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Blurb

Late one night, a thing appears in the paddock next to Fabio's house. His dad calls it 'space junk' but inside Fabio discovers books. Books about the galaxy; big, fat books; books full of poems. He swaps a book with Leila from next door and the thing becomes a Great Book-swapping Machine. But will the very important woman from the Space Agency let the community keep their machine? And what will happen when Fabio pulls its shiny red lever?

Comprising a funny, original and imaginative story, whimsical illustrations and an informative fact section, *The Book-swapping Machine* is a book about the joys of reading and the importance of community.

Further Resources

Emma Allen reading *The Great Book-swapping Machine*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9U7eFriSE8>

Grade 3 Digital Classroom module: Creative Storytelling

nla.gov.au/digital-classroom/year-3/creative-storytelling

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The Great Book-swapping Machine

Teachers Notes

Recommended for: Foundation—Year 3

1. Late one night, a thing lands next to Fabio's letterbox. In a circle, share a story starting with the sentence 'Late one night, a thing landed next to my letterbox.' The next child repeats this sentence and adds a new one.
2. In the story, Vesper reads a book called *Poems for Night Travellers*. Can you imagine that you are a night traveller? Write a poem about your experience. Where did you go in the night? How long did you stay there? What happened? How did you feel?
3. Write a book review of *The Great Book-swapping Machine*. What did you like most about the book? What did you like least about the book? How did it make you feel? Would you recommend it to your friends?
4. Select another book by Emma Allen from your school library. Consider the way that she uses language. What are the differences? Are there any similarities? How can you describe her style? Does the style depend on the type of story she tells?
5. Re-tell the story in a comic strip format. Did you leave out any parts of the story? Why? Why not? Do you think that a comic strip is suitable for this story?
6. What clues has the illustrator used to show you where the story is set? Why do you think she has drawn 'the thing' this way? Look at the words the author uses to describe it in the text and think about the different scenes that take place in or around the machine; would you have drawn it differently?
7. The author describes 'the thing' as 'fat and content', leaning 'apologetically', retiring with a 'quiver' and a 'sigh'. Do you think 'the thing' has a personality? Why do you think it feels the way it does throughout the book? What journey has it been on to get to the farm?
8. Choose a character and draw their bookshelf. Think about what their favourite book might be and why. Draw the character holding their favourite book.
9. Pick one of librarian Zenodotus' genres and write a short piece of text. You could write about something that happened in your past (history); a scroll of jokes (comedy); a guide to stopping hiccupping (medicine); a speech to be delivered on the opening of your dream library (rhetoric); or a set of rules you think should apply in your classroom (law). Copy your text in your best handwriting onto a piece of paper. You might like to stain the paper with a wet teabag, before drying it and rolling it around a stick.
10. Make your own printing press. Cut or press letters or shapes into a polystyrene or foam block. Roll with paint and then press onto paper. What happens to the image? Is it the same or is it reversed? How can you design your polystyrene printing press so that the letters come out the correct way? Experiment.
11. Read about the design of your National Library in Canberra. What would your dream library look like? Draw up a plan of the library, showing the different genres it would have.
12. Make a 'street library' for the classroom. Bring in a book to swap. Make a library card for it, including the book's title, the author and the year of publication (you can find this on the imprint page). Write a few sentences describing what happens in the book and why you like it. Put it in the street library and choose a book to borrow.
13. Bring in your favourite picture book and share why do you like it. Tally the kinds of books your class enjoys and make a graph to show the results.
14. The Watson kids love superhero comics. The tourists like books about maps. Vesper likes poetry. What stories would you like to read? Write a persuasive letter to the National Library asking them to make a book about your favourite subject.