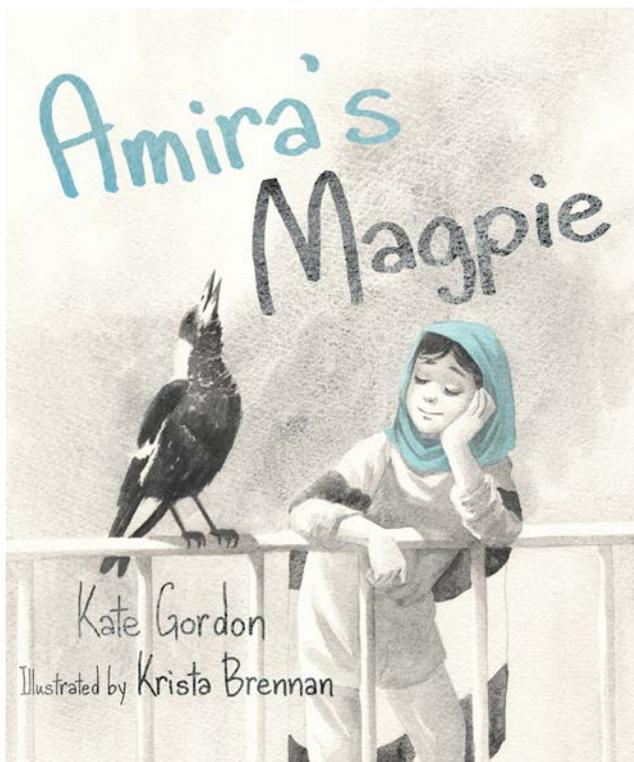




**Wombat Books**  
Stories you'll want to share

# Teachers' Notes



## Amira's Magpie

Kate Gordon/ Krista Breannan

ISBN: 978-1925563986

Recommended retail: \$24.99

Reading level: Ages 5-8 Picture Book

## Book Summary

Amira has a magpie. He is the most beautiful, strangest of creatures ...

Amira imagines her magpie flying across the world, to visit the family she left behind when she escaped her homeland. And as she flies, she flies with him and she is free.

Amira's Magpie is a story of friendship, family and escape; of bravery and resilience in the face of hardship. It is the story of hope we find in small happinesses, even when it seems like all hope is lost.

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## Contents

Book Summary	1
Reasons For Studying This Book	2
Themes	2
About the Author	3
About the Illustrator	3
National Curriculum Areas	
4 Questions and Reflections	5
Classroom Activities	6

### Reasons For Studying This Book

This book addresses difficult-to-discuss themes that are universal and affect people of all ages and backgrounds. It prompts discussions about how to deal with loneliness or hardship through the power of imagination. The character is implied to be living in an centre far from her home.

The book addresses the experiences of a child asylum seeker in a sensitive, non-didactic way and can be used to help normalise the types of emotions that ensue. It can help support childhood mental health care, particularly for those children who are experiencing stressful life situations or know others who are.

### Themes

Imagination/Creativity      Perseverance      Loneliness      Asylum      Seeker      Cultural      Difference  
Emotional      Resilience      Coping      mechanisms      Courage      Family  
Hope      Fear      Taking Control      Time/Change      Ups and Downs      Supporting Others

## About the Author:



Kate Gordon grew up in a small town by the sea in Tasmania.

*The Heartsong of Wonder Quinn* was published by UQP, in 2020. Megan Daley called the book “Just exquisite”. Magpies Magazine called it “Haunting and beautiful”.

Books one and two in the Juno Jones, Word Ninja series – are junior fiction novels about books, friendship, alien lizard men, killer mermaids and an adventurous girl who definitely does not like reading. They are out now from Yellow Brick Books.

*Girl Running, Boy Falling* was released with Rhiza Edge in 2018. It is a story about grief, family, mental health and friendship, set in a small town in Tasmania. It has been long-listed in the 2019 CBCA Awards.

Her first book, *Three Things About Daisy Blue* was published in the Girlfriend series by Allen and Unwin in 2010. Her second book, *Thyla*, was published by Random House Australia in April 2011 and her third book, *Vulpi*, the sequel to *Thyla*, was published in April 2012. Kate was the recipient of 2011 and 2012 Arts Tasmania Assistance to Individuals grants.

*Writing Clementine* was published in June 2014 by Allen and Unwin. It received the 2016 IBBY Ena Noel Award and was published in the German language by Random House, Germany. In 2018, Kate was shortlisted in the Dorothy Hewett Awards for an Unpublished Manuscript, and was commended in the 2018 Vogel’s Awards.

In 2019, Kate had her first picture book, *Bird on a Wire*, published by Hardie Grant.

*Aster’s Good, Right Things* was published by Yellow Brick Books in November, 2020.

## About the Illustrator



Krista is a freelance illustrator, fine artist, art teacher and stained glass artist who lives in Sydney, Australia with her partner and mischievous cat. She primarily uses traditional methods for her art, including watercolour, ink and oils. Krista’s art has been featured in books, card games, exhibitions and competitions, but she enjoys using her pictures to tell stories most of all.

She is the illustrator of *Once*, by Kate Forsyth and *Archie Appleby* by Kaye Ballie

## Key Curriculum Areas:

### CURRICULUM AREAS AND KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

#### Humanities and Social Sciences Australian Curriculum

##### **Who we are, who came before us, and traditions and values that have shaped societies**

Students explore their own identity, Australia's heritage and cultural diversity, and Australia's identity as a nation in the world. They examine the significance of traditions and shared values within society.

##### **How societies and economies operate and how they are changing over time**

Students learn about Australian society and other societies in the world, both past and present; and how they function socially, culturally, economically and politically. Students examine developments that have resulted in or are bringing about change.

##### **The ways people, places, ideas and events are perceived and connected**

Students are provided with opportunities to explore different perceptions of people, places, ideas and events. They develop an understanding of the interdependent nature of the world and the interrelationships within and between the natural environment, human communities and economies. They explore how people, ideas and events are connected over time and increasingly interconnected across local, national, regional and global contexts.

#### English: Prep

ACELT1575	ACELA1429	ACELA1434	ACELT1578
ACELT1577	ACELA1430	ACELA1786	ACHASSIO01
ACELT1783	ACELA1435	ACELY1651	ACHASSIO05
ACHASSIO07	ACHASSIO08	ACHASSIO10	

#### English, HASS Year One

ACELA1444	ACELA1451	ACELT1582	ACELY1656
ACELA1787	ACELA1452	ACELT1584	ACELY1788
ACELA1447	ACELA1458	ACELT1586	ACELY1660
ACELA1449	ACELT1581	ACELT1832	ACHASSIO25
ACHASSIO27	ACHASSKO47	ACHASSKO50	

#### English, HASS: Year Two

ACELA1461	ACELA1463	ACELT1833
ACELA1462	ACELT1591	ACELY1665
ACHASSKO50	ACHASSKO51	

## 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.

### Pre-reading Questions

1. Before reading, discuss the front cover. What might the book be about? Who is the author and illustrator? What type of story do you think it will be?
2. Discuss the back cover and blurb. What does the blurb tell you about the subject of the book? Does it match the clues you found on the front cover? Who is the publisher of the book?
3. Does the title of the book give any indication of what the story might be about?

### After-reading Questions

1. Discuss the characteristics of a good story. *I.e. What is the plot? Who is the central character? What is the conflict/problem in the story? How is that problem solved (resolution)?*
2. Discuss the role of illustrations in picture books. Are there things we only learn from the illustrations, not from the text? Do the illustrations follow the text? Do they enhance the story? How? Do the illustrations make us feel things that the words don't, and vice versa?
3. How does the character use her imagination? How do we see this in the illustrations? Why do you think she imagines the Magpie in the way she does?
4. When the magpie is not nearby Amira imagines him far away. How does this help her relate to her surroundings and remember her family?
5. How else can the imagination be used in general, whether at school, at home, with friends, learning new skills and more? What are some different forms of creativity? How do you like to express yourself creatively?
6. How is a sense of time conveyed in the book? What are some other ways of showing time passing?
7. What cultural perspectives are represented in the story? What cultural differences are relevant to the story?
8. Thinking about your own culture, do you relate to having been in a different culture? What do you think it would be like to go to live in a brand new culture?

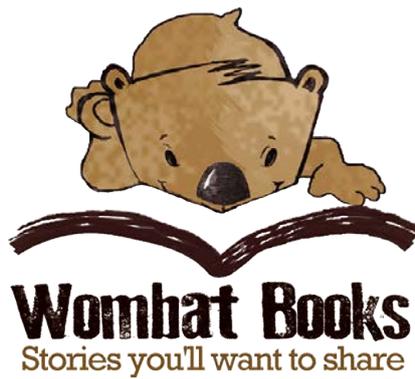
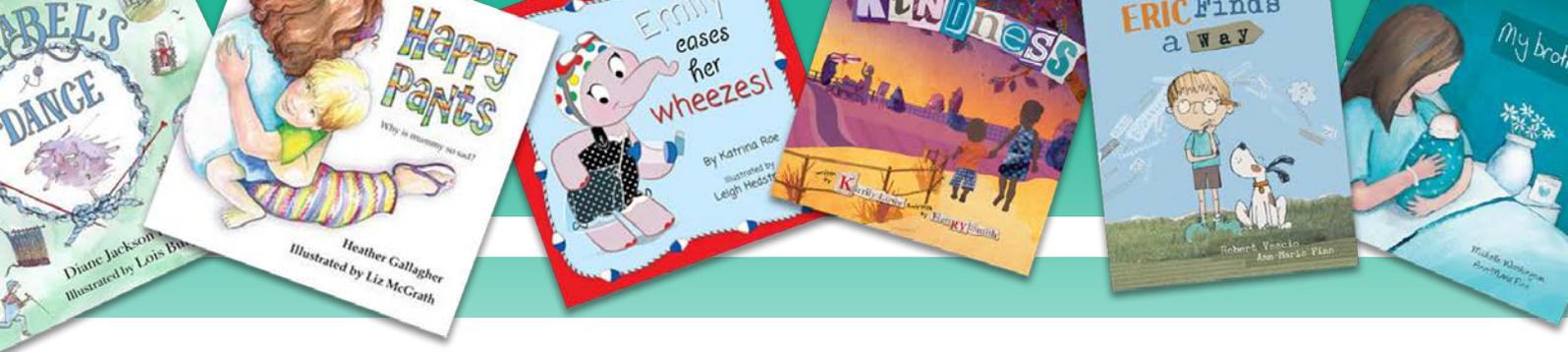
## Classroom Activities

### HASS

- Look at different cultures of people who come to Australia for a new life
- Look at your family history and explore how long your family has been in Australia
- Think about what change in Amira's family would feel like.

### English

- Find examples of descriptive language in the book. Write a poem about magpies or flying demonstrates various uses of descriptive language, such as adjectives, alliteration, assonance, similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia etc. (This can be an acrostic poem).
- Have students come up with a list of interview questions for Amira They can then take turns being the interviewer and the interviewee in a roleplay. Students can also compile a list of questions for the author .
- Rewrite the book from the perspective of the grandfather
- Describe what the magpie sees as they fly across the world to the grandfather
- Write about a time when you have been far from home or missed someone. What message would you have sent to them with an animal messenger?
- Look out your window. What are you able to see? Compare it with what Amira can see.



Contact Wombat Books for more information.

*Amira's Magpie Teachers' Notes can be used in schools (independent learning, small groups, and whole classes); at home with caregivers; and as part of mental health support programs facilitated by counsellors, psychologists, children's charities, etc.*

## Connect with Wombat Books

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