

Pom's Tales: S2C Lesson for Middles

Story by Sofia Ghassaei. Lesson by Tracey Ghassaei, 2026

Materials needed: Book Pom's Tales

In the book *POM'S TALES*, Ellie discovers something EXTRAORDINARY (unusual or remarkable): her gray tabby cat, Pompom, can talk. This surprising moment happens at her sunny kitchen table, where Pom begins telling a long story about chasing a mouse in the CORRIDOR. Ellie is shocked, not only because cats shouldn't be able to speak, but because Pom has apparently been talking for years without her noticing. This story invites us to think about COMMUNICATION, trust, and what happens when we finally start LISTENING to those who have been trying to share their world with us all along.

What is the name of this book? POM'S TALES

A word for unusual or remarkable is ___ EXTRAORDINARY

He's telling her about chasing a ___ MOUSE

Where was Pom chasing the mouse? CORRIDOR

What's another word for corridor? Ex HALLWAY / HALL / PASSAGEWAY

Why is Ellie surprised? HER CAT SUDDENLY TALKS

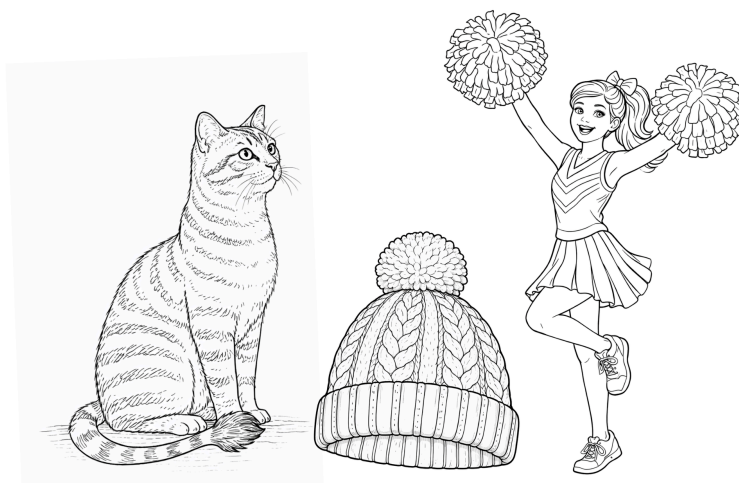
The story invites us to think about ___ COMMUNICATION / TRUST / LISTENING

Where might you see a pompom? Ex HAT / CRAFT / CHEERLEADER

What would be a good name for a pet cat?

Describe a time when someone finally listened to you.

VAKT Circle the pompoms you see.



Pom is an ordinary gray tabby with one unusual feature: a fluffy TUFT on his tail that other neighbourhood CHEETIES (cats) tease him about. Ellie cares for him deeply. She feeds him SCONES and HERRING, and treats him like family. When Pom reveals that he has been speaking all along, Ellie must rethink everything she believed about him. Their relationship becomes a lesson in seeing someone fully, not just ASSUMING (concluding, supposing) what they can or cannot do.

What kind of cat is Pom? GRAY / TABBY

His tail has a fluffy ___ TUFT

What regional word does the book use for cats? CHEETIES

What do the other cats do to Pom? TEASE HIM

Why do the other cats tease him? HIS TAIL LOOKS DIFFERENT

Name one thing Ellie feeds him. SCONES / HERRING

Name a kind of fish. Ex GOLDFISH / TUNA / SALMON / SHARK, etc

What makes Ellie a good friend to Pom? SHE FEEDS HIM AND TREATS HIM LIKE FAMILY

What work means concluding or supposing? ASSUMING

What is something people should rethink?

As Pom explains his daily adventures, Ellie learns that she has missed many important details. Pom has seen MACGREGOR watering down their milk on Tuesdays, Princess the cat sneaking out the bathroom WINDOW, and all sorts of NEIGHBOURHOOD secrets. Pom isn't a sneak, he simply notices things others overlook. His stories show how OBSERVATION can reveal truths that people ignore, especially when they don't believe the observer is worth noticing.

Who waters down their milk? MACGREGOR

Pom sees all sorts of ___ secrets. NEIGHBOURHOOD (NEIGHBORHOOD)

What is one secret Pom sees? MACGREGOR STEALS THEIR MILK / PRINCESS SNEAKS OUT

Princess sneaks out the bathroom ___ WINDOW

What's something you might find in a bathroom, besides the usual fixtures? Ex MIRROR / TOOTHBRUSH / TOWELS / MAKEUP etc

His stories show how ___ can reveal truths that people ignore. OBSERVATION

What is something YOU notice that others don't?

A major theme in *Pom's Tales* is BELIEF. Pom has been talking for three years, but Ellie never understood him because she didn't expect a cat to be able to communicate. Pom explains that there is only so much anyone can do if people don't believe in them. This idea connects to real life: many people communicate in ways others don't RECOGNIZE (acknowledge, accept.) When Ellie finally believes Pom, their whole RELATIONSHIP changes. The story reminds us that VOICE can take many forms, and that LISTENING with respect can transform how we understand someone.

A major theme of the story is ____ . BELIEF

How long has Pom been talking to Ellie? 3 YEARS

Why didn't Ellie understand Pom for 3 years? SHE DIDN'T EXPECT A CAT TO COMMUNICATE

Many people communicate in ways others don't ____ RECOGNIZE

Another way to say recognize is ____ ACKNOWLEDGE / ACCEPT

What are some ways people communicate? Ex SPEECH / SIGN LANGUAGE / WRITING / BODY LANGUAGE, etc

When Ellie finally believes Pom, their whole ____ changes. RELATIONSHIP

The story reminds us that ____ can take many forms. VOICE

What does the story remind us? VOICE CAN TAKE MANY FORMS / LISTENING WITH RESPECT CAN TRANSFORM HOW WE UNDERSTAND SOMEONE

What's a synonym for transform? Ex CHANGE / ALTER / MODIFY

Why do you think Pom says his life felt "somewhat wasted"?

Sofia Ghassaei, the AUTHOR, explains that she relates most to Pom, not Ellie. As a nonspeaking autistic writer who uses a LETTERBOARD or keyboard to communicate, she knows what it feels like to be MISUNDERSTOOD or assumed to be ALOOF (unfriendly, antisocial). Like Pom, she communicates in ways people don't always expect. Her story blends imagination with lived experience. She says she chose SCOTLAND in the 1930s as the setting to challenge herself creatively, proving that writers can stretch beyond what they are most familiar with, while still grounding their work in AUTHENTIC feeling.



A person who writes a book is an ____ AUTHOR.

VAKT Point to Sofia in the picture above

Give me one of the adjectives I used for Sofia. NONSPEAKING / AUTISTIC

What does Sofia use to communicate? LETTERBOARD / KEYBOARD

VAKT Look at some of Sofia's communication tools above

What's an adjective to describe you?

She knows what it feels like to be ____ MISUNDERSTOOD

Give me a synonym for aloof. UNFRIENDLY / ANTISOCIAL

What 2 things did I say her story blends? IMAGINATION / LIVED

EXPERIENCE

What decade does her story take place? 1930s

Rounding up, how long ago does the story take place? 100 YEARS

What country is the story set in? SCOTLAND

How can you tell the setting is in Scotland? Ex REGIONAL WORDS / NAMES

Writers can stretch beyond what they know, while still grounding their work in ____ feeling. AUTHENTIC

Creative Writing

A- Finish the sentence. "One thing I wish people understood about how I communicate is..."

B- Why might someone be "waiting to be believed," as the dedication page says?

Print out activity pages and listen to an audio narration on SofiaGhassaei.com

Question type key

Green: Known/spelling. These are questions that have only one possible correct answer to the question posed, which was given in the lesson

Orange: Semi-Open. These are questions that have a small group of possible answers, given in the lesson . Broad semi-open is in italics, and could be a rewording or a full sentence

Blue: Prior Knowledge. Not specifically addressed in the text of the lesson, but likely common knowledge for the speller's age

Purple: Math. Any question that uses number board or requires calculation

Pink: Open /Creative Writing. A question that requires summary and synthesis, opinion, or is creative.

Red: VAKT. An extension activity to support **v**isual, **a**uditory, **k**inesthetic, or **t**actile learning off the boards.