



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Early primary
(ages 5–9)

CONTENTS

1. Plot summary	1
2. About the author	2
3. Author's interview	2
4. Pre-reading questions	3
5. Key study topics	3
6. Further reading	5

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English; Visual Arts, Geography
- **General capabilities:** Literacy; Critical and creative thinking; Personal and social capability
- **Topics:** Art and visual literacy; Writing and communicating; Geography; Resilience

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- To discuss new vocabulary, respond to texts and share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts.
- To interpret images, and to experiment with creating images to communicate ideas to an audience.
- To discuss grief and the feelings associated with losing a family member.
- To discuss the concepts of loneliness and friendship.

THEMES

- Loneliness
- Grief and loss – losing a grandparent
- Friendship
- Writing letters

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia and Gus Gordon

PUBLICATION DETAILS

ISBN: 9780143794141 (hardback)

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

Visit penguin.com.au/teachers to find out how our fantastic Penguin Random House Australia books can be used in the classroom, sign up to the teachers' newsletter and follow us on [@penguineachers](https://twitter.com/penguineachers).

Copyright © Penguin Random House Australia 2020



Finding François Gus Gordon

PLOT SUMMARY

Alice wishes she had someone her own size to talk to. Then one day, her wish comes true.

Through hope and chance, love and loss, two little ones who need each other find each other.

A heartwarming story from award-winning author and illustrator Gus Gordon about loneliness, saying goodbye and the value of life-affirming friendships.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gus Gordon is an internationally acclaimed illustrator and author. He has illustrated and written more than 80 books for children. His illustrations are known for their loose and energetic line work, mixed media and humour. His writing is always anthropomorphic. He attributes this to his love of Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in The Willows*.

Gus's first picture book, *Wendy*, was a Notable Book in the 2010 Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Picture Book of the Year Awards.

His second picture book, *Herman and Rosie*, now published in twelve countries, has been internationally acclaimed and awarded.

Somewhere Else was published by Penguin Random House Australia in 2016 and has also won many awards internationally, including a 2017 CBCA Notable book and 2017 book of the year for 5-8 year olds in the Speech Pathology book awards in Australia.

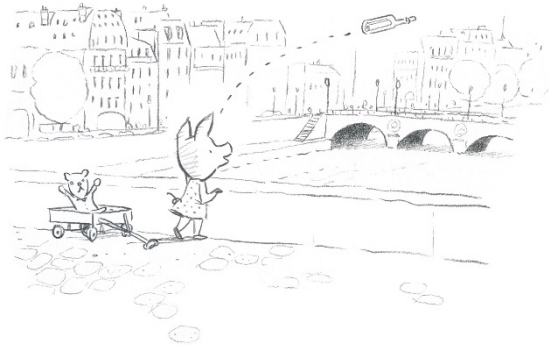
Visit Gus's website (gusgordon.com) for lots of information and resources, and follow him on Instagram ([@gusgordonbooks](https://www.instagram.com/gusgordonbooks)) for updates, creativity tips and book readings.

AUTHOR'S INTERVIEW

Gus, what was your inspiration for writing *Finding François*?

Finding François was one of those books that took a long time to develop. Like a good stew, it slowly got richer and more interesting as the time passed.

I have always been a lover of all things French. I'm a tragic Francophile. Paris is especially wonderful. I have spent a great deal of time there, wandering the streets aimlessly. One day, for no apparent reason whatsoever, I drew this little sketch...



I didn't really know what this little pig was up to, but I knew where my next book would be set (this was not a surprise to anyone who knows me). Once I had this

image, a stream of ideas began to flow in my head as I imagined the bottle slowly floating down the river and out into the sea, bobbing on the waves, with an important message inside. Then I pictured another little animal finding the bottle washed up on a beach and then replying in a way only a small child would reply. I loved the notion that it could be possible for two little ones to communicate, in a 'magical realism' kind of way, via the bottle, and that a friendship might form based upon the process of writing messages to each other and knowing that the bottle would reach the other, however illogical that sounds, would be quite special. The fact that the two of them longed for some company was enough to keep me motivated to work out the rest of the story. I don't explain the reasons why Alice happens to live with her grandmother and François lives with his father, as it's not necessary to go into such detail. The important thing is that they are both part of a family and are loved and cherished, and that they also have the ability to be brave in the face of loss.

Alice and François live in very different places. What gave you the idea for François's home to be in a lighthouse?

For a long time, I have wanted to write a story that involved a lighthouse. I have always loved lighthouses. (Who doesn't?) So when I had the idea that the bottle would wash up on a beach somewhere, it gave me the perfect excuse to include one and it also seemed particularly fitting that François, the only son of the lighthouse keeper, might be lonely out in the middle of the ocean.



When the initial threads of the story began coming together, I realised that this story wasn't just about feeling lonely (a common theme in my books) and finding a friend, but that it was also a story about grief and coping with the loss of someone special in your life. This is where things got a little tricky. In my years of writing picture books, a character of mine has never actually... died. How on earth was I going to convey



this moment with the gravity and sensitivity it deserved without upsetting the reader too much? Clearly, Alice was very fond of her grandmother, so I hesitated at this point (and she was a treat to draw!). With some guidance from my editor, I settled on letting the pictures do the talking; which is really what a good picture book should do anyway, of course. In the end, finding the right perspective, like a director looking through the lense of a camera, and using the colour tones to set the mood, I was satisfied that the reader would know and understand Alice's anguish. Her grief and ability to find a way to move on will no doubt be a point of discussion with librarians, teachers and parents, and their little readers. I hope everyone will see that with good family and friends (even newly found friends), you are never alone.



Could you tell us a little about how you created the artwork in *Finding François*?

The artwork for the book was created using a variety of mediums. These include watercolour, colour pencil, and a variety of old, new and found collage papers (mostly French). Collage is my favourite medium. I have drawers and drawers full of wonderful paper. Collage has the unique ability to tell a story within a story. I use it carefully as I want to make sure that the collage elements don't distract the reader from the story; rather it provides another layer of whimsy and visual interest. Much of the collage is obtained from very old French shopping catalogues. I also used old postcards, receipts, stamps, letters, labels and advertisements. I 'cut' out the image or paper and 'paste' them, often naively, into the artwork. This is done digitally. Every element of each illustration is hand-drawn, painted and collected, then scanned-in, bit by bit, into my computer. I assemble the whole thing, like a glorious puzzle, on the screen. This is good and bad (but mostly good). It allows me to move things around and change my papers and tweak my colours if I need to. Unfortunately, working digitally means that

I'm not left with any original artworks, and so I do prints instead. Everything takes an awful long time, but it seems to work out in the end.



PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Look at the front cover of the book. What do you think the story will be about?
2. List three words that describe how the character looks to you. Is there anything that the character is doing that might give you a clue to what the story is about?
3. Read the blurb on the back cover. What do you feel about it? What kind of things are you now expecting to see inside the book? What questions do you have?

KEY STUDY TOPICS

English

Questions

1. Read *Finding François* together as a class. What do you think the author is saying with this story?
2. Why do you think Alice wants someone her own size to talk to?
3. What is the difference between being alone and feeling lonely? When were you last on your own? And have you ever felt lonely? If so, were you alone when you felt lonely or were you with other people?
4. On page 30, the text reads, 'Over time, the dark clouds slowly packed up their things and shuffled into the distance, and the sun sprang forth from wherever it was hiding.' There are two layers of meaning to this sentence. Discuss what they might be with your class.
5. The book ends with Alice and François writing more letters to each other – as pen pals. Have you ever written a letter to a friend? Discuss with your



class what sort of things you might write in a letter.

Activities

1. Were any of the words in the story new to you? Could you guess what they meant from the context (the way the words were used and what surrounds them)?
2. Imagine you are writing a letter to a new friend who you have never met in person. What would you tell them about yourself?
3. François lives in a lighthouse. Do you know why lighthouses are located by the sea? Discuss what you know about lighthouses. Do you know any other books that have lighthouses in them?

Art and visual literacy

Questions

1. Picture books tell their stories through illustrations as much as through words. What do you think has happened on pages 24-25? Discuss how this makes you feel with your class and teacher.
2. On pages 26-27, there are no words – just a large illustration. There is a lot of emotion conveyed in the illustration. What feelings does the artwork make you feel? And what do you notice about the illustration that makes you feel that way?
3. Look through the pictures of the book. Which pictures show what is happening in the text, and which pictures show something different to what the words say?

Activities

1. Alice lives in Paris in France, and the illustrations show a city that looks very french. How do the pictures achieve this? Think about what is unique and/or typically Australian about the city that you live in. It could be something in nature, such as specific plants and wildlife, or something man-made, such as a building or bridge.
2. Draw two pictures of yourself side by side: one that shows you feeling confident and happy, and one where you are sad and lonely. How can you convey those two moods, just through expression and body language? Try choosing a colour scheme for each drawing that reinforces the mood you are conveying.

Geography

Questions

1. Alice lives in Paris, which is the capital city of the country France. In France, they speak the French

language. In Australia, we speak English. What other countries do you know that speak English? Do you know the names of any other languages?

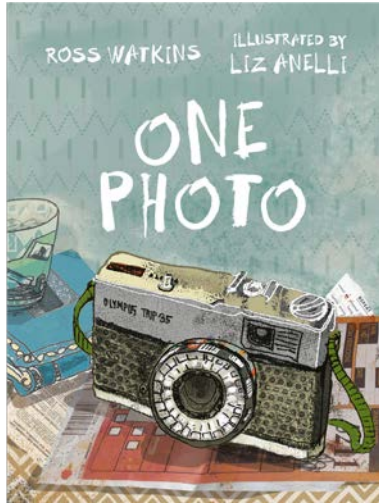
2. In some countries, some people speak one language while other people speak another. Which language they speak is usually determined by their family history. What is your family's history? Has your family always lived in Australia? Does anyone in your family speak a different language?
3. France is part of the continent called Europe. There are six continents in total. Can you name the other five?

Activities

1. Look at a map of the world. Can you find the city you live in? And can you find Paris – the city where Alice lives? Alice travelled by boat to visit François. What transport might you use to travel to Paris from Australia?
2. Paris is the capital city of France. On your map of the world, can you name the capital cities of any other countries?



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA

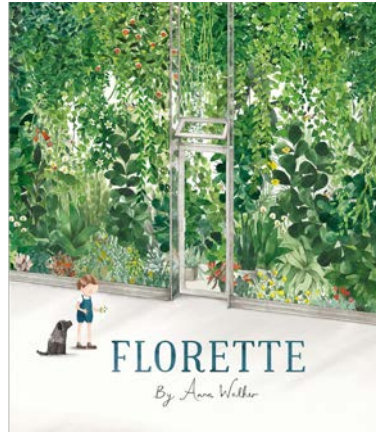


One Photo
by Ross Watkins and
Liz Anelli

A poignant story about love, loss and legacy. One son, one family, one photo.

Dad came home one day with one of those old cameras, the kind that use film. But Dad didn't take photos of the regular things people photograph . . .

Told in stunning prose, with creative heart-warming illustrations, this book explores the difficult topics of dementia and grief while celebrating what we hold closest to our hearts.

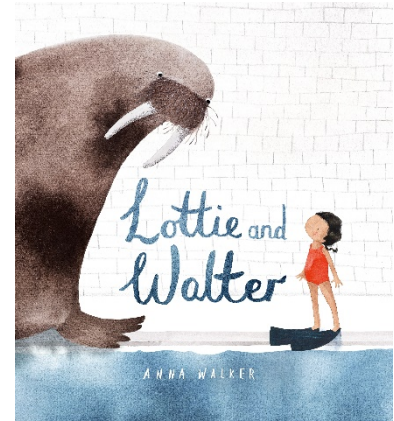


Florette
by Anna Walker

A powerful and beautiful story about loneliness and feeling connected to where we live.

When Mae has to move house from the country to the city, she feels lonely and sad - until she discovers a beautiful place full of green in the centre of Paris. What she finds there sparks something special and beautiful that will make her feel much more at home.

Teachers' resources available.



Lottie and Walter
by Anna Walker

An empowering story about overcoming fear with a friend.

'I'm not swimming,' Lottie announced.

Lottie doesn't want to be afraid, but no matter what she does, she just can't go in the water.

Until she finds a surprising friend, who turns out to be more helpful than Lottie could ever have imagined...

Teachers' resources available.

ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
Finding Francois	Gus Gordon	9780143794141	K-5	\$24.99		
Somewhere Else	Gus Gordon	9780143782780	K-5	\$14.99		
Herman and Rosie	Gus Gordon	9780143507277	K-5	\$14.99		
Wendy	Gus Gordon	9780143504658	K-5	\$14.99		
One Photo	Ross Watkins and Liz Anelli	9780670077977	K-5	\$24.99		
Florette	Anna Walker	9780670079414	K-2	\$24.99		
Lottie and Walter	Anna Walker	9780143787181	K-2	\$24.99		
TOTAL						

PLEASE NOTE THAT PRICES ARE RECOMMENDED RETAIL ONLY AND MAY HAVE CHANGED SINCE THE TIME OF PRINTING. PRICES ARE GST INCLUSIVE.



NAME: _____

SCHOOL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

STATE: _____

POSTCODE: _____

TEL: _____

EMAIL: _____

ACCOUNT NO.: _____

PURCHASE ORDER NO.: _____

PLEASE SEND ORDER FORMS
TO YOUR LOCAL EDUCATION
SUPPLIER.

