



TEACHERS' NOTES

Compiled by
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This teacher resource is
suitable for years K - 6

Great and Small is suitable
reading for years K - 6

GREAT AND SMALL

**Written by Alison
McLennan**

**Illustrated by Connah
Brecon**

Picture Book

**Storytorch Press
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For a tiny unicorn, Eunice has big dreams. She really wants to compete in the Great Unicorn Games, but even with all the effort and practice she can muster, she's just no competition for all these able-bodied athletes.

That's when the most wonderful idea turns into a truly great reality.

A celebration of universal design and our unique abilities, *Great and Small* celebrates what unifies us - our glorious diversity.

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THEMES

Uniqueness, diversity, abilities, competition, courage, friendship, acceptance, the Olympics, the Paralympics

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alison McLennan is children's author based in Brisbane, a proud member of SCBWI and Writelinks, a mother of two and a professional voiceover artist.

She has written four picture books including *Hotel For Bees* (State Library of Qld 2020), *Growing Pains* (EK Books 2021), *Great and Small* (Storytorch Press, July 2022) and *Birdie Lights Up The World* (EK Books 2023).

Her short stories have appeared in the School Magazine and the Spooky Stories Anthology. Her graphic novel, *A Flood in the Village* was published by Library for All as part of their Natural Disaster Education Series.

Alison is available for author visits to schools, libraries and kindies. More information can be found on Alison's website at alisonmclennan.org.



BEFORE READING

Discussions and questions asked prior to reading are not meant to elicit 'correct' answers from the children. The purpose is to pique the children's interest and make connections with their prior knowledge to increase enjoyment and understanding. Discussion and question suggestions are meant to be a guide only. Please tailor them to children's ages and interest.

The Front Cover

Show children the front cover of the book. Read the title.

Discuss:

- Who is the story about?
- Why do you think it's called 'Great and Small'?
- What might happen in the story?

Invite and accept all suggestions but don't give away any hints. Discourage anyone who has already read the book from giving away details.

The Back Cover

Show children the back cover. Read the blurb. Ask children if the blurb and the illustrations give any additional clues as to what might happen in the book.

The Endpapers

Draw children's attention to the illustration of animals on the endpapers for additional clues about the story.

What do the front endpapers suggest about the storyline? The group of characters? The landscape they are in?

READING THE STORY

As you read the story, tailor the discussion to suit children's interest and attention. On each spread, you may invite them to discuss information in the text as well as the illustrations.

You may choose to read the whole story first, or to discuss some elements that prepare them for comprehension.

First Spread ***Pgs 4 - 5***

Eunice dreaming

- Who is the story about?
- What is she dreaming?
- What does it mean to have your heart set on something?
- What events do you think there will be in the unicorn games?
- Ask children to comment on anything else they notice in the illustrations, for example the goldfish in the bowl.

Second Spread ***Pgs 6 - 7***

She loved sports more than anything.'

- Invite children to name the sports that are illustrated.
- You may like to discuss what happened in each of the illustrations with the long jump and high jump and discus.
- Explain, or invite children to explain, what is required of each event and why Eunice's attempts were 'dreadful', 'disastrous' and 'dangerous'.
- Children may notice the turtle holding the goldfish and wonder if the turtle was shown on the first page. If so – go back to the first page and see that the goldfish is resting on the turtle's shell, not a rock.

Third Spread ***Pgs 8 - 9***

Sign up day

- Why do you think the other unicorns were surprised to see Eunice?
- Why didn't they help Eunice sign on?
- Who are Eunice's friends?
- How did they help her? (words and actions)



Fourth Spread

Pgs 10 - 11

Eunice started training

- What events is Eunice training for?
- How are her friends helping her?

Fifth Spread

Pgs 12 - 13

Day of the Unicorn Games

- Who are the spectators?
- What does it mean 'the stadium rippled with excitement'?
- Why would Eunice's little legs tremble?
- When would you feel that way? How would you describe that feeling?
- Do you think Eunice just needs to be brave? Does being brave mean that she will win?
- Instead of whispering 'I just need to be brave', what else could Eunice whisper to herself, for example 'I just need to be courageous', 'I just need to have a go', 'I just need to do my best'.

Sixth Spread

Pgs 14 - 15

Eunice in the events

- How did Eunice go in the events?
- Did being brave mean that she would win?
- What happened in the long jump? The high jump? The discus?
- What is a commotion?
- Invite children to explain the meaning of 'But she gave it everything she had.'
- How would Eunice be feeling? Proud that she did her best? Disappointed she didn't win? Invite children to discuss.
- What do you think the other unicorns think, or how do the other unicorns feel about Eunice's participation?

Seventh Spread

Pgs 16 - 17

The unicorns' response and Eunice's hope for the final event

- How did the unicorns feel about Eunice's participation?
- What do you think the final event is? Do you think Eunice will win a ribbon?
- What does 'She might be little, but her heart was big' mean?

Eighth Spread
Pgs 18 - 19

Eunice didn't win

- How does Eunice feel?
- How do her friends comfort her?
- What do you think Eunice's idea is?

Ninth Spread
Pgs 20 - 21

Planning the Great and Small games

- What was Eunice's idea?
- What sorts of events will they need to have in the games if everyone is to compete?

Tenth Spread
Pgs 12 - 23

The day of the Great and Small games

- What event do you think the animals are lining up for?
- Why is the stadium rippling with a new kind of excitement? How will it be different from the 'old' excitement?
- What does 'beamed with pride' mean?
- Why does Eunice feel proud?
- How is her new dream bigger than winning a ribbon?

Eleventh Spread
Pgs 24 - 25

Events

- What kind of events were in the Great and Small games?
- Who was competing?
- What does 'Everyone had a chance to shine' mean?

Twelfth Spread
Pgs 26 - 27

Swimming and other events

- Discuss the meaning of the swimmers making a splash – literal and figurative.
- Discuss the meaning of winning by a whisker – literal and figurative.
- What is a three-way tie? What is a marathon?

Thirteenth Spread
Pgs 28 - 29

Crowd favourite

- What is the limbo?
- Why would it be the favourite?
- How would the giraffe go in the limbo?



Fourteenth Spread
Pgs 30 - 31

Eunice

- Why is it great to be small?
- Do you think Eunice will win?

Fifteenth Spread
Pg 32

The winners

- Did Eunice win?
- Who did win?
- How does Eunice feel? Why?
- Why is the book called *Great and Small*?
- Why do you think the author wrote the story?
- Do you think the author wanted you to learn anything from the story?

**LANGUAGE
FEATURES**

Alliteration

You may wish to draw children's attention to language features used in the text, for example:

Eunice the Unicorn – List other words that start with the long 'u' sound, for example usual, unique, university, unicycle, ukulele, universe, uniform, utensils, unit.

Ask children to compose sentences using words that begin with the long 'u' sound, for example: The unique unicorn rode a unicycle to university for ukulele lessons.

Past Tense Verbs

The story is told in the past. It has already happened.

If you are teaching past tense, you may wish to look at both the regular and irregular verbs used in the text.

Regular Verbs:

·add 'ed': started, jumped, sounded, roared, whispered, wished, beamed

·leave off the 'e' and add 'ed': loved, rippled, waded, trembled, caused

Irregular Verbs:

thought, said, held, ran, spun, fell, hit, gave, came, made

Relating verbs: was, were, had.

Direct Speech

Point out how punctuation is used to show direct speech, the words actually spoken by the characters. Direct speech is in the present tense.

Word Meanings

Synonyms

Discuss the words 'dreadful', 'disastrous' and 'dangerous' which were used to describe Eunice's attempt at some events. What other words could be used instead? List them.

Antonyms

Now turn the descriptions around and suggest words that would describe successful attempts. List them.

Comparative Adjectives

Although not used in the text, comparative adjectives may arise in discussions, for example:

higher, highest; lower, lowest; faster, fastest, slower, slowest.

Phrases/sayings that children may need to have explained, for example:

- 'her heart set on entering ... and winning'
- 'the stadium rippled with excitement' (a metaphor)
- 'fell short'
- 'new low'
- 'gave it everything she had'
- 'her heart was big'
- 'beamed with pride'
- 'Her dream had become so much bigger than winning a ribbon.'
- 'made a splash'
- 'won by a whisker'

Encourage the children to suggest other ways the ideas could be expressed. Explain that the language of books may differ from the language we speak.



WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

- Read back through the book to identify all the words of encouragement that were used. List them on a chart. Invite children to list other phrases that could be used to encourage themselves and others.
- Provide children with opportunities to role play giving encouragement to others.

EXPRESS AND DEVELOP IDEAS

- Invite children to retell the story in sequence. Encourage them to use words to mark the order; for example, first, second, third, next, then, after, when, while.
- Invite children to draw and write about their favourite part of the story or what they think of the story.
- Invite children to contemplate alternative endings for the story.

EXTENSION

Research the Olympics, Paralympics and Commonwealth Games. Find out the events held in each of the games. Research where and when they are held and the countries participating.

English

- List the animals that are mentioned in the story and arrange them in alphabetical order.

Science

- Research the animals featured in the story to find out their physical features and how these influence their abilities.
- Write a brief description of each animal. Focus on information about their features and abilities.

EXTENSION

Maths

Measurement

- Compare the sizes of animals featured in the story.
- Measure the lengths and heights jumped, distance balls are thrown, for example, in the class mini games (see below).

Counting

- Count the number of bounces, ten pins, dart totals.

Health and Physical Education

Discuss the events mentioned in the book. Use the book as a stimulus to plan a friendly competition or class mini games. Invite children to suggest and plan the activities. They could include, for example:

- Who can jump the highest?
- Who can jump the longest?
- Who can bounce a ball the most times?
- Who can kick a ball the furthest?
- Who is the quickest at blowing up a balloon?
- Who can knock down the most ten pins?
- Who can roll a ball closest to a target?
- Who can score the highest in darts?
- Who can answer the most questions correctly?
- Who can tie their shoelaces the fastest?

They don't need to be sporting things. Try to include as many activities as possible to give everyone a chance at being the best at something. Ask children to suggest things they are good at and they would like to see included in the games.



LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

Great and Small is a useful resource for teaching in the three strands of the English Curriculum (Language, Literature and Literacy) and can be used as a springboard for developing skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing and creating as children listen to and engage with the text for enjoyment. Extension suggestion provides ways of linking the story with other curriculum areas including Health and Physical Education, Science and Maths.

Key Curriculum Areas

English, Health and Physical Education, Science and Maths

ENGLISH / Language

Language for interaction

- (ACELA 1429) Understand that language can be used to explore ways of expressing needs, likes and dislikes

Text structure

- (ACELA 1430) Understand that stories and informative texts have different purposes

Expressing and developing ideas

- (ACELA 1786) Explore the different contribution of words and images to meaning in stories
- (ACELA 1453) Compare different kinds of images in narrative and informative texts and discuss how they contribute to meaning
- (ACELA 1437) Understand the use of vocabulary in familiar contexts related to everyday experiences, personal interests and topics taught at school

ENGLISH / Literature

Literature and Context

- (ACELT 1575) Recognise that texts are created by authors who tell stories and share experiences that may be similar or different to students' own experiences

LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

ENGLISH / Literacy

Responding to literature

- (ACELT 1783) Share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts
- (ACELT 1582) Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts and share personal responses to these texts, making connections with students' own experiences

Interacting with others

- (ACELY 1646) Listen to and respond orally to texts and to the communication of others in informal and structured classroom situations
- (ACELY 1650) Use comprehension strategies to understand and discuss texts listened to, viewed or read independently

HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION / Personal, Social and Community Health

Being healthy, safe and active

- (ACPPS001) Identify personal strengths
- (ACPPS015) Describe their own strengths and achievements and those of others, and identify how these contribute to personal identities
- (ACPPS033) Explore how success, challenge and failure strengthen identities

Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing

- (ACPPS004) Practise personal and social skills to interact positively with others
- (ACPPS005) Identify and describe emotional responses people may experience in different situations
- (ACPPS019) Describe ways to include others to make them feel they belong
- (ACPPS037) Describe how respect, empathy and valuing diversity can positively influence relationships
- (ACPPS038) Investigate how emotional responses vary in depth and strength



LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

SCIENCE/ Science Understanding

Contributing to healthy and active communities

- (ACPPS006) Identify actions that promote health, safety and wellbeing
- (ACPPS007) Participate in play that promotes engagement with outdoor settings and the natural environment

MATHS / Measurement

Biological sciences

- (ACSSU017) Living things have a variety of external features

Using units of measurement

- (ACMMG006) Use direct and indirect comparisons to decide which is longer, heavier or holds more, and explain reasoning in everyday language
- (ACMMG019) Measure and compare the lengths and capacities of pairs of objects using uniform informal units

GENERAL CAPABILITIES

Literacy

- Comprehending texts through listening, reading and viewing
- Composing texts through speaking, writing and creating
- Text knowledge
- Grammar knowledge
- Word knowledge
- Visual knowledge

Numeracy

- Estimating and calculating with whole numbers
- Using measurement

Critical and Creative Thinking

- Generating ideas, possibilities and actions

Personal and Social Capability

- Self-awareness
- Social awareness