

BAT AND THE END OF EVERYTHING EDUCATOR'S RESOURCE

About the Book

This is the third book in the funny and joyful series Katherine Applegate has called “tender and important,” by National Book Award finalist Elana K. Arnold.

Bixby Alexander Tam (nicknamed Bat) has been the caretaker for Thor, the best skunk kit in the world...but the last day of third grade is quickly approaching, and Thor is almost ready to be released into the wild.

The end of school also means that Bat has to say good-bye to his favorite teacher, and he worries about the summer care of Babycakes, their adorable class pet. Not only that, but his best friend is leaving for a long vacation in Canada.

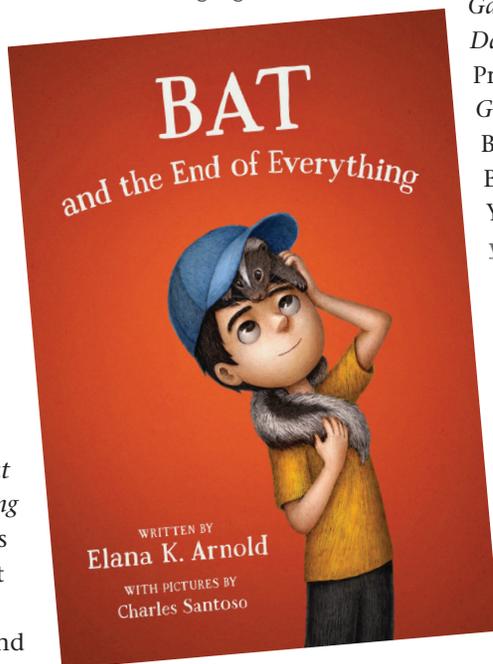
Summer promises good things, too, like working with his mom at the vet clinic and hanging out with his sister, Janie. But Bat can't help but feel that everything is coming to an end.

Bat and the End of Everything is the third story in this series that stars an unforgettable boy on the autism spectrum. It follows the popular first two books in the series, *A Boy Called Bat* and *Bat and the Waiting Game* to complete this delightful series about a boy who loves animals, his family, and

having a best friend, but who struggles with everyday challenges. Bat's autism makes learning facts easier than making friends. As famed animal scientist and autistic advocate Temple Grandin once put it, “Autism made school and social life hard, but made animals easy.”

About the Author

Elana K. Arnold is the author of books for middle-grade readers and teens. Her middle grade titles include *A Boy Called Bat*, A 2018 Global Read Aloud Book and *Bat and the Waiting Game*. Her teen titles include *Damsel*, a 2019 Michael L. Printz Honor Book and *What Girls Are Made Of*, a National Book Award and California Book Award Finalist. You can find her online at www.elanakarnold.com.



It's been such a thrill to watch kids get to know Bat over the last several years! I've received letters from readers who have ideas for future Bat and Thor adventures; I've been sent drawings of kids and their pets; I've heard from parents, teachers, and kids whose questions, comments, and insights have made me laugh and sometimes cry.

Truly, the greatest reward of writing about Bat has been hearing from young readers who see themselves reflected in these books. When I set out to write the series, I had an idea in mind of the story I wanted to tell—a gentle, family-centered series about animal companionship, empathy, and love—but I didn't imagine all the stories that would come back to me, in return. I have spoken to autistic and neurotypical kids who appreciate Bat's struggles as reflective of their own. I've heard from grownups who see their kids and themselves in these books, as well.

Sharing Bat's story has been a way for me to speak, but also to listen. I hope that these books help others—parents, teachers, and kids—to speak about what they need and want, what they love and fear, and I hope too that the books model ways that we can listen with empathy to animals, to one another, and to ourselves.

With Love,

Elana

Background for Educators:

ACTIVITIES FOCUSED ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The concept of Emotional Intelligence (EQ) emerged in the 1990s, in part growing out of Howard Gardner's concept of "multiple intelligences" and the concern that many of those who scored highly on IQ tests struggled in school and the workplace. Components of Emotional Intelligence that the student activities include: seeing potential conflicts from another person's point of view; regulating one's emotions and defusing conflict situations; showing interest in and concern for others; and expressing one's needs and feelings in a positive way so as to contribute to conflict resolution rather than adding fuel to the fire.

ACTIVITY: UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW: BAT AND JANIE

In *Bat and the End of Everything*, Janie, who usually supports Bat and helps him navigate the world of emotions and relationships, is the one struggling to deal with her feelings about their Dad's new girlfriend, Suzette. In the activity "Understanding Different Points of View: Bat and Janie," Bat is confused at Janie's emotional outburst. Her words and the illustrations of her body language offer clues to how she feels, and this activity helps students to identify those clues. Using those clues, students may be able to understand what's going through Janie's head and write the scene from her point of view.

Emotional Intelligence Activities continued

Understanding Different Points of View: Bat and Janie

Why is Bat so confused by Janie's reaction?

How is the illustration "telling" a story to Janie's feelings about Suzette?

How is the illustration and the body language of the character, a clear story of feelings about Suzette?

Write the same scene from Janie's point of view. Use the clues from the illustration to help you understand how Bat is reacting with Dad and Suzette.

ACTIVITY: SHARING FEELINGS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

Sharing one's needs and feelings in a constructive way is a difficult skill to acquire and use, especially in the heat of a conflict. So is making an apology. This activity focuses on the scene at the pool that begins with Janie angry and sulking once again over Dad and Suzette. After Dad apologizes and both Janie and Bat share their concerns about Suzette cutting into their private time with Dad, the three of them come to an agreement about the Every-Other-Weekend that satisfies everyone. A well-timed and well-expressed apology is one that invites those wronged to express themselves and be heard, and it pushes the apologizer to make concrete changes.

Emotional Intelligence Activities continued

Sharing Feelings to Solve Problems

Why is it important for Dad to apologize?

How do Dad, Janie, and Suzette come to an agreement about the Every-Other-Weekend and Suzette? Do you think Dad's apology was helpful? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY: BEING A GOOD FRIEND: SHOWING INTEREST AND CONCERN

Emotional Intelligence is crucial to forming and maintaining long-term friendships. Bat and Israel have been friends over the course of the series, but the summer vacation poses new challenges, which Bat acknowledges when he worries that Israel will like his cousin in Canada better than he does Bat and drop Bat as a friend. Then the letter arrives, and Bat sees Israel has not forgotten him. But can Bat write a letter that conveys to Israel the importance of their friendship?

Emotional Intelligence Activities continued

Being a Good Friend: Showing Interest and Concern

Write a letter to a partner in class. Pretend one of you is talking to the other one in writing. Use your writing skills to show interest and concern about the person who will be writing your letter.

Describe a time when you used evidence to make a big decision.

This paired letter-writing activity highlights ways that students can show interest in and concern for a friend, thus building the skills needed to maintain close friendships.

ACTIVITIES FOCUSED ON CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

The activities in this section connect the book to what students are learning in Math, Science, ELA, and Social studies while also tying into aspects of Emotional Intelligence.

ACTIVITY: HOW LONG DO PETS LIVE?

Students will note from this activity that skunks kept as pets live significantly longer than those in the wild, which ties into the scene at the end of the novel when family members share their thoughts and feelings about Bat keeping Thor even though the skunk is now grown and can live on his own.

Curriculum Connection Activities continued

How Long Do Pets Live?

Why is this information important to Bat and his family when they're making a decision about Thor?

ACTIVITY: FIGURES OF SPEECH: HYPERBOLE

In addition to exploring a figure of speech used in the scene at the veterinarian's office, this activity focuses on the role of a sense of humor in developing Emotional Intelligence.

Curriculum Connection Activities continued

Figures of Speech: Hyperbole

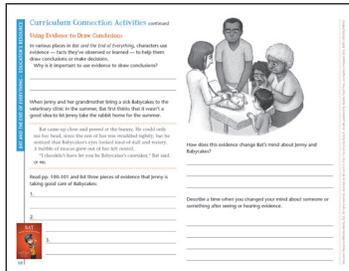
Think of an example of hyperbole that you've heard or used recently and write it here.

ACTIVITY: USING EVIDENCE TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS

When Bat uses evidence to understand that Jenny is taking good care of Babycakes, he is able to accept her as the bunny's caretaker, and ultimately the two become friends. Having students consider evidence before responding with accusations or emotional outbursts is a key component of Emotional Intelligence. The evidence that Bat collects to show that Jenny is taking good care of Babycakes:

- 1) "Her fur was smooth and well brushed, without any matting or tangles," (which meant Jenny had been grooming her every day);
- 2) "Babycakes did not seem to have lost much weight, if any;"
- 3) "her paws were clean, which meant Jenny had been keeping her enclosure nice and fresh."

(pp. 100-101)



ACTIVITY: CREATIVE WRITING AND ART: IMAGINING THE FUTURE

This activity, in which students imagine Thor's life with Bat's family, in part from the perspectives of Thor, Israel, or Janie, will help students to see others' points of view.

Books and Websites about Autism Spectrum Disorder

BOOKS FOR EDUCATORS

A Buffet of Sensory Interventions: Solutions for Middle and High School Students with a Spectrum Disorder, by Susan Culp. AAPC Publishing, 2011.

How to Talk to an Autistic Kid, by Daniel Stefanski. Free Spirit Publishing, 2011.

ONLINE:

What Good Representation of Autistic Characters Looks Like: A Three-Part Series in Thinking Person's Guide to Autism:

This informative and thorough series by Elizabeth Bartmess offers a survey of exemplary representations of autistic characters in children's books, young adult fiction and science fiction. (The overall site offers a wealth of other necessary information from autistic people, professionals and parents.)

Part 1: Interiority and Neurology

Part 2: Diversity in Autistic Characteristics and Demographics

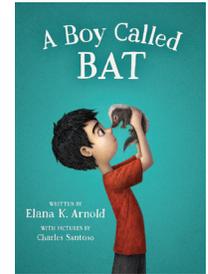
Part 3: Setting, Plot, and Character Growth (Plus Some Bonus Goodies)

Disability in Kidlit: Disability in Kidlit is dedicated to discussing the portrayal of disability in middle grade and young adult literature, publishing articles, reviews, interviews, and discussions examining this topic from various angles — and always from a disabled/neurodiverse perspective.

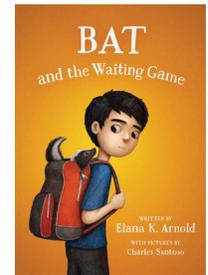
Lyn Miller-Lachmann, creator of this Educator's Guide, is the author of three novels for young readers — *Gringolandia*, *Surviving Santiago*, and *Rogue* — and is a translator from Portuguese and Spanish to English of children's books, screenplays, poetry, and academic articles. *Gringolandia* — the story of a refugee teenager from Chile under the Pinochet dictatorship and his relationship with his father, a just-released political prisoner — was an Américas Award Honor Book and selected for the ALA/YALSA Best Books for Young Adults list in 2010. Her middle grade novel *Rogue*, first published in 2013 and rereleased in 2019, is a pioneering own voices portrayal of an autistic girl trying to figure out what it means to be a friend. Her YA historical novel *TORCH*, forthcoming in early 2021, features a teenager on the spectrum whose first friendship with a pair of dissidents puts him in danger of psychiatric abuse in Communist Czechoslovakia. She reviews for *The Pirate Tree* and blogs on travel, politics, and writing while autistic at www.lynmillerlachmann.com.

Classroom Read-Aloud Suggestions

A Boy Called Bat by Elana K. Arnold. Walden Pond Press, an Imprint of HarperCollins Children's Books. The first story in the series about the life and times of Bixby Alexander Tam (called Bat), centers on his experiences becoming the caretaker of an orphaned skunk kit he names Thor.



Bat and the Waiting Game by Elana K. Arnold. Walden Pond Press, an Imprint of HarperCollins Children's Books. The second story in the series picks up with Janie getting a part in the school play, which means she can't watch Bat after school. This leads to some pretty big changes. But Bat just wants everything to go back to normal.



The Real Boy by Anne Ursu. Walden Pond Press, an Imprint of HarperCollins Children's Books. On an island on the edge of an immense sea, there is a city, a forest, and a boy. The city is called Asteri, a perfect city saved by the magic woven into its walls when a devastating plague swept through the world years before. The forest is called the Barrow, a vast wood of ancient trees that encircles the city and feeds the earth with magic. And the boy is called Oscar, a shop boy for the most powerful magician in the Barrow, who spends his days grinding herbs and dreaming of the wizards who once lived on the island. Oscar's world is small, but he likes it that way. The real world is vast, strange, and unpredictable. And Oscar does not quite fit in it. In this National Book Award Longlist finalist, a young boy becomes a hero against all odds.

Other Recommended Titles

PICTURE BOOKS

Benji, the Bad Day, and Me by Sally J. Pla, illustrated by Ken Min. Lee & Low Books.

Sammy comes home wet and angry after a bad day at school. He wonders why his autistic little brother, Benji, gets a special box when he's angry or upset, while Sammy is ignored by his busy mom. But today, Benji comes out of his box and shows Sammy how to feel loved and cared for too.

Benny Doesn't Like to Be Hugged by Zetta Elliott, illustrated by Purple Wong. Rosetta Press, 2017.

In rhyming verse, the unnamed Black narrator describes her close friendship with Benny, who is autistic. This is a powerful celebration of shared interests and differences and the joys of spending time with friends.

MIDDLE GRADE

Forever Neverland by Susan Adrian. Random House Books for Young Readers

When Fergus, who is autistic, and his older sister Clover visit their grandmother in London, Clover is supposed to look out for Fergus. But when Peter Pan flies through the window and takes them to Neverland, the tables are turned and Fergus is the one who truly belongs to the world.

M Is for Autism by the Students of Limpsfield Grange School in collaboration with Vicky Martin. Available at amazon.com.

A novel featuring a 13-year-old autistic girl coming to terms with her anxiety, written by students at a school for girls with communication and interaction difficulties.

Planet Earth Is Blue by Nicole Panteleakos. Wendy Lamb Books.

In the days before the 1986 Challenger tragedy, 12-year-old Nova, who is autistic and nonverbal, awaits her missing older sister's return so they can watch the launch together. For years Bridget has

taken care of her as the two moved through a succession of foster homes. But Bridget is now missing, and Nova is struggling to adjust to a new home with its routines and a new school where no one realizes how smart she is and how much she knows about outer space.

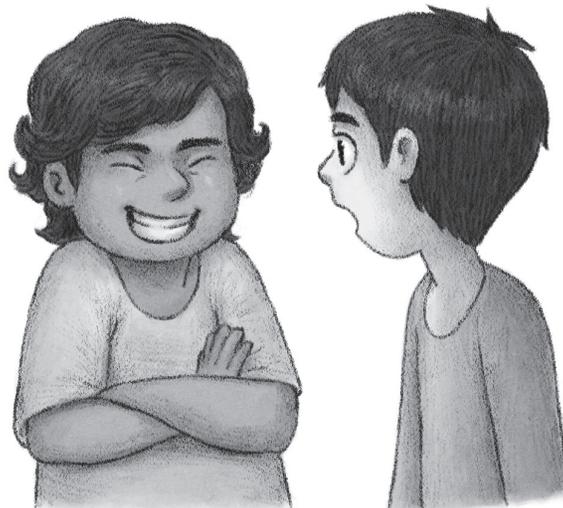
The Someday Birds by Sally J. Pla. HarperCollins.

A debut middle grade novel filled with humor, heart, and chicken nuggets. Equal parts madcap road trip, coming of age story for an autistic boy who feels he doesn't understand the world, and an uplifting portrait of a family coming together to help each other.

YOUNG ADULT

Rogue by Lyn Miller-Lachmann. Nancy Paulsen Books; reprint ed. Last Syllable Books

Kiara's undiagnosed autism and her obsession with the X-Men superhero Rogue make it hard for her to keep friends. When she fights back against a bully and is suspended from school, she finds herself even further from her goal of having a friend. Then Chad moves in across the street, and she hopes that for once, she'll be able to make friendship stick. She's even willing to keep Chad's



secrets and help him do something she knows is wrong, if that's what it takes. Still, being a true friend is complicated, and it might be just the thing that leads her to her own superhero power.

The State of Grace by Rachael Lucas. Feiwel & Friends

An autistic teenager living on the Scottish coast, Grace finds joy in caring for animals, in getting together with her one true friend, and in a budding relationship with a sweet boy named Gabe who has just moved to town. But worried about the local mean girl's efforts to woo Gabe, Grace takes a risky decision to impress him, putting herself, her friends, and her favorite horse in danger.

On the Edge of Gone by Corinne Duyvis. Abrams Books for Young Readers

January 29, 2035 is the day the comet is scheduled to hit. Denise and her mother and sister, Iris, have been assigned to a temporary shelter outside their hometown of Amsterdam to wait out the blast, but Iris is nowhere to be found, and at the rate Denise's drug-addicted mother is going, they'll never reach the shelter in time. By sheer luck they end up on a generation ship, scheduled to leave Earth behind to colonize new worlds. But everyone on the ship has been chosen because of their usefulness. Denise is autistic and fears that she'll never be allowed to stay.

CLASSROOM VIDEO SUGGESTIONS

Fourth grader George Yionoulis explains what it feels like to be autistic in this [six-minute video](#).

[Five minutes of highlights](#) of the miracle game of Jason McElwain, a basketball player with autism.

[Thirteen-minute video](#) featuring two boys who followed in Jason's footsteps to play basketball.

Emotional Intelligence Activities

Understanding Different Points of View: Bat and Janie

This activity centers around Emotional Intelligence: the ability to understand, control, and express your feelings, to get along with others, and to see their point of view.

“Suzette,” Dad said, “you’re here already!”

Bat looked away from the doughnuts and to a lady sitting at one of the tables, holding a cup of coffee. She stood up when she saw them, and she smiled a wide friendly smile at them.

“You must be Janie and Bat,” she said, holding out her hand. “I’m Suzette. It’s so nice to meet you.”

Janie just stood there, even though she was usually the first person to say hello and do the polite things like hand shaking. Bat looked back and forth between Janie and the lady’s outstretched hand, waiting to see what would happen.

“Janie, Bat,” Dad said, “this is my friend Suzette. Say hello.”

“Hello,” said Bat. And then, because Suzette was still holding out her hand, Bat shook it.

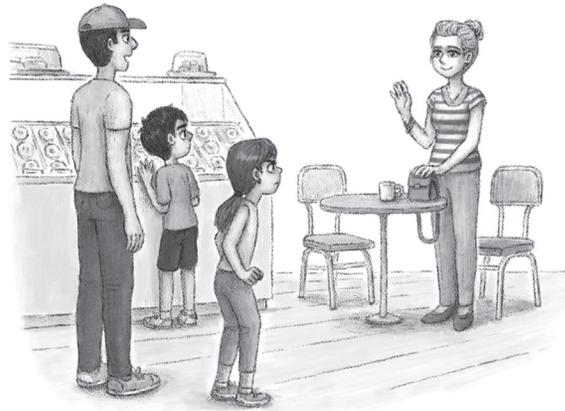
“Your fingers are warm,” he said.

Suzette smiled. “That’s because I was just holding my cup of coffee,” she said.

“You didn’t tell me your *friend* was going to be here,” Janie said to Dad.

“Janie, don’t be rude,” Dad said in a rude voice.

Janie crossed her arms. “I don’t think I want doughnuts after all,” she said. (PP. 76-78)

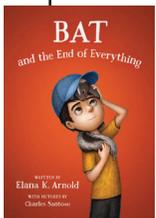


Why is Bat so confused by Janie’s reaction?

How is the italicized word “friend” a clue to Janie’s feelings about Suzette?

How is the illustration, and the body language of the characters, a clue to Janie’s feelings about Suzette?

Write this same scene from Janie’s point of view. Include her feelings about how Bat is interacting with Dad and Suzette.



Emotional Intelligence Activities *continued*

Controlling One's Emotions and Comforting Others

Controlling emotions and temper is a big part of Emotional Intelligence. It's also something Bat has trouble doing. But in this book, Janie has some difficulties too, especially in the same scene in the doughnut shop when she first meets Suzette.

...and then she turned and left, shoving hard on the door so that the little friendly bell clanged loudly.

Bat didn't know what to do. He'd never seen Janie be rude to a grown-up before. Maybe her head was hurting again.

"I'm so sorry about that," Dad was saying to Suzette. "I don't know what's gotten into her. She's usually so polite."

"Didn't you tell them I was going to be here?" Suzette asked.

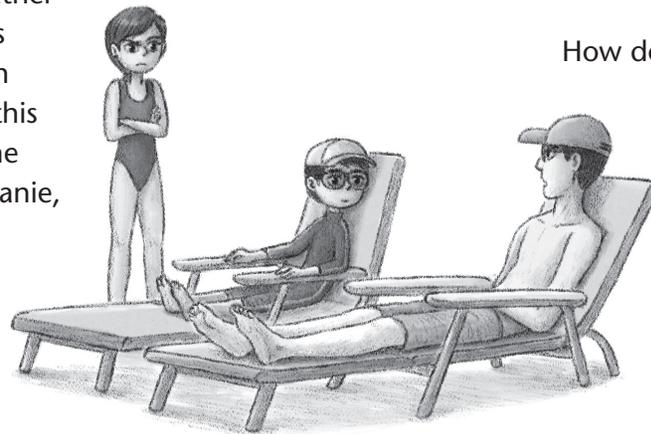
That was something Bat did know. "No," he told her. "He didn't."

"Oh, Calvin," Suzette said, and she shook her head.

(PP. 78-79)

Sharing Feelings to Solve Problem

Throughout the novel, Janie is angry with Dad for inviting Suzette along for their time together, and Bat is confused and unhappy as well. One big part of Emotional Intelligence is sharing those feelings to solve problems, rather than stomping off. Another is being able to apologize when you've done wrong. We see this begin to happen in the scene between Dad, Janie, and Bat at the pool.



Dad stood up. "Wait," he called after Janie. "Come back!"

Janie stopped and stood.... Her whole body looked tense, and Bat could see how strong she'd gotten from all the swimming....

"Sit down," Dad said, and he sat too. "Let's have a talk."

Janie said down on Bat's lounge chair next to him. She wasn't wet, so Bat didn't complain.

"First, I want to apologize," Dad said, and that got Bat's attention. Apologizing wasn't something Dad did very often. "I shouldn't have surprised you guys the way I did. I just really wanted you to meet my friend Suzette. I went about it the wrong way. I promise not to do that again."

Next to Bat, Janie's shoulders softened. "I like surprises," she said. "Just not that surprise." (PP. 120-121)

How does talking about her feelings help Janie?

Why is it important for Dad to apologize?

How do Bat, Janie, and Dad come to an agreement at the end about their Every-Other-Weekend and Suzette? Do you think that's a fair agreement for everyone? Why or why not?



Emotional Intelligence Activities *continued*

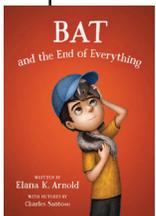
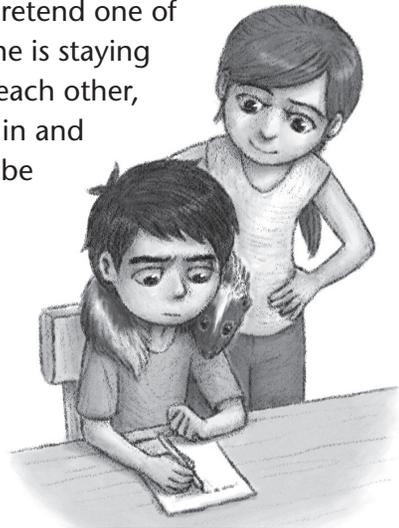
Being a Good Friend: Showing Interest and Concern

People with Emotional Intelligence are good friends. Israel is a good friend to Bat, and Bat learns how to be a good friend too. For instance, when Israel writes Bat a letter from Canada and Bat wants to write back, Janie helps him.

“You write that Babycakes was sick, but you don’t say what happened, or that she got better, or anything! And also, you don’t ask Israel anything about his summer. It’s more thoughtful to ask some questions back.” (P. 138)

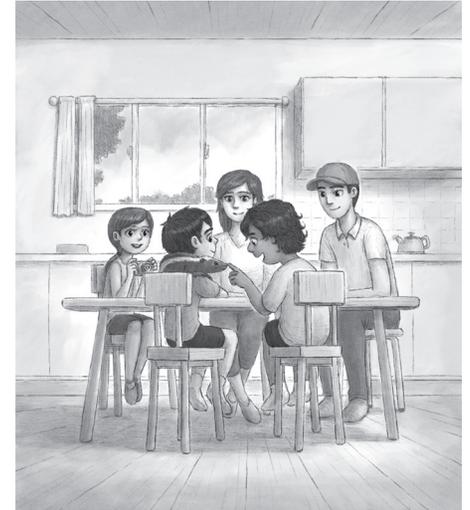
Do you agree that when responding to the questions in a letter, it’s more thoughtful to ask some questions back? If so, why? If not, why not?

Write a letter to a partner in class. Pretend one of you is taking a trip and the other one is staying home. Take turns writing letters to each other, asking questions that show interest in and concern about the person who will be reading your letter.



Family Meeting

At the family meeting in Chapter 23, how do each of the following characters use evidence to decide where Thor is going to live?



Israel:

Janie:

Dad:

Describe a time when you used evidence to make a big decision.

Curriculum Connection Activities

How Long Do Pets Live?

When Bat suggests that Jenny take Babycakes home for the summer and then changes his mind, he talks to Mr. Grayson, and Mr. Grayson asks if Bat knows Babycakes's age:

Bat hadn't ever really thought about it. Babycakes was full-grown, Bat knew that much, and angora rabbits live between seven and twelve years, so she must be somewhere between two (since she was already full-grown when Bat had met her last September) and twelve (since she was still alive).... (P. 61)

Let's research the lifespan of each of the pets mentioned in the story.

Angora Rabbit: from ___ to ___ years.

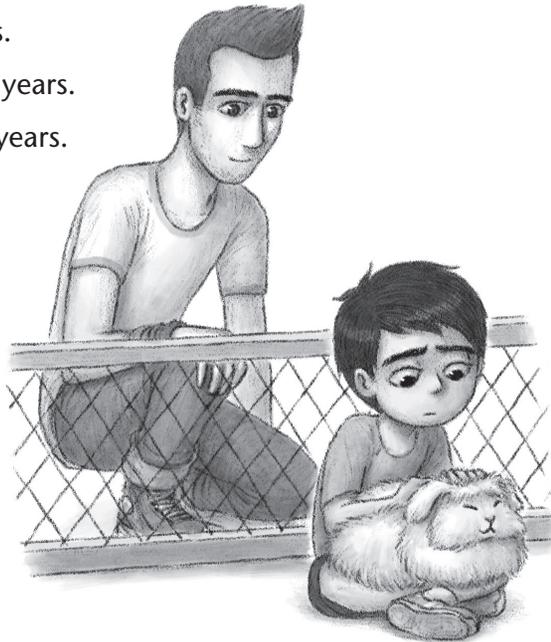
Skunk: from ___ to ___ years.

Dog: from ___ to ___ years.

Cat: from ___ to ___ years.

Parakeet: from ___ to ___ years.

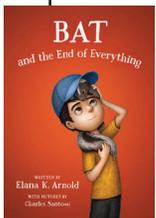
Tortoise: from ___ to ___ years.



How does the life span of each of the animals compare to the others and to people?

Why may there be such a big range for some animals, such as skunks and cats?

Why is this information so important to Bat and his family when they're making a decision about Thor?



Curriculum Connection Activities *continued*

Figures of Speech: Hyperbole

Hyperbole (pronounced high-PER-bo-lee) is a figure of speech that uses exaggeration for humorous or emotional effect. While Bat often takes what people say literally, he has also learned that he can exaggerate their words to make a joke.

“I can’t believe it,” Bat said, “but I think Pumpkin is even bigger than he was when Janie and I came over!”

“No,” said Mrs. Herrera quickly. “He hasn’t grown any more.”

“We’ll weigh him today when we give him his bath,” Laurence said.

“No need for that,” Mrs. Herrera said.

“Well, we keep a record,” Laurence said.

She sighed. “Weigh him if you have to, I guess, but he isn’t an ounce heavier, I can tell you that.”

“He’s not an ounce heavier,” Bat said, “because he’s pounds heavier!”

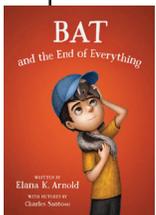
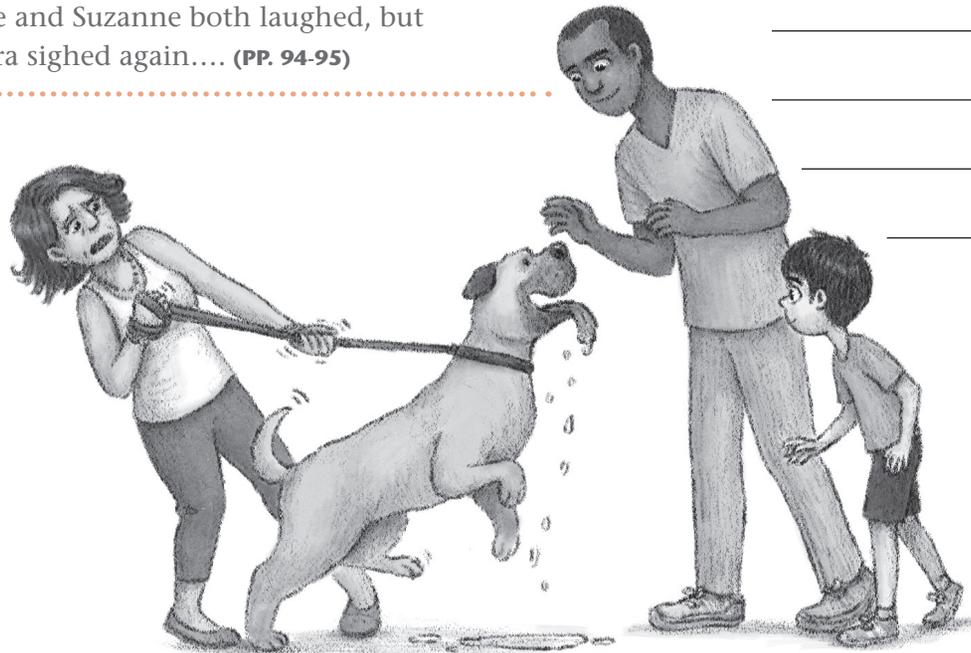
Laurence and Suzanne both laughed, but Mrs. Herrera sighed again.... (PP. 94-95)

How do both Mrs. Herrera and Bat use hyperbole?

Why is Bat’s comment about Pumpkin so funny?

How can being funny be a useful skill in making friends?

Think of an example of hyperbole that you’ve heard or used recently and write it here.



Curriculum Connection Activities *continued*

Using Evidence to Draw Conclusions

In various places in *Bat and the End of Everything*, characters use evidence — facts they've observed or learned — to help them draw conclusions or make decisions.

Why is it important to use evidence to draw conclusions?

When Jenny and her grandmother bring a sick Babycakes to the veterinary clinic in the summer, Bat first thinks that it wasn't a good idea to let Jenny take the rabbit home for the summer.

Bat came up close and peered at the bunny. He could only see her head, since the rest of her was swaddled tightly, but he noticed that Babycakes's eyes looked kind of dull and watery. A bubble of mucus grew out of her left nostril.

"I shouldn't have let you be Babycakes's caretaker," Bat said.

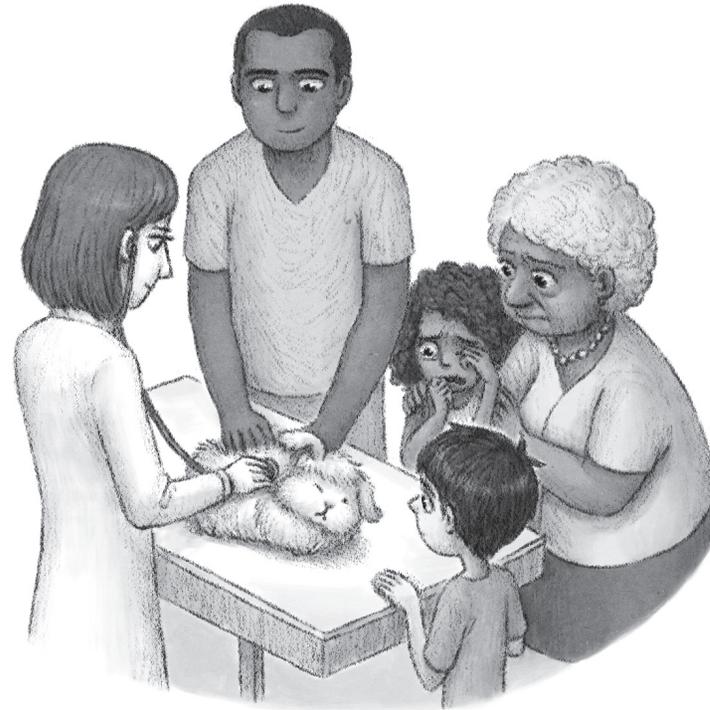
(P. 98)

Read pp. 100-101 and list three pieces of evidence that Jenny is taking good care of Babycakes:

1.

2.

3.



How does this evidence change Bat's mind about Jenny and Babycakes?

Describe a time when you changed your mind about someone or something after seeing or hearing evidence.

