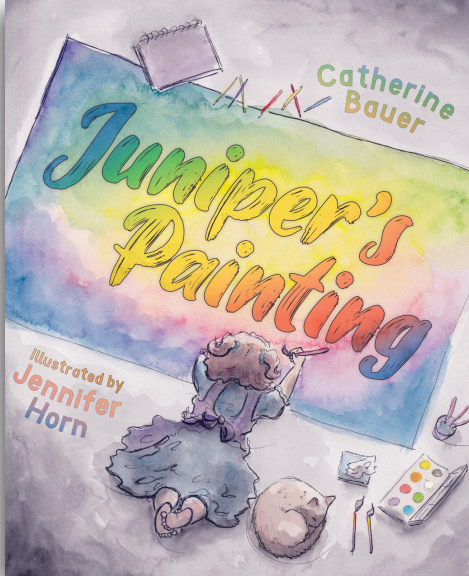

Teachers' Notes



JUNIPER'S PAINTING

Catherine Bauer / Jennifer Horn

ISBN: 9781761112409

Recommended retail: \$26.99

Reading level: 4 to 8

BOOK SUMMARY

It's a grubby-grey, hazy-sky day.

All Juniper wants is to play on the sand, but it's too wet and Mamma's busy with work. Eventually, she runs out of things to do. Mamma suggests she paint a picture, so Juniper decides to paint her beloved beach.

By the time it's complete, Juniper is surprised to see that something has changed! Maybe her imagination is more powerful than she thought ...

THEMES

Environment • Disappointment • Creativity • Living In The Present

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**Catherine Bauer is available for author talks and workshops.
Contact Wombat Books for more information.**

*Juniper's Painting Teachers' Notes can be used in schools
(independent learning, small groups, and whole classes); at home
with caregivers; and as part of mental health support programs
facilitated by counsellors, psychologists, children's charities, etc.*



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Catherine Bauer is an awarded writer from South Australia. She has worked as a news and political journalist and features writer, a government media adviser, stakeholder engagement manager with the State Theatre Company South Australia and currently works with a not-for-profit, raising funds to help homeless and vulnerable communities.

Her love of writing started as an eight-year-old where she wrote and illustrated her own book. Growing up she wanted to be either an astronaut or a mermaid. She became a journalist.

She has now written and had published children's plays, three picture books, two non-fiction and a YA novel. Catherine aims for her stories to spark all or one of the following three reactions in readers: 'that's me'; 'I wish that was me' or 'I'm glad that's not me'.

AUTHOR NOTE

As a child I loved writing my own stories and drawing pictures. I'd staple these together into books. This was a great activity to do when it was wet and cold and playing outdoors wasn't an option. Growing up, I lived by the beach and would paddle in the rock pools in summer and winter, looking for and finding treasures.

When I had my own children and the weather was too rough to play outdoors, one of the activities I introduced them to was making up their own stories and painting pictures to go with them.



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Jennifer Horn is a Brisbane-based illustrator and children's writer. Juniper's Painting is her second illustrated work with Wombat Books, the first being junior fiction Skippy Blackfeet by Rebecca Fraser. Her fairytale debut picture book The Precious Plum was shortlisted for the 2022 Little Pink Dog's Authorstrator Prize. She occasionally works in art department teams for notable local films, including Christmas on the Farm and Romance on the Menu and, unlike Juniper, loves rainy weather!

ILLUSTRATOR NOTE

The story is set in wet and blustery weather and the process of painting is a theme throughout. I thought watercolour rather than digital would suit for the illustrations to match the setting. My typical process is to first hand-draw the linework, then experiment with watercolours, as well as light and shade contrast. After several iterations, I evaluate what works and what doesn't, and then produce the final illustrations. There were requests for some of the pages to have small pops of colour before crescendoing to full colour spreads at the end. I ran with this idea, adding a twist where I pulled back the colour completely to monochrome blank and white mid-way through the story for emotional effect – a sombre snap back to the reality of having to play alone, inside, as her mother is busy working.

I love how this story conveys the concept of redirecting one's focus away from disappointment and toward something more purposeful, finding enjoyment and losing track of time. It beautifully illustrates this flow state we enter when fully engrossed in an activity. I'm thrilled for Juniper as she experiences both the creative joy of her artistic zone and the fulfillment of her desire to explore the beach.

When reading the manuscript, I felt that Juniper's world was vividly constructed with colour and visuals as her primary sensory inputs. This inspired me to explore the idea that she might have a hearing impairment, which was a concept the team embraced. To accurately depict this, I researched different types of hearing aids and their appearances, as it was my first time illustrating a character with this feature.

Growing up, I was a total indoor kid, so I would have been happy to draw and paint no matter the weather!

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

Juniper's Painting is a gentle, beautifully illustrated picture book that explores the inner world of a young girl navigating disappointment, boredom, and the power of imagination. Set in a cosy beachside home, the story follows Juniper as she learns to find joy in the present moment and express herself through creativity. Teachers can use *Juniper's Painting* to explore themes of emotional resilience, mindfulness, and creative problem-solving with primary school students.

At its heart, *Juniper's Painting* encourages children to reflect on how they respond to challenges when things don't go as planned. Juniper's experience with a stormy day and cancelled beach adventures provides a relatable context for discussing frustration, flexibility, and coping strategies. Her journey from disappointment to discovery supports meaningful classroom conversations about self-regulation, patience, and finding calm in everyday life.

The book also highlights the value of creativity as a form of self-expression and emotional growth. Through Juniper's decision to paint the beach she longs for, students can explore how imagination can transform difficult feelings into something hopeful and beautiful. Teachers can use this moment in the story as a springboard for creative projects that help students process their own experiences and express their ideas through art, writing, and play.

In addition, *Juniper's Painting* nurtures a connection to nature and a sense of wonder about the world outside. The story gently emphasises the beauty of the natural environment—particularly the ocean and beach—and encourages children to observe and appreciate the places they love. This opens the door to early discussions about environmental awareness and the importance of caring for the world around us.

Juniper's Painting also supports foundational literacy skills. With its engaging narrative, emotional depth, and vivid illustrations, the book provides opportunities to explore key elements of storytelling, such as character motivation, setting, and plot development. It invites personal reflection, text-to-self connections, and thoughtful conversations that deepen comprehension.

With its thoughtful blend of emotional insight, artistic inspiration, and environmental appreciation, *Juniper's Painting* is an excellent choice for cross-curricular teaching that connects literacy, art, social-emotional learning, and science in primary classrooms.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS & LEARNING OUTCOMES

YEAR ONE

English, Humanities and Social Science, Science

AC9E1LE02 - discuss literary texts and share responses by making connections with students' own experiences

AC9E1LY02 - use interaction skills including turn-taking, speaking clearly, using active listening behaviours and responding to the contributions of others, and contributing ideas and questions

AC9E1LA07 - understand that words can represent people, places and things (nouns, including pronouns), happenings and states (verbs), qualities (adjectives) and details such as when, where and how (adverbs)

ACELT1584 - Discuss features of plot, character and setting in different types of literature and explore some features of characters in different texts

AC9E1LA03 - explore how texts are organised according to their purpose, such as to recount, narrate, express opinion, inform, report and explain

AC9E1LY11 - use short vowels, common long vowels, consonant blends and digraphs to write words, and blend these to read one- and two-syllable words

AC9E1LY05 - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising and questioning when listening, viewing and reading to build literal and inferred meaning by drawing on vocabulary and growing knowledge of context and text structures

AC9E1LA10 - understand that written language uses punctuation such as full stops, question marks and exclamation marks, and uses capital letters for familiar proper nouns

AC9E1LE01 - discuss how language and images are used to create characters, settings and events in literature by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors and illustrators

AC9E1LA09 - recognise the vocabulary of learning area topics

AC9HS1S04 - discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events

AC9E1LE05 - orally retell or adapt a familiar story using plot and characters, language features including vocabulary, and structure of a familiar text, through role-play, writing, drawing or digital tools

AC9S1U01 - identify the basic needs of plants and animals, including air, water, food or shelter, and describe how the places they live meet those needs

AC9S1H01 - describe how people use science in their daily lives, including using patterns to make scientific predictions

YEAR TWO

English, Humanities and Social Science, Science

AC9E2LA01 - investigate how interpersonal language choices vary depending on the context, including the different roles taken on in interactions

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AC9E2LA03 - identify how texts across the curriculum are organised differently and use language features depending on purposes

AC9E2LE05 - create and edit literary texts by adapting structures and language features of familiar literary texts through drawing, writing, performance and digital tools

AC9E2LA02 - explore how language can be used for appreciating texts and providing reasons for preferences

AC9E2LE03 - discuss the characters and settings of a range of texts and identify how language is used to present these features in different ways

AC9E2LY01 - identify how similar topics and information are presented in different types of texts

AC9HS2S04 - discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events

AC9S2H01 - describe how people use science in their daily lives, including using patterns to make scientific predictions

AC9S2U02 - explore different actions to make sounds and how to make a variety of sounds, and recognise that sound energy causes objects to vibrate

YEAR THREE

English, Humanities and Social Science, Science, Health

AC9E3LE01 - discuss characters, events and settings in different contexts in literature by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors and illustrators

AC9E3LY02 - use interaction skills to contribute to conversations and discussions to share information and ideas

AC9E3LE02 - discuss connections between personal experiences and character experiences in literary texts and share personal preferences

AC9HS3S07 - present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms

AC9HS3S05 - draw conclusions based on analysis of information

AC9S3U01 - compare characteristics of living and non-living things and examine the differences between the life cycles of plants and animals

AC9HP4P10 - investigate and apply behaviours that contribute to their own and others' health, safety, relationships and wellbeing

AC9HP4P05 - describe how valuing diversity influences wellbeing and identify actions that promote inclusion in their communities

AC9HP4P01 - investigate how success, challenge, setbacks and failure strengthen resilience and identities in a range of contexts

AC9E3LA02 - understand how the language of evaluation and emotion, such as modal verbs, can be varied to be more or less forceful

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TEACHING POINTS AND ACTIVITIES

This book may be used in whole class, small group or independent learning activities in schools.

Please note, the following suggestions and activities are suited to a variety of year levels spanning Foundation to Year 6 primary aged children. Some activities may be applicable to early secondary school students, as well.

KNOWLEDGE AND LITERAL UNDERSTANDING

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Show the cover to the class and ask the students what they think the book might be about.
2. Ask the students what they think might happen to Juniper in the book.
3. Ask the students what environments we might see in the book.
4. Ask the students what the conflict might be.

AFTER-READING QUESTIONS

1. What was Juniper doing at the beginning of the story?
2. What does Juniper want?
3. What stops Juniper from getting what she wants?
4. What does Juniper do instead?
5. What would you do in Juniper's position?
6. What does the story remind you of? A time or place? An event?
7. What was your favourite part of the story?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GENERAL

- What colours did Juniper use in her painting? What do those colours make you feel?
- If you could paint a place that makes you happy, what would it look like?
- Do you think art can help people feel better when they're sad? Why or why not?
- Why can't Juniper go outside?
- What are some of the indoor activities Juniper tries?
- Who suggests that Juniper paint a picture?
- What does Juniper decide to paint?
- What details does she include in her painting?
- What happens after she finishes her painting?
- How does the story end?
- Imagine you're stuck inside on a rainy day. What fun things could you do?
- If you were going to paint your favorite place, what would it look like?
- Do you think a painting can tell a story? What story would your painting tell?
- What's a special place that makes you feel happy like the beach makes Juniper feel?
- What do you like about being outside in nature? Can you describe it using colors like Juniper did?
- If your imagination could change the world around you, what would you imagine?

ENVIRONMENT

- What do you think Juniper loves most about the beach?
- Why do you think being outside in nature is important to Juniper?
- What are your favorite things to do in nature, and how would you paint them?
- What part of nature does Juniper include in her painting?
- What sounds, colors, or animals do you think Juniper sees and hears at the beach?
- How does the beach change in the story—from the beginning to the end?
- Do you think the story shows how nature can affect our feelings? How?

DISAPPOINTMENT

- Why was Juniper disappointed at the beginning of the story?
- How did she handle her feelings throughout the day?
- How can you tell that Juniper felt upset or frustrated?

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- Have you ever had a day when you couldn't do what you wanted? How did you feel?
 - What are some ways Juniper tried to make herself feel better?
 - What do you think Juniper learned about disappointment by the end of the story?
 - Why is it okay to feel disappointed sometimes?
 - What do you think would have happened if Juniper stayed upset all day?
 - Can you think of a time when something good happened after you felt disappointed?

CREATIVITY

- What did Juniper decide to paint? Why do you think she chose that?
- How did painting help Juniper feel better?
- What are some things you like to create when you're stuck inside?
- Do you think her painting really changed the weather, or was it her imagination?
- Why do you think Mamma suggested that Juniper try painting?
- What made Juniper's painting special?
- How do you think Juniper decided what colors and objects to use?
- Do you think painting helped Juniper imagine she was really at the beach? Why or why not?
- What happened after Juniper finished her painting? How did it change her day?
- If you could paint any place that makes you happy, what would it be?
- What would you put in your painting that shows something special about you?

LIVING IN THE PRESENT

- Juniper was very focused on what she couldn't do. What helped her enjoy the moment instead?
- What helped Juniper enjoy her day, even though it didn't go the way she wanted?
- How do you think being creative helped Juniper stop worrying about the weather?
- What are some fun things you can do inside, even when your plans change?
- What did Juniper learn about enjoying the moment?
- Why is it important to focus on what we can do instead of what we can't?
- Why do you think it's important to pay attention to the good things happening right now?

ACTIVITIES

PAINT YOUR HAPPY PLACE

Have students paint, draw, or collage their own "happy place," just like Juniper painted her beach. Encourage them to include details using colour and texture: sky, water, trees, animals, etc. Students can also write or dictate a short description about what they love about their happy place and how it makes them feel.

STORY SEQUENCING CARDS

Give students illustrated or written cards showing events from the story. Have them work in pairs or small groups to put them in the correct order.

Students can also write a caption for each part of the story to show understanding.

RAINY DAY RESCUE

Students brainstorm a list of things they wish they could do outside. Then, they work in pairs or groups to "transform" one idea into an indoor version (e.g., "beach day" becomes a pretend beach with towels, shells, and painted waves). You can further let students design their own imaginative indoor play area and draw a plan.

NATURE DETECTIVE JOURNALS

Take students on a short outdoor walk (schoolyard or nearby nature area). Have them keep a "Nature Detective Journal" — drawing or writing down 3 things they notice, hear, or feel. Back in class, they create a mini-poster or poem titled "What I Noticed Today."

MINDFUL MOMENTS JAR

Create a classroom "Mindful Moments" jar. Students write simple mindfulness activities on slips of paper (e.g., "Take 3 deep breaths," "Name 3 things you're thankful for," "Look outside and describe what you see"). Pull one each day for a calm moment.

STORMY TO SUNNY CHART

As a class, create a two-column chart titled "Stormy Feelings / Sunny Ideas."

- "Stormy Feelings" = frustrated, bored, sad
- "Sunny Ideas" = draw, read, play music, talk to someone, etc.

Students brainstorm what helps them move from the first column to the second. Students create their own personal mini-chart for their desk or journal.

Further resources can always be found on our website.

Other worksheets are included on the next two pages.