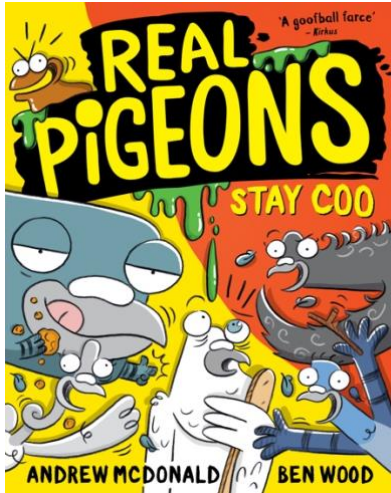


Teacher's Notes



Real Pigeons: Stay Coo

Written by Andrew McDonald

Illustrated by Ben Wood

Teacher's Notes by Bec Kavanagh

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

RECOMMENDED FOR

primary-aged readers (ages 5+, grades 2+)

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: English
- General capabilities:
 - AC9E3LE05
 - AC9E2LY06
 - AC9E3LY06

THEMES

- Fame
- Friendship
- Teamwork
- Kidnapping
- Privacy

SYNOPSIS

The Real Pigeons are the coo-lest birds around, and they're back, with three brand-new stories. In *The Slime Crime* there's a slimer on the loose, which is no good for pigeons. You can't fly with slime in your feathers! Of course, Real Pigeons Find Slimers! But the Real Pigeons are so famous now that Rock starts to wonder if they're even going to be able to stay coo and fight crime when everyone is watching.

In *The Roller Problem*, the parlour pigeons have gone missing! They went out to search for the legendary Paradise Ledge, a secret spot in the city safe for all pigeons, but they never came back! Will the Real Pigeons be able to find them? And will they finally find a spot in the city where they can be free from fame?

And in *Rats of the Sky*, the Real Pigeons are desperate to escape the pressures of fame. When Frillback is birdnapped, the Real Pigeons must put their beaks together to figure out how to save one of their own. Will the Real Pigeons Find Frillback??



ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

Andrew McDonald is the author of the bestselling Real Pigeons junior fiction series. He loves writing stories that make kids laugh, wonder and leap into the air with surprise. His books have been shortlisted for the Readings Children's Book Prize and the Australian Book Industry Awards. Andrew is a regular presenter on the schools circuit, where he conducts writing workshops, talks about his life as an author and inspires kids to read, write, draw and be creative. Andrew lives in Melbourne, Australia.

Ben Wood is the illustrator of the bestselling Real Pigeons junior fiction series and the graphic novel series Hello Twigs. Drawn to stories that are funny and heartfelt, his lively illustrations reflect his love for graphic novels and animation. When not in the studio Ben speaks in schools and runs workshops about illustration. He lives in Naarm/Melbourne, Australia.

THEMES

Fame

Everyone wants to be famous...don't they? The Real Pigeons are so famous now that it almost stops them from being able to fight crime. Not to mention the copyrats, whose hunger for fame of their own makes them slime the city! Sometimes being famous isn't all it's cracked up to be. Discuss the pros and cons of fame that you see in the book. Do you want to be famous? Why? What would you be famous for?

Privacy

In the *Roller Problem*, the Real Pigeons are looking for a private place to hang out. Why is privacy so important? What's interrupting their privacy? Describe a place that gives you privacy to just be yourself. How do you feel when you're in that place? How would you feel if you didn't have it? Who has a right to privacy?

WRITING STYLE

In **alliteration**, writers use repeating consonant sounds in neighbouring words to focus a readers attention on particular details in a story, or to create a particular rhythm. One example is 'slipping on some slime'.

What other examples of alliteration can you find in the book? What effect do they have on how you read the story?

WRITING EXERCISE

Come up with your own examples of alliteration to describe the following:

- A bird singing
- Something you're afraid of



- Someone expressing excitement about something (see what we did there!)

Use one of these to write a short poem using your image as inspiration.

COMPREHENSION

- Pigeons used to nest on cliff faces. Where do they live now? Why?
- How do the Real Pigeons deal with fame?
- Why is slime bad for birds?
- What does it mean to adapt to something? What do the Real Pigeons adapt to in the book?
- What kinds of animals are slimy? What else is slimy?
- Why were the rats sliming things? What did they want?
- Why does Tumbler want to be a shadow?
- What are the pigeons trying to hide from?
- How does a parlour pigeon get around? Why? What are some of the things a parlour pigeon is good at?
- Who is Frillback's best friend?
- What clues are provided in the poem about Paradise Ledge?
- Is Megabat really an evildoer? Why/why not?
- Why do the other parlour pigeons roll away from Roller? What do they want him to change about his behaviour?
- What does a human, a pony and a dog have in common?
- Why do people call pigeons 'rats of the sky'?
- What are the three possible things that might have happened to Frillback in *Rats of the Sky*?
- What's special about the human's mirror? What illusion does it create?

ILLUSTRATION STYLE

It's all in the details! If you zoom into the illustrations in the book you'll see many hidden details relevant to the story – hiding spots! Clues! Jokes! Sometimes, if these details are really significant, the illustrations will zoom in for you, or point out particular details with a handy label.

What are some of the details that the illustrations focus on in either of these ways in the book? Why is it important that you notice them?

Draw a picture of your school or classroom, and 'zoom in' using a close-up image or a label (or both) to focus the readers attention on particular details. What kind of story do these details tell?

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES



- What are some of the challenges of fame? How do you think you'd deal with being famous? Write a day in the life of a celebrity pigeon – you might want to use a real celebrity as inspiration!
- Make your own slime – you can find some easy recipes here (<https://www.homesciencetools.com/article/how-to-make-slime/>) Try to recreate some of the slime scenarios (under supervision) from the book and document your findings.
- Every pigeon in the city has heard of Paradise Ledge – but none of them can find it! Draw a picture of what you imagine paradise ledge will look like. What makes it so special? Where is it?
- Imagine you adopted a pet pigeon and it turned out to be a rat. What would you do! Write a short story about an adventure that you could have with your pet rat.

RELATED READING

Real Pigeons (series)

By Andrew McDonald and Ben Wood

Cross Bones (Series)

By Jack Hensliet and Chris Kennett

Pet Monster (series)

By Lili Wilkinson and Dustin Spence

Barkly Mansion (series)

By Melissa Keil and Adele K Thomas

