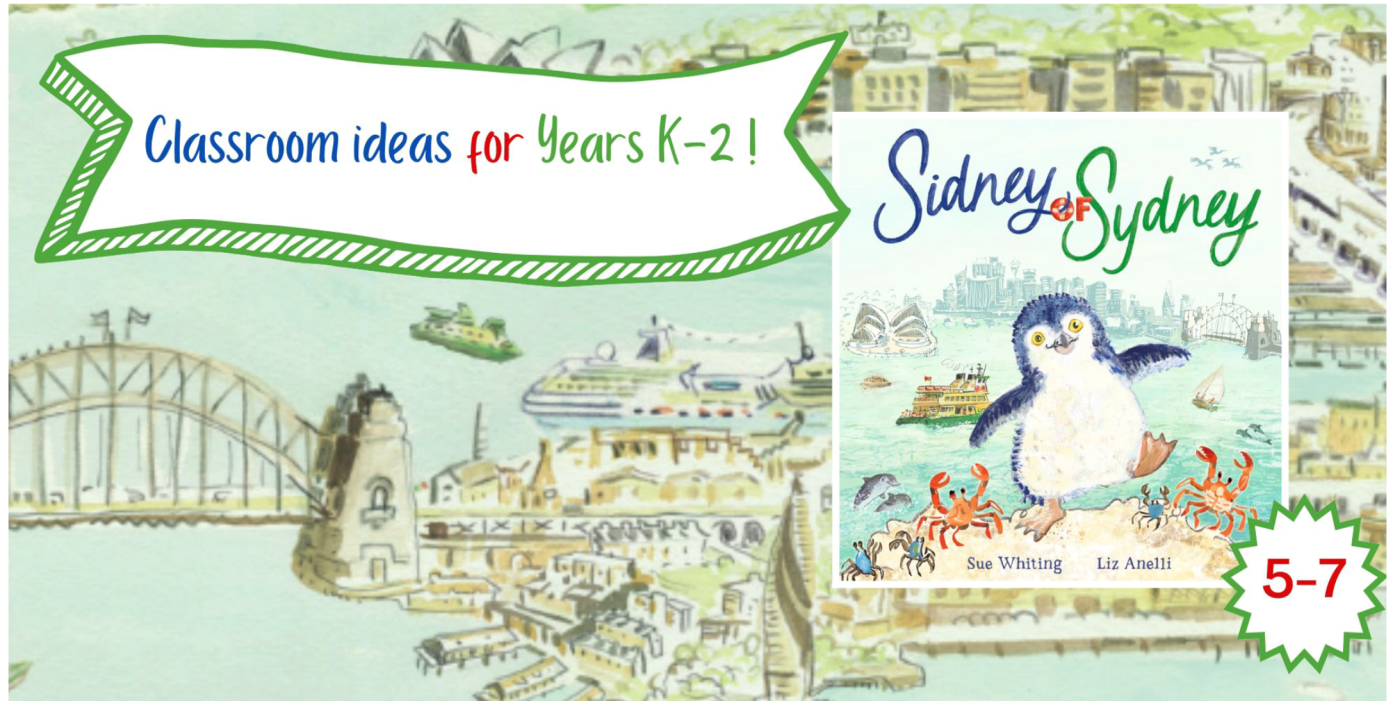


SIDNEY OF SYDNEY CLASSROOM IDEAS

Notes created by Sue Whiting



ABOUT THE BOOK

Sydney is a big city with a busy harbour.

Sidney is a young penguin ... and he's trouble.

Sidney doesn't mean to be trouble, he's just curious.

And one day that curiosity takes Sidney all over Sydney
and on a grand adventure that lands Sidney in ... **TROUBLE!**

Inspired by a true story ...

Details:

Illustrated by [Liz Anelli](#)

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These notes are for:

- Grades K-2
- Ages 5-7

Key Learning Areas: English

Themes/Ideas:

- adventure / curiosity / Sydney
- penguins / independence / family / big & little

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sue Whiting is an award-winning children's and YA author and editor, and former teacher, who has worked in publishing for twenty+ years. Sue was senior commissioning editor and publishing manager for Walker Books Australia for many years before leaving in 2016 to concentrate on her writing. Sue has written numerous books for a variety of age groups, from picture books through to YA, including the bestselling *Missing*, the acclaimed *The Book of Chance* and several CBCA Notable Books. As a storyteller and schools' performer, Sue has informed, inspired and entertained thousands of kids across the country. Sue is passionate about the power of story and is an advocate for reading and writing for pleasure.



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Liz Anelli once had a job dusting dinosaurs at London's Natural History Museum. Nowadays she draws every day and illustrates picture books, combining collage, printmaking and paint into digitally composed artworks. These have collected numerous shortlistings and awards. In between books, she creates quirky illustrated maps. Having spent ten glorious years in Australia, she and her husband are now living in

Cambridge, England. Liz loves sharing her passion for making pictures at festivals, libraries and schools around the world. She can be found at lizanelli-illustration.com, Liz Anelli on Instagram, LinkedIn and Facebook and @lizillustrator on Twitter.

THE INSPIRATION

Sidney of Sydney was inspired by the true story of a juvenile little penguin who was rescued from a stormwater drain in Haberfield in Sydney's inner west – 20+ kilometres from its colony in Manly, in December 2016. The distressed and malnourished little penguin was taken to Taronga Zoo Animal Hospital where it was cared for before being released back to its colony in Manly.

THE BOOK

General discussion questions

1. This story is set in Sydney. What do the words and pictures tell you about Sydney? What do *you* know about Sydney? Have you ever visited Sydney Harbour? What did you see? Do? Hear? Smell? Feel?
2. Who is the main character in this story? What do the words and pictures tell you about him? What do *you* know about penguins? Have you ever seen one?
3. Sidney has a 'bill for trouble'. What does that mean? What type of trouble does he get into? Why?
4. Why do his parents 'have to keep an eye on him'? And why is it a BIG job?
5. How does Sidney feel when his parents tell him it is time for him to look after himself? How do you know this? How would you feel if your parents left you to look after yourself? Why?
6. What did Sidney see and do on his wonderfully curious day?
7. How did he feel when he popped up and saw the storm? Why hadn't he realised a storm was approaching?
8. What made Sidney feel more relaxed once he was rescued? Why?

More thought-provoking questions

9. Sydney is BIG, but Sidney is LITTLE. How is this idea of BIG and LITTLE important to the story? Find other references to big and little in the story.

10. SOS is an abbreviation for the title for *Sidney of Sydney*. What is an SOS? What does it stand for? (Save our Souls) How is a distress signal like an SOS fitting for Sidney's story? In many ways his 'Brrr-rup-rup-rup' is like an SOS message. If Sidney was able to send an SOS, when do you think he might have sent it? And why? Who responds to his distress call? How do they know where to take Sidney? (Check the illustrations earlier in the book for clues.)
11. Sidney is very curious. What does that mean? What are you curious about? Does being curious always lead to trouble? Why do you think it does for Sidney? There is a saying 'Curiosity killed the cat' – what do you think this means and how does it relate to the story?
12. View the illustration of Sidney being taken through Sydney back to Manly. What things do you think Sidney might have seen or noticed that made him curious again?
13. Do you think Sidney will be able to keep his nosy bill out of trouble? Why? Why not?
14. Discuss what a 'wonderfully curious' day means. Where would you like to go (and see and do) on a wonderfully curious day?
15. Sue Whiting uses lots of strong verbs in this story. Do you think they help to make the story stronger? Why / why not? Collect them and create a word bank. (dips/ dives / ducks / skims /sings / flaps / tumbles / catches etc.) Write a story trying to use as many as possible.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

1. Sidney of Sydney is inspired by a true story that occurred in December in 2016. Research what really happened. (These links will get you started - <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/dec/02/happy-feat-for-penguin-rescued-from-a-stormwater-drain-in-sydney> and <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-12-20/sydney-penguin-reunited-with-colony-near-manly/8136284>) Identify the key facts and timeline and write a factual recount of the true story. (Or possibly a newspaper report or podcast.) Compare the true and the fictional stories. How are they similar / different?

2. Collect curious facts about Sydney and or little penguins. Use the facts to write an information report.
3. Sue Whiting says that to create the fictional story of *Sidney of Sydney* she had to create an interesting penguin character and decide how and why that character would end up so far from home. Discuss Sidney's character and how this relates to how and why he ended up in the stormwater drain. Create your own penguin character and decide how and why your character might have ended up so lost and alone and so far from home. Share your ideas with your class.
4. View and discuss the bird's eye view map of Sydney Liz Anelli created depicting Sidney's journey on his wonderfully curious day. Create (or copy) a map of your local area (or favourite holiday spot) and create a pictorial map that depicts all the key places – library, school, park, shops etc.
5. Research Manly's penguin colony. Create a podcast or news report highlighting an interesting aspect of the colony – e.g. issues, threats, tourism, uniqueness, community involvement. Present it to your class. (This could work well as a group activity.)
6. It is unlikely that Sidney will stay out of trouble. In small groups discuss what other misadventures Sidney's curiosity might lead him into. Brainstorm your ideas. Create a short play script of your favourite.
7. View Liz Anelli's amazing illustration of the storm. Discuss how Liz has used colour and movement to create a dramatic scene. Create your own 'stormy' paintings.

Sue and Liz at Manly -
checking out the setting
and doing a bit of research

