



# Hands Off my Cushion!

Author **Gérard Moncombe** / Illustrations **Frédéric Pillot** / 32 pages / Book Series **Coco the Cat**

## Objectives

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- To enjoy listening to and understanding the main idea of a story in English.
- To demonstrate understanding of a variety of words and expressions used throughout the story by practising them in related activities.
- To practise pronunciation and intonation skills by acting out short conversations.
- To be able to read and understand parts of the story at both word and sentence level.
- To be able to write short sentences and simple conversations to demonstrate understanding of the story.
- To work on the competence of social skills and citizenship (patterns of behaviour that facilitate peaceful coexistence, relation with others, cooperation and conflict resolution).

## Word bank

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### Key vocabulary

Nouns: cushion, washing machine, bees, roof, floor, mess.

Verbs: to take a nap, to stink, to smell, to wake up, to laugh, to climb, to break, to chase, to dream.

Adjectives: *purrfect* (perfect), young, silly, soft, hairy, lucky.

### Key structures

Your cushion stinks!

I'm going to (wash it)!

Whiskers!

Here's the *purrfect* place for a nap!

What's that noise?

What a mess!

## Tips and ideas

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### Before reading

- Use *realia* to spark learners' interest. Divide students into groups and ask each group member to bring a cushion from home. In class, tell them to observe, analyse and compare different cushions in their group. Let them feel the cushion using their different senses and scaffold language related to different features of a cushion (size, colour, smell, touch). For example: "This cushion is soft / a bit hard / enormous / striped / smells nice / doesn't smell at all. Next, ask each group vote on their favourite cushion. They have to explain their choice.
- Encourage higher level thinking. In their groups, ask them to brainstorm what problems a cushion could cause. Remind them that in brainstorming there are no good and bad ideas. All ideas have to be written down.

### During reading

- Reinforce your students' pronunciation and intonation skills. After each chapter take a break and ask students to act out short conversations to help convey the meaning of the story. Alternatively, divide the class into different groups to interpret chorally the different expressions and voices (e.g. a cat voice, Susan's voice, etc.).

### After reading

- Apply the knowledge (words and structures learnt) by inventing a cooperative story as a class about another animal and a similar problem.
- Plan specific higher level thinking questions:
  - How would you feel if you were...?
  - What would you say to Coco if you were his friend? Why?

# Teacher support activities

## Great Games: "Running words"

- Divide the students into 5 groups and ask them to face the board. Each student has a copy of the "*Coco the Cat*" story, a piece of paper and a pencil. Students in each group are numbered from 1-5.
- Draw lines on the blackboard to make a drawing space for each group. Distribute each group with pieces of poster tack and sets of cards (face down) with words from the story written on them.
- Name a student to be the "runner", for example "*Coco the Cat 4*". All students numbered 4 turn over a word card and cooperate with the others in their group to agree on the meaning of the word and a way to represent it.
- When the group has come to an agreement, the "runner" returns to the blackboard, draws a picture to represent the word and sticks the word card next to the picture. Next, he/she turns and says, "**3-2-1**" and the group must **chorally say the sentence that corresponds to the word**. For example, if the word was "stinks", the sentence would be: "It doesn't smell bad! It STINKS!".
- The first team to achieve this wins a point. The game continues by choosing another "Coco the Cat" number.

## CLIL LINK: Physical Education

Coco does many actions which are typical of a cat. How can we do catlike actions if we don't have four legs?

### Resources:

- **A CD player and music with a fast beat** (e.g. the theme song for the Pink Panther) to set the tempo for the catlike movements.
- **A-4 size word cards with actions written on them:** race out of the garden, climb walls, jump from roof to roof, s-t-r-e-t-c-h, scratch, relax, jump off the sofa, run from the dragon, TAKE A NAP (special card).
- **A whistle to get the students' attention when it's time to change the action.**

### Procedure:

- The students sit down on the floor in a big circle. The teacher blows the whistle and shows a word card. The students have to perform the action pretending they are cats.
- The word card *TAKE A NAP* is special. The teacher pauses the music and all students lie on their backs with their hands and feet in the air imitating Coco and shouting, "*Purrfect!, Purrfect!*". Then the teacher turns on the music again and the activity continues.

## English Theatre: "Ring, ring - I'm so sorry!"

Divide the class into 2 different characters, *Dogs* and *Cocos*, and have students sit shoulder to shoulder holding an imaginary telephone. Gradually make the groups smaller, until the students feel confident enough to represent one of the characters alone.

**Cocos:** 9-1- 8-5-6- 3-4-9-0

(the Cocos are dialing the number and saying "Ring... Ring...")

**Dogs:** Hello? Hello?

**Cocos:** Hello Dog!

**Dogs:** (sleepy) Who's calling me? It's half past five in the morning!

**Cocos:** I'm calling you! I'm Coco... Coco the cat!

**Dogs:** Oh! It's you again! The cat that took a nap in my house!

**Cocos:** Yes... I'm calling you to tell you... that I'm sorry.

**Dogs:** Sorry?

**Cocos:** Yes. I'm so sorry that I took a nap in your house. You didn't invite me.

**Dogs:** (very angry) No, I DIDN'T invite you! You need to learn some respect!

**Cocos:** You're right. I won't do it again.

**Dogs:** Why didn't you take a nap on YOUR cushion?

**Cocos:** Because Susan said it smelt bad, so she washed it!!!

**Dogs:** (very surprised) Really? How TERRIBLE!

**Cocos:** (very sad and disappointed) Yes... Now it smells like flowers!

**Dogs:** Oh, dear... I'm so sorry, now I understand.

**Cocos:** Yes... well... I just wanted to apologise. Goodbye!

**Dogs:** Goodbye Coco.