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Ages 8+ KS2 Notes for teachers

Subject Checklist: • Literacy • Drama • P.S.H.E./R.S.E. • Art and design



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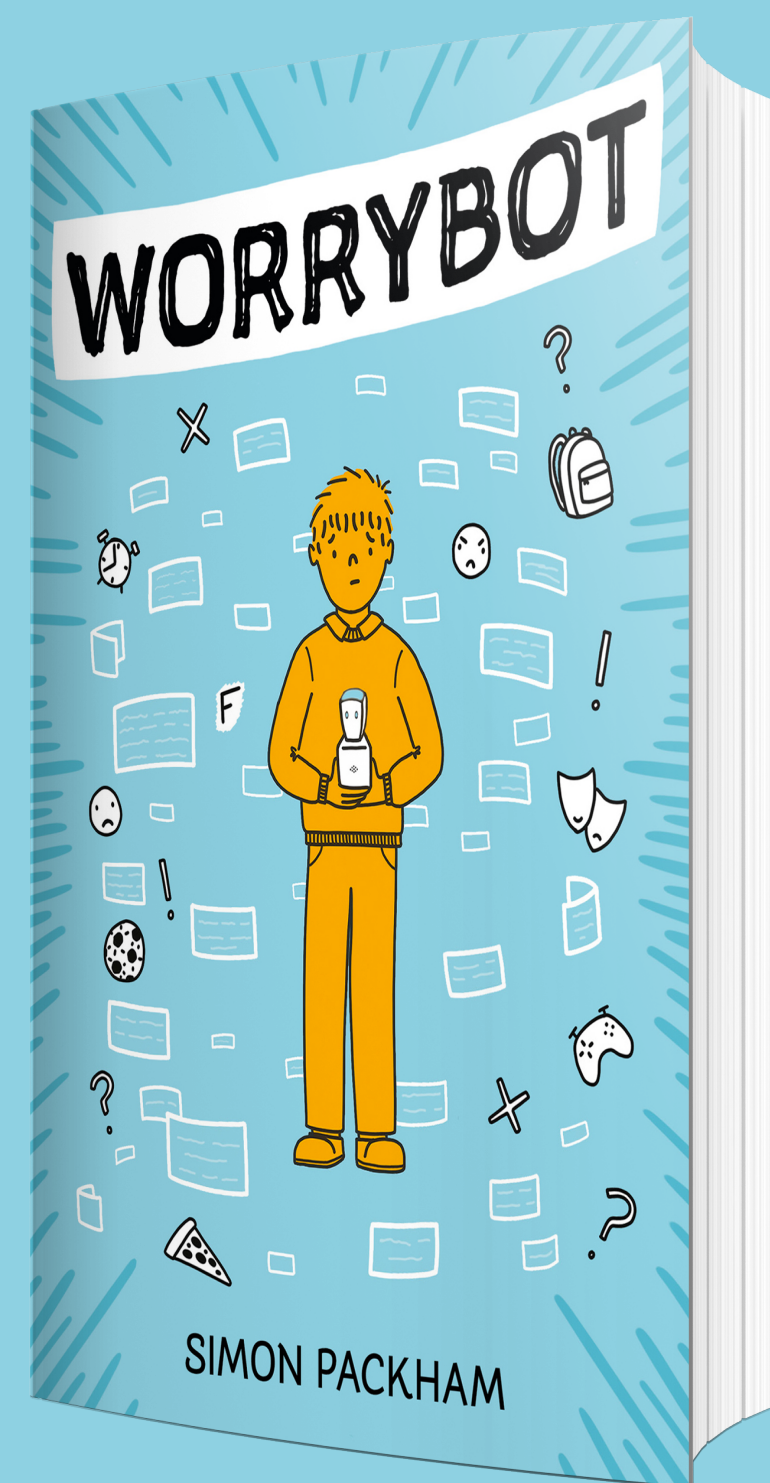
ABOUT THE BOOK

Josh is such a worrier. He worries about everything. Water slides. School. Global warming. Sleepovers. But he knows something is really wrong when his mum and dad begin to act strangely... His family is moving to Brighton and he must start a new school with new teachers, new pupils and new everything!

He used to have his own Worrybot - a home-made cardboard robot which was supposed to eat up his worst fears if he wrote them down on bits of paper and posted them into its mouth. It did help a bit. But now Josh is terrified that his anxiety will return when he starts at his new school. And he is more than a bit surprised to discover that there's a robot in his new class - a real-life learning robot which sits on the desk next to his and allows classmate Charlie to join lessons remotely. Soon Charlie becomes Josh's best - perhaps his only - friend.

Will Charlie's friendship help Josh overcome his fears, or will it just give nasty Noah more reasons to make fun of him? And why won't Charlie come to school anyway?

A suspenseful story of emotional high stakes that will appeal to fans of Lisa Thompson, Ross Welford and Elle McNicoll.



Contents

Theme 1 – What does anxiety feel like?..... pg 6

Activities: Use colour, line, shape and words to express how Josh feels and what he is thinking.

Objectives: Make inferences about a character's thoughts and feelings based on details stated and implied. Be able to recognise and name anxiety.

Theme 2 – Managing worry and anxiety ... pg 10

Activities: Design and make a Worrybot.

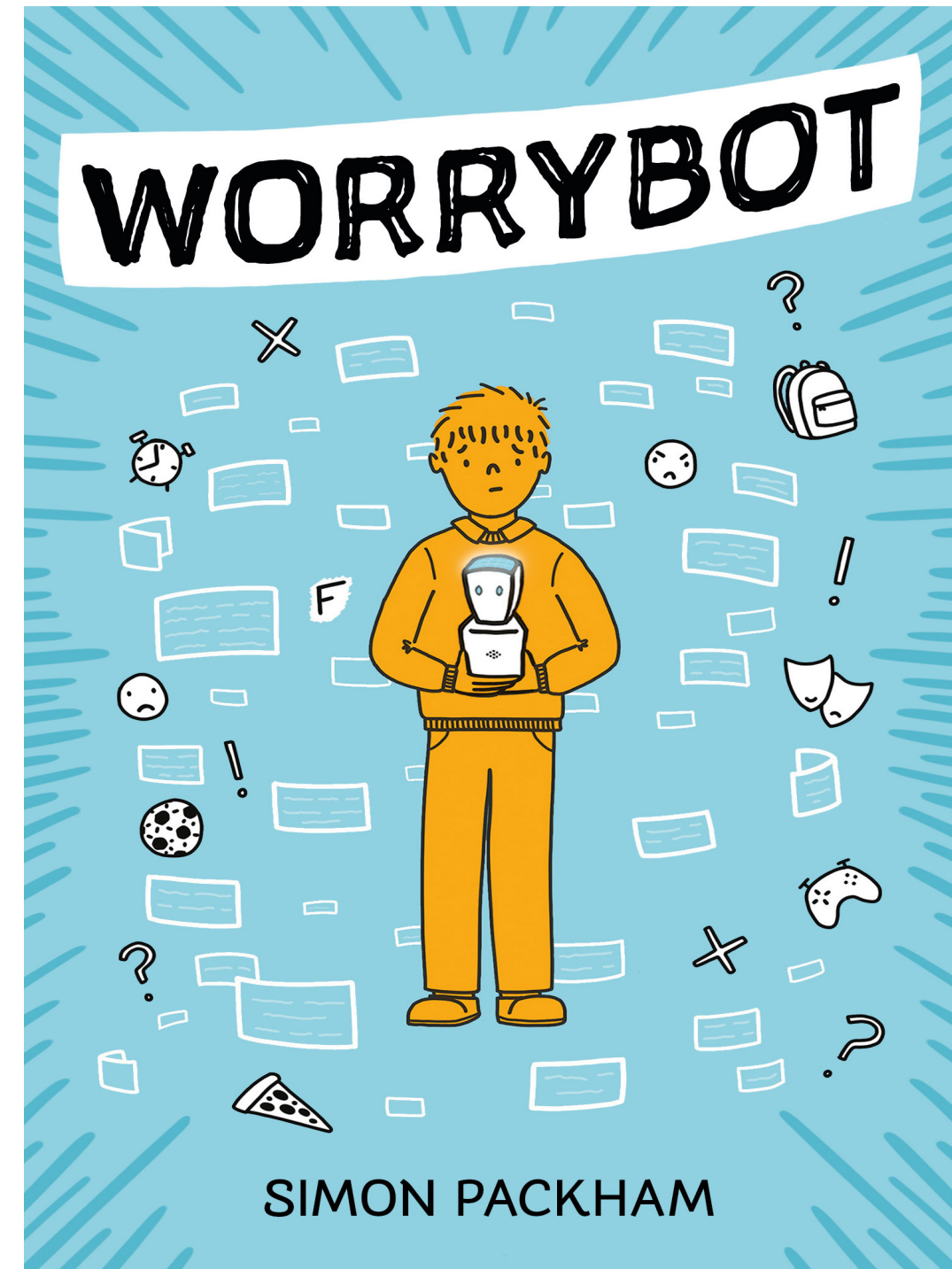
Objectives: Practise using a strategy that may help manage worries.

Theme 3 – New challenges pg 14

Activities: Write a letter to Josh.

Objectives: Empathise with a character and understand his thoughts, feelings and motivations.

Further Activities pg 18



- How do you think the character on the cover feels?
- What pictures and symbols can you see around the outside? Why do you think the illustrator may have included these pictures?
- What do you think a 'worrybot' might be?
- Can you think of three questions about the book based on the front cover?
- What genre do you think the book might fit within?

Theme 1: How does anxiety feel?

In this extract, Mum and Dad give Josh and Willow some big news...

Dad grabs a piece of cold pepperoni from the pizza box. "So, we're moving to Brighton. Exciting, isn't it, guys?"

"Yaaaaaay," say Willow and Mr Prickles, who obviously haven't thought it through.

I have though, and I'm starting to feel sick again. "Dad's car can hardly get to the shops and back. Who's going to drive us to school?"

"Nobody," says Mum. "We'll make sure we live within walking distance of your new one."

That's when the butterflies start doing aerobatics in my stomach. "New school? But I don't want to go to a new school."

"Neither do I," Willow pulls a confused face. "What about all my friends?"

"You'll make new friends," says Dad. "And you can still FaceTime all the old ones. That way you'll have twice as many."

"Oh yes," says Willow.

I try to count to ten. One . . . two . . . three ... Oh no, not this again! My mouth has gone all dry and I've got that horrible wobbly feeling in my legs. I can't even remember what number comes next!

"What about me?" I whisper, a sickly mixture of marshmallows and pepperoni churning in my stomach. "You know how much I hate changes. Why can't I stay at St Andrew's? This is so unfair."

"It's all right, my love," says Mum. "We won't be moving for another three months. You'll have plenty of time to get used to the idea."

I swallow hard and try not to be sick as about a hundred major catastrophes try to force their way into my head. "I'll never get used to the idea."

Discussion Questions

1. Can you underline any words or phrases that tell you how Josh feels?
2. The author could have written, "I feel anxious" but instead he wrote, "Butterflies start doing aerobatics in my stomach." Why do you think he made this choice?
3. Do you think Josh has felt like this before?
4. Why do you think Josh starts counting to ten?
5. What are Josh's reasons for not wanting to move to Brighton?

Notes:

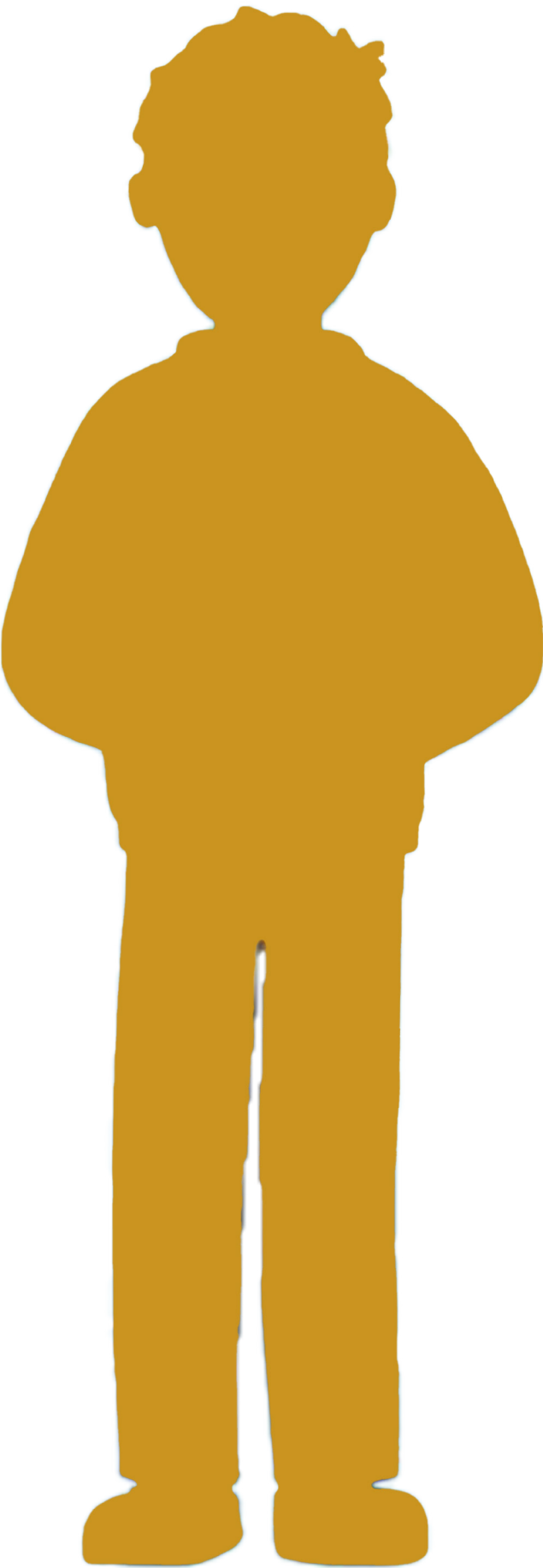
Activity: Josh’s feelings

- Re-read the parts of the extract you have underlined.
- Inside the outline, draw how Josh feels in different parts of his body. You can use colour and shape to express different sensations and emotions.
- What thoughts might be going through Josh’s head? Write Josh’s thoughts around the outside of the picture.

Activity: Josh’s feelings

- Everybody feels worried or anxious sometimes. Have you ever felt like this? Do you know any strategies to help manage worry or anxiety? Discuss with your class.

Notes:



Theme 2: Managing anxiety and worry

In this extract, Josh has taken his Worrybot out from under his bed...

Believe it or not, Mum and I spent a whole Sunday afternoon making him. He's supposed to be a robot, but he's basically three old shoe boxes, at least a roll-and-a-half of Sellotape and a lot of paint.

It was Mrs Collins' idea to write down my worries and post them through the slit in my Worry bot's mouth so that they couldn't get out again. Yes, I know; sounds silly doesn't it? That's why I told her I wasn't doing it. In the end, Mum persuaded me to give it a try. And believe it or not, it did actually help. Every time I felt anxious about something, I'd write it down on a scrap of paper, fold it up and stash it away in my Worrybot.

I didn't really want to do it at first. So, Mum and Dad put in a few worries of their own to get me started. Once I'd come up with my first one (what to wear on World Book Day) it was easy. I'm not saying all my worries vanished overnight but writing them definitely made them a bit less scary.

"Open the Worrybot!" whispers my Wolverine poster.

"Open the Worrybot!" say Raheem Sterling and Harry Kane.

"Open the Worrybot!" call an assortment of action figures and Lego people from under the bed. Until everything in my bedroom (even the PlayStation and my football lamp) are yelling at me to take a look inside.

Slowly, I pull his head off and prepare to face my fears.

I certainly had a lot of them. The Worrybot is practically full.

Luckily for me, I'm not really like that anymore. Even my handwriting has improved. As soon as I've unfolded a few scraps of paper, I'm certain that I've done the right thing. Because most of this stuff just doesn't worry me now:

Being late for school.

Adverbs.

The lockdown.

Orange juice with bits in it (I still don't like it, but it definitely doesn't scare me!).

My performance management appraisal meeting (I think that's one of Mum's).

Callum's sleepover.

Swimming lessons.

Discussion Questions

1. What is Josh's Worrybot made from?
2. What was the first worry Josh put in his Worrybot?
3. In what way did the Worrybot help Josh?
4. How does Josh feel about the worries in his Worrybot now?
5. Can you think of something you have in common with Josh?

Notes:

Activity: Design and make your own Worrybot!

Step 1

Design your very own Worrybot! Josh’s Worrybot is bright green with ‘big splodgy eyes and toilet roll feet’ (page 17). What will yours look like? Don’t forget, it will need a hole for a mouth so it can eat up all your worries! Draw your design in the box opposite.

Step 2

Now it’s time to get crafty and make your Worrybot! You could use old boxes, paint, coloured paper, pipe cleaners, toilet rolls, paper cups, tin foil, beads, buttons or any other junk or craft supplies you have.

Keep your Worrybot somewhere safe. Whenever you’re anxious, you can write it down on a piece of paper, fold it up and feed it to your Worrybot. Like Josh, you might find that writing your worries down makes them feel a bit less scary.

It’s important to remember that you can always talk with a trusted adult about the worries in your Worrybot. Josh talked to his parents and his teacher about his worries. Who could you talk to about your worries?

Tip- Different strategies work for different people. At the end of the book are some more techniques to help manage anxiety. Try them out with your class. Which ones do you find most helpful? When might you use them?

My Worrybot

Theme 3: New challenges

In this extract, Miss Wright is giving out parts in the Drama Club play...

“Last but not least, we have our two time travellers, Sam and Lucy.” Miss Wright waves the final script in the air. “You guys work so well together that it was actually a very easy decision.”

A murmur of expectation circles the classroom. My heart starts doing backflips.

“Soooo, Charlie, I want you to play Lucy. Don’t worry, I’ll e-mail you a script after school.

Which means Josh, you’re going to be our Sam.” Everything goes all strange and echoey and I think I’m going to be sick.

No, no, no, no, **no**, **no**!

Unbelievably, the robot in front of me sounds pretty delighted. “Yeesssss!”

Most of the others seem OK with it as well.

Which leaves only two members of Drama Club who hate the idea.

“You sure about that, Miss?” smirks Noah. “How can a time traveller called Lucy be a robot?”

“She’s from the twenty-sixth century, Noah. Friendships between humans and highly advanced forms of artificial intelligence will probably be very common.”

“Sit down, Noah,” says Ruby. “I think it’s a great idea.”

Unfortunately, Noah hasn’t finished yet. “What if she loses her Wi-Fi connection? If you ask me, it’s a terrible idea.”

“Well, I’m not,” says Miss Wright firmly. “Josh and Charlie will be excellent. If we have any technical problems, I’m sure we’ll be able to cope.”

But I agree with Noah. I mean, Charlie would definitely be good as Lucy, but if Miss Wright had seen Mr Scrooge’s Rock ‘N’ Roll Christmas, she’d realise that casting me as Sam is the worst decision she’s ever made.

So I’m just about to suggest she tries Harry (or even Ethan) when the bell goes and there’s a mad dash for the door.

“Please don’t run,” says Miss Wright, grabbing her laptop and following them out to the corridor. “How many times do I have to tell you, 6W?”

“Miss, Miss,” I call. “I need to talk to you, Miss. It’s about the play.”

“Not now, Josh. I know you’re excited, but I have to catch Mr Dully before the staff meeting. If you’ve got any questions, we can talk about it tomorrow.”

Discussion Questions

1. How does Josh feel when he hears he has been given a part in the play? Why do you think he feels like this?
2. Why do you think the author has repeated the word ‘no’ with the font size getting bigger and bigger?
3. How does Charlie react to the announcement?
4. Have you ever done something that has made you feel nervous? How did you get through it? How did you feel after you’d done it?
5. As Miss Wright dashes off to the staff meeting, Josh and Charlie are left in the classroom. What do you think Josh and Charlie might say to each other? With a partner, role-play a conversation between the two of them. What do they each think and feel about being in the play? How might they help or support each other?

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Activity: Advice for Josh

Write a supportive letter to Josh. You could begin your letter by showing Josh that you understand how he feels. Now, think about what advice you'd like to give him. Do you think he should accept his part in the play or tell Miss Wright he doesn't want to be in it? What could he do to help himself feel calmer? Think about how you could reassure Josh and help him feel more confident in himself.

Here are some sentence starters you could use:

I understand that you feel... If you... Perhaps you could.... Maybe... I think...
You are

Dear Josh,

Further activity ideas

- Being in the play is a big challenge for Josh. Sometimes it's good to try a new challenge (even if it makes you feel a bit nervous!) Is there a challenge you would like to set yourself? Perhaps you'd like to join a new club, take a speaking part in your class assembly or try a new position in your sports team? Choose a challenge for yourself and make a plan of action. What strategies will you use if you feel nervous? Who might help you? How will you feel when you have done it?
- How can you support your classmates when they are trying something new or feeling a bit nervous? Discuss as a class and create a mind-map of things you can all do to ensure your classroom is a friendly, supportive environment.
- Re-read chapter four to remind you of some of the things that Josh finds difficult when he starts Warmdene Primary School. How might you welcome somebody new to your school? Create a booklet designed to help newcomers settle into your school. What information will they need to know?
- Carry out some research into distance learning avatars such as the AV1. Why might a child not be able to go to school? How could a distance learning avatar help?
- Play Noah and hot seat them. What questions might you ask to find out more about Noah's feelings and motives?

- Having read to the end of the book, re-write a scene from Charlie's point of view. For example, you could re-write Chapters 5 and 6 when Josh first arrives at school. How does Charlie feel when she sees Josh come into the classroom? What are her thoughts as she is introduced to him?
- What is your impression of Noah? Does he remind you of any other characters in this book or other books? Why do you think he behaves as he does? As a class, you might like to choose a volunteer.
- Friendship is an important theme in the book. Can you think of three words to describe Josh and Charlie's friendship? What challenges has their friendship faced? What do you think each of them like and admire about the other?
- In the book, Dad is writing a one-man show called 'Rabbits Aren't the Answer to Everything' about loneliness. What role does loneliness play in the book? Which characters do you think experience loneliness? Is their loneliness resolved by the end of the book? How? Can you think of any ways that you could help to combat loneliness in your school or community?
- What do you think is next for Josh and Charlie? Write a text conversation between the two of them a year from the end of the book. How are they both doing? Are they still friends? What have they been up to and how have they each changed?

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