



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Secondary (ages 13+)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English, Health and Physical Education.
- **General capabilities:** Literacy; Critical and Creative Thinking; Personal and Social Capability; Ethical Understanding.

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Analysing how language and writing evoke mood, tone, tension and characterisation
- To discuss what makes a story extraordinary
- Encouraging creative and imaginative writing
- To discuss resilience, perseverance and the power of human connection
- To discuss the effect of social media and the digital age on relationships

THEMES

- Family relationships
- Friendship
- Coming-of-age relationships
- Pursuing a passion
- Pressure to achieve
- Dealing with serious illness
- Loss & Grief
- City vs country life

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia

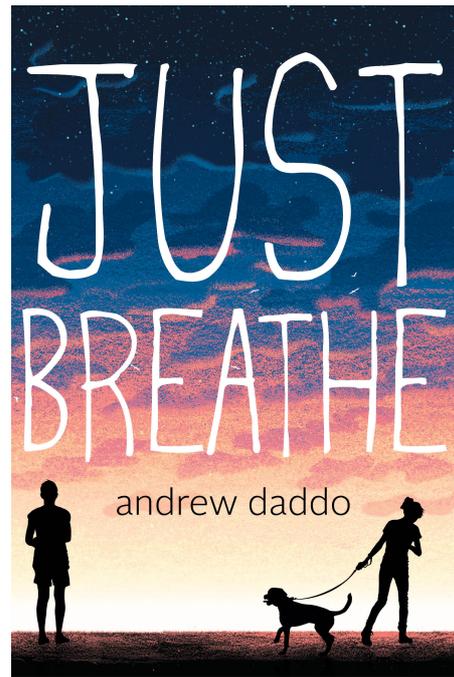
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JUST BREATHE

Andrew Daddo

PLOT SUMMARY

A compelling coming-of-age story from much-loved Australian author and media personality, Andrew Daddo.

Hendrix's father has a vision – to see Hendrix run for Australia at the Olympics. His days are completely mapped out – what he eats, when he trains, when he sleeps, even the air he breathes.

There was never room in that vision for a girl, especially in the lead-up to the Nationals. Yet fate works in funny ways, and when Hendrix literally bowls Emily over on a training run, he just can't get her out of his head. His life and priorities take a turn as he falls for her.

But Emily has a deadly secret that she's scared to share even with Hendrix. As their bond grows and Hendrix strays further from his father's strict regime, the tension builds to a heart-wrenching climax.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Daddo had a starring role on *'I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here!'* in 2015, but his first real TV job was as host of the ABC's national music show *The Factory*, which gave him cult status amongst Australian teenagers. After a year in New York as the first Australian to graduate to MTV 'VJ', he returned to become a household name with programs like *The World's Greatest Commercials*, *Australia's Funniest People* and comfortably adapted to news program *11AM*. He's presented the Olympics with Seven in Sydney and Beijing, enjoyed the good life of a professional traveller with *The Great Outdoors*, appeared in three films and one stage show. Andrew's done a lot!

Andrew Daddo is also an accomplished author of more than 25 best-selling books for all ages - picture books, chapter books, short story collections, young adult novels and adult non-fiction. He writes each month for *Australian Golf Digest* and contributes regularly to *Essential Kids*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and various travel magazines.

Over the past ten years he has spoken to literally hundreds of thousands of school students around Australia about the importance of literacy.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Andrew Daddo says:

There's something about wanting and not having that's always been of interest. And the flip side of that, as well. Having, not wanting. Or having, and not even knowing what you might want. In the strangest way, *Just Breathe* was inspired by an irrational fear that now more than ever, we're missing some fantastic moments and experiences because our heads are buried in our mobile devices. We literally could have the love of our lives, or the opportunity of a lifetime wander past and we wouldn't see it because we're too busy seeing what the social world is doing instead of the real world in front of us.

Just Breathe is about opportunity and chance, and change. It's not only about seeing the possibility of what's in front of you, but being able to recognize that opportunity when it raises its gorgeous head. Hendrix is on a trajectory that could see him at the

very top of his chosen pile, his father can see it as clearly as the sun at midday. In fact, it's so bright, he sees little else. Hendrix is happy to be caught up in the dream because it's literally all he knows.

Emily, on the other hand, has a very different reality ahead, and it's one that's been forced upon her. She has no choice but to face what's coming head on, even though none of it seems to make sense. What is clear to Emily, is that if things don't work out the way she wants, she won't be left wondering, 'What if?'

Chance brings them together; life does its best to pull them apart. At its core, *Just Breathe* is a story about relationships, how they change and develop and possibly implode. The idea of a single pursuit is at odds with the more rounded fulfillment of a wider, normal life. How do you balance perfection and life and manage to walk away with fulfilment? And what if the end-game is wrong? What if the goal posts are in the wrong spot and all that work leads to nothing?

What if you're on your phone when the love of your life walks past?

What if you have everything to live for but fate plays a hand that takes your life away? While Hendrix lives, and has everything to live for, it takes a Emily to show him what life is all about.

That's what I was thinking about for *Just Breathe*.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Look at the cover design – what do you think the front cover might reveal about the story? What kind of emotion is it evoking?
2. Examine the importance of the back cover blurb in captivating the reader. Do you feel it has been successful in peaking your interest? Why? Why not?

KEY STUDY TOPICS

Writing Style

Questions

1. What is the novel's writing style? Consider how and when information is revealed, particularly



through the use of direct speech. Does it feel authentic? How effectively does this contribute to the novel's storytelling?

2. How does the alternate first-person point-of-view between Hendrix and Emily in Book 1 affect what is revealed to the reader? How might the story have been different if a third-person narration had been used through the whole book OR if the first person alternate narrative continued throughout?
3. In Book 2, at the point Hendrix and Emily meet, the writing style changes to third person, though still mostly from a particular character's point-of-view, changing from time to time. How does this change from first to third person affect the tone of the story from this point?
4. How does the book's title relate to its content, beyond the obvious breathing of an athlete? (see pp 95-96, 248, 251-252, 298, 325-331 & 344-347)
5. What did you think about the ending of the story?

Activities

1. Read the opening page on p3 plus first paragraph of the page 4 of text. What do you think the mask is for? What does this section tell you about Hendrix's relationship with his father? Then read pp 10 & 11 up to the line break. What do you think is going on in Emily's life? How different to Hendrix is Emily's relationship to her family?
2. Find two or three references to oxygen and breathing in the book and examine the use of imagery and metaphor here. How is it used to bind the stories of Hendrix and Emily.
3. Choose an incident in the story, such as the State Championships when Emily has her first collapse and write it from a different character's perspective, such as Paul or Ethan.
4. Examine the description of Emily's breakdown on pp148 and 149 and identify the language conventions used, and their effectiveness in evoking the mood and gravity of the situation here.

Setting

Just Breathe is mostly set in central Melbourne, but also has elements of rural life in the town in nearby Benalla in Victoria.

Questions

1. How does the different backgrounds of the two characters affect the tone of the story? What affect does it have on the characters and their relationship?
2. What effect does going to the city have on Emily, and what effect does going to the country have on Hendrix later in the book.
3. Why do you think the author chose the Tan track for Emily and Hendrix to meet?

Characterisation

Characters in the book include Hendrix, Emily, Paul (Hendrix's dad), Ethan (Hendrix's training partner), Anna (Emily's mum), Astrid (Emily aunt), Eric (Emily's dad), the 'strippers' & Amelia (Emily's school friends),

Questions

1. Do you see either Hendrix or Emily as the main character, or are they equally balanced? Why/why not?
2. Which minor characters also had pivotal roles the story? Why? What roles did they play?
3. What role does Hendrix's dad play in Hendrix's development? How does Hendrix's reaction to his father change throughout the story. Why?
4. How do Hendrix and Emily change as a result of their meeting?
5. How is Hendrix different from other characters?
6. How is Emily different?
7. What role do mobile phones play in the story? What are your views on the effect of digital media on our relationships with family and friends? How is that represented in *Just Breathe*?
8. How convincing do you feel the romance is in this novel?

Activities

Write a story about your own family and evoke each character within it in a distinctive way in the style of this novel.



THEMES

Family

In this novel, there are two different families who relate to each other in very different ways: Hendrix, only child, with his father, a single parent after the death of Hendrix's mum; and Emily with her mum, dad and sister, as well as her Aunt.

Questions

1. What is the overall message in this book about family? Give some examples of why you think that.
2. How much do you think Hendrix's dad's parenting style is a reaction to his wife's untimely death? Why?
3. How much do you think Anna & Eric's parenting style is a reaction to Emily's illness? Why/Why not?
4. How does each family show their love to each other?
5. How and why do both Hendrix's and Emily's relationships with their parent/s change over the course of the novel? Give some examples.

Pursuing a passion/pressure to achieve

Hendrix is on his way to becoming an elite athlete, through hard work and a strict training regime managed by his father.

Questions

1. What are the conflicts that Hendrix finds in his Dad's regime before and after falling for Emily?
2. How does Hendrix's relationship with Emily and his understanding of her illness affect his relationship with his dad?
3. How does Hendrix's final defiance in running away to Benalla change his and his father's big-picture view about his future? (see pp304-313)

Activity

Look at the passage on pp325-331 in which Hendrix runs for Emily in Benalla.

Now write a short story about a hobby or pursuit you are passionate about – perhaps a sport (e.g. surfing, running, hiking, netball, gymnastics) or other passion (e.g. drawing, painting, singing, playing an instrument) etc. Describe how it feels when you are completely immersed in this activity.

OR

Write a story about an activity that you have been persuaded/forced to do by friends, school or family. Describe how you feel when doing this activity or when being pressured to do it. Have your feelings changed since you first started doing it?

Dealing with serious illness/loss

Emily has a serious condition which is very difficult to treat and is a potential time bomb in her head.

Questions

1. What effect does this illness have on Emily – how does her outlook change?
2. Where does she look for support? How does she cope at school?
3. How does her condition affect her attitude to her relationship with Hendrix?

Hendrix and his father have had to deal with the death of his mother/wife.

Questions

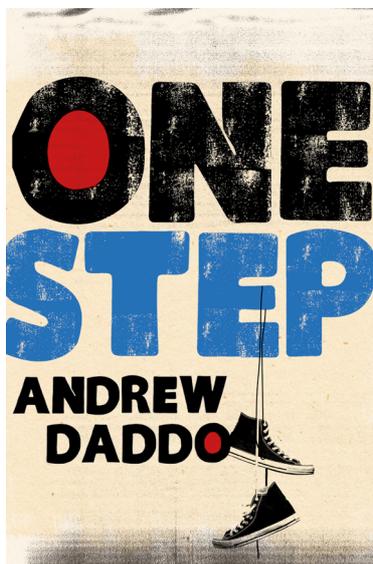
1. We learn very little in the story about Hendrix's mother & her loss, especially early on, with a fuller explanation only appearing towards the end (pp310-311). What do you think that is a reflection of? What was the effect on you as a reader?

Activity

Look up support groups for those with serious illness or suffering grief/loss. What are some of the services they can provide? E.g. <https://livewire.org.au/> or Beyond Blue.



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA

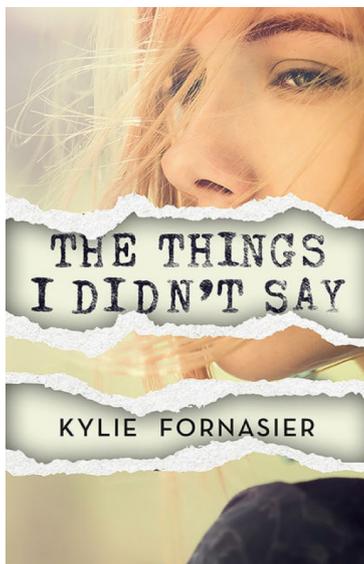


One Step
by Andrew Daddo

Dylan is struggling. He's struggling with the acne that has declared war on his face; struggling with his pushy younger sister; with his nagging mum and his dad who never has time for him anymore; struggling with his old phone-me-down; and struggling with his constant preoccupation with girls, and what might happen if he manages to snag one.

Struggling, but surviving. But when Dylan's creative writing piece is read out in class, it sets off a chain of events that sends him on a frantic roller coaster of emotions culminating in a revelation that could make or break his survival.

Hilariously funny yet painfully poignant, this is a powerful and insightful story from a much-loved Australian writer and media personality.

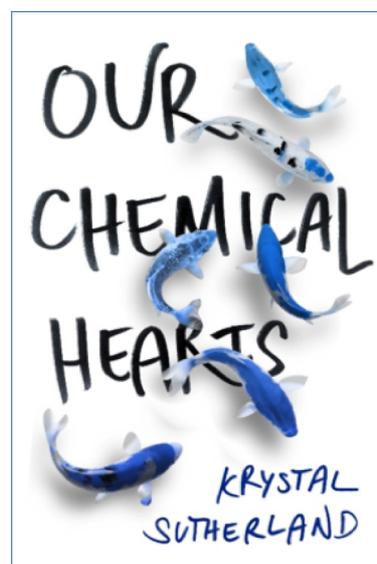


The Things I Didn't Say
by Kylie Fornasier

A story of doubt, love, friendship, and the power of words we say and those we don't.

I hate the label Selective Mutism - as if I choose not to speak, like a kid who refuses to eat broccoli. I've used up every dandelion wish since I was ten wishing for the power to speak whenever I want to. I'm starting to wonder if there are enough dandelions.'

After losing her best friend that night, Piper Rhodes changes schools, determined that her final year will be different. She will be different. Then she meets West: school captain, star soccer player, the boy everyone talks about. Despite her fear of losing everything all over again, they fall in love without Piper ever speaking one word to West. But can a love mapped by silence last?



Our Chemical Hearts
by Krystal Sutherland

Henry Page has never been in love. The slo-mo, can't-eat-can't-sleep kind of love he's been hoping for just hasn't been on the cards—he's too busy trying to get into a semi-decent college and become editor of his school newspaper. The rest of his spare time he spends with his best friends, Lola and Murray, playing video games and advising them on their own sordid love lives.

Then he meets Grace Town, the elusive new girl in school, who wears oversized boys' clothing, walks with a cane, rarely seems to shower, and is hiding crushing secrets. She's hardly who Henry expected his dream girl to be, but when the two are chosen to edit the paper together, sparks fly. After all this time, Henry's about to learn firsthand just how disastrous the road to first love can be—and that sometimes it's the detours that end up mattering much more.



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
Just Breathe	Andrew Daddo	9780143573623	Year 8+	\$19.99		
One Step	Andrew Daddo	9780143573616	Year 8+	\$19.99		
The Things I Didn't Say	Kylie Fornasier	9780143573630	Year 7+	\$19.99		
Our Chemical Hearts	Krystal Sutherland	9780143573906	8+	\$19.99		
Holding Up the Universe	Jennifer Niven	9780141357058	8+	\$19.99		
TOTAL						

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