



# TEACHERS' RESOURCES

## RECOMMENDED FOR

Lower and middle primary  
(ages 6–8; years 1 to 3)

## CONTENTS

1. Plot summary	1
2. About the author	2
3. About the illustrator	2
4. Pre-reading questions	2
5. Writing style/Structure	2
6. Key study topics	2-3
7. Key quotes	3
8. Illustrations	3
9. Fun facts page	3
10. Further reading	4
11. Order form	5

## KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English
- **General capabilities:** Literacy, personal and social capability, critical and creative thinking,

## REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Develop independent reading
- Help foster understanding and empathy
- Encourage discussion around family and belonging

## THEMES

- Family
- Home/belonging
- Bravery

## PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia

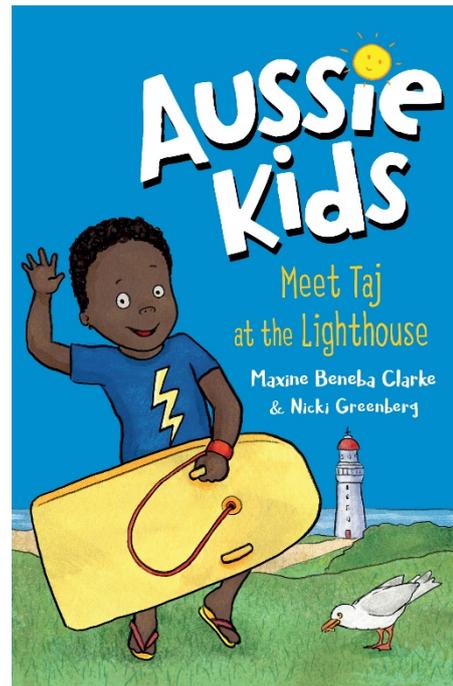
## PUBLICATION DETAILS

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## Aussie Kids: Meet Taj at the Lighthouse

Maxine Beneba Clarke and Nicki Greenberg

## PLOT SUMMARY

*Hi! I'm Taj.*

*This is my favourite T-shirt.*

*I brought it to Australia from my old home.*

*My family came here after a long journey.*

*It was hard at first, but now I love my new home!*

Aussie Kids is an exciting new series for emerging readers 6-8 years.

From a NSW Zoo to a Victorian lighthouse, or an outback sheep farm in WA to a beach in QLD, this junior fiction series celebrates stories about children living in unique places in every state and territory in Australia.

8 characters, 8 stories, 8 authors and illustrators from all 8 states and territories!

Come on an adventure with Aussie Kids and meet Taj from Victoria.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maxine Beneba Clarke is the author of 9 books, including the Indie and ABIA award-winning short fiction collection *Foreign Soil*, the memoir *The Hate Race*, the Boston Globe/Horn Prize and CBCA winning picture book *The Patchwork Bike*, and the recently released picture book *Fashionista*. She lives in Melbourne's glorious, diverse western suburbs, and has met many kids like Taj in her neighbourhood, who've journeyed to Australia in search of safe haven. Some struggle to fit in, but just like Taj, most eventually find their light.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Nicki Greenberg is a writer and illustrator based in Melbourne, Australia. Her first books, The Digits series, were published when she was fifteen years old. She later spent ten years disguised as a lawyer, while maintaining a not-so-secret Other Life as a comics artist and children's book author. In 2008, Nicki's innovative graphic adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* was selected as a White Raven at the Bologna Book Fair. She then went on to tackle *Hamlet* in a lavish 425-page 'staging on the page'. *Hamlet* was joint winner of the 2011 Children's Book Council of Australia Picture Book of the Year award. Nicki now dedicates most of her ink to books for younger readers and has written and illustrated many exuberant picture books. Her favourite activity is making books, but when she does manage to tear herself away from the desk Nicki loves to rollerskate and crochet bizarre sea creatures. Nicki is a frequent presenter at schools, festivals and conferences, where her speaking style is described as passionate, engaging and full of energy.

## PRE-READING QUESTIONS

### Questions

1. Have a look at the front cover. What do you think the story is going to be about?
2. Look at the illustrations of Taj on the front and back cover – how do you think he is feeling?
3. Look at the map on the back cover. What does it tell you about the story and its location?

### Activities

- What is Taj holding on the front cover? What are some other things you might take to the beach?
- Tell us about a time when you and your family went to the beach? (Or had a picnic next to a creek or river.) What games did you play?

## WRITING STYLE/STRUCTURE

### Questions

1. This book is broken up into chapters – how many are there?
2. Taj calls his mother and father 'Mama' and 'Dadda'. What do you call your parents or guardians?
3. Taj loves his T-shirt – it gives him confidence and makes him feel good. Do you have an article of clothing or a toy that makes you feel the same way?
4. Stories have a beginning and middle and an end. A problem is usually introduced for the main character at the start of the story. What do you think the main problem for Taj and his family is? When does it get resolved?

### Activities

- How do you think the story would be different if Taj and his family stayed in the first city they lived in when they came to Australia? Write a new version of chapter four – what would change for Taj? What would stay the same?
- Taj lived near the sea in both his home overseas and in Australia. List some of the words the author uses to describe living near the ocean.

## KEY STUDY TOPICS

### Family

#### Questions

1. Taj and his family have been on a long journey. The story says that 'things turned bad in the country where we lived.' Do you know anyone who has had to change where they lived?
2. Taj went from having a very big family to a very small one – how big is your family? Do they all live in the one town or city? Or are they in a few different places?

#### Activities

- Draw a family tree – include the people who live in your home. Then, if you have room, add your grandparent, cousins, aunts and uncles. You could also add your friends!
- Draw your own map of Australia using the one at the front of the book. Mark on the map where you live. Then mark where the rest of your family lives. Write down how many different states of Australia your family lives in. (Or even different countries if some of them live overseas!)



## Home/belonging

### Questions

1. Taj and his family find it hard to settle in to their new home because so many things are different. Have you ever felt unsure or like you didn't belong? What helped you overcome these feelings?
2. Are there kids from different countries in your class? How many different countries do you have represented in your classroom?

### Activities

- In a group, pretend you have just started at a new school. Act out what your first morning at the new school might be like.
- Write a list of all the things that make you feel at home or like you belong. It might include things like your mum and dad, your siblings or a special toy or piece of music.

## Bravery

### Questions

1. Taj has to be very brave throughout the whole story, but can you remember a place where you thought he was particularly strong? Can you remember times when you've had to be strong or when you've helped one of your friends get through a hard time?

### Activities

- Can you find an example in the story where Taj is very brave?

## KEY QUOTES

1. *'You'll want to wear it again one day,' she said. 'Things will come good, Taj. Believe.'* (p. 21)  
Why do you think Taj wanted to hide his T-shirt?  
How do you think he was feeling on that day?
2. *'If you like, you can call me Taj Lightning. My dad calls me that, and it's an even better name now because of our lighthouse.'* (p. 40)  
Do you have a nickname or a special name only some people call you? Why do you think Taj feels his nickname is even better because they live in a lighthouse?

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Nicki Greenberg has created the illustrations for *Meet Taj at the Lighthouse*.

1. How do you think the illustrations add to the story?

2. Do you think you'd be able to relate to Taj in the same way if there were no illustrations in the story?
3. Look at the way the illustrator has used only used the colour blue in the pictures. Do you think this is effective? Why?
4. Turn to the illustration on page 23. There are many kids represented in the drawing. Make a list of the different emotions each kid appears to be feeling.

## FUN FACTS PAGE

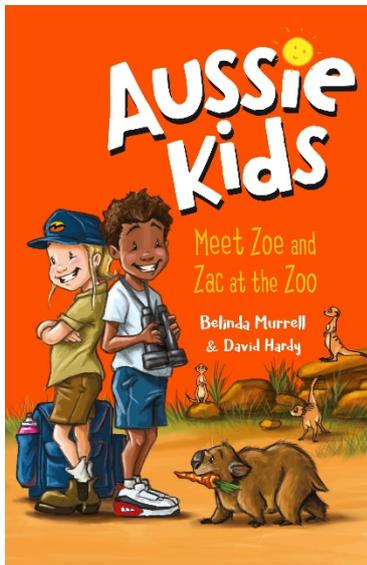
At the back of the book there is a section called 'Fun Facts about Lighthouses'. Had you heard about lighthouses or seen a lighthouse before reading this story?

### Activities

- Draw a cross-section of a lighthouse. Show the stairs going up, the different levels and the lantern room at the very top.
- Pretend you live in times when people still lived and worked in lighthouses. Write a short story about living in a lighthouse. Perhaps you could include a storm or a shipwreck to give your story tension and action?



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



*Aussie Kids: Meet Zoe and Zac at the Zoo*  
by Belinda Murrell and David Hardy

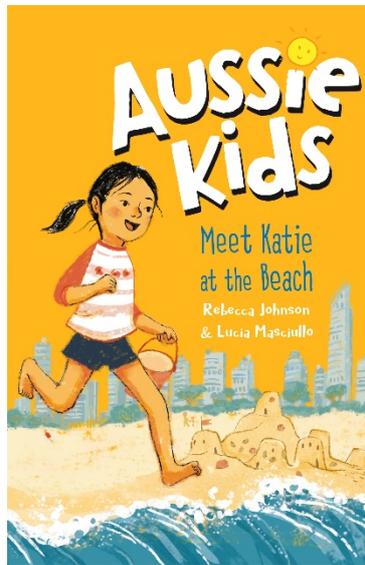
*Hi! I'm Zoe and this is Zac.*

*We're so lucky we live at the zoo!  
As a birthday treat, we're helping out with the animals.*

*We can't wait!*

*Come on an adventure with Aussie Kids and meet Zoe and Zac from New South Wales.*

*Teachers' resources available.*



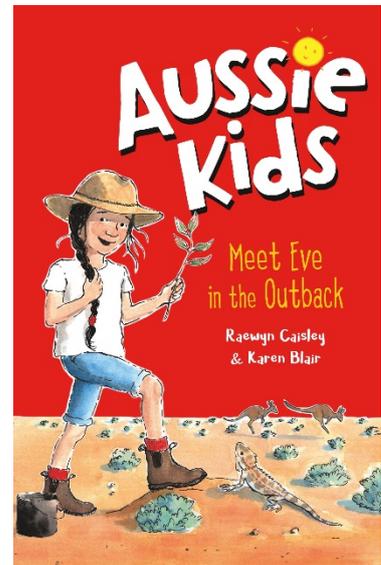
*Aussie Kids: Meet Katie at the Beach*  
by Rebecca Johnson and Lucia Masciullo

*Hi! I'm Katie.*

*I have a wobbly tooth that won't come out! But it's not going to spoil my trip to the beach. We're going to eat mangoes and play beach cricket!*

*Come on an adventure with Aussie Kids and meet Katie from Queensland.*

*Teachers' resources available.*



*Aussie Kids: Meet Eve in the Outback*  
by Raewyn Caisley and Karen Blair

*Hi! I'm Eve.*

*I live at a roadhouse in the Nullarbor. We don't get many visitors. But today my cousin Will is coming. We'll have so much fun!*

*Come on an adventure with Aussie Kids and meet Eve from Western Australia.*

*Teachers' resources available.*

## ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
Aussie Kids: Meet Taj at the Lighthouse	Maxine Beneba Clarke & Nicki Greenberg	9781760894528	1-3	\$12.99		
Aussie Kids: Meet Zoe and Zac at the Zoo	Belinda Murrell & David Hardy	9781760893651	1-3	\$12.99		
<b>TOTAL</b>						

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