

Pom's Tales: S2C Lesson for Teens and Up

Story by Sofia Ghassaei. Lesson by Tracey Ghassaei, 2026

Materials needed: Book Pom's Tales

Pom's Tales begins with a moment that challenges ASSUMPTIONS: Ellie discovers her cat Pom is capable of speech. This astounding REVELATION (announcement) disrupts her understanding of what is possible and forces her to reconsider the quiet, everyday moments she had previously overlooked. The story uses this magical twist to explore how COMMUNICATION can be present even when it is not recognized, and how DISBELIEF can silence someone who has been speaking all along.

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

The story begins with a moment that challenges ___ ASSUMPTIONS

What does Ellie discover? HER CAT IS CAPABLE OF SPEECH

The word I used for an announcement was ___ REVELATION

What does the revelation do? DISRUPTS HER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE / FORCES HER TO RECONSIDER THE MOMENTS SHE OVERLOOKED

Use astounding in a sentence.

The story uses this magical twist to explore how ___ can be present even when it is not recognized. COMMUNICATION

What did I say can silence someone? DISBELIEF

What's another word for disbelief? Ex DOUBT / SKEPTICISM / INCREDULITY

What would be a good name for a pet cat?

Describe a time when your communication was present but not recognized.

Pom is described as an ordinary gray tabby with an UNDIGNIFIED, poodle-ish tuft on his tail. Other cats TAUNT (tease, mock) him, but Ellie treats him with care and affection. The contrast highlights how identity is shaped not only by how we see ourselves but by how others choose to see or dismiss us. Pom's DIGNITY is intact, even when others fail to acknowledge it.

What kind of cat is Pom? GRAY TABBY

The tuft on his tail is ___ UNDIGNIFIED / POODLE-ISH

How is Pom described? AN ORDINARY TABBY WITH AN UNDIGNIFIED, POODLE-ISH TUFT ON HIS TAIL.

Why is his name Pom? Ex HIS TAIL LOOKS LIKE A POMPOM

Another way to say tease or mock is ___ TAUNT

How does Ellie's treatment of Pom differ from the other cats' treatment?

SHE TREATS HIM WITH CARE AND AFFECTION

How is identity shaped? HOW WE SEE OURSELVES / HOW OTHERS CHOOSE TO SEE OR DISMISS US

Pom's ___ is intact. DIGNITY

What supports your sense of worth and dignity?

Pom reveals that he has witnessed years of neighbourhood secrets: watered-down milk, FURTIVE cats, and the private habits of humans who assume he is IRRELEVANT (unimportant, insignificant). His role as an unnoticed observer gives him access to truths others miss. The story suggests that those who are underestimated often have the clearest INSIGHT into the world around them.

Pom reveals that he has witnessed years of neighbourhood secrets: watered-down milk and ___ cats. FURTIVE

Pom reveals that he has witnessed years of neighbourhood secrets. Name one.

WATERED-DOWN MILK / FURTIVE CATS / PRIVATE HABITS OF HUMANS

What's another word for furtive? Ex SNEAKY / SECRETIVE / SLY, etc

Another word for unimportant, insignificant is ___ IRRELEVANT

Being unnoticed gives him access to ___ TRUTHS OTHERS MISS

Why does Pom know so much about the neighborhood? HIS ROLE AS AN UNNOTICED OBSERVER GIVES HIM ACCESS TO TRUTHS OTHERS MISS

The story suggests that those who are underestimated often have the clearest ___ into the world around them. INSIGHT

Define insight. Ex UNDERSTANDING, AWARENESS, etc

What insights do YOU have because of how you move through the world?

A central theme of the book is BELIEF. Pom explains that he has been speaking for years, but Ellie never understood him because she did not believe he could

communicate. The story mirrors real-world experiences of people whose communication is dismissed because it does not match others' expectations. Belief becomes a form of ACCESS, opening the door to connection, understanding, and mutual respect.

A central theme of the book is ___ BELIEF

Why didn't Ellie understand him before? SHE DIDN'T BELIEVE HE COULD COMMUNICATE

Belief becomes a form of ___ ACCESS.

Belief opens the door to ___ CONNECTION / UNDERSTANDING / MUTUAL RESPECT

What does belief from others allow you to do?

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 primarily uses a letterboard, 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. By placing the story in 1930s SCOTLAND, she stretches her creative range while grounding the work in AUTHENTIC feeling. Her dedication reads, "To all the "cats" waiting to be believed, and all those who help them."



A person who writes a book is an ___ AUTHOR.

Who authored this book? SOFIA GHASSAEI

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

VAKT Look at some of Sofia's communication tools below

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 their creative range while still grounding their work in ____ feeling. AUTHENTIC

Who are the "cats" in the dedication?



Creative Writing

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

B- How has YOUR communication shaped your identity? What is one way people can better honor your communication?

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.