Teaching Activities Linking the *Marcy* Series to the Australian Curriculum – English, Science

and

The New Zealand Curriculum – English

About Susan Halliday

Children's books offer endless opportunities to let your imagination run wild – be you the reader, or the writer. Susan Halliday found that writing the MARCY books was great fun. She often hears from so many of the MARCY readers.

Susan is someone who has always loved books, so much that she collects them – lots of them. Some of her favourite books are very, very old. She has a number of children's books that are over 100 years old!

About Phil Kettle

Phil grew up on a farm in Mildura, northern Victoria. His favourite subject at school was sport, then more sport. He loved football and cricket – in fact, any sport where he could hit, kick or throw something. He also really loved reading and writing – and being an author all started from there! He has been involved with writing over 160 books.

The Toocool, books are about Toocool's amazing adventures with his best mate Spike, his next door neighbour Wong and of course Marcy. In the series Toocool hunts treasure as a pirate, rounds up horses, races jet skis, plays Big Bash cricket and even gets interviewed by famous journalists!

Teaching Notes for *the Marcy and TooCool series*

Susan Halliday and Phil Kettle run school workshops and give author talks. For booking details visit www.fordstreetpublishing.com/cnet

Australian Curriculum

The *Marcy and Toocool Series* are excellent books for students to read to help them to achieve outcomes in the Australian Curriculum (1), which states that:

"The Australian Curriculum: English helps students to engage imaginatively and critically with literature to expand the scope of their experience".

They "learn how ideas and viewpoints about events, issues and characters that are expressed by authors in texts are drawn from and shaped by different historical, social and cultural contexts."

Through "responding to literature, students learn to identify personal ideas, experiences and opinions about literary texts and discuss them with others. They learn how to recognise areas of agreement and difference, and how to develop and refine their interpretations through discussion and argument."

New Zealand Curriculum

The New Zealand Curriculum requires that the key competencies (3) be integrated into a classroom reading programme, thereby opening up space for student thinking and for student experience to be brought into the learning. The researchers call this "interpretive space". Students connect their own knowledge and background – their world – to the act of reading.

There should be time for the students to talk about the text with each other and to discuss their different interpretations, posing and answering student and teacher questions. Ideally, students should have the opportunity to pose questions of the author.

These teaching notes provide schools that invite Susan Halliday and/or Phil Kettle to speak to their students, in real or virtual time, about the inspiration for, and characters in, the Marcy and Toocool Series. There are Australian and New Zealand curriculum based activities for before, during and after author visits/virtual visits.

Teachers in Australia may choose from the following teaching notes the Australian Curriculum – English, learning statements and activities that are appropriate for their students, to assist them to develop interest and skills in inquiring into the aesthetic aspects of texts, and develop an informed appreciation of literature. There are additional curriculum statements for the Australian Curriculum – Science.

Teachers in New Zealand may choose from the following teaching activities linked to the New Zealand Curriculum (4) – English, learning process activities that are appropriate for their students.

Australian Curriculum – English (1)

Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Suggested Activities
Language: Text Structure and organisation – Purpose , audience and structures of different types of texts – Punctuation				
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)	Understand how texts vary in complexity and technicality depending on the approach to the topic, the purpose and the intended audience (ACELA1490)			Years 3 – 6: Invite Susan Halliday to visit your school to talk about Marcy and how she has a go at everything – there is no challenge too large for Marcy! Marcy's positive attitude, self-confidence and candid humour are contagious. Year 3 & 4: Read **Marcy – Lost Dogs** and/or **Marcy – 13 Dolphins.** Prior to the visit students might: 1. discuss the Marcy books as examples of simple narratives. 2. read *13 Dolphins* as a starting point for a unit of work on mammals.
	Recognise how quotation marks are used in texts to signal dialogue, titles and quoted (direct) speech (ACELA1492)			Years 3 – 6: Invite **Phil Kettle** to your school to talk about Toocool , his amazing adventures with his best mate Spike, his next door neighbour Wong and of course Marcy Read **Marcy – Lost Dogs** and **Toocool – The Race** Year 4 students might: 1. Find examples of direct speech in the stories. 2. With students working in pairs, have them pretend that they are Marcy or Toocool and a newspaper or TV reporter, then use software such as **Windows Live Movie Maker** to record the interview and save it to thumb drive for

				teacher and peer assessment.
Language: Expressing and developing ideas – Word level grammar				
Understand that verbs represent different processes (doing, thinking, saying, and relating) and that these processes are anchored in time through tense (ACELA1482)				Year 3 students might: 1. explore action and saying verbs in narrative texts such as *Toocool – Pirates* and *Marcy – Lost Dogs* to show how these verbs give information about what characters do / say 2. explore the use of sensing verbs and how they allow readers to know what characters think and feel.
Language: Expressing and developing ideas – Vocabulary				
	Incorporate new vocabulary from a range of sources into students' own texts including vocabulary encountered in research.			After reading *Marcy – 13 Dolphins* year 4 students might, while conducting research into marine mammals, develop a word bank of technical terms.
Literature: Responding to literature – Personal responses to the ideas, characters and viewpoints in texts				
Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts, and share responses with others (ACELT1596)	Discuss literary experiences with others, sharing responses and expressing a point of view.	Present a point of view about particular literary texts using appropriate metalanguage, and reflecting on the viewpoints of others (ACELT1609)	Analyse and evaluate similarities and differences in texts on similar topics, themes or plots.	After reading *Marcy – Lost Dogs* and/or *Toocool – Pirates* year 3 students might discuss: Their past experiences such as helping to raise money for a charity, and/or building something; Teachers might divide their year 4 or 5 class into two teams, one of which reads *Marcy – Lost Dogs,* the other *Toocool – Pirates.* The students might then discuss the two books, investigating different interpretations of each story. Following the discussion students might develop a summary of views expressed by the main characters, discussing questions, such as 'Should this character have behaved as they did?'

				Year 6 students might work in teams to analyse similarities and differences between *Marcy – Lost Dogs* and *Toocool – The Race*, developing a summary or flowchart of similarities and differences.
Literature: Examining Literature – Language devices in literary texts including figurative language				
	Discuss how authors and illustrators make stories exciting, moving and absorbing and hold readers' interest by using various techniques, for example character development and plot tension (ACELT1605)	Recognise that ideas in literary texts can be conveyed from different viewpoints, which can lead to different kinds of interpretations and responses	Identify, describe, and discuss similarities and differences between texts, including those by the same author or illustrator, and evaluate characteristics that define an author's individual style (ACELT1616)	During a visit to the school by **Susan Halliday** and/or **Phil Kettle,** the author(s) might discuss the language used to describe the traits of characters in stories, their actions and motivations, reading extracts about Marcy and/or Toocool. After reading *Marcy – Lost Dogs* and/or *Toocool – The Race,* year 4 students might examine the author's description of a character's appearance, behaviour and speech and note how the character's development is evident through his or her dialogue and changing relationships and the reactions of other characters to him / her. Year 5 students might, after reading either the Marcy or the Toocool books, compare the texts to determine literary style, assess its appeal and present this comparison to the class for peer and teacher assessment. Year 6 students, might, after exploring texts by either author, identify: - similarities, for example subject or theme, - characterisation, - text structure, - plot development, - tone, - vocabulary, - narrative point of view, and

				• favoured grammatical structures
Literature: Creating Literature				
	Create literary texts that explore students' own experiences and imagining (ACELT1607)			Year 4 might recall the Marcy and Toocool stories, then: • experiment with changing particular aspects, e.g. the time or place of the race or the visit to the dogs' home, adding characters they have created or changing the personalities of the existing characters • offering an alternative point of view on the development of the boat in *Pirates,* or the jet ski, or on fundraising for the dogs' home,
Literacy: Texts in Context				
Identify the point of view in a text and suggest alternative points of view (ACELY1675)				After reading ***Marcy – 13 Dolphins*** and/or ***Toocool – The Race,*** year 3 students might: 1. discuss how the book presents the point of view of the main character, 2. speculate on what other characters in either book might think or feel 3. recognise that there is more than one way of looking at the same event Students might retell the story from the perspectives of other characters in the series (for example, have Mr Wong tell the story of the jet ski in ***Toocool – The Race*** or Bella talk about her chores mentioned in ***Marcy – 13 Dolphins***
Literacy: Interacting with others – Listening and speaking interactions				
		Clarify understanding of content as it unfolds in formal and informal situations, connecting ideas to students' own experiences and present		Teachers might select a year 5 student to ask specific questions of visiting author(s) Susan Halliday or Phil Kettle. The questions could seek to

		and justify a point of view (ACELY1699)		clarify a speaker's meaning, review ideas expressed in ***Toocool – The Race/Pirates*** and/or ***Marcy – Lost Dogs/13 Dolphins***

Literacy: Interpreting, analysing and evaluating – Comprehension strategies

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning and begin to evaluate texts by drawing on a growing knowledge of context, text structures and language features (ACELY1680)				Year 3 students might make connections between events in ***Marcy – 13 Dolphins*** and/or ***Toocool – Pirates*** and their own experience

Australian Curriculum – Science (2)

Science Understanding: Biological Sciences

	Living things have life cycles Living things, including plants and animals, depend on each other and the environment to survive	Living things have structural features and adaptations that help them to survive in their environment	The growth and survival of living things are affected by the physical conditions of their environment	Year 3-6: Read ***Marcy – 13 Dolphins***. Year 3-4: Work in small groups to research the life cycle of dolphins. Year 5-6: Discuss- What physical conditions might impact on marine mammals such as dolphins to cause a calf to be separated from the pod?

Science as a Human Endeavour: Use and influence of science

	Science knowledge helps people to understand the effect of their actions			Having read ***Marcy – 13 Dolphins,*** students might debate the use of scientific knowledge to rescue stranded marine mammals such as the baby dolphin, linking this activity to animal rescues during oil spills from ships or attempts to prevent whale kills during research by Japan.

New Zealand Curriculum – English (3)		
Stage 2	**Stage 3**	
Listening, Reading and Viewing		
Processes and strategies *Students will:* • Select and use sources of information, processes, and strategies with some confidence to identify, form, and express ideas. Indicators: – selects and reads texts for enjoyment and personal fulfilment *By using these processes and strategies when listening, reading, or viewing, students will:* **Purposes and audiences** • Show some understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences. Indicators: – recognises how texts are constructed for different purposes, audiences, and situations; – understands that texts are created from a particular point of view **Ideas** • Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts. Indicators: – uses their personal experience and world and literacy knowledge to make meaning from texts; – makes meaning of increasingly complex texts by identifying	**Processes and strategies** *Students will:* • Integrate sources of information, processes, and strategies with developing confidence to identify, form, and express ideas. Indicators: - thinks critically about texts with developing confidence *By using these processes and strategies when listening, reading, or viewing, students will:* **Purposes and audiences** • Show a developing understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences. Indicators: – recognises and understands how texts are constructed for a range of purposes, audiences, and situations **Ideas** • Show a developing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts. Indicators: – uses their personal experience and world and literacy knowledge confidently to make meaning from texts; – makes meaning of increasingly complex texts by identifying	Teachers might invite Susan Halliday and/or Phil Kettle to speak (in person or via video conferencing or Skype) to their students. Prior to the interview with the author(s), Stage 2 and 3 students - read the **Marcy** and/or **Toocool Series**. Students might work with their teacher to prepare questions for the author(s). Stage 2 students might work in small groups to discuss the ideas in the text(s), then - identify and flowchart the main ideas in the text(s) - might predict how *The Race* will end, or whether the baby dolphin will be rescued - make inferences about why Mister Wong helps Toocool build his jet ski. Stage 3 students might work in teams to map the story plots in the texts, then analyse the main and subsidiary ideas in *Marcy-Lost Dogs* and *Toocool-Pirates*, developing a flowchart of these ideas.

main ideas	main and subsidiary ideas in them	

Pre-visit / Virtual visit

Prior to a visit / virtual visit by Susan Halliday or Phil Kettle teachers could have students read *Marcy – Lost Dogs, Marcy – 13 Dolphins, Toocool, The Race, Toocool – Pirates,* allowing time for the students to talk about the text with each other and to discuss different interpretations, rather than focusing on comprehending the "one true meaning" of the text. This discussion will enable students to prepare questions for the visiting author(s).

Teachers might ask the students to identify concrete examples of what one of the key characters in the text was doing, feeling, thinking.

Teachers might share their responses to the books and contribute to the discussion as a reader of the text;

- maintaining the balance between responding as a reader and providing guidance as a teacher

- listening to student discussions in an open way

- helping students understand how characters in the books were feeling and why.

Post Visit/Book Study

Year 3 – 6 students might:

1. Choose two of the Marcy or Toocool stories to compare. Select one story as their favourite. Briefly explain, either in an oral presentation, or in writing, the reason for their choice.

2. Recreate one of the Marcy or Toocool texts imaginatively using drawing, writing, performance and digital forms of communication.
3. Share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts.
4. Pretend, for example, they are Mister Wong or Bella and write a story or character analysis for Toocool.

5. Read *Marcy – Lost Dogs* as stimulus to discuss care and safety of pets such as dogs. Develop a list of care procedures for a domestic animal of choice.

6. Investigate recipes for pancakes, correctly list ingredients and procedure, then work in teams to cook some pancakes.

7. Develop a map of Duck Island and the lake in *Toocool – The Race.*

8. Develop a flowchart sequence for the activities in *Toocool – The Race*

9. Pretend you're one of the characters in the Marcy and Toocool series and list, from your point of view, what you think of Marcy or Toocool's personality.

10. Design a dustcover for one of the **Marcy / Toocool** books.

References

(1) (2) www.australiancurriculum.gov.au   © Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

(3) http://keycompetencies.tki.org.nz/ln-learning

(4) http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/

http://philkettle.com/toocool/

http://www.susanhalliday.com/susan/books

The Marcy and Toocool books are available from Ford Street Publishing – http://www.fordstreetpublishing.com/