

HOW TO BE A REVOLUTIONARY



Don't
judge
a friend
by its tail

FIND YOUR PASSION
BUILD A TEAM
CHANGE THE WORLD

TEACHING RESOURCES



HOW TO BE A REVOLUTIONARY

by Lucy Ann Unwin

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE PACK

4x Lesson Plans and Ideas

Suitable for: Ages 9+

Explore themes of:

- ✓ **Political empowerment:** Explore Natalie's journey through learning about politics and the impact of individual voices in driving change. Recognise how activism and understanding political systems can shape society and make a difference.
- ✓ **Appreciating rats:** See how Natalie's bond with her pet rat not only showcases the value of compassion for all creatures but also challenges and changes common misconceptions about rats.
- ✓ **Prejudice and the unfair treatment of others:** Learn how prejudice affects people and communities and understand why confronting biases, assumptions and stereotypes are crucial for creating a fairer, more inclusive society.
- ✓ **Finding one's passions:** Discover how Natalie uncovers her true interests and how following her passions fuels her purpose. See how embracing what she loves leads to personal growth and inspires her to take meaningful actions.

Subjects: • English • Science • PSHE





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Objectives: Identify their personal passions; design a 'Passion Project' similar to the one described in the book and plan out actionable steps to make a positive change related to their interests.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INNOVATIVE IDEAS

NATIONAL CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES (KEY STAGE 2)



ABOUT THE BOOK

*'What do you all come here for?' 'Why, to change the world, of course!
Don't we all want to change the world... if we can?'*

A General Election is coming and the Revolutionaries are gathering at Natalie's house. She's determined to be a part of it all, but is it really just about red coats, muddy boots and piles of glossy leaflets?

*Surely changing the world should be more exciting than that?
It's time to start her OWN revolution – and it all begins with her pet rat...*

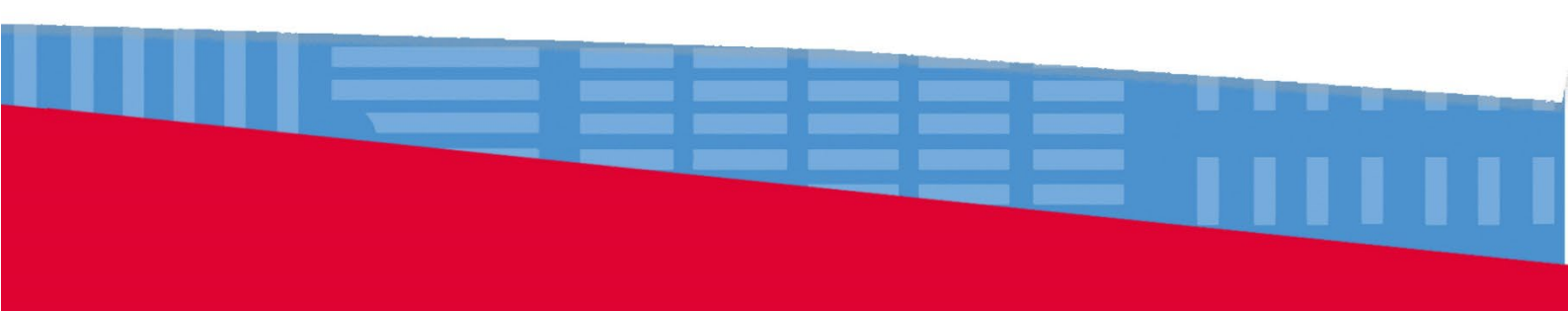
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

LUCY ANN UNWIN

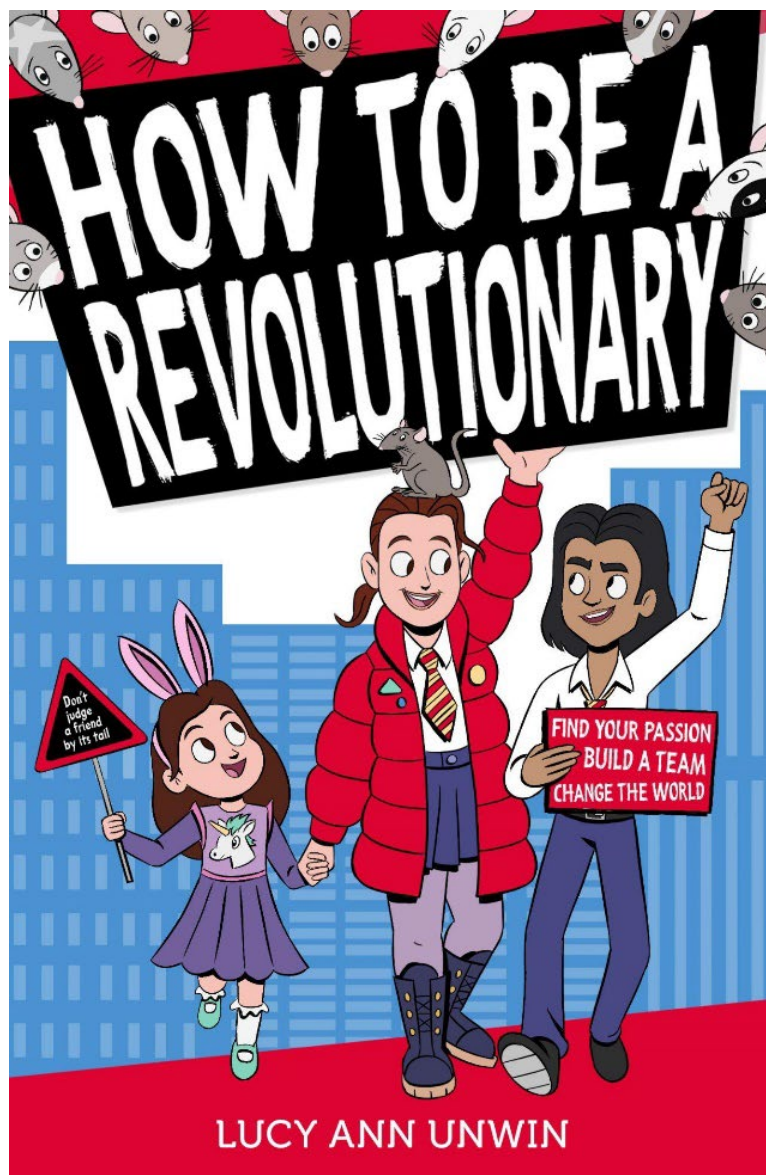
Lucy's professional background is in journalism. She was a music journalist at BBC 6 Music for 10 years, where she was privileged enough to interview the likes of Paul McCartney, Stevie Wonder and Adele, report live from the side of the Pyramid stage at Glastonbury, and absorb hundreds of hours of wonderful live music.

Brought up in Birmingham, Lucy has lived all around the UK, from Newcastle to Brixton, Worcester to Chesterfield. She also lived for a year in the Chilean city of Valparaiso, and for three years in San Francisco, where she tutored children and young adults in creative writing as part of the 826 Valencia writing programme, set up by Dave Eggers.

She has now settled on the Sussex cliff tops with her husband and two daughters (and tortoise), where she divides her time between writing, editing, book-selling and reading as much children's fiction as she can. Her first Book, *The Octopus, Dadu and Me*, was shortlisted for multiple awards, including The Brilliant Book Award.



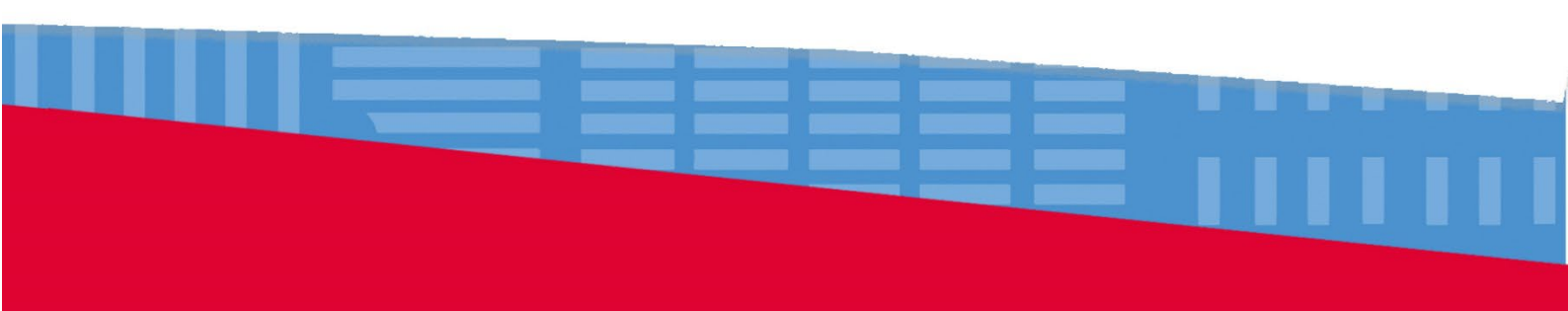
PRE-READING: COVER AND INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. Look carefully at the cover. What part do you find the most interesting? Why does it catch your eye?
 2. Who wrote this book? Have you read any other books by this author? If yes, what did you like about them?
 3. The cover features several rats surrounding the title and even sitting on the main character's head. What do you think these could symbolise or represent in the story?
 4. Why might the book be called 'How to Be a Revolutionary'? Do you know what a revolution is?
 5. The younger girl on the left is holding a sign that says "Don't judge a friend by its tail". What do you think this phrase means?
 6. Another character is holding a sign that reads, "Find Your Passion, Build a Team, Change the World." How do you think these three steps might be important in the story?
 7. Based on the title How to Be a Revolutionary and the cover image, what do you predict the book will be about? What kind of story or adventure do you think the characters will have?
 8. Does the cover make you want to read the book? Why or why not? What about the cover makes you feel that way?
 9. Now, read the blurb (the summary) on the back cover. What does it tell you about the story?
 10. After reading it, what questions do you have about the story? What are you most curious to find out when you read the book?
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LESSON 1

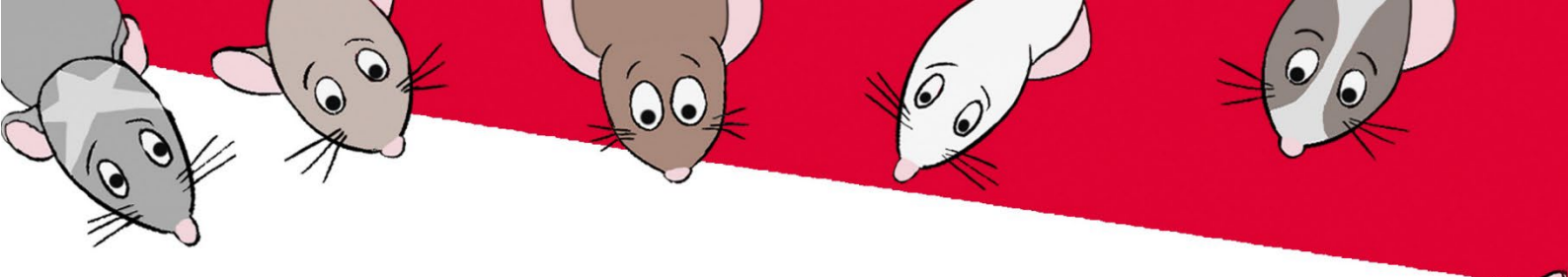
EXTRACT 1A: TOO YOUNG TO VOTE

(from CHAPTER 2 - Rats are THE BOSS
(but not suitable for bringing to school): pages 18-19)

I needed to make this more interesting. So far this morning, each presentation had been duller than the last. At least half the class had prepared little PowerPoint things to go with them . . . either zooming graphics and 'hilarious' captions, or loads of graphs and quotes and facts. The only one I was vaguely interested in was brainbox Annalise's.

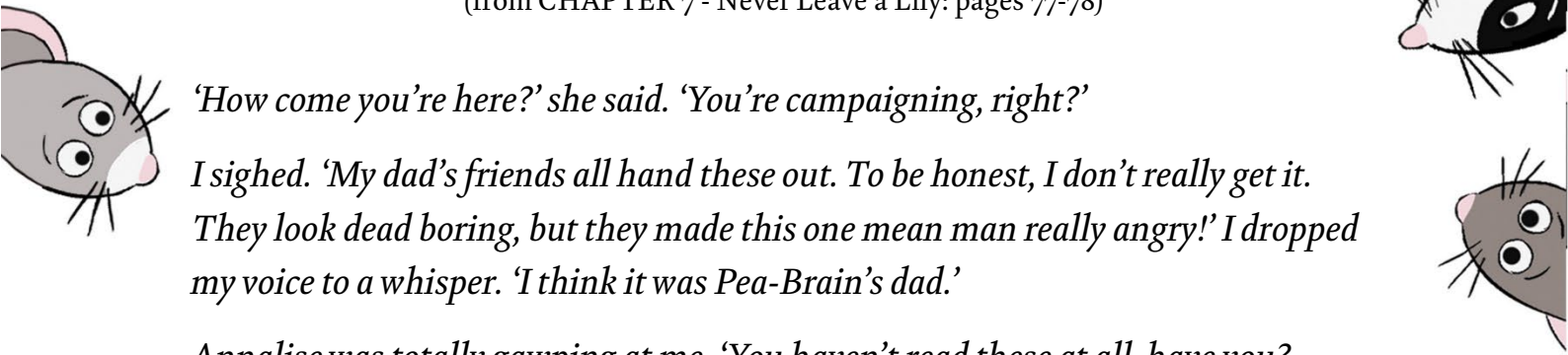
Her presentation was called 'Too Young to Vote', which I copied into my book from one of her slides. Apparently, there is another General Election coming up in a month, where everybody in the country – except us kids – gets to vote on who is in charge. As soon as she'd said it, I felt like an idiot. That was exactly like the last time the Revolutionaries had taken over; but Mum had talked about nothing else then, and this time Mum and Dad hadn't said anything to us at all. I just hadn't joined the dots.

I listened carefully to Annalise in case she revealed what exactly the Revolutionaries' role was. Had some clues. But her talk mainly seemed to be about how clever kids were, and how we knew better than adults.



EXTRACT 1B: THE BAD GUYS?

(from CHAPTER 7 - Never Leave a Lily: pages 77-78)



'How come you're here?' she said. 'You're campaigning, right?'

I sighed. 'My dad's friends all hand these out. To be honest, I don't really get it. They look dead boring, but they made this one mean man really angry!' I dropped my voice to a whisper. 'I think it was Pea-Brain's dad.'

Annalise was totally gawping at me. 'You haven't read these at all, have you? What did you think you were handing out?'

I shrugged. 'I mean, I know they're for Labour, and the election... This stuff's all over our house. I guess I hadn't really given much thought to the whole sides thing.'

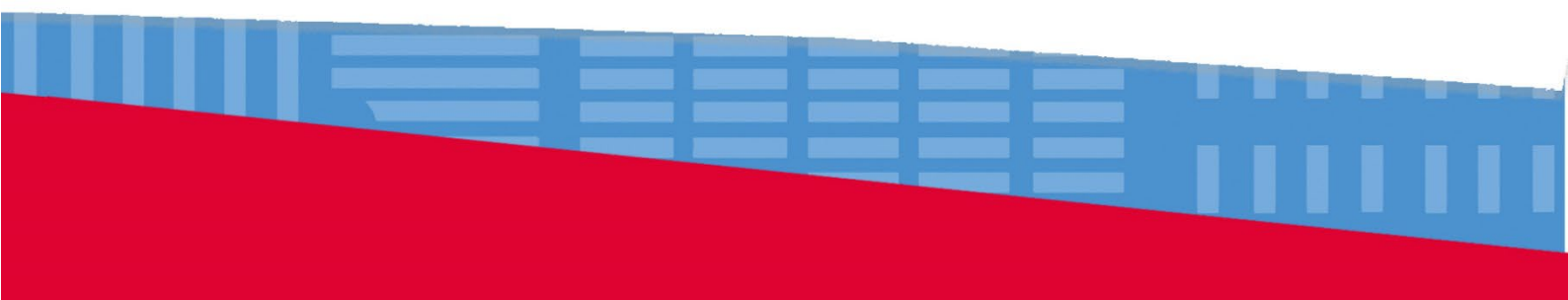
Annalise propped herself on the edge of the table. 'OK... ' She sounded like she was thinking. 'Well, my mum's a Labour supporter and always has been, but my dad votes for the Conservatives.'

I actually gasped. 'The bad guys?'

Annalise frowned. 'Well, it's not that simple, is it? My dad thinks his lot "help people help themselves".'

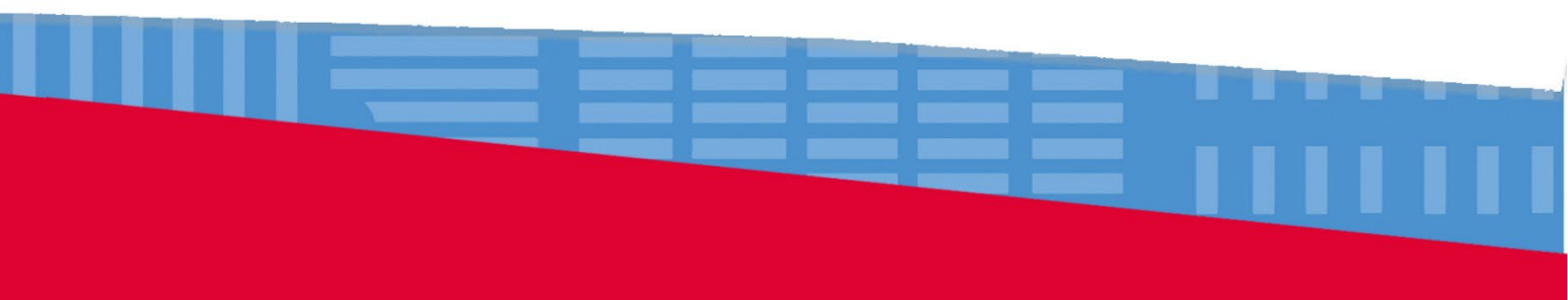
That certainly didn't sound evil. I remembered Bernard saying the other teams thought they were changing the world too.

'Mum says he just doesn't want to pay more tax though.' Annalise laughed, ponytail swinging. 'He goes pink when she says that, so I think she might be right! Anyway, I think I would vote Green...'





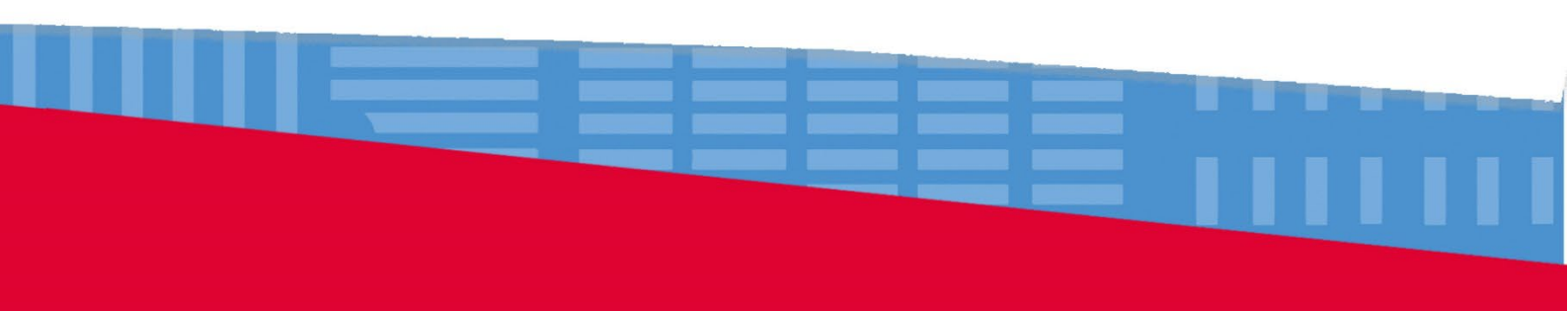
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

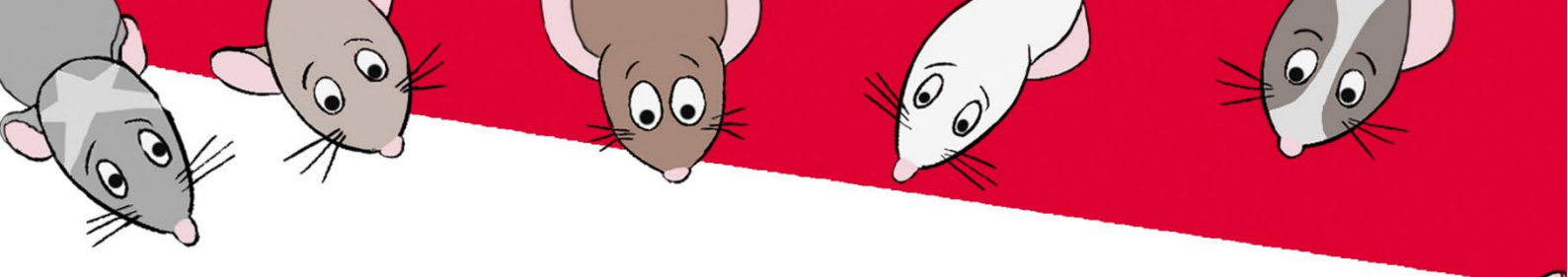



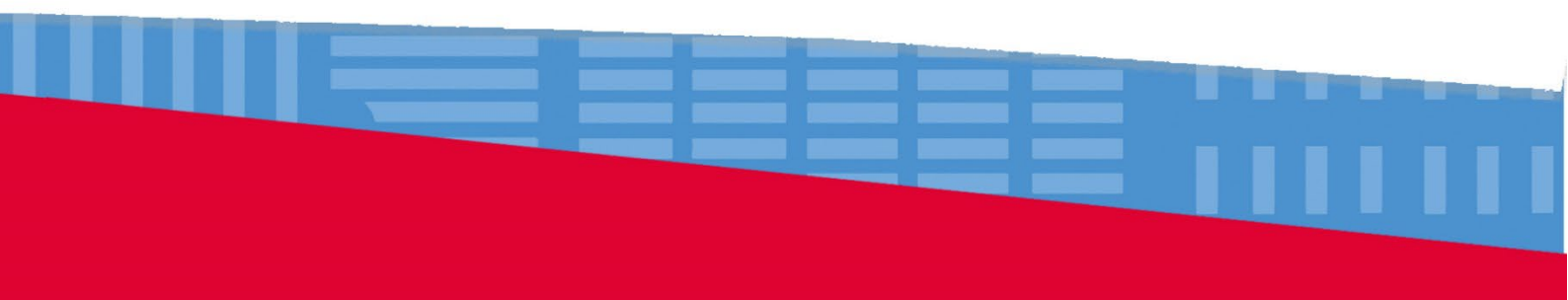
1. What is happening in the classroom during the first extract?
 2. Which presentation does the main character find most interesting and why?
 3. The text mentions an upcoming General Election. Do you know what a General Election is?
 4. Why aren't kids allowed to vote in it? Do you think they should have the right to vote?
 5. Do you agree or disagree with Annalise's idea that kids might know better than adults?
 6. In the second extract, the narrator (Natalie) is handing out leaflets to the public. Why is she doing this?
 7. What is politics? Why is it important for society? How do political decisions affect our daily lives?
 8. Find the names of the three different political parties mentioned in the second extract.
 9. Natalie refers to the Conservatives as "the bad guys." Why might she use this label? How does Annalise help her see beyond stereotypes and consider a more balanced view of the political parties?
 10. How can young people get involved in politics or make their voices heard even if they can't vote yet?
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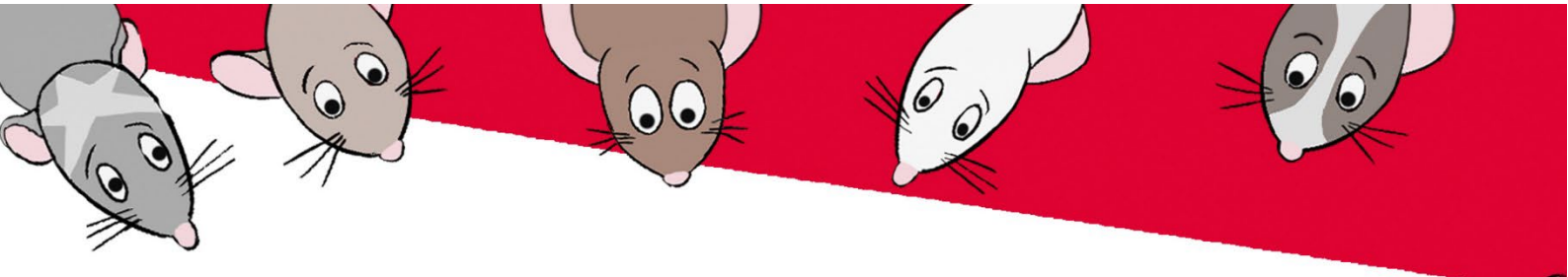


ACTIVITY 1: A CLASSROOM ELECTION



- Start by sharing the extracts with the class. These introduce the term ‘General Election’ and offer various perspectives on politics, giving insight into how people perceive different political parties.
 - Next, discuss the characters of Natalie (the main character) and Annalise (her friend) from the book. Explore how Annalise educates Natalie about politics and provides insights into her own perspectives on political parties and issues, as well as her parents’.
 - Write the word POLITICS in the middle of the board. Ask students to share what they think it means and record their responses around the word to create a visual map of their ideas.
 - Look for any common themes or similarities in their responses and try to connect these to build a clearer understanding of how students perceive politics.
 - Explain that politics affects everyone by influencing important aspects like how much money schools receive, the quality of community services such as hospitals, policing and public transport, and the decisions made by leaders and their governments that impact our daily lives and future opportunities.
 - Describe that a government is a group of people who are elected to make decisions and rules for the country. Refer to the book and highlight that this is where a General Election comes into play, as it is the process through which these people are chosen. They are known as Members of Parliament (MPs).
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- Using a map, show students that the UK is divided into areas called ‘constituencies’ and that each one has an MP who represents the people living there. There are currently 650 constituencies in total.
 - Tell them that every five years, a general election is held to either elect a new MP or re-elect the current one. A voting system called first-past-the-post is used where the candidate with the most votes in each constituency wins.
 - Highlight that each candidate standing in a constituency during a general election either represents a political party or runs as an ‘independent’. Being independent means they are not associated with any political party and make decisions based on their own views and principles. Depending on the age of the students, you might wish to introduce a range of political parties and some of their key policies.
 - Tell the students that, to help them understand the voting process, you will split them into five or six groups. Each one will create their own name for a new political party. They will present a policy given to them from the activity sheet (cut them out) and then everyone will vote on which they think has the best idea. If they prefer, they can come up with their own policy ideas, rather than using those on the sheet.
 - Encourage them to be as creative as they like, using posters, presentations, speeches and other methods. Remind them that they might not personally agree with the policy idea they’ve been given, but they should still present it as persuasively as possible, as it might appeal to some voters.
 - After the policies have been presented, conduct a class vote using simple ballot papers, where students put an ‘X’ in the box. Collect and tally the votes, then announce the results to the class.
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ACTIVITY SHEET 1: PICK A POLICY



Policy 1: Improving School Facilities

Idea 1: Build a new playground with modern equipment and a safe surface.

Idea 2: Renovate the school library to include more books, cosy corners and technology areas.

Idea 3: Construct a new sports pitch for activities like football, rugby or track events.

Idea 4: Add more green spaces and outdoor learning areas to the school grounds.

Idea 5: Install air conditioning in classrooms to improve comfort and learning conditions.

Idea 6: Build a dedicated art and craft studio with space and materials for creative projects.

Policy 2: Making School Meals Better

Idea 1: Allow students to design their own menus for a day, with their favourite foods.

Idea 2: Have days where the school serves foods from different countries or cultures.

Idea 3: Give all students free meals, which could be a big cost for the school/government.

Idea 4: Remove sugary snacks from the menu to promote healthier eating habits.

Idea 5: Serve smaller-sized portions to help prevent food waste.

Idea 6: Include more fruit and vegetables to help students achieve eating their five-a-day.

Policy 3: Homework

Idea 1: Have homework-free weekends once a month so students can enjoy their time off.

Idea 2: Provide options boards so students can choose the type of homework they complete.

Idea 3: Do the homework the teacher sets because they know best how to support you.

Idea 4: Ban all types of homework so students can focus on their free time activities.

Idea 5: Only set homework over school holidays so students have enough time to complete it.

Idea 6: Make all homework projects collaborative so they involve students working together.

Policy 4: After-School Activities

Idea 1: Create a coding club where students can work on technology projects.

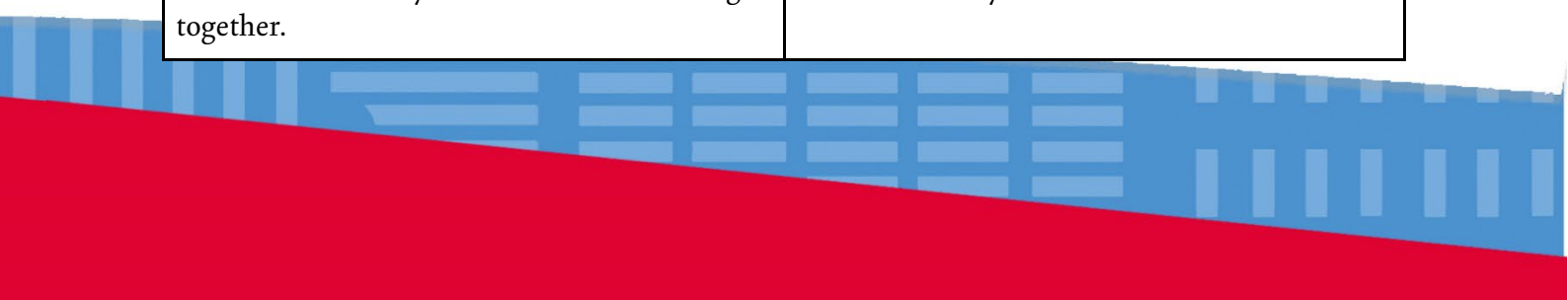
Idea 2: Launch a debate club where students can practise public speaking and critical thinking.

Idea 3: Develop a drama club with opportunities for acting, stage design and scriptwriting.

Idea 4: Get students to lead after-school clubs to help out in the school community.

Idea 5: Stop all after-school clubs because it means teachers have to work extra hours.

Idea 6: Start a club where a new sport is introduced every term or half term.






LESSON 2

EXTRACT 2A: PRESENTATION PANIC

(from CHAPTER 2 - Rats are THE BOSS (but not suitable for bringing to school): pages 16-17)



'Actually,' I said. 'Rats are very, very clean. You'd be surprised.'

'Yes,' she said.

I gave Captain Furry a little stroke. I would definitely include that in my presentation.

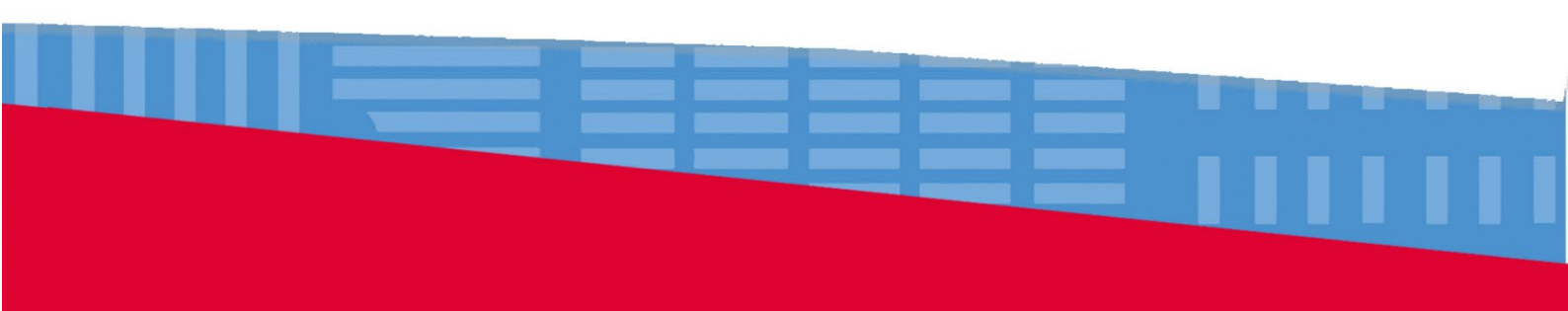


'Rats are very, very clean.' My nerves were making me shout. 'You'd be surprised.'

'Hang on a second, Natalie.' Mrs Maincroft was holding up her pen. 'Give us a bit of an introduction. You are talking about a social issue, aren't you? I assume you read the question.'

'Yeah, "animal welfare"!'

That was, like, the second choice on the sheet or something. Surely Mrs Maincroft knew that?


'Right, OK then. Off you go.'





EXTRACT 2B: PASSIONATE ABOUT RATS

(from CHAPTER 8 - THE GREAT RAT REVOLUTION: pages 84-85)



Lily stood up and pointed to a cage, high up on our right. It was full of gorgeous little rats.

'Rats!' she said. 'Captain Furry, and rats, and people saying they're ugly when they're not. That's what you're passionate about.'

I didn't know what to say. Was it? Probably.

Avinash suddenly jumped. 'Oh flip-bags, the time!' He was staring at his watch. 'Mum's coming to pick me up at half twelve.'

Why was everyone so busy?

'We don't want the librarians hunting for two missing kids!' he added. 'And I guess I'd better tell them we've found Lily.'

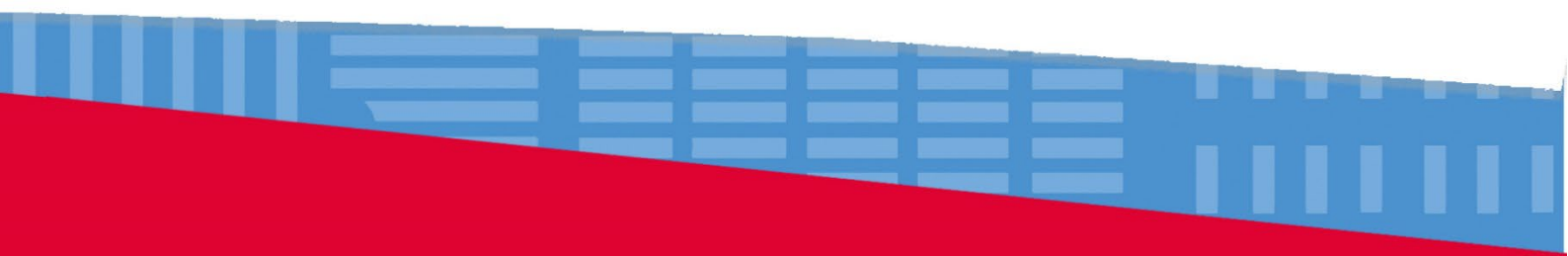


'Thanks, Avinash.' I forced a smile. 'See you soon, OK?'

'Er, yeah. Bye.'

He gave me that little half-smile, then bolted. I turned to Lily and squeezed her into a huge hug.

'I'm so sorry for shouting, and for leaving you.' She burrowed into me, and I could almost feel her smiling into my armpit. I held her out at arm's length to confirm it. Yes.

'And thanks about the rats, too . . .' I glanced up at them. Two of them were holding on to the wire with their paws, looking like they were watching our reunion play out. They probably were. People didn't realise this, but rats were super-clever.





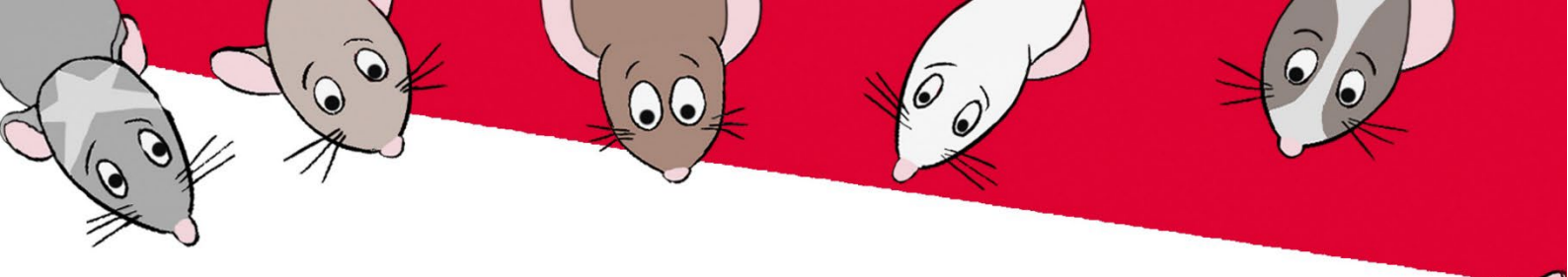
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In the first extract, who or what is Captain Furry and what role does he play in the scene?
2. What does Natalie share about rats in her presentation?
3. Do you have any knowledge or interesting facts about rats?
4. What kind of habitats do rats live in?
5. Can you explain what the phrase 'animal welfare' means?
6. Do you take care of any animals? If so, how do you make sure they stay healthy and happy?
7. How does Natalie feel about rats? Find two examples from the text that show her feelings.
8. Lily points out that Natalie is passionate about rats, even though she isn't sure. Have you ever discovered a passion of yours through someone else's encouragement?
9. Would you agree or disagree that rats are ugly? Why or why not?
10. What do you think you should consider if you are thinking about keeping a rat as a pet?

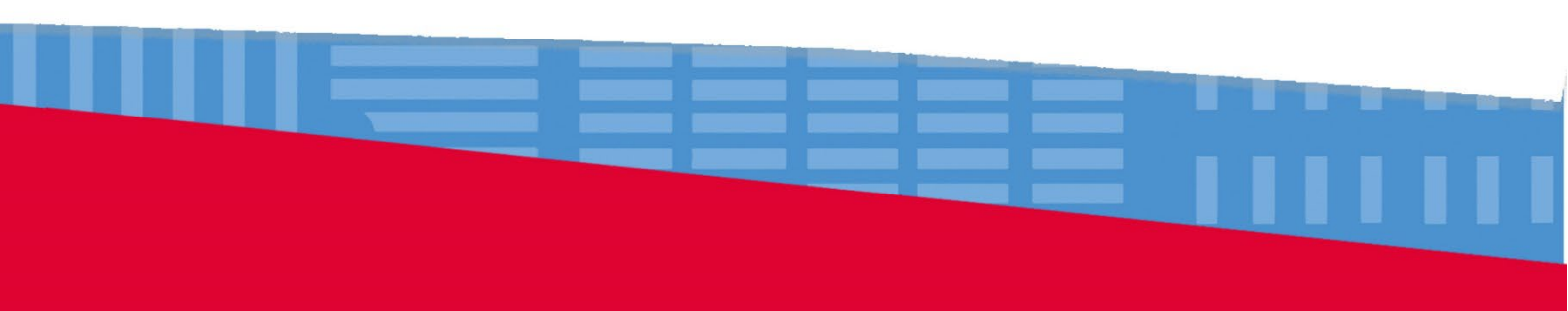


ACTIVITY 2: RAT REPORT

- Begin by displaying a selection of engaging images or a short video of rats on the board to capture students' interest and provide a visual introduction to the topic.
- While viewing the images or video, prompt students to take notes on key aspects of the rats, such as their appearance, habitats, behaviours and any other details they observe.
- Gather the class back together and facilitate a discussion about their notes, encouraging them to share their observations and insights about the rats. What interesting things did they notice?
- Next, explain that rats are mammals and belong to a group called rodents. They are medium-sized animals with long tails and can be found all over the world, living in the wild as well as near to people.
- Enhance students' understanding of rats by providing them with detailed information, such as:
 - Appearance:
 - Size: Rats generally range from 6 to 10 inches in body length.
 - Fur Colour: Their fur can vary widely in colour, including shades of brown, grey, black, and white. Some domestic rats may even have fur in patterns like spots or patches.
 - Tail: Rats have long tails that are often hairless, which help with balance and temperature regulation.
 - Distinctive Features: Rats have large, rounded ears, sharp incisor teeth that grow continuously and a keen sense of smell and hearing.



- Habitats:
 - Urban Environments: Rats are common in cities and towns, often found in sewers, basements and behind walls. They thrive in areas where food is readily available.
 - Natural Habitats: In the wild, rats inhabit a range of environments including forests, grasslands and wetlands. They build nests in burrows or hidden areas.
- Behaviours:
 - Activity Patterns: Rats are generally nocturnal, meaning they are most active during the night. They use their keen senses to navigate and find food in the dark.
 - Feeding Habits: Rats are omnivores and have a varied diet that includes grains, fruits, vegetables, and sometimes small animals or insects.
 - Reproduction: Rats can reproduce quickly. Females that are only a few months old are already able to bear young.
 - Social Structure: Rats are social animals that live in groups called mischiefs or colonies.
- After providing an in-depth overview of rats, tell students that it's now their turn to explore and learn more about them through their own research. Offer a variety of resources, such as books and websites to help in their investigation and ask them to collate and organise their findings using the activity sheet. Remind them to make notes of the source of their information so
- After completing their research, students can present their findings in a format of their choice, such as a written report, a presentation, like Natalie does in the story, or a fact file. You may like to compile these into a class book to showcase their understanding of rats and celebrate their creativity and effort.





ACTIVITY SHEET 2: RESEARCHING RATS

KEY FACTS		
Appearance	Behaviour	Habitats
1. _____ _____ _____	1. _____ _____ _____	1. _____ _____ _____
2. _____ _____ _____	2. _____ _____ _____	2. _____ _____ _____
3. _____ _____ _____	3. _____ _____ _____	3. _____ _____ _____
Any other interesting information: _____ _____ _____ _____		
Sources:		
Books: _____ _____ _____	Websites: _____ _____ _____	Any other sources: _____ _____ _____

Reflection: Write a short summary of what you learned about rats. Did anything you learned change how you think about them? _____ _____ _____ _____



LESSON 3

EXTRACT 3: BEST PLAN

(from CHAPTER 10 - Where to Get MONEY: pages 108-109)



'Nat, you still haven't told me about your Best Plan. Remember what you said? In the pet shop? You said it was just the beginning.'

She didn't take her eyes off the rats as she talked to me. 'What did you mean?'

She was twisting The Black Rodent's tail round her finger as the rat climbed on to her shoulder.

Their hairless tails were one of the things people seemed to hate about them. Poor things. They couldn't help it. Could I still do the plan? Lily would like it. And it would be fun.

'Well... ' I said. 'D'you remember how you wanted us to get a bunny, and when Mum bought the Captain, you cried?'

'Oh, I know!' Lily's eyes went wide. She scooped him up and kissed him, then hugged him to her chest. 'But don't tell Captain Furry that! I didn't know him then! As soon as we had him, I knew I'd love him for ever! I wouldn't swap him for a rabbit in a million years!'

'I know, I know. Calm down, silly bunny.' I held out my hand and she passed my rat back to me. I tucked him in my hood and he nestled down there.

'Well, that's my plan. People are prejudiced against rats. We learnt that word at school this term. It means when people already don't like something because they think they know all about it, but they really don't. Or something like that.'

Lily was frowning. 'Was I pred-joo... whatever then?'

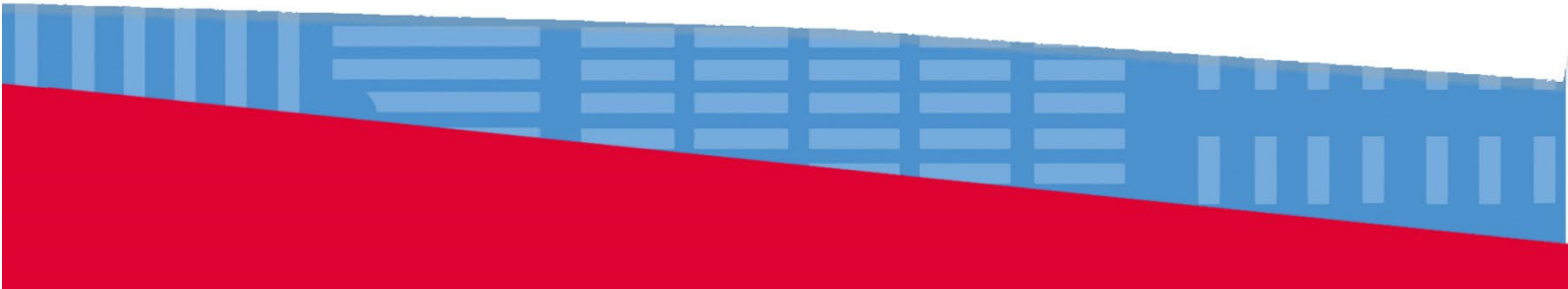


'Pred-joo-dissed. Probably! Mrs Maincroft said we all are a bit if we're not careful about it. But the point is, if people got to know rats they would love them. Just like you did.'

'I do love you! I do, I do, I do!' Lily smooched each of the three new ones in turn as they crawled all over her. She was feeding them little bits of dried banana chips as treats. I took one and passed it back to the Captain.

'So, what do you think?'

She dragged her eyes away from them. 'About what?'

'The plan! If I get everyone in my class a rat, then they'll fall in love with them too, right?'





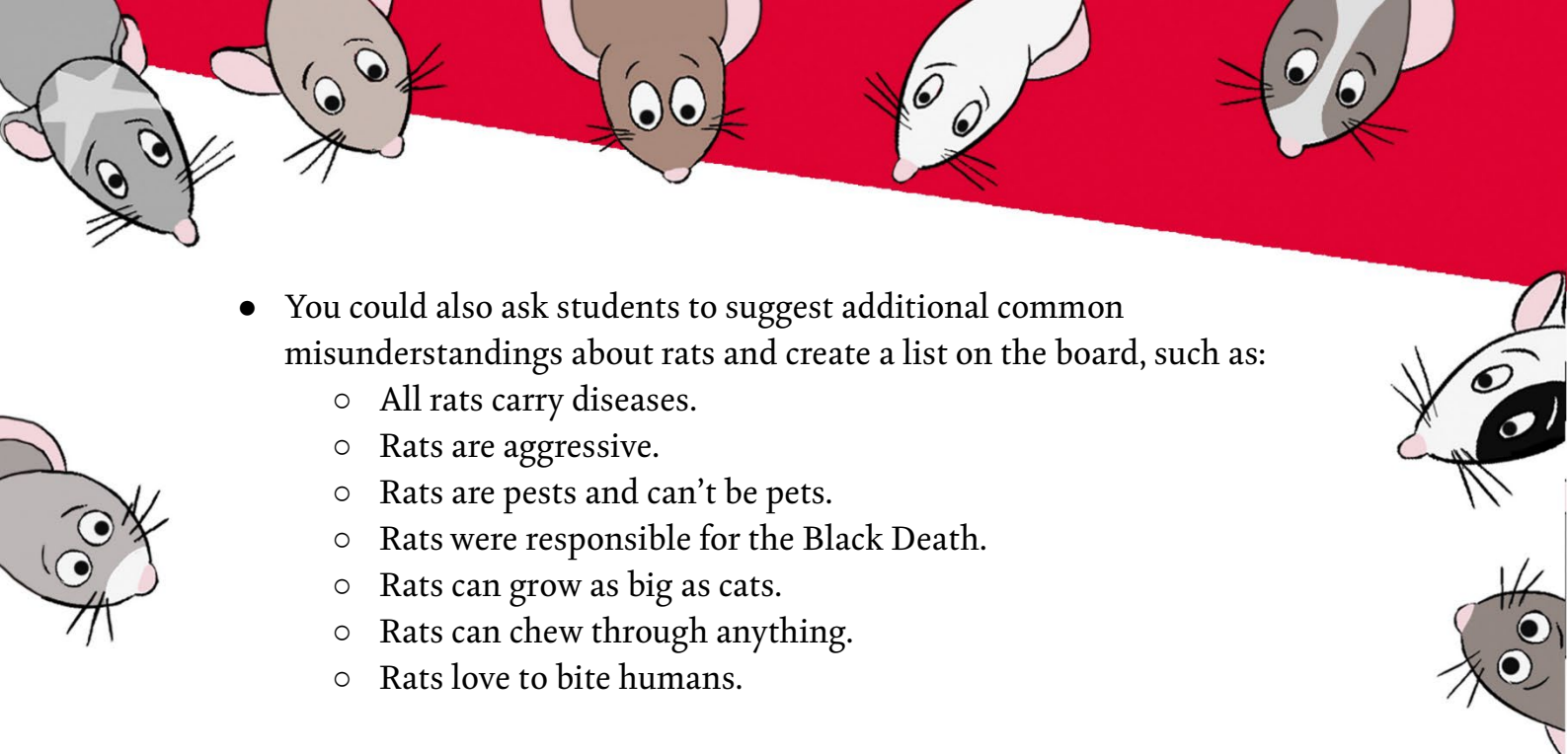
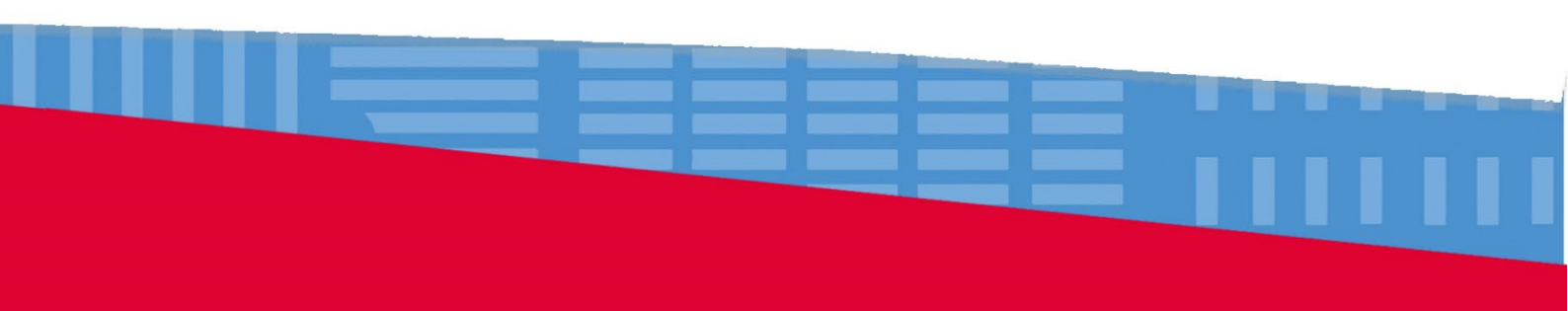
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. According to the extract, what does the word 'prejudiced' mean?
2. How does Nat explain the concept of being prejudiced to Lily? Does she understand the explanation?
3. Why do you think people might have prejudiced views about rats? Can you think of other examples where people might be prejudiced against something or someone in the world we live in?
4. Nat says that people are prejudiced if they don't learn about things properly. How can we make sure we keep an open mind and learn more about different things or people before forming an opinion?
5. She believes that getting to know rats will help people appreciate and love them. Do you think learning more about something or someone can change how we feel about them?
6. Is it a good idea for Nat to give a rat to everyone in her class? Why or why not?
7. How might things like what we see on TV, online and in other media like newspapers influence our views? Can they lead to prejudice, and if so, how?
8. Have you ever felt that someone made a judgement about you without really knowing who you are? How did that make you feel?
9. If you saw someone being prejudiced towards another person because of something they don't know about them, what could you do to help?
10. How can practising kindness and empathy towards others help us fight prejudice? Can you share some examples of kind actions you've taken recently, whether big or small?



ACTIVITY 3: PUTTING A STOP TO PREJUDICE

- Start by reading a short, age-appropriate story or fable that highlights prejudice, (e.g. The Ugly Duckling by Hans Christian Andersen or a modern story about making unfair judgements).
- After reading, engage the students with questions to check their understanding. Ask, “What was the main problem in the story?”, “How did the characters feel when they were judged unfairly?”, and “How did things change when the characters got to know each other better?”
- Next, introduce the term ‘prejudice’ and define it in simple language. Explain that prejudice is when we make up our minds about someone or something before we have a real understanding of the person or situation.
- Discuss how prejudice can happen in our world, especially toward people who are vulnerable or part of marginalised or minority groups. Highlight that these people are often unfairly treated or misunderstood due to biases, assumptions and stereotypes (wrongly held beliefs) about them.
- Ask students whether or not they like rats and hold a class vote to find out their perceptions and opinions about them. The results might surprise you!
- Refer back to the extract in the book where Natalie describes how people often hold prejudiced views about rats and see them negatively. Explain that there are many misconceptions about rats, such as thinking they are dirty or dangerous.

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- You could also ask students to suggest additional common misunderstandings about rats and create a list on the board, such as:
 - All rats carry diseases.
 - Rats are aggressive.
 - Rats are pests and can't be pets.
 - Rats were responsible for the Black Death.
 - Rats can grow as big as cats.
 - Rats can chew through anything.
 - Rats love to bite humans.
 - Once the list has plenty of suggestions, review each point with the class. Ask students where they think these ideas came from and then work together to debunk each myth.
 - Explore why it's important to challenge these myths and how doing so can help us understand and appreciate animals (and people) better. To put this into practice, hold another class vote to see if their opinions about rats have changed after the discussion. Compare the new results with the previous ones to see if learning new information has influenced their views.
 - As an extension, you could divide the students into small groups and give each group a card with a scenario about someone being treated unfairly from the activity sheet. Ask each group to talk about what's happening in their scenario. What unfair treatment or prejudice do they see? Then, have them think of ways to help the person in the scenario feel included and supported. How could they show kindness, empathy and understanding?
- 



ACTIVITY SHEET 3: EMPATHY IN ACTION

Jamal is new to the school. Some students make fun of the way he talks, and he feels sad and isolated.

Discuss:

- What prejudice is Jamal facing?
- How can Jamal be made to feel welcome and valued?
- What can students do to show empathy and respect for Jamal?

Aisha uses a wheelchair and is often not invited to birthday parties because her friends think it would be too difficult for her to get around.

Discuss:

- What kind of prejudice is Aisha encountering?
- What steps can be taken to make Aisha feel more included?
- How can we make sure that parties and events are welcoming and accessible for everyone?

Carlos is a quiet student who doesn't always raise his hand in class. His teacher thinks he's not interested in learning, so he rarely gets called on to give his opinion.

Discuss:

- What prejudice is Carlos's teacher showing towards him?
- How can the teacher better support Carlos in class?
- How can we help create a classroom where everyone gets a chance to contribute?

Mila has two dads and some students make unkind comments about her family. She feels embarrassed and excluded because of this.

Discuss:

- What kind of prejudice is Mila experiencing?
- How can you show respect and understanding for families that might be different from your own?
- If you heard someone making unkind comments about Mila's family, what would you do?



LESSON 4

EXTRACT 4: SMALL CHANGES = BETTER RESULTS

(from CHAPTER 23 - THE PASSION PROJECT: pages 252-256)

Mrs Maincroft had to be happy with that, because it was time for the lesson to start. I thought that would mean the end of rat chat, but apparently not.

'Now.' She propped herself on her desk and beamed out at all of us. 'Quite a few of you became surprise new pet owners yesterday!'

There was a buzz of chatter. 'Hands, please – who has a new rat?'

About half the class raised their hands.

'And is it going OK, so far?'

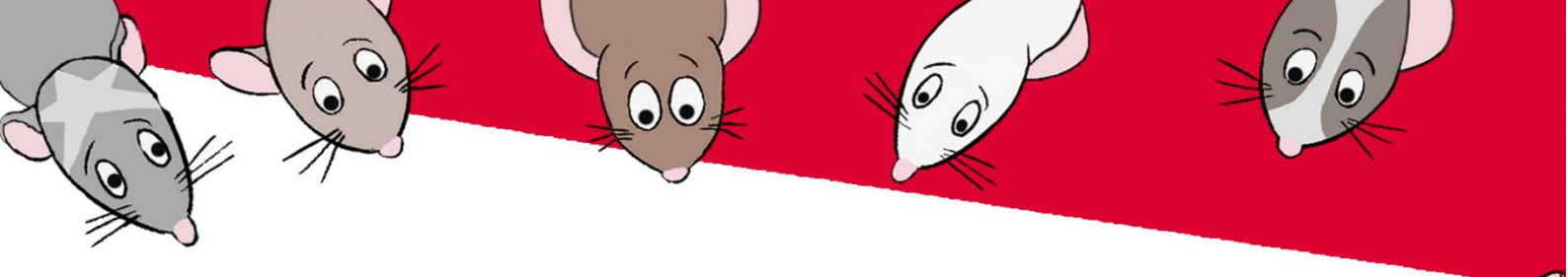
A general murmur of agreement.

'Well, I think you'll all agree, that this is not what we all envisaged when Natalie brought her pet rat in a few weeks back!'


She carried on talking about how the project had set her thinking. How she'd told me rat care wasn't a social issue, but I'd shown her the power of change you can create with small things you care passionately about.

I felt a tremor of pride. I wished Mum and Bernard and Dad could hear her and know that I wasn't just a liar; that my teacher thought we'd done something good.

'So, all of you who are now proud rat-mummies – and daddies! – will know this to be true. How much more impactful it can be to DO something small, than to TALK about something too big to get your teeth into. We can all get a bit paralysed, can't we? When faced with the world's problems.



It's hard to know where to start, but I think Natalie has shown us that starting at all is the secret!' My face was on fire, but she was still talking. 'So, I've been to see Mr Hapling about this, and we've decided to launch a WHOLE SCHOOL project. And, because it started here, this class will get to launch it. You hear that 7M? You'll be leading the charge!'



There was an excited hubbub in the classroom; it was pretty much unheard of for Year 7s to take the lead on anything. Annalise looked fit to burst, and Percy just looked gobsmacked. I couldn't help the little rays of happiness that crept cautiously into the gloom.

Annalise's hand shot up, poker straight. A familiar sight.

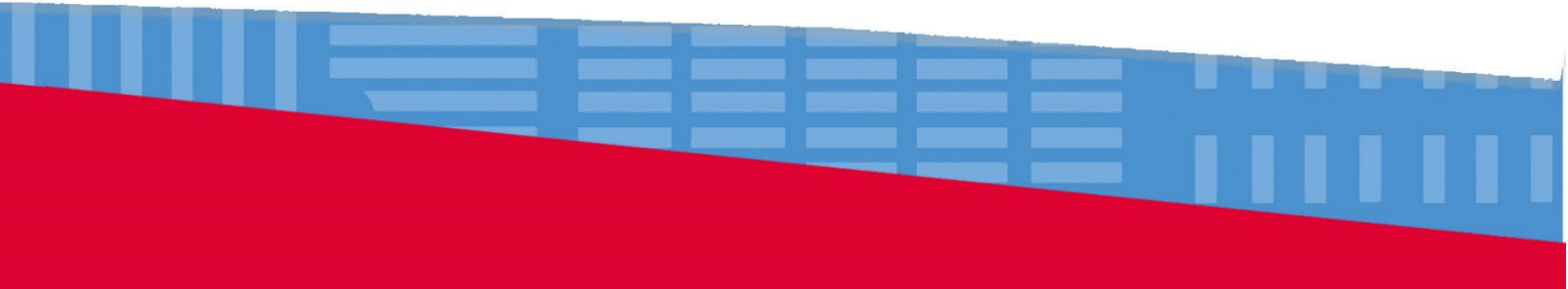


'Yes, Annalise?'

'But what exactly is the project, Miss? We can't get enough rats for the whole school!'

'Ha! No, indeed. And just imagine the chaos if they were to get mysteriously set free.' She looked pointedly at James. 'No, you're right. I should probably tell you what the actual project is, shouldn't I?'

'We're calling it "Passion Projects". That sound good to you, Natalie?'

She looked at me as if I actually had a say, so I nodded quickly, conscious of the eyes on me. 'Every student will be encouraged to find one small thing they really care about and use it to make one small change for the better.'





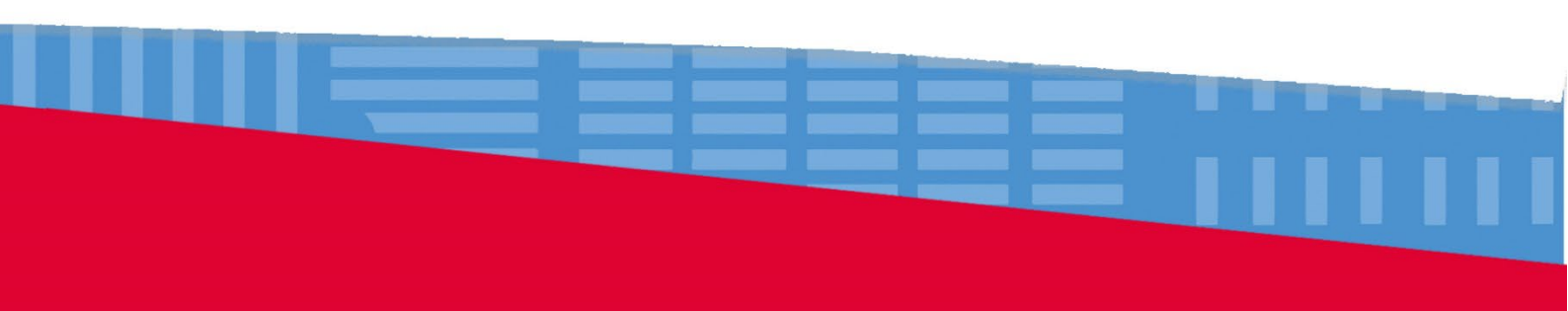
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS




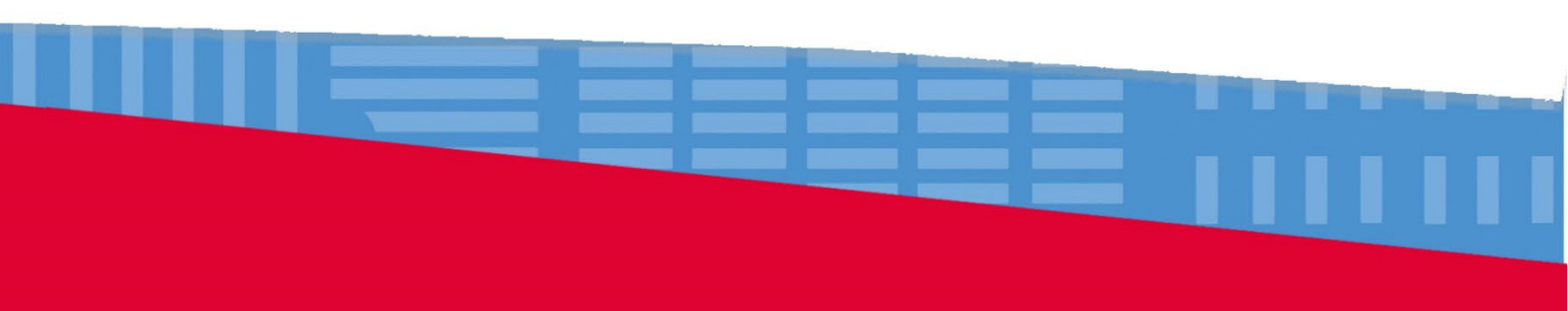
1. What exciting news is everyone talking about in the classroom in this part of the story?
2. How do the students respond when Mrs Maincroft explains the details of the new project?
3. Why might the school want to start a new project after the success of the rat project?
4. After Mrs Maincroft talks to him about the new project, who do you think Mr Hapling might be in the book?
5. She also says that taking action is better than just talking about a problem. Would you agree that actions are stronger than words? Why or why not?
6. Why is it better to start with small, manageable goals instead of trying to solve huge issues all at once? How does this idea apply to the world's problems like climate change or poverty? Can you think of ways you could help with these in small ways?
7. Should teachers also support students' personal interests and passions, not just their schoolwork?
8. Look for the word 'hubbub' in the text. Explain what you think the word means based on its context.
9. Can you find phrases in the text that show how Natalie feels proud of herself?
10. Is there a small cause or issue you care about? How could you make a change for the better about it?



ACTIVITY 4: PASSION PROJECTS



- Briefly recap the extract where the whole-school Passion Project idea was introduced by Mrs Maincroft.
 - Present this idea to the students as something you plan to propose to your headteacher in the future. But for now, you will try to implement it on a classroom scale.
 - Ask the class to discuss the following question with a partner: “What is a passion? Can you think of something you care deeply about or really enjoy doing?”
 - Next, distribute sticky notes and ask students to write down one thing they are passionate about or enjoy on each note. Have them place their sticky notes on a board or wall, creating a visible collection of their interests.
 - Talk about how our passions make us feel, exploring the emotions they evoke. Encourage them to reflect on their personal experiences with their passions and how these interests contribute to their overall happiness and motivation.
 - Explain that we can also use our passions to drive positive change and help others by channelling our enthusiasm and skills into meaningful actions. Highlight some examples of how individuals and groups have used their passions to make a difference in their communities and beyond, while addressing various challenges, supporting causes they care about and creating long-lasting impacts.
 - Tell students that they are going to design their own passion project, inspired by the book.
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- Give each student a copy of the activity sheet, which breaks down the key areas they need to consider as they develop their passion project.
 - Model how to complete each section of the activity sheet, including:
 - Describing their passion: How to articulate what they are passionate about.
 - Project Idea: How to outline their project concept and objectives.
 - Goals: How to set small, manageable goals for their project.
 - Action Plan: How to list actionable steps.
 - Impact: How to describe the expected impact on themselves, others and their community.
 - Allow students time to start filling out their activity sheets with guidance and support as needed.
 - At the end of the lesson, have students outline their immediate next steps and any resources they might need. This helps them create a clear path forward and sets the stage for further development of their projects.
 - Plan a number of follow-up sessions or check-ins to review progress on the passion projects. This could be done in future classes or as a special project update day.
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The page is decorated with several cartoon mouse heads of various colors (white, grey, brown) peeking from the left and bottom edges. The background is red with a blue plaid pattern on the right side.

ACTIVITY SHEET 4: MY PROJECT PLANNER

Passion Description:

What is your passion? Describe it in detail.

Action Plan:

List the steps you will take to complete your project.

Project Idea:

How can you turn this passion into a project that makes a positive change?

Impact:

How will your project make a difference? Who will benefit?

Goals:

What small, manageable goals do you need to achieve for this project?




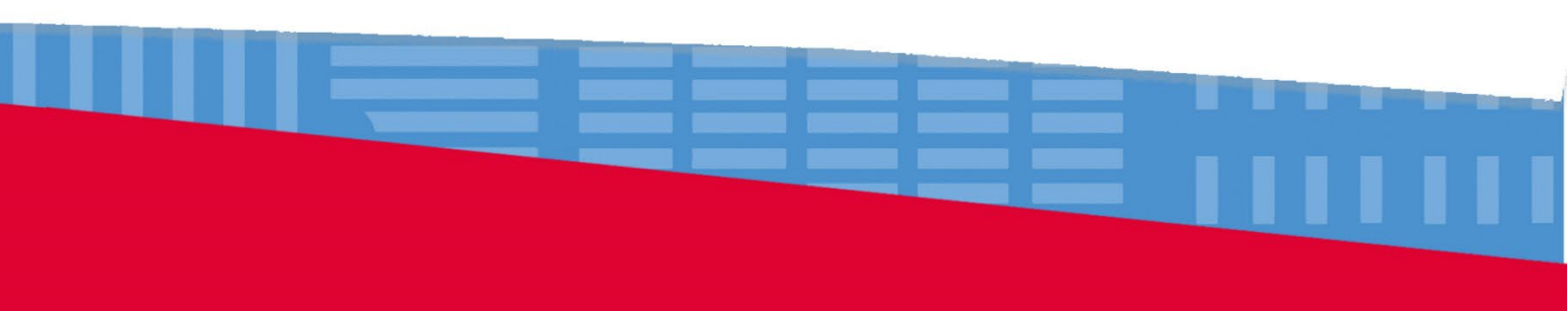
Challenges:

What challenges might you face and how will you overcome them?

A decorative border featuring several cartoon rat heads in various colors (grey, brown, white, and black and white) peeking over the top and sides of the page. The background is a gradient from red at the top to white in the middle, and blue and red at the bottom.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INNOVATIVE IDEAS

- **Author Study and Q&A Session:** Organise an in-person or virtual Q&A session with the author of the book, Lucy Ann Uniwn, if possible. Before the session, have students come up with creative and thoughtful questions about her inspiration, writing process and what it's like to create a book. This interactive experience will give students a chance to learn directly from the writer, offering a behind-the-scenes look at how stories are crafted and the magic of being an author.
- **Rat's-Eye View:** Have students write a short story or create a comic strip from the perspective of a rat. They should consider how the world looks from a rat's point of view and what adventures or challenges the rat might face.
- **Design a Rat-Friendly Habitat:** Learn about animal care and design while considering the needs of rats by designing and creating a model of an ideal habitat for a pet rat. Students could include features like play areas, hiding spots and other elements that cater to a rat's natural behaviours.
- **Pet Rat Care Guide:** After lots of the characters become rat owners in the book, develop a thorough care guide for pet rats, covering essential topics such as diet, exercise and health, to help them. Design it as a brochure or digital document and enrich your guide with practical tips and personal insights from Natalie, Annalise and Percy throughout the book.
- **Expert Visit:** Invite a veterinarian or pet rat expert to visit your class and give a talk on rat care. They can provide real-world advice, answer questions, and offer hands-on demonstrations to enhance your understanding of responsible rat ownership. Additionally, they can share case studies of rat care, discuss common health issues, and provide tips on creating a stimulating environment for pet rats.

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- **Government Building Trip:** Arrange a visit to a local or national government building, such as the Houses of Parliament. Students could tour the facility, meet with officials and participate in educational workshops to learn about government operations, political processes and how democracy functions.
 - **The Power of Colours:** Learn about the significance of political party colours in the UK, such as red for Labour, blue for the Conservatives, yellow for Liberal Democrats and green for the Green Party. Research their meanings and discuss how these colours reflect each party's identity and branding.
 - **Create a Classroom Council:** Set up a mini-parliament in the classroom where students take on roles and make decisions about how the classroom runs. After a week or so, rotate the roles so that everyone gets an opportunity to experience different responsibilities.
 - **Kindness Tree:** Make a 'Kindness Tree' display for students to add leaves to it with notes about small acts of kindness they've witnessed or performed. Regularly review the tree together to celebrate and discuss these, reinforcing the importance of kindness inside and outside of the classroom.
 - **Passion Sharing:** Hold a show-and-tell session where students bring in items linked to their passions or hobbies. Each student shares stories about their items, explaining why they are meaningful and how they became interested in them. After the presentations, facilitate a discussion where students can ask questions and explore connections between their own interests and those of their classmates. You never know it may inspire someone else to take up a new passion! You could also create a Passion Wall in the classroom where students can display pictures or other items related to their interests.
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NATIONAL CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES (KEY STAGE 3)

ENGLISH

Reading – comprehension

Pupils should be taught to:

- maintain positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by:
 - continuing to read and discuss an increasingly wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks
 - recommending books that they have read to their peers, giving reasons for their choices
 - identifying and discussing themes and conventions in and across a wide range of writing
- understand what they read, in books they can read independently, by:
 - drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence
 - predicting what might happen from details stated and implied
 - summarising the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph, identifying key details that support the main ideas

Writing: composition

Pupils should be taught to:

- plan their writing by:
 - discussing writing similar to that which they are planning to write in order to understand and learn from its structure, vocabulary and grammar
- develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by:
 - writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional)

Spoken language

Pupils should be taught to:

- develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/improvisations and debates



SCIENCE

Pupils should be taught to:

- notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults
- find out about and describe the basic needs of animals, including humans, for survival (water, food and air)
- identify that animals, including humans, need the right types and amount of nutrition, and that they cannot make their own food; they get nutrition from what they eat

PSHE (taken from Programme of Study for PSHE education: KS1-5)

Pupils learn:

Shared responsibilities

- L4. the importance of having compassion towards others; shared responsibilities we all have for caring for other people and living things; how to show care and concern for others

Communities

- L9. about stereotypes; how they can negatively influence behaviours and attitudes towards others; strategies for challenging stereotypes
- L10. about prejudice; how to recognise behaviours/actions which discriminate against others; ways of responding to it if witnessed or experienced