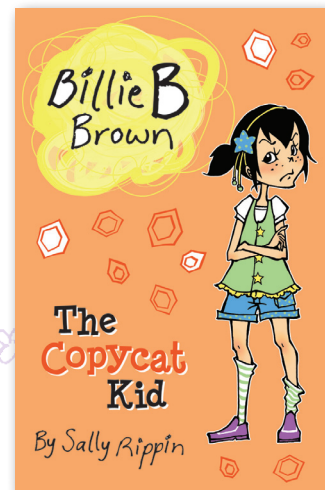


Billie B Brown: The Copycat Kid

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Consider the challenges of moving to a new country and a new school
- Use a Venn diagram to establish the similarities and differences between themselves and a friend
- Explore emotions



About the story

When the new girl arrives in Billie's class, it's Billie's job to help her settle into school. But Billie's excitement slowly turns to frustration when the new girl begins to copy everything Billie does. What she wears, the games she plays, even the pictures she draws – all this copying is making Billie furious! But with the help of her teacher, Billie slowly begins to understand why the new girl wants to do everything that Billie does. It's then that Billie realises she needs to be more than a buddy to the new girl – she needs to be her friend.

Before you read the story

Read the title of the story to students and assist them to define the word 'copycat'. Ask students if they have ever used the word and, if so, detail the circumstances under which it was used. Now turn to the back cover and read the blurb aloud. Students share their ideas on the responsibilities of buddy and suggest what it might be like to be the new student at the school. Ask students to predict why the new girl might be copying everything Billie does and how Billie may feel about that.

Questions and activities

Chapter One

Why is Billie all dressed up?

How do you think Billie will help Mika settle into school?

How do you think Mika feels about starting a new school? Can you find examples in the chapter to support your answer?

Activity

Invite any students who have had the experience of shifting schools or moving to a different country to share their experiences. Now locate a picture story book that captures the difficulties of starting school in a foreign country such as, *Sumi's First Day of School Ever*, by Soyung Pak or *One Green Apple*, by Eve Bunting and assist students to identify the difficulties students such as Mika face.

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Questions and activities

Chapter Two

"It looks like you have a fan!" What is Ms Walton talking about?

Why do you think Mika has come to school dressed like Billie?

How does Billie feel about Mika wearing the same clothes?

Activity

Observe that Billie likes to look different. Discuss the fact that friends have differences but also their similarities. Invite students to think of a close friend and consider their similarities and differences in respect to their appearances, dress sense, interests, likes and dislikes. Introduce students to the Venn diagram and explain its function. Model how to use the Venn diagram to organise information about the similarities and differences that exist between themselves and a friend before instructing students to complete an individual response.

Chapter Three

Billie's mouth drops open. How does Billie feel at this moment and why?

What does the word unique mean? Describe Billie's unique picture.

Billie looks over at Mika's drawing and gasps. Explain what causes Billie to react this way.

Activity

Observe that the author describes Billie's angry feelings as a big angry ball growing inside her and feeling like she's going to explode. Note that the author also uses the word 'furious' and writes of Billie stomping her food, shouting and squeezing her mouth tight. Ask students to recall an incident that caused them to feel quite angry. Using this chapter as an example, model how to write a short descriptive piece of writing about feeling angry. Give students time to discuss and brainstorm before completing their individual response. Close the session with a discussion about how to manage angry feelings.

Chapter Four

Imagine what it must be like for Mika. What does Ms Walton help Billie to understand about Mika's experience?

Ms Walton offers Billie an explanation for why Mika is copying her. What is it? Does this change the way Billie feels about Mika's actions?

Billie writes a message in Japanese. Can you explain how she does this and why?

How do you think Mika would have felt when she received this message?

Activity

Refer students to page 41 and direct students to the message that Billie wrote to Mika in Japanese. Ask students if they or their parents speak or write in another language and, if so, identify what that language is. Send a note home to parents requesting that if another language is spoken and written, they, together with their child, write the word 'friend' in that language on the large piece of paper supplied. Display and discuss.

