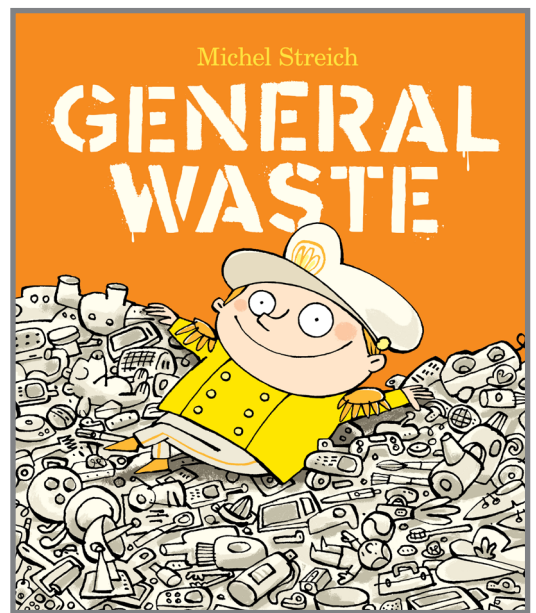


General Waste

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR
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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary

SYNOPSIS

General Waste loves stuff! Wasting lots of stuff! He tosses away apples after one bite, he has hour-long showers, he must have the latest uniform fashion, and he rides around in a monster truck! He shares a house with Gram-Gram. She always saves her leftovers, does her own repairs and cycles everywhere! One day, when General Waste finds himself trapped under a mountain of his own stuff, Gram-Gram comes to the rescue.

ABOUT THE CREATOR

Michel Streich started his illustration career as an educational illustrator in Germany before moving to London, and later Australia. After ten years in Sydney, he now lives in the Blue Mountains.

Michel's illustrations have appeared in publications such as the *Times*, the *Financial Times*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and ABC Magazines. He has been a regular contributor to the *Australian Financial Review* and *The Economist's 1843 Magazine*. His previous work includes illustrating *Wesley Booth Super Sleuth*, written by Adam Cece.

STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the story, as a class, discuss the book cover and title. Some things to include in your discussion could be:
 - What do you think the title of this book means?
 - Who do you think the main character of this book might be?
 - Do you think General Waste is a person, or a thing? Why do you think this?
 - What do you think is likely to happen in this story?
 - What can you see happening in the cover artwork?
 - Who do you think the person on the cover could be?
 - What do you think the person on the cover is feeling? Why do you think this?
- Look carefully at the illustrations on the end pages of this book. What can you see in these pictures? What type of artwork do you think this is?
 - Use the artwork in the end pages of the book as inspiration for an artwork of your own. Use pen (or marker) on white paper to create lots of little close-together drawings of as many different objects as you can think of. Once you have finished your drawing, discuss how colouring your objects would change the impact of the artwork.
 - Divide your artwork into three equal parts, either horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Leave one third of your artwork the way it is, use coloured pencils or markers to colour all the objects on another third, and on the final

third use a soft lead pencil to add shading to the different objects pictured. Discuss the visual impact of the three distinct styles of artwork, and share which style you prefer and why. Include in your discussion a conversation about which choices the creator made in creating their artwork, and why you think they chose to do it the way they did.

- General Waste has ‘countless lotions and potions.’ What does it mean when we say something is ‘countless’? How many lotions and potions do you have in your bathroom at home? Including such things as shampoo, conditioner, and sunblock, count all the different bottles of stuff that are in your bathroom. Write down or remember this number, and bring your result to school to share.
 - Record everyone’s results on a large piece of paper, and then use this data to create a graph showing how many different bottles of stuff your class has in their bathrooms at home. For a challenge, use your data collection to calculate the average number of bottles of stuff your class has in their bathrooms.
 - Do you think that this is more or less than General Waste’s number of bottles and tubes? Why do you think this?
- General Waste has far more things than he needs—which is clearly wasteful. What other things does he waste in the story? Why it is important that we all try not to be wasteful? What are some different ways we can try not to be wasteful in our own lives?
- Have a zero-waste day where everyone tries to bring a zero-waste lunch to school. Brainstorm before your zero-waste lunch day, and think of the different ways that you can ensure that your lunches are all zero-waste. Be sure to talk about such things as using reusable containers for snacks, and reusing cloth or paper wrappers for sandwiches. As a challenge you might even like to talk to the school administration about running a zero-waste lunch day for your whole school, maybe add a competition to see which class collects the least amount of rubbish at lunchtime on the day!
- Who lives in Gram-Gram’s garden? Look carefully at the illustrations and see if you can identify all the different creatures who are living happily in her yard. Choose one of these creatures and, in pairs or small groups, research it online or in the school library.
 - Individually create an artwork featuring your chosen creature, include in your artwork a ‘fact box’ sharing three interesting facts you discovered through your research.
- Gram-Gram and General Waste make art together using some of his discarded stuff. Collect (clean!) items from the recycling or rubbish bins at home, and at school, and use them to create an artwork with a theme of reduce, reuse and recycle. You can create a sculpture like Gram-Gram and General Waste, or you might prefer to create a collage, or even a diorama, a mobile or a set of puppets. Display everyone’s artwork to enjoy.
- Gram-Gram teaches General Waste how to grow his own food in the garden. Grow beans or herbs in clean washed yoghurt pots or takeaway cups on the classroom windowsill. You might have to research how to care for bean seedlings or your chosen herbs online or in the library! Be sure they get the right amount of water and sunshine, and at the end of term, take them home for your family to enjoy the harvest.
- Gram-Gram tells General Waste that ‘You don’t always need machines, just a little elbow grease.’ General Waste replies with ‘What’s elbow grease?’ What is elbow grease, and why would Gram-Gram say that cooking needs it?
- Create musical instruments from found or used items, just like the way that Gram-Gram and General Waste do, then as a class, write and perform a musical piece using your instruments, featuring lyrics inspired by the story and including the refrain ‘Life’s too wonderful to waste on stuff.’

AUTHOR OF NOTES

RAE CARLYLE