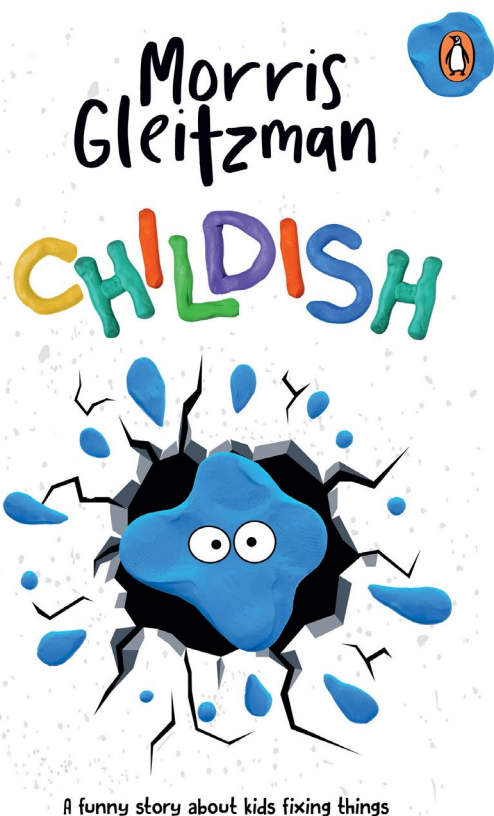




Teachers' Resources



PLOT SUMMARY

A funny story about kids fixing things.

childish

Me and Dot reckon it's just a word for being a child.

And having a crack at solving a big problem using only a really good friendship and the world's best dumplings and a thousand kilos of plasticine.

Like we're doing now.

RECOMMENDED FOR ages 7+ (years 2 to 8)

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CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- Learning areas: English, HASS, Science
- General capabilities: Literacy; Critical and creative thinking; Ethical understanding, Intercultural Understanding, Personal and Social Capability

Reasons for studying the book

Morris writes with his trademark humour but explores more serious topics including being in unfamiliar territory, trying to fit in, taking up a cause and making a difference, adapting to change. The text also develops understanding and respect for others, compromise, integrity and resilience.

THEMES

'Fish out of water', Belonging and identity, Family and friends, Grief/Loss, Community, Resilience, Country v City, Taking action

PUBLICATION DETAILS

ISBN: 9781761343759 (paperback); 9781760149383 (ebook); 9781761355776 (audio book).

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Childish

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Morris Gleitzman grew up in England and came to Australia when he was sixteen. After university he worked for ten years as a screenwriter. Then he had a wonderful experience. He wrote a novel for young people. Now, after 45 books, he's one of Australia's most popular authors. He was appointed the Australian Children's Laureate for 2018–2019.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

What inspires you as a writer?

I've always been inspired by problems and how vital they are to stories. The bigger the problems, the better. The harder they are to solve or survive, the more creative the characters have to be, and the more interesting and fun the story is.

Sometimes in stories for young people, problems that are huge for the young characters don't seem big at all to the adult characters. Which is yet another problem for the young characters. They have to be extra creative. Sometimes large amounts of dumplings and plasticine are needed.

I've always believed that learning how to solve problems, big ones and small ones, is a superpower worth having. Not just for fixing things in our own lives. Also for helping other people with their problems and getting invited to their birthday parties. And maybe one day, joining with lots of other people to have a crack at fixing one of those really big global problems. You know what they are, and you've read heaps of stories, so what's stopping you?

Writing Style

Written in first-person narrative style, the author uses a number of literary techniques and devices including: idioms, metaphors/similes, imagery, puns, descriptive and emotive vocabulary. There is an emphasis on humour although much of the narrative has a focus on serious topics.

Before Reading

- Establish a class learning wall to record the journey of the novel study. Record answers, observations etc on the Learning Wall throughout.
- Organise a bulk loan of Morris Gleitzman books from the school library.

Topic 1: Childish

Ask students to consider the title. How would they define the meaning of the word 'childish'? Have any of the students been described as childish e.g. by a cross parent or teacher?

1. How does it make one feel to be called childish? What is the intention of the person using the term?
2. What do you think people mean when they call somebody childish? Is all behaviour by children childish?
3. Has anyone ever observed childish behaviour from an adult? What was this like?



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Topic 2: Fish out of Water

Introduce or revise the literary term 'trope'. Tell the students that one theme explored in the novel is the 'fish out of water' trope i.e. a character who is put into a situation that is new or unfamiliar and their self-discovery, growth and challenges as they navigate this. There are typically humorous incidents, moments of tension or drama but also opportunities for the character to develop new outlooks or perspectives.

1. Who in the class has been in the situation of 'fish out of water'? Perhaps starting a new school, sporting team or other activity?
2. What about the new situation made it so difficult? Often this is because of contrast between the previous and the now – because everything is very different.
3. What helped to adapt to the new situation? What or who were the main things that made the new situation easier?

Topic 3: Country v City

Students might be familiar with the Aesop fable [The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse](#). This narrative is also about the contrast between country and city.

1. If the students are in a country school, what do they know of the city? And vice versa.
2. What would they predict as being very different from one setting to the other?
3. How would students react if they were suddenly moved from one to the other? What kind of emotions would they experience? What would they miss? What would they enjoy?
4. Establishing a communication between classes in each could be a useful extension.

Topic 4: Self-reliance/Resilience

It would be reasonable to say that Arkie has an attitude of resilience and also understands being self-sufficient, due to his country upbringing.

1. What reasons are there for country (especially isolated) people being more self-sufficient?
2. Arkie is sure his parents would take action about the potholes. Why is he so convinced?
3. What does it say about Arkie that he takes up the challenge himself?

During Reading

Literacy

- The author uses the 'show don't tell' technique skilfully from the outset. Pause at the end of p 3 and discuss what readers already ascertain. In particular, consider this quote: 'I'm not really used to streets yet, not even in general. Out where I come from we don't need them. We've got plenty of dirt tracks. Which some day might be mud tracks if we're lucky.' [p 3]
- Readers should be able to identify that Arkie has come from the country to the city recently. This is possibly because there is a drought. We also know that he's made one friend (Dot) and that he is not used to take-away food. Make notes of the other references to the country and Arkie's newness to city life.
- Note other examples of this technique throughout the text. Introduce or revise figurative language techniques.
- There are numerous examples of idioms throughout the text. Ask students to provide meanings. Have students identify others as



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they read, note these and record or research meanings.

Idiom	Meaning
On the house (p 5)	
stamp on [someone's] toes (p 63)	
Wing it (p 79)	

- Puns are also figurative language. Arkie's Nan provides a couple: *any wella and I'd be a shampoo* [p 12], *a wet-naan nan* [p 69]. Have students identify these and any others they might find. Can they come up with their own examples?
- What other figurative language types do students know? Can they find examples of these in the text as they read? Record these with type and meaning on the learning wall or in workbooks.

Australian Slang: Introduce or revise the term *vernacular*. Have students note these examples, guess the meaning and then check/research to confirm. Can they find others in the text? What others do they know?

- *like a spring roll in the deep fryer* (p 14)
- *Gaffer* (p 6)
- *dream about the jokers* (p 11)
- *ripper* (p 12)
- *we'll be hoofing* (p 13)
- *The front wheel's cactus* (p 14)
- *I'll give it a crack* (p 17)
- *hospitals here are absolute crackers* (p 14)

After Reading Discussions and activities

Drought: More of Arkie's background is revealed as the novel continues. Readers learn of the drought and that Arkie's parents are trying to sell the farm to support his need for a 'real' school rather than satellite school. The drought is not so much the reason for the sale as an impediment to it.

- Drought is a common occurrence in many parts of Australia and has affected many families.
- In pairs or small groups have students research one such drought event, and create a presentation that provides knowledge of this, how it affected people/families, what was the eventual outcome, what is happening now in that particular location?
- The [National Museum of Australia](#) has useful historical background.
- **Nan's Motto:** This is adapted from what is commonly called the Serenity Prayer. In class discussion, unpack this for meaning. What makes it so applicable within the context of the narrative? Consider Nan's grief, Arkie's anxiety, his parents' stress over the farm, the issue with the potholes etc.
- Have students create their own inspirational motto and use the same



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technique of words collaged (this could be done digitally or in hardcopy).

- Consider Arkie's actions regarding the potholes. He feels so strongly about the issue, he embarks on a campaign to 'fix it'.
 - Detail the actions he takes, in spite of his unfamiliarity with both the topic and his new situation i.e. stepping out of his comfort zone.
 - Have any students been in similar situations? Discuss.
 - How might this inspire others?
 - Create a character arc that shows Arkie's growth throughout the narrative.
- **Young Achievers/Activists:** As a research topic, investigate other young people who have seen a problem and taken action to fix it e.g. Greta Thunberg, Malala Yousafzai, William Kamkwamba, Gitanjali Rao, Anna Du, Ryan Honary. Rebecca Young. Internet searches will find many more, some as young as Arkie.
 - In pairs or small groups create a multi-media presentation on the chosen person. This could be part of a culminating event or expo.
- **Plasticine:** Invented by William Harbutt in 1897 it is made from calcium salts, petroleum jelly and fatty acids. It is still very popular today for modelling. Many students will know it from film/TV shows like Wallace & Gromit, or from previous play. Playdough is similar and can be home-made.
 - Start a class Plasticine Club.
 - Model a scene from the narrative. Have others guess which part of the story it represents.
- **Dot's Dumplings:** Arkie is pretty keen on the different take-away foods he tries out with Nan but the dumplings are a favourite, especially learning to make them.
 - Dumplings are part of many different cuisines. Read more about dumplings of the world here.
 - Find recipes or 'how-to's. Write and illustrate a class recipe book.
 - Script and film a cooking segment on how to make dumplings.
 - Invite a parent or local restaurateur to demonstrate and teach a 'how-to' session.
- **Local Authorities:** Invite representatives from local council and utility companies to visit and expand on their commitment to local issues. Students can prepare questions for this.
- **Taking Action:** As a class, pairs, small groups or individuals identify a local concern which needs to be addressed or



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supported e.g. environmental damage or dangerous street crossings.

- Undertake some action research to identify areas of responsibility, possible solutions and relevant authorities.
- Collate research and develop a strategy to advance awareness and potentially solve the problem.
- Create a public awareness campaign and deliver it.
- **Media Interview:** In pairs, script and film an interview for TV as either part of the campaign for students' choice of issue or a summing up of what has/might be achieved.
- **Create one-pager summaries:** Create these in pavement chalk for an outdoor gallery walk. Examples available online.
- **Culminating Activity:** Hold a class expo for peers or parents to include these completed activities. Serve with dumplings!

KEY QUOTES

1. 'I've got my own library card and my own 150cc trail bike, and I know how to pick up a snake . . . What did the old bloke mean when he said there's lots to learn about the city?' (p 7)
2. "'The reason why the council and utility company people don't know how to be flexible and generous and grown up," says Sharon, "is because they're greedy-guts, bossy-boots, stupid-heads, pooey-bums and idiots." I stare at her, shocked. "And there's worse," she moans. "As well as that, they are just so, so, so, so childish."' (p 66)
3. "'So childish," groans the Senior Public Works Liaison Manager at the next utility company. "So totally and utterly childish."' (p 66)
4. "'How can people who are so childish," says the Senior Public Works Liaison Manager, "get such senior positions in major organisations?"' (p 72)
5. "' . . . I admire your childish determination . . . "' (p 128)
6. 'The people in charge of the sunken manhole covers, the people who could stop other kids ending up like Dot, didn't bother to come. They piked out.' (p 93)
7. 'So I don't say that sooner or later could be too late. That we need to do something even sooner than that. Because very soon, today or tomorrow, another kid at this school could crash into a totally unexpected hole and their life could be ruined.' (p 97)
8. "'Arkie tried his best," she says. "That's all us kids can do. There are just too many problems that grown-ups aren't handling. It's not their fault. They're being struck down by a terrible illness. The AGM pandemic. Angry Grumpy Moaning. It's sweeping the world, and soon us kids will have to do everything. Including find a cure."' (pp 110–11)
9. "'And so," says Gavin, "to sum up, this has been the very scary story of what can happen to a simple, well-meaning, but perhaps slightly foolish, maybe even thoughtless, post on social media. How it gets taken on a long global journey of many small exaggerations, much uninformed disapproval, plus heated arguments, wild reinterpretations, malignant condemnations, and finally vicious desires, globally shared, to hurt a child. Thank you."' (p 131)
10. 'People who see them won't forget it. People who don't understand what it is will want to find out. People who don't really care will still find themselves having a squiz. And when the plasticine's done its job, and made them look, and is taken away, and the holes are still there, people will ask why.' (p 151)



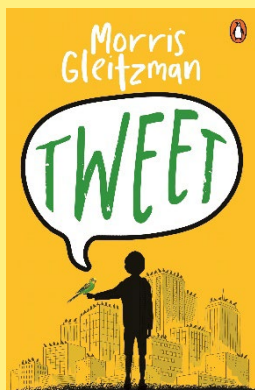
One-Pager Biography

Copyright Free: https://www.worksheeto.com/post_author-biography-worksheet_551166/



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Further reading from Penguin Random House



Tweet
by Morris Gleitzman

Birds. Lots of birds.

The people of the world are puzzled. Their feathered friends are trying to tell them something, and they're not sure what it is.

Then a boy and his pet budgie discover the secret.

Join Jay and Clyde, and their friends Maxine and Dora, on an exciting, funny, risky journey to save their families.

And every other family too.

A boy and his beloved budgie are thrust into an epic adventure that could change everything. Absolutely everything.

Teachers' resources available.



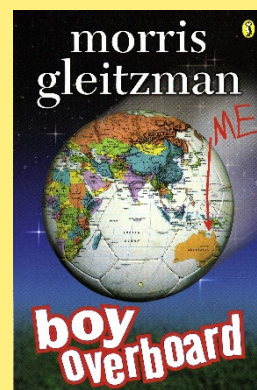
Once
by Morris Gleitzman

Once I escaped from an orphanage to find my Mum and Dad. Once I saved a girl called Zelda from a burning house Once I made a Nazi with toothache laugh. My name is Felix. This is my story.

The powerful and moving story of a young boy named Felix who, during the Holocaust, tries to survive and make sense of the world around him.

The gripping first instalment in Morris Gleitzman's multi-award-winning Felix series, followed by *Then, After, Soon, Maybe, Now* and *Always*.

Teachers' resources available.



Boy Overboard
by Morris Gleitzman

Jamal and Bibi have a dream.

To lead Australia to soccer glory in the next World Cup. But first they must face landmines, pirates, storms and assassins.

Can Jamal and his family survive their incredible journey and get to Australia? Sometimes, to save the people you love, you have to go overboard.

With its witty humor and powerful themes of courage, determination, and the importance of family, *Boy Overboard* is sure to leave you laughing, crying, and cheering for Jamal and his journey.

Teachers' resources available.



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Order form

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
Childish	Morris Gleitzman	9781761343759	2-8	\$16.99		
Tweet	Morris Gleitzman	9781761343742	4-8	\$16.99		
Once	Morris Gleitzman	9780143301950	4-8	\$16.99		
Boy Overboard	Morris Gleitzman	9780141308388	4-8	\$16.99		
TOTAL						

NAME: _____

SCHOOL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

STATE: _____

POSTCODE: _____

TEL: _____

EMAIL: _____

ACCOUNT NO.: _____

PURCHASE ORDER NO.: _____

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