Out of the Egg - Overview

Out of the Egg
By Tina Matthews
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No. of Pages: 32

Key Learning Areas:
- English
- HSIE
- Music/Dance/Drama
- Art
- Science

Example of:
- Literary narrative
- Circular Story
- Reworking of a traditional tale

Experience of:
- Visual Literacy
- Traditional tales
- Fairy Tales
- Adaptations

Values addressed:
- Care and Compassion
- Respect
- Understanding, tolerance & inclusion

Out of the Egg
A classic tale retold with a modern twist and illustrated with beautiful Japanese-style woodcuts.

This reworked version of the traditional tale of the hardworking, unaided Red Hen continues until her own baby chick befriends the offspring of the lazy cat, rat and pig and together they play. By the end of the day, everyone learns a new lesson in forgiveness and sharing.

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.

How to use these notes:
This story works on many levels; from a simple reworking of a well-known tale to a commentary on society and the future. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.
Before Reading Out of the Egg:

- View the cover and title. What do you think the story is about? What clues are there?
- View the title page. Does the illustration give you more of an idea? Does it confirm your predictions? What do you think the story is about now?

Activities and Discussion Questions for Out of the Egg:

- What story does this remind you of? Read the traditional story of The Little Red Hen. Create a table that lists the similarities and differences between the two versions.
- Why do you think Tina Matthews named the cat, rat and pig: Fat Cat, Dirty Rat, Greedy Pig? What do the pictures tell you about the characters? (And society?)
- Why do you think the Red Hen said: “Not I!” when the little rat, little cat and little pig asked: “Who will let us in to play under the tree?” Do you think the Red Hen was right in saying no? Why/why not?
- Why does the little chick think her mother is mean? Do you agree? Why/why not? Is it right to get back at people like this? How does it make you feel? Has this ever happened to you?
- Do you think the Red Hen was pleased that she listened to her little chick and let the others in? How do you know? Is it important to listen to others? Who should we listen to? Why? When?
- Brainstorm: What can adults learn from children? What can children learn from adults? What have you learnt from your friends? What have you taught your friends/parents? Write and deliver a three minute speech about learning from others (adults, children, peers).
- Why do you think the Red Hen gave the little cat, the little rat and the little pig a green seed each? What do you think they will do with their seeds? Why? Write a new story about what one of the characters (the little cat, the little rat or the little pig) did with his or her seed.
- What would have happened (or not happened) if the Red Hen didn’t look after the seed by herself? Can you think of situations in real life where this type of thing may occur?
- As a class, create a retelling of The Little Red Hen or another well-known tale such as Henny Penny, The Ugly Duckling etc. Try to think of an interesting/surprising twist.
- Tina Matthews has used stark Japanese woodblock prints to create the art for Out of the Egg. Examine her artwork. Do you think it is effective? Why/why not? What do you notice about her choice of colours? Note where she has used red and green – why do you think she has chosen to use colour for these particular parts?
- Create a picture using only black and white. Add only two colours to your picture. Why did you choose to use these colours? What do they add to your picture?
- Study play scripts. Note how they are set out and what their special features are (character lists, props, instructions). In small groups rewrite Out of the Egg as a play. Practise your play and perform it for the rest of the class.
- What does this story tell us about:
  - People?
  - Helping?
  - Working hard?
  - Forgiveness?
  - Society?
  - The environment?
  - The future?
Out of the Egg find-a-word

Find all the words listed below. Some go right, up, down, diagonal and even backwards! The left over letters spell the secret words!

Find the secret words here:

OUT OF THE EGG
LITTLE RED HEN
SEED
LITTLE CAT
PIG
GREEN
TINA
MATTHEWS
GREEDY
LAZY
RAT
CHICK

HELPING
FORGIVENESS
SOCIETY
WALKER
WISDOM
WOODBLOCK
FAT
DIRTY
TWIST
TALES
GROW

SOW
SUN
TREE
ART

Write the secret words here:

____  ________  ________  ________  ________  ________
____  ________  ________