

# Walker Books Classroom Ideas

## Sally Murphy on *Roses are Blue*

I'm a bit of a different mother, and sometimes this can be embarrassing for my kids. I sing (badly) in public, talk to strangers in supermarket queues and laugh too loudly. I was thinking about this one day, and I wondered what it would be like if your mother was really different, and you didn't want your friends to know. The idea for *Roses are Blue* came from this seed.



### Also written by Sally Murphy



**Pearl Verses the World**  
Illustrated by Heather Potter  
9781921150937  
AU\$15.95/NZ\$17.99  
Classroom ideas available



**Toppling**  
Illustrated by Rhian Nest James  
9781921529429  
AU\$16.95/NZ\$18.99  
Classroom ideas available



**Do Not Forget Australia**  
Illustrated by Sonia Kretschmar  
HB 9781921529863  
AU\$29.95/NZ\$32.99  
PB 9781922077097  
AU\$16.95/NZ\$18.99  
Classroom ideas available

## Gabriel Evans on *Roses are Blue*

*Roses Are Blue* was a beautiful book to illustrate. Inspired by the gently poetic text, I explored the world of Amber and her friends. Using traditional pencil, ink and watercolour, I began to design her world, initially through light, reflective sketches then creating the final paintings seen in the book.



### Also illustrated by Gabriel Evans



**Walker Stories: Annie's Snails**  
Written by Dianne Wolfer  
9781921720635  
AU\$11.95/NZ\$13.99  
Classroom ideas available

## Discussion Questions and Activities

### Before reading *Roses are Blue*:

View the front cover of *Roses are Blue*. Based on the title and cover illustration, what do you think the book is about? How do you think the girl on the front cover is feeling? Do you think this will be an imaginative or informative book? Give reasons for your answers.

Identify the title, author, illustrator, blurb and publisher on the cover.

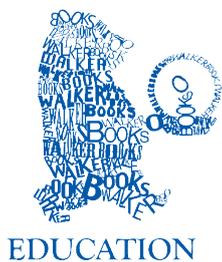
### Guided reading activities:

**Page 8.** Why does Amber not want her mum at the high tea? What is she afraid might happen? Imagine you are Amber and write a list of what might happen if her mum

came to high tea. Include good and bad things that could happen and how each one might make Amber feel.

**Page 13.** Sally Morgan uses metaphor to describe how Amber is feeling by saying her "heart falls all the way to the ground" and continues to reference her heart being on the floor throughout the book. How does this metaphor effectively describe Amber's emotions? What other metaphors are used in the novel?

**Page 22.** Create a card for your mum or someone special. On the front draw a picture of their favourite things (like how Amber draws a bunch of flowers her mum would love) and inside write a message telling your mum or special person why you love them.



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**Page 24.** Write a paragraph about something you love and are good at. Write about who helped you learn this skill or who supports you with this skill. Take a survey of each student's favourite skill and make note of the most popular ones. Create a poster for your skill showing where you can do it, how you do it, the tools or equipment you need to do it and anything else that is relevant.

**Page 38.** The "Roses are Red" poem on this page is written in a different font to the rest of the book. Why do you think that is? How does it affect how you read it?

**Page 40.** Amber has been through a significant change in her life and wishes things would go back to the way they were before. Sometimes changes can't be reversed and people have to deal with their new situation. In groups, discuss some ways you could help Amber accept her new situation and feel better about it.

**Page 50.** What kind of behaviour does a bully normally have? Does Lola Jones fit into this description of a bully? How has Lola's behaviour affected Amber? Imagine you are Amber and write a letter to Lola explaining how her behaviour has made you feel.

**Page 55.** Amber confesses that she feels sorry for Jack because he doesn't remember what their mum used to be like. How does Amber try to make up for this with Jack? What other things could she do for Jack so he understands what his mum used to be like? Will Jack have as hard of a time getting used to his 'new mum' as Amber has? Why do you think so?

**Page 62.** Amber's mum made a painting of her family through her eyes. Make your own painting of your family or friends as you see them through your eyes.

**Page 76.** Discuss the saying "you don't know what you have until it's gone" and how it applies to Amber. Spend a few minutes thinking of all the wonderful things in your life that you normally don't take the time to appreciate.

**Page 89.** Why is Saffron upset? Why did Amber not tell her about her mother? Write a list of what makes a good friend.

**Page 90.** Why do you think Leroy was not excited about the high tea?

**Page 92.** Amber realises she jumped to an incorrect conclusion in the shopping centre when Leroy bumped into her mum's wheelchair. Why do you think Amber was quick to thinking that Leroy and his mum were grossed out? What are the dangers of jumping to conclusions? What could Leroy or his mum have done differently to help the situation?

**Page 100.** "She is looking at me  
as if I am the most beautiful rose  
she has ever seen."

This sentence is a similie. What is the difference between a simile and a metaphor? Write some sentences that have similies in them.

**Page 101.** What is the significance of Amber painting a picture of her mum "how she is now" compared to "how she's meant to be" (page 35)?

### After reading *Roses are Blue*

How can you tell when a character is speaking in *Roses are Blue*? How is this different to other books?

What does the title of this book mean? Does it have more than one meaning? What literary device has the author used?

Look at Gabriel Evans' illustrations. How would you describe his style? What is unique about it? Choose one page of the story and illustrate it in your own style.

Identify the orientation, complication and resolution of the story. Ask students to try to identify this structure in other books or movies. As a class, discuss how these narrative features give meaning to stories.

Do you know anyone with a disability or serious illness? How did they change from before their injury/sickness to after? How did you learn to deal with it?

*Roses are Blue* is a verse novel, meaning it written in free verse, an open form of poetry that is similar to the rhythm on natural speech. How is this different to a traditional novel? Choose a page from the book and read it aloud, pausing at the end of each line, then reread the page aloud pausing only at commas and full-stops as you would in a traditional novel. How does the story feel different when read in these ways?

Write a book review of *Roses are Blue*, paying special attention to the themes and issues that it raises. To add extra information to your book review, research the author and illustrator online.

Write a few stanzas of free verse poetry in a similar style to *Roses are Blue*. You could re-write a section of a novel or a picture book as free verse, or use a photograph as inspiration if you need help getting started. Use words to describe the five senses and the emotion your character would be feeling. There are no rules for free verse poetry, so your poem can take any form you like.