



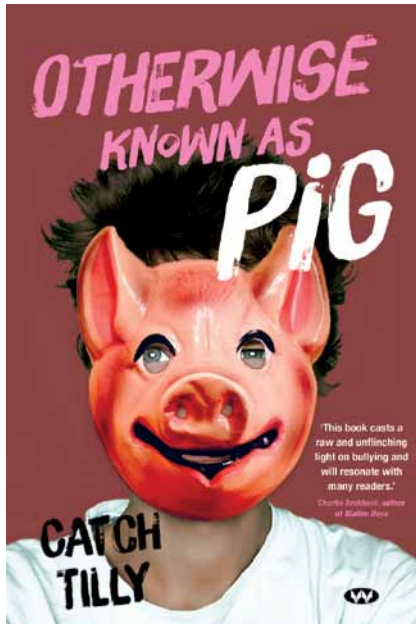
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TEACHERS' NOTES

Otherwise Known as Pig

By Catch Tilly

Notes prepared by Catch Tilly © 2019



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1. Introduction to *Otherwise Known as Pig*

'Still a loser, Pig,' Stormin says. 'Guess you haven't learnt much over summer.'

'I don't know,' I reply, bloody, bowed and hating his guts. 'I can read.'

Otherwise Known as Pig tells the story of Morgan who faces the daily battle of being used as the 'punching bag' by every kid in his school, especially the illiterate Stormin. The bruises on his face, combined with a sarcastic tongue, alienate teachers and when he tries to get help, the other students are too scared and contemptuous to back up his story of being bullied. Even his friend/girlfriend lies out of fear.

Then the art room is burnt down, and Morgan loses the one teacher prepared to stick up for him and comes to the attention of the psychopathic arsonist Chris. He survives Chris, but loses the supportive teacher and when he intensifies his verbal attacks on Stormin, he gets his collarbone broken.

It is while he is losing faith in his ability to survive that Morgan comes across a book on martyrs. Inspired by their courage, and the fact that they won without fighting, Morgan tries turning the other cheek. He gets it struck, but in letting go of hate Morgan finds the courage to stand up to Stormin and begins to earn the respect of the other students. When Stormin threatens to break Morgan's collarbone again 'to keep him down', another student interferes and – for the first time – Morgan is no longer alone.

2. About the author

Catch Tilly is a former high school teacher now working as an author and script writer. It was after hearing students comment how realistic and empowering they found Morgan and Stormin's story (presented in a play on bullying) that she decided to write *Otherwise Known as Pig*. She is married with five children and has an MA in creative writing.



3. Inspiration behind the novel

In 2006 Catch Tilly wrote and performed a play on bullying that contained scenes of extreme violence and a psychopathic 'devil' who drove one character to suicide. Though scenes had been deliberately exaggerated for dramatic effect, students reacted with comments like 'just like the playground' and praised the play for being 'true to life'.

Further research unearthed frightening statistics on extreme bullying and the fact that a bullied child can be left without recourse. Bullying is not a crime. Mandatory reporting deals with home not school abuse, and in Australia with our culture of not 'dobbing in' very few acts of bullying are ever reported.

Otherwise Known as Pig was written in response to these facts. It was written to give bullied teens a voice and hope. Their voice is Morgan's – sarcastic and clever with an angry heartlessness covering up the idealism. When told by a bullying teacher 'Don't be smart,' Morgan replies: 'Didn't realise purpose of education was to remove smartness. Glad we've cleared up that little misunderstanding.'

The hope is that when there's nothing you can do, no way to fight, you can still stand and face tomorrow. That, as Morgan says, 'I know I didn't have their courage – but I could pretend I did.'

Finally, the fact that the action happens at school makes it immediately relevant to students lives. The choices made by the bullies, victims and bystanders in *Otherwise Known as Pig* connect directly to the ethical and moral decisions the students will be called on to make; decisions that will determine the safety of their society.

4. Key curriculum links

These teacher's notes have been designed as a companion to the novel, *Otherwise Known as Pig*, with the aim of encouraging students to engage more closely with the text to promote emotional intelligence, critical interpretation, and a deeper understanding of using the English language for creative writing purposes.

The suggested questions and activities will encourage students to think critically and creatively, and to promote interpretation of meaning and themes behind the text. Additionally, students can examine the novel's style, voice, point of view etc. with questions that encourage group discussion and communication.

The following sections outline suggested questions to ask students, and activities to be performed to encourage group discussion and class engagement. They have been broken down into sections to enable teachers to identify which topics most suit their class or teaching style, or alternatively, for one or two questions to be selected from every section.

Learning Area: English Year 9–12

Otherwise Known as Pig is best studied in middle to late secondary grades (Years 9–12). Its themes of bullying, injustice, social dynamics and identity make it a good choice for units focusing on Ethical Behaviour and Personal and Social capability as well as Literacy and Critical and Creative Thinking. Specific connections to the Year 9 and 10 English syllabuses will be listed with the relevant exercises in these notes.

Facts on Bullying

Does it happen?

Yes, violent bullying happens regularly in schools. For example:

In Australia there have been at least two school stabbings reported in the media. (*News.com*, July 24, 2018 and *9 News*, June 28, 2019). A student in WA was held in a headlock on the ground and punched seventeen times and another girl was attacked while students filmed and laughed. (*9 News*, April 17, 2018)

- A student in Southern California was burnt with a cigarette lighter, threatened to be set on fire and was subject to students just 'walking up and punching them in the face' (Cleary, Sullivan, & Sullivan, 2005, p 69).
- A gang of girls and boys beat up a group of girls with 'kicks and punches hard enough to draw blood and break bones' as part of a community football game (Roberts Jr, 2006, p 9).
- Bystanders take turns to bully and close friends turn on the victim (Marr & Field, 2001, p 105).

These are just a few examples. Resources such as the SBS program on bullying (*Insight*, 2019, Episode 6: 'Stopping School Bullying') books such as *Bullycide* by Marr & Field (2001) and any quick Google search can uncover more. It is estimated that at least one in five students are regularly bullied at school with up to one in three adolescent suicides attributed to bullying (Cleary, Sullivan & Sullivan, 2005, pp 1–2). Every piece of bullying in *Otherwise Known as Pig* has a real-world counterpart.

Why don't people report it?

A statistical study was done on the likelihood of reporting bullying (Cleary, Sullivan, & Sullivan, 2005, p 8). The results showed:

- Adolescents are less likely to report bullying than any other age group.
- Males are less likely to report than females.
- Australians, with our strong anti-authoritarian culture, are the least likely nationality in the western world to report bullying.

As an adolescent Australian male Morgan is statistically the least likely person in the world to talk about his

problems.

High school bullying

- Australian children do believe that any male who does not play sport is a 'loser'. In a bullying workshop performed at upper primary school we asked the question 'What do you call a boy who doesn't play sport at all?' To the visible shock of the teachers present we ALWAYS got an answer like 'loser' or 'hopeless'.
- Female violent bullying has increased by up to 50% since 1980. (Marr & Field. 2001, p 212)
- Victims do not normally come from dysfunctional families or have other issues. (Marr & Field, 2001, p 141). However, victims may have up to a 33% higher suicide risk (Cleary, Sullivan, & Sullivan, 2005, pp 1-2).
- Except in Victoria one student bullying another student at school is not a crime (Nicholson, 2006, p 17). This is possibly changing though only the most severe attacks that leave children in hospital seem to be going to the police.
- Parent responses (usually male) on websites discussing bullying included comments like: 'It'll help them toughen up' and 'It's part of growing up'. They displayed a belief that physical bullying of boys was part of the experience of growing up as a male in Australia. (Home-school discussion boards 2019)

Otherwise Known as Pig is a work of fiction, but it represents a real-life problem.

5. Quick questions

These are questions with short, usually one word or sentence, answers intended to help students develop a list of facts and impressions that will help them write essays. They can be answered individually or in a group.

Central Plot

- Who punched Morgan in the mouth? (p 1).
- Why do you think Stormin often attacks Morgan after an English class? (p 168)
- How long has Stormin been bullying Morgan? (p 51)
- What is the one time Morgan was pleased to hear Stormin's voice? Why? (p 90)
- What does Morgan say to Stormin just before Stormin breaks his collarbone? (p 155)
- What happens when Morgan behaves like a martyr? How does this change his dynamic with Stormin? (pp 184–186)
- In three to five sentences summarise the story between Stormin and Morgan.

Subplots

- Why does Lissa expect Morgan to hate her? (p 35)
- Lissa is one of the only people we have a physical description for. Why is that? What does she look like? (p 43, p 48)
- Why does Lissa refuse to admit to going out with Morgan? (p 112)
- Why does Chris hate Mrs Eveson and her pictures? (p 89)
- How does Chris treat his friend Alex? (pp 61–62)
- Morgan never learns to fight. What does he get out of boxing class? (p 119, p 164, p 193)
- Why does Morgan's dad want him to play football? (pp 158–159)
- Who wins round twenty-five? (p 194)
- Briefly describe your favourite 'round' between Morgan and the PE teacher.
- Pick two subplots (Lissa/Chris/Alex/the PE Teacher/I've-Got-a-.22). In no more than three sentences each summarise these two plots.

Comic relief

- What is 'the only solution for the environmentally conscious vandal to the problem of battery hens'? (p 12)
- How does Morgan 'cut out the middle man' with the PE teacher? (p 47)
- Who are the stars of *White Trash Does Keeping up with the Kardashians*? (p 78)
- What does *Sesame Street* have to do with table tennis? (p 117)
- Why is the closed shoe policy not a good OH&S decision? (p 189)

Characters

- Go through the book and make two lists: Named and Unnamed characters. (Note: Stormin is named as Stormin is a nickname he prefers)

- Does anyone change category?
- Pick one named and one unnamed character, make a list of what you know about them.

Style/Structure

- In what point of view is *Otherwise Known as Pig* written?
- What two fonts are used in the text. What are they used for?
- Give two examples of subjectless clauses and two examples of beginning a sentence with a conjunction in the text. What effect does this have on Morgan's voice?

Imagery

- Find three descriptions of breath in the book.
- Describe the 'tree' picture.
- List two descriptors (adjective or metaphor) used for Stormin.
- List two descriptors (adjective or metaphor) used for Chris..

6. In depth exercises

Bullying

Does it happen?

'Don't lie to me, boy. How do you explain the state we found you and young Alex in?' (p 42)

Research exercise: Pick three bullying incidents in *Otherwise Known as Pig* (one by Stormin, one by Chris and one that does not involve Morgan). Using computer, library and personal resources track down their real-world equivalents. (ACELT 1635)

Extension work: Follow up one case, see if you can discover what the results were. (ACELY 1645)

Creative exercise: Using the information you have learnt write a social media post about one of these incidents. (ACELY1746, ACELA1566, ACELT 1644)

Group work: Pick one post and 'share' it. Each group member gets three opportunities to comment on the post or on another's comments. Then, as a group, analyse your responses. (ACELT 1644, ACELY 1640).

Extension work: Comment on the post in the persona of one or more of the characters in *Otherwise Known as Pig*. (ACELT 1644, 1815)

How does bullying happen?

'Do you know what creates an unjust society?'

'Victims like me? People like...' I pause.

'Like Chris?' She looks up from the lighter. 'You'd think, so wouldn't you? But it's not. It's not you, and it's not just the people who are hurting you, Morgan. It's the rest of us: the people who don't do anything.' (p 108)

Comprehension/creative exercise: Everyone, including Morgan, sometimes thinks he's the reason he gets bullied. Is he right? Using the information found in *Otherwise Known as Pig* construct an argument for why Morgan deserves what happens to him. You can use any bias or misinformation that has been presented in the text to do this. Your argument does not need to be logical but must have rhetorical force. This can be done individually or in small groups. (ACELT 1565, 1633, 1635, 1812; ACELY 1740, 1811, 1746, 1756, 1752)

Group exercise: Now in groups analyse the arguments presented. How much do you believe? What bias/prejudice have you discovered in yourself? How easy/difficult is it to justify attacking someone? Present your conclusions to the class who can then discuss them. (ACELT 1565, 1633, 1635, 1812; ACELY 1740, 1811, 1746, 1756, 1752)

Performance exercise: Present this argument verbally as a reason for why it was right not to interfere or to join in when Morgan was bullied. Imagine you are talking to a friend or teacher or parent. If in a group do this as a short play. (ACELY 1813, 1741)

Extension exercise: Construct the same argument/ do any of the above exercises from the perspective of a character in the book. (ACELT 1773, ACELT 1815, 1644)

Research extension: Find an example of group prejudice that has resulted in serious harm (example: Ku Klux Klan, Nazi Germany, treatment of indigenous Australians). What were the biases and beliefs that led to these actions? Would they have been possible without community agreement or inaction? (ACELA 1551, ACELT 1633, ACELY 1752)

Other themes

Hate, Compassion and Schadenfreude

- *'I hate Marfield.'* (Morgan, p 63)

Morgan takes less than 10 minutes to make a list of 10 things he hates about Marfield. He then spends a

further 40 minutes trying to make a list of 10 things he likes. Why does he do this? Is his list positive? With reference to the text discuss where Morgan does and does not have a positive attitude. (ACELY 1752, ACELA 1552, 1553, 1561)

Creative exercise: Write your own 10 things I like about poem. (ACELY 1739, ACELT 1773, 1638, 1644)

- *'Had the stupidest thought that if I hadn't had that moment of compassion, I'd be bleeding my life out in the lower school courtyard.'* (Morgan, p 133)
What happens when Morgan displays compassion? Analyse what role compassion plays in *Otherwise Known as Pig*. (ACELT 1771, 1635, 1642, ACELY 1752)
- *'Bite down on my fear and pull up every bit of hate I have. Let it drag me to my feet.'* (Morgan, p 155)
'I close my eyes and drag up the last of my hope. Let it pull me to my feet.' (Morgan, p 185)
In both these scenes Morgan is trying to stand up to Stormin. How are they different? How does Morgan's act of replacing hate with hope effect his and Stormin's behaviour? (ACELT 1771, 1635, 1642, ACELY 1752, 1739)

Art and story

- *'I happen to believe art needs a redemptive quality to be good.'* (Mrs Everson, p 108)
She seemed honest and dedicated and I felt like I was making a snuff film. (p 183)
Contrast the attitudes of Mrs Everson and Stormcrow towards art. (ACELA 1565, ACELT 1812, 1771, ACELY 1740, 1752).
- *'Story is the way we interpret the world.'* (Stormcrow, p 174)
What stories resonate with your life? Refer to texts, movies, songs or online sources. (ACELT 1635, 1642, 1771, ACELY 1739)
- *This isn't how the story is meant to go.* (p 123)
What attempts does Morgan make to interpret his reality with stories Why is this difficult? He has no religious background so why does the martyr story resonate so strongly with him? (ACELT 1633, 1640, 1642, 1771, ACELY 1739)

Identity/Stereotypes

- *And – stupid though it sounds – I thought the boxing classes would teach me how to fight. I mean, I can't play sport, so I need something to prove I'm a guy.* (Morgan, p 128)
Why would Morgan need to play sport or fight? Analyse the view of masculine identity presented in *Otherwise Known as Pig*. What effect does this view have? What do you think about this view? Do you agree with it? (ACELA 1551, ACELT 1633, 1635, 1812, ACELY 1740, 1752)
- *It's obviously going to be a girls-can-beat-you-up-too demonstration. It's the latest bullying trend and we're very progressive at Marfield.* (p 54)
Why would female violence be increasing? Analyse this trend in the light of the gender identity changes of the last fifty years. (ACELT 1633, 1635, 1812, ACELY 1740, 1752)

Justice

Battleaxe moves her gun-sights in our direction and my praise of To Kill a Mockingbird goes unsaid. I know it was written years ago but it seems relevant to me. Injustice – it hasn't gone out of fashion yet. The cops still target you if you look different, and what about those kids on Manus Island? Not to mention the shit that happens here every day. I don't know what planet Jayden is on. (p 181)

Intertext exercise: Use *Otherwise Known as Pig* and at least one other source (possible examples: *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, *The Justice Game*, any Batman movie, *Macbeth*, *Murder on the Orient Express*) to explore the question of justice. What is it? Why is it important? What happens when it breaks down? Reference current events as well as the texts in your answer. (ACELA 1565, ACELT 1633, 1635, 1640, 1812, 1771, 1634, 1772, ACELY 1740, 1752, 1744, 1739)

Characters

Morgan

- *I really should learn to keep my stupid mouth shut.* (p 2)
Why does Morgan keep talking even though it gets him hurt? (ACELT 1771, 1634, 1772, 1642, 1812, ACELY 1752)
- *'I don't know,' I reply, bloody, bowed and hating his guts. 'I can read.'* (Morgan, p 2)
What does this line tell you about Morgan? (ACELT 1771, 1634, 1772, 1642, 1812, ACELY 1752)
- *'I don't hate you.'* (Morgan, p 34)
Why should Morgan hate Lissa? Why doesn't he? How does Morgan's forgiveness of Lissa effect our view of him? (ACELT 1771, 1634, 1772, 1642, 1812, ACELY 1752)
- *It's not a heroic defence.* (p 56)
Morgan does not see himself as any form of hero. Is he right? What makes someone a hero?

Text extension: Compare the view of heroism in *Otherwise Known as Pig* and two other texts (can be written or visual or multimedia). How do any of these pictures relate to the classic heroes' journey?

Stormin

- *Stormin looks as surprised as I do to be treated like a human being.* (p 14)
Discuss how Stormin is/is not presented as a human being in *Otherwise Known as Pig*. (ACELT 1771, 1634, 1772, 1642, 1812, ACELY 1752)

Creative exercise: Draw/photoshop a picture of Stormin. Remember we are never told what he looks like, so you will need to match his picture to what you know of his character. Afterwards analyse why you made the choices you did. Were you responding to stereotypes? (ACELA 1561, ACELT 1771, ACELY 1740, ACELT 1638)

- *I'm sure Stormin would be there too, but he lacks community spirit.* (p 59)
Both Stormin and Morgan are loners. Why do you think this is? How does it affect them?

Personal extension: Why is it important for people to interact with each other even though it can be painful? Discuss as a class or in small groups.

Chris

- *No one is crazy like Chris.* (p 129)
Morgan describes Chris as 'the school psycho'. Is he right? With reference to imagery and actions discuss how Chris is represented in *Otherwise Known as Pig*.

Creative extension: Write a report on Chris for his new foster parents. You will need to decide whether you are or are not concerned about his mental health.

Lissa

- *Lissa's eyes were flickering like broken bulbs and she had red marks around one of them. Shiny red marks around a green-brown eye with tiny gold flecks. I would spend two weeks trying to draw Lissa's eyes and they would end up looking like fly-spotted gumballs. Bit of a waste really.* (p 43)
Lissa is as much of a victim of bullying as Morgan. How does this help and hinder her relationship with Morgan? (ACELT 1771, 1635, 1812, ACELY 1752)

Group exercise: Discuss the situations of Lissa, Morgan, Steff and Alex. Which is worse? Why? Conduct a debate (formal or informal) on the question 'Lissa is more a victim of bullying than Morgan.' (ACELT 1811, 1771, 1635, 1812, ACELY 1813, 1752)

Language: Morgan often uses absurd metaphors to describe Lissa (like gumball eyes or corkscrew hair). What effect does this have, especially in contrast to Lissa and his situation? Do you think it indicates a lack of feeling on Morgan's part? (ACELA 1552, 1561, ACELT 1637)

- *I do love you, Morgan.* (Lissa, p 163)

Lissa says she loves Morgan. Do you think it is true? How would you describe Lissa and Morgan's romance? Compare it to other love stories in texts or movies. (ACELT 1635, 1771, 1812, ACELY 1740, 1752, 1744)

Minor characters

- *'Total loser,' Girl One agrees. She turns her back and takes the lipstick off her friend. 'And you call him Pig.'* (p 4)
Morgan is depersonalised by most of his peers and in turn he names very few people in the book. Instead he uses the cinema naming convention for minor characters, handing out names such as Girl One, I've-Got-a-.22 and Hard Nose Cop (Male).

Discuss why Morgan does this and what effect it has in the book. Does it make it easier to distinguish characters and to identify stereotypes? Reference both comic and serious uses of the convention in your answer. (ACELA 1553, ACELT 1637, 1642, 1771, ACELA 1551, ACELY 1740, 1739, 1745)

Creative/social exercise: Pick ten people from your life and 'name' them like Morgan. Write a short description that matches the name you have given them. Example rooster red hair and obsessed with shooting things: I've-got-a-.22. (ACELA 1551, 1553, 1552, 1561, ACELT 1635, 1773, 1638, 1644, ACELY 1740, 1750, 1745)

Creative exercise: Pick one of the non-named characters in *Otherwise Known as Pig*.

Write a short scene involving them (including set and character description) and perform it for the class. (ACELY 1740, 1746, 1750, ACELT 1815, 1644, 1741, 1638)

Or create a short graphic story (ACELT 1638, ACELY 1740, 1746, 1750, ACELT 1815, 1644, 1638)

Or create a Facebook page for them (ACELY 1740, 1746, 1750, ACELT 1815, 1644, 1638)

Structure and Voice

- *Otherwise Known as Pig* is written in a deliberately colloquial style. It is informal, often grammatically incorrect and lacks traditional literary devices. Pick a section of narrative voice (non-italics). Analyse sentence length, verbless and subjectless clauses, use of adjectives, adverbs – What effect does this have? (ACELA 1552, 1564, 1567, 1557, 1561, 1569 ACELT 1642)

Intertext exercise: Compare *Otherwise Known as Pig* to a traditional Australian play (*Summer 17thly Doll, Don's Party*). Analyse the similarity of language use. (ACELY 1745, 1561)

Extension exercise: Pick a page of narrative and 'fix' the grammar, remove poor adverbs like 'really' or 'very'. Add some traditional metaphors. What effect has this had on Morgan's 'voice'. Try reading both versions out loud. (ACELT 1638, ACELA 1553, ACELT 1642)

- *Otherwise Known as Pig* is written in first person with both narrative and diary entries. What effect does this have? Compare the two styles. Apart from font what other differences are there? What effect do these have? What do you think the purpose of the diary entries are? (ACELA 1553, 1556, 1564, 1567, 1561, 1569, ACELT 1642)

Cultural extension: Over the last fifty years the bulk of Young Adult novels have moved from third person past tense to first person present tense. Does this reflect a growing desire for instant stimulation? Discuss as a group/class. (ACELT 1642, 1633, 1635 ACELY 1745)

- *Why does no one take my side?* (p 128)

Another characteristic of Morgan's diary entries is that they break the fourth wall and talk to the reader. Why does Morgan do this? (he tells us). What effect does it have on a reader? (ACELA 1553, ACELA 1564, ACELT 1642)

Creative exercise: Pick a question that Morgan asks in his diary and answer it. Do so as yourself and give reasons for your answer. (ACELT 1644, 1635, ACELY 1752)

Extension work: Answer one of Morgan's questions as a character from *Otherwise Known as Pig*. (ACELT 1644, 1815)

Group exercise (2 people): Copy one of Morgan's entries with a question. Then one person answers the question

in the diary, the second person replies as Morgan. Continue the conversation but only as a written document. Do not talk. This could be done as an email or text conversation. (ACELT 1644, ACELY 1746, 1756)

Imagery

- *I might mention one day – not today, I’ve spilled my guts enough today – that looking at that painting was what it felt like to know I could come into the art room with my burnt-sienna bruises and be safe.* (p 52)
This painting of a boy and tree is one of the few things Morgan describes fully, and it obviously affects him. Why might it make him feel safe? How is the image used in different places in the text? (ACELA 1552, 1561, ACELT 1637)
- *‘Yeah, we do.’ Draw in a breath with considerable effort. ‘What did you want to talk to me about, Chris?’* (Morgan, p 88)
Breath is mentioned 36 times in the text. With reference to at least five examples describe how references to breathing are used. What effect does this have? (ACELA 1552, 1561, ACELT 1642, 1637)

Research exercise: Google information about sympathetic breathing. (ACELT 1635, 1637)

- Comic style descriptors are often used for violent actions in *Otherwise Known as Pig*. Why is this? Does it make the violence easier to accept? (ACELA 1553, 1556, 1587, 1561, 1569 ACELT 1642, ACELY 1745)

Creative exercise: Draw/photoshop one of the scenes where Stormin beats up Morgan as a comic. (ACELY 1735, ACELT 1638, 1773)

- *You can tell it’s a HASS room by the pictures of starving people looking surprisingly happy.* (p 125)
Morgan rarely gives physical description of people or places. Instead he creates social pictures of his environment. In the same way he rarely describes a person directly.

Exercise: Pick one of Morgan’s standard descriptions (do not include Lissa or any pictures). What impression do you get from these? How has the author used evocative descriptors to create a picture? (ACELA 1552, 1561)

Exercise: Draw (or photoshop) a character from *Otherwise Known as Pig* (not Lissa or Morgan). What do they look like? Given the lack of information about physical appearance why did you make the choices you did? Were you responding to stereotypes? (ACELA 1561, ACELT 1771, ACELY 1740, ACELT 1638)

- *I’m not fat, I’m not pink, and my eyes don’t bulge out. I DON’T LOOK LIKE A PIG!* (p 5)
One of the challenges of first-person narrative is giving the reader an idea of what the main character looks like. This difficulty is amplified when the character is a 14-year-old male who is uninterested in his own appearance.

Exercise: Is it important to know what Morgan looks like? Why/why not? How do we find out about his appearance? Why not just have Morgan look in a mirror and describe himself? (ACELA 1553, 1564, ACELT 1642,)

Creative exercise: Write a short story in the first person that includes a description of the narrator. Be as creative as possible in how you do this. ((ACELY 1815, ACELT 1638)

Major group extension exercise

This exercise would take multiple lessons. However, as it covers character, theme, language, performance and social connection it could provide an interesting alternative way to study the text. Syllabus areas covered are (ACELA 1551, 1565, ACELT 1635, 1633, 1812, 1815, 1642, 1638, 1553, 1561, ACELY 1740, 1746, 1811, 1741, 1756, 1750, 1813, 1752)

Part one: Students pick a character from the novel (not Morgan, Stormin, or Mrs Blah Blah).

Suggested characters are Alex, Girl Two, Number Two Bully, I've-Got-a-.22, Botox Girl, Not-Yet-Ex-Boyfriend, Jayden, Steff, Chris, Lissa, Freckle Face, Spike, Amy (the girl from Drama) and Shovel Face.

Students will then answer the following questions about their character:

- Are they outspoken or shy?
- Do they display the courage of their convictions or do they bow to social pressure?
- What do they think about Morgan?
- Name between one and three things that are most important to them
- Do you like them? Why/why not?
- How do they talk? Do they swear, are they verbose or curt? Do they use any characteristic phrases or words
- How persuasive are they? Are they capable of logical or rhetorical argument?
- Who are their friends/social connections?

Part Two: Once students have completed this task present the following scenario to them.

There has been an announcement from the school principle (Mrs Blah Blah):

'It has come to our attention that there may have been an isolated bullying incident. Now, while I am sure no student would behave badly, in the interests of school community and ethical transparency, I am allowing a classroom discussion and vote on the issue. The students involved, Michael Lawson and Morgan Lohdi, will not participate leaving it up to their peers to determine if there has been any misconduct. If this is the case, in line with the school's strict no-bullying policy, the offending student will be immediately suspended. I am sure you will agree that this innovative process will see justice done.'

Morgan is sitting in one corner, glaring at his fellow students as if he'd quite like to shoot the lot of them.

Stormin is sitting in the other. He's scowling, and his fists are clenched.

The class is ready to vote.

Using the information gathered on their character each student must now vote. They will have time to prepare a short speech to be given publicly with their vote. Where characters have friendship or other connections, they will discuss their vote in the character groups.

After the vote students write a short description of their speech and the reasons the character had for voting as they did. They then analyse why they voted as they did and how they may have voted differently if the vote had been private or online.

Part three: Finish with class discussion.

What does this tell us about democracy? About why people do and don't act the way they do?

A simpler (though even more confronting) version of this exercise is to have student construct their own arguments, rather than attempt to create the arguments of a character in the book.

7. Appendix A: References for bullying

The following is a collection of references about bullying used when writing *Otherwise Known as Pig*. They may be useful for extension work on bullying.

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