

GO GIRL!

Go Teachers!

Notes on Go Girl! books by Nancy Mortimer

Go Girl! is a brand new series of fiction books that young independent readers will delight in. Each title deals with situations that girls of this reading age are facing in their lives. These books have simple, relevant stories about characters experiencing and exploring new situations.

While readers are absorbed by these engrossing stories, the books are also a model for how to handle new situations and difficult people, as well as consider their options and behaviour.

The books give young girls a presence and an independence to know what to expect in the new and exciting environments they are constantly facing. They will help empower young girls to have the confidence and ability to handle life's ups and downs with gusto.

The Go Girl! books are about normal girls taking control or being able to choose their path of action in different life situations. Many strategies are presented and there are lessons to be learned within the framework of enjoyable stories.

The catchy title of the series and individual books, as well as the play on words and light humour of the text, will mean that girls will read them with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. These books also give girls plenty to think about and do after reading.

Having read one title, girls will want to meet all the other Go Girls! girls and will be eager to read the next book in the series to find out what confronts girls like them and how they acquit themselves.

Ash Oswald has illustrated the Go Girl! titles with modern, cartoon-like drawings that are particularly appealing to the age group. These illustrations add interest and bind the four books together with a strong visual style.

There are currently four titles in the series, with more to come in August 2005.



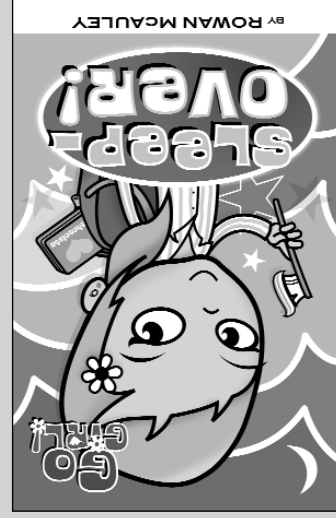
#2 The Worst Gymnast by Thalia Kalkipsakis.
 Gemma lives for gym but when she slips doing a vault and kicks her coach Michael in the head she believes she will lose her place in the team. When Michael gives her a hard routine of extra strength exercises, Gemma thinks it is to punish her. She is determined to succeed and perseveres with her training. She resolves to learn a new and difficult leap to add to her routine as a way of securing her place on the team. She secretly practises this new leap as much as she can. When the state finals arrive Gemma wins a trophy and proves to everyone, but especially herself, that her work was worth it and she is certainly NOT the worst gymnast ever!



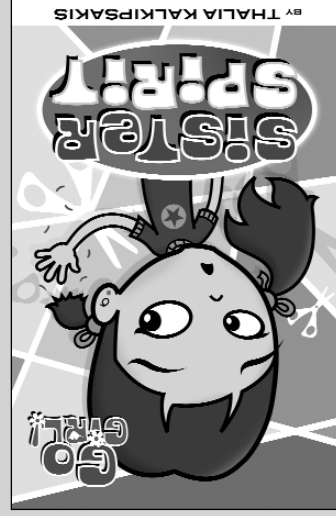
#4 Lunchtime Rules by Vicki Stegall
 Samantha (Ant for short) is small for her age, but she is very plucky. What she enjoys most is playing footy with her friends (two boys and her best-friend Ellie) at lunchtime. One day her life is shattered when one of the boys declares she is too small and slow to play. Ant is hurt and doesn't feel welcome to play anymore. She fills in her lunchtimes as best she can but feels like she doesn't fit in with any other groups. She reluctantly airs her problems to Miss Kay. Miss Kay gives Ant a book about Rod Laver (a tennis player), who was told he was too small and weak but went on to become a world-class player. Inspired by this story, Ant and her mum devise a plan to overcome the criticism of being too slow by learning to run faster. Once she is back on the team, Ant is determined to make an effort to include the girl who took her place – now she knows just how hurtful it is to be excluded.



#1 Sleep-over! by Rowan McAuley
 Olivia is excited but anxious about going to sleep over at her friend Ching Ching's house – her first time away from her mum ever. She finds Ching Ching's household very different from her own (she is an only child but Ching Ching has three older brothers), and also finds their ways of behaving hard to handle. Despite the new experience, which is sometimes difficult and daunting, Olivia manages to really enjoy her first sleep-over.



#3 Sister Spirit by Thalia Kalkipsakis
 Cassie tells the story of how her big sister Hannah cuts off her long hair in an attempt to make Cassie look older. Everyone's reaction to her new appearance – including her own – is very interesting. Cassie is angry with her sister and decides to get revenge on her when she finds she can peek into Hannah's wardrobe through a gap in the wall with her bedroom. When Cassie sees Hannah reading a book about ghosts she decides to pretend to be a ghost. When Cassie realises she has seriously scared Hannah she feels guilty. At the same time, Cassie starts to enjoy her new haircut and gains a new sense of confidence. The sisters eventually make amends and become good friends.





#1 Sleep-over!

Questions!

1. How did Olivia feel about sleeping over at Ching Ching's house? Why? How do you know this?
2. What did the butcher say that so embarrassed Olivia? What made him say it? How does Mrs Adams handle the butcher's comments? Describe the game the family plays in this situation.
3. How did Ching Ching's brother, Daniel, behave towards Olivia?
4. Did Olivia enjoy her sleep-over at her friend's place?



Talk About!

- * Family
- * Misinterpreting people's behaviour
- * Having mixed emotions or feelings
- * Ways of coping with difficult new situations
- * What friends do when they are together



Activities!

- * Jot down the things that went wrong when Olivia went to Ching Ching's house. What were the positive aspects of the sleep-over?
- * Describe the differences between Ching Ching's house and family and Olivia's house and family.
- * Do a brief character study of Olivia, describing what she is like as a person.

#2 The Worst Gymnast



Questions!

1. How does Gemma feel about Gym?
2. Who is Michael? What is he like?
3. What made Gemma think she was going to be kicked off the team?
4. What are the members of Gemma's team like? Does she get along with them?
5. Why did Michael yell at Gemma?
6. Gemma feels that talking about her problems makes her feel better. Who do you talk things over with? Does it help you to talk about things?
7. What makes Gemma think she is the worst gymnast in the team? When did she feel that everything had changed?



Talk About!

- * Being part of a team
- * Feelings
- * When you think things are unfair
- * When you don't understand someone
- * What it takes to be good at something



Activities!

- * From the story, find and talk about instances where girls in the team show concern for each other
- * List some other activities associated with gymnastics
- * Describe Gemma's relationship with her coach Michael
- * Describe the state finals
- * Relate how Gemma went from feeling like the worst gymnast ever to winning a trophy in the state finals. How was Gemma able to achieve this?



#4 Sister Spirit

questions:

1. Who tells the story?
2. How does Cassie come to have her hair cut?
3. How does Cassie feel about having her hair cut off? How would you feel about this happening?
4. Where does the title for the book come from?
5. How do Cassie and her big sister Hannah get along?
6. What does Cassie do to Hannah after her hair cut? Why does she do it?
7. How do you get along with your sister or brother, if you have one?
8. How does the difficult situation between the two sisters finally work out?
9. Has something happened to you that has made you feel more grown-up?



Activities!

- * Jot down other people's reactions to Cassie's short hair
- * List all the positive things that result from Cassie's hair cut
- * Send an email to a friend, telling them about the new book sister spirit
- * Like Cassie, write in your secret diary what you did to Hannah to pay her back and what happened
- * Have you ever done anything to a sister or a friend that you have not told them about? Write about it in your secret diary



#3 Lunchtime Rules

questions:

1. What did Ant use to do at lunchtime? What does she do now?
2. What did Ant contribute to the footy games? Why did she stop playing? How did she feel about this? What did she do to try and overcome the problem?
3. What's is Ant's mum renowned for?
4. What was the plan that Samantha's mum came up with?
5. With whom does Ant share her secret?
6. What is involved in training for something? Why do people undertake training? What is the difference between training and an actual event?
7. Who do you share secrets with?

Talk About:

- * Rules
- * Friends
- * Expectations
- * Encouragement
- * Secrets
- * Solutions
- * Being included and excluded
- * The life of your parents before you were born

Activities!

- * Jot down what you learned from this story
- * Make a list of characters from the story and jot down a few words beside each to describe them
- * Describe running in a race
- * With a partner, pretend you are Ant and your friend is Ellie. Tell Ellie about what Miss Kay says, who Rod Iaver was and how much you running has improved
- * In a secret diary, list the problems you have faced and how you overcame them

