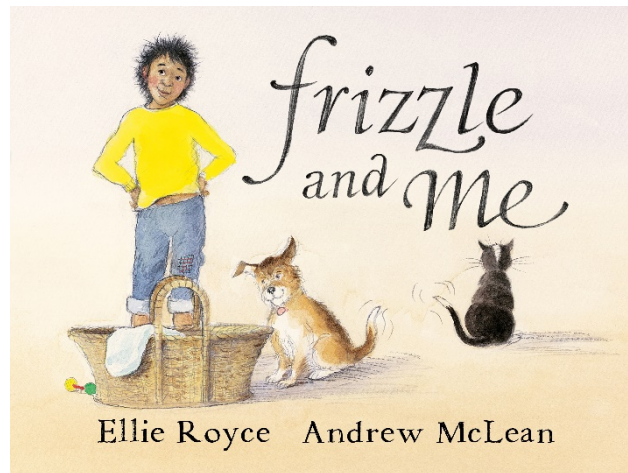


Frizzle and Me

Written by Ellie Royce

Illustrated by Andrew McLean



About the Story:

Frizzle And Me is the gently humorous story of a growing rainbow family. It's a big deal when your family changes, but with plenty of love to go around, even the biggest changes can be wonderful.

Frizzle And Me is a valuable classroom resource with opportunities within the Australian Curriculum in English and Humanities and Social Science: Inquiry & Skills from Foundation to Year 2 and beyond. *Frizzle and Me* touches on many different areas of the K-10 Curriculum that focus on diversity, inclusion, family, community, respect and kindness.

About the Author:

Ellie Royce is an internationally published author of books for kids; 'The most important people in the world.' Ellie believes in the power of books and stories to change lives for the better and reads and writes all the time (quite often when she should be doing other things!)

About the Illustrator:

Andrew McLean studied at Prahran Technical College and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. He taught art to high school students before becoming a teacher of painting and drawing at Chisholm Institute in Caulfield, Victoria. Andrew has been a full-time painter/illustrator for almost 40 years. He has received various Children's Book Council Awards and is the inaugural recipient of the Albert Ullin Award in 2020.

Key Points:

- Diverse characters and rainbow family
- Themes of diversity, inclusion, empathy
- The innovative use of non-gender specific child characters offers opportunity for creative thinking and interpretation
- Works on many levels, from read out loud in a group to discussion text
- Child-centric with themes and activities resonant to all children: cuddles, reading, singing, food, etc.
- An award-winning illustrator and internationally published author

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Making Connections to the Text

Learning Intention: We are learning to explain how we are the same as or different to characters, and use that to help us understand the text.

Curriculum Links:

Foundation: Recognise that texts are created by authors who tell stories and share experiences that may be similar or different to students' own experiences ([ACELT1575](#))

Year 1: Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts and share personal responses to these texts, making connections with students' own experiences ([ACELT1582](#))

Year 2: 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](#))

Tell students about how making connections to characters helps us to understand them better and learn about other people.

Questions to Ask:

Before reading:

- Who is in your family?
- Do you know anyone with a family which is different to yours?
- Your family changed when you joined them. How else has your family changed over time?

During reading:

- After each time a new person joins the family: Who is in the family now? Does anyone have a family like this?
- What kinds of things does your family do together? (e.g., reading, singing, bicycling, cooking?)
- How do you feel about doing things together?
- Has your family changed as you've grown older?
- What kinds of celebrations have you had in your family? (e.g., weddings, christenings, funerals?)
- Do you have pets like the family in the story?
- How are you the same as the family in the story? How are you different?

After reading:

- How are families the same? How are families different? Discuss how families can be different but they are all united by loving each other.
- What do you notice about the family in the story? (Diversity)
- How do you think the main character feels about their family? (Empathy)
- How do the family show they care about the main character? (Listening, asking for their opinion, asking how they feel, making them feel included)
- Is the main character a boy or a girl? Why do think so? (Stereotypes – Gender bias)
What did you like best about the story? Why? (Reflection)
- What is another book about families that this one reminds you of? (Connection)

Activities:

English:

- What has the author used to show different stages in the story (question and answer, refrain, repetition and adding lines)? Write a story about your family.
- Make up a story using your family as characters.

Maths:

- How many people are in the family at the beginning of the book? How many at the end?
- Add them up. (Kindy, counting)
- How many animals are in the book? (Kindy, counting)

Art:

- Draw your family.
- Students draw a picture of their family and write a sentence about how they show they love each other.
- Draw your favourite character from the story.

Inferring Using Pictures

Learning Intention: We are learning to infer characters' feelings by using picture and text clues.

Curriculum Links:

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

Year 1: 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](#))

Year 2: 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](#))

Ideally students would have experienced this book before this activity.

- Talk to students about inferring information to learn more about characters. Discuss how we can tell if people are happy, sad, or worried. Look for clues in pictures to see if the main character is happy, sad, or worried, and name how you can tell.
- Read through the book, looking at how characters interact in the pictures. Stop on the page which begins, 'When I was two...'. Read the text and then ask the students to think silently about how the character is feeling and how they know. If they have experienced Making Connections, ask them to make a connection to when they might have done the same thing.
- Ask students to share with the person next to them what they were thinking, and after some share time, discuss as a class what the clues are that the main character is feeling a bit worried. The clues might be in the text, the body language of the main character, or the facial expression on the main character.
- Stop on the page which begins, 'When I was three...'. Read the text and repeat the exercise above.

- Students choose a page from the book including a picture. Ask them to describe how the characters are feeling and how they know. To differentiate this task, students can be given different pages which are more or less challenging.
- Reflect on what students have discovered and have them use the same skills in their own picture story books.

Thinking About the Author and Illustrator

Learning Intention: We are learning to think about the author’s message.

Curriculum Links:

Foundation: Respond to texts, identifying favourite stories, authors and illustrators ([ACELT1577](#))

Year 1: Discuss how authors create characters using language and images ([ACELT1581](#))

Year 2: Discuss the characters and settings of different texts and explore how language is used to present these features in different ways ([ACELT1591](#))

- Talk to students about how authors and illustrators often have message which they want to people to think about. Explain that the message of *Frizzle And Me* is that families can look different, but that they all love each other. Explain that you are going to read the book and look at the pictures and see how the author and illustrator have given this message.
- Read the first page and discuss the language used to show love (I loved Mummy. She hugged me tight.) Talk about how love is shown in actions as well as words.
- Read the page which begins, ‘When I was one...’. Ask the students to identify how we know that Jani loves the main character, either from the pictures or the words.
- Continue to the page which begins, ‘When I was five...’. Ask the students to identify how we know that David and Elizabeth love each other and the main characters, either from pictures or the words.
- Continue to the page which begins, ‘When I was seven...’. Ask students to identify how everyone feel about the baby, and how they know. Can they love the baby before it is even born?
- Continue to the end of the book. Ask students why they think the baby is called Frizzle. What message is the author trying to tell you?
- Ask students to think about what they have in common with the main character, and what the author and illustrator did to help them think that. Does the main character look like them? Is it a boy or a girl? Discuss how the author and illustrator made the characters relatable.
- Finally, look at the dedication on the back page, ‘For Baby Finn, with love – ER; For my lively lovely grandson, Fraser – AM’. Ask students to think about what these dedications might mean, and to guess what the author and illustrator’s families might look like.

Ordering Events in a Text

Learning Intention: We are learning to order events in a text.

Curriculum Links:

Inquiry and Skills

Foundation: Sequence familiar objects and events ([ACHASSI004 - Scootle](#))

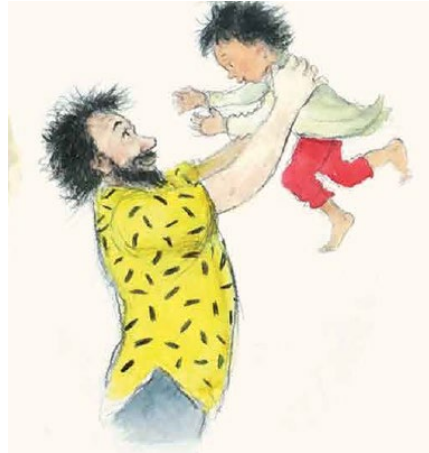
Year 1: Sequence familiar objects and events ([ACHASSI021 - Scootle](#))

Year 2: Sequence familiar objects and events ([ACHASSI037 - Scootle](#))

- After reading the book, ask students to order the events as they occurred in the book using the attached sheet, *Which Came First?*
- Discuss the meaning of the words First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth, and how they can be alternately written.
- As a reflection, discuss how this might be what a plan of a story looks like, thinking about what happens first and then what happens next.

FORD ST

Which came first?



First 1st	Second 2nd
Third 3rd	Fourth 4th
Fifth 5th	Sixth 6th

Innovation on Text

Learning Intention: We are learning to use *Frizzle And Me* to tell the story of our own families.

Curriculum Links:

Foundation: Innovate on familiar texts through play ([ACELT1831](#))

Year 1: Innovate on familiar texts by using similar characters, repetitive patterns or vocabulary ([ACELT1832](#))

Year 2: Innovate on familiar texts by experimenting with character, setting or plot ([ACELT1833](#))

Note: It is important to be aware of students' individual family circumstances before commencing this task so any differences can be accommodated and sensitive topics can be avoided or addressed sensitively as is appropriate.

Discuss with students that all families have a story about how everyone came to join them. Ask students to share with the person next to them who is in their family.

Talk about how different families start: Sometimes it's with parents getting married, sometimes it's when the oldest child is born, or it can be something else. Invite students to draw a timeline of how their family started, and how it grew from there.

Provide students with a variety of sentence starters to support writing the story of their own families, such as:

- When I was born, my family was...
- When I was ____ years old, _____ joined our family.
- Then my family was...
- I love _____ because they ...

Have students add these sentences to the pictures from their timeline to form a book.

Extend students by having them identify how each family member shows their love, and share the books with families.

From the Author:

More than anything else I wanted to tell this story from a child's experience, focusing on the issues that are most important to a child when things change, which really boil down to one vital question – **'Will you still love me?'**

In *Frizzle and Me* this is shown through the eyes of our narrator as they grow from 0-8 years old in their evolving family unit. 'Me' is a gender-neutral character (in that they are never specifically spoken of as a boy or girl). I wanted to write them this way partly to see what assumptions people would bring to the story, as an interesting little twist that might even go unnoticed but could be used as a great discussion starter when the book is read, because this way, it's not a 'book about a boy' or a 'book about a girl', it's a 'book about me' (and isn't that all of us?).

I also wanted to make the family diverse and contemporary, reflecting a reality experienced by many children but not necessarily shown in their literature, so that they see themselves and their families represented in that literature.

While these ideas were in my mind, I also wanted the family to be warm and loving, as real as possible and to have some fun in them. Fortunately for me, Andrew understood exactly what I was talking about and through his illustrations has captured that warmth and fun.

Frizzle and Me was inspired by a discussion with my own daughters, who told me that this was the kind of book that they and their friends would want to read to their children because this is what the society they live in actually looks like. They wondered why there were so few books that showed it, and that got me wondering too.

Happily, today there are a growing number of children's books showing all kinds of diversity. I'm so pleased to be among them!

From the Illustrator:

I loved this story from the first reading. Once I started the book, I realised it would be tricky drawing the main character from newborn through to the age of eight. I googled each age but it didn't always help, because within each age group there is a lot of variation in size.

Drawing characters and keeping them consistent is always difficult because there are so many subjective elements that come into play when you are drawing the human face, particularly expression and proportion. I can do a rough drawing that has exactly the look I want. However, when I put the drawing on the light box to trace the rough onto watercolour paper for the final artwork, I can't always get the same look. It only takes a subtle modulation in the line to alter the expression and shape of the face.

If you opt for a more cartoon style it is easier to keep things consistent, and it is quicker to repeat drawings. My recent drawings have more naturalistic faces. I think it was Helen Oxenbury who said that one of the first decisions she has to make was whether to have a dot for an eye or draw the eye with an eyelid. There is a world of difference between a more cartoony way of drawing and a more naturalistic one. I use the word naturalistic rather than realism. With the figure I like to draw quickly to capture gesture and movement, I treat the landscape more impressionistically.

Paradoxically, I like to put in a lot of little details or incidents that the reader can look for. Like a lot of illustrators, I often include animals in my drawings to direct the eye and as a way of making a sly comment on the action.

I chose a horizontal format for this book, mainly because the story takes place over a number of

FORD ST

years. I felt the horizontal format fitted with the notion of time passing, even if there is no logic to that. It was also a very good format for one of my favourite scenes where they're all riding their bikes across a double page.

I have used lots of different papers and media over the years. With my previous book for Ellie called *Lucas and Jack* I used my iPad, but I finally seem to have settled on smooth watercolour paper, pencil outline and mostly watercolour with some gouache and pastel additions for my recent books.

Ellie has written a beautiful story with a clever structure and characters that I came to love as I worked on it.