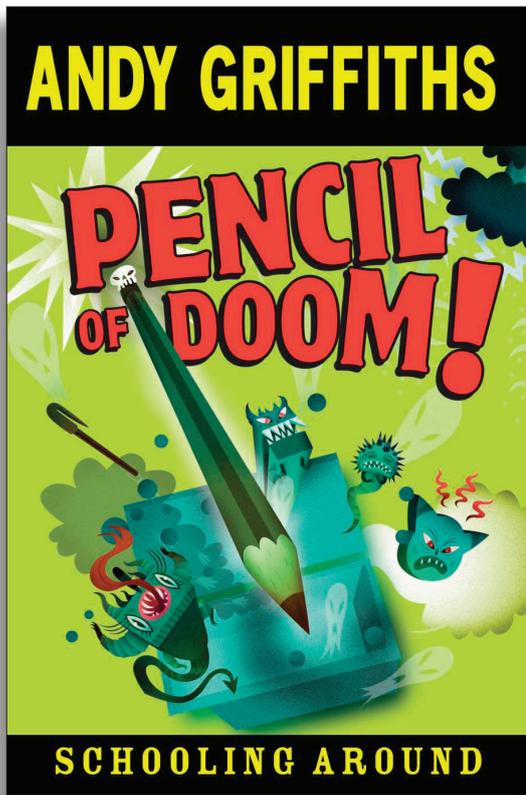


The Pencil of Doom

Andy Griffiths

Teachers' Notes



Introduction

Andy Griffiths is an Australian children's book author and comedy writer. He is most famous for his Just! series and his books have sold more than 3 million copies worldwide.

The Pencil of Doom is the second book in Andy's Schooling Around series. It follows the exciting adventures of Mr Brainfright's class at Northwest Southeast Central School.

Mr Brainfright teaches grade five and in his class is a student called Henry McThrottle, who likes telling stories. This story is about an evil pencil, a runaway lion, an avalanche and, once again, falling out of windows.





Curriculum Links

English: Reading, Writing

Creative and Performing Arts: Drama, Drawing

Science and Technology: Living Things

Learning Outcomes

Students will have the opportunity to:

- read a text independently and in groups
- respond to themes and issues in a text
- draw on a range of skills and strategies to read and comprehend a text
- analyse techniques used by an author to create certain effects and use language creatively
- devise, act and rehearse drama for performance to an audience.

Before you read

Look at the name of the author. Talk with classmates about other book titles by Andy Griffiths you have read before. Make the list as long as you can and share a bit about your favourite book.

Look at the title and the picture on the front cover of the novel. Work in pairs and write a short paragraph suggesting what the story may be about. Read out your group's ideas to the rest of the class.

Read the book

Read *The Pencil of Doom* as directed by your teacher in one of the following ways:

- as a whole class
- in small reading groups
- individually

Stop every now and then to re-evaluate where you think the story may be heading. With a friend, discuss your ideas as well as the parts of the story you like and why.



After You Read

Use the following questions to promote discussion of the book. Discuss these questions as a class or write the answers down.

1. What did Mr Brainright teach instead of Maths on Monday morning?
2. Where did Henry get his pencil?
3. What made Henry think there was something wrong with his pencil?
4. How did Henry's pencil help Jack with his cartoon? What happened after Jack drew his cartoon?
5. What happened to Henry when he won the writing competition?
6. What is the name of Henry McThrottle's art teacher? [Mrs Rainbow]
What does her name say about her?
7. What happened when Henry wedged the pencil under Mr Grunt's car?
8. What cartoon did Clive draw after stealing the pencil?
9. What happened when Jenny and Henry put the pencil in the Mighty Boy Garbage Compactor?
10. What was Newton's idea for getting rid of the pencil?
11. What happened in the library?
12. How was the pencil finally destroyed? How would you have destroyed the pencil?

Activities

The Pencil of Doom

Draw and label Henry's 'Pencil of Doom'.

The 'Heimlich' Manoeuvre

At the end of Chapter 4, Henry performs the 'Heimlich' manoeuvre. What is it and how does it work?

Write your own first aid chart showing how to help someone who is choking, using this manoeuvre. Illustrate your instructions with cartoon drawings.

Yes Means No and No Means Yes

Re-read Chapter 6 where the kids play the Yes Means No and No Means Yes game. Break into small groups and try to talk or play together using these rules. Then write down what happened.



Interview the author

Cartoon Capers

Jack liked to draw 'Fred and Clive' cartoons when the Durkin brothers annoyed him.

Draw your own cartoon of something fun you would like to see happen to your friends. Use the example on p23 to draw eight labelled cartoon frames.

Pencil List

Work with a partner and list some of the crazy or unusual things Henry's pencil did.

Use your imagination to write about or draw something you would like the magic pencil to give or do to you.

Magic Time

Sketch Mr Brainfright dressed as a magician cutting someone in half. Make a list with descriptions of or instructions for some magic tricks you know. Work with a partner and research the famous Houdini. Give a brief summary of his life and his magic, and any other interesting facts about Houdini.

What Scares You?

Newton has a list of the top ten things he is scared of (p62). Make up your own list of the top ten things that scare you.

The Lion and the Mouse

An escaped lion arrives in Mr Brainfright's classroom. Use books or the internet to look up the fable of the Lion and the Mouse. Read it as a class then discuss its meaning. Work with a friend to make up your own fable that teaches others a lesson.



Helpful Guide

In Chapter 30 Mr Brainfright made up a handy guide for protecting yourself against lions. Re-read this chapter then choose a different type of animal. Create your own humorous, crazy guide to protecting your class against your animal should it decide to visit your classroom.

Nightmarish!

Write about a nightmare you have had. Use descriptive language to include who was there, where you were, what happened and how you felt when you woke up.

Drama Time

In small groups of 4-6, select a part of the story you like the best. Rehearse this section of the book with your group and perform it for the class. Bring in any costumes or props you may need.

The Monkey's Paw

Summarise Mr Brainfright's story about the monkey's paw. Write down or share with the class what you think Mr Brainfright was trying to teach the class.

Bandaid Boy

Draw Jack with bandaids all over his head and face.

Abracadabra

In Chapter 66 Mr Brainfright uses his magic wand to pull a rabbit out of a magic hat. He uses the word Abracadabra. Make as many words as you can from the letters of the word Abracadabra. Have a class competition to see who can find the most words.

A Class Pet

The class is allowed to keep the rabbit as a pet. Make a chart with instructions on how to look after a class rabbit as well as a roster for feeding and caring for a rabbit.