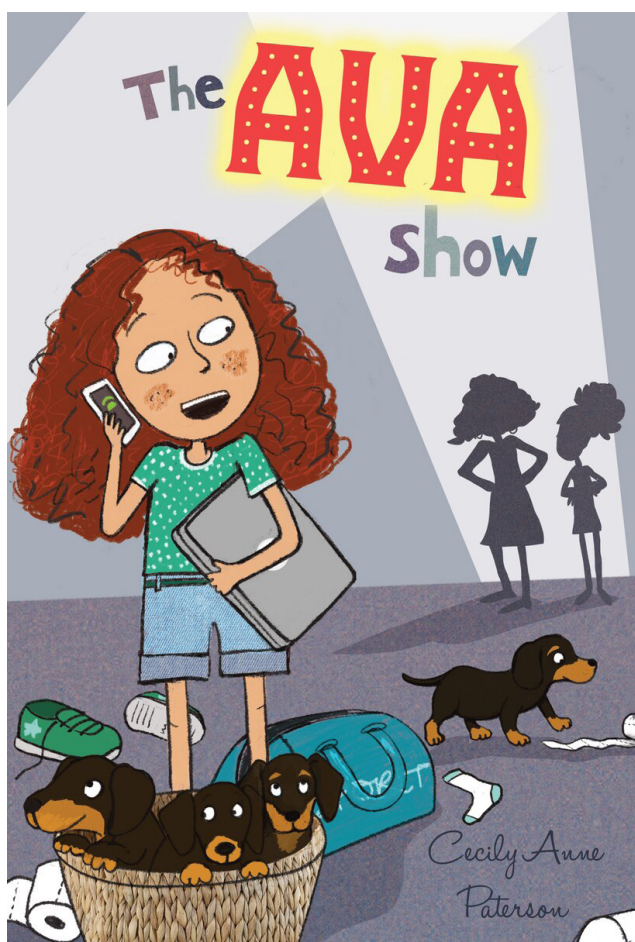




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Teachers' Notes



The Ava Show

Cecily Anne Paterson

ISBN: 9781761110405

Recommended retail: \$16.99

Reading level: Middle grade

Book Summary

Ava's been training hard for an awesome athletics season, and is looking forward to celebrating her 12th birthday. Life's great—and Chloe the dog is having puppies! Even if Mum gets annoyed at Ava's lack of organisation, Ava can always rely on her best friend Josie and her sister Maddie to pick up after her.

But when the pandemic hits, everything's cancelled. There's no school, no birthday, no athletics, no toilet paper and definitely no Josie to rely on. When a puppy goes missing, it's Ava's fault. Can she mend her irresponsible ways in time?

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Themes

Friendship - and what type of friend you are. How affectionate and demonstrative are you with your friends? How much do you show them you love them and care about them?

Pandemic - people's reaction to it (some are scared, some don't care). Related issues including panic buying, staying home, lockdown, school at home, missing out on opportunities

Family - Getting on with your family when you're all lumped together with nothing else to do

Responsibility and learning to taking care of yourself - What it means to be responsible, caring for others, stress, and the perceived 'freedom' of being irresponsible. How irresponsibility can turn around and bite you, and maybe cause problems for others.

About the Author:



Cecily Anne Paterson is the author of nine middle grade and early YA books and 'The Ava Show' is the fourth in her Kangaroo Valley School series, which is based on a real school in a real town, where she used to live. Cecily grew up as an expat kid in Pakistan where she went to boarding school in the Himalayan mountains (higher than Mt Kosciuszko) from Grade 6 to Grade 10. She loves to write stories about realistic friendships and relationships for girls this age. During the pandemic, Cecily's whole family worked and did school from their home in Sydney's northern beaches, just like everyone else who was

in lock down. Lots of the little details about lock down life are taken from her own experience. For example, she learned to braid her daughter's hair, they all played board games, and she had to do extra shopping trips to keep the hungry teenagers fed with enough pasta! Only two things are different: her dog did not become pregnant, and they never quite ran out of toilet paper. Cecily had a dachshund called Feedoo when she was eight years old. He was the smartest, most wonderful dog in the world, and in *The Ava Show*, she decided a dachshund needed a starring role!

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 Ava reminds them of anyone they know: a friend, a sibling, themselves perhaps.
5. What is their first impression of Ava? Do they think she's irresponsible?
6. How does Ava change over the course of the story?
7. Ask students how they perceive Ava's situation. Does she come through in the end?

Discussion Questions

Friendship

- What words would you use to describe Josie and Ava's friendship?
- What words would you use to describe the other girls' friendship?
- Which friendship would you rather be part of, and why?
- Is it surprising that Ava's way of showing friendship changes?
- Have you ever seen friendships change?
- Ava uses the word 'friend-y' to describe her feelings about the other girls' friendship. What words or phrases could you use to describe it more accurately?

Pandemic

- Think back to when you first learned about the pandemic. How did you hear about it? How does Ava first become aware that there's a pandemic?
- Ava's family has trouble getting toilet paper. What was your experience of 'panic buying'? Why do you think panic buying happens? If you were (a) the Premier of your state (b) the supermarket owner, what would you do to stop panic buying?
- Living through the pandemic made Ava change as a person. Can you identify three changes in her? Did you change because of the pandemic?

Responsibility

- Ava and Josie have different ideas about responsibility. Who are you more like - Ava or Josie? Which attitude do you think is better, Ava or Josie's?
- Whose fault was it that Chloe ended up having puppies?
- Whose fault was it that the puppy got lost?
- Mum and Ava talk about responsibility at the end of the story. How does Ava end up defining responsibility? Do you agree with her that responsibility is basically just being a caring person? Or do you have a different definition?

Discussion Questions

Puppies and dogs

- Puppies can be a lot of work. Discuss how to best take care of a puppy.
- ‘Dachshund’ is a word that’s hard to spell. Where did the breed of dog originate, and why are its legs SO short?

Activities

Friendship

- Write a story about friendship. Maybe it’s based on your own friendships. What does it mean to be a good friend?
- Are friendships with siblings different? Talk or write about your relationships with your siblings and your friends. How are they different? How are they the same?
- What are some ways you can show friendship? List all the different ways you can think of and compare with how Ava shows her friendship throughout the book.

Pandemic

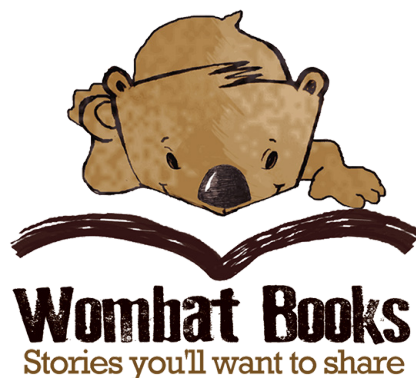
- The pandemic was a really tough time for lots of people. What are some ways that it changed your family’s lives? See if you can list five different ways.
- What does the pandemic mean to you? What do you think about most when you think about the pandemic? Draw what the pandemic means to you.

Responsibility

- Make a poster or a flyer about responsibility, advertising it to your classmates. What does it mean to be responsible? What are the benefits of responsibility? How does being responsible make you feel?

Puppies and dogs

- Puppies need different care at different ages. You could work in groups to create a flyer or poster on how to look after puppies at home.
- Do you have a pet at home? Do you help take care of it? Draw five different ways you help take care of your pet.



Cecily Anne Paterson is available for author talks and workshops. Contact Wombat Books for more information.

Ava Show 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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