

Your Next Read

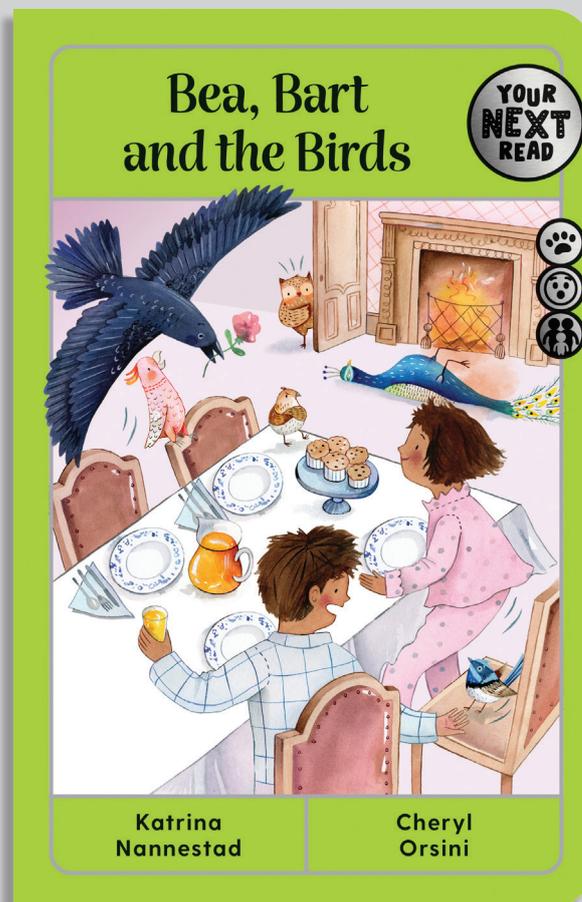
Teaching Notes



Bea, Bart and the Birds

Written by Katrina Nannestad

Art by Cheryl Orsini



Teaching notes by Karys McEwen

As a teacher librarian and passionate advocate for reading, I created the *Your Next Read* teaching notes to be both curriculum-connected and educator-useful. Each set of notes is grounded in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA V9) to ensure teachers can confidently link quality literature to learning outcomes across key learning areas. My aim is for these notes to do more than tick curriculum boxes. I want them to help educators create rich learning experiences and bookish conversations sparked by stories that act as windows, mirrors, and sliding doors and invite every child to see themselves and others in new ways.

The *Your Next Read* framework also intentionally incorporates the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP). Many Australian schools draw on both ACARA and PYP approaches, and I see great value in including both. The PYP focus on inquiry, conceptual understanding, and learner agency complements ACARA's emphasis on critical and creative thinking. Together, they provide a holistic way of engaging with stories, encouraging children not only to learn to read but also to choose to read with purpose, joy, and connection.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Megan Daley".

Megan Daley

Curriculum Framework

- The Your Next Read teaching notes are designed to align with the Australian Curriculum (ACARA) and the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) learning areas and outcomes. All literature and recreational reading also support both the PYP Approaches to Learning and ACARA General Capabilities and Cross-curriculum Priorities, encouraging students to think critically and creatively and to view learning as an active, dynamic process.
- The Your Next Read series aims to nurture the joy of reading, with educators playing a key role in the development of the knowledge and skills needed to access text.

These teaching notes aim to:

- Connect *Bea, Bart and the Birds* to curriculum for meaningful classroom use and real-world connection.
- Prompt student inquiry, discussion, and creative response.
- Foster independent, confident readers who read for purpose and pleasure.

By linking stories to meaningful learning experiences, these notes encourage students to inquire, reflect, and create, building a bridge between reading in school and choosing to read beyond it.

Synopsis

Bea and Bart have a pet owl called Boo, who enjoys scaring people. They soon adopt a whole load of cheeky birds: Polly the parrot, Doornail the peacock, Squish the fairy-wren, Rosy the crow and Crumbs the sparrow. Each bird has its own special talent, and together they cause lots of chaos. One day, the children take the birds out in their walkies wagon at the park, where Bea meets a tall woman. Then the children and the birds are kidnapped! The birds escape their cage, and hearing all the noise, Nanny finds them and brings everyone safely home. Bea and Bart celebrate the clever birds with a family dinner – and wonder about who else might join the flock...

From the Author

One day, when put on hold during a telephone call, I doodled a picture on a tiny scrap of paper of two children surrounded by some silly-looking birds. I gave them each a name and, just like that, they came alive and demanded to be written into a story!

From the Artist

This is the eleventh book I've illustrated with Katrina Nannestad, so I think we have some bookish secret language. She's the funniest writer I've worked with, and I love leaning into that. This book is the first I've illustrated entirely with Photoshop – I'm hoping it still has the same quality as my pencil drawings. I've used a variety of brushes / pencils so that the digital drifts away – 2B, hard pencil, crayon, watercolour, gritty – I'm pretty much learning on the job!

Themes

Family: siblings working together, caring for others, navigating family rules and expectations.

Kindness and compassion: noticing creatures in need and acting to help them.

Community: how animals, children and adults share space and affect one another within a household.

Problem-solving: being resourceful, creative and persistent when challenges arise.

Courage: staying calm and thinking clearly in surprising or even scary situations.

Concepts

Responsibility: caring for animals, learning about safety and understanding the consequences of choices.

Perspective: seeing situations from different viewpoints – parents, Nanny, birds, siblings.

Change: unexpected events, new arrivals, shifting routines, growing confidence.

Identity: noticing the different roles children can take on (helper, carer, problem-solver, brave kid).

Ethics: understanding right and wrong, fairness, kindness towards animals.



Getting to Know the Book (dialogic questions)

Pre-reading

- Point to the parts of the book when I call them out: spine, front cover, back cover, blurb, title, series icons.
- Can you find the author's name on the cover? The illustrator's name?
- What does the title tell you about this book? Who might Bea and Bart be?
- What clues does the cover illustration give you about the setting?
- Where do you think the birds might end up in the house? What makes you think that?
- Read the blurb. What do you now know about the story?
- This book is part of a series: Your Next Read. What does it mean when a book is part of a series?
- What might the series title, Your Next Read, refer to?
- What do the icons on the cover refer to? Which one do you connect with most and why?

Pre-reading Sentence Starts (make predictions)

- I think Bea and Bart will ...
- The birds might ...
- This story could be about ...

Post-reading

- Why do you think Bea and Bart keep helping every bird they find?
- Which bird caused the most chaos? Why?
- How did Bea and Bart stay calm during the kidnapping?
- What did the birds do to help the children?
- How do you think Mummy and Daddy felt about all the birds by the end of the story? What evidence in the text shows this?

- What might happen next at Plum House?
- Who would you recommend this book to, and what would you suggest as their 'next read'?

English Year 1: AC9E1LY05, AC9E1LE01

English Year 2: AC9E2LY05, AC9E2LE02,
AC9E2LE01

Vocabulary Words

These words from *Bea, Bart and the Birds* can be used for word walls, oral language discussions, writing prompts, or vocabulary notebooks. They help students deepen comprehension and transfer new vocabulary into their own reading and writing.

- Frighten (p.8)
- Perched (p.8 & p.14)
- Flutter (p.7)
- Frazzled (p.9)
- Scattered (p.9)
- Snore (p.53)
- Kidnapped (p.55, p.57, p.78)
- Racket (p.75)
- Celebrate (p.85)



Bea, Bart and the Birds

Curriculum Connections

ACARA Australian Curriculum Version 9

Learning Areas:

English – Literacy; Literature; Language

Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) – Geography

Health & Physical Education (HPE) – Personal, Social and Community Health

Science – Biological Sciences

General Capabilities:

- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Personal and Social Capability
- Ethical Understanding
- Literacy

Cross-Curriculum Priorities:

- Sustainability

Content Descriptors:

Bea, Bart and the Birds sits most strongly with

English (Year 1/Year 2), **Geography** (Year 1), **Health & Physical Education** (Years 1-2) and **Science** (Year 1) in ACARA V9.

English Year 1: AC9E1LA01, AC9E1LA02, AC9E1LE01, AC9E1LE02, AC9E1LE03, AC9E1LY01, AC9E1LY03, AC9E1LY05, AC9E1LY06

English Year 2: AC9E2LA01, AC9E2LA02, AC9E2LE01, AC9E2LE02, AC9E2LE03, AC9E2LE05, AC9E2LY01, AC9E2LY02, AC9E2LY05

HASS Geography Year 1: AC9HS1K03, AC9HS1S05

HPE (Years 1-2): AC9HP2P01, AC9HP2P02, AC9HP2P03

Science (Biological Sciences) Year 1: AC9S1U01, AC9S1U02

International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP)

Transdisciplinary Theme: *Who we are* (exploring

relationships, responsibility, community and empathy)

Key Concepts:

- Connection (relationships between people and animals)
- Responsibility (caring actions, learning about safe choices)
- Perspective (understanding viewpoints in tricky situations)
- Causation (actions have consequences)
- Reflection (considering choices, behaviour and outcomes)

Related Concepts:

- Empathy
- Community
- Identity
- Change

Student Agency/Action:

- Making choices
- Taking action to help others
- Responding creatively and responsibly to challenges

Approaches to Learning (ATL) Skills:

- Social Skills (collaboration, helping others)
- Communication Skills (expressing ideas and responding to others through discussion)
- Thinking Skills (problem-solving, predicting, creative responses)
- Self-management Skills (managing emotions, staying calm)

Learner Profile Attributes:

- Caring (helping animals and each other)
- Balanced (exploring the tension between fun, safety and responsibility)
- Reflective (considering rules, choices, and safety)
- Risk-taker (approaching unfamiliar situations with bravery)

YOUR
NEXT
READ

Mapping Plum House and the Park

Learning Area: HASS Geography Year 1

Content Descriptors:

AC9HS1K03 – the natural, managed and constructed features of local places, and their location.

AC9HS1S05 – draw conclusions and make proposals.

Students label a map of Plum House and the surrounding park, locating key story features such as:

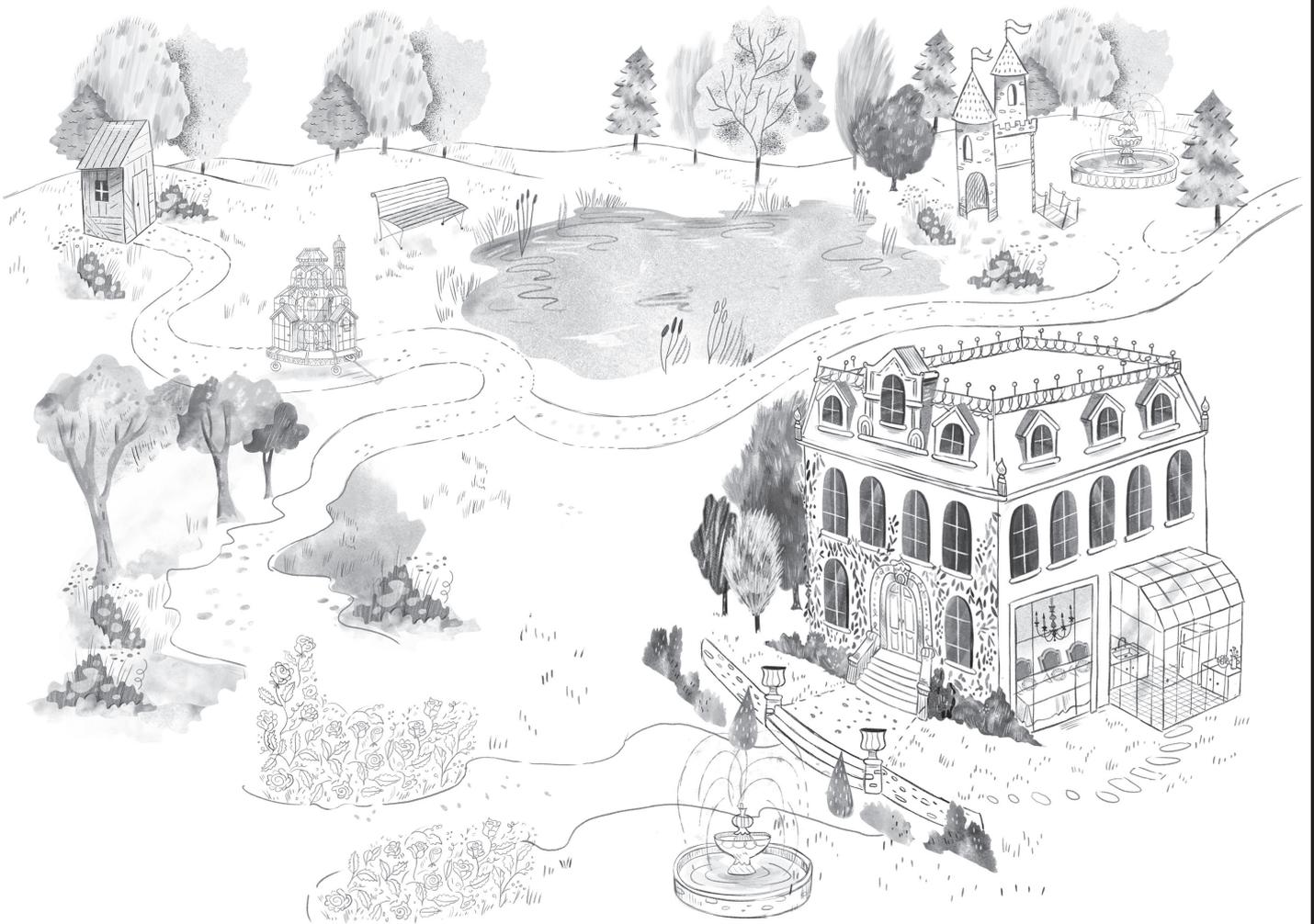
- Rose garden
- Kitchen
- Dining room
- Walkies wagon (movable feature)
- Park bench
- Fountain
- Tool shed
- Bird hiding places (curtains, shadows, corners)

Teachers can provide a birds-eye view map for students to label. The map does not need to be to scale; it represents story locations. Students may include additional park features mentioned or implied in the text.

Students use different colours to identify:

- Natural features (trees, lake, garden)
- Managed features (park paths, fountain, lawn)
- Constructed features (Plum House, shed, wagon, road)

Mapping Plum House and the Park



**YOUR
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READ**

Roles Under Pressure

Learning Area: HPE (Personal, Social and Community Health)

Content Descriptors:

AC9HP2P01 – describe their personal qualities and those of others and explain how they contribute to developing identities.

AC9HP2P02 – identify and explore skills and strategies to develop respectful relationships.

AC9HP2P03 – identify how different situations influence emotional responses.

In this story, everyone responds differently when things get busy or overwhelming. Some characters take on caring roles, some organise, and some create disruption – sometimes by accident, sometimes to help.

Revisit scenes featuring Bea and Bart. Ask:

- What job does Bea take on when the birds arrive?
- What job does Bart take on when things start to get chaotic?
- How do their roles help (or sometimes complicate) the situation?

Prompt students:

When things get noisy, busy or unexpected, do you:

- help others?
- try to organise?
- feel overwhelmed?
- get silly or energetic?

Sentence stems:

- When things feel chaotic, I am more like Bea/ Bart/a bird/another character because ...
- One thing I would do differently next time is ...

Students then role-play situations such as:

- Helping an injured animal
- Staying calm during a problem
- Asking for help from a grown-up
- Working as a team to fix a tricky situation

Make sure the role-play includes respectful communication, tone of voice, and helpful choices.

Journey of the Story

Learning Area: English – Language and Literature

Content Descriptors:

AC9E1LE02 – discuss literary texts and share responses by making connections with students' own experiences.

AC9E1LE03 – discuss plot, character and setting, which are features of stories.

AC9E1LY03 – describe some similarities and differences between imaginative, informative and persuasive texts.

AC9E1LY06 – create and re-read to edit short written and/or multimodal texts to report on a topic, express an opinion or recount a real or imagined event, using grammatically correct simple sentences, some topic-specific vocabulary, sentence boundary punctuation and correct spelling of some one- and two-syllable words.

AC9E2LE02 – identify features of literary texts, such as characters and settings, and give reasons for personal preferences.

AC9E2LE03 – discuss the characters and settings of a range of texts and identify how language is used to present these features in different ways.

AC9E2LY02 – use interaction skills when engaging with topics, actively listening to others, receiving instructions and extending own ideas, speaking appropriately, expressing and responding to opinions, making statements, and giving instructions.

AC9E2LY06 – create and edit short imaginative, informative and persuasive written and/or multimodal texts for familiar audiences, using text structure appropriate to purpose, simple and compound sentences, noun groups and verb groups, topic-specific vocabulary, simple punctuation and common 2-syllable words.

Students create a visual timeline showing:

1. How Bea and Bart found Boo
2. How each new bird joined the household
3. Key chaotic events (Polly's rhyming, Rosy's stealing, Doornail's 'deaths')
4. The turning point where everything became 'too much'
5. The kidnapping
6. The rescue
7. The celebration dinner

Students can draw, collage, or use digital tools.

Learning intentions:

- Identify main events in a narrative.
- Order events chronologically.
- Retell a story using words, images, and sequencing language.

Bird Habitats & Home Design

Learning Area: Science – Biological Sciences
(Living Things)

Content Descriptors:

AC9SIU01 – identify the basic needs of plants and animals, including air, water, food or shelter, and describe how the places they live meet those needs.

AC9SIU02 – describe daily and seasonal changes in the environment and explore how these changes affect everyday life.

Students explore the different habitats and living spaces of the birds in the story, then create their own 'ideal bird home'.

Revisit the text and illustrations to identify where each bird lives or hides.

Ask students:

- Why does each bird like that space?
- What features make it safe, comfortable, or fun?
- Which need is this meeting: shelter/safety/food/water/air?

Students then design their own safe, stimulating space for a bird, using materials such as paper, cardboard, or digital tools. They should include:

- Sleeping or resting areas
- Hiding spots
- Play areas
- Access to food or water

Students present their designs to the class, explaining:

- Why they chose each feature
- How it keeps the bird safe and happy
- How it might encourage the bird to explore or play

Students can also discuss the following question:
How might your bird home change on a hot day/rainy day/winter day? (Shade, water source, wind protection, nesting materials.)

Encourage creativity while linking choices to the bird behaviours observed in the story. Prompt students to consider natural and safe materials.

Learning Intentions:

- Observe and describe the needs of living things.
- Connect features of habitats to behaviours of animals.
- Design a safe and stimulating environment for a living creature.

Bringing the Birds to Life

Learning Area:

- Identify and use descriptive language to bring characters to life.
- Write creatively from a character's perspective.
- Share ideas and respond to others' creative writing.

Learning Area: English – Language and Literature

Content Descriptors:

AC9E1LA01 – understand how language, facial expressions and gestures are used to interact with others when asking for and providing information, making offers, exclaiming, requesting and giving commands.

AC9E1LA02 – explore language to provide reasons for likes, dislikes and preferences.

AC9E1LE02 – discuss literary texts and share responses by making connections with students' own experiences.

AC9E1LE03 – discuss plot, character and setting, which are features of stories.

AC9E1LY01 – discuss different texts and identify some features that indicate their purposes.

AC9E1LY03 – describe some similarities and differences between imaginative, informative and persuasive texts.

AC9E2LA01 – investigate how interpersonal language choices vary depending on the context, including the different roles taken on in interactions.

AC9E2LA02 – explore how language can be used for appreciating texts and providing reasons for preferences.

AC9E2LE03 – discuss the characters and settings of a range of texts and identify how language is used to present these features in different ways.

AC9E2LE05 – create and edit literary texts by adapting structures and language features of familiar literary texts through drawing, writing, performance and digital tools.

AC9E2LY01 – identify how similar topics and information are presented in different types of texts.

AC9E2LY02 – use interaction skills when engaging with topics, actively listening to others, receiving instructions and extending own ideas, speaking appropriately, expressing and responding to opinions, making statements, and giving instructions.

Revisit scenes featuring the birds (Boo, Rosy, Crumbs, Squish, Polly, Doornail). Ask students to notice:

- How the author describes their appearance (colours, size, feathers)
- How their actions show personality
- Sounds they make (chirping, squawking, rhyming)

Students choose a bird and create a profile that includes:

- Name of the bird
- Physical description
- Personality traits
- Favourite things to do
- Sounds or voice (using onomatopoeia or rhyming words if they like)

Students can share their bird profiles in small groups or as a class.

Extension ideas:

- Write a short diary entry from the bird's perspective
- Create a mini story showing the bird in a new adventure
- Illustrate their bird to accompany their writing

Model descriptive words and phrases from the text. Encourage use of adjectives, adverbs, similes, and expressive language to make the writing vivid.



Educator Bookmark

Note to educators: this bookmark is designed to be used as a quick prompt card for you or an adult helper. Consider it a summary of much of the content of these teaching notes to have beside you while reading.

This educator bookmark could also be sent home with a copy of *Bea, Bart and the Birds* as a homework task and as a guide to parents/caregivers as to how to extend the book reading experience.

Before Reading

1. Character feelings prediction: How do you think Bea and Bart might feel about having birds in their house? Excited, worried, proud, annoyed? Why?
2. Problem-prediction prompt: Stories often have a problem. What kind of problem do you think might happen in this story?
3. Bird behaviour: What are some things real birds do (chirp, peck, fly, steal shiny things)? How might those behaviours cause trouble in a house?
4. Value/theme prediction: What do you think this story might teach us about family, helping others, or responsibility?
5. Personal connection: Have you ever looked after an animal or pet? What was fun about it? What was hard?

After Reading

1. Why do you think Bea and Bart kept helping every new bird, even when it made life more chaotic? What does this tell us about their characters?
2. How did the different birds each cause trouble (but also help) in the story? Can you give an example of both?
3. When Bea and Bart were kidnapped, what feelings do you think they had at different times in that scene? What clues from the words or pictures helped you know?
4. What did the adults (Mummy, Daddy, Nanny, James) learn about the birds by the end of the story? How is this different from how they felt at the beginning?
5. This story mixes danger, chaos and kindness. What do you think the story is really about? Helping others? Family? Being brave? Something else?

YOUR
NEXT
READ

Student Bookmark

Note to educators: this bookmark is designed to be photocopied (2 to an A4 page) and placed inside the front cover of *Bea, Bart and the Birds* for independent use by a student or reading group.

If you have class sets or multiple copies of *Bea, Bart and the Birds*, a laminated bookmark could be added to each copy for use in small group sessions. Laminated bookmarks can be sent home with a copy of *Bea, Bart and the Birds*.



Keep this card alongside you as you read

Bea, Bart and the Birds

Before You Start

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