

Publication Date: October 2020
Audience: Children aged 3–8

Type of Text
Picture book

Key Curriculum Areas
English
Health
Visual Art

Themes
Family and Relationships
Pets



Piper Picks the Perfect Pet

Author: Caroline Tuohey
Illustrator: Nicky Johnston

Publisher: Ford St Publishing
Price: \$24.95 (hc) \$16.95 (pb)
ISBN: 9781925804584 (hardcover)
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Teacher Notes prepared by
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Back Blurb

My dad says I can choose a pet, but I'm not sure which pet to get.

A dog, a cat, a fish, a rat?

How can Piper pick the perfect pet when there are so many appealing possibilities?

Benefits of the Book

- A lovely story for 3 to 8-year-olds about relationships with animals.
- 20 February is National Love Your Pet Day – arrange a visitor, guest speaker, author or illustrator for story time on that special day.
- Can be linked to the curriculum areas of Health, Visual art, Literacy

Piper Picks the Perfect Pet – Caroline Tuohey & Nicky Johnston (Ford St Publishing)

- Classroom use:



Family – relationships with animals/pets

Visual art – use of colour, materials uses, drawing style

Literacy – vocabulary, reading

Maths – recording and graphing

Media – filmmaking

AUTHOR BACKGROUND

Caroline Tuohey is a children's writer whose main interest is picture books. She has also been published in children's literary magazines, anthologies and poetry sites online. This is her sixth picture book. Her other interest is bush poetry which she writes and performs. She enjoys holding story-time sessions at libraries, schools and preschools and conducts workshops for both school students and adults.

ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND

Nicky Johnston is a primary teacher and art teacher whose love of visual storytelling has helped her dream to be a children's book author and illustrator come true. Her style is often referred to as whimsical, emotive, simple yet deep. She loves visiting schools and passing on her passion for creative writing and illustrating.

ILLUSTRATION STYLE

Nicky has used both watercolour and pencils to create the illustrations for *Piper Picks the Perfect Pet*. The colour palette chosen is bright and fun to match the rhythm and tone of the text, but also soft to express the feelings of the characters and their pets.



TEACHING NOTES

Classroom Ideas:

Activity sheets can be used for activities for small groups or the whole class. Suggested ideas below can also be adapted to suit all year levels.

LITERACY

- Looking at the cover, what do you think the story is about?
- After reading the blurb, predict what the story might be about.
- Write a book review for *Piper Picks the Perfect Pet* – **Activity Sheet 1**
- Discuss the different pets people have. What animals can be pets as well as doing other important jobs for humans? Research an animal that is a particular help to people?
- Write a short description to read to the class about why you love your pet. You can include things such as special or funny things they do, how they make you feel, and why they are great to have around.
- Match the Pets to the labels – **Activity Sheet 2.**
Think of some synonyms for the pets' labels or write your own labels for the different pets.
- Think up your own alphabet of animals and illustrate your three favourite ones.
- Look at all the words that rhyme and write them in pairs.
- Now think of some other rhymes for the three animals you've chosen to illustrate. Then see if you can write two rhyming lines about each animal.
For example,
I love my new pet zebra,
I think I'll call her Debra
- Caroline uses unusual words to describe some pets, such as puddly and jumpy-twirly. Think of some unusual words to describe your favourite pet.

MATHS

- Create a graph recording the variety of pets belonging to your class. Discuss the results.
- Have the class vote for the pet each would choose from the book then graph the class results (don't forget to have your teacher vote too!). Discuss the results.

HEALTH

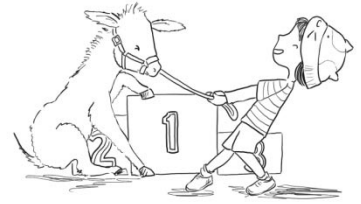
- Discuss the benefits of having a pet, what the responsibilities are, what pets need to live a wonderful life. What pets are you allowed and not allowed to keep?
- Pet safety – discuss things we need to know about pet safety and human safety for the pets belonging to your classmates.

VISUAL ARTS

- Discuss the use of colours in the book, are they bright or dull, do they suit the text? What is the colour pattern on Piper's top? Create your own colour pattern using a colour-in sheet – **Activity Sheets 4 and 5**
- Look at the details in the illustrations. What parts of the story you can see are not mentioned in the words? Are there any words in the story that are not shown in the illustrations?
- What art materials do you think Nicky (illustrator) has used to create the pictures? Paint, pencil, ink, computer?
- Bring a photo of your pet (or one you'd like to have) and have a guessing competition as to which pet belongs to which student. Different classes can guess each other's photos. Or have teachers bring in photos of their pets and students can guess which one belongs to which teacher.
- Make a diorama fish tank. What types of animals could you have in there?
- Discuss and draw a pet that you'd love to own. What would they need to live? (Food, water, environment, exercise, care, toys ...)
- Can you spot the missing details in one of Nicky's illustrations? – **Activity Sheet 3.**

MUSIC

- Click or clap to the rhythm of the text.
- Can you make it into a song?
- Use tempo and percussion sounds to represent the sounds different animals would make when moving (clip clop for a horse, etc.)



MEDIA

- Film your pet at home and make a class movie celebrating your pets. Add pet-themed music to it or make and add your own percussion sounds.

Activity Sheet 1 – Book Review

Activity Sheet 2 – Match the Pets

Activity Sheet 3 – Spot the Difference

Activity Sheet 4 – Colour-in Activity

Activity Sheet 5 – Colour-in Activity

