



Wombat Books
Stories you'll want to share

Teachers' Notes



Cloud Conductor

Kellie Byrnes / Ann-Marie Finn

ISBN: 978-1925563344

Recommended retail: \$24.99

Reading level: Ages 5-8 Picture Book

Book Summary

Frankie loves to just sit and watch the clouds. She conducts symphonies in the sky and listens to the melodies that only she can hear.

As the seasons pass, Frankie is taken away from her bedroom on the tales she creates. Even when illness means she can't leave her bed, Frankie can escape to the beach with shimmering waves or the outback with thundering horses.

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Reasons For Studying This Book

This book addresses difficult-to-discuss themes that are universal and affect people of all ages and backgrounds. It prompts discussions about how to deal with illness or hardship through the power of imagination. The story focuses on how one can use their mind to confront/escape fear, anxiety and pain.

The book addresses childhood illness in a sensitive, non-didactic way and can be used to help normalise the types of emotions that ensue. It can help support childhood mental health care, particularly for those children who are experiencing stressful life situations or know others who are. It can also be used as a tool by those surrounding them as carers, and school counsellors, psychologists or other practitioners who are facilitating support programs.

In addition, the story ties in nicely to learning about weather patterns and changes, particularly clouds and the seasons. The book also showcases the passage of time and demonstrates different types of descriptive language.

Themes

Imagination/Creativity Perseverance Illness Emotional Resilience Coping mechanisms Courage
Friendship Hope Fear Taking Control Time/Change Ups and Downs Supporting Others

About the Author:



Kellie Byrnes is a children's author, full-time freelance writer, and book reviewer. Her debut picture book, *Cloud Conductor*, was released by Wombat Books in 2018 and *Yes! No* will be published in 2019.

Kellie has a BA degree in Literature; over five years of experience copywriting; and has spent time in marketing, PR and publishing roles. She previously worked as a publishing assistant for Pan Macmillan, and as a sales rep for Pan and later Hardie Grant Gift (Taltrade Books at the time).

When she's not busy writing, reading or coming up with new ideas, Kellie can be found walking her two dogs, checking out movies, plays and musicals, or travelling as far and wide as she can for inspiration.

For more information, visit www.KellieByrnes.com.

About the Illustrator



Ann-Marie Finn is an illustrator and author of children's books. She lives in Brisbane with her two young boys who inspire new stories and ideas every day. She started her career in the UK, but migrated to warmer climates in 2007 and is now a happy Australian and proud owner of The Mad Hatters Bookshop in Manly, Queensland.

She has a growing collection of children's books to her name, including *A Trip to the Moon*, *Captain Kieron* and *I Despair of my Hair*. She is also the illustrator of *Harrison's Song*, *Eric Finds a Way*, *Lulu* and *My Brother Tom* with Wombat Books.

Key Curriculum Areas:

CURRICULUM AREAS AND KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

Foundation (Kindergarten/Prep)

English, Science, Visual Arts

ACELT1575	ACELA1429	ACELA1434	ACELY1653
ACELT1577	ACELA1430	ACELA1786	
ACELT1783	ACELA1432	ACELY1651	
ACELT1578	ACELA1435	ACELY1652	
ACSSU004	AC SIS012	AC SIS233	
ACAVAN107	ACAVAM108		

Year One

English, Science, Visual Arts

ACELA1444	ACELA1451	ACELT1582	ACELY1656
ACELA1787	ACELA1452	ACELT1584	ACELY1788
ACELA1447	ACELA1458	ACELT1586	ACELY1660
ACELA1449	ACELT1581	ACELT1832	
ACSSU019	AC SIS213		
ACAVAN107	ACAVAM108		

Year Two

English, Science, Visual Arts

ACELA1461	ACELA1463	ACELT1833	
ACELA1462	ACELT1591	ACELY1665	
ACSHE035	AC SIS041		
ACAVAN107	ACAVAM108		

Questions and Reflections

Have the teacher read the book out in class, making sure everyone can see the illustrations. Alternatively, students can take turns at reading each page aloud.

Pre-reading Questions

1. Before reading, discuss the front cover. What might the book be about? Who is the author and illustrator? What type of story do you think it will be? *i.e. Funny? Serious?*
2. Discuss the back cover and blurb. What does the blurb tell you about the subject of the book? Does it match the clues you found on the front cover? Who is the publisher of the book?
3. Does the title of the book give any indication of what the story might be about?

After-reading Questions

1. Discuss the characteristics of a good story. *i.e. What is the plot? Who is the central character? What is the conflict/problem in the story? How is that problem solved (resolution)?*
2. Discuss the role of illustrations in picture books. Are there things we only learn from the illustrations, not from the text? Do the illustrations follow the text? Do they enhance the story? How? Do the illustrations make us feel things that the words don't, and vice versa?
3. How does Frankie use her imagination? How do we see this in the illustrations? Why do you think Frankie uses her imagination to escape her hardships?
4. At one point, Frankie is too weak to look out at the clouds, but she imagines them in her head. Can you think of a time when you used your imagination to feel better?
5. How else can the imagination be used in general, whether at school, at home, with friends, learning new skills and more? What are some different forms of creativity? How do you like to express yourself creatively?
6. How is a sense of time conveyed in the book? What are some other ways of showing time passing?
7. What can we learn about different weather patterns from reading the book? And the different seasons? How can we tell what season it is? What types of things change throughout the year (*i.e. temperature; light; flowers; ocean currents and tides; what we need to wear; what activities we can do, etc.*)?
8. How does the different weather reflect the main character's mood or thoughts? When the weather changes, does your mood change?
9. Do you know someone who has been or was very ill? How did this make you feel? What about you - have you ever been very sick? How did this feel? What do you do to feel better when you're sick or have hurt yourself? How do you support/help other people when they feel sick or have been hurt?

Classroom Activities

Science

- Complete the worksheet on Page 6. Discuss the environmental and animal changes during different seasons (*i.e. leaves falling in autumn, flowers blooming in spring*).
- The main character in the story loves inventing things. Using your imagination, what are some of the most interesting things you could invent? How would these be used? How would they make life better or easier? What is an invention you wish you had come up with? If you had developed it, what might you have done differently?

English

- Find examples of descriptive language in the book. Write a poem about clouds that demonstrates various uses of descriptive language, such as adjectives, alliteration, assonance, similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia etc. (This can be an acrostic poem).
- Have students come up with a list of interview questions for Frankie. They can then take turns being the interviewer and the interviewee in a roleplay. Students can also compile a list of questions for the author .

Visual Art

- On a cloudy day, the teacher can take their students outside to look at the clouds. Using the template on Page 7, students can draw or paint a picture of something they saw in the clouds.
- The wind 'whispers secrets' in *Cloud Conductor*. Have students build a windsock.
 1. Materials: Each student will need an empty plastic bottle, some plastic bags (preferably different colours), string and access to scissors.
 2. Method: Use the scissors to cut the top and bottom off the bottle so that you are left with a ring. Cut the plastic bags into strips that are about 3cm wide. Fold a strip in half and use the loop created to thread the plastic bag over the plastic ring. Pull tight to secure. Repeat this step until the strips of plastic bags are threaded around the plastic rim.
 3. Presentation: Tie a piece of string around either end of the windsock and hang up somewhere windy.

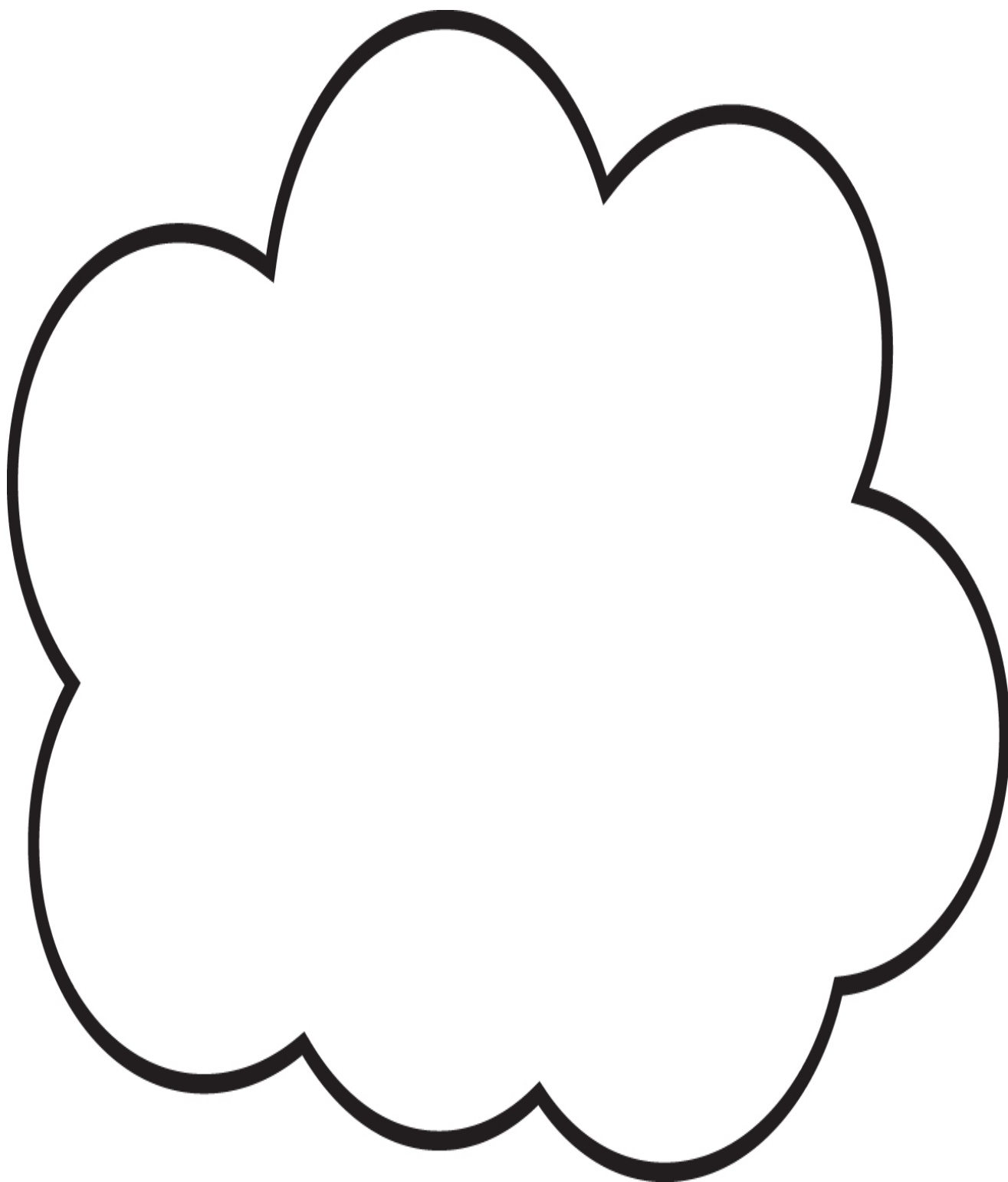
Social Science

- Students can practise visualisation by imagining they have to do something hard, and then picturing themselves completing this task or receiving the result they want. How do they feel at the start, versus after they have imagined themselves succeeding?

Seasons Worksheet

Students may use the assistance of the Internet when completing this worksheet. Explain that Australia has different seasonal changes to other places in the world (*i.e. it snows in Germany in winter, the first month of winter is December in the United Kingdom*).

	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring
What months are in this season?				
What do you wear in this season?				
What do you eat in this season?				
What is the weather like in this season?				
What do animals do in this season?				





Kellie Byrnes is available for author talks and workshops. Contact Wombat Books for more information.

Cloud Conductor Teachers' Notes can be used in schools (independent learning, small groups, and whole classes); at home with caregivers; and as part of mental health support programs facilitated by counsellors, psychologists, children's charities, etc.

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