charlie's Nhale

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TEACHERS RESOURCES



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Introduction	3
Themes & Curriculum Topics	3
Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)	
Visual Literacy	
Creative Arts	
Learning Technologies	
Further Topics for Discussion and Research	6
Conclusion	7
About the Author	7
About the Illustrator	7
Worksheets	8
Bibliography	12
About the Author of the Notes	15

INTRODUCTION

Charlie loves whales. Minke whales, orcas, beluga whales and humpbacks, sperm whales and right whales, and especially the great blue whale.

Young readers will delight in this story of Charlie's obsession with these majestic giants of the sea, written by one of Australia's most loved and awarded writers for children, Libby Gleeson, and accompanied by gorgeous illustrations by brilliant young artist, Hannah Somerville.

Charlie loved the sea. He loved the seashells and seahorses, the sharks and the stingrays, the crabs and the cravfish.

He loved the gentle waves that crept up onto the sand and tickled his toes. He loved the huge wild waves that crashed onto the sand and made the beach tremble. But most of all he loved the whales.

This is an elegant and 'classic' picture book text about a little boy who just wants to see a real whale.

THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes are covered in this book which might be related to the Australian Curriculum, including:

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

Several themes and topics are relevant to the following Curriculum Area: <<u>https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/</u>>

WHALES

<u>Activity</u>: The book contains a list of various whales. Research and discover how many species of whales there are, and the similarities and differences between these whales. [See **Bibliography**.]

<u>Activity</u>: Create a 'project book' like Charlie's and take note of anything you discover about whales.

Discussion Point: Whales sometimes beach themselves and are stranded. Rescue operations can't always save them, as they are such huge animals. Read about this issue and then read Jane Yolen's book *The Stranded Whale* (2015) – illustrated by Melanie Cataldo – about three siblings who try to save such a whale, and Jan Rammage's *Stranded* (2010) – illustrated by Mark Wilson –about a boy who saves a whale.

Discussion Point: Which whales are found in Australian waters?

Discussion Point: Which whales are endangered?

Discussion Point: Read other picture books about whales and discuss in comparison to *Charlie's Whale*. [See **Bibliography**.]

Discussion Point: Read some First Nations stories about whales and discover Aboriginal Australian beliefs about whales. [See **Bibliography**.]

HOBBIES, PASTIMES AND OBSESSIONS

Discussion Point: Children (and adults!) often have favourite hobbies or pastimes. Sometimes children are obsessed with reading about dinosaurs, with collecting things such as toys, shells or marbles, with playing a particular sport or a musical instrument, with caring for pets ... or watching whales, like Charlie! Discuss with students what some of their favourite things are.

OCEANS, MARINE LIFE AND SEASHORES

<u>Activity</u>: Research Australian marine life and how sea creatures co-habit in our oceans and on our beaches and even in an aquarium such as the one Charlie visits with his family.

Discussion Point: What other sea creatures or aspects of the beach or ocean appear in this book? Look through the pages and find the following: seahorses, crabs, stingrays, crayfish, seashells, boats, turtles, octopuses, seagulls, surfboards, beach umbrellas.

IMAGINATION

Discussion Point: Many of the images in this book are suggestive of the imagination. The sky, for example, has swimming whales in several frames. Young children have the capacity to imagine many possibilities. Charlie's bedroom is a tribute to the imagination with a whale-themed nightlight and whale toys. Discuss the imagination with students and encourage them to create imaginative responses to this text in any medium they prefer, whether it be writing, illustration or model making. [See **Visual Literacy** and **Creative Arts** below.]

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area: https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>

The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following aspects:

Discussion Point: The text is written in third person, past tense.

<u>Activity</u>: Read the text and identify any **literary devices** employed, for example, *Personification*: 'He loved the gentle waves that crept up onto the sand and tickled his toes.'; 'He loved the huge wild waves that crashed onto the sand and made the beach tremble.'

Activity: Write a rhyming ballad (poem) about seeing a whale. [See Bibliography.]

<u>Activity</u>: Test your students' **comprehension** by asking them questions about the written and visual text.



VISUAL LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area: _">https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>_

The visual text of a book combines with the written text to tell the story using the various parts of the book's design and illustrations, as explored below:

<u>Activity</u>: The **cover** of a book is an important part of its message. Here we see the little boy from behind gazing out to sea, and there are a number of ships, boats and sails on the horizon. On the **back cover** is a view of the boy swimming with a giant whale. What do these two images suggest to you about the story's content?

Discussion Point: The front **endpapers** depict sketches of whales frolicking in the ocean, and then on the **back endpapers** are fully painted images of the same creatures. The half-title page depicts Charlie clutching a plush toy whale. This image is also symbolic of his love of whales. The title page repeats the image on the cover. Discuss the way each of the book's preliminary parts are designed to build meaning before we read the text.

Discussion Point: The **format** of the book is **square**. How does the **layout of the storyboard** and the **format and design** of the book influence your reading of it?

<u>Activity</u>: Creating characters entails studying **facial expressions and body language**. Examine the images and discuss what they suggest about the characters within this family – the three boys (Max, Jack and Charlie) and their mother.

<u>Activity</u>: The **medium or style** employed is watercolour, gouache and digital in charming **pastel colours**. Use a similar colour palette and medium in your creative response to this text, below.

<u>Activity</u>: Prediction is an important part of picture book reading. The reader, in observing strong left-to-right movement across a double-page spread, is encouraged to follow the action sequentially in a filmic way. Encourage students to predict further action as they are reading each page of this book.

Discussion Point: Perspective in these images is used evocatively. In some frames the action is viewed from above. These aerial views give us an insight into what is happening not only to the central characters in the foreground but also in the periphery. For example, the shadow of a whale is viewed in the water in one frame, although Charlie can't see it. What else does such an aerial view reveal to the reader?

<u>Activity</u>: Employ **critical literacy skills** to examine this book more closely. Illustrators often include details or sub-text in images which are not commented on in the written text. For example, within two early frames in this book the whale's tale appears, and in another one, the shadow of the whale is viewed underwater. Can you spot them?

Charlie's bedroom contains several whale-themed things. Can you identify them?

Charlie has a range of sea toys. Can you identify them?

Charlie's brothers, Max and Jack, play with different things in these pictures. What are they?

Charlie reads sea books. Pick a book about the sea from your classroom to read. [See **Bibliography** for possible titles to share with students.]

Charlie sings sea songs to his sea toys. Can you think of any sea songs? [See Bibliography

for possible songs to share with students.]

In several images we observe whales sketched as clouds; and in Charlie's bedroom the walls reflect whale patterns from his whale-patterned nightlight.

In one frame Charlie lies on the ground looking at the stars and observing a constellation shaped like a whale. Did you know that there is a constellation called 'Cetus' sometimes called 'the whale' in English? [See: 'Cetus' *Wikipedia* <<u>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cetus</u>>]

Activity: Invite students to draw, paint, or collage a whale and a scene to accompany the **ballad** story they wrote above. Create a classroom mural using all the images. For guidance on how to draw this, see 'How to Draw a Humpback Whale', *YouTube* July 16, 2021 ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ujlx04NQ4eQ>

Create a classroom mural using all the images. [See also Worksheet 1. below.]

<u>Activity</u>: Create a graphic novel/comic version of a scene in this book. [See **Bibliography**.] [See also **Worksheet 3**.]

CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

- 1. Listen to **songs** about whales. [See **Bibliography**.] Then create your own simple rhyming song together.
- 2. Create a **diorama** of Charlie and the whale. [See **Bibliography**.]
- 3. Create a whale mobile. [See Worksheet 4.]
- 4. Create a **poster** to advertise this book.
- 5. Create a **book trailer** to promote this book. [See **Bibliography**.]

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

<u>Activity</u>: Research the topics of whales; hobbies, pastimes and obsessions; oceans, marine life and seashores; imagination online.

Activity: Research the author and illustrator online. [See Bibliography.]

FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

- Research the work of Libby Gleeson. Compare *Charlie's Whale* to her other books.
- Research the work of Hannah Somerville. Compare Charlie's Whale to her other books.
- Compare *Charlie's Whale* to other picture books that feature whales such as those listed in the **Bibliography**. What are the similarities and differences?
- Investigate any topic beyond those in these notes which you consider is suggested by this text.

CONCLUSION

Charlie's Whale is a book which is perfectly in tune with young children's interests and temperaments. It is a celebration of a child's passion for whales, and of the power of the imagination.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Libby Gleeson AM has published over 30 popular, highly acclaimed books for children and teenagers. Libby has been a teacher and lecturer and contributes regularly to national conferences. She chaired the Australian Society of Authors from 1999–2001. Her books have been shortlisted numerous times for the Children's Book Council of Australia Awards and Libby has won five times with *Hannah Plus One* (Fiction for Young Readers Book of the Year 1997), *An Ordinary Day* (Picture Book of the Year 2002), *Amy and Louis* (Early Childhood Book of the Year 2007), *Go to Sleep, Jessie!* (Early Childhood Book of the Year 2015) and *The Cleo Stories Part 1: The Necklace and the Present* (Fiction for Young Readers Book of the Year 2015). In 2013 *Red* won the Prime Minister's Literary Award and in 2015 she received the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award.

Libby received the prestigious CBCA NSW Lady Cutler Award for Services to Children's Literature in 1997. In 2007 she was appointed a member of the Order of Australia and she won the 2011 Dromkeen Medal, awarded for contributions to children's literature. Libby was also recently nominated by IBBY Australia for the Hans Christian Andersen Award (Writing) 2020. Visit her website: <u>http://www.libbygleeson.com.au/</u>

See also: 'Writing Western Sydney: the Readings Libby Gleeson reads from Amy and Louis' *YouTube* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0At4K4fM6NU>

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Hannah Sommerville is a best-selling picture book illustrator who creates enchanting watercolour, gouache and digital illustrations in her home on the South Coast of NSW. Hannah earned a Bachelor of Creative Arts (Visual Arts and Graphic Design) at the University of Wollongong in 2006.

Hannah began illustrating in 2010 after the arrival of her young children from whom she draws inspiration. She is a storyteller who enjoys creating picture books that capture the imagination, tenderness and playfulness that surround children and family life. Her picture book *Digby & Claude*, written by Emma Allen, was selected for the CBCA 2019 Notables list. *Anisa's Alphabet*, written by Mike Dumbleton, was selected for the CBCA 2021 Notables list.

Visit her website: https://www.hannahsommerville.com/



WORKSHEETS

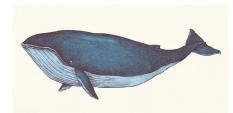
WORKSHEET 1. COMPLETE THIS IMAGE

Finish the incomplete sketch below and draw an underwater landscape to around the whale. Add other sea creatures and details based on what you observed in the images within books you have read. Use coloured pencils, texta pens or watercolours to paint the image. You may wish to use collage as well.



WORKSHEET 2. WHALE QUIZ

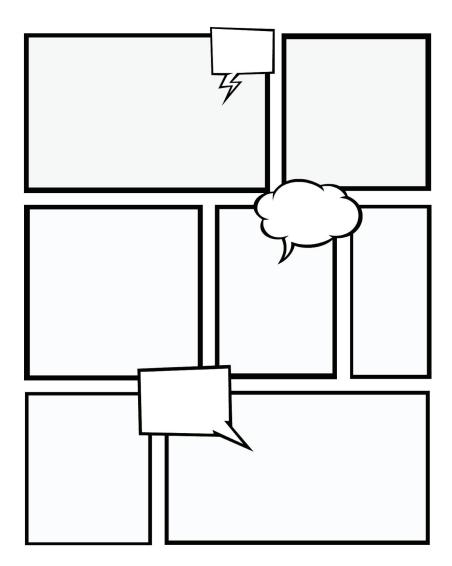
- 1. When whales leap out of the water what is that movement called?
- 2. What word is used to describe a whale raising its tail out of the water?
- 3. Which whale has the largest flippers?
- 4. What is a group of whales called?
- 5. What do we call the lobes at the end of a whale's tail?
- 6. What products do humans hunt whales for?
- 7. What are the fierce orcas sometimes known as?
- 8. Which whale is the largest animal to have ever lived on earth?
- 9. What is a scientific name for whales?
- 10. How many species of whale are there?
- 11. What two main types of whales are there?
- 12. The narwhal's name is derived from an Old Norse word meaning what?



Answers: 1. Breaching 2. Flippering 3. Humpback whale 4. A pod 5. The two lobes at the end of a whale's tail are called flukes. 6. Blubber (for oil, soap and paint) and baleen, a hard tissue inside the Humpback's mouth (for making fishing rods, umbrella frames, tools, toys and piano key) 7. Killer whales 8. Blue whale 9. Cetaceans 10. Around ninety 11. Baleen whales and toothed whales 12. 'Corpse whale', because its skin colour resembles that of a drowned sailor

WORKSHEET 3. GRAPHIC STORYTELLING

Create a graphic novel/comic interpretation of one of the scenes in this book. Use the layout below as the storyboard for your comic. Enlarge it on a photocopier to give you more space.



Comic Book Template viewed at: < http://www.pinterest.com/pin/365706432212821426/>

WORKSHEET 4. WHALE MOBILE

Glue the images below to craft paper and cut them out. Attach to fishing line and suspend from a wire coathanger at different lengths.



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