



Teacher Notes

The Plane Over My Backyard

Written and Illustrated by Tom Jellett

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Publication details

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Reader ages: 2-7 years

About the Book

Discover the wonder of planes and air travel with this delightful picture book from the bestselling creator of *The Train at the End of My Street*.

Planes soar over my backyard – big ones, small ones, bright ones and some with special markings. I love to see them gliding to and from the airport at all hours. But today is very special: we get to travel on a plane!

About the Author

Tom Jellett is a Sydney based illustrator. For over twenty years he has illustrated a number of books for children including *My Dad Thinks He's Funny* by Katrina Germein, *Why I Love Footy* by Michael Wagner, as well as his own author-illustrated book *The Train at the End of My Street*. His work can also be seen in a number of magazines and newspapers, including editorial illustrations for *The Australian* and *The Weekend Australian*. Tom was also recently included in the Editorial category for *Illustrators 62*, and exhibited at the Society of Illustrators, New York in 2020.

Curriculum Connections

Early Years Learning Framework V2.0 & Australian Curriculum V9.0

EYLF V2.0

- Outcome 1
- Outcome 2
- Outcome 4
- Outcome 5

Foundation

- AC9EFLE01
- AC9EFLE02
- AC9EFLE05
- AC9EFLY02
- AC9EFLY05
- AC9EFLA08

Year 1

- AC9E1LE01
- AC9E1LE02
- AC9E1LE05
- AC9E1LY02
- AC9E1LY05

Year 2

- AC9E2LE01
- AC9E2LE02
- AC9E2LE05
- AC9E2LY02
- AC9E2LY05

Why Teach This Book?

Many children are fascinated by planes. They notice them flying overhead, wonder where they are going and often have stories to share about their own travel experiences. *The Plane Over My Backyard* provides a wonderful opportunity to explore everyday moments of wonder and curiosity while helping children think about journeys, places and the people who make travel possible.

The story encourages children to look closely, ask questions and consider all the people and places involved in making a journey happen. It provides opportunities to develop oral language, build vocabulary and make personal connections through shared experiences and

classroom conversations.

The illustrations and simple storyline provide opportunities to explore literacy, geography, technology and the people involved air travel. Children can share their own experiences while developing curiosity about the wider world.

Themes

- Curiosity – Encouraging children to ask questions and explore the world around them.
- Family – Sharing a special experience together and supporting one another throughout the journey.
- Journeys – Exploring the different steps, experiences and feelings involved when travelling somewhere new.
- Community – Exploring the different people and roles that help make air travel possible.
- Perspective – Thinking about how places can look different depending on where we are viewing them from.

Concepts

- Journey – following the complete travel experience from home to destination.
- Perspective – viewing familiar places from the sky and seeing them differently.
- Observation – noticing details about planes, airports and the world.
- Sequence – understanding the order of the events in air travel.
- Community – recognising the many people who make travel possible.
- Technology – exploring how planes and airports work together.
- Connections – noticing how people, places and experiences are connected through travel.

Rich Vocabulary

Word / Child-friendly meaning / Talk About It

Gliding

- Moving smoothly and quietly through the air.
- Can you think of something else that glides? How is gliding different from flying?

Markings

- Special colours, patterns or symbols that help identify something.
- What markings help people recognise things in your community?

Terminal

- The part of the airport where passengers wait before boarding a plane.
- What do you think people do while they are waiting?

Runway

- A long strip where planes take off and land.
- Why do you think planes need such a long runway?

Security

- Special safety checks that everyone goes through before getting on a plane.
- Have you ever had to follow special safety rules? Why are rules important?

Crew

- The people who work together on the plane to help passengers.
- What jobs do you think each crew member has?

Take-off

- The moment a plane leaves the ground.
- How do you think your body feels during take-off?

Journey

- Travelling from one place to another.
- Tell your partner about a journey you've been on. Where did you go?

Story Stops

Story Stops are carefully chosen moments to pause during reading. They encourage students to predict, observe, discuss and wonder. This helps them become active, thoughtful readers.

Story Stop 1 – Look Closely

When: Before reading the book.

Ask:

Spend a minute exploring the cover and endpapers.

- What do you notice?
- What clues tell you this story is about planes?
- What do you wonder?

Teacher Tip

Give children thinking time before inviting responses. You'll be amazed by the details they notice.

Story Stop 2 – Talk Together

When: After "I like to think about different people on each plane going to different places"

Ask:

- If you were on one of those planes, where would you be going?
- Who might you be travelling with?
- Why?

Teacher Tip

Encourage children to listen carefully to their classmates and add their own ideas. Sometimes the most interesting answers come from hearing another person's thinking.

Story Stop 3 – Pause & Predict

When: The page just before boarding.

Ask:

- What do you think happens before people get on a plane?
- What might happen next?

Teacher Tip

Remind children that predictions are not about getting the answer right. The important part is explaining what clues

helped them make their prediction.

Story Stop 4 – Think Like the Author

When: When the child sees "our backyard!"

Ask:

- Why do you think the author chose to include this moment?
- How does seeing something familiar from above change the way the character feels?

Teacher Tip

There may be lots of different ideas here. Invite children to share why they think the author included this moment and how it helps us understand the character.

Story Stop 5 – Connect

When: After landing.

Ask:

- Have you ever travelled somewhere exciting?
- How did you feel?
- What was similar or different?

Teacher Tip

Some children may not have had the opportunity to travel by plane. Invite them to connect to any journey they've experienced, such as a car trip, train ride, ferry or even a special day out. Every connection is valuable.

Story Stop 6 – Wonder

When: At the end of the story.

Ask:

- Why do you think the child still looks up at the planes after returning home?
- What do you think they are dreaming about next?

Teacher Tip

Children may have lots of different ideas about this moment. Encourage them to explain their thinking and listen to different perspectives.

Dialogic Questions – Before Reading

Picture Walk

- What details has Tom Jellett included on the cover that give us clues about the story?
- What clues tell you this story is about planes?
- What do you think the child is feeling?
- What details can you spot before we even read the story?

Wonderings

- What do you wonder about planes?
- Where do you think this family is travelling?
- What questions do you have before we begin?

Prediction

- What do you think will happen during the family's journey?
- Do you think everything will go as planned? Why?

Vocabulary

- Have you heard the words terminal, runway or crew before?
- What do you think they might mean?

Prior Experiences

- Have you ever been on a plane?
- If not, what other kinds of transport have you travelled on?
- How did it make you feel?

Dialogic Questions – During Reading

Inference

- How do you think the child is feeling right now? What makes you think that?
- What details has Tom Jellett included in the illustrations to show what is happening around the child?

Illustrations

- What has Tom Jellett shown us in the illustrations that the words haven't told us yet?
- What do you notice happening in the background?

Connections

- Does this part remind you of something you've experienced before?
- Airports can be busy places. What do you notice about all the people and jobs happening around the child?

Prediction

- What do you think will happen next?
- What clues helped you make that prediction?

Wonderings

- What questions do you have now?
- Is there anything you're still wondering about planes or airports?

Dialogic Questions – After Reading

Reflection

- What was your favourite part of the journey?
- What surprised you most?

Evaluation

- What did you enjoy about this story?
- Would you recommend it to a friend? Why or why not?

Author's Purpose

- Why do you think the author wanted to write this story?
- What do you think this story helped us notice or think about?

Favourite Moment

- Which page would you like to visit if you could step inside the story?
- Why did you choose the page?

Extension Thinking

- If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?
- What would you tell someone who has never been on a plane before?
- What do you think the child will remember most about this journey?

Learning Experiences

These learning experiences invite students to extend the ideas from the story through creativity, investigation and personal reflection.

Design an Airport (Create)

Imagine you have been asked to design a brand-new airport.

Draw and label your airport, including important features such as a runway, terminal, baggage collection, security, waiting area and control tower. Add something unique that would make your airport special for children.

Challenge: Design an airport that is environmentally friendly.

Welcome Aboard! (Perform)

Become a flight attendant or pilot.

Create and perform a short welcome announcement for passengers before take-off.

Think about:

- Greeting your passengers
- Explaining the safety rules
- Wishing everyone an enjoyable flight

Challenge: Add one announcement in another language.

Mapping Our Journey (Investigate)

Trace the family's journey from home to their destination.

Draw a simple map showing each stage of the trip.

Talk about:

- Where did their journey begin?
- What happened first, next, and last?
- Which part of the journey do you think was the most exciting?

Challenge: Add one extra stop to the journey and explain why the family visited it.

Through My Window (Respond)

Imagine you are looking out of the aeroplane window.

Write or draw what you can see below.

Use descriptive words to help your reader picture the view.

Challenge: Close your eyes and imagine the view from the aeroplane window. What can you see, hear and feel? Add these to your writing or drawing.

Pack Your Suitcase (Explore)

You are going on a holiday.

Choose five things to pack in your suitcase.

For each item, explain why you chose it.

Challenge: Include one item in your suitcase that nobody else would think to pack—and explain why!

Book Check

Before You Close the Book...

- One idea I'll keep thinking about...
- One connection I made...
- One thing that surprised me...
- One question I still have...