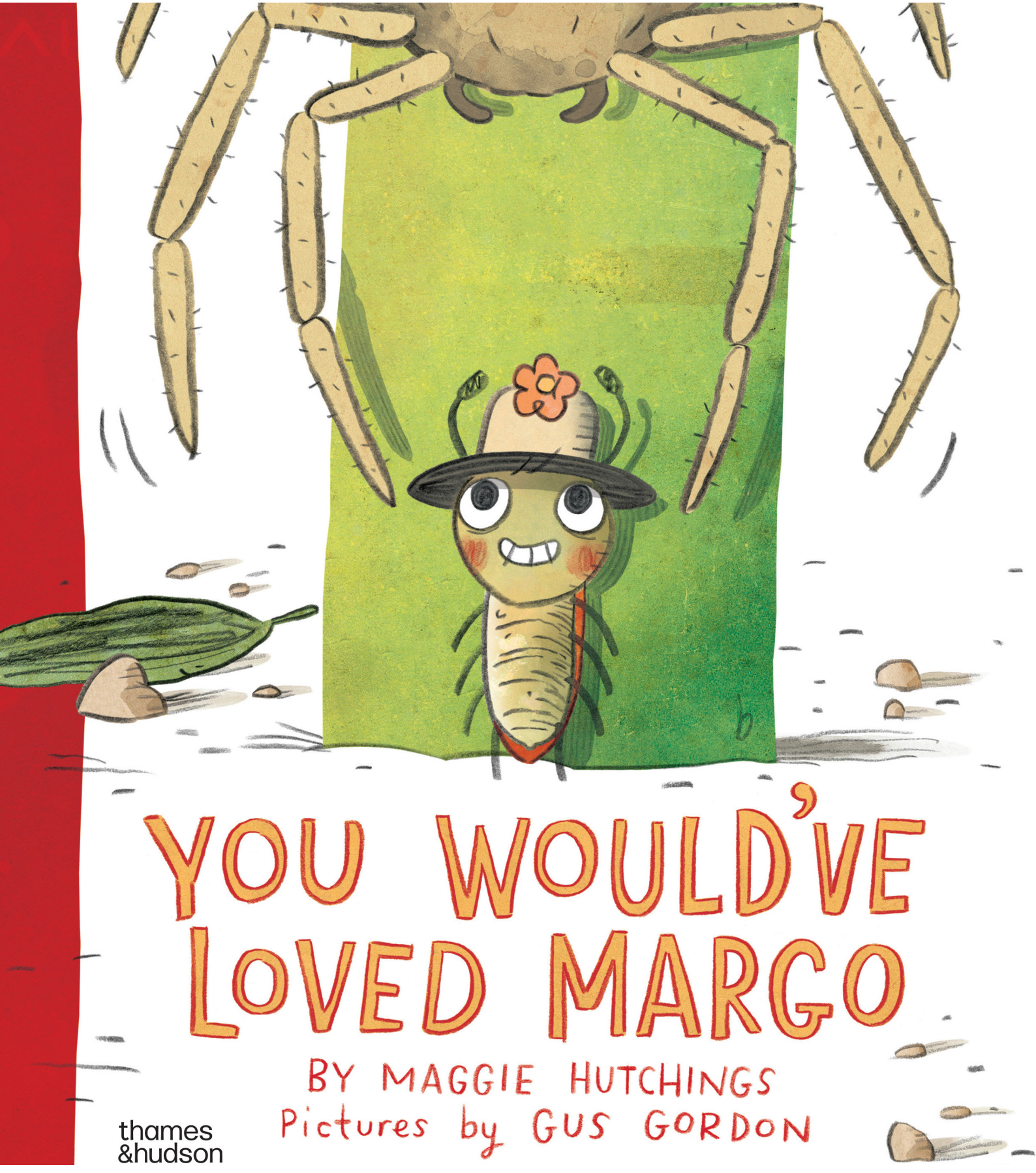
TEACHERS' NOTES

YOU WOULD'VE LOVED MARGO

Written by Maggie Hutchings and illustrated by Gus Gordon

Teachers' notes prepared by Belinda Bolliger



Thames & Hudson Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work. For our head office in Naarm (Melbourne), we respectfully acknowledge the people of the Kulin Nations. We recognise the continuing connection to culture and story passed down through generations of Indigenous Australians that unite people, environment and ways of seeing. We pay respects to elders past and present, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waterways and community. Sovereignty has never been ceded. It always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

Blurb

Meet Margo! A quick-witted bug who finds herself in a sticky situation.

Can she talk her way out of a spider's clutches before it's time for dinner?

From bestselling author Maggie Hutchings and beloved illustrator Gus Gordon comes this hilarious story of escape, trickery and why you shouldn't eat too many stinkbugs.

Synopsis

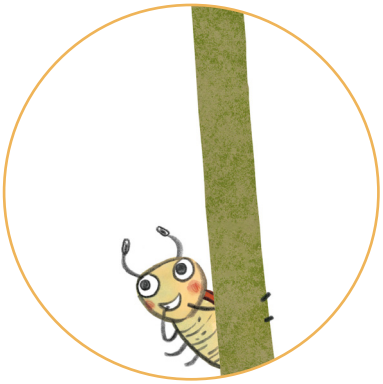
You Would've Loved Margo is a hilarious tale of one very clever bug and one very hungry, but not quite so clever, spider.

When Margo becomes trapped in a spider's web, it looks as though she is destined to become dinner. But quick-thinking Margo has other ideas. With jokes, dancing, distractions and some clever persuasion, she keeps the spider entertained... and herself off the menu.

Told from the spider's unsuspecting point of view, *You Would've Loved Margo* is a playful story about quick thinking, persuasion and looking at events from different perspectives.



Themes



HUMOUR



PROBLEM-SOLVING



PERSUASION



TRICKERY



QUICK THINKING



PERSPECTIVE



SURVIVAL



LIFE CYCLES,
PREDATORS AND PREY



Writing style

Maggie Hutchings uses a lively, conversational writing style filled with humour, wordplay and exaggeration. The story is narrated by the spider, who speaks directly to the reader and is entirely unaware that Margo is continually trying to escape being eaten. Short sentences, repeated patterns, dialogue and emphatic words add energy to the text, making it particularly effective when read aloud. Double meanings and recurring jokes add to the humour of the story. The ending, which returns to the opening idea that 'Margo loved a good joke', brings the story back to where it began – with a twist!

Author Motivation

Writing this book was such a joy! I especially enjoyed creating the two main characters with their very different views of this sticky situation. One thing I love to achieve in a story is to engage kids straight away and for them to be 'in on the joke'. That was my primary motivation! But on a big-picture level, I also wanted to show that using your brain can generate solutions to the trickiest of problems. Margo is thinking hard the entire time! She never gives up and uses her wits right up until the last page. Meanwhile our spider is so sure of his power, he assumes he'll win out. I also enjoyed making this book because Gus the illustrator is a great friend of mine which made the process a real treat.

Illustration style

Gus Gordon's illustrations combine expressive line drawings, watercolour and collage to create a playful, textured world. Pieces of printed and patterned paper are incorporated into the backgrounds, while areas of white space allow the characters and their actions to take centre stage. Gus Gordon plays with scale, composition, facial expression and body language to add to the humour. The illustrations frequently tell us more than the words do. Margo's expressions reveal what she is really thinking and feeling, allowing readers to understand her schemes even while the unsuspecting spider remains clueless.



About the author

Maggie Hutchings' debut picture book *Unicorn!* was published in 2018 and she has since published many bestselling picture books in Australia and around the world. Her picture book *Your Birthday was the Best* (illustrated by Felicita Sala) was a CBCA Honour Book, a White Raven Book and was shortlisted for the Russell Humour Prize. Maggie worked as a family counsellor for many years and now spends her time writing from her home on the coast of Northern NSW.



About the illustrator

Gus Gordon is an internationally acclaimed illustrator and author. He has illustrated and/or written over 80 books for children. His books *Wendy*, *Herman and Rosie* (2013 CBCA Honour book), *Somewhere Else* (2017 Speech Pathology book of the year), *The Last Peach* and *Finding François* have sold in over 20 countries worldwide and have received wide recognition.





Australian curriculum links (Foundation to Year 2)

English: Language

- Explore how language is used to interact with others, express feelings and opinions, and engage an audience.
- Explore how words, images and other visual features work together to create meaning in picture books.
- Explore how authors use language choices, repetition, emphasis and patterns for particular effects.
- Recognise and experiment with features of spoken language, including expression, volume, pace and emphasis.

English: Literature

- Respond to literary texts by sharing thoughts and feelings about characters and events.
- Discuss characters, settings and events and make connections between them.
- Discuss how authors and illustrators use language and images to create humour and engage readers.
- Explore different points of view and consider what different characters know, think and feel.

English: Literacy

- Listen to, read, view and comprehend picture books, identifying key ideas and events.
- Use comprehension strategies including predicting, questioning, making connections and inferring meaning.
- Discuss the ways illustrations contribute information that may extend or differ from the written text.
- Use drawing and writing together to communicate ideas and tell stories.

Science: Biological sciences

- Explore the diversity of living things and the features and behaviours that help animals meet their needs and survive.
- Investigate animals and their habitats, including insects and spiders.
- Ask questions, make observations and communicate findings using drawings, labels and simple informative texts.

The Arts: Visual arts

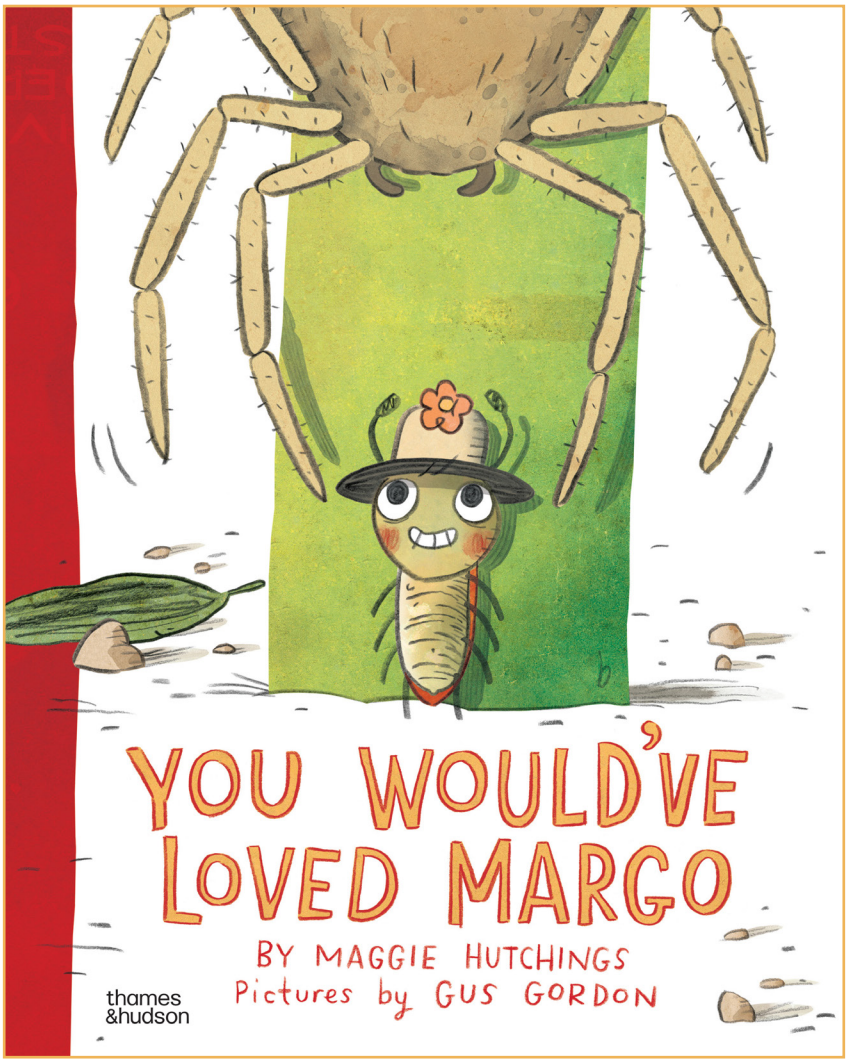
- Explore how visual elements such as colour, line, shape, texture, space and scale can be used to communicate ideas and feelings.
- Discuss how illustrations communicate information about characters, setting, action and mood.
- Explore different art-making techniques and materials, including drawing, painting and collage.



Notes

'You Would've Loved Margo': Exploring the cover

- What do you first notice when you look at the cover of *You Would've Loved Margo*? Why did your eye go there first?
- What do you think the story might be about?
- Who do you think Margo is? What can you tell about her from the illustration?
- Look at Margo's expression and body language. How do you think she is feeling?
  - Margo is smiling. Is it a happy smile? What does her expression suggest she might be thinking?
- What can you see above Margo? How does the illustrator make the spider appear large and possibly scary?
- The title is *You Would've Loved Margo*. Why do you think the author has used the words 'would've loved' rather than 'will love'? What does this make you wonder about Margo?
- Do you think this will be a funny story or a scary story? What clues in the cover support your answer? What do you think might happen when Margo meets the spider?
- After reading the story, return to the cover. Which of your predictions were correct? Did anything on the cover have a different meaning once you knew the story?



'Margo could read me like a book': Vocabulary and language

- There are some words and phrases in the story that might be new to you. As a class, discuss what the following mean:
  - Considerate
  - She had all the moves
  - Boogie on down
  - Disco
  - Read me like a book
  - Let off a little wind
  - Glorious
  - Clingy
  - Vegetarian

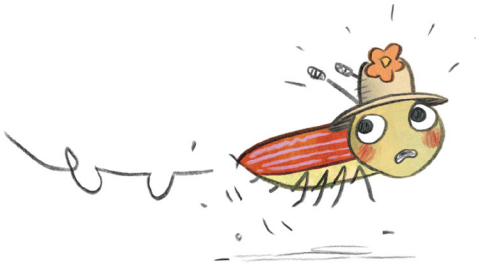
'Margo loved a good joke': Characterisation

Margo and the spider are very different characters. It is these differences that create much of the humour in the story.

- Map each thing Margo does to avoid being eaten and decide which tactic was the cleverest.
- As a class, compare Margo and the spider. Think about what each character says, does and thinks and what this tells us about their personality. Add your ideas to a table like the one below. A few examples have been done for you.

Margo	**Spider**
quick-thinking determined clever	gullible easily fooled! not very clever

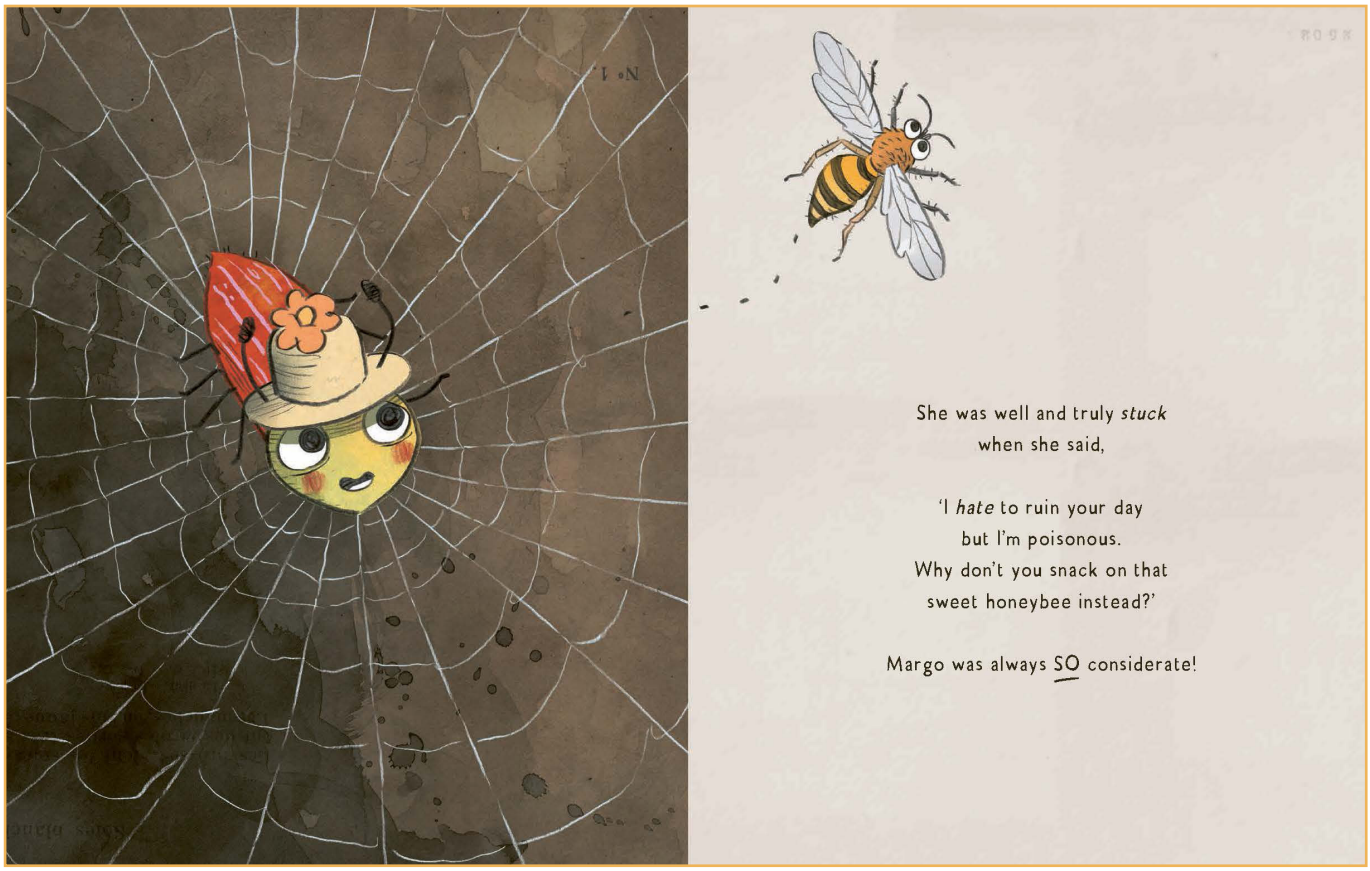
- Choose one characteristic for each character. How do you know that Margo or the spider is like this? Find something in the words or pictures that supports your idea.
- The spider describes himself as 'GORGEOUS but DEADLY'. These two words tell us very different things about him.
  - Create your own 'this but that' descriptions for Margo and the spider. Try putting together
  - two words or ideas that contrast with each other. For example, Margo is CLEVER but
  - STUCK. The spider is NOT VERY CLEVER but HUNGRY.
  - Choose your favourite description for each character and illustrate it. Use details in your illustration that show why both parts of your description are true.



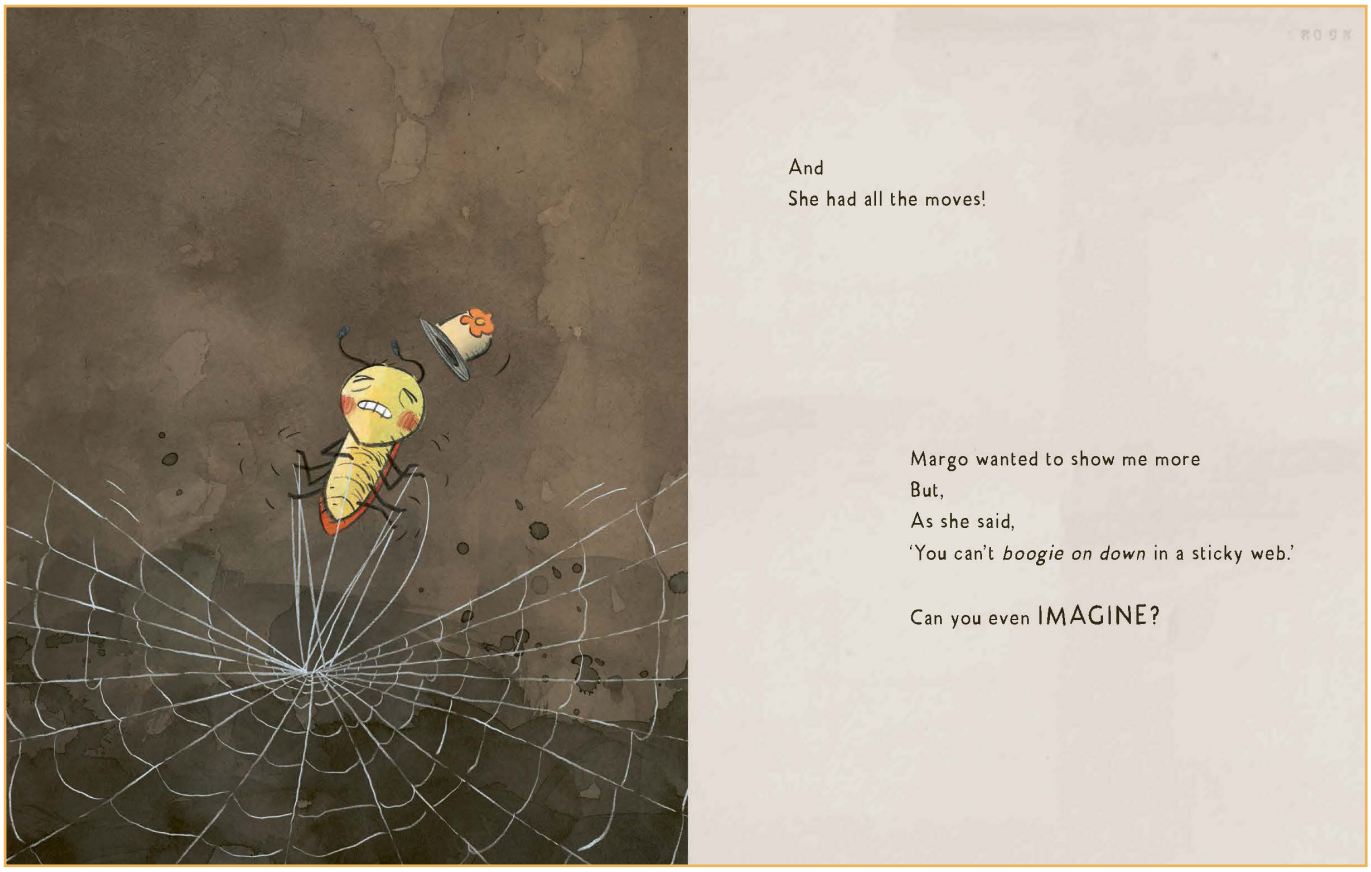
'Margo was so thoughtful': Perspective and point of view

Much of the humour in the story comes from the difference between what the spider believes, what Margo knows and what the reader understands. The words and illustrations often give the reader clues that the spider has misunderstood Margo's actions.

- Look at the spread where Margo is trapped in the web. She tells the spider that she is poisonous and to eat the honeybee instead. The spider tells us, 'Margo was always SO considerate!'
  - Is Margo really being considerate? Why does she suggest the honeybee?
  - What does the spider believe?
  - What does Margo know?
  - What does the reader understand that the spider does not?



- On the next spread, the spider tells us that Margo ‘had all the right moves!’
  - Is Margo really dancing and showing her moves?
  - What do you think she is actually doing?
  - How does the spider misunderstand her actions?
  - How does knowing more than the spider make the scene funny?



- Choose another moment in the story when the spider misunderstands what Margo is doing or saying. Use clues from both the words and the pictures to explain:
  - What does the spider think is happening?
  - What is really happening?
  - What does the reader know that the spider doesn’t?
- Why do you think the author chose to tell the story from the spider’s point of view rather than Margo’s?
- How might the story be different if Margo were the narrator? Rewrite one scene from Margo’s point of view. For example, ‘I was stuck in the web. Then I had an idea…’

'Margo just clung to a grass stem while I let off a little wind': Language and humour

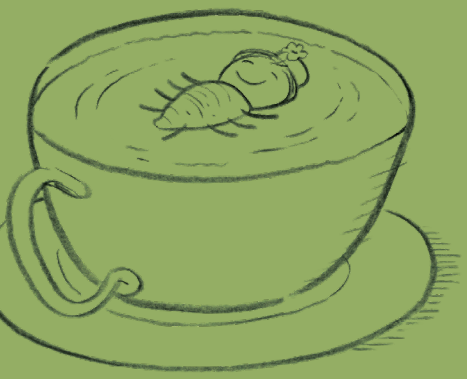
The author uses language in playful and sometimes surprising ways to make the story funny. Read the story again and look for examples of the following techniques:

- Exaggeration: exaggeration means making something seem bigger, better, worse or more dramatic than it really is.
- Find some examples of exaggeration in the story. Why are they funny?
- Look at the way the spider describes Margo and the way he describes himself. Do you believe everything he says?
- Try writing an exaggerated description of Margo or the spider.
- Wordplay and double meanings: sometimes the author chooses words and phrases that can be understood in more than one way. For example, Margo tells the spider that her friends will 'love you to death!'
- What does 'love you to death' usually mean?
- What does the phrase mean in this situation when the spider meets the pythons?
- Can you find any other words or phrases in the story that have more than one meaning?
- Capital letters and emphasis: some words are written in capital letters or emphasised so that they stand out. For example, SO, GORGEOUS, DEADLY and GLORIOUS.
- Why do you think these particular words have been emphasised?
- How does this affect the way you read them aloud?
- Experiment with saying the following sentence in different ways: 'Margo gave the spider a mushroom.' Emphasise different words, for example 'Margo GAVE the spider a mushroom.' How does changing the emphasis change the meaning or make it funnier?
- When the reader knows more (irony): as we have already seen, much of the humour comes from the reader knowing something the spider does not.
- Choose one spread and compare the words with the illustration. What does the spider tell us is happening? What does the illustration show us? Are they the same?













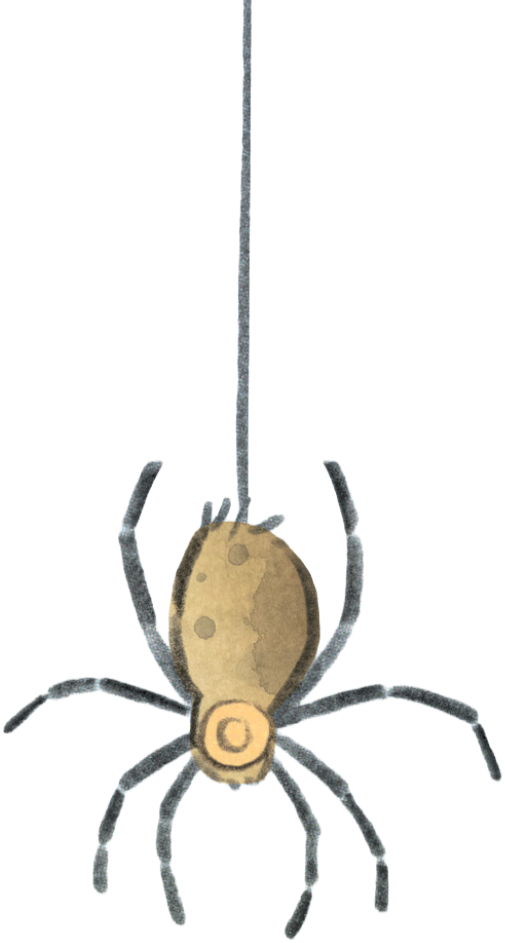
'Margo LOVED a good joke': The Ending

- Look back at the beginning of the book. How does the ending connect with the start of the story?
- What do you think happens after the final page? Does Margo escape from the spider?
- What clues in the words and pictures support your prediction? Are the illustrations on the green endpapers another clue about what happens to Margo?
- As a class, brainstorm a silly predicament (for example, 'You're a fly caught in a frog's kitchen') and invent three things you could say to persuade the predator not to eat you.

'Can you even IMAGINE?': Exploring the illustrations

The illustrations add humour, reveal the characters' feelings and often give the reader information that the words do not.

- Look at Margo and the spider throughout the book. How can you tell what each character is feeling?
  - How does the illustrator use the characters' arms, legs, eyes and mouths to show emotions?
  - Find an illustration where Margo's expression tells you something the spider doesn't know.
  - Look at the 'GORGEOUS but DEADLY' spread. Are Margo's tears really 'tears of joy?' What do you think she is really feeling? Why do you think the illustrator has made her face so large on this page?
  - Both Margo and the spider wear hats. How are their hats different? How has the illustrator used them to show each character's personality?
- Choose either the spider or Margo and draw them showing three different emotions. How can you change the eyes, mouth and body language/position to make each emotion clear?
- Margo is tiny compared to the spider. Find some spreads where the spider seems enormous compared with Margo. How does this make the spider appear dangerous?
  - Even though the spider is so much bigger, is he in control of what happens?
  - Look at the spread where the giant pythons 'hug' the spider. How has the illustrator changed the sense of scale? Who looks small and in danger now? (Does the spider know he's in danger?!)
- Draw a tiny character and a huge character together. Then reverse their sizes. How does changing their size change the way we think about them?



- What different colours, patterns and textures can you find in the illustrations? Can you see pieces that look as though they may once have been part of something else, such as a book, map or wrapping paper? Why do you think the illustrator has used different materials rather than just drawing everything?
    - Create your own artwork using collage and drawing.

'And those fire ants … Burn, baby, burn all the way down!': Science

The story features creatures including spiders, honeybees, stinkbugs, fire ants and even giant pythons. Use the story as a springboard to explore some of these animals.

- Choose either a stinkbug or a fire ant and investigate:
    - Where does it live?
    - What does it eat?
    - How does it protect itself from predators?
    - Why are stinkbugs called 'stink' bugs?
    - Why are fire ants called 'fire' ants?
    - What interesting or surprising fact can you discover?
    - Create a fact card about your creature, including a labelled drawing.
- Spider webs are amazing! They may look delicate, but they are actually incredibly strong. There are lots of different types of webs. Use the internet or your library to find out about the following types of webs and draw simple diagrams to show what they look like:
    - spiral orb webs
    - tangle webs
    - funnel webs
    - sheet webs
    - triangle webs
- As a class, find out:
    - What is spider silk made from?
    - Where does the silk come from?
    - Are all the strands in a spider web sticky?
    - Why doesn't a spider get stuck in its own web?
    - How does a web help a spider catch its food?
    - What else do spiders use silk for?
    - What happens when a spider web is damaged?

(Note: The Australian Museum has a great spider-web resource that you might find useful: australian.museum/learn/animals/spiders/spider-webs/)

- Make your own spider web: Use a paper plate, cardboard frame or crossed sticks as the outside structure of a web. Wind and weave wool or string across the frame to create a web. You might try to copy the structure of a real orb web, with spokes radiating from the centre and a spiral winding around them.
    - When your web is finished, test it. Place or gently toss small paper 'insects' onto your web. Which parts of the web are strongest? Could you change your design to make it better at catching prey?
    - You might like to make a Margo and a spider to sit in your web. Don't forget the hats!
- Create a brand-new species of bug. What does it look like? Does it have any unusual features? Where does it live? What does it eat? How does it move? How does it defend itself?
- Now create a new species of spider. What does it look like? Where does it build its web or make its home? What does it eat? How does it catch its prey? Is your spider dangerous or friendly?
- Write and illustrate a story about your bug meeting your spider. What happens next? Make sure your story has a beginning, middle and end. You might like to include dialogue, humour and a surprise ending, just like in *You Would've Loved Margo*.

