Outline:

Harvey wants to bake a great cake, but doesn’t have all the ingredients. That doesn’t stop him. Harvey can make cakes from the most amazing things!

Author/Illustrator Information:

Tina Matthews was born in New Zealand and now lives with her family in Sydney. She is an artist and designer who has worked in children’s theatre and television for 25 years, including on Bananas in Pyjamas, The Ferals, The Upside Down Show and Jim Henson’s Labyrinth. Tina teaches puppetry at NIDA and is designer of the bestselling Black and White Baby Mobile.

Her previous titles with Walker Books Australia are Out of the Egg and Waiting for Later. In 2008 Out of the Egg won the Best First Book Award in the New Zealand Post Book Awards and was listed as a Notable Book in the Children’s Book Council of Australia Awards. Waiting for Later was short-listed for the 2011 Queensland Premier’s Literary Awards Children’s Book – Mary Ryan’s Award and was a a finalist for the 2012 New Zealand Post Children’s Book Awards in the Picture Book category.

How to use these notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:
- Primary years F-3
- Ages 4+

Key Learning Areas:
- English
- Art
- Cooking
- Imagination
- Friendship

Example of:
- Picture Book
- Procedural Text

Themes/ Ideas:
- Family
- Home-life
- Cooking
- Imagination
- Friendship

National Curriculum Focus:*  
English content descriptions include:

- Foundation: ACED1429, ACED1431, ACED1432, ACED1434, ACED1786, ACED1440, ACED11575, ACED11783, ACED1179, ACED11658, ACED1161, ACED11581
- Year 1: ACED1447, ACED1448, ACED1449, ACED1452, ACED1453, ACED1454, ACED1455, ACED1456, ACED1461, ACED11582, ACED11584, ACED11586, ACED11587, ACED11588, ACED11590
- Year 2: ACED1463, ACED1464, ACED1465, ACED1466, ACED1467, ACED1468, ACED11592, ACED11593, ACED11594, ACED11595, ACED11596, ACED11597
- Year 3: ACED1482, ACED11598, ACED11599, ACED11600, ACED11601, ACED11602, ACED11603, ACED11604, ACED11605, ACED11606

*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.
Tina Matthews on *A Great Cake*

I loved writing and illustrating *A Great Cake*. It’s quite unlike my other books and has only 64 different words, most of those from a recipe which is repeated four times. That doesn’t sound like much of a story but, with the help of the pictures, a lot happens in the 32 pages and by the end of the book the reader knows all the characters pretty well.

As the title suggests, it’s a book about cake. More particularly, it’s about how to make a cake and offer it to friends.

Writing and illustrating *A Great Cake* reminded me of how I played as a child. Whether making a house from a shoebox or a delicious potion from grass clippings and water, it was in no sense make believe – I was making a place to live and a nourishing soup. That’s how Harvey plays in this book; he’s very concentrated on what he’s doing and very determined to make a cake even if the ingredients aren’t quite right. And his mum is happy to go along with that.

As I worked on the book I was also reminded of how it felt to be a mother of small children. Even though I didn’t get much sleep and the house was always a crazy mess with lots of loads of washing and often not much in the fridge, there was also loads of pleasure. Simple pleasures: the chance to explore nature, tell stories, cook and eat with others and have adventures of the imagination with all the brand-new language and lovely ways of seeing that young children give like gifts. The only essential ingredients in that life were time, friends and sufficient money for food and shelter, all of which I was lucky enough to have.

Those are some of the things *A Great Cake* is about and I think a great world would be one in which every parent and child could know such simple pleasures.

Can you find the hidden instruction in the title?

**A Great cake... eat cake!**

And the best sort of cake to eat is one you make yourself, to eat with friends.

Other great titles by Tina Matthews

*Out of the Egg*

- 9781921529559
- AU$15.95/NZ$17.99
- Teachers’ notes available

*Out of the Egg Big Book*

- 9781921720437
- AU$44.95/NZ$47.99
- Teachers’ notes available

*Waiting for Later*

- 9781921720055
- AU$24.95/NZ$27.99
- Teachers’ notes available
Discussion Questions and Activities

• Before reading A Great Cake, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:
  » The title of the book
  » The author
  » The illustrator
  » The publisher
  » The blurb.

• What do you think the story might be about from looking at the title only? Do your ideas change after seeing the cover? Write your own story using the title A Great Cake.

• What is the purpose of the repetition of the process of Harvey making the cake? Why do the illustrations not match the text for most of the book?

• How can the reader tell when a character is speaking? (i.e. Punctuation)

• Why does the word “Harvey” have a capital H? Why don’t other words, such as mother, cake, flour, etc.?

• Read the book aloud to the class without showing the illustrations. Ask students to draw or make an image in their mind of the four cakes: wet, lumpy, sticky and just right. Read the book again showing the illustrations to the class. How do the illustrations change the story?

• Ask students who has made a cake at home before. What kind of cake was it? Who did they make it with? What other kinds of food have students made at home?

• Have a class discussion about the qualities of the characters in A Great Cake. What can you tell about Harvey’s mother, father and little brother from the text and illustrations?

• Does Harvey’s mother think he has made a real cake? Ask students if they sometimes play games with their imagination and if they sometimes join in with other people’s games of imagination.

• Look at the spread showing the picnic. Ask students to pick out one or some of the characters shown in this spread and write a short story about what they are doing.

• Is A Great Cake an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? Is it a combination of more than one of these text types? How can you tell?

• Write and illustrate your own procedural text for something you do regularly.

Cooking

• Do you ever cook with an adult?

• Do you know any recipes from memory?

• Can you remember how Harvey made the cake?

• What do we know from the title page?

• Why might Harvey have been so interested in cakes?

• How does Harvey’s father know they have “all the things we need”?

Words and Homonyms

• Most of the words in the book are repeated 4 times. Which words change?

• Why is the wet cake “wet”? Why is the lumpy cake “lumpy”? Why is the sticky cake “sticky”? (What’s brown and sticky? A stick!)

• What are the yellow things in the wet cake? What is the soft thing in the lumpy cake?

• What does Harvey put in the sticky cake that sounds like “flour”? A flower!

• A homonym is one of a group of words that share the same spelling and the same pronunciation but have different meanings. 12 of the 64 words in A Great Cake have homonyms. Can you find some of them? Need-kneed, for-four, one-won, great-grate, I-eye, flour-flower, to-too-two, some-sum, we-wee, right-write, beat-beet, morning-mourning.
Observation

- How many snails are on the wet cake page? Can you find the “cake tin”?
- How many lizards are on the lumpy cake page? Can you find the “cake tin”?
- How many butterflies are on the sticky cake page? Can you find the “cake tin”?
- How many friends are on the just-right cake page? Can you find a real cake tin?
- Where do you think the friends are meeting for a picnic? What might they play and do while they are there (apart from eating cake)? What season might it be? What makes you think that?

Art and Craft

- Cut out a stencil of a cake. Sponge black paint through the stencil to make a silhouette (alternatively you could paint a cake in black and make photocopies for students to colour). Add all your colourful “ingredients” with paint or oil pastels.
- Draw an outline of a cake on solid light paper. Draw all the colourful “ingredients” inside the line, then draw over the top of them with black oil pastel. When all of the colour is covered up, scratch the black away with a toothpick or satay stick to reveal the “ingredients” inside.
- Make a great cake in your classroom. As a class, or individually, collect items from around the room or playground to make a great cake just like Harvey. After you have made your cake, decide who this would be a great cake for.
Create your own Zine!

A great cake

How to Fold a Zine

1. Use A3 or A4 paper (scrap paper is fine)
2. Crease the fold well with your fingernail
3. The second fold is in half
4. Unfold each side, unfold
5. Cut from centre fold
6. To half way out to edge
7. Squash the sides
8. In half

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The cake was rather

Harvey put flour and sugar and soft butter in a bowl.

He added three yellow eggs and a teaspoonful of vanilla.

Then he beat the batter a bit and put it in the oven to cook.

And the cake was just right.

A Great Cake For Friends Recipe

Put 3/4 cup caster sugar and 125 grams of very soft butter in a bowl.

Sift in 1 1/2 cups of self-raising flour

Pour in 3 lightly beaten eggs and 1 teaspoonful of vanilla extract

Beat the batter until smooth

Spoon mixture into small greased and floured cake tin

Bake in moderate oven for 30-40 mins.

Eat with FRIENDS!

"It's a great cake for friends," said Harvey's mother