

Pop Starlets by Josie Montano

Format: Novel

Extent: 144 pp

Overview

Kiara and her friend Sam are chosen to compete in the national Pop Starlets competition. The girls form a school group, including their friends Gardenia, Britney and Alithia. However, Alithia has different aspirations to the girls and wants to steal the limelight from her fellow group members. The group heads off to camp with their teacher, La Signora, Kiara's mum and Mrs Snooks. During the auditions, suspicious events begin to take place. Kiara has her own ideas about who is causing the problems.

A funny book, that deals with issues such as bullying, conflict resolution and cheating. It also takes a behind-the-scenes look at dance and music competitions. This book is suitable for upper primary readers.

Author Profile

Josie Montano lives with her family in Brisbane and works as a full-time writer. Her love of fiction writing began at age eight, when she would shelve her self-published stories in her primary school library. Josie has worked in the primary school environment as a teacher's aide, a secretary and a library aide. Her published works include the very successful *Wogaluccis*, *Stuff They Don't Teach You at School*, *Who's Wheelie the Fastest*, *Snot Fair*, *Snot Funny*, *Snot Cool* and *Chicken Pox...Sucks!*

Find out more about Josie Montano on the Scholastic website:

<http://www.scholastic.com.au/Profiles/ProfileDisplay.asp?ProfileId=448>

Focus Questions

□□ What is a 'flashback' technique? Look at other movies or books that use this technique. Do you like knowing the ending at the beginning of the story? Why/Why not? (pp 7-8)

□□ How does Kiara use humour to describe Alithia? Why does she talk this way? (p 9)

□□ Why do the children think Frank Stein and Nazzie are bullies? Why did Vinnie nickname them? (pp 14-15)

□□ Why is Alithia so nasty? Is she a bully? Why/Why not? (p 19)

□□ Who hid the class newsletters? Why? Predict. (p 18)

□□ Why was Kiara embarrassed when her dad watched her dance? (p 28)

□□ How did the girls use their talents together? (p 30)

□□ Why is Alithia acting weird? (p 32)

□□ Why is Kiara nervous? Is it good to be nervous before a performance? Why/Why not? (p 35)

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□□ What are Mrs Snook and Alithia up to? Is it fair? (p 38)

□□ How did the teachers and Mrs Snook reach a compromise? (p 47)

□□ What are Kiara's suspicions? What information did she find out? (pp 50-1)

□□ Why would you be suspicious about eating the chocolate slice? (p 53)

□□ Why did Alithia annoy everyone on the bus trip? Does her mum spoil her? Why/Why not? (p 58)

□□ How does Alithia treat her mum? (p 69)

□□ Why is Mrs Snook 'devastatingly devious'? (p 77)

□□ How did Signora solve the group name problem? How did each of the girls feel about the name? (p 81)

□□ What is bribery? How is Mrs Snook bribing Mr Meany? (pp 86-7)

□□ How did the girls resolve their problem with Alithia? (p 107)

Assessment

Self-assessment rubric: As a class, students brainstorm a set of criteria that they wish to assess. Criteria could include the following:

- place the series of events in chronological order
- identify the different settings used by the author
- use different forms of writing including recounts, conversations, plays, poetry, songs, job descriptions, jokes, interviews, invitations, menus, scripts, letters, emails and diaries
- identify the introduction, complications and resolutions used within the plot
- discuss the different points of view presented in the text
- identify with the characters by relating it to their own real-life experiences
- recognise the different themes and issues used by the author
- determine how characters resolve their problems
- locate and research information using different sources including learning technologies
- discuss ways the author has used language to convey feelings such as happiness, humour, suspicion and embarrassment
- compare different texts written by the same author.

Portfolio: Collate work samples that students feel demonstrate a high standard. Put pieces of work on display as a special parent evening/ lunchtime event.

Opinion survey: Students answer questions relating to the text. These could include:

- Did you like *Pop Starlets*? Why/Why not?
- What do you think was the funniest part? Why?
- How does the humour used in this book differ to other books you've read?
- What was the most important part of the story for you? Why?
- What was the main event in the story? How did this affect the main character?

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- What important themes/issues did Josie Montano discuss in her book?
- What did you learn from reading the book that you didn't know about before?
- Would you like to read more humorous texts or Josie Montano's other books? Why?
- Would you recommend this book to another person? Why? Who?

Peer assessment on use of oral skills: Create a class list of criteria to assess each performance. Discuss what skills are aimed for, so that students know what is expected of them. Skills could be displayed on a reporting sheet upon which peers can jot down notes about the performance. Select a specific skill to focus on during the peer assessment (this often makes it easier to begin with). Include such skills as:

- used expression in their voice
- controlled the volume of their voice.
- looked directly at the audience using eye contact
- answered questions in detail
- kept on track with the talk
- used a variety of sources for their information
- used charts or props to support their talk
- used technology correctly (tape recorders, video cameras).

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Activities

READING

Small-group activities

1. Act out the different auditions given by Kiara, Sam, Gardenia, Britney and Alithia. (pp 41-6)
2. Create a graph of the exciting or humorous events in the book. Also look at the low events such as bullying, Alithia's tantrums, the disappearance of Miss Funky and the bribing of Mr Meany.
3. What does 'choreograph' mean? How did the girls plan their dances? (p 26) Choreograph your own dance routine to a favourite pop tune and then perform it for your classmates.
4. Design a set of costumes and hairstyles for the girls to wear. Label each feature and link the design to the name of the group. For example, if the group's name is 'The Heart Starters' use hearts in the costume design. You could also design the costumes for your own group name.
5. What is the 'sabotage hotline'? Create a conversation on the sabotage hotline between the telephone operator and the girls. Tape onto a cassette recording. (p 102)
6. How does Mum become a heroine for the girls? Create a cassette tape of Mrs Snooks' conversation. (p 129)
7. Create your own dance routine to the song 'Drama Queen'. (p 48)
8. Make a short video of a small group acting out the singing and dancing clip of 'Wannabe' (pp 120-1) and 'Drama Queen' (p 48). Perform the act for an audience.

Whole-class activities

1. Play charades. Students try to guess which character is being copied from the book.
2. Make a glossary of the key words such as: choreographer (p 2), impudent (p 38), objections (p 38), audition (p 39), chaperone (p 53), pathetic (p 54), punctuality (p 70), sabotage (p 94), harmonise (p 120). Use a dictionary to locate meanings and write a sentence explaining each word.
3. Create your own pop group names such as the 'Disco Divas' and 'Pop Starlets'. (p 78) Conduct a survey to find out the most popular group name in your class.
4. Debate whether to have Alithia in your pop group or not. List the positives and negatives.
5. List all the bullying conflicts between the different characters in both *Pop Starlets* and *Chicken Pox... Sucks!*
Are they different forms of bullying? Why/Why not?

Individual activities

1. Create character profiles for Kiara, Alithia, Gardenia, Britney, Sam, Mrs Snooks, La Signora and Mum. Include physical characteristics, strengths and weaknesses.
2. Give a description of the Pop Starlet campsite. Design a tour map of the camp layout (you can use your own ideas here). Include the hall, studios, kitchen, eating area, bunk rooms and parent/teacher rooms. (pp 62-3)
3. Design a board game that involves the action cards 'cut', 'roll', 'shoot' and 'action'. Base the ideas around the music themes.
4. Design a CD cover for the new song 'Wannabe'. Include a front cover, inside information about the band, words to the song and dedications. (pp 120-1)

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WRITING

Small-group activities

1. Use an Italian-English dictionary to locate the meanings of the following words from the novel: tarantella (p 41), arpeggio (p 41), bravissimo (p 43), fantastico (p 43), bella (p 45), signore (p 45), ciao (p 61), buon giorno (p 67). What other Italian words do you know? Make a list of their meanings.
2. Write a job description for a judge in the National Pop Group Competition. What skills would the judge need?
(p 71)
3. Create a typed schedule for the girls after they have won the school competition. Include times, events that they need to be present at, rehearsals, auditions and meetings. (p 119)
4. What would Alithia's 'secret family recipe' be? Create your own recipe for brownie slice. Set it out as a proper recipe, including ingredients and an equipment list; steps in chronological order; verbs such as 'mix' and 'stir' to start each sentence; and a diagram or photo of the finished product.

Whole-class activities

1. Create a chart listing the problems Kiara faced. How did she solve these situations and what were the consequences? Discuss how you may have faced similar bullying situations and how you resolved your problems with bullies.
2. What does the saying 'butterflies in my stomach' mean? What other signs indicate that you are feeling nervous like Kiara? What other sayings do we use to describe how we are feeling in different situations? Make a class chart.
3. Create a grid that lists the main characters, settings, main themes, problems and endings. Then list information beside each section for both *Pop Starlets* and *Chicken Pox... Sucks!* As a class, compare the similarities and differences between the two books. Predict where Josie Montano would go in her next book for the series. Make a class predictions chart for display in the classroom.

Individual activities

1. Imagining you are Kiara, write a diary entry for each day. Write how you felt about the events that took place throughout the Pop Starlets Competition.
2. Create an advertisement for the school newsletter, announcing the upcoming auditions for the Pop Starlets Competition. Include the venue, date, time, rules of the competition and what you are expected to do.
3. Design a school newsletter article that celebrates the girls' achievements in winning the Pop Starlets Competition. Include some comment about what happened to Alithia.(p)
4. Imagine you are one of the band members from the group. Write an email to a school friend telling them about the exciting events at the Pop Starlet camp.
5. Create a farewell speech for the girls from Mrs Carter or another character wishing them good luck for the upcoming national competition. (p 54)
6. Imagine you are a newspaper reporter who is interviewing the girls after winning the national competition. Devise a series of interview questions to ask the girls about how they feel about winning, who they are, what they did to win and where they are heading next as a group. Then role-play your questions with a partner.
7. Write a fan mail letter to your favourite character from the band.
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8. Write a different ending to the story from Alithia's point of view. Do you think the girls would be in a group or would Alithia be singing on her own?