



# TEACHERS' RESOURCES

## RECOMMENDED FOR

Upper primary  
(ages 9–11; years 3 to 6)

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## KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English, Humanities and Social Sciences
- **General capabilities:** Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability, Ethical Understanding

## REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Learning about ethics and philosophy
- Applying ethical and philosophical principles to everyday situations
- Asking questions about the world
- Examining the idea of right and wrong
- Understanding different perspectives

## THEMES

- Ethics and philosophy
- Lying, happiness, learning, life choices, letting go, fairness, trends, promises, friendship, bravery, fighting, integrity

## PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia and Short & Curly

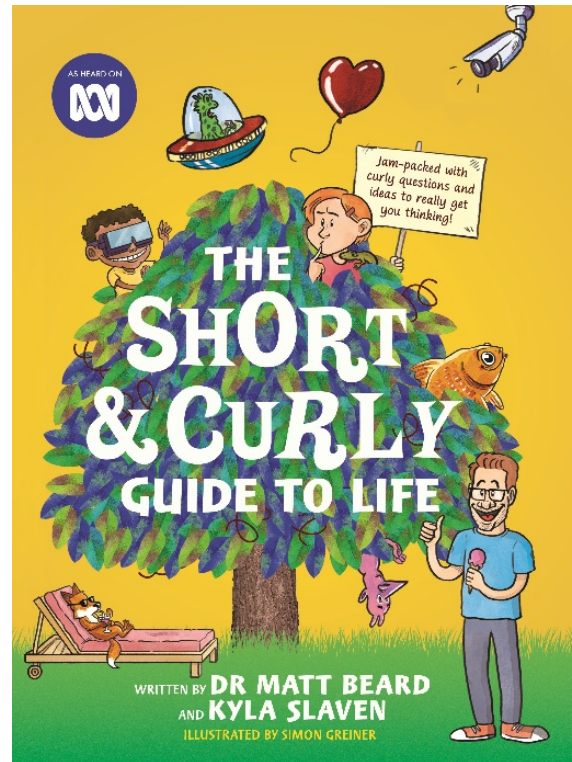
## PUBLICATION DETAILS

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## The Short & Curly Guide to Life

Dr Matt Beard and Kyla Slaven

## PLOT SUMMARY

*Dive into the mind-bending world of ethics with the Short & Curly team and their Brains Trust of researchers. Based on the hit ABC podcast!*

What makes something good or bad? Why are things the way they are? How come it's so hard to work out the right thing to do? *The Short & Curly Guide to Life* is an imaginative look at some of life's biggest and trickiest questions. Figuring out what's right is way more fun than you think!

You'll find yourself wondering if it's okay to break a promise – even if it's in a video game! Questioning whether you would want to spend the rest of your life in an amazing virtual reality. Umzing and ahhing over whether there's anything wrong with keeping an adorable baby fox as a pet. Putting ideas like fairness, what's normal and what's brave under the microscope . . . and so much more!

Covering topics such as fairness, bullying, bravery, friendship and choice, *The Short & Curly Guide to Life* is a must-read for every child, parent and teacher.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### Dr Matt Beard

Dr Matt Beard is a husband, dad, pop culture nerd, moral philosopher and ethicist. Matt is a Fellow at the Ethics Centre and the resident philosopher for the kids' ethics podcast Short & Curly. He appears regularly in print, radio and TV discussing ethical issues from vampires to anti-vaccination. Matt believes everyone is already a philosopher who, given the right circumstances and skills, can live a wise, enriched and ethical life.

### Kyla Slaven

Kyla Slaven is the producer of the kids' ethics podcast Short & Curly. Kyla has been making radio and podcasts for a long time – working in community radio, as a reporter at Triple J and heading up the then-new current affairs show, Hack. She also worked on the philosophy podcast (for grown-ups) The Philosopher's Zone, where a chance encounter with a bunch of school kids gave her the idea for Short & Curly. Kyla loves that her job combines the serious with the silly, and the smart with the fun.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Simon Greiner is an illustrator who lives in Sydney, Australia, with his beautiful wife and two boys. His work has appeared all over the place, including the front cover of the *New Yorker* magazine, as well as the kids' book *Regal Beagle*.

## ABOUT THE SHORT & CURLY PODCAST

The Short & Curly podcast takes you on super-fun, ridiculous and eye-opening journeys to all kinds of ethical questions, big and small. It's hosted by the awesome duo, Molly Daniels and Carl Smith, and features philosopher Dr Matt Beard from The Ethics Centre, who gives some ethical insight into the weird and wacky dilemmas.

Short & Curly is produced by ABC Audio Studios, and is the brainchild of genius producer Kyla Slaven (who also co-wrote this book).

There are loads of shows to listen to and more coming all the time. Here's a taste of some of the adventures we've gone on so far: Can you eat your pets? What's wrong with travelling to Mars? Is it ethical to climb Mt Everest? Should we let chimpanzees come to school with us? Can a robot be your best buddy? Why can't kids vote in elections?

## PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. *The Short & Curly Guide to Life* and the Short & Curly podcast are all about ethics – discuss as a class what you think ethics are.

## PRE-READING ACTIVITY

1. As a class, listen to an episode of the Short & Curly podcast. Write down some thoughts about it, then, after having read the *Short & Curly Guide to Life*, discuss the similarities and differences.

## KEY STUDY TOPICS

*The Short & Curly Guide to Life* is broken up into 12 chapters which each cover a different ethical topic. Within each chapter, you will read about a scenario that explores this topic and encourages you to think about the ethical issues involved and how you might react if you were faced with a similar situation.

After reading each chapter, use the Thinking Questions below (also provided within the book) to have a class discussion.

### Lying

#### Thinking Questions

1. Do you think it's ever OK to tell a lie?
2. If someone told a lie to protect your feelings, and later you found out they'd lied to you, how would you feel?
3. If you were Alinta's parents, what would you do?
4. Is it OK to tell a lie so long as you tell the truth later? Can you think of any examples from your own life?
5. If you were Alinta, how would you feel about being lied to? Would it matter if you found out Shibastian would be OK after you'd already given him up?



## Happiness

### Thinking Questions

1. Have you ever done something that hurt someone's feelings even though you weren't trying to?
2. Is it OK to be selfish sometimes? Do we always have to think about how our actions will affect other people?
3. What do you do to escape from real life? (Remember, it's OK to escape sometimes – we all do it!)



## Learning

### Thinking Questions

1. Should school help you to be a better person?
2. Can you make a distinction between 'getting an education' and 'going to school'?
3. Do you think school needs to be improved? If you think it does, what changes would you make?
4. Imagine the happiest pig in the world. Would you rather live your life as happy as that pig, but with no chance to learn or understand the world, or would you rather be a person, even if it means being bored, confused and maybe even having to go to school?
5. How do you like to learn? Do you like doing exams and assignments, or do you think you're at your best when you can go at your own pace?



## Life Choices

### Thinking Questions

1. Is there something you'd love to try, but you're too scared to because you're not sure what it would be like?
2. Have you ever done something you couldn't take back?
3. What would life be like if we didn't try new things, take risks or make discoveries?
4. Can you think of a time when you had too much of a good thing? How did you feel about it after your binge session? Did it still make you happy?
5. Do you think you'd eventually turn into a horrible person if you lived forever?



## Letting Go

### Thinking Questions

1. Is there something in your life you absolutely couldn't give away? Why is it important to you?
2. The more we care about things, the more upset we get when we lose them. Would it be better not to care about stuff at all?
3. If you were Samar, what would you have given away to make more space in your bedroom? The Whiskers Gang, the books or the writing desk? Why?
4. There's an old saying: 'It's better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all'. Do you agree, or is it sometimes better to avoid pain, even if it means we try not to care so much about stuff?



## Fairness

### Thinking Questions

1. What would society look like if it were designed with people like Juan in mind, as well as average-sized people?
2. Do you think it's fair for Juan to have the same sized desk as everyone else?
3. Should the school get a bigger bus so Juan can use it as well? If not, is it fair that Juan might have to go to school by himself instead of being with his friends?
4. Do you think there is such a thing as a normal person? What are they like?
5. If you were in Juan's shoes, would you have taken the cure?



## Trends

### Thinking Questions

1. What would you give up or do less often to make sure you weren't leaving as much rubbish in the world?
2. Has your school had any 'crazes'? Did you want to be part of them? Why?
3. How can you tell whether a new craze at school is going to last?



## Promises

### Thinking Questions

1. Do you think it's OK to break a promise if it's too hard to keep?
2. What would you do if you'd made a promise you shouldn't have made, like Skylar did?
3. Would you keep your promise to Bill, or save Amara?
4. Have you ever done the wrong thing to a fictional or imaginary character in a game? How did it make you feel?
5. Is it OK to do bad things in video games, like kill, lie or steal?



## Friendship

### Thinking Questions

1. What do you think makes someone a good friend?
2. Have you ever had to make new friends? What were some tricks that made it easier?
3. Do you think Zola should invite Louis to her party?
4. Should friends always tell each other the truth?
5. It's good to support your friends, but should you support them if you think they're making a bad decision?
6. Zola did try to sit with Louis in class, but she got pulled away. Is she really being as unfriendly as Jen seems to think?



## Bravery

### Thinking Questions

1. When do you think someone should be able to make their own decisions, even risky ones, without anybody else interfering?
2. Have you ever done something silly or out of character to try to fit in? Did it work? How did you feel about it?
3. What is the bravest thing you've ever done? What made it brave?
4. Can you be brave when you're doing the wrong thing? Try to think of some examples.



## Fighting

### Thinking Questions

1. Put yourself in Dev's shoes – or slippers in this case! You're the only person at school in your PJs. How would you feel?
2. Do you think there is a difference between jokes, teasing and bullying?
3. Imagine your friend is being bullied. You can stand up for your friend, but then the bullies will turn on you! Would it be OK to do nothing?
4. Why do you think some people bully others?
5. Have you ever fought back against a bully? Did it work?
6. What are some non-violent ways of stopping someone from picking on you?



## Integrity

### Thinking Questions

1. Is it OK to break the rules sometimes?
2. If Aika cheats, is it her fault? Or is it her parents fault for creating the temptation? Or maybe her teacher for leaving the exam on her desk?
3. Have you ever had to own up to doing something wrong? How did it go?
4. If you were one of Aika's classmates, what would you want her to do?
5. Is it fair for Madame Dubois to hold the whole class back because one person did the wrong thing?



## ACTIVITIES

1. The Short & Curly team love hearing from kids! Write them an email with a question about ethics or an idea for a new podcast episode at: [shortandcurly@abc.net.au](mailto:shortandcurly@abc.net.au)
2. Each chapter in the book begins with a title page and an illustration that represents the topic. For example, a drawing of scales is used for the chapter discussing fairness. Choose one of the chapters and draw your own illustration that you think represents the topic. Be as imaginative as you can!
3. Choose one of the philosophers that are mentioned in the book and write a short biography (one or two paragraphs) about them.
4. Fighting/bullying is one of the topics covered in The Short & Curly Guide to Life and the example used is of an incident at school. Does your school have a bullying policy or advice for those experiencing bullying? If yes, review it as a class and discuss whether there are any similarities to what is discussed in the book? If no, write a bullying policy for your school.
5. Become one of the Short & Curly Brains Trust agents and write your own profile! Include your hobbies, any special skills you have and the style of field reporting the team can expect from you.

FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



*Wonder*  
by R.J. Palacio

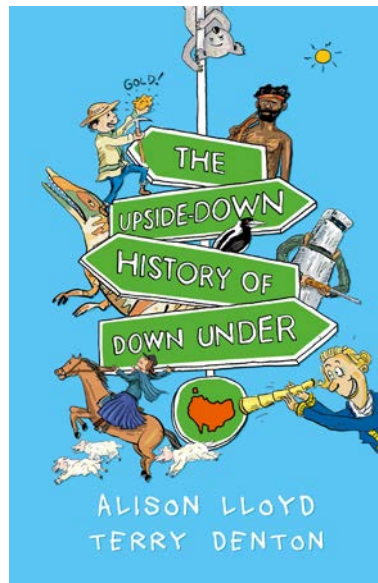
**Why this story?** Read it as an example of a book raising issues of fairness, bravery, fighting and integrity.

The unforgettable and life-affirming story of August Pullman - a boy who's desperate to blend in, but is destined to stand out.

Auggie wants to be an ordinary ten-year-old. He does ordinary things - eating ice cream, playing on his Xbox. He feels ordinary - inside. But ordinary kids don't make other ordinary kids run away screaming in playgrounds. Ordinary kids aren't stared at wherever they go.

Born with a terrible facial abnormality, Auggie has been home-schooled by his parents his whole life. Now, for the first time, he's being sent to a real school. All he wants is to be accepted. But can he convince his new classmates that he's just like them, underneath it all?

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



*The Upside-down History of Down Under* by Alison Lloyd and Terry Denton

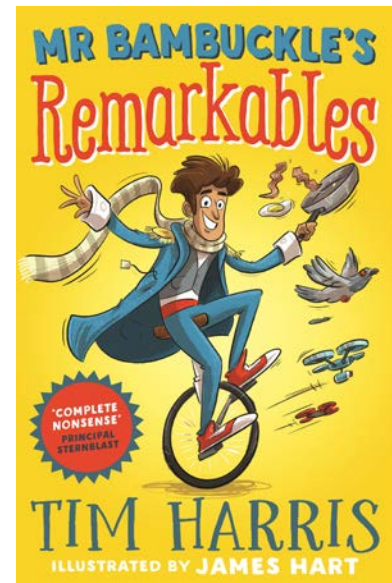
**Why this story?** Read it as an example of engaging non-fiction for primary school-aged readers.

The true story of Australia starts with a piece of land that went for a swim. About 200 million of years ago it floated away from Africa. Very, very, slowly. It was home to dinosaurs and giant animals, then the first Australians showed up and got comfortable.

And for a long time this wild and wonderful land was a mystery to the rest of the world. Until the English decided to make it the biggest jail ever . . .

Funny, heroic and tragic – the story of our country from prehistory to federation.

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



*Mr Bambuckle's Remarkables*  
by Tim Harris

**Why this story?** Read it as an example of ethical scenarios that kids may face at school.

He's the first teacher to cook us breakfast.

Is his spark-maker beetle really that dangerous?

I heard he drank yak's milk in Mongolia.

He's the only person who isn't afraid of Canteen Carol.

My mum says he used to be in the circus.

The class in room 12B has a new teacher, and nothing is ever going to be the same . . .

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



## WORKSHEET: AN ETHICAL DILEMMA

In *The Short & Curly Guide to Life* you will read about different ethical dilemmas faced by the subjects and the Brains Trust agents. Have you ever faced a tough decision where you weren't sure what to do? Write a short paragraph describing this situation. Outline the choice you had to make and what the end result was. As a further exercise, imagine what advice Dr Matt might have given to you.

**Describe your ethical dilemma (tough decision):**

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**Outline the choice you were faced with:**

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**What did you do and what was the end result?**

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**What advice might Dr Matt have given you in this situation?**

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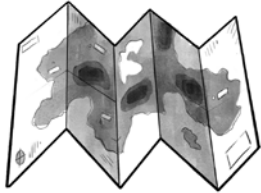
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## WORKSHEET: ETHICAL TOOLKIT MIX-AND-MATCH

Using the Ethical Toolkit pages in the book as a reference, draw a line from the different ethical tools to the situations they would be best used for.



MAP

QUESTIONING  
OUR EMOTIONS



TORCH

CHECKING  
ASSUMPTIONS



BINOCULARS

USING  
CURIOSITY AND  
EMPATHY



COMPASS

MAKING  
DISTINCTIONS



HIKING POLES

DEFINING OUR  
TERMS



MACHETE

DOING A  
THOUGHT  
EXPERIMENT



MAGNIFYING GLASS

FACT FINDING





## WORKSHEET: FIND A PHILOSOPHER

Throughout *The Short & Curly Guide to Life* various philosophers are mentioned. Using the clues below, fill in the names of each philosopher.



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This philosopher came up with the idea of the panopticon.



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The first and only philosopher to think about becoming a vampire.



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This philosopher believed that using violence to stop something only resulted in more violence.



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This philosopher thought ethics was basically about being a good or virtuous person.

## ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
The Short & Curly Guide to Life	Dr Matt Beard and Kyla Slaven	9780143792185	3-6	\$24.99		
Wonder	R.J. Palacio	9780141378244	3-6	\$19.99		
The Upside-down History of Down Under	Alison Lloyd and Terry Denton	9780143788669	3-6	\$24.99		
Mr Bambuckle's Remarkables	Tim Harris	9780143785859	3-6	\$14.99		
<b>TOTAL</b>						

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