

It's Time for Slime!

Teaching Notes

Author: Liz Bennett

Illustrator: Nicole Curti



Synopsis:

Squid searches the library for books with characters like him. He reads about furry creatures, feathery creatures, and farmyard creatures, but can't find any books with slimy heroes. His friends Slug, Newt, and Hagfish have the same problem, so Squid decides to write a slimy superhero story, one in which his friends can see themselves. In this tale about representation, equality, and diversity, children will learn about some of Earth's fascinating lesser-known creatures, which are boldly depicted in the engaging and humorous illustrations.

In the classroom:

BEFORE READING

- Introduce the cover of the book.
 - What creatures can you see on the front and back covers?
 - How many can you see? (Don't miss the little fish!)
 - How can you tell this is a squid not an octopus? (*Octopus has 8 arms; squid 8 arms plus 2 tentacles; also, the shape is different – squid bodies are more triangular; octopus more circular*)
- The book is called 'It's Time for Slime!'
 - Which of the animals on the covers are slimy? (*Squid and slug – on back*)
 - Can you think of other slimy animals?
 - Do they live in water or on land – or both?
 - Have you ever touched one?
 - Have you ever made slime?

AFTER READING

Discussion.questions.about.slimy.creatures

- Squid and Hagfish are sea creatures. This slug lives on land (he leaves trails!) but there are also sea slugs. Newts are amphibious (do you know what this means?).
Can you think of other slimy creatures who live in water, on land, or are amphibious?
- What is something interesting you learned from the book?
- Do you know any differences between a squid and an octopus?
- Can you remember some of the things slime can do for different creatures?
(*Gripping, sliding, skin protection, sending messages, protection against predators*)
- Do you have a favourite slimy creature? Why do you like it?

Discuss.diversity.and.representation

- What kind of animals do we normally call cute? Do you think this makes sense?
- Squid thinks his slime is great - sparkly and useful. Why do people see it as yucky?
- Why do you think Squid decides to write the books?

Squid and his friends are frustrated because:

- *They don't get to be the main character in stories, like other animals do.*
- *They don't feel understood – and their slime is called yucky!*

- How do Squid's books help change things?
 - *Slimy creatures feel recognised.*
 - *Ms Crab says she will think about slime differently - and stop saying it's yucky!*
- What do the animals in the library queue - parrotfish, octopus and sea cucumber - have in common? (*Hint: it's slime-related!*)
- Do you think it's good to see different types of main characters in books, tv and movies?
Is this the same for *people*, as well as animals?
- Is there an animal you think is beautiful or cool or interesting that people often don't think about the same way? What do you like about it?
- Is there something interesting or cool or beautiful about you, or a person you know, that other people might not recognise straight away?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- Find out more about a slimy creature and write down some cool facts to share.
- Find out more about some of the cool things mentioned in the book, like:
 - Newts going into space
 - Slugs communicating with their slime
 - The smallest and biggest squid
 - How squids can be smart (octopuses can be smart too!)
 - How hagfish fight attackers using slime.
- The book describes Squid's three picture books, but just gives a peek at them. Make one about Slug, Newt or Hagfish – or another slimy creature.
- Write a story with a type of hero you've never seen before.
- Write some things that are interesting or beautiful about you, or someone you know.
- Create a slimy play zone and make slimy "gloop" using cornflour and water.
What words are good to describe it? Is it fun to touch?
- Go to the school library and look at some books.
 - Are there animals you don't think are shown enough as main characters?
 - What about people? Do you see many main characters who are from different cultures? Who have different body types? Different abilities? Different ages? Different jobs?
 - Are there gaps you think should be filled in who is shown as a main character?

About the Author:

Liz Bennett lives in tropical Darwin, Australia, and has a background in social work, law and dispute resolution. With a lifelong love of storytelling, Liz has published poetry and other writing locally and internationally and has been nominated for several writing awards. She has long wanted to write for children and loves dreaming up ideas on the veranda of the house-on-stilts where she brought up her own.

About the illustrator:

Nicole Curti grew up reading children's books and watching animation films, dreaming of one day creating her own. In 2010 Nicole graduated from IED as an illustrator and animator, and after gaining work experience elsewhere, decided to devote herself entirely to this field. She has since collaborated with many Publishers and private customers. Nicole takes her inspiration from the nature, mountains and flowers found around her.