

# Your Next Read

## Teaching Notes



### The Missing Pencil Case

Written by Jasmin McGaughey

Art by Jade Goodwin



Teaching notes by Mel Kroeger

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* teachers' 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, allowing them 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 *The Missing Pencil Case* 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.

## Synopsis

Lea has lost her pencil case containing the money she's raised for her Year Two classroom fundraiser. She's afraid to tell her mum. Instead, she tells her cousin Jaya, and they search the shed together. They don't find it. Next, Lea checks if her cousin Noah has seen it. He hasn't, but he realises he has forgotten to sell his own chocolates. Finally, Lea decides to check her school bag – where she finds her pencil case! She tells her mum the truth. Lea can't wait show her friends and teacher all the money she's raised!

## From the Author

My idea behind *The Missing Pencil Case* was to create adventure that needed problem solving with young characters who worked together. I loved the idea of depicting a character whose family was large and vital to her everyday activities. I've lived in apartment complexes where other family members also lived, and I have such good memories of these times – but I also know living with grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles as if they are immediate family isn't always depicted in books for young readers.

## From the Artist

For this book, I began by sketching ideas in pencil and exploring each character before bringing everything to life digitally in Procreate. I loved finding small moments of warmth and humour within the story, especially through the characters' expressions and body language. Lea reminds me a little of myself as a kid, always losing something important for school and spending time with cousins, so illustrating her came really naturally!

I also adore how the family all live so close together. It reminded me again of my own upbringing and being surrounded by cousins and grandparents. I tried to capture that same sense of closeness and love in every page, with details that feel joyful and familiar.



## Themes

**Belonging:** Lea is safe, supported and accepted, even when mistakes are made.

**Friendship:** kindness, cooperation and standing by one another during challenging moments (friends help us solve problems and feel less alone).

**Family:** families come in many forms and can offer care, guidance and reassurance.

**Community:** the apartment building setting highlights community as a network of people who work together, support one another and share responsibility for helping others.

## Concepts

**Responsibility:** taking responsibility for actions, belongings and shared commitments (losing the pencil case, fundraiser money, making things right).

**Honesty:** Telling the truth even when it feels difficult and understanding how honesty builds trust within families and friendships.

**Connection:** relationships within families, friendships and communities support individuals in challenging situations.

**Community:** building something together that matters to everyone (a friendship and/or a physical item).

**Perspective:** recognising and understanding different feelings and viewpoints (fear, worry, disappointment, care).

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# Getting to Know the Book (dialogic questions)

## Pre-reading

- Look at the illustration on the front cover and predict what the characters are doing and where they might be.
- What do you think might be in the pencil case that is important?
- Predict what might happen in the story.
- Read the blurb and make further predictions about what might happen.

## Post-reading

- At first Lea didn't want to tell her mum that she had lost her pencil case with the fundraiser money in it. Why do you think she didn't want to? Do you think the outcome may have been different if she had told her mum first? How so? Discuss.
- Can you list all the characters from the story and what apartments they live in? Map out the building with who lives where.
- When do Lea and her cousins all get together and what do they do? Do you do something like this with family or friends? If not, what would you like to do?
- Where did Lea find her pencil case? What else did she find there?

## Vocabulary Words

Pulling out rich vocabulary from *The Missing Pencil Case* gives students the opportunity to notice, discuss, and use new words in meaningful contexts. The following words from *The Missing Pencil Case* can be used for word walls, oral language discussions, writing prompts, or vocabulary notebooks, helping children deepen comprehension and transfer new vocabulary into their own speaking and writing.

- Fundraiser (p.4)
- Donation (p.10)
- Dim (p.19)
- Scuttles (p.21)
- Tarp (p.24)
- Squelch (p.37)
- Gigantic (p.77)



# The Missing Pencil Case Curriculum Connections

## ACARA Australian Curriculum Version 9

### Learning Areas:

English (Literature, Language)

### General Capabilities:

- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Personal and Social Capability
- Literacy, Numeracy

### Content Descriptors:

*The Missing Pencil Case* sits most strongly with **English** (Year 1/Year 2), **Health and Physical Education** (Year 1/Year 2), **HASS** (Year 1), **Mathematics** (Year 2)

**English Year 1:** AC9E1LA01

**English Year 2:** AC9E2LY06

**Health and Physical Education Years 1 and 2:** AC9HP2P05

**HASS Year 1:** AC9HS1K01

**Mathematics Year 2:** AC9M2N06

## International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP)

**Transdisciplinary Theme:** *Who we are* (relationships, emotions, choices and the ways we interact with others, including honesty, trust, family connections and working together)

### Key Concepts:

- Responsibility (for actions, money and decisions – Lea losing the pencil case and fundraiser money)
- Connection (family relationships, friendships and community support)
- Perspective (how others may feel in difficult situations)
- Reflection (how choices and decisions might lead to different outcomes)

### Approaches to Learning (ATL) Skills:

- Social Skills (cooperating with others, working together, showing respect and care for family members and friends)
- Communication Skills (expressing feelings, telling the truth, asking for help, listening to others)
- Self-management Skills (recognising emotions, managing fear and anxiety, using strategies such as deep breathing to stay calm)
- Thinking Skills (problem-solving, predicting outcomes, reflecting on decisions and consequences)

### Learner Profile Attributes:

- Caring (showing concern for others, family and the wider community)
- Communicator (expressing ideas, feelings and concerns honestly and respectfully)
- Thinker (making decisions, solving problems and reflecting on actions)
- Brave/Risk-taker (facing fears, entering the shed and telling the truth even when it feels difficult)



# Trusting Emotions

**Learning Area:** Health and Physical Education Years 1 and 2; English Year 1

**Content Descriptors:**

AC9HP2P05 – Identify and demonstrate protective behaviours and help-seeking strategies they can use to help them and others stay safe.

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.

Your body can react differently in a range of situations that can be safe or unsafe.

Turn to a partner and make a face that Lea and Jaya made when entering the spooky shed.

What words could you use to describe this face and how they felt?

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Words that describe how Lea and Jaya felt when entering the spooky shed:

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Draw Lea or Jaya's face below.



When Lea and Jaya were in the shed, they came across a grey and green toad!

Turn to a partner and make a face that Lea and Jaya might have made when they came across the toad.

What words would you describe this face and how they felt?

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Describe their face and their emotions (what they would have felt) at that time.

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Draw Lea's face below.



## Trusting Emotions

What other dangers might have been in the shed?

Do you think that Lea and Jaya should have asked an adult to come with them into the shed? Why/why not?

At first, Lea didn't want to tell her mum that she had lost the money. List some things you would do in this situation.

List people you trust to ask if you needed help. Why would you choose these people?

Your body can sometimes tell you that you are in danger. How clever is that? Have you ever been in a situation where your body felt strange? Your body was warning you that something was not right. Sometimes you may get goosebumps or a prickly feeling if a stranger talks to you or if you see something not very nice.

What was the situation and what did your body feel like? Discuss.

In the story, Lea did some deep breathing when she was feeling panicked (p.13). Have you tried different types of breathing to help you feel calm?

**Square breathing** – breathe in for four counts and draw the first straight line of an imaginary square in the air, then breathe out for four counts and draw the next line of the square. Repeat until you complete your imaginary drawing of the square. How does this make you feel?

**Finger breathing** – spread your fingers of one hand out in front of you. With your other hand, use your pointer finger to slowly trace around your hand in front of you. As you slowly trace up one finger, breathe in, then slowly trace down that finger and breathe out. Repeat with all five fingers. How does this make you feel?

Do you know any other types of breathing that help you in different situations? Discuss with your classmates and try different ones.



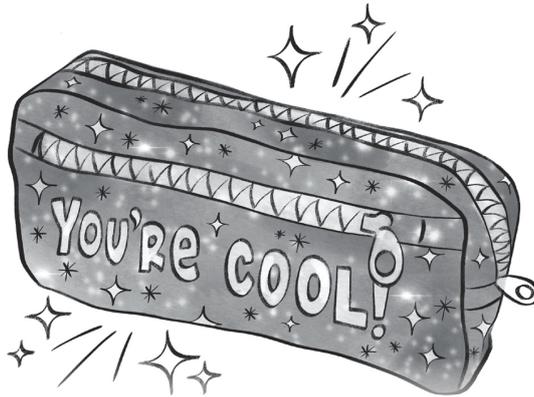




# Educator Bookmark

**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 *The Missing Pencil Case* as a homework task and as a guide to parents/caregivers as to how to extend the book reading experience.



## Before 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?
- What do the icons on the cover mean? Can you find this information on the book?
- What clues does the cover illustration give you about how the main character might be feeling?
- Read the blurb – what do you now know about the story? Predict what the story might be about.

## After Reading

- **Page 8:** Look at the illustration. What can you tell about the people that live in each apartment from the image?
- **Page 13:** Lea did some deep breathing when she was feeling panicked. Have you tried different types of breathing to help you feel calm?
- **Page 31:** Aka's cats are called Milo and Bushells. What about these names matches? (Answer: both drinks)
- **Page 70-71:** Look at the illustration. What emotion is Lea feeling? What clues are there in the illustration?

**Do you have a special spot in your house where you put your school bag or your homework so it doesn't go missing?**

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# Student Bookmark

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

If you have class sets or multiple copies of *The Missing Pencil Case*, 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 *The Missing Pencil Case*.



Keep this card alongside you as you read

## ***THE MISSING PENCIL CASE***

### **Before You Start**

- Read the title and scan the front cover of this book for clues about the story. What do you notice?
- Turn the book over. Read the blurb and scan the back cover of this book for clues about the story. What do you notice?
- Read the first page of *The Missing Pencil Case*. Are there words that do not make sense? Do you need to re-read the page?
- As you read, look out for the following toys in the illustrations: blocks, dinosaur, cat, balls, bears, doll, car, game controller.
- As you read, look for words you do not already know and note them down.

### **After Reading**

- Scan the text. Write a list of interesting words.
- Scan the text. Write a list of describing words (adjectives).
- Scan the images. Count how many stars appear in the book.

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