

TEACHERS NOTES by Robyn Sheahan-Bright



Be Brave, Pink Piglet!

WRITTEN By Phil Cummings
ILLUSTRATED By Sarah Davis

Be Brave, Pink Piglet!

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Introduction

Pink Piglet is not feeling at all brave. But his mother urges him to set off into the 'wilds' of the farmyard and beyond to explore.

There he is frightened by a series of animals until he forgets himself and plays in the mud, and the berries, and the frog pond, and comes back looking very different. It's his turn to frighten the others. And he does!

But he doesn't fool his mother. She knows exactly who he is . . . her brave explorer!

Phil Cummings's playful and highly engaging text is pitched perfectly to a younger audience. It is matched by Sarah Davis's vibrant, animated and colourful illustrations. She brings these characters to life and makes each one of them 'a real character'!

This is bound to be a favourite read-aloud text which children will return to, over and over. And their parents and teachers will enjoy the fun too!

Themes & Curriculum Topics

Several themes are covered in this book which might be related to:

'Australian Curriculum' <<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/humanities-and-social-sciences/history/Curriculum/F-10?y=3&y=4&y=5&y=6&s=HKU&s=HS&layout=1>> These include:

- **Study of History, Society and Environment**
- **Journeys and Explorations**

Discussion Point: Exploring can be about climbing mountains or crossing deserts or seas. But it can also be about discovering your backyard or garden, your neighbourhood or your suburb. Discuss exploring, and how it is a combination of adventure, fun, and sometimes challenges.

Activity: Read books about exploring. Some stories (like this one) are about animals exploring: See *Lucy Goosey* by Margaret Wild and Ann James (Little Hare Books, 2007); *Oops!* by Colin McNaughton (Collins, 1996); *Who Sank the Boat?* by Pamela Allen (Penguin, 1996, 1982); Lynley Dodd's *Hairy Maclary* series. Others are about kids exploring: See Peter Carnava's *The Great Expedition* (New Frontier, 2011); *The Rainbow* by Gary Crew and Gregory Rogers (Lothian, 2011); *Come Away From the Water, Shirley* by John Burningham (Red Fox, 1992).

Discussion Point: Invite students to discuss the explorations they've made.

Activity: Go on a class exploration in the schoolyard, or a park, or another place that appeals to the class.

- **Bravery and Fear**

Discussion Point: Piglet is frightened of the animals who are bigger than him. Invite students to discuss how they would have coped with these creatures towering over them? How do they overcome fear?

Discussion Point: Why did the mother pig encourage her baby to face such challenges; to take a risk and venture into the wide world?

Discussion Point: Is Piglet brave? How hard was it for him to advance into that unknown farmyard? What qualities did he evince?

Discussion Point: The ‘tables are turned’ when the bigger animals are frightened of the messy piglet! Discuss the fears we have of smaller things too e.g. Spiders or cockroaches or mice!

Activity: Make Bravery Badges for students [See **BM 6** below] and award them for ordinary acts of bravery during this unit of work.

- **Pigs!**

Activity: There are lots of fun things to discover about pigs. Read for example, ‘Fun Pig Facts for Kids’ <<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/animals/pig.html>>.

Activity: Read other stories about pigs [See **Bibliography**]

Activity: Sing some pig songs or recite some pig rhymes, for example, ‘The Old Woman and her Pig’; ‘This Little Piggy Went to Market’; ‘To Market, to Market to Buy a Fat Pig’.

Activity: Conduct some pig activities. [See **Creative Arts** below] You might also conduct some of the activities listed at this site: ‘Pigs: Theme Station’ *Preschool Express Station*.

<<http://www.preschoolexpress.com/theme-station09/pigs-april.shtml>>

Discussion Point: If you had a pet piglet, what would you call it?

- **Mud and Messiness**

Activity: Kids will love the mess that Piglet makes of himself! Read other ‘messy’ books such as *I’m a Dirty Dinosaur* by Janeen Brian and Ann James (Penguin, 2013) or *This is the Mud!* by Kathryn Apel and Warren Crossett (Hachette Australia, 2009). Conduct some messy activities of your own. Give kids a tub of mud, and some heavy paper or card to draw on and make muddy pictures using handprints, fingerprints or everyday items like bottle tops or jar lids to create patterns out of mud, or to paint a picture of a pig. Make sure they wear aprons as well!

Activity: Make up a rhyme about playing in mud, and berries and ponds. Use words such as ‘squelching, sliding, sliming, slopping’ etc . . .

- **Farmyard Animals**

Activity: The following animals or amphibians appear in this book:

Rooster * Cow * Frog * Worm * Pig * Dog

Conduct activities based on any of these animals. For example, see 'Farm Animals
Preschool Activities and Crafts'

<<http://www.first-school.ws/theme/animals/farm.htm>>.

Activity: Recite rhymes about each of the animals in this story.

Activity: Conduct an excursion and take students to see pigs and other farmyard animals.

[See also **Bibliography** for other references]

- **English Language and Literacy**

The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following aspects:

Activity: Cumulative tales rely on a traditional structure in which a character goes on a journey, encounters a series of animals or people, each of whom ask a repeated question, or prompt a repeated statement, and leads to a climax. The underlying structure is that the end is in the beginning. The brave little pig was always going to overturn his adversaries, as Henny Penny was always going to be eaten, in the classic tale. Repetition is important in cumulative tales. The same sequence of words is repeated until the climax, until the order is upset or reversed and the piglet comes home again. This encourages predictions, and engages the child by suggesting that they are clever and insightful.

Activity: Noise-making in a cumulative tale is an important feature, encouraging participation. Make the noises as you read the story. What noise would piglet make? Invite students to create their own original pig noises.

Question: This story is told in **third person past tense**. Could it have been told in first person? For example, 'Early one morning I left my mother's . . .' How might that have changed the story?

Activity: Test your students' comprehension by asking them questions about the written and visual text. [See also **Blackline Master 2**]

Activity: Make up a story as a sequel to this one. What might piglet do on another day out adventuring?

Activity: Make up your own piglet rhyming poem.

Activity: In Phil Cummings' **Author's Note** (see below) he has explained the origin of the story. Discuss the imaginative process, and how an original idea can evolve into a story which is very different.

- **Visual Literacy**

The visual text of a book combines with the written text to tell the story using the various parts of the book's design and illustrations, as explored below:

Activity: The **cover** of a book is an important part of its message. Look at the front cover of *Be Brave, Pink Piglet*. How does the placement of the two characters (Piglet and Rooster) tell the reader what the story is about?

Discussion Point: The endpapers are floral but on the back endpaper the pattern has muddy footprints on it. How does this relate to the story?

Activity: The **title page** is a gorgeous portrait of the piglet. Students might paint their own 'Portrait of Piglet'. They can then display them in the classroom mural exhibition, created in response to this text.

Discussion Point: The **format** of the book is landscape in shape; why does this format suit this narrative so well?

Discussion Point: The **layout of the storyboard** contains double-page spreads which bleed off the page and across the gutter in each spread. How does the format and design of the book influence your reading of it?

Discussion Point: The **body and character of Piglet** needs to be drawn in an engaging way as he is the 'star' of this show! Sarah Davis posted on her blog some preliminary sketches asking for opinions on which style suited the character best <<http://sarah-davis.org/blog/2014/11/7/pigging-out>> Draw your own Pink Piglet. Use guides such as 'How to Draw a Pig' <<http://www.wikihow.com/Draw-a-Pig>> to assist you.

Activity: The **medium or style** employed is sketching and digital art. [See **Illustrator's Note** below]

Discussion Point: The **colours** used in this book are rich and resonant primary colours. How does colour affect your interpretation of this work? Colours are mentioned throughout this text. Piglet is pink; then he becomes brown, red and green. Discuss colours and then paint a picture of Piglet using all four colours.

Activity: Perspective in left-to-right movement is important in a picture book, and in this cumulative tale. Piglet is facing from the left into the gutter with the large creatures facing him (in an intimidating way), from the right to the left. Later he is on the right hand page with the animals chasing him from the left. Follow his movement through the book and observe how movement across the page animates and enhances the story.

Activity: Invite students to draw, paint, or collage another scene to be added to the book, i.e. another animal for Piglet to encounter, with a repetitive text to accompany it. Create a classroom mural using all the images. [See **also Creative Arts 1** below]
[See also **Blackline Master 1** below]

Activity: Create a graphic novel/comic version of a scene in this book.

[See **Bibliography.**] [See also **Blackline Master 5.**]

- **Creative Arts**

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

1. Have fun making a **Flying Pig Mobile.**
2. **Make Paper Plate Pig Masks.**
3. **Make Pig Noses out of egg cartons.**
4. **Create a Book Trailer** to promote this book. [See **Bibliography**]
5. **Make a Paper Bag Pig Puppet.** ‘Pig Crafts’ <<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/pigs/>>

- **Learning Technologies**

Activity: Research the topics above online.

Activity: Research the author and illustrators online. [See **Bibliography**]

Activity: Design a poster for this book using an online drawing program.

- **Mathematics**

Activity: Have fun counting things in this book. E.g. How many flowers are there on the front endpaper? (**Answer:** 24)

Activity: See **BM 4** below for mathematics activities.

Further Topics for Discussion and Research

- Research the work of Phil Cummings. Compare this to his other books.
- Research the work of Sarah Davis. Compare this to her other books.
- Students might research this book in comparison to reading other picture books such as those listed in the **Bibliography.**

- Investigate any other topic not covered in these notes which you consider is suggested by this text.

Conclusion

Be Brave, Pink Piglet is a perfect story for pre-schoolers and lower primary students. It is a funny, engaging tale which encourages active participation and word play. (Oink! Oink!) It also deals with emotions and situations young children will identify with and appreciate; it encourages bravery and resilience.

Author's Notes

This story was first written down as a rough idea over twenty years ago just after my son's sixth birthday. He was a very keen cricketer and one of the gifts he received for that birthday was a new pair of gleaming white cricket pants. They didn't stay white for long. The first time he wore them to play a game the ground was wet with overnight rain and at the end of the day he walked from the field with brown, green, red and white pants. And so the first idea I had was to write a story called *Ben's Birthday Pants*. I actually did a rough draft on my typewriter! I worked with it for a while but it wasn't working. I put it away and there it sat for a very long time until I came across it when I was clearing the clutter from my files. When I read it I could suddenly see, after years of experience, that if I looked at this from a different angle I could make this work on a number of levels. It was during the re-drafting process that Pink Piglet came into being. I wanted to use this innocent, endearing character as a vehicle to develop a predictive, noisy, cumulative text that could carry the themes of vulnerability, resilience and even risk-taking to a certain degree. And I wanted to help young readers understand that fear isn't an emotion reserved only for the small, defenceless and timid among us; even the big, strong and proud harbour a fear and anxiety of the unknown. I sought to explore all of this in a simple, entertaining, humorous and poignant way. In order to carry this through, however, I knew we would need an illustrator of exceptional skill. I can't tell you how excited I was to hear that Sarah was going to illustrate this book. She has captured all that I hoped for and imagined when I wrote this simple text: the action, the movement, the sounds, the compassion, the expression and the gentle nature of personal discovery. Her work is brilliant! And now, after all this time, our engaging character prepares to venture out into the big wide world . . . *Be Brave, Pink Piglet*.

Phil Cummings

Illustrator's Notes

Be Brave, Pink Piglet is a very sweet little story, but also quite funny. The text is very simple and understated, but the words 'He scared Rooster. He scared Dog. He scared Cow.' made me laugh – I could imagine all these great big animals nearly leaping out of their skins with fright when they saw this bizarre little creature coming towards them. So I tried to make the animals' expressions and body language as funny as I could. But I also wanted the pictures to feel warm and gentle, so I've used soft edges, and warm colours, and tried to capture the feeling of early morning light.

I started off by looking at photographs of pigs, roosters, cows and dogs, and did a few realistic sketches to work out what they might look like, but then I drew the characters and settings in this book, mostly from my imagination. I wanted them to be a little cartoony and not completely realistic. I actually 'painted' all the images on the computer, using a Wacom tablet, and a program called Corel Painter – this let me finish the book quite quickly, and also achieve really bright, fresh colours.

Sarah Davis

About the Author

Phil Cummings was born in the small seaside town of Port Broughton in South Australia. He is the youngest of eight children with four brothers and three sisters. Life as a kid for Phil was a fabulous adventure. He was on a farm for the first eight or nine years of his life. When his family left the farm they moved to the mid north of South Australia to a railway town called Peterborough. His older brothers worked on the steam trains. The windows in his house would rattle constantly as the trains rumbled through the rail yards. When Phil left school he worked in a local garage, in the abattoirs and played sport constantly until he left to attend teachers' college.

Phil's interest in writing began with poetry and writing songs. With the beginning of teacher training, Phil was exposed to a great deal of children's literature, particularly picture books. Phil decided to sit down and write one! He mistakenly believed it would not be difficult at all! His work was rejected time and time again but, having the writing bug, he kept on going. He soon learnt that writing for children was a lot harder than he ever imagined. Six or seven years after his first attempts, Phil had his first book published: *Goodness Gracious!* illustrated by Craig Smith (Omnibus Books, 1989). Since then, Phil has published over sixty books including fiction for younger readers and picture books. See his website: <http://philcummings.com/about/>

About the Illustrator

Sarah Davis spent her formative years in New Zealand getting into trouble for doodling all over her school books, and now gets paid to scribble to her heart's content, and can hardly believe her luck. 'I don't have any formal art training, but hold an honours degree in literature, and as a qualified secondary teacher I taught English, creative writing and art in NZ secondary schools. My love of language plays an important part in my work, and I really get a kick out of the way words and images can be made to play off each other.' In 2004 she moved to Sydney and began freelancing in commercial illustration for advertising, film, editorial publishing, and toy design. She worked as an in-house designer for The Book Company, and as art director and senior illustrator for Childhood Heroes, producing books in association with high profile sports stars such as Tim Cahill, Brett Lee, and UK footballers Steven Gerrard and Rio Ferdinand. She received her first picture book contract in 2008, and in 2010 she quit her day job and began illustrating books full time. 'Now I'm lucky enough to spend my days drawing wicked pirates, crazy llamas, cowardly dogs, and a thousand other strange and wonderful things, and calling it "work"! I'm totally ruined for any other career, and will never have a Real Job ever again. Hopefully!'

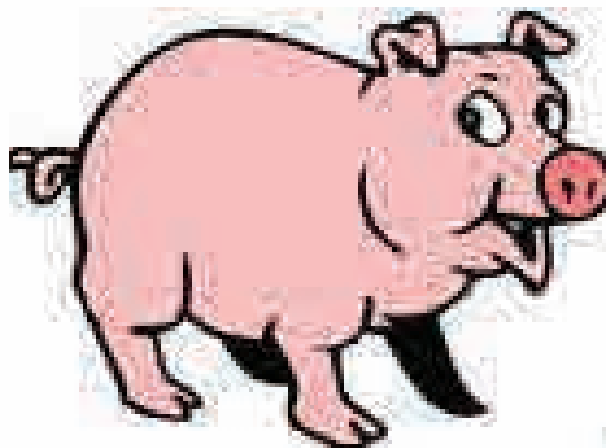
Since 2008 she's had over 20 books published in Australia and overseas, and her work has been shortlisted for quite a few awards in Australia and New Zealand. She is also the current Illustration Coordinator for the Australian Chapter of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI), and frequently speaks at schools, universities, festivals and conferences. See her website at <http://sarah-davis.org/>

Blackline Masters

BM 1. PIGLET IN DANGER!

Draw a scene behind the piglet below, indicating that he is in imminent danger.

Write a cartoon caption or speech bubble containing words to further explain the scene.



BM 2. PIGLET VERBS

The following verbs appear in this text. Write a synonym beside each one:

TROTTED	
FRIGHTENED	
HURRIED	
HOPPED	
HEADED	

Then write a sentence using each of these words:











BM 3. PIGLET QUIZ

A. Complete the expressions or film/book titles below:

A pig in a . . .

. . . like a pig

Pigs might . . .

‘This little pig went to . . .’

Babe: Pig in the . . .

Choose the words from this list: Market*Fly*Poke*City*Sweat

B. Finish this rhyme:

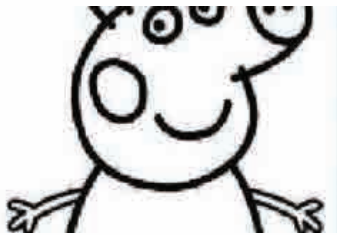
Tom, Tom, the piper’s . . .

Stole a pig and away did . . .

The pig was eat, and Tom was . . .

Till he run crying down the . . .

C. Who is this famous book and television character pig?



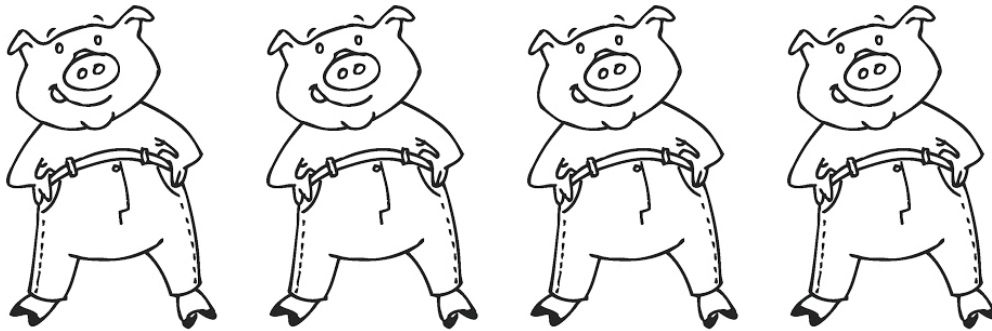
D. What is a male pig called? What is a female pig called?

E. This scrambled word ‘NEISW’ is another name for a pig. What is it?

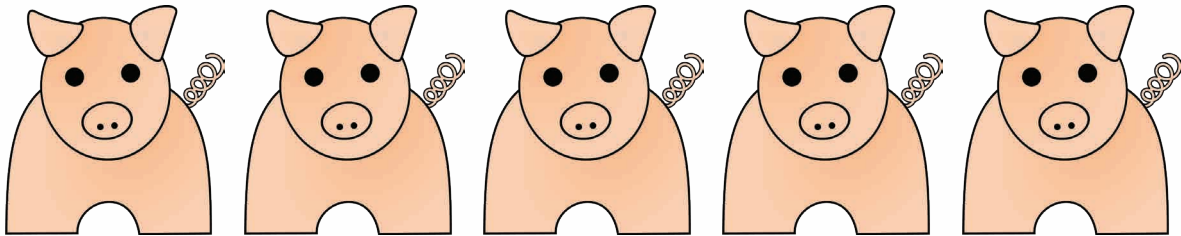
Answers: **A.** A pig in a poke. Sweat like a pig. Pigs might fly. This little pig went to market. *Babe: Pig in the City.* **B.** Son; run; beat; street. **C.** Peppa Pig. **D.** A Boar. A Gilt if she hasn’t had piglets yet, or a Sow if she has. **E.** Swine.

BM 4. PIGLET MATHS

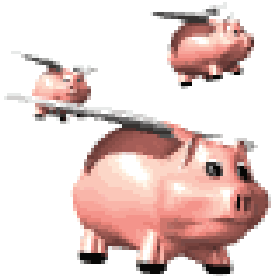
Q. 1. If you added six pigs to the line below, how many would you have?



Q. 2. If you took two pigs away from this line, how many would you have left?



Q. 3. If you multiplied these three flying pigs by three how many would you have?



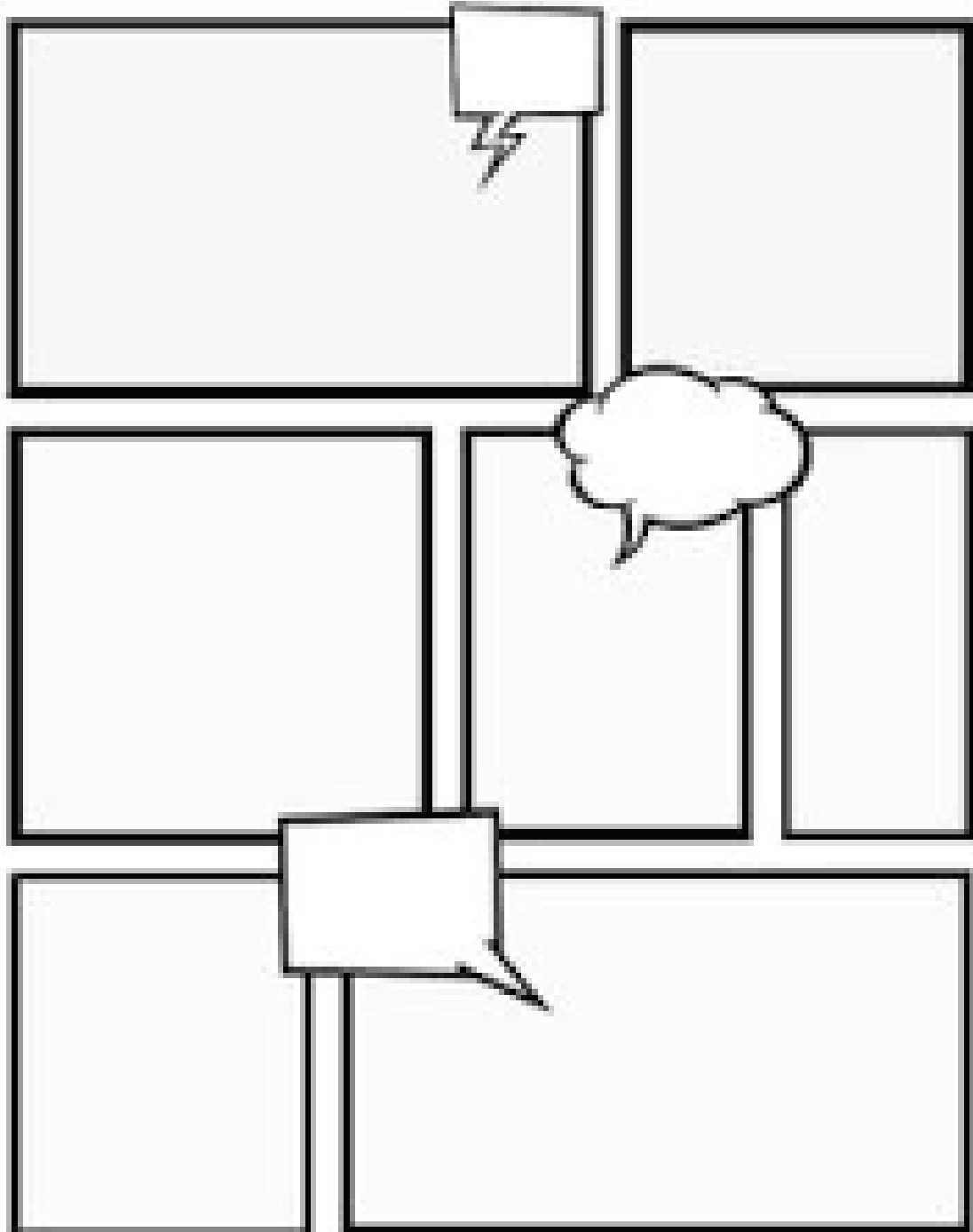
Q. 4. If you added up all the pigs on this sheet, how many would you have?

Q. 5. If you divided the number of pigs on this page by three, how many would you have?

Answers: 1. Ten. 2. Three. 3. Nine. 4. Twelve. 5. Four.

BM 5. GRAPHIC STORYTELLING

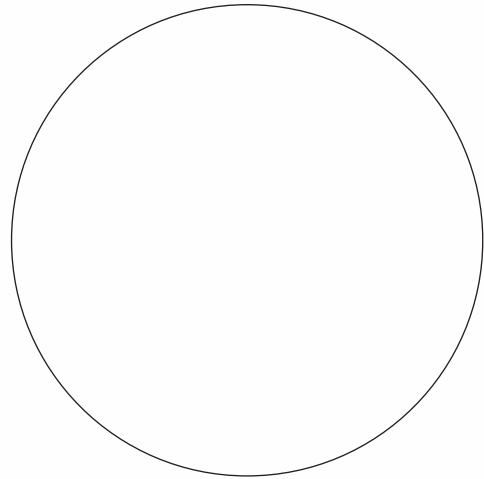
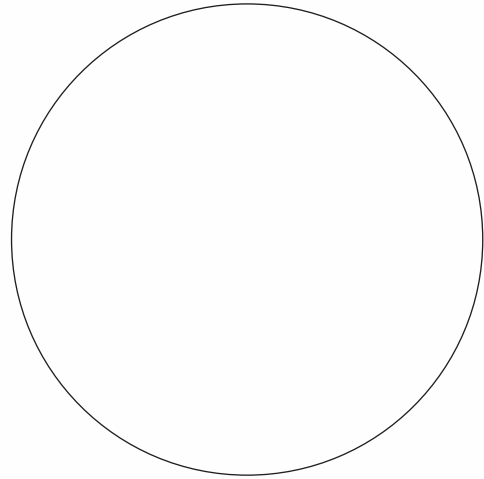
Create a graphic novel/comic interpretation of one of the scenes in this book. Use the layout below as the storyboard for your comic. Enlarge on a photocopier to give you more space.



Comic Book Template viewed at: <<http://www.pinterest.com/pin/365706432212821426/>>

BM 6. BRAVERY BADGES

Cut out the shapes below, glue the pig to the circle, and then the circle to card. You can either use a badge-making machine to create badges or make simple badges by taping a plastic clip or Velcro to the back of the badge.



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‘Book Trailers for Readers’ by Michelle Harclerode

<<http://www.booktrailersforreaders.com>>

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‘Farm Animals Preschool Activities and Crafts’

<<http://www.first-school.ws/theme/animals/farm.htm>>

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<<http://www.how-to-draw-funny-cartoons.com/how-to-draw-a-pig.html>>

‘Pig Crafts’ <<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/pigs/>>

‘Pigs: Theme Station’ *Preschool Express Station*

<<http://www.preschoolexpress.com/theme-station09/pigs-april.shtml>>

About the Author of the Notes

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011 she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, in 2012 the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award.

