

Teaching Notes: SAM SQUIRREL HAS ADHD

Written by Selina Lee

Illustrated by Aleksandra Szmidt

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SYNOPSIS

Sam Squirrel can't seem to do anything right ... he keeps getting in trouble at home, school and with his friends. But when Sam and his parents finally meet with Dr Kasey, they discover another reason behind Sam's troubles.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Selina Lee grew up in Brisbane with her mother and siblings. After school, Selina became a croupier and travelled the world on cruise ships. When she landed in the UK, she changed professions, and spent a decade as a Police Constable in the Metropolitan Police Force, where she met, Bob 'The Bobby'. They moved to the beautiful Gold Coast to raise their family and she is now a Private Investigator. Selina was diagnosed with ADHD at 40, after her son was diagnosed at 6. Selina's partner and second son have also now been diagnosed with ADHD. Selina's research proved it is still a prevalent disorder that remains misunderstood and unsupported. Selina is helping to create a better world through her books and charity. **Website: www.adhdwhisperer.com.au**

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

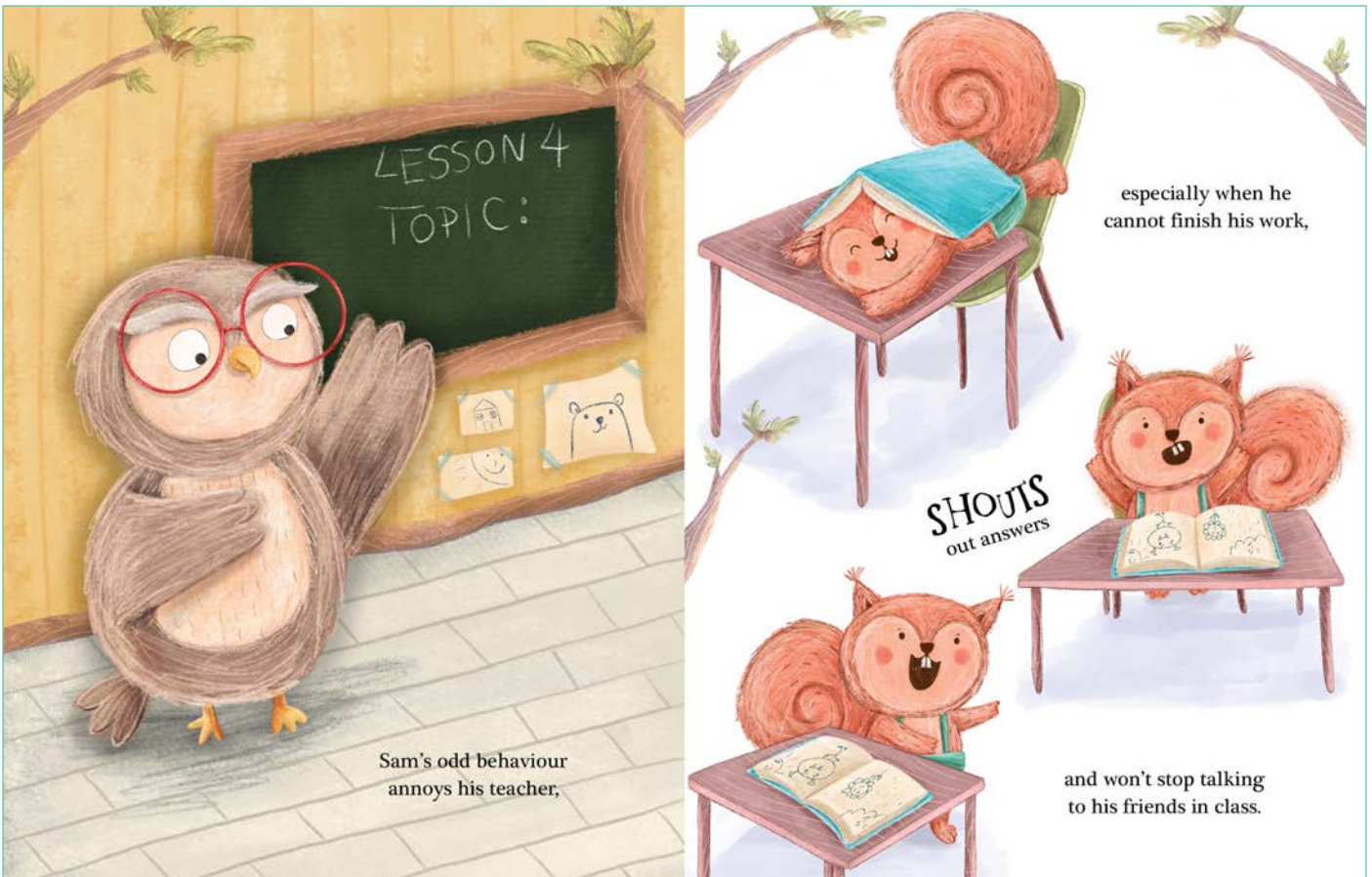
Aleksandra Szmidt grew up in Poland and worked as a graphic designer. She currently resides in New Zealand as a freelance illustrator. From her home studio, Aleksandra creates one-of-a-kind artwork for clients across the world. Her love of drawing plants and animals can be attributed to her landscape architecture studies. She also likes to design magical things detached from reality. The majority of her artwork is made with traditional watercolour, gouache and coloured pencil but she also creates digital art. She loves her job and it brings her immense joy and an emotional connection to her art.



DISCUSSION TOPICS

Read the book together, asking questions throughout.

1. Talk about Sam's behaviour at the beginning of the book.
2. What does he do that annoys his mum, his dad, his teacher and his friends? Have you ever done any of those things? Or, do you know someone who has? Discuss the fact that Sam is not trying to behave badly, instead there is a positive intention behind his behaviour. (Somebody with ADHD simply might not know a better way to express or achieve their desire.)
3. What do Sam's mum and dad do at first to try and control Sam's behaviour? Does it work? How do you think Sam feels?
4. Eventually, Sam's parents take him to see a special doctor. What does the doctor tell them? What do you know about ADHD? Does anyone in your family or class have ADHD? How does the doctor help Sam?
5. Discuss how Sam's behaviour changes after he takes the medicine. Why are Sam's parents, friends and teacher happier now?
6. Sam finds out that sometimes people with ADHD can invent new things and create wonderful art and music. Have you ever felt extra creative? If you could invent something, what would you invent?



DRAWING SAM

Draw a picture of Sam with his family or Sam with his friends at school.
Use your brightest colours!



MEMORY GAME

How well do you remember what happened in the story? Below are six pictures from the story but they are jumbled up. Carefully cut them out (ask an adult to help you!) and arrange them in the correct order. Try to retell the story in your own words.



FEELINGS/ACTIONS

Discuss the difference between feelings and actions. Feelings *just exist* (there is no 'should' with feelings), but actions *need to be considered*, filtered and reasonable. Sam has trouble considering and filtering his actions. Knowing the difference between the two can help with accepting a feeling without acting impulsively on it. Write down lots of feelings and actions on the board in class and ask the children to put them into the correct columns. First, you might want to read aloud Selina Lee's poem below.

FEELINGS

ACTIONS





FEELINGS vs ACTIONS

Feelings are what they are.
There is no should.
Feelings just exist.
You cannot change them.

To be healthy,
you must acknowledge
and accept your feelings.

There is no right or wrong about feelings.
Feelings are not to be judged.
Feelings need to be accepted and understood.

For once feelings are understood,
you can then take considered,
measured actions.

It is the filtering and thought
between feelings and actions that is important.

Actions have the should.
Actions can be right or wrong.
Actions must be considered and measured.

