



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Readers aged 6–8

CONTENTS

1. Plot summary	1
2. About the author	2
3. Writing style	2
4. Key study topics	3
5. General Activities	3
6. Further reading	5

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English
- **General capabilities:** Literacy, personal and social capability, critical and creative thinking

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Encourage discussion on friendship, belonging, courage and critical thinking
- Develop independent reading

THEMES

- Family
- Friendship
- Courage
- Belonging

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia

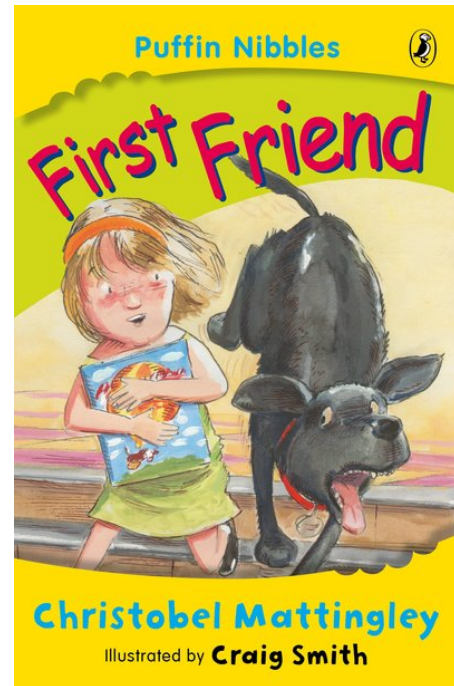
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First Friend

Christobel Mattingley

Illustrated by

Craig Smith

PLOT SUMMARY

Kerry is a little bewildered by how different things are on her first day at a new school. But she soon finds old friends in her favourite books in the school library and a real live friend Black Dog.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christobel Mattingley was born in SA in 1931 and died in 2019, and is the author of more than 50 books, 47 of which were for children. After publishing her first book, *The Picnic Dog*, in 1970, Mattingley went on to win numerous awards for her work including the Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Children's Book of the Year Award in both the Younger Readers and Picture Book categories, and an Australian Human Rights Award commendation for *No Gun for Asmir*. Her work has been translated into other languages, won various awards in Australia and the USA, and has been made into films for ABC Television. In 1990 she received the Advance Australia Award for Service to Literature, and in 1996 she was made a Member of the Order of Australia for her service to literature, particularly children's literature, and for community service through her commitment to social and cultural issues.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Craig Smith's warm, exuberant illustrations have delighted children for more than thirty years. Craig has several award-winners to his credit and his titles appear regularly on Children's Choice Award shortlists. Finding humour in domestic, family and school situations, and a fondness for unusual perspectives and energetic characterisation are features of his work.

Questions

1. Have a look at the cover of this book (including the title) – what does it tell us about the story inside?

2. How do the illustrations help to tell the story?

Activities

1. Can you tell us in one sentence what *First Friend* is all about?

2. Think about your first day at school or your first day at a new school and make a list of words that help describe how you felt, e.g.:

1. Scared
2. Worried
3. Nervous
4. Excited
5. Curious
6. Happy

3. What were some of the things that happened during that day that were **new** to you?

4. Make a list of some of the things that were new to Kerry when she started in her new school:
 1. New teacher
 2. New ways of doing things such as working on your own rather than sharing an activity (p 14) and a bigger library (p24)
 3. Finding her way around the school
5. List all the different ways Kerry makes new friends when she starts her new school. Use the following categories:
 1. Teachers
 2. Children
 3. Library
 4. Books in the library
 5. Dog
6. Tell us about the friends in your life. They can be two legged, four legged or they can be things, such as toys, books etc.

WRITING STYLE

Questions

1. Christobel Mattingley has written a first chapter book. How many chapters are there in this story?

2. The **story arc** goes a bit like this:

1. Introducing the characters

- Introducing Kerry and her family and then her school community

2. Introducing the major theme of the book

- Kerry is starting at a new school which means finding new friends and adjusting to a whole new environment

3. Introducing a problem

- Kerry finds it all a bit daunting – things are done differently, the school is much bigger than her last one and to top it off, there's a large dog and she's scared of dogs!



4. Solving the problem and ending the story

- Kerry takes comfort in finding books that are like old friends to her – no matter where she is, the books feel familiar.
- The dog helps Kerry to navigate her way around the school and the children and teachers look out for her and encourage her to play.

Activities

1. Write a short story (with any theme) and see if you can use a similar story arc – introduction of characters and plot, problem, problem solution and conclusion
2. Draw some illustrations to complement your short story.
3. Create a storyboard to reflect the story arc of **First Friend**

KEY STUDY TOPICS

Topic

FRIENDSHIP and BELONGING

Questions

1. Discuss why it is important to welcome new people – both teachers and children to the school
2. In your discussion, give some examples of how your school helps to make it easier for newcomers to the school community
3. Tell us about the things **you** do to make new children to the school feel welcome

Activities

1. Make a list of the books that Kerry finds that she knows and loves from her previous school and home library
2. As a class, make a list of the books that are classroom favourites and combine this list with Kerry's.
3. Create a poster of the books on the list so that others in the class can look for them in the library.
4. For your next library lesson, select a number of books from the combined list and make a display of those books that are in the library

and label your display: YEAR (*insert name of class*) FAVOURITE FRIENDS

5. A popular song about Friendship is Randy Newman's 'You've Got a Friend in Me' from *Toy Story 1*.
 - a. Learn the words to the song and as a class, sing along.

Topic

COURAGE

Kerry shows great COURAGE heading off to her new school on her own

Questions

1. What does the word COURAGE mean?
2. Can you think of another word for COURAGE
3. Describe another moment in the story when Kerry shows COURAGE

Activities

1. Do you know of Mr Walker? He lives at The Park Hyatt Hotel in Melbourne and acts as a friendly, welcoming face to visitors and guests.
 1. Research Mr Walker and make a short PowerPoint presentation to show the class what his role is at the hotel.
2. WELCOME is such a great word.
 1. Write a little story or poem about a time you felt welcome somewhere – a party, a friend's house, school, another classroom etc
 2. Create a WELCOME TO OUR SCHOOL sign for the entrance/foyer.
3. Think of a time where you felt courageous or brave. Share your experience with the class.



GENERAL ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities

- Compose a letter or email to send to a friend letting them know all the reasons you enjoy having them as a friend.
- Create a map of your school so that when new students come, they know where the following areas/landmarks are:
 - Toilets
 - Main playground
 - Office
 - Library
 - Your classroom
 - Art room
 - Music room
 - Hall
- Arrange a morning tea to welcome someone to your classroom and to share in the work that you've been doing on the theme of friendship– perhaps it is the Principal or parent helpers.

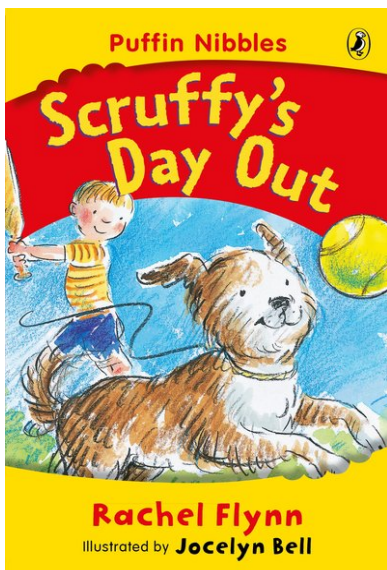
This activity will require **sub-committees** to manage:

- Catering:
 - Make a list of food that will be brought along
 - Organise people to hand food around to guests and classroom participants
- Official activity:

Designate someone to write and say the words of welcome.
- A Spotify playlist of songs with a friendship theme that will be played quietly in the background.
- A display of the books that were noted as favourite books – books that felt like old friends. (these can be taken from the library display that was made).



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



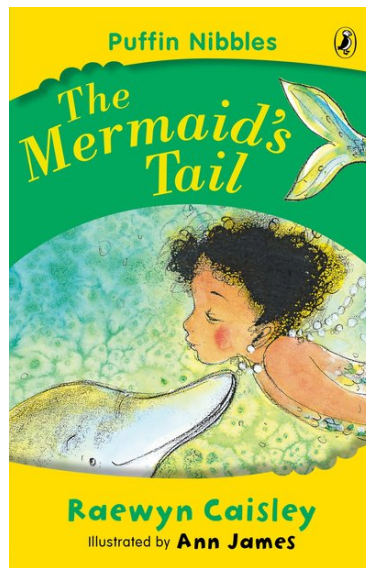
Scruffy's Day Out

by Rachel Flynn, illustrated by
Jocelyn Bell

Dad nearly runs over a stray dog!
A very scruffy stray dog. But who
does it belong to?

If you enjoyed *The Mermaid's Tail*
you will also enjoy **other Puffin
Nibbles in the series.**

Teachers' resources available.



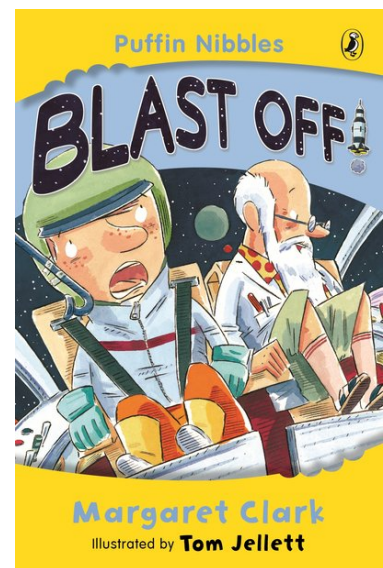
The Mermaid's Tail

by Raewyn Caisley,
illustrated by Ann James

Crystal longs to be a mermaid.
So her mother makes her a
flashing silver tail. But the tail
doesn't feel real enough, until
the night Crystal wears it to
bed.

If you enjoyed *The Mermaid's
Tail* you will enjoy **other Puffin
Nibbles in the series..**

Teachers' resources available.



Blast off!

by Margaret Clark,
illustrated by Tom Jellett

Adam wants to be an
astronaut. It's all he ever thinks
about. One day he discovers
Mad Marvin and his amazing
space bubble, and it's time for
blast off!

If you enjoyed *The Mermaid's
Tail* you will also enjoy **other
Puffin Nibbles in the series..**

Teachers' resources available.



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
First Friend	Christobel Mattingley and Craig Smith	9780141308944	P-4	\$9.99		
The Littlest Pirate	Sherryl Clark and Tom Jellett	9780141313382	P-4	\$9.99		
Bad Buster	Sofie Laguna and Leigh Hobbs	9780143300335	P-4	\$9.99		
Fairy Bread	Ursula Dubosarsky and Mitch Vane	9780141311753	P-4	\$9.99		
Scruffy's Day Out	Rachel Flynn and Jocelyn Bell	9780141311692	P-4	\$9.99		
Blast Off!	Margaret Clark and Tom Jellett	9780143301851	P-4	\$9.99		
The Mermaid's Tail	Raewyn Caisley and Ann James	9780141306155	P-4	\$9.99		
TOTAL						

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