
Teachers' Notes



AMANDA COMMANDER: THE PINKY PROMISE

Coral Vass

ISBN: 9781761110788

Recommended retail: \$12.99

Reading level: 6 to 8

BOOK SUMMARY

When Amanda and her friends make a pinky-promise to run together in the Cross-Country race at school, Amanda needs to make a choice. Should she keep her promise or win the race.

It's OPERATION CROSS COUNTRY!

Even though she is competitive, Amanda learns it is more important to show kindness to others than win.

THEMES

Family and friendship, Problem solving, Creativity, art and craft, Kindness and helping others, Forgiveness

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Coral Vass is an award-winning Australian children's author. She has always loved telling stories and has been writing books for over ten years.

Her awards include the 2018 Speech Pathology Awards for Best Book for Language and Literacy Development Indigenous Children, the 2019 CBCA Book of the Year Eve Pownall Award and the 2021 Caleb Picture Book of the Year Award. Coral has also been shortlisted for the 2020 REAL Awards.

Coral loves to visit schools, where she runs writing workshops and shares the power of story. She is an ambassador for Reading Out of Poverty and is passionate about giving all children an equal opportunity to read.

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Light the Dark Pty Ltd, Trading as Wombat Books
Wombat Books, PO Box 302, Chinchilla, Queensland 4413

ABN: 30 137 345 941
admin@wombathriza.com.au

**Coral Vass is available for author talks and workshops.
Contact Wombat Books for more information.**

Amanda Commander Teachers' Notes can be used in schools (independent learning, small groups, and whole classes); at home with caregivers; and as part of mental health support programs facilitated by counsellors, psychologists, children's charities, etc.



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REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

The Amanda Commander is a series promoting kindness, loyalty and friendship. It models positive friendships and behaviour. They provide examples of practical and creative problem solving and helping others. And the series celebrates creativity, art and craft.

The series is great for beginner readers and aims to help children understand concepts that can otherwise seem complex. Amanda Commander wishes to instil the values of inclusion, compassion and empathy in children. and celebrates diversity and multiculturalism. It also wants to encourage outdoor activities and fun; canoeing, surfing, kayaking, boating. The smaller chapters will boost confidence in young readers.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Curriculum Areas and Key Learning Outcomes.

YEAR ONE

English, Humanities and Social Science

ACELA1444	ACELA1451	ACELT1582	ACELY1656
ACELA1787	ACELA1452	ACELT1584	ACELY1788
ACELA1447	ACELA1458	ACELT1586	ACELY1660
ACELA1449	ACELT1581	ACELT1832	ACELA1454
ACHASSI022			

YEAR TWO

English, Humanities and Social Science

ACELA1461	ACELA1463	ACELT1833	ACELA1454
ACELA1462	ACELT1591	ACELY1665	
ACHASSI038			

YEAR THREE

English, Humanities and Social Science

ACELT1594	ACELY1676	ACELA1488	ACELY1675
ACELT1596			
ACHASSK093	ACHASSI059	ACHASSK070	ACHASSI080
ACHASSI060	ACHASSI056		

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TEACHING POINTS AND ACTIVITIES

This book may be used in whole class, small group or independent learning activities in schools.

Please note, the following suggestions and activities are suited to a variety of year levels spanning Foundation to Year 6 primary aged children. Some activities may be applicable to early secondary school students, as well.

KNOWLEDGE AND LITERAL UNDERSTANDING

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Show the cover to the class and ask the students what they think the book might be about.
2. Read the back cover blurb. Does this give them more of an idea of what the book could be about?
3. Ask students if they can recognize the setting of this story from the cover image.

AFTER-READING QUESTIONS

1. Ask students if Amanda or her friends remind them of anyone they know: a friend, a sibling, themselves perhaps.
2. What is their first impression of Amanda?
3. How does Amanda change over the course of the story?
4. Ask students how they perceive Amanda's situation. Does she come through in the end?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GENERAL

- In what ways did Amanda show she valued kindness over winning?
 - How does Rosie feel when Amanda agrees to run with her in the cross-country race? What words can you find to describe her feelings?
 - Vocabulary - Define the following phrases used in Chapter Two.
1. It was D-day!
 2. I wish I could scoop back my words
 3. ...grabbing Rosie by the arm and dragging her into the conversation.
- Recall a time when you had to make a decision between being kind and getting what you wanted. How did you respond to the situation? Looking back, would you have acted differently?
 - What did Amanda learn about herself and her friends when they finished the first cross-country race?
 - Think about the theme of forgiveness. In what ways did Amanda need to forgive Mai and Lucia? In what ways did Amanda need to forgive Eve and Rosie? In what ways did Amanda need to forgive the little girl with red hair?
 - Explain a time you have been forgiven. How did that feel? How does it feel to forgive others? Suggest a reason why it might feel this way.

FAMILY AND FRIENDSHIP

- What did Amanda learn about herself and her friends when they finished the first cross-country race?
- In what ways were Lu and Mai acting like a good friend to Amanda?
- In what ways were Lu and Mai not acting like a good friend to Amanda?
- Have you ever made a 'pinky-promise' and broken your promise? Has a friend ever broken a promise to you? How did you feel when you found out?
- What do you think this quote means? 'Friendship means nobody gets left behind!' How have you tried to see this happen in your own friendship groups?
- In what ways was Amanda rewarded for keeping her promise in the story?

PROBLEM SOLVING

- When Amanda said in Chapter Three: 'I had to make a decision: Should I stay with my best friends, with the Squad, or do I keep my promise to Rosie and stay with her?' what would you have done if you were Amanda?
- Do you think Amanda made the right choice to run with Rosie? Why? Or why not?
- When you saw the red-haired girl fall, what would you have done if you were Amanda?
- How did Amanda make District Finals when she had to wait for Rosie?

CREATIVITY, ARTS AND CRAFT

- How does painting the squad mural help the girls express their feelings?
- What creative thing do you do to express how you feel?
- What colours would you choose to describe these feelings – Anger, Jealousy, Joy, Sadness, Boredom, Nervousness, Scared, Embarrassed.
- Why is it important that a story shows us how people feel?
- Why do you think the squad had a paint-fight in Chapter 10?

KINDNESS AND HELPING OTHERS

- In what ways did Amanda show she valued kindness over winning?
- How does Rosie feel when Amanda agrees to run with her in the cross-country race? What words can you find to describe her feelings?
- Recall a time when you had to make a decision between being kind and getting what you wanted. How did you respond to the situation? Looking back, would you have acted differently?
- Do you think Amanda and her friends should have been awarded for their kindness at the school assembly? Why or why not?
- Have you ever only been kind to someone because you wanted something in return?
- How do you think Amanda would have felt if she didn't stop for the red-haired girl, but instead won the race?

FORGIVENESS

- Think about a time you've had to forgive others. What did you have to forgive them for? What helped you forgive them? How did you feel after forgiving them?
- Think about the theme of forgiveness. In what ways did Amanda need to forgive Mai and Lucia? In what ways did Amanda need to forgive Rosie? In what ways did Amanda need to forgive the red-haired girl?
- How would have things turned out differently if Amanda didn't forgive Lu and Mai?
- How does forgiving someone make us free?

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ACTIVITIES

IDENTIFY FEELINGS WITH COLOURS

Using the colour guide for feelings, think about how you felt on each day this past week and colour in each day accordingly. Why did you feel like this?

Feeling	Colour
Sad	Grey
Angry	Red
Happy	Yellow
Excited	Pink
Calm	Blue
Bored	Green
Nervous	Purple

M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su

SCRAPBOOKING

Using old newspapers or magazines, cut out words that describe what a true friend is like and stick it in a scrap book.

FRIENDSHIP BRACELETS

Using three pieces of different coloured wool, plait them together to make a friendship bracelet to give to your friends. 'A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.'

NEWSPAPER

Pretend you are a newspaper reporter. Write a newspaper article about the District Cross-country event held at the Private School.

MAKE YOUR OWN CHEER

Make up a cheer song for Yellow House at Amanda's school.

DESIGN YOUR OWN COURSE

Think about your school grounds. Design a cross-country course around your school and draw a map of the course.

WRITE A NEW ENDING

Think about how the events in Amanda Commander: The Pinky Promise unfolded. Did you like the ending? How would you like to see it end?

Write an alternate ending to this story.

MAKE YOUR OWN CHOCOLATE CHIP BISCUITS

You can make your own Chocolate Chip Biscuits using [this recipe](#). While you're cooking think about the following questions:

- What are ways that cooking can bring us together?
- How might we be creative with cooking? For example replacing normal chocolate chips with yoghurt chips, raisins, or even pretzels!
- Why does Amanda like to bake?
- What other kinds of things would you like to make?