



Wombat Books
Stories you'll want to share

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.

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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.

Themes

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

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
ACHASSIO22			

Year Two

English, Humanities and Social Science

ACELA1461	ACELA1463	ACELT1833	ACELA1454
ACELA1462	ACELT1591	ACELY1665	
ACHASSIO38			

Year Three

English, Humanities and Social Science

ACELT1594	ACELY1676	ACELA1488	ACELY1675
ACELT1596			
ACHASSK093	ACHASSIO59	ACHASSK070	ACHASSIO80
ACHASSIO60	ACHASSIO56		

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

4. Ask students if Amanda or her friends remind them of anyone they know: a friend, a sibling, themselves perhaps.
5. What is their first impression of Amanda?
6. How does Amanda change over the course of the story?
7. 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 2.

It was D-day!

I wish I could scoop back my words

...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?
- Pretend you are a newspaper reporter. Write a newspaper article about the District Cross-country event held at the Private School.
- 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.
- Write an alternate ending to this story.
- Think about your school grounds. Design a cross-country course around your school and draw a map of the course.
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Discussion Questions

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

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

- 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.
- 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?

Activities

Identify your feelings.

- 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

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Make Amanda's Chocolate Chip Biscuits

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 225g self-raising flour
- 200g chocolate chips
- 125g butter
- 1 egg

Mix butter and sugar until fluffy. Amanda uses an electric mixer with help from an adult.

Add 1 egg and mix. Sift flour and add to butter mixture.

Add chocolate chips and mix together until well combined. Make small balls by rolling in hands.

Line a baking tray with greaseproof paper. Place cookie balls on tray and gently press down.

The mixture should make roughly about 25 cookies.

Bake in a medium oven (180C) for about 15-20 mins.

Activities

Scrapbooking

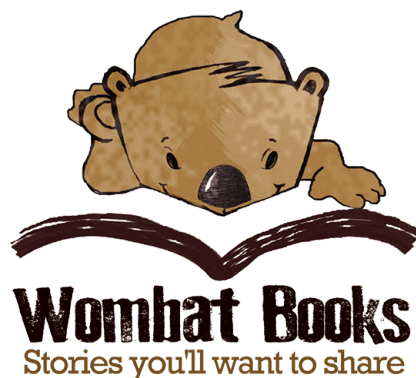
- Using old newspapers or magazines, cut out words that describe what a true friend is like and stick it in a scrap book.

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.'

Cheers

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



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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