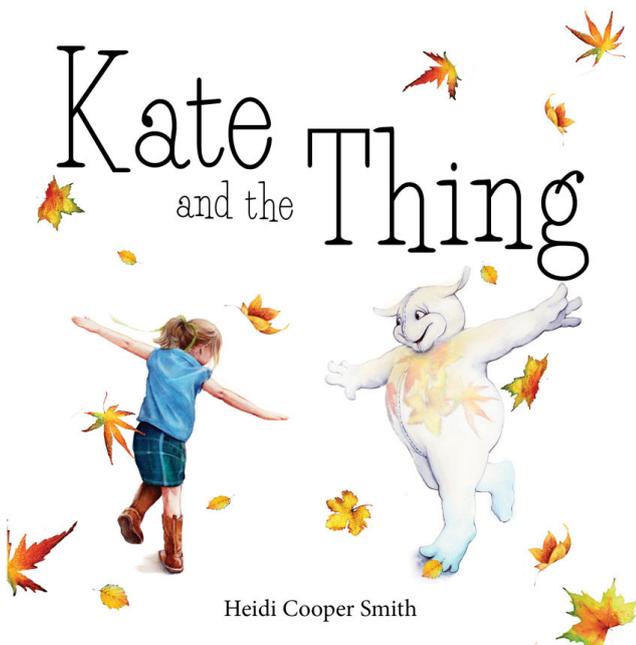


**Wombat Books**  
Stories you'll want to share

## Teachers' Notes



Heidi Cooper Smith

### Kate and the Thing

Heidi Cooper Smith

ISBN: 978-1925563290

Recommended retail: \$24.99

Reading level: Ages 0-7 Picture Book

### Book Summary

Moving to a new place, or starting a new school, can be overwhelming — more than anything you need a friend.

Luckily for Kate, she has the Thing. *Kate and the Thing* is a story of courage and kindness, and the need to belong.

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### Reasons For Studying This Book

*Kate and the Thing* can be used for kids starting at a new school or moving to a new place. It teaches children not to feel alone and to have the self-courage to make friends. This is an excellent teaching resource to discuss themes such as belonging, being new and courage.

### Themes

#### Starting School /Being New

Kate is starting at a new school, where she feels alone and awkward.

#### Making Friends

At first, Kate only has the Thing as her friend. However, she soon gains the courage and starts making friends with the other students.

#### Self-Courage

Over time, Kate depends on the Thing less and less. She finds the courage to play and talk with the other school children, until one day, she is no longer 'new'.

#### The Need to Belong

Kate feels like she doesn't belong at first as she's the 'new kid'.

## Author and Illustrator Bio

### About the Author/Illustrator



At an early age Heidi knew she wanted to write and illustrate picture books. But during a Visual Arts degree, she fell in love with Ceramics and spent the next 20 years covered in clay. Heidi rediscovered her passion for drawing in 2014 when she joined the online '52-week illustration challenge'.

Six months later she was offered her first illustration contract with Koala Books for *Two Birds on a Wire* (by Coral Vass). This wonderful experience inspired her to start writing, and in 2015 and 2016 she won the CYA illustrated manuscript competition (aspiring). *Kate and the Thing* is Heidi's first book as both author and illustrator.

## Author/Illustrator Interview

### 1. What is the Thing?

The Thing hovers between our reality and imagination. He's a blank canvas, a big comforting pillow and a shield from the unknown but, above all, the Thing is a friend who shows up in your time of need.

### 2. Do you wish you had the Thing when you started school?

I think the worst thing about being new, in any situation, is the self-consciousness you experience being alone and that feeling everyone is somehow judging you for it. The Thing is big and protective, but gentle and soft – so yes, I would have liked the Thing to have shown up to lend me courage when I started school.

### 3. What does the Thing get up to when no one is looking?

The Thing is always present and watching protectively for as long as you need him to be. When he isn't in your thoughts, he's on the lookout for a new friend who might be desperate for company and reassurance. He has been known to wake for sneaky midnight feasts of cupcakes with whipped cream.

### 4. Can you remember your first day at school?

I remember my first day at preschool above any other – we were joined with a Year One class and told we had to play silently at the front of the classroom so as not to disturb the big kids, which on reflection seems very strange. I felt like they were all looking at me – it was terrifying!



## Key Curriculum Areas:

### CURRICULUM AREAS AND KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

#### Foundation (Kindergarten/Prep)

##### English

ACELT1575	ACELA1429	ACELA1434	ACELY1653
ACELT1577	ACELA1430	ACELA1786	
ACELT1783	ACELA1432	ACELY1651	
ACELT1578	ACELA1435	ACELY1652	

#### Year One

##### English

ACELA1444	ACELA1451	ACELT1582	ACELY1656
ACELA1787	ACELA1452	ACELT1584	ACELY1788
ACELA1447	ACELA1458	ACELT1586	ACELY1660
ACELA1449	ACELT1581	ACELT1832	

#### Year Two

##### English

ACELA1461	ACELT1833
ACELA1462	ACELY1665
ACELA1463	
ACELT1591	

## Questions and Reflections

Have the teacher read the book out in class, making sure everyone can see the illustrations. Alternatively, students can take turns at reading each page aloud.

### Speaking and Listening

1. Can you remember your first day at school? How did you feel?
2. Do you wish you had the Thing when you started school?
3. How does the Thing make Kate feel?
4. Who do you think will help you settle in to school?
5. Why do you think Kate depends on the Thing less and less?
6. What should you do if you feel sad and alone at school?
7. What special thing does Kate do when a new boy comes to her school? What makes it special?
8. What should you do when other new kids come to the school?

### Writing

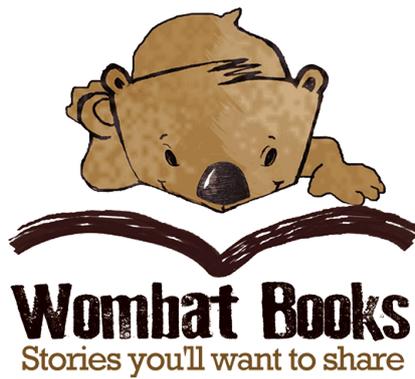
9. Write a recount of your first day of school. Now imagine if you had had the Thing with you. Rewrite that recount with the Thing.
10. Write a letter to a new student. Tell them what they should expect on their first day at school.

## Classroom Activities

### Make Your Own Thing

The Thing is a big blank canvas for us to fill with our emotions and experiences. Use the below template to fill in your own Thing.





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