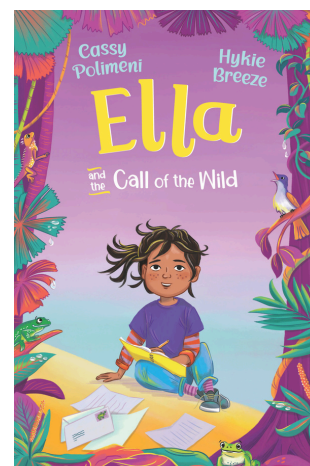


Ella and the Call of the Wild

Written by Cassy Polimeni, illustrated by Hykie Breeze

Synopsis

When Ella's class is assigned pen pals from the other side of the country, she has no idea what to write. What would her pen pal, Billie, want to know about her? And what could they possibly have in common when their lives seem worlds apart? Everything changes when Ranger Dan visits Ella's school with a very unusual co-worker: Finn, a frog that has accidentally travelled across the country in a banana box. When Ella discovers Finn is from the rainforest near Billie's school, she knows exactly what to write! Before long, Ella and Billie can't stop exchanging letters, especially after discovering their shared passion for frogs and nature.



ISBN: 9781760803360

A delightful story about community, conservation and connection, *Ella and the Call of the Wild* celebrates the power of friendship and finding your voice.

About the series

Ella and the Frogs is a four-book series by Cassy Polimeni, illustrated by Hykie Breeze, that will appeal to 5 to 9 year olds who are interested in nature, animals, and science. If a child loved *What Zola Did*, *Lemonade Jones* and *Violet Mackerel* they'll love *Ella and the Frogs*.

Why frogs? With extreme sensitivity to changes in their environment, frogs are the canaries in the coal mine of climate change. Places where frog populations are in decline tend to be where the environment is most at risk. They can be found in rural and urban settings, so are accessible for kids from all walks of life. Connecting with nature has been proven to positively impact kids' moods, confidence, sense of empathy and social responsibility.

Themes

- Frogs
- Action
- Rainforests
- Ecosystems
- Biodiversity
- Friendship
- Community
- Pen pals
- Personal Strengths
- Courage
- Resilience

Links to the Australian Curriculum

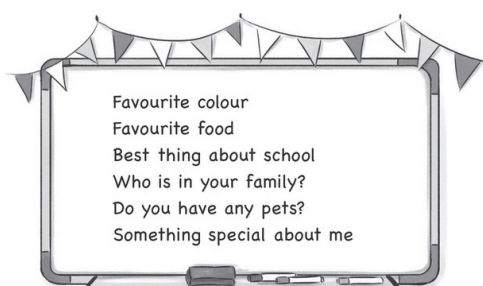
Learning Area	Year level
English	Foundation–3
HASS	Foundation–3
Science	Foundation–3
Health and Physical Education	Foundation–3

Writing Style

Written in first person, present tense, *Ella and the Call of the Wild* is an engaging and accessible story for readers aged 5 to 9. Told across ten short chapters, it is well suited to independent reading while also making an excellent read-aloud text. The relatable characters and compelling plot draw readers into Ella's world, while effective figurative language helps them vividly imagine her experiences and connect with her emotions. Charming illustrations complement the narrative beautifully, providing additional insight into the characters, settings and events. Through its references to frogs, ecosystems, biodiversity and rainforests, *Ella and the Call of the Wild* also highlights the importance of finding your voice and demonstrates the power of taking action to create positive change.

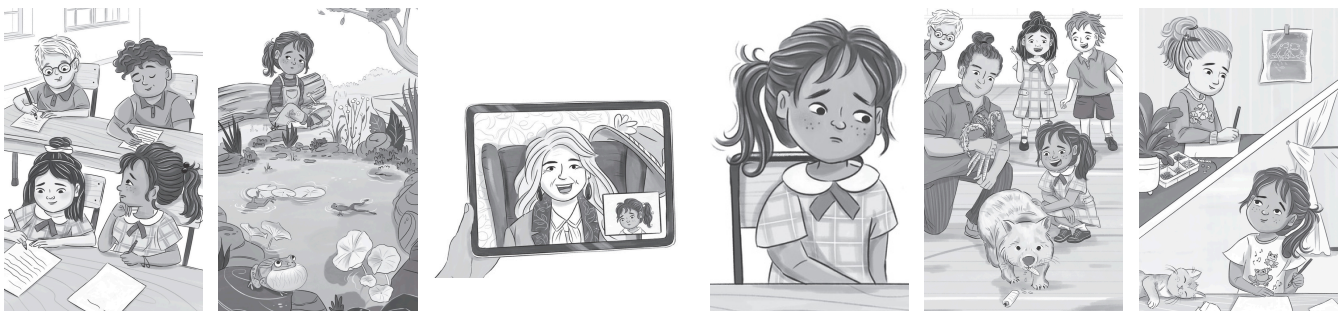
Study notes

- Before reading, examine the cover of *Ella and the Call of the Wild*. What Ella is doing? Describe her facial expression. What clues do we get about the plot and themes of the story? Make predictions about this book.
- Why does Ella find it so difficult to write her first letter to Billie? What advice helps her? Imagine you are Ella. Write this letter to Billie.
- Have you ever written or received a letter? What is unique about this form of communication? Examine examples of personal letters, discussing their features. Include the letters that Ella and Billie exchange in Chapter 5. What do you notice about the 'voice' used in these letters? Why does the writer often ask questions of the reader? Using the prompts given by Ms Cleven below, write a letter that introduces yourself to someone you've never met. (See letter template at the end of the document).



Study notes

- Make connections with another class, either from your own school, town/city, or from further afield. Exchange letters with pen pals from this class.
- Why does Ella find it difficult to share what's special about herself? How does she eventually overcome this challenge? What's special about you? Share in a reflection.
- What are the students from Double Beach Primary doing to help protect the Daintree Rainforest (see pg 10)? What could you and your class do to protect an ecosystem in your local area?
- Why are rainforests so important (see pg 11)? Find out more about rainforests by conducting your own research. Share your findings in a multi-modal presentation or information report.
- Conduct and record an interview with a classmate about their family and favourite things. Listen to this recording. What is it like hearing your own voice? Why does it sound different to what you were expecting (see pg 25-26)? In a paragraph, explain why this happens. How does this help understand the different ways animals communicate with one another?
- Aunt Holly tells Ella that 'the things you love are what make you, you (pg 28). In a reflection, explain what she means. How is this true for you?
- Using the illustrations below as a guide, write a series of journal entries in the role of Ella to share your understanding of the text at these points in the story:



- What role does Ranger Dan play in *Ella and the Call of the Wild*? How would the story be different without him?
- Why does Ranger Dan choose Ella to feed the wombat (see pg 35)? Why is Mai so excited about this?
- In what ways is Mai a good friend to Ella? What makes a good friend?
- Ella learns that 'animals can't always use their voices, so sometimes they have to find other ways to communicate' (see pg 38). How do wombats do this? Read *The Diary of a Wombat* series by Jackie French (Angus & Robertson) to find out more about these fascinating creatures.
- How does meeting the tree frog, Finn, help Ella to find her voice?
- Why, when frogs like Finn are found away from their natural habitats, should they not be released into the local area? How do Ella and her friends help share this important message?

Study notes

- How does Ella feel when there's no letter from her pen pal? How do we know?
- Knowing that Finn is far from home, Ella wonders if he is lonely, 'calling out with no one to answer because the other frogs like him are too far away to hear' (pg 43). How does this show Ella's sensitivity and empathy?
- Ella receives a friendship bracelet from Billie. How is this used as an important narrative tool in *Ella and the Call of the Wild*?



- When at the fruit shop, Ella is told that 'one of the delivery workers found a green frog in a bunch of bananas this morning' (pg 56). Make predictions about what might happen next, giving reasons for your thinking.



- Why does Ella's mum decide to take Ella and Mai to the Haven Wildlife Sanctuary (see pg 61–62)? How does this help Ella? In the role of Ella, write a journal entry about your day there.



- With reference to the illustrations below, explain why Ella feels that the Banana Box frogs are a problem that is too big (see pg 70)? How does she overcome this?



Study notes

- Why does Ella say, 'I don't feel like a tiny raindrop anymore, I am part of the ecosystem. I know we can't fix everything but we can all do something. I have finally figured out how to use my voice. But I never would have guessed how far it would travel' (pg 91)? What has Ella learnt about herself in *Ella and the Call of the Wild*?
- What have you learnt about yourself from reading *Ella and the Call of the Wild*? Share in a reflection.
- Ella's actions result in a newspaper article, radio announcement, and television interview, all making the public aware of the Banana Box frogs. With a partner, choose one of these to recreate.



- Discuss the importance of Ranger Dan's statement that 'we all have a voice and it can be powerful to know how to use it' (pg 95). How is this reflected in *Ella and the Call of the Wild*?
- Ella says, 'animals can't talk like us so we have to listen carefully. Sometimes they need us to be their voice and speak up when they need help' (pg 99). How does she achieve this?
- What are ecosystems (see pg 10–11)? Why is it important that ecosystems are protected? What happens when parts of an ecosystem become threatened? What are the components of a rainforest ecosystem? Create a labelled diagram that show these.
- What is meant by the term biodiversity? Why is biodiversity so important?
- Read and summarise the fact sheets found at the end of the text.
- Read the other titles in the *Ella and the Frogs* series.
- Using the non-fiction book, *Seed to sky: life in the Daintree* by Pamela Freeman (Walker Books), practise taking notes using bullet points.
- Locate the Daintree Rainforest on a map of Australia. View online and/or print images of this forest. In addition, view the videos below. On a Y Chart, brainstorm words and phrases of what you would see, hear and feel in the rainforest. Write a description of this ecosystem. As an extension, use some figurative language to help bring this description to life.
 - <https://youtu.be/qSm93-hhZGg?si=OMvLy9iJkyLLoRYG>
 - https://youtu.be/D3weC0zYQvE?si=g7iWPtzq2ZJ_K71W
- As a companion text to *Ella and the Call of the Wild*, read *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* by Jeannie Baker (Julia MacRae). Create your own collage of a rainforest inspired by this book.

Study notes

- Time permitting, read *Wombat Warriors*, *Smooch & Rose*, *Mr Cassowary*, *Devils in Danger* or *Turtle Trackers* by Samantha Wheeler (UQP), all of which include children taking action to protect the environment. Discuss the similarities between Ella and the protagonist from your chosen novel.
- Make your own magic paintings by drawing a picture on white paper with a white crayon, then painting over it with watercolour paints. Make a classroom display of these magic paintings.
- How has Ella's character grown and changed throughout *Ella and the Call of the Wild*? Show this character analysis visually.
- Create a Thought Tunnel by having students form two lines facing one another. Choose volunteers to assume the roles of Ella, Ranger Dan and Billie. As these characters walk through the tunnel, allow students to ask questions of these characters to better unpack the plot, characters and themes of *Ella and the Call of the Wild*.
- Like Ella's class, enjoy a lesson outside during which you close your eyes and listen to the sounds of nature. What do you hear? Try the same experiment as Ella's class, seeing if you can tell who is speaking. How does this help Ms Cleven's point that we all have unique ways of communicating?
- In *Ella and the Call of the Wild*, we learn how some species communicate with one another. Based on an animal of your choice, research how it communicates. Share your findings in an infographic.
- Using the template at the end of this document, write a postcard to Mai about visiting the Daintree Rainforest with your family.
- Retell a part of this story from Finn's point of view.
- With a friend, retell the story of *Ella and the Call of the Wild* in a picture book.
- Create posters to publicise a class project of your own.
- Using the chapter headings and illustrations in the table below, create a Story Map to show your understanding of the main characters, settings and events of *Ella and the Call of the Wild*.

 1 Hearing Voices	 2 Guardians of the Forest	 3 Lost For Words	 4 Wild Things	 5 You've Got Mail
 6 Fruit Salad Surprise	 7 Frog Haven	 8 Lost Property	 9 Save the Frogs	 10 BREAKING NEWS STOWAWAYS SPARK REVOLUTION For the owner of Family Fruit and Veg, Tina D'Onofrio, stowaways are part of the job.

Study notes

- Discuss the use of figurative language throughout the text, and how it contributes to the story. Examples include:
 - 'Ms Cleven raises her arms like she is conducting an orchestra' pg 5.
 - 'Her footsteps are loud and crunchy as she walks across the gravel path' pg 5.
 - 'A voice mumbles, then laughs like a kookaburra' pg 6.
 - 'A picture flashes into my mind: Clara cartwheeling across the oval at lunch time, her hair billowing behind her like smoke' pg 6.
 - 'I can hear the smile in her voice' pg 6.
 - 'The voice is sweet and clear like maple syrup' pg 6.
 - 'Her voice warm like hot chocolate' pg 7.
 - 'Putting on a funny deep voice like an engine rumbling' pg 8.
 - 'The class buzzes with excitement' pg 10.
 - 'There are spiky lizards that look like bark' pg 12.
 - 'The papers jostle together and make a sound like someone whispering' pg 14.
 - 'Her voice sounds warm and sure like a fire crackling' pg 19.
 - 'When he's excited it sounds like he's shouting through a tunnel' pg 21.
 - 'Bubble Head, with his big throat that swells like a balloon when he croaks' pg 21.
 - 'She wrote so much the pink envelope puffs up like a pillow' pg 23.
 - 'A man enters wearing a pale snake around his neck like a scarf' pg 31.
 - 'Everyone starts talking at once, and voices bounce off the gym walls like a wave' pg 32.
 - 'I crane my neck like a lizard to see over the kids in front of me' pg 34.
 - 'A big hairy wombat slowly shuffles into view and noses the ground, like a very slow, sleepy dog' pg 34.
 - 'Dozens of hands shoot up in the air, waving like trees in a storm' pg 34.
 - 'We watch as she crunches and munches away until there are just a few flecks left on the floor, like orange sprinkles' pg 35.
 - 'The crayon sparkles on the page like a snail trail' pg 42.
 - 'My rainforest is almost invisible. Then I swoosh soft washes of green and gold over the top, like the light that dripped through the tree canopy in the video Ms Cleven showed us.' pg 42.
 - 'Happiness froths in me like a bubble bath overflowing' pg 44.
 - 'My stomach churns like a washing machine' pg 55.
 - 'Every leaf that blows across the car park looks like a frog' pg 58.
 - 'It's like searching for a needle in a haystack. Or a raindrop in a rainforest. I get a sinking feeling.' pg 76.
 - 'His little webbed feet like tiny pink suction cups' pg 77.

Other books in the series

- *Ella and the Amazing Frog Orchestra*
- *Ella and the Sleepover Safari*
- *Ella and the Mystery of the Missing Frogs*

Find out more or purchase online: <https://uwap.uwa.edu.au/collections/ella-and-the-frogs-series>

Links to the Australian Curriculum

Foundation

English

Language

- Explore the different contribution of words and images to meaning in stories and informative texts (ACELA1786)
- Understand that language can be used to explore ways of expressing needs, likes and dislikes (ACELA1429)

Literature

- Recognise that texts are created by authors who tell stories and share experiences that may be similar or different to students' own experiences (ACELT1575)
- Share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts (ACELT1783)
- Identify some features of texts including events and characters and retell events from a text (ACELT1578)

Literacy

- Listen to and respond orally to texts and to the communication of others in informal and structured classroom situations (ACELY1646)

Hass

- The places people live in and belong to, their familiar features and why they are important to people (ACHASSK015)
- Reflect on learning to propose how to care for places and sites that are important or significant (ACHASSI009)

Science

- Living things have basic needs, including food and water (ACSSU002)

Health and Physical Education

- Identify and describe emotional responses people may experience in different situations (ACPPS005)

Year 1

English

Language

- Compare different kinds of images in narrative and informative texts and discuss how they contribute to meaning (ACELA1453)

Literature

- Discuss how authors create characters using language and images (ACELT1581)
- Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts and share personal responses to these texts, making connections with students' own experiences (ACELT1582)

Literacy

- Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning about key events, ideas and information in texts that they listen to, view and read by drawing on growing knowledge of context, text structures and language features (ACELY1660)

Hass

- Explore a point of view (ACHASSI022)
- Draw simple conclusions based on discussions, observations and information displayed in pictures and texts and on maps (ACHASSI025)
- Reflect on learning to propose how to care for places and sites that are important or significant (ACHASSI026)

Science

- Living things live in different places where their needs are met (ACSSU211)
- People use science in their daily lives, including when caring for their environment and living things (ACSHE022)

Health and Physical Education

- Describe physical and social changes that occur as children grow older and discuss how family and community acknowledge these (ACPPS016)

Links to the Australian Curriculum

Year 2

English

Language

- Understand that different types of texts have identifiable text structures and language features that help the text serve its purpose (ACELA1463)
- Identify visual representations of characters' actions, reactions, speech and thought processes in narratives, and consider how these images add to or contradict or multiply the meaning of accompanying words (ACELA1469)

Literature

- Discuss how depictions of characters in print, sound and images reflect the contexts in which they were created (ACELT1587)
- Compare opinions about characters, events and settings in and between texts (ACELT1589)
- Discuss the characters and settings of different texts and explore how language is used to present these features in different ways (ACELT1591)

Literacy

- Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning and begin to analyse texts by drawing on growing knowledge of context, language and visual features and print and multimodal text structures (ACELY1670)

Hass

- Explore a point of view (ACHASSI038)
- Draw simple conclusions based on discussions, observations and information displayed in pictures and texts and on maps (ACHASSI041)
- Reflect on learning to propose how to care for places and sites that are important or significant (ACHASSI026)

Science

- Living things grow, change and have offspring similar to themselves (ACSSU030)
- People use science in their daily lives, including when caring for their environment and living things (ACSHE035)

Health and Physical Education

- Describe physical and social changes that occur as children grow older and discuss how family and community acknowledge these (ACPPS016)

Year 3

English

Language

- Understand how different types of texts vary in use of language choices, depending on their purpose and context (for example, tense and types of sentences) (ACELA1478)

Literature

- Discuss texts in which characters, events and settings are portrayed in different ways, and speculate on the authors' reasons (ACELT1594)
- Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts, and share responses with others (ACELT1596)
- Discuss how language is used to describe the settings in texts, and explore how the settings shape the events and influence the mood of the narrative (ACELT1599)
- Discuss the nature and effects of some language devices used to enhance meaning and shape the reader's reaction, including rhythm and onomatopoeia in poetry and prose (ACELT1600)

Literacy

- Identify the point of view in a text and suggest alternative points of view (ACELY1675)

Hass

- Examine information to identify different points of view and distinguish facts from opinions (ACHASSI056)
- Reflect on learning to propose actions in response to an issue or challenge and consider possible effects of proposed actions (ACHASSI060)

Science

- Living things can be grouped on the basis of observable features and can be distinguished from non-living things (ACSSU044)

Health and Physical Education

- Investigate how emotional responses vary in depth and strength (ACPPS038)

Name:

Date:

POSTCARD



Mai

Ms Cleven’s class

Primary School

Australia

To:

Handwriting practice lines for the 'To:' section, consisting of 18 sets of three horizontal dashed lines.

From:

Handwriting practice lines for the 'From:' section, consisting of 3 sets of three horizontal dashed lines.

