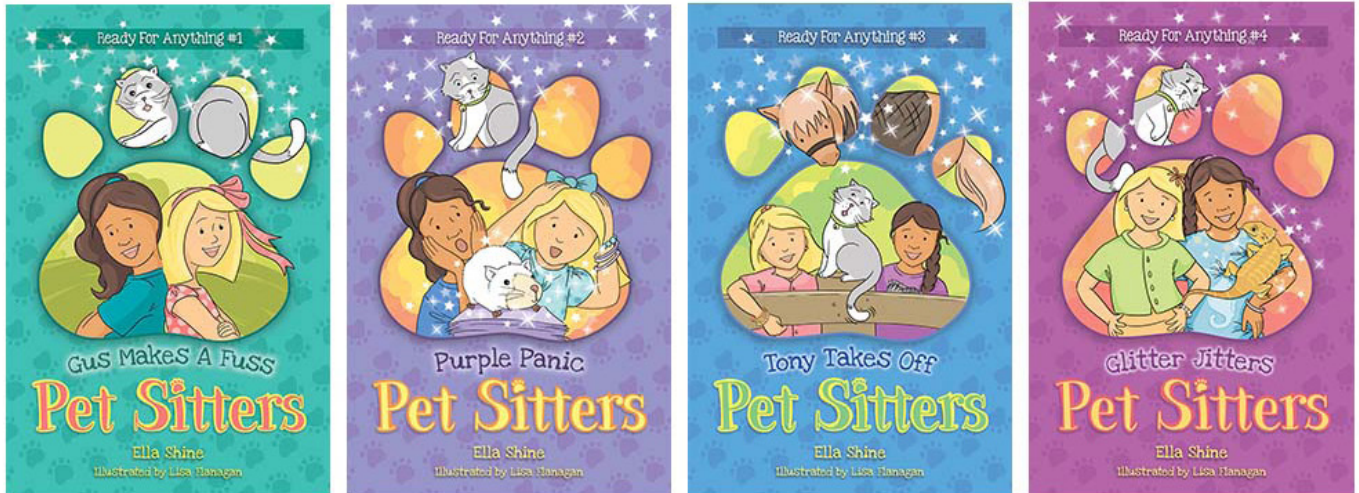


Teacher's Notes

Pet Sitters: Ready For Anything



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Pet Sitters: Ready For Anything is a series of four chapter books for readers aged 6-10. The books can be read as a set, or as stand alone novels. They are written by Ella Shine, illustrated by Lisa Flanagan and published by Puddle Dog Press. The Pet Sitters books are also available as audiobooks which can be used in guided reading. Pet Sitters audiobooks were made possible through a NSW Government, Create NSW grant.



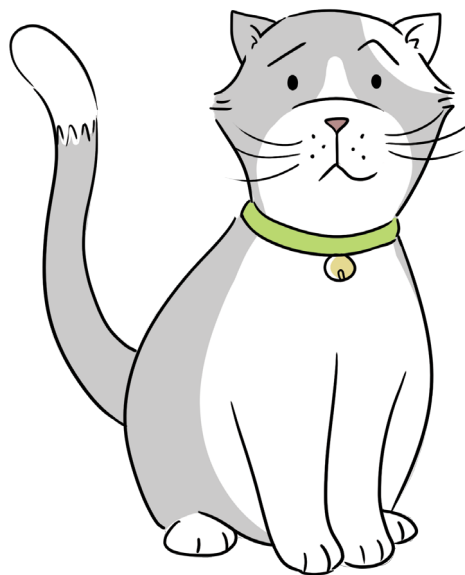
Series Summary:

Best friends Cassie and Lina would love to own their own pet, but unfortunately neither girl is allowed one.

When they are given the opportunity to pet sit a neighbour's cat, they think their dreams are coming true.

There's only one problem: Gus the cat isn't a normal cat. He's a talking cat and whatever he does, he seems to cause chaos. The new Barefoot Springs pet sitters might think they're ready for anything, but are they ready for Gus?!

Pet Sitters is a series of fun, fast paced chapter books for 6-9 year olds. Although designed as a series, the books can be read as stand-alone novels.



Deliberately created with literacy teaching in mind, the books are available in multiple formats including ebooks, audiobooks and print to support reluctant readers and those with visual difficulties.



Series themes:

Friendship, responsibility, risk-taking, problem solving, family and community, and unconditional love.

About the Author:

Ella Shine is the pen name for the Pet Sitters author team made up of Penny Reeve and Cecily Paterson.

Having both raised young readers and known how quickly 6-9 year-olds churn through books, Penny and Cecily were keen to write a fun series that would not only encourage children's love of reading but strengthen their vocabulary at the same time. They also knew they wanted to write books that adults would enjoy listening to, or reading aloud as well.

Brainstorming in Cecily's dining room one day, they came up with the characters of Cassie and Lina. Gus the talking cat soon followed. After that, it was a dashing of pets, a sprinkling of magic, a whole lot of chaos and the Pet Sitters books were born. Planned, written and edited collaboratively this series has fun at its centre. While both writers have extensive experience writing for children and young people, the Pet Sitters series is their first collaboration.



Penny Reeve is the author of more than 20 books for children and young adults, and also writes as Penny Jaye. Her

most recent work includes the picture book, *The Other Brother*, and the CALEB Award winning YA novel, *Out of the Cages*.

Cecily Paterson is the author of eight middle fiction and young YA novels for young teen girls



including *Lola in the Middle*. Two of her novels are on the NSW Premier's Reading Challenge list.

About the Illustrator:

Illustrator and cover designer, Lisa Flanagan, has illustrated over a dozen books for children of all ages.

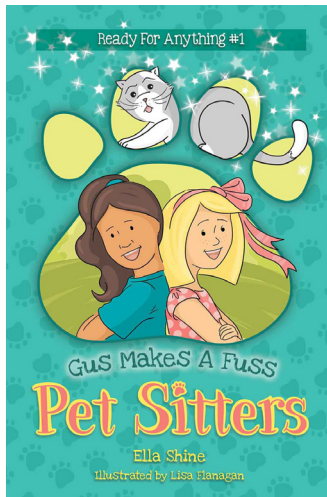


Lisa's preferred medium is freehand digital illustration. For the Pet Sitters books she has worked blackline illustrations for the internal pages and full colour covers.

Teacher Notes *Pet Sitters: Ready For Anything*

Books in the Series:

Book #1 – Gus Makes a Fuss



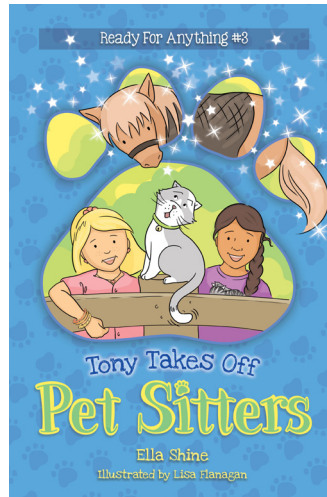
Best friends Cassie and Lina would love to take a pet to the Pet Parade but it's not possible... until they're asked to pet sit Gus the cat next door. The girls might be 'ready for anything' but Gus isn't quite the cat they were expecting.

Book #3 – Tony Takes Off



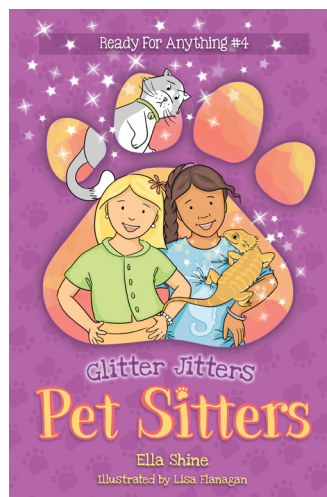
'No chaos! And no emergencies!' says Lina's mum when Lina and Cassie get to pet sit Tony the miniature pony. But Gus gets bored... and the girls soon discover there's more to Tony than anyone could ever imagine.

Book #2 – Purple Panic



Princess Gina's owner is very fussy but Cassie and Lina think they'll be able to care for her guinea pig just fine... until Gus runs off with the pet sitting instructions and Princess Gina can't even be seen!

Book #4 – Glitter Jitters



Cassie and Lina think Bella the bearded dragon is beautiful. Gus disagrees and he's about to prove it... until Bella has some seriously sparkly allergies. Now everyone's got the jitters, especially Gus!

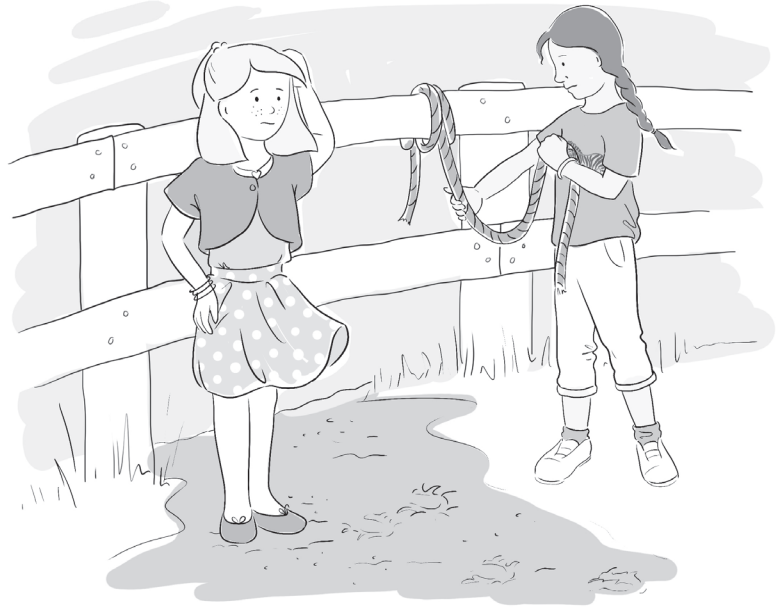
Questions for reading:

Before you read:

- Look at the illustrations on the front and back covers:
- What do you think this book/series is about?
- What clues are there about what type of story this might be?
- Does the blurb give you any additional clues about the story?
- What questions does the blurb raise?

During the reading:

- Who is your favourite character so far? Why do you like them?
- What do Cassie and Lina want to do in this story?
- What does Gus do that causes a problem?



After the reading:

- How does Gus save the day in the end?
- Does the story resolve the way you expected?
- What questions do you have at the end of the story?
- What do you think might happen next?

Teacher Notes *Pet Sitters: Ready For Anything*

Learning Activities:

English:

1) Research for non-fiction writing

Cassie and Lina know that following instructions is very important when you are caring for animals. Choose a pet to research and make an instructions sheet about how to care for them properly. Include answers to the following questions:

- What does the pet need for food and water?
- Where does the pet sleep?
- What type of exercise does it need?
- What type of cage/area does this pet need?
- Any other instructions?

2) Creative writing

Imagine you were pet sitting with Cassie and Lina. Write a short story about the pet you cared for. What is the pet's magical feature? Does Gus help or create chaos? What happens in the end?

(Feel free to use our 'Story Helps' download on the Puddle Dog Press website at www.puddledogpress.com/activities)



3) Write a review

Encourage students to write a review of their favourite Pet Sitters story. Include details such as a brief summary of the story, your reaction to the story, who you think the book would suit best and why you would/would not recommend it to others. Or use the template included below.

Teacher Notes *Pet Sitters: Ready For Anything*

English continued

4) *Write to the author*

Write a letter to the author or illustrator. (Contact Ella Shine via the Puddle Dog Press website at www.puddledogpress.com)

5) *Poetry*

Write a poem about your favourite pet or animal. It can be an acrostic, haiku or a free verse poem.

Math and map work:

The Pet Sitters books have a map of Barefoot springs at the start of each book. You can download the map at www.puddledogpress.com/activities or use the Grid Map attached to these notes.

1) *Using the Grid map coordinates*, get children to practice reading and giving directions to their peers.

2) *Using the Plain map* (available from the website) ask students to plan a journey from one location to another. Have them write a clear list of directions and test those instructions on their peers. Encourage use of directional language such as right, left, go straight, go around, go between etc.

3) *Discuss the various buildings* that make up a town. Ask children to draw a similar map of their town or Main Street, identifying important buildings, parks and locations of interest. Ask them to share their maps with the class and justify why they included the buildings that they did.

Teacher Notes *Pet Sitters: Ready For Anything*

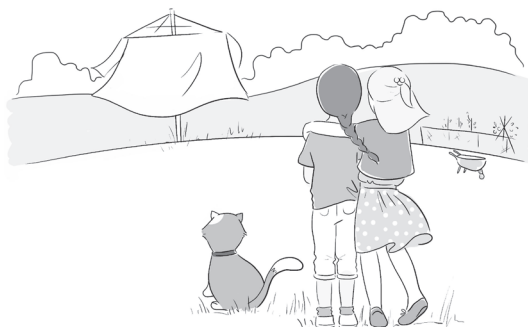
PDHPE / Theme-related activities:

Friendship – Cassie and Lina are best friends and have been ever since they were babies. They become friends with Gus after only knowing him a short time.

1) Have a class discussion about what it takes to be a good friend.

2) Make mind maps about the qualities of good friendships.

3) Use the Pet Sitters stories as springboards to consider topics such as: kindness, inclusion, sharing adventures, encouraging each other, conflict resolution, supporting each other in hard times etc.



Family

Cassie and Lina have very different families. Cassie lives with her older brother and her dad. Lina lives with her younger brother Timmy, the two babies and her mum and dad. Lina also likes learning Hindi, which she learns from her grandparents.

1) *Every family is different!*

Encourage children to draw their families, including important extended family members or people who are like family even though they may not be related.

2) *What are your interests?*

Encourage children to identify special interests different family members might have (eg. Mum is footy mad and Dad loves making lasagne!)

3) *What do you speak?*

Are there any different languages in children's families? What are they? You may be able to have family members visit the class (whether in person or virtually) to give a short language lesson.

Art:

1) *Dress up Collage*

In *Gus Makes A Fuss*, Cassie and Lina dress Gus the cat up for the Pet Parade. Using collage techniques and a variety of different materials, make a poster of an animal dressed up in a funny costume. Try to use different textures and be as creative as possible.



2) *Diorama*

Make a class diorama of the Barefoot Springs Map. Include the characters and pets featured in the stories.

Drama:

1) *Dramatic reading*

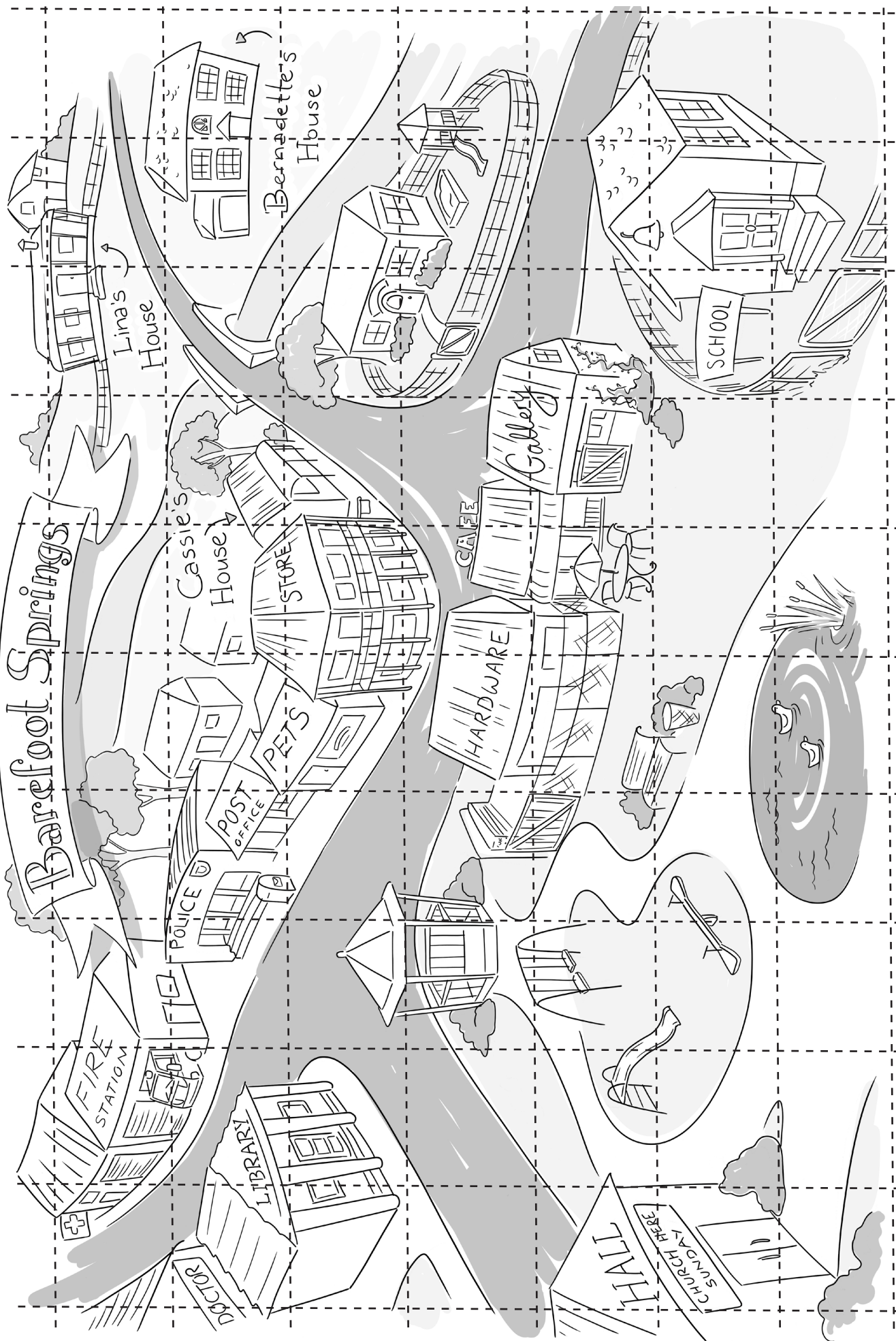
Allocate chapters to small groups to act out or perform a dramatic reading. Encourage students to consider tone of voice and emotion as well as body actions to communicate the action and events of the chapter they are presenting.

Additional Resources:

- More information about the creators of the Pet Sitters series, including some fun facts about the types of pets they had when they were young, can be found at our website
www.puddledogpress.com
- Barefoot Springs Map and colouring pages are available from our website
www.puddledogpress.com/activities
- Download and print our creative writing story plan available on the website at *www.puddledogpress.com/activities*
- The unabridged audiobook of Book #1 *Gus Makes A Fuss* is free when you subscribe to the Pet Sitters mailing list, and comes with a downloadable PDF of the full story.
- Barefoot Springs Math Grid Map.

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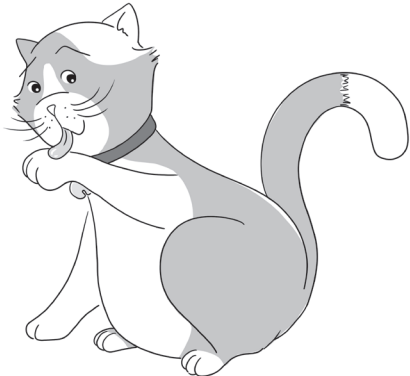
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A B C D E F G H I J

Write a Book Review



Name:

Book:

Author:

Star rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Story summary:

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My favourite part was:

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I'd recommend this book for... ..

because... ..

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