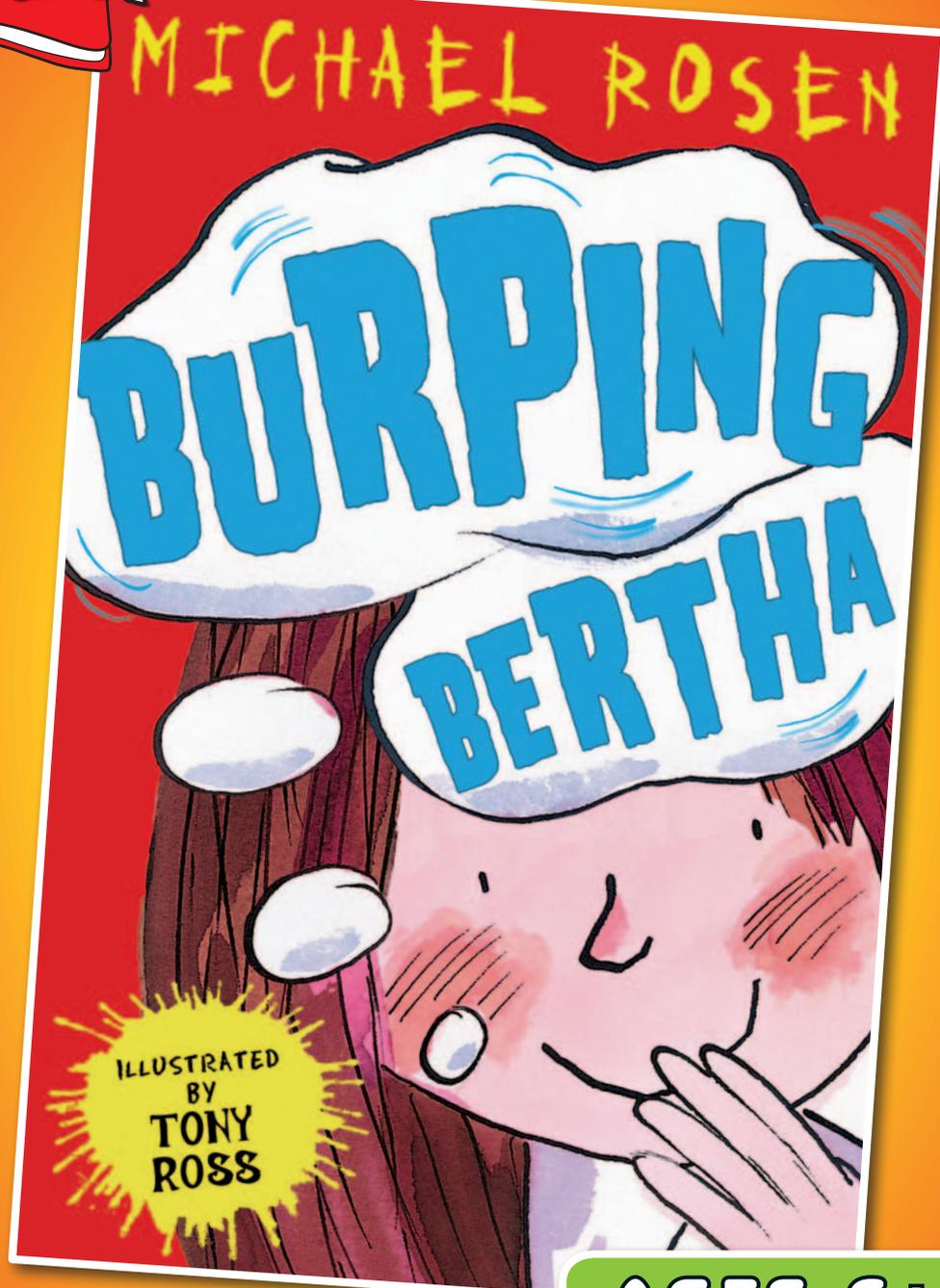


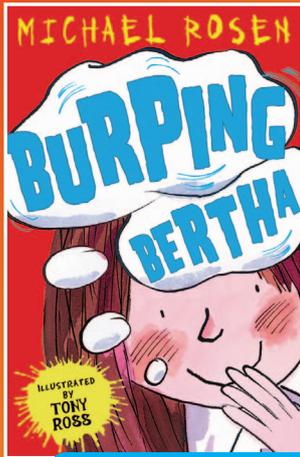
 SCHOLASTIC

**Book
Talk**



AGES 6+

**Engage and inspire your
pupils with a Book Talk!**



Look out for this book at your Book Fair!

AGES 6+

Price	£4.99 / €6.10
Case	Read Alone
Author	Michael Rosen
Illustrator	Tony Ross
Publisher	Andersen Press

Using this book in your classroom

Themes

This funny and thought-provoking black comedy explores the themes of **talents, fame** and **celebrity culture**.

Summary

Bertha Cookoonest is just an ordinary girl, until one day she accidentally discovers an unexpected talent – for burping!

Even from the start, Bertha can burp so hard that she can make small objects fall off shelves. With a bit of work and practice, she soon finds that she can deflect footballs away from goals, burp apples down from trees and make jugglers drop all their plates. Her burping skills nearly get her into trouble at school, but when she gives a brilliant burping performance at the school Christmas play, she finds herself on the road to a very strange kind of stardom. Record deals, film appearances and Bertha-themed video games quickly follow, but unfortunately Bertha's final burp, onboard a plane over the Atlantic, brings about her downfall in more ways than one!

Did you know?

- Michael Rosen was the Children's Laureate between 2007 and 2009, and he has also been awarded the Chevalier in Order of Arts and Letters by the French government.
- Michael has written and edited over 50 books for children, as well as several for adults.

The Story Session

1. Introducing the book

- Read the back cover blurb to the children and share their predictions. What kind of story do they think this will be? What kinds of things do they think will happen to Bertha in this story? What do they think it would feel like to be famous for something like burping? Would it be fun or embarrassing?
- Read the first four pages of the story, and then pause to share the children's thoughts. Ask: "Do you think Bertha's burping is going to get her into trouble, or do you think it will turn out to be useful?"

2. Reading the story

- Encourage the children to read the rest of the story independently, or read it out loud to them.
- Pause after Mr Fobnitch takes Bertha to see Mrs Bouncible, and share the children's predictions again. Ask the children whether they think Bertha will get into trouble.
- Pause after the letter from Twentieth Century Fish, on page 46. Ask: "What would you do if you were Bertha? Would you want to be in the film? What do you think will happen to Bertha next?"
- At the end, ask the children what they think caused the plane crash. Do they think Bertha really died in the crash? Does this feel like a fair ending to them? Would you have wanted to end the story differently, if they had written it?

3. Follow-up

- Talk about celebrity culture – do the children think that sometimes people without a lot of real talent end up famous? Why do they think this is? Do the children think Bertha deserved all the fame she got in the story?
- Look at the way Michael Rosen often describes the characters with a string of adjectives, e.g. 'dark-haired, blue-eyed thirty-three-year-old Mum', or 'balding forty-two-year-old Mr Fobnitch'. Ask the children to make up a description of themselves, or someone in their family, in this way.
- Ask the children to imagine they have a secret talent. What would it be? Who can think of the funniest secret talent? You could challenge the children to write or act out a story about what happens when they use their secret talent in public.
- Michael Rosen's website www.michaelrosen.co.uk contains lots of information about Michael and his books and media appearances, as well as poems, videos and podcasts.

YOU TELL US

- Did you use these notes to have a Book Talk in class? • Were the notes helpful?
- Are there any changes you'd like to see to make them more useful?

We'd like to hear your comments! Please email us at:
bookfairs@scholastic.co.uk or bookfairs@scholastic.ie