



Captain Coconut is a one-of-a-kind Indian detective, ready to solve any mystery, large or small. In this zany graphic novel - the first in a series - we follow the good Captain as he moves from his office to the scene of crime, his powerful brain constantly at work - even during the times he sings and dances like a Bollywood hero. Artist Priya Sundram takes Anushka Ravishankar's hilarious mixture of logic and non-sequiturs to an entirely new level of absurdity, and children of different ages will 'get' the book in different ways.

## Talk About

- Here are some suggestions for conversations around the book: questions that children can answer on their own, or along with other children.
- What's a 'case'? Who solves cases? Why? Have you ever solved a case? Talk about mysteries, and the satisfaction of solving them.
- What do you think is the best incident in the story? The funniest words? The strangest picture?
- What's a detective? Is he or she the same as the police? How do we know Captain Coconut is a detective? List the accessories that a true detective must have. Hint: examine Captain Coconut's office.
- Speculate about the character's name: why is he called that? Invent other interesting detective names. How would they look?
- What's your favourite image of Captain Coconut? What's he made of? Make a list.
- Look at one image and talk about how the artist has put different elements together to create a picture. What is a collage? Is it easy or hard to do?
- Dwell on the mathematics involved in the plot. Would things have turned out differently if some of the bananas hadn't been ripe?
- Talk about reading mystery stories. Is Captain Coconut like other mystery novels or different?

## Activities

There is a lot for the child to see, do and enjoy with this title. One well-planned activity, which is also fun, is to help children create their own detective and their own mystery story. There are two ways of coming up with an illustrated mystery tale. The story could be written first, and illustrated later or they can create an image, and write a story around it.

Here are some ideas that you could try out with children.

### **Writing**

- Begin by creating a character. Is it a man, woman, boy, girl, animal or thing? How old is the character? What does he or she look like? Does he or she have a long nose, curly hair or a bushy tail? What does he /she wear? Think of something special in the way the character acts or speaks. Give him or her a name. Write it all down.
- Put this character in a place, and think of something strange that happens to her there. Write a story on what she does then, and how she solves the case.

### **Art**

- Put together a character in the collage style: collect a variety of everyday materials - old magazines, newspapers, buttons, wrapping paper, tickets, photographs, ribbons, stickers, drawing paper, colours, scissors and glue.
- Begin with a name that will get you started on a character you want to create. Or start making a character, and then come up with a name.
- Pick one element from your pile of materials – say, a photograph or a drawing, and use this as a base to build up a character, pasting in other details.
- Create a scene or location – say, an office or a playground - either by finding a picture to use as a base, or put together bits and pieces to come up with a location.
- Place the character into the location. What is she doing? What's happening around her? Add to your picture, or make changes if you like.

### **Combining Text and Art**

- Once you have the text and the picture, paste them on two sides of a card, like facing pages.
- If you want to try making a graphic novel-style layout, cut up your picture, and stick the sections separately. You can add the text, or dialogue, with speech bubbles.