



EK BOOKS TEACHER NOTES & RESOURCES

Title: Go Away, Worry Monster!

Author: Brooke Graham

Illustrator: Robin Tatlow-Lord

Publisher: EK Books

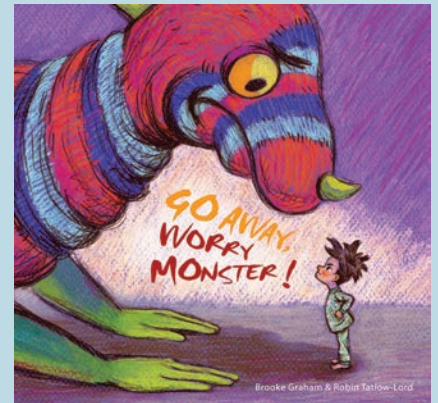
Price: ANZ \$24.99 | USA \$18.99 | CA \$24.99 | UK £10.99

ISBN: 9781925820393

Publication date: Sept 2020

Audience age: 4 - 9

Key Curriculum Areas: English, The Arts, Health and Physical Education, Wellbeing



SYNOPSIS:

Worry Monster loves 'helping' Archie worry, especially on the night before he starts at a new school. Archie feels so anxious that his head hurts, his tummy flutters and his heart pounds. He soon realizes that the only way to feel better is to make Worry Monster go away. He does his belly breaths and challenges his inner fears by facing facts, and Worry Monster is forced to leave Archie alone!

Go Away, Worry Monster! gives children useful strategies to cope with their anxieties and stress, showing them how to make their own Worry Monsters leave, even in highly stressful times.

THEMES:

Anxiety and worry. Facing fears. Coping with stress. Problem solving. Starting school/new school

SELLING POINTS:

- Provides evidence-based anxiety-reducing techniques.
- Allows children to engage and empathise with the characters.
- A valuable wellbeing resource for teachers, parents, counsellors and psychologists.
- Linked to the Australian curriculum for English, Health/Wellbeing and The Arts.
- Stunning and emotive illustrations assist children to develop visual literacy.

WRITING STYLE:

Go Away, Worry Monster! is child-friendly with simple yet emotive vocabulary, allowing children to engage and empathise with Archie. It is written in third person, past tense.

AUTHOR MOTIVATION:

I wanted to write a story that incorporates evidence-based anxiety-reducing techniques and increases awareness of children's mental health. I hope this story will be an invaluable, life-changing resource for young children and their parents.

AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND:

Brooke Graham, Author

Brooke Graham is a children's author, primary school teacher and mother. She enjoys writing emotive stories that help children cope with life's ups and downs. Brooke is a member of The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) and Write Links, a Brisbane based writers' group. She is the coordinator for the Write Links picture book critique group.

Brooke works part-time in a small school and teaches HASS, Health and Wellbeing, to Prep-Year 6. In her spare time Brooke enjoys reading, bike riding, bush walking and hanging out with family and friends.

Robin Tatlow-Lord, Illustrator

Robin Tatlow-Lord is an illustrator, animator, writer and cartoonist who lives in Adelaide. She loves to draw people and animals, bringing character and emotion into her pictures with a wide range of materials including coloured pencils, watercolour, collage and digital techniques. When she's not drawing, you can find Robin riding her bike, babysitting her wonderful niece, indulging her cat's relentless need for neck scratches, or playing roller derby. Robin also works at an art gallery, organising events for children. She is a voracious reader of picture books, middle grade fiction and graphic novels. *Go Away, Worry Monster!* is Robin's first book.

INTERVIEW:

AUTHOR

What is the inspiration for this story?

I was inspired to write this story after my daughter started to experience anxiety following a family tragedy. Through counselling she learned useful anxiety-reducing techniques, which are featured in *Go Away, Worry Monster!*

What was the most rewarding part of this project?

Getting the contract with EK Books and also seeing the completed illustrations for the first time were both very exciting times. Knowing this story will benefit many children who worry or have anxiety is incredibly rewarding.

What was the most challenging part of this project?

Waiting two years from signing the contract to holding the book in my hands!

ILLUSTRATOR

What media do you use to create your illustrations? Briefly describe your process.

I really wanted the book to have a feeling of night time, while still being bright and colourful. After some experimenting, I decided to create the illustrations using coloured pencils on dark blue paper. Drawing on dark paper is sort of the opposite process to drawing on plain white paper: everything starts out dark, and you have to build up the light areas with lots of pencil. It's a lot of fun seeing figures and forms emerge from the deep blue!

What was the most rewarding part of this project?

Putting the finishing touches on the final illustrations, and looking at all of the finished pages together. A few days after I had finished, my parents visited my studio and I showed them the illustrations, reading Brooke's words as I revealed each page. That was quite magical and made me feel very proud.

What was the most challenging part of this project?

I found it incredibly challenging to design Worry Monster! It was clear to me that he shouldn't actually be scary. But when I created the first character sketches for the book, Worry Monster was a sad-looking beast with a pig snout and long spindly arms. The publishers were happy with the designs - but I wasn't! I didn't think he looked unique enough, and I just wasn't getting the right feeling from him. I spent hours and hours looking at animal books and inventing different kinds of monsters: a turtle with a lion's mane, a sort of chicken llama, an enormous rhino / bunny thing. Nothing felt right... until the sock. That sock was the key that unlocked Worry Monster!



TEACHER ACTIVITIES/NOTES:

Activities are linked to the Australian Curriculum (ACARA) but are relevant to other countries.

ENGLISH

OUTCOMES:

- Visual language – Identify visual representations of characters' actions, reactions, speech and thought processes in narratives, and consider how these images add to or contradict or multiply the meaning of accompanying words (ACELA1469).
- Evaluative language – Explore different ways of expressing emotions, including verbal, visual, body language and facial expressions (ACELA1787).
- Features of literary texts – Discuss the characters and settings of different texts and explore how language is used to present these features in different ways (ACELA1591).
- Features of literary texts – Discuss features of plot, character and setting in different types of literature and explore some features of characters in different texts (ACELT1584).
- Personal responses to the ideas, characters and viewpoints in texts – Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts and share personal responses to these texts, making connections with students' own experiences (ACELT1582).
- Comprehension strategies – Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning about key events, ideas and information in texts that they listen to, view and read by drawing on growing knowledge of context, text structures and language features (ACELY1660).

Before Reading

- Making predictions:
 - Look at the front cover. What do you think the story is about?
 - Who do you think this creature is?
 - Why do you think he is bigger than the boy?
 - What is a worry?
 - Who do you think the story is about?
 - Read the blurb on the back cover to see if predictions were accurate.

During the Story

- Ask questions that focus on Archie and Worry Monster's emotions – refer to text and illustrations.

After Reading

Ask the following literal and inferential questions to support and extend understanding of the story:

- Who were all the characters in the story?
- Why are Toby, Brown Teddy and Owl important to Archie?
- Where does the story take place (setting)?
- What was Archie worried about?
- How do the words in the story show Archie was worried? Guide students to focus on physical actions/body clues (head throbbed, heart pounded, tummy fluttered).
- How do the illustrations show Archie was worried? Guide students to focus on body language and facial expressions.
- Why didn't Archie want to ask his parents for help?
- What did Archie do to make Worry Monster leave? (Took deep breaths, thought of the facts, ignored Worry Monster/his worries)
- Have you been worried before?
- How did you know you were worried?
- Why do you think the endpapers are a picture of socks? (If necessary, go back to beginning of story and point out there is only one sock beside Archie's bed).
- Why do you think the illustrator has drawn scribble around Worry Monster's body? (Hint: to show Worry Monster isn't real and is imagined by Archie. Worry Monster is Archie's anxiety).
- Do you think Worry Monster is real? (Worry Monster is imagined by a part of Archie's brain called the amygdala (uh-mig-duh-luh). Refer to Background Information at the end of the Teacher Notes for more information on the amygdala, worrying and anxiety.
- Create a character profile for Archie and Worry Monster.
- Describe the events that occur during the orientation, complication and resolution.
- Write about your favourite part of the story. Why is that your favourite?

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

(PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTH) AND WELLBEING

OUTCOMES:

- Practise strategies they can use when they feel uncomfortable, unsafe or need help with a task, problem or situation (ACPPS017).
- Explore strategies to manage physical, social and emotional change (ACPPS034).
- Identify and describe emotional responses people may experience in different situations (ACPPS005).
- Identify actions that promote health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS006).



TEACHER NOTES: Go Away, Worry Monster!

- Practise belly breathing. Have children lie on the floor on their backs and place their hands on their belly. Guide students to take a deep, slow breath into their belly so it fills up like a balloon. Students should feel their tummy expand with their hands. Then tell them to slowly breath out as though they are letting the air out of the balloon. Guide students to do five belly breaths. Practise this calming tool regularly so children are able to use this strategy when their amygdala fires (i.e. they become anxious, scared or angry). See Background Information for more information on the amygdala (part of the brain responsible for processing emotions).
- As a class, brainstorm things children might worry about, e.g. starting a new school, moving, parents fighting, tests, new situations.
- As a class, brainstorm body clues that someone might be worried, e.g. headache, sweaty, tummy ache, racing heart, dizzy, nauseous etc.



THE ARTS

OUTCOMES:

- Drama – Explore role and dramatic action in dramatic play, improvisation and process drama (ACADRM027).
- Drama – Use voice, facial expression, movement and space to imagine and establish role and situation (ACADRM028).
- Visual Arts – Create and display artworks to communicate ideas to an audience (ACAVAM108).

ACTIVITIES:

Drama

- In pairs, take turns pretending to be Archie and Worry Monster and act out the part of the story when Archie firmly tells Worry Monsters to leave and then ignores him.
- In pairs, role play ignoring your worries. In this activity, one child is the ‘worry monster’ and the other is the ‘worried child’. The ‘worried child’ should choose what they are worried about. Focus on the use of voice, facial expression, movement and space to establish role in the interaction. Swap roles.

Visual Arts

- Naming your anxiety/worry is a good way to separate yourself from it. Brainstorm a list of names, e.g. Worry Monster, Drama Queen, Worry Bully. Choose a name for the worry part of your brain and label and draw it. Use crayons, colours or paints to complete the artwork.

Craft Activities:

- Worry Jar – A worry jar is a place where children can tuck their worries away. Worries might include school work, moving, friendship problems, snakes or spiders, or trying new things. Make a Worry Jar/Worry Box using an old jar, container or box. Decorate. Assist with writing the worries on a piece of paper and putting them in the jar/box. Revisit the Worry Jar/Worry Box from time to time and remove the worries once they no longer cause concern.
- Worry Monster sock puppet – Make a sock puppet using old socks, buttons, scrap fabric, eyes and other craft supplies.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Anxiety and worry

It is normal for children (and adults) to feel worried or anxious from time to time. When anxious feelings don't go away, happen without any particular reason, or make it hard to cope with daily life, it may be the sign of an anxiety condition (Beyondblue).

Circumstances such as: stressful events, life changes, transitions, difficult experiences and new or unfamiliar situations can induce anxiety in children. There are also a range of common developmental fears and anxieties that children experience, for example, primary age children often experience fear of monsters and school anxiety.

Current evidence-based anxiety-reducing techniques

Encouraging children to name their anxiety is a current strategy used by psychologists to assist children in separating themselves from their anxiety. Worry Monster is imagined by Archie and is actually his anxiety! Other names for anxiety might be Drama Queen (this is what my daughter named her anxiety), Worry Bully, or any other preferred name.

Acknowledging body clues can assist children in recognising that they are feeling worried or anxious. In *Go Away, Worry Monster!* Archie's head throbbed, his tummy fluttered and his heart pounded. There are many other body clues (physical symptoms) of anxiety, including: lack of appetite, trembling, fast/shallow breaths, feeling dizzy, sweating or shivering, feeling restless and sleep disturbance.

The anxiety-reducing techniques Archies used to make Worry Monster leave are current-evidence based strategies.

The first technique Archie used was to take deep breaths. This is often called belly breathing. This helps the amygdala (uh-mig-duh-luh), which is responsible for processing strong emotions (such as fear, worry, sadness and also happiness) to reset.

Another strategy Archie used was to think about the facts. Finding the evidence that the worry isn't really something to be worried about helps children to realise their fear is not rational. A common fear for children is monsters hiding under the bed. Asking Mum or Dad to shine a torch under the bed and to see that there is no monster is the factual evidence that proves they don't need to worry.

Archie's final strategy was to ignore the worry/anxiety. He did this by reading his book. There are many other activities children can do to distract themselves. The activity can be quiet and calming such as drawing or colouring in. Alternatively, they might choose physical exercise such as bouncing on the trampoline, going for a walk or riding a bike.

Getting further help

If a child is experiencing ongoing anxiety it is recommended their parents speak with their GP. If needed, the GP may organise a Mental Health Care Plan, which will provide financial assistance to access mental health professionals through the Medicare Benefits Schedule.



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Resources for teachers, parents and carers:

- *What to Do When You Worry Too Much: A Kids Guide to Overcoming Anxiety* (2006), by Dawn Huebner, illustrated by Bonnie Matthews.
- *Anxious Kids: How children can turn their anxiety into resilience* (2019), by Michael Grose & Dr Jodi Richardson.
- *Helping Your Anxious Child: A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents, Second Edition* (2008), by R. Rapee, A. Wignall, S. Spence, V Cobham & H. Lyneham.
- *Smiling Mind App* – a free mindfulness meditation app.
- *Pause Program*, written by Wendy Fox for Education Queensland.
- <https://www.youthbeyondblue.com/>



TEACHER NOTES: Go Away, Worry Monster!

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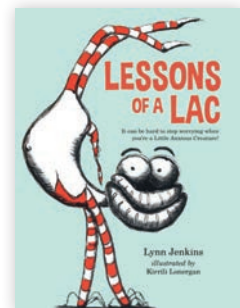
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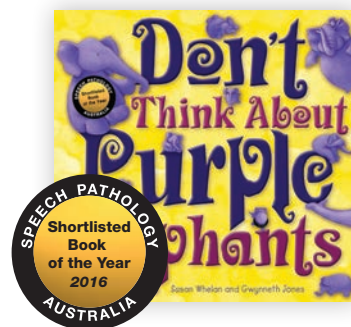


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