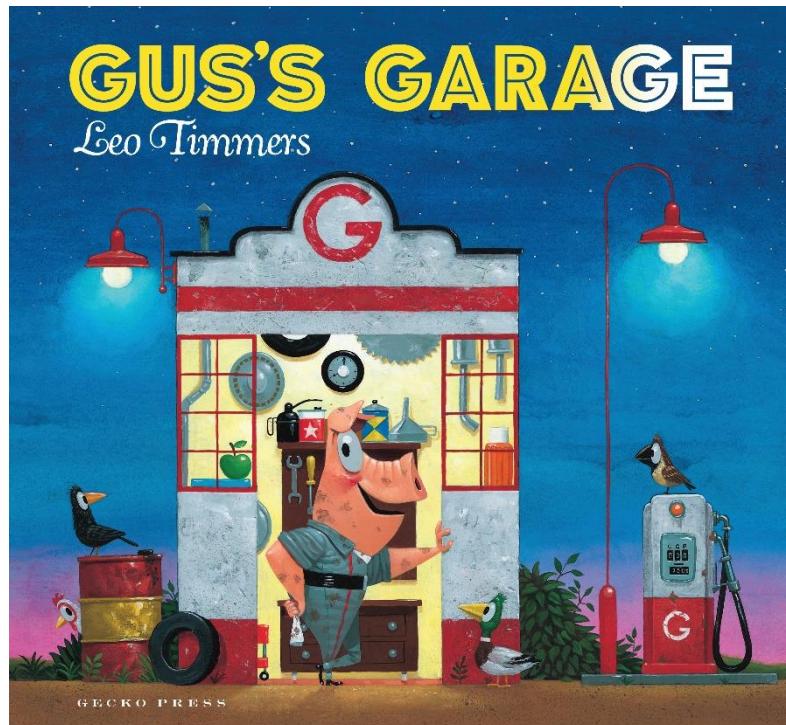


Teaching Notes

Gus's Garage

By Leo Timmers



Synopsis

Gus's workshop is full of odds and ends and when his friend Rico comes over with a problem, Gus finds just the thing to solve it.

One by one his friends come to Gus's Garage and he solves their troubles with ingenious solutions—a cooling system made with a fridge that doubles as an ice-cream machine, a burst of speed from a rocket blaster trombone.

Soon the workshop is almost empty. Is anything left to solve Gus's own problem at the end of a long day?

The Author/Illustrator

Leo Timmers was born in 1970, in Belgium. At the age of 12 he started to draw comics. After training as a graphic designer, he began to write and illustrate children's books, going on to win a number of international awards. He lives in Brussels with his wife and daughters.

Themes

This hilarious picture book, filled with stunning and colourful illustrations, has several themes.

Two themes explored are inventiveness and resourcefulness. At his workshop, Gus, through his inventiveness and resourcefulness, manages to adapt, add to and ultimately build creative, ingenious and bespoke vehicles for each of his grateful customers.

Other themes illustrated are recycling and reusing. Gus uses the seemingly useless junk piled up in his workshop as the material for his marvellous creations, proving that one animal's junk may just be one pig's treasure.

Further themes are those of embracing, using and sharing your talents. It is evident that Gus is renowned for this as there is a constant stream of animals arriving at his workshop seeking out his assistance and expertise.

A final theme is that of the need to reward yourself after a hard day's work and a good job well done, even if that means utilising your own talents again to build your own marvellous cleaning creation!

Activities

1. Before reading the book look at the cover image and title. Discuss what you think this story might be about?
2. This picture book features rhyming couplets. List all the rhyming words from the book. Choose one of the adjectives from the book for the title of, and inspiration for, your own poem in rhyming couplets, such as 'dry' or 'fast'.
3. 'Bits and bobs' is an example of alliteration. Find out the definition of this literary term. Provide an example of alliteration for each of the names of the characters from the book as well as for the names of three of your fellow classmates.
4. Choose your favourite double page spread from the book. Locate one of the bird characters who live at Gus's Garage. Write a personal diary entry about what is happening on your chosen pages from their point of view. Include their view on how they would describe the physical scene and the other characters, as well as their feelings about Gus, his customer and/or Gus's creations.
5. In pairs, explain to your partner which of the vehicles that Gus creates is your favourite, and why? Create a 'For Sale' advertisement for this vehicle, including a description of its unique selling points. Remember to use persuasive and descriptive language to advertise your vehicle.
6. There are many animals featured in the book. Choose two animals and describe them using only three statements. In pairs, try and guess which animals each other has described.
7. Anthropomorphism is when gods, animals or things are depicted with human attributes and behaviours. Find two examples of this from the book. Find other picture books where animals are depicted in this way, for example, *Bang* (Gecko Press, 2013), *I Want Spaghetti* (Gecko Press, 2015) and *How to Be Famous* (Gecko Press, 2016).

8. Examine the illustrations in the book. What attracts your attention to a particular picture? What colours are used? What kinds of lines and textures are used? Which is your favourite illustration and why? Find another book illustrated by Leo Timmers. Compare and contrast the illustrations. Are there many similarities or differences? Design your own illustrations for the cover and/or one page of text.
9. Exclamation marks, question marks, speech marks, ellipses, full stops and commas are all types of punctuation found in the book. Find an example of each from the book and explain their grammatical purpose.
10. Think about a mode of transport you might use, for example, a bicycle, a car, a bus or a horse. Then choose some items from Gus's junk pile to create your own modified transportation. Next, design a marketing campaign for your new creation. Your campaign could include elements such as pamphlets, radio jingles, posters, slogans, etc. Remember to use persuasive and descriptive language to get people to purchase your invention.
11. Review the book for your favourite magazine or website. What do you like about the book? Why? What did you dislike about the book? Why? Give it a rating, such as stars or a number out of ten.
12. Find another book by Leo Trimmers, such as *I am the King* (Gecko Press, 2007), *Who's Driving?* (Gecko Press, 2007), *The Magical Life of Mr. Renny* (Gecko Press, 2012) or *Bang* (Gecko Press, 2013). Write a plot summary and/or book report.