



EK BOOKS TEACHER NOTES & RESOURCES

Title: Tomorrow Girl
Subtitle: A Tale of Mindfulness
Author: Vikki Conley
Illustrator: Penelope Pratley
Publisher: EK Books
Price: ANZ \$24.99 | USA \$18.99 | CA \$24.99 | UK £10.99
ISBN: 9781925820362
Publication date: Feb 2021
Audience age: 4-7 years
Key Curriculum Areas: English, Humanities, Mathematics, and Social Sciences, Critical and Creative Thinking, Visual Arts, Health and Physical Education



SYNOPSIS:

Catch up with a girl called Tomorrow – you’d better be quick because she’s always in a hurry! ‘You’ll catch up with the next day if you keep rushing,’ says Tomorrow’s mother. But when Tomorrow meets worrywart Yesterday and trips over thoughtful Today, her whole world begins to slow down.

Tomorrow Girl is a quirky tale delivering a timely reminder about the importance of mindfulness and what can happen when we allow ourselves time to slow down amidst the modern-day rush. It’s brimming with wonderful, teachable moments for children to reflect on how they can be more mindful in their everyday lives and discover new friendships just by being in the moment.

THEMES:

Mindfulness. Worry/Anxiety. Friendship. Connection. Slowing down and being in the moment. Imagination. Natural world.

SELLING POINTS:

- Encourages kids to be more mindful in their everyday life and to remember to live in the moment.
- Unique and quirky characters engage, excite and stimulate discussion for young readers.
- Themes of mindfulness, worry, friendship, connection and slowing down are topical, as anxiety spikes among primary-school-aged children.
- A timely tale, as more and more people begin to rush through life, causing our kids to forget how they can live in the moment.

ILLUSTRATION STYLE:

To illustrate *Tomorrow Girl*, Penelope has used traditional watercolour techniques.



WRITING STYLE:

Tomorrow Girl's narrative is crafted in delightful prose. It hops along, reflecting the high energy of its main character, peppered with a generous use of dialogue and action-oriented concrete verbs (e.g. burst, tumble, march). The story flows like a conversation in the playground. The characters interact with brief questions and statements, just like young children do as they explore their world. It is a curious and thought-provoking text that will stimulate conversations about mindfulness, personalities and friendships. The story's themes can be explored on a variety of levels appropriate for pre-schoolers up to early primary students.

AUTHOR MOTIVATION:

Vikki is an intrepid traveller and nature lover. She loves to climb mountains, search for platypus, and hunt for inspiration in far-flung places. In the natural world, Vikki loves seeking out beautiful places and moments to be still, be quiet and listen to the world around her. Many stories ideas often come to her during these meditative moments when her mind is clear and calm. Inspired by a country- and sea-going childhood, Vikki writes children's books that celebrate the spirit of wonder, adventure and freedom that she wishes every child could enjoy.

INTERVIEW:

AUTHOR

What is the inspiration for this story?

Tomorrow Girl was inspired by a line in a collection of stories called *A Necklace of Raindrops*, by Joan Aiken. The line said something about "rushing into the next day." For me, it triggered a thought process about what it would be like to run so fast that you caught up with the next day. From there, *Tomorrow Girl* was born.

I was delighted to come up with a character that could tell a story about mindfulness. I believe mindfulness is one of the most powerful skills that children and adults can learn in this busy modern world. Research now shows that mindfulness, particularly meditation, can make significant and positive changes in the brain. In my personal life, mindfulness and meditation have helped when life becomes busy or sad. It's also a great tool for creativity!

I am also saddened by the many small wonders in the world that are being missed and forgotten amongst busy lifestyles, wonders such as nature, interpersonal connections, sounds, touch, expressions, and love. *Tomorrow Girl* is a small reminder of how much joy there is to be gained through wonder and discovery, and of how easily these things can be unlocked by simply being in the moment and slowing down, so that you can begin to notice the things around you.

What was the most rewarding part of this project?

Remembering what it was like to be a child like the character Today – gazing up at the clouds, catching tadpoles and discovering baby birds high up in the treetops!



What was the most challenging part of this project?

Creating a story about mindfulness that would be accessible for this age group. I hoped that using interesting names like Tomorrow, Yesterday and Today would be an engaging concept for children to explore and understand the idea of being in the moment.

ILLUSTRATOR

What media do you use to create your illustrations? Briefly describe your process.

I always use pencil to sketch my initial ideas and storyboard when I first read a manuscript. The composition of the page layout is then refined and pencil is used to draw an outline using varying line and weight. When colouring the illustrations, I use a delicate combination of watercolour washes to create light airy shades, tones and tints. Using several wash layers and adding individual brushstrokes allows me to create detailing and depth within the illustration – like the detail on Tomorrow’s orange shorts.

What was the most rewarding part of this project?

I adored illustrating Tomorrow Girl. It is the first time I have ever painted a landscape for a book (I was quite worried about getting that right). Seeing all the illustrations come together so beautifully with the Vikki’s gorgeous text is an absolute joy. I really enjoyed planning Tomorrow’s wardrobe and giving each character a colour profile to match their personality. I also loved adding in a little sub-story for Today with his frog and as soon as I read the manuscript, I knew Tomorrow had to have a pair of cardboard tube binoculars.

What was the most challenging part of this project?

The most challenging part of this project was getting the perspective right in the landscapes and working out how to paint cloud dragons.

AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND:

Vikki Conley is a children’s author, content creator and intrepid adventurer. She has worked as a professional writer for two decades across three continents and is a CBCA Notable author. Vikki lives in a house built largely of recycled materials in Victoria, Australia. She is the author of *Ella and Mrs Gooseberry* (EK Books).

Penelope Pratley has been mucking about with paint since she was a small girl. She has taught art from preschool to high school. She now works as an illustrator, under her business Penelope’s Nest.

TEACHER ACTIVITIES/NOTES:

N.B. These questions and activities can be adapted to suit the experience and ability of students.

Discussion:

Before Reading

- Look at the cover of Tomorrow Girl. What do you see?
- How do you think the child is feeling? Why might she be feeling that way?
- What does the word 'mindfulness' mean? What kinds of things do you do to be 'mindful' or aware of what's happening in the moment?
- What do you think this story is about? What does the cover make you wonder about?
- Are you someone who likes to rush, or do you prefer to take things slow?

After Reading

- What was the story about?
- Who are the characters in the story? What do their names (Tomorrow, Yesterday and Today) tell you about their personalities?
- What do you like about the illustrations? What do you notice about the way the characters are dressed? The items they're carrying? Their body language?
- What do you notice about Tomorrow in the pictures as she is rushing to school?
- What does Mum mean when she tells Tomorrow, "You'll catch up with the next day if you keep rushing."?
- How do you think Yesterday is feeling? Why is she avoiding climbing and sandpits after getting hurt days before? Do you think Yesterday could learn to join in and try new things?
- At first, why doesn't Tomorrow notice Today and the things in nature he is trying to show her?
- How do you think Today was being 'mindful'? What did he teach Tomorrow about 'slowing down'?
- What do you think Tomorrow learned about nature and about making friends?
- Which character in the story do you think you relate to the most? Why?
- What kinds of things do you like about nature? Watching clouds? Climbing trees? Discovering wildlife? Anything else? How do these things make you feel?



Activities:

ENGLISH

Foundation Curriculum Links

Responding to literature: Share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts ([ACELT1783](#))

Examining literature: Identify some features of texts including events and characters and retell events from a text ([ACELT1578](#))

Interacting with others: Listen to and respond orally to texts and to the communication of others in informal and structured classroom situations ([ACELY1646](#))

Interpreting, analysing, evaluating: Use comprehension strategies to understand and discuss texts listened to, viewed or read independently ([ACELY1650](#))

Creating texts: Create short texts to explore, record and report ideas and events using familiar words and beginning writing knowledge ([ACELY1651](#))

Years 1 and 2 Curriculum Links

Language – Text structure and organisation: Understand that different types of texts have identifiable text structures and language features that help the text serve its purpose ([ACELA1463](#))

Expressing and developing ideas: Explore differences in words that represent people, places and things (nouns, including pronouns), happenings and states (verbs), qualities (adjectives) and details such as when, where and how (adverbs) ([ACELA1452](#))

Creating literature: Innovate on familiar texts by experimenting with character, setting or plot ([ACELT1833](#))

Creative Writing:

- Narrative - Imagine you were one of the characters from the story, Tomorrow Girl. Think about a problem they face, for example, Tomorrow rushing and missing out, or Yesterday worrying about an event in the future. What adventures could be happening around them? Will it be a funny, happy, or reflective story? How does the character feel throughout the story? What could they do to solve the problem?
- Persuasive – Write a persuasive text from one character to another, convincing them to join your adventure. For example, if you were Today, how would you persuade Yesterday to climb a tree? Fish for tadpoles? Build a sandcastle?
- Instructional – Write an instructional piece explaining, step by step, how to perform a particular task. For example, ‘How to Catch Tadpoles’, ‘How to Spot Cloud Shapes’, ‘How to Tie Your Shoelaces’.

Comprehension:

Answer the questions based on the events in the story.

- What are the names of the three main characters?
- Match the words to the correct sentence: Tomorrow is good at _____. Yesterday is good at _____. Today is good at _____. (rushing through life, worrying about things, connecting with nature)
- What did Today see in the sky?
- What animal did Today see in the river? A. crocodile. B. otter. C. duck. D. turtle.
- Draw a picture of the things Today and Tomorrow could see from the top of the tree.
- What did Today teach Tomorrow about 'slowing down'?

Adjectives:

Complete the table with adjectives (describing words) to describe each of the character profiles. Draw a picture of each child underneath. See BLM 1.

Thinking Tools:

Use graphic organisers, such as a Mind Map or a Venn Diagram, to organise your thinking. For example, separate the differences and similarities between each of the characters, Tomorrow, Today and Yesterday. See BLM 2.

MATHEMATICS

Foundation, Year 1 and 2 Curriculum Links:

Measurement and Geometry

Using units of measurement: Connect days of the week to familiar events and actions ([ACMMG008](#))

Use a calendar to identify the date and determine the number of days in each month ([ACMMG041](#))

Year 1 and 2 Curriculum Links:

Statistics and Probability

Chance: Identify practical activities and everyday events that involve chance. Describe outcomes as 'likely' or 'unlikely' and identify some events as 'certain' or 'impossible' ([ACMSP047](#))

Time - Calendar of Events:

- Create a calendar including all the days of the week from Sunday to Monday. Fill in your calendar with daily routines and special events. What will you plan for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and so on? You can include fun activities, like 'cloud watching', 'dress up day', or 'bird watching'.
- Discuss with a friend, using 'time' language, 'what happened yesterday?', 'what are you doing tomorrow?', 'what is something you have enjoyed today?'.

Chance and Probability:

- Devise some questions around the themes of the book and ask students to match them using 'probability' language, such as 'will happen', 'might happen', 'won't happen', 'certain', 'likely', 'equally likely', 'unlikely', 'impossible'.
 - o Dragons will come down from the sky.
 - o I will see birds tomorrow.
 - o I will get sand in my eye today.
 - o A frog will jump into my backpack.
 - o There will be clouds in the sky.

SCIENCE

Foundation, Years 1 and 2 Curriculum Links:

Science Understanding – Biological sciences: Living things have basic needs, including food and water ([ACSSU002](#))

Living things live in different places where their needs are met ([ACSSU211](#))

Earth and space sciences: Observable changes occur in the sky and landscape ([ACSSU019](#))

Chemical sciences: Different materials can be combined for a particular purpose ([ACSSU031](#))

Animal habitats:

- Take a stroll outdoors and observe some animals in nature. Take notes and/or photos. Be careful not to touch!
- Choose an animal you would like to study. Research its habitat, life cycle, appearance, or amazing fun facts to report on.
- Create a booklet, poster or other visual presentation to share with your friends. Be sure to include a heading, sub-headings, photos, captions, diagrams, a map, etc. for your information report.

Cloud in a Jar Experiment:

www.funlearningforkids.com/rain-cloud-jar-science-experiment

- Explore clouds in this hands-on weather experiment. You might like to record your predictions, findings and learnings using the headings: 'Tomorrow' (What I think will happen), 'Today' (What I observed) and 'Yesterday' (What I learned).
- Materials needed include: a large jar, shaving cream, food colouring, and pipettes or droppers.
- Instructions: Add some food colouring to a cup of water. Fill the jar $\frac{3}{4}$ full of water. Spray a pile of shaving cream into the jar. Using the dropper, squirt coloured water on top of the shaving cream, slowly, two or three times. Observe what is happening below the cloud.
- The Science – the shaving cream represents the clouds and the water represents the air. The coloured water represents rain. As the cloud gets heavy, it can no longer hold the water.



VISUAL ARTS

Foundation, Years 1 and 2 Curriculum Links:

Use and experiment with different materials, techniques, technologies and processes to make artworks ([ACAVAM107](#))

Create and display artworks to communicate ideas to an audience ([ACAVAM108](#))

Landscape Art:

Think of or imagine your favourite place in the outdoors. What can you see?

Create a peaceful, natural scene of a beautiful landscape using your favourite medium or multi-media. Materials could include paint, pencil, oil pastels, paper collage or natural materials.

Paper Roll Binoculars:

Tomorrow wears binoculars in the story, as she is always looking forward. Create your own binoculars to observe the world around you using paper rolls, coloured paper or paint, sticky tape and some string.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Foundation, Years 1 and 2 Curriculum Links:

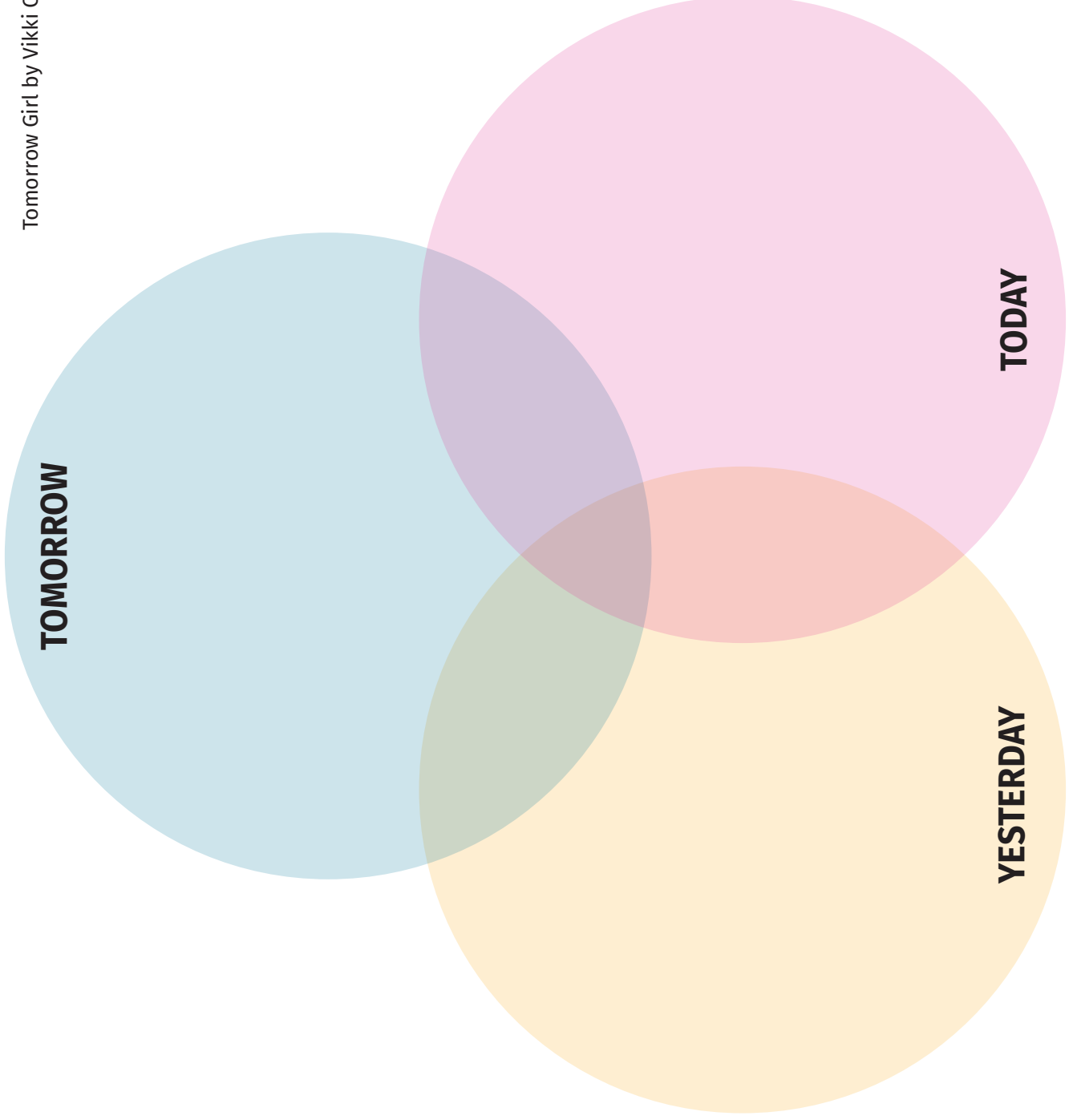
Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing: Identify and practise emotional responses that account for own and others' feelings ([ACPPS020](#))

Contributing to healthy and active communities: Identify and explore natural and built environments in the local community where physical activity can take place ([ACPPS023](#))

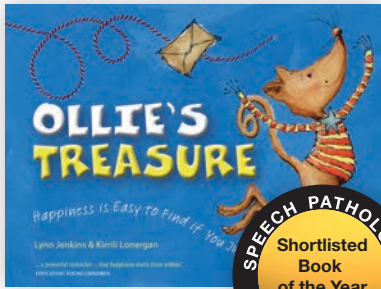
Mindfulness Ideas:

- Cloud watching.
- Listening to the leaves rustle in the wind.
- Watching tadpoles, fish, or other creatures swim about in a river.
- Drawing or colouring in patterns from nature.
- Use 'spidey-senses' to focus on the smells, sights, sounds, tastes and touches in the world around you.
- Creating a mindfulness jar with water and glitter, or flowers – swirl your upset thoughts away.
- Nature walk to observe birds, creepy-crawlies, and other animals.

YESTERDAY	TODAY	TOMORROW



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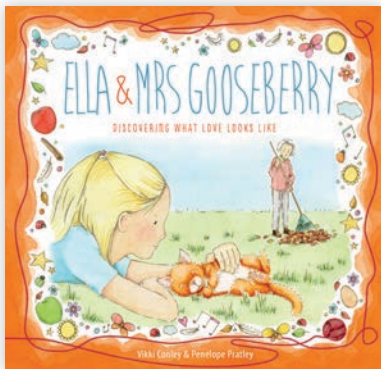
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