



Yackety Zac

by Chris Gurney and illustrated by
Ross Kinnard

About the author:

Chris Gurney had her first picture book published in 2009 and is now the author of sixteen picture books. A large number of them are part of Scholastic NZ's popular Kiwi Corkers series, which retells well known tales with a New Zealand flavour. Her stories are told with a faultless sense of rhyme and rhythm, using interesting words and a sense of humour.

Chris lives with her family in Warkworth, where she is endeavouring to grow fruit trees, cats, chooks, and a flock of stories.

About the illustrator:

Ross Kinnaird was born and raised in Hamilton, educated in Auckland, before moving to Sydney and then Hong Kong and finally returning to live in New Zealand. He worked as a graphic designer and illustrator but illustrated his first picture book in 2002 - the very successful 'Why do dog sniff bottoms' written by Dawn McMillan. Since then he has illustrated many books by a range of writers, from Willian Taylor to Chris Gurney, for several different publishing houses.

Synopsis of Picture Book:

'In this story baby Zac is born talking non-stop with a vocabulary well beyond his tender age. The problems begins when he just doesn't stopyackety yacking! Although initially proud of their remarkable child, his parents and grandma soon learn that there is a downside to so much chatter.

Later, Zac's teacher finds his constant yacking a problem in the classroom. Eventually with the help of some unorthodox treatment from a doctor Zac learns to slow downhis yacking enough to actually listen to what others have to say.

Rhyme and rhythm feature in this story, making it a fun read aloud.

Themes / Issues:

- Relating to others.
- Developing social skills
- The importance of listening

Suggested Learning Opportunities

Prior to Reading: Thinking, Participating and Contributing

Discuss: Can you make a prediction about this story based on the cover and the title?

What do you think more important; talking or listening?



Shared Book Reading Strategies:

1. **Prediction:** After pg 3: What do you predict might happen in this story about a baby who can talk?
2. **After pg 15:** Can you predict how the adults will stop Zac from talking too much?
3. **After pg 21:** Can you predict what the doctor's cure might involve?
3. Collect and display words from the story which mean talk - chatter, natter, yack etc
4. **Onomatopoeia:** Define and discuss. Possibly collect and display in the classroom.
5. Gulp pg 5, whizzing, buzzed pg 8, clicky-Clack pg 19, rackets pg 27,

Questioning: Can you ask a question about the story so far?

1. **Inference:** What are the 'slip-slidey' things mentioned on pg 10? How do you know?
2. Look at the image on pg 14 / 15. What can you infer about the conversation between Mum and the teacher?
3. What other clues in the story tell you that Zac's talking was a problem?
4. **Synthesising:** Can you explain the meaning of these words on pg 29; 'Zac learned to choose the right words to use...' Why is this important?
5. What is the main point of this story? Why do you think the author wrote this book?
6. **Summarising:** Can you retell the first half of the story to a partner and then listen while they summarise the second part of the story? Can you ask your partner a question about the story?
7. Exploring Language (Thinking, Using language, symbols and text)
6. **Rhyme:** Identify the rhyming words on selected pages. Look at the letters, discuss sounds, blends and why the words rhyme.
7. **Suggested follow up activities:** (Thinking, Participating and Contributing)
8. **Discuss:** Why is careful listening important?
9. Share and discuss this famous quote: 'If we were meant to talk more than listen, we'd have two mouths and one ear' - Mark Twain.
10. **Activities:** Try playing 'Telephone' (also known as 'Chinese Whispers').
11. There are many other listening and drawing, or listening and following instructions ideas available online.

Curriculum Links

English: Listening, reading and viewing. speaking, writing and presenting.

Health and P.E: Relationships with other people, identity, sensitivity and respect, interpersonal skills.

Building Vocabulary and Comprehension:

1. Discussion and definition of selected key words/ phrases eg: getting the knack pg 9, tatty pg 20, concern pg 23, stowed pg 24, ceased pg 29
2. On pg 23 the doctor was looking 'stern.' Can you make a stern face?

by Karen Hinge