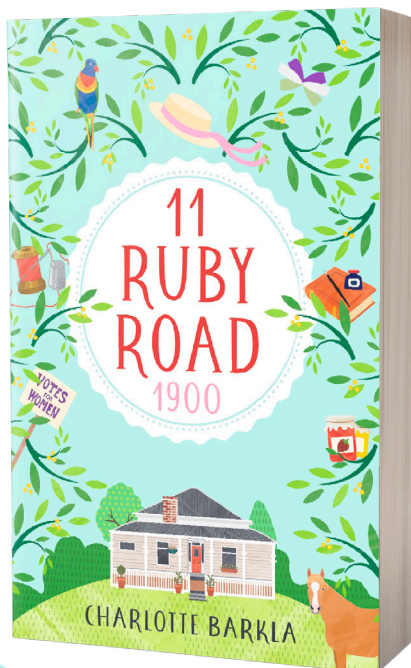




TEACHER NOTES

Teacher Notes by Belinda Bolliger

WALKER BOOKS



ABOUT THE BOOK

11 RUBY ROAD: 1900
CREATOR: CHARLOTTE BARKLA
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Dorothy and her family have moved to the city and life is very different to the rural one she has known. Ruby Road is bustling – full of families and children, horse-drawn carts and even a mysterious dog. Best of all, her new home has a secret writing room that only she knows about.

There are many reasons for her family's move, but Dorothy has her own plans. She has to settle into a new school, make new friends and find an ingenious way to help the suffragists in their fight for women's right to vote! Perhaps her secret writing room holds the answer.

Join Dorothy and the inhabitants of 11 Ruby Road in 1900, as a newly federated nation and a new century ... begins.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charlotte Barkla is a Brisbane-based writer who worked as a civil engineer and physics teacher before rediscovering her love for children's literature. As well as writing for children, Charlotte writes feature articles for publications including the CSIRO's *Double Helix*, *Beanz* magazine and *Kookie* magazine. She regularly visits schools for creative writing workshops, sharing her passion for science, creativity and stories with children of all ages. Charlotte's books include *All Bodies are Good Bodies* (Hardie Grant Children's Publishing, 2020), the *Eddie's Experiments* series (Penguin Random House, 2020) and *From My Head to My Toes, What I Say Goes* (Hardie Grant Children's Publishing, 2022).

Charlotte's books have been translated into multiple languages and shortlisted for awards, and she has been the recipient of grants and mentorships for her fiction writing.

ABOUT THE TEACHER NOTES AUTHOR

Belinda Bolliger worked as an editor and publisher of children's books for over twenty-five years. She was the Children's Publisher at Hodder Headline (now Hachette Australia) and Children's Commissioning Editor and Publisher for ABC Books/HarperCollins. She has worked with many award-winning authors and illustrators, including Libby Hathorn, Garry Disher, Frances Watts, Judith Rossell and Matt Ottley. Belinda was editorial manager for Australian Standing Orders (Scholastic) for over 11 years, reviewing and selecting the most suitable new releases from Australian publishers to send to schools around the country. Belinda now works as an associate agent at Key People Literary Management and as a freelance children's editor and project manager.

CURRICULUM LINKS


English (language, literature and literacy) • Humanities and Social Sciences (historical knowledge and understanding, civics and citizenship) • The Arts (media arts, drama, visual arts) • Technologies (design and technologies) • Health and Physical Education (personal, social and community health)

CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures • Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia

THEMES

Transition and adapting to change • History and Social Studies
• Empowerment and advocacy • Friendship and community
• Creative writing and the power of the imagination



TEACHER NOTES

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

11 Ruby Road is set in the year 1900 in Brisbane. It was the start of a new century and the beginning of many changes for Australia. Using resources from the library and the internet, discover and discuss what was happening in Australia from 1900 to 1925 (when the second *11 Ruby Road* book is set). Some topics to consider:

- Federation: What did it mean for Australia to be a newly federated nation? What changes do you think Australian people were experiencing during this time? How did Federation affect First Nations peoples?
 - The suffragist movement: When did Australian women gain the right to vote? How did this compare with other countries? Why were First Nations women not given the right to vote at this time? How did the right to vote impact the role of women in the years that followed?
 - The First World War: How did the outbreak of war in 1914 affect Australia? What role did Australian soldiers play in the war? How did the war impact Australia's relationship with other countries?
 - A new capital city is named in 1913: Where was the capital before Canberra was named? Why did it move to Canberra? Who played a significant role in the selection of Canberra as the capital? What is the significance of the name 'Canberra' and its Indigenous origins?
 - First Nations people: Research treatment and attitudes towards First Nations people during this time.
- Culture: What significant and lasting works were created during this period (eg Dorothy Mackellar wrote her famous poem, 'My Country'; the film *The Sentimental Bloke* was made)?
 - Science and technology: Name some important developments and events in science and technology that occurred during this period (eg the first Australian-led expedition to Antarctica; construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge).

Activity: Create a timeline of the major events in Australia from 1900 to 1925. Include pictures, quotes and other visual or written elements to illustrate your timeline.

PROLOGUE

The novel begins with a prologue and introduces Millie, her mother and the house at Ruby Road. What do you think is the purpose of the prologue? How does it add to the story? What do you think might happen to Millie and her mother? When you've finished reading *11 Ruby Road: 1900*, revisit the prologue. What have you discovered?

CHARACTERS

Dorothy's family

- Each of the children in Dorothy's family has a unique personality and perspective on the world. Write a paragraph describing each character – Ivy, Florence, Dorothy, Margaret, Elsie [Baby Helen].
- What role does each character play in the story?

- Who is your favourite of all the sisters? Why?
- Write a diary entry from the perspective of one of the characters (not Dorothy!).
- A character trait is a quality or feature that defines who a person is. As a class, brainstorm words that describe Dorothy's character traits under these three headings:
 1. Emotional traits and beliefs
 2. Physical traits
 3. Personality traits
 (You may need to use your imagination for some of them)
- Create an artwork of how you imagine Dorothy looks and then paste her most significant character traits on your artwork.
- Dorothy and her family have moved from rural life to life in a town. How do you think life in Ruby Road differs from life on their farm in the country? What might be some of the advantages and disadvantages of each?
- Have you experienced big changes in your life? What helped you adapt?

George

Quote: *'Don't you hear the talk about people from China?' Florence lowered her voice and looked over her shoulder, as though someone might suddenly appear from the scrub over the back fence. 'Apparently, they took most of the gold at the goldfields.'*

Dorothy rolled her eyes. 'Don't be ridiculous, Florence. People from all over the world came to dig for gold. Perhaps some were better at finding it than others!' (p 53)

The discovery of gold in Australia in the 1800s attracted many immigrants, including Chinese labourers.

Resource: 'Because the Chinese were better organised and, unlike the other miners on the field, brought the water to "pay dirt", they were able to extract more gold from a given area. This, coupled with their different clothing, customs and eating habits, led to envy and many false rumours of successes . . . Eventually, envy and these false rumours led to hate and ultimately to the riots, in which the predominantly English-born miners attempted to drive the Chinese from the goldfields.' (Harvest of Endurance: A History of the Chinese in Australia 1788–1988, multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/doc/yimei_1.pdf)

- Discuss how attitudes towards people of Chinese origin might have affected George and his family.
- Why do you think George gets cross when Dorothy asks him where he's from? (p 44)
- Discuss how unfair attitudes, greed and envy can lead to poor treatment of people. Have you seen this play out at school? What should you do if you see someone being targeted by bullying?
- Extension activity for older readers: What was the Immigration Restriction Act (1901)/White Australia Policy? How did this Act impact people's lives and Australia's relationship with other countries?
- At the end of the story, George is living in China with his relatives. What do you think might happen to George next? Do you think he and Dorothy will remain friends?

Ruffles

- Each of the characters in *11 Ruby Road* plays an important role in the development of the story, even Ruffles. Why is Ruffles important? How does he help Dorothy? Why do you think he keeps disappearing? Create an artwork that shows Ruffles in one of the scenes in the story.

11 RUBY ROAD

Quote: *The small timber cottage had a steep, pointed roof and a narrow verandah across the front. There wasn't much of a garden, but there was an exceptional front door, painted bright red. Dorothy loved it right away . . . She ran to the small timber building adjoining the front of the house. The girls had spotted the store from the top of the hill . . . The proud sign announcing "Millie's Store" in bright blue letters was hard to miss! (pp 7-8)*

Research house and building styles in Brisbane and in Australia in the 1900s.

- Were houses in Brisbane different to houses in other states? Do you think they were built a particular way for a reason? Why might that be?
- Create an artwork that shows your vision of how the house at 11 Ruby Road might have looked in 1900.
- The next book in the Ruby Road series is set in 1925. How might the house at number 11 change over 25 years?
- Imagine that the house at 11 Ruby Road still exists today. What would it look like? Would there still be a store?
- Write a short piece of imaginative writing from the house's point of view when Dorothy and her family arrive.

SCHOOL DAYS

Resource: 'Aussie students in the 1900s lived a fairly meagre existence. Many went to school barefoot, in an unfussy tunic-style frock or sailor suit. Their textbooks tended to be hand-me-downs, and it was common for a community to have just one teacher (males need not apply), taking multiple grade levels in a single-room schoolhouse. There was no talking back in the classroom, unless you fancied a swift cane across the rump. Strict rules governed how children were to enter the room, bow to their teacher, sit at their desks, hold their pens, and generally behave at any particular point in the day. Disobedience was met with a smack (or three) and noted down in a record book that was monitored by a school inspector. Though knuckles and backsides continued to be rapped, in 1908, laws were mercifully set up to ban "unnecessarily severe modes of punishment" (<https://www.frankie.com.au/article/old-school-new-school-545292>)

School and education were very different in Dorothy's time to the school life you experience today.

- Would you have liked to go to school in 1900? What would you have liked? What would you have found challenging?
- Why do you think Dorothy was always getting into trouble at school? Do you think Miss Armstrong was too hard on her? Why or why not?

A blast from the past

- Organise a role-play day where you and your teachers come dressed as students and teachers from the 1900s. Before your 1900s school day, source and make school supplies or toys from the 1900s, such as inkwells, slates or simple wooden toys.

- Organise school activities, lessons and games from the 1900s for your 'blast from the past day'. Make sure you only use the tools that were available at that time (no computers or phones!).
- Take a virtual tour of a museum that features exhibits on Australian history, including school life in the 1900s.
- Arrange a session where you, the teacher, or a guest speaker acts as a time traveller from the 1900s. Students can prepare questions in advance to ask about school life, allowing for an interactive and immersive learning experience.

LIFE IN 1900

Compare and contrast life in 1900 with life today with these activities:

- Write a letter using ink and a quill pen. Imagine you live in 1900 and write to a friend or family member telling them about your daily routines and any exciting events that have happened in your town. How does the experience of communicating this way differ to sending a text or email?
- Research traditional farming techniques, such as hand-milking cows, churning butter and ploughing fields. How does this differ to how we farm and source food today?
- When you are reading *11 Ruby Road: 1900*, take note of the processes used in the McIntyre's store. How are they different to modern supermarkets and shops?
- Research and roleplay the jobs that were common in 1900 Australia. Some of these are mentioned in the story, such as the iceman, baker (delivering the bread in a cart), the milkman, seamstress, working in a factory etc. How are these jobs done today?
- What were the main foods eaten in 1900 Australia? (Some of these are mentioned in the story, but you may also need to do some further research.) How were they different to the foods we eat today? What influenced the types of food eaten in 1900 (think about refrigeration, transport, farming methods etc).

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

Quote: *Ivy had pointed out a white boundary pole the day before when the girls were helping Father with a delivery. One of the teachers at her school had said that at 4 'o'clock each day, the troopers used to ride around Brisbane town, cracking their whips and yelling at the Aboriginal people to leave the town boundary. Ivy wasn't sure whether it still happened or not . . . but Dorothy thought it sounded awful either way. It didn't make the slightest bit of sense, either. Why couldn't everyone live and work where they wanted to? (p 75)*

- Use this quote as starting point for discussions on historical injustices and the importance of understanding and recognising the rights and contributions of First Nations people – and all people.
- What do you think it felt like for the Aboriginal people to be forced to leave the town boundary every day?
- Dorothy thought the treatment of Aboriginal people sounded awful. How does it make you feel? Why? Why is it important to know about and remember these events, even if they might not happen anymore?
- How can we challenge such beliefs and learn from the past to improve the present?
- What can you do as a school or community to make sure everyone feels welcome and valued, regardless of their background?

THE SUFFRAGIST MOVEMENT

Resource: 'In the 19th century Australian women had very few legal rights. Once married, these rights were further limited as they were transferred to her husband. Married women surrendered all property to their husbands and any wages earned. Husbands were the sole legal guardian of any children from a marriage and could remove them from a mother's care at any time, even bequeathing their care to other people in their will.' (<https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/womens-suffrage>)

- Aunt Esme is 'heavily involved in the suffragist movement, trying to help women gain the right to vote'. (p 53)
What do you know about the suffragist movement? Why do you think it took so long for women to get the vote? And even longer for First Nations women to get the vote?

Quote: 'Look, you're going to have to get married one day, like it or not,' said Florence. 'It's just the way it is. Isn't that right, Ivy?'

'Well ...' Ivy, who had managed to keep out of the argument so far, looked pained. 'You probably will, Dorothy. We all will.' (p 54)

- Research attitudes towards women in the 1800s and 1900s. How have attitudes changed? How have attitudes stayed the same?
- Why do you think Dorothy decided to change her play to include a female prime minister? Why would this have shocked some people? How can small actions like Dorothy's and the other cast members change the way people think?

- Why do you think it was important for Dorothy to be involved in helping the suffragists? What does this tell us about her character?
- What causes do you believe in? How can you make a difference?
- Create an illustrated timeline that shows significant events that changed women's lives. Include the history of women's rights in each state and show when they received the vote.
- In small groups, choose a well-known figure from the suffragist or suffragette movement and create a PowerPoint or poster presentation about their lives to share with the rest of the class.

CREATIVE WRITING

- Dorothy is thrilled when she discovers the undercroft and she quickly turns it into her secret writing room. Why do you think the room is so important to Dorothy?
- Discuss how Dorothy's writing brings the Ruby Road community together. Why is it important to have friends and community? How do they change the lives of Dorothy and her sisters?
- Towards the end of the novel, we discover that each of the children has been using the undercroft as their own special room. If you had a secret room of your own, what would it be like? What would you use it for?
- Create an artwork that illustrates your secret room.
- Write a short story or a diary entry from Dorothy's perspective, using the undercroft as a key element.

DRAMA

Dorothy and George write a play and together with children from the neighbourhood they perform it for the community.

- Break into small groups and choose one of the chapters in the book. Rewrite it as a play script to perform for the rest of the class. Designate people to perform the various roles: actors, props and costumes, director, music and so on. You might like to choose one of the adaptations to perform at your 'Blast from the past' day.

ACTIVITIES

- Create a class mural depicting Ruby Road and the people who live there. Include details from the book and also your own ideas of how Ruby Road looked in 1900. Don't forget Ruffles!
- Organise a class debate on a current issue, inspired by Dorothy's advocacy, to practise forming arguments and speaking publicly.
- Field trip: visit a local history museum or historical site related to the suffragist movement.
- Watch the documentary film, *Utopia Girls: How Women Got the Vote*. NB: this documentary is rated PG, please review before sharing it with the class.





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