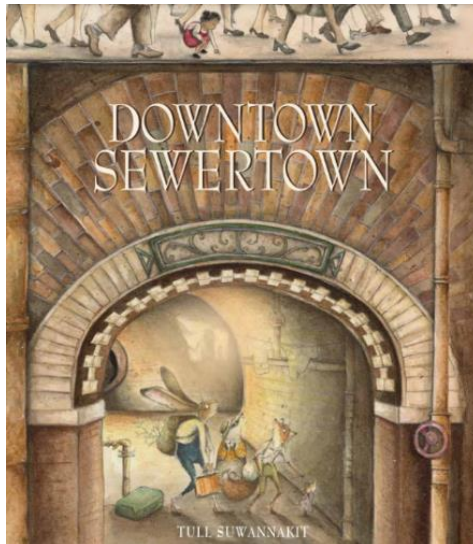


DOWNTOWN SEWERTOWN

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY TULL SUWANNAKIT

Teacher's Notes

The following notes provide teachers with a variety of activities linked to the story *Downtown Sewertown* by Tull Suwannakit. The story is said to be targeted at children aged 4-8 and would fit nicely into a range of Junior Primary reading programs. Alternatively, you could also use the learning activities provided below to evoke a deeper analysis from students in Years 3, 4 and 5.



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BLURB

When the diggers came and construction began,
The animals had to pack up and scam,
Leaving behind their woodland home,
Searching for a new place of their own . . .
But will they be welcomed by the city folk?

SUMMARY

This poetic story tells of animals that must leave their woodland home and find a new place to live. They travel to the city but quickly realise that they are not welcome there. The only place they can afford to stay is the dirty, filthy Downtown Sewer. Their new home seemed very dreary until Mouse stepped up and got the animals to work cleaning, polishing and scrubbing. Soon the animals had created a paradise down below, which caught the attention of the people from up above. One brave girl stepped up and united the people and the furies to live happily side by side.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tull Suwannakit is a children's book author and illustrator with a background in animation and fine art. He began his artistic career as a set designer and sculptor for an independent animation studio in New York. Tull's books have been published in Australia, the UK and the US, as well as being translated in numerous languages worldwide.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Teachers are able to use the following unit of work to introduce or reinforce literal, inferential and analytical comprehension skills in students from Year 3 to Year 5. These activities have been designed to flow coherently as a unit plan, but may also be used as stand-alone lessons.

Lesson 1: Predictions

Tune in: As a class, discuss what makes a good story. Is it the characters, events, setting, language, relatability, or something else entirely?

Class discussion: Show students the front cover of *Downtown Sewertown* and ask them to make predictions of what the story may be about. Leading questions could include;

- Who is the main character?
- How did the animals get there?
- Are the animals happy to be there?
- What do you think the main event in the story will be?
- How will the story end?

Read the blurb to the students and then ask similar leading questions to see if their answer has changed at all.

Class activity: Read through the text highlighting important features as you read. Interesting things to highlight may include;

- Why do you think the animal's home was being destroyed?
- What do the city signs say in the illustrations? How does that contrast to how the animals are treated?
- What colours are used in the city illustrations? How does the author want you to feel about the city?
- Why do you think the author chose for Mouse to be the leader?
- The author has included pages without any words. Why do you think Tull has chosen to do this? What words do you think might belong on this page?
- What colours has Tull used to illustrate the new and improved Sewertown? How do you think he wants you to feel about it?
- Note how the illustrations of the people and the city change from brown to colourful once they accept the animals as friends.

Individual activity: Once the book is complete, ask students to return to their earlier written notes or group conversations and see if any of their predictions came true.

Reflection: As a class, discuss if they would have enjoyed the book more if one of their predictions had of come true or if they enjoyed the surprises that came from the plot.

Australian Curriculum Links

Year Level	Curriculum Area	Content Descriptor
3	Language for expressing and developing ideas	AC9E3LA09 identify how images extend the meaning of a text
3	Analysing interpreting and evaluating	AC9E3LY05 use comprehension strategies when listening and viewing to build literal and inferred meaning, and begin to evaluate texts by drawing on a growing knowledge of context, text structures and language features
4	Analysing interpreting and evaluating	AC9E4LY05 use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning, to expand topic knowledge and ideas, and evaluate texts
4	Examining literature	AC9E4LE03 discuss how authors and illustrators make stories engaging by the way they develop character, setting and plot tensions
5	Examining literature	AC9E5LE04 examine the effects of imagery, including simile, metaphor and personification, and sound devices in narratives, poetry and songs
5	Analysing, interpreting and evaluating	AC9E5LY05 use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning to evaluate information and ideas

Lesson 2: Plot

Tune In: Reread the text as a class, asking various students to take turns in reading aloud. Discuss and demonstrate that as this book is written poetically we need to read it with a rhythm.

Class Activity: Discuss as a class what the main events of the text are. Are all of the events weighted equally in importance of the storyline? As a class decide on the three main events of the story and discuss how each was resolved. These events will likely include; the animals having to move out of their home, the city people not being welcoming, the sewer not being a nice place to live, and the city people discovering Sewertown. Each of these events has a solution before the next event occurs.

Individual Activity: Show students the Plot Worksheet attached below and ask them to choose their own three events from the story and create a plot map. Students can use dot points to briefly identify the event and the solution. Once students have completed their plot map, demonstrate how they can use these three events to write a summary at the bottom of the sheet.

Reflection: Students to share their summary with the student next to them, potentially asking students to volunteer to read to the class if time permits.

Australian Curriculum Links

Year Level	Curriculum Area	Content Descriptor
3	Text and text structure	AC9E3LA03 describe how texts across the curriculum use different language features and structures relevant to their purpose
3	Examining literature	AC9E3LE03 discuss how an author uses language and illustrations to portray characters and settings in texts, and explore how the settings and events influence the mood of the narrative
4	Examining literature	AC9E4LE03 discuss how authors and illustrators make stories engaging by the way they develop character, setting and plot tensions
4	Text structure and organisation	AC9E4LA03 identify how texts across the curriculum have different language features and are typically organised into characteristic stages depending on purposes
5	Text structure and organisation	AC9E5LA03 describe how spoken, written and multimodal texts use language features and are typically organised into characteristic stages and phases, depending on purposes in texts

Lesson 3: Moral

Tune In: Read out a few student summaries from the previous lesson. Discuss the events each student chose to highlight in their summary and remind students of how each event was resolved.

Class Activity: Ask the students if this story teaches us anything? When a story aims to teach the reader something or pass on a message to the audience we call this a moral. Common morals for stories include 'lying breaks people's trust', 'never judge someone by how they look' and 'don't count your chickens before they hatch'. Can you think of any others?

Does this story have a moral? Possible morals to discuss include; being resilient in the face of challenges, if you are accepting of others everyone is happier, that you should accept and welcome everyone, that with a good attitude and team work you can achieve anything.

Individual Activity: Students fill in the Moral Worksheet where they are asked to think about what the moral of Downtown Sewertown is and provide evidence from the text as to why they think that is the moral of the story. At the bottom of the worksheet students are invited to be creative and think about a moral that is important to them.

Reflection: Ask students who thought of similar morals for the story to group together and share their moral and evidence, as well as the moral for their own personal story they would like to write.

Australian Curriculum Links

Year Level	Curriculum Area	Content Descriptor
3	Examining literature	AC9E3LE03 discuss how an author uses language and illustrations to portray characters and settings in texts, and explore how the settings and events influence the mood of the narrative
4	Analysing, interpreting and evaluating	AC9E4LY03 identify the characteristic features used in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to meet the purpose of the text
4	Analysing interpreting and evaluating	AC9E4LY05 use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning, to expand topic knowledge and ideas, and evaluate texts
5	Engaging with and responding to literature	AC9E5LE02 present an opinion on a literary text using specific terms about literary devices, text structures and language features, and reflect on the viewpoints of others
5	Analysing, interpreting and evaluating	AC9E5LY04 navigate and read texts for specific purposes, monitoring meaning using strategies such as skimming, scanning and confirming

Lesson 4: Theme

Tune In: Revise what a moral is from the previous lesson. What is the difference between the moral of the story and the theme of a story? A moral is a teaching or message that the author is trying to communicate to the audience, whilst a theme is a reoccurring idea throughout the text.

Class Discussion: Brainstorm on the board some possible themes for Downtown Sewertown (answers may include; friendship, team work, resilience, perseverance). The author, Tull Suwannakit has actually provided us with the four themes he wove into this story. The themes are acceptance, empathy, kindness and nature. Do any of the themes you brainstormed on the board match Tull's?

Individual Activity: Students to complete the Theme Worksheet in which they need to look up the definition for each of the four themes and find evidence from the text where each theme occurs. There is a space at the bottom for them to find evidence for one of the other themes that students thought of.

Answers may include:

Nature: the destruction of trees shown on the first page, the colours used in the city illustrations versus the nature illustrations, 'concrete jungle', animals growing their own crops in Sewertown, the use of colour in the city illustrations at the end.

Empathy: the city people did not show the animals any empathy, the 'brave girl' stood up for the animals.

Kindness: the animals showed kindness for one another as they worked as a team, they showed kindness by inviting other animals to live in Sewertown, the 'brave girl' showed kindness by standing up for the animals and at the end of the story the city people showed kindness to the animals.

Acceptance: the illustrations show lots of different types of people living happily together showing acceptance across cultures, the animals accept the Sewertown as their home and accept other animals into their new home, the animals accept each other as friends even though they are all different animals, the city people eventually show the animals acceptance and equality by living as friends.

Reflection: As a class go through each of Tull's four themes and share examples of how these are demonstrated in the book. Students can share their chosen theme and evidence with a partner.

Australian Curriculum Links

Year Level	Curriculum Area	Content Descriptor
3	Examining literature	AC9E3LE03 discuss how an author uses language and illustrations to portray characters and settings in texts, and explore how the settings and events influence the mood of the narrative
4	Responding to literature	AC9E4LE02 describe the effects of text structures and language features in literary texts when responding to and sharing opinions
4	Examining literature	AC9E4LE03 discuss how authors and illustrators make stories engaging by the way they develop character, setting and plot tensions
5	Engaging with and responding to literature	AC9E5LE02 present an opinion on a literary text using specific terms about literary devices, text structures and language features, and reflect on the viewpoints of others
5	Analysing, interpreting and evaluating	AC9E5LY04 navigate and read texts for specific purposes, monitoring meaning using strategies such as skimming, scanning and confirming

Lesson 5: Poetry

Tune In: Have the four pages (including the inside cover art) that do not include any words printed onto A3 paper laid out on tables around the room. Invite students to walk around and write words on sticky notes that they relate to each image. Share the posters and words with the class once gathered back together on the floor.

Class Activity: As a class focus on the inside cover art of the city people all walking together. Tell students that they are going to write a rhyming poetry verse, in line with the author's writing style, for one of the other three pages. Demonstrate how students will achieve this by constructing an example with the class for this first page. You may like to use the Poetry Poster below as an anchor chart. Explain how students will need an idea first before writing, your idea as a class can be to describe the city people and how bland their life is. Come up with a word bank as a class to use in the verse, including rhyming words. Before you begin writing, read the first page of the book and discuss the rhythm that Tull has used in his writing. What does he like to use in his writing? Emotive language, lots of added details using the word 'and', repetition of language, line A and B rhyme and line C and D rhyme.

Individual Activity: Students to write their own verse based on one of the other three textless illustrations in the text. Ensure students note where in the plot that page occurs. If students are struggling they can write their own version of the class constructed verse from the inside cover art.

Reflection: Students share their poetry verses with the class or in small groups. You may like to photocopy the pages so students can write their verse onto the illustration they chose.

Australian Curriculum Links

Year Level	Curriculum Area	Content Descriptor
3	Examining literature	AC9E3LE04 discuss the effects of some literary devices used to enhance meaning and shape the reader's reaction, including rhythm and onomatopoeia in poetry and prose
3	Creating literature	AC9E3LE05 create and edit imaginative texts, using or adapting language features, characters, settings, plot structures and ideas encountered in literary texts
4	Examining literature	AC9E4LE04 examine the use of literary devices and deliberate word play in literary texts, including poetry, to shape meaning
4	Creating literature	AC9E4LE05 create and edit literary texts by developing storylines, characters and settings
5	Language for expressing and developing ideas	AC9E5LA07 explain how the sequence of images in print, digital and film texts has an effect on meaning
5	Creating literature	AC9E5LE05 create and edit literary texts, experimenting with figurative language, storylines, characters and settings from texts students have experienced

USING THIS TEXT ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Downtown Sewertown incorporates several themes that provides teachers the opportunity to use it as a learning resource across the curriculum. This text particularly lends itself to two areas from the Australian Curriculum; Civics and Citizenship and Ethical Concepts.

Civics and Citizenship

This text can be easily incorporated into existing Civics and Citizenship lessons and unit plans to help highlight how different communities interact. Some examples could include;

- The animals working together to create a new community, Sewertown, in the face of adversity from the city people.
- Identifying how the city people appear to come from various demographics and are all living together happily.
- Discussing the challenges and benefits the animals and people would have had at the end of the book as they create Downtown Sewertown together.
- Identifying all of the different perspectives and characters in the text and how they can all live together happily whilst being individuals.
- Discuss if the groups are better off living separately, the animals in the forest and the people in the city, or if they are better off living together in a combined environment.
- Investigate how one person, the 'Brave Girl', can make a difference in societal change.

Australian Curriculum Links

Year Level	Curriculum Area	Content Descriptor
3	Civics and Citizenship	AC9HS3K07 why people participate within communities and how students can actively participate and contribute to communities
4	Civics and Citizenship	AC9HS4K09 diversity of cultural, religious and/or social groups to which they and others in the community belong, and their importance to identity
5	Civics and Citizenship	AC9HS5K07 how citizens (members of communities) with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve a civic goal

Ethical Concepts

Downtown Sewertown has many opportunities for students to develop an opinion regarding the ethics of the characters actions. Here are some ways you can use this book to evoke an interesting discussion around ethics;

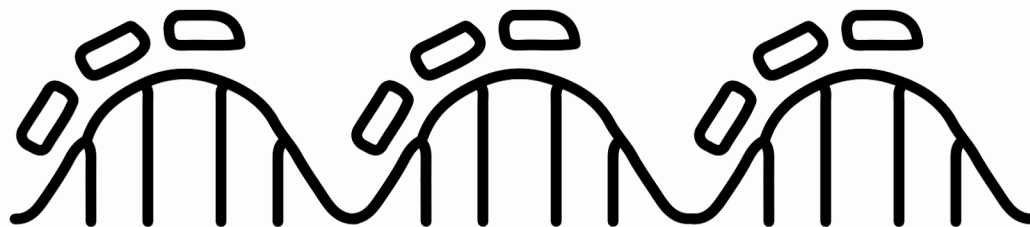
- Analyse all of the different perspectives from the book and how each character would individually feel about the events that took place.
- Discuss if any of the characters are more 'ethical' than others.
- Discuss the context of the situation and how the ethics may differ if the animals chose to come to the city instead of being forced out of their homes.
- Is it fair that the city people destroyed the animal's original home? Is it fair that the animals could only afford to live in the sewer instead of a nicer home?
- Were the city people tolerant of the animals? What could they have done to be more ethical?

Australian Curriculum Links

Year Level	Curriculum Area	Content Descriptor
Level 1 (Foundation)	Ethical Concepts	identify examples of ethical concepts such as right and wrong
Level 2 (Years 1-2)	Ethical Concepts	identify ethical concepts, such as honesty and fairness, and describe actions and behaviours associated with these
Level 3 (Years 3-4)	Ethical Concepts	identify ethical concepts, such as respect and tolerance, and describe how a situation or context affects actions and behaviour
Level 4 (Years 5-6)	Ethical Concepts	identify and describe ethical concepts, such as truth and justice, and explain how perspectives may vary according to the situation or context

Name:

Plot



Event 1:

Event 2:

Event 3:

Solution:

Solution:

Solution:

Using the above plot points can you write a summary of the story?

Name:

Morals

What is the moral of the story?

What evidence supports this?

If you were going to write a story, what would you like the moral to be? Why?

Name:

Themes

Acceptance

Definition:

Empathy

Definition:

Nature

Definition:

Kindness

Definition:

Can you think of another theme of the story?

Downtown Sewertown

Poetry Verse

Step 1: Choose a page to author

Step 2: Think of an idea
What do you want the page to say?

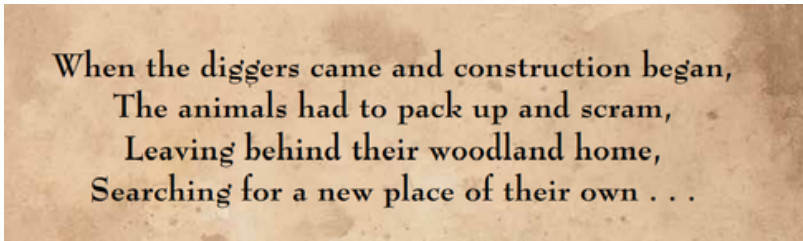
Step 3: Brainstorm a word bank

Step 4: Create rhyming pairs in your word bank

Step 5: Experiment with word combinations to form lines using the below guide

Author Analysis

Tull's Writing



When the diggers came and construction began,
The animals had to pack up and scam,
Leaving behind their woodland home,
Searching for a new place of their own . . .

- 4 lines per page
- Line **A** and **B** rhyme
- Line **C** and **D** rhyme
- Emotive language
- Repitition of words and rhythm