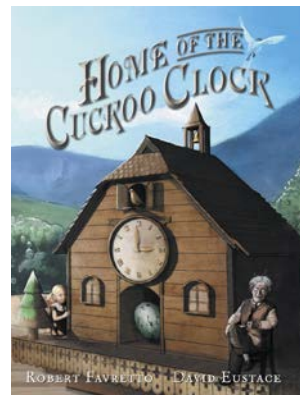




Teachers' Notes

Home of the Cuckoo Clock

By Robert Favretto and David Eustace



Synopsis:

The village of Schoenwald is frozen in time. With no clock to measure their lives, the townsfolk live in complete chaos. Until an unexpected visitor arrives and changes the village that time forgot, forever. A magical legend about the incredible cuckoo clock.

About the Author:



Robert Favretto lives on the Mornington Peninsula where he is a primary school teacher and author of children's books. His stories often include puns and word play with creative twists to engage reluctant readers. Robert's books include *Lost for Words*, *Leonardo's Spot of Trouble*, *On the Nose* and the hilarious *CAT* book series. *Home of the Cuckoo Clock* is his first picture book.

About the Illustrator:



David Eustace lives in subtropical Brisbane. He combines traditional art techniques with digital drawing to create dreamlike pictures that balance the worlds of realism and fantasy. He is inspired by mythology, surrealist art and the bedtime stories he reads to his two sons.

Story Inspiration:

Home of the Cuckoo Clock was spawned by Robert's visit to Interlaken, in central Switzerland many years ago. Whilst travelling through the township, he was fascinated by the variety of cuckoo clocks displayed in shop windows. The clocks were beautifully handcrafted in all styles and designs ticking rhythmically and announcing the hour with the distinctive cuckoo call. It made him wonder how the cuckoo bird inspired the clock that bears its name.

The sights of the Swiss Alps fuelled his imagination and before long he had an idea for a story set in Grindelwald, which explores the concept of time. He later learned however that the cuckoo clock originated in Schoenwald, Germany. So this crucial amendment was made, underlining the need for accurate research.

Robert's central character is the mysterious cuckoo, introduced as an outsider to observe the village beset with chaos. The cuckoo's visit and subsequent actions directly affect the main events and make him the hero of the story. Franz Anton Ketterer, the designer and creator of the first noted cuckoo clock, is included as a key character alongside the cuckoo to give the story authenticity. Inspired by the cuckoo's actions, he continues the bird's legacy, bringing order to his community and creating a legend.

About the Illustrations:

David's illustrations for *Home of the Cuckoo Clock* combine both traditional drawing materials, such as pencils and watercolour paints with digital techniques. The pictures contain a mix of fantasy and realism to create a dreamlike atmosphere.

Having never visited Germany or Switzerland, much of the inspiration for the pictures came from old photographs of both people and landscapes in the region. Inspiration for the characters also came from famous historical personalities in the area such as the character of Franz who has traces of both Albert Einstein (the hair) and Carl Jung (the eyes and spectacles). Other historical characters, costumes and references to the area are also included in the illustrations. Research is a vital part of the illustration process and adds another level of authenticity to the story. In preparing the concept drawings, David also read old German fairy tales for inspiration and if the reader looks closely, they will find references to characters such as Struwwelpeter and Rapunzel.

The use of symbolism is also central to many of the drawings to explore the themes of time, chaos and order in Robert's story.

Discussion and Activities: (For Ages: Lower Primary)

1. Look at the cover of *Home of the Cuckoo Clock*. What do the cover illustration, the title and the blurb make children think the story might be about? (Look at it *after* they have read the story and ask them if they think the elements included on the cover gave them good clues about it and made them want to read it.)

Discussion points:

Where and when (season) does the story take place? How can you tell?

Why was the village of Schoenwald frozen in time?

Who was the unexpected visitor to the Black Forest?

What information (words and pictures) gives you clues that the village was in chaos?

What was the reason for Schoenwald's problem?

Why did the bird return to the pine forest deep in thought?

Why does Franz watch the cuckoo?

How did the cuckoo change things for the better?

What causes the bird's disappearance from his new home?

How do the townsfolk react to the missing bird?

What happened to the village after the cuckoo flew away?

What was Franz's brilliant idea to restore order to Schoenwald?

Where did Franz place the birdhouse when he finished to build it? How did he feel?

What made the people rush to the birdhouse? What greeted them with an hourly call?

Why did Franz and the village craftsmen build more cuckoo clocks?

Why do you think the cuckoo returned with his new mate?

What happened to Schoenwald at the end of the story?

Would you have ended the story differently? How?

4. Read the story again and challenge the children to find the hidden egg on each page.

3. Have children pick different parts of the story to illustrate, writing down the page numbers that the events in the story come from. Pin the illustrations up on the wall in the order in which they appear in the book, with the words from the appropriate pages copied out below.

4. Why is it important to tell time?

Time is an integral part of our daily lives. We read clocks to tell time and plan our day. People schedule classes, meetings and appointments using time so it's important for children to understand that time is a reference point, an agreed-upon standard on which the day is based.

5. Brainstorm a list of different types of clocks: alarm clocks, pocket watches, wrist watches, digital clocks, stopwatches, timers, clocks that count down, and so on. Where have children seen a clock? What do people use clocks for? Have children describe the different clocks they have seen at school, home, or around the neighbourhood. Explain that analogue clocks may have faces that look different – some analogue clocks only have four numbers on the face, while others may have none at all.

6. How do we use time throughout the day?

Investigate events that children perform during the day like morning, noon, afternoon, evening and night times. Have children match the time of day with various events.

7. Make a habit of announcing when certain events will take one, five or 15 minutes, and state when they're over. Use a stopwatch, alarm, or kitchen timer to help speed the process of learning. Time some of your children's favourite activities to help them connect with the intervals.

8. Lead a discussion about different timepieces (clock, watch, timer, hourglass) and the energy sources required to run them (electricity, battery, wind-up movements). Have children survey their homes and count the number of timepieces they find. Guide children to design a chart or poster that reflects their findings.

9. Introduce the elements of a clock and explain their functions. Direct children's attention to the clock. How many big numbers are on the clock? Have students point to the hour hand. Tell them that when the hour hand moves from one number to the next, one hour has passed. What can you do in an hour?

10. Have children make a paper plate clock face. Using a split-pin, attach some paper hands to the centre of the plate. These clocks can then be used in various reinforcement activities. For example, as the teacher calls out a time, the students show the correct time on their clocks.