

## AT THE DOG PARK

MOIRA COURT

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YEAR LEVEL: K–Y3

### ABOUT THE BOOK

*This dog is noisy and that one is quiet. This dog is tiny and that one is giant.* Pooches of all different shapes, colours and sizes leap off the page in this stunning picture book about visiting the local dog park. In lively rhyming prose, Moira Court captures all the joy of the dog park, with each canine created in clever paper collage and screen-print. Children will love identifying their favourite dog breeds and what dogs they have seen at the park while learning about opposites.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Moira Court grew up in the West Country, England. She emigrated to Australia in 2001 and now lives in the Perth Hills with her husband, daughter and fur children. An artist and illustrator, she predominantly works in printmaking and likes to chop up the failures to use for collaging. Her work is inspired by nature, conservation, folklore and folk art. Moira's dog Lucy, who appears on the cover, is a rescue pup and very playful and bouncy.

### THEMES

- Dogs
- Word play (rhyme, antonyms)
- Visual art (collage, printmaking)

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

K–Y3 English

K–Y3 Biological Sciences

K–Y3 Visual Art

### USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author's website: <https://moiracourt.wordpress.com>

### CLASSROOM IDEAS

#### Discussion questions

1. Why do dogs make such popular pets?
2. Do you have any pets? What are they? What are their names?
3. Why do dogs love to visit the park?
4. Dogs come in many different shapes, sizes and colours, depending on their breed. But they all belong to the same species, called *Canis familiaris*. How did the dog come to have so many breeds?
5. How many different breeds of dog are there? Which is the largest breed? The smallest? The fastest?
6. If you could have any dog in the story, which would you choose and why?
7. How many dogs can you count in the entire book? How many sticks? How many paws?
8. Are there any other kinds of animals in the book? How many can you find?
9. One dog is 'busy'. Why is it wearing a special harness? What important job is it performing? What other jobs do dogs perform?
10. How many dogs in the story have collars? Why are collars important? What should you do if you see a lost dog?
11. Is there a local animal shelter in your neighbourhood? Can your class help to fundraise or advertise the animals available for adoption?
12. What medium has illustrator Moira Court used? What do you like best about her style? Which is your favourite illustration and why?



## Creative writing

1. *Antonym pairs:* Draw a line to match each of these words to their opposite meaning. The first is done for you.

young	giant
hot	dizzy
smooth	grubby
grumpy	old
black	chubby
heavy	busy
noisy	waggy
tiny	slow
clean	light
skinny	quiet
idle	cold
steady	white
fast	shaggy

2. Complete a fact sheet about your pet with the following information: name, age, species, breed, physical description, favourite food, favourite game/toy, illustration, I love them because ... (Note: if you don't have a pet then write about your dream pet instead!) Create a class display.
3. How many rhyming pairs (e.g. shaggy/waggy, old/cold, busy/dizzy) can you find? Does rhyme make the story more fun to read aloud? Create your own rhyming pairs to describe two contrasting dogs.
4. Research and draft a pamphlet for new dog owners explaining how to take good care of their pet with the following headings: feeding, grooming, exercise, training.
5. Use a narrative planning framework to brainstorm a short story based on one of the following titles: 'I woke up one morning and I was a dog!' or 'The day I took my dream pet to school!' You may choose to write a one-page story or create a picture book in the style of Moira Court.
6. Why is it important to research different breeds to find the right dog for your lifestyle? Choose your favourite dog breed and create a poster with the following headings: breed name, history, physical characteristics, labelled diagram, personality traits, interesting facts.

## Visual art

1. *Puppet show:* Create pop-stick puppets of the various dogs in the book. Materials could include geometric cardboard shapes, felt, cellophane and recycled materials.
2. *Animal sculpture:* Create a sculpture of your favourite dog using plasticine, clay or recycled materials. Create a shoebox diorama of the dog park for your pooch to play in.
3. *Pet portrait:* Create a portrait of your pet (or dream pet) in the style of Moira Court. Experiment with paper collage; styrofoam block printing; simple repetitive shapes; ink and stencils; recycled paper offcuts (different colours/patterns/textures). Customise a bowl, collar or leash for your dog.
4. *Styrofoam printing:* Etch a picture of your favourite dog in the book on an A4 piece of foam using a sharp pencil. Next, cover this etching with block ink using a roller. Finally, flip the etching over and, with the wet side facing downward, press firmly onto paper to create your very own print. You may wish to repeat this process using different coloured ink to create multiple layers.
5. *Collagraph printing:* Cut an A4 base from cardboard food packing such as a cereal box to design the background for an illustration. Stick different textured materials to create your background scene at the dog park (e.g. sand, leaves, tissue paper, crepe paper, masking tape, sticky tape, layered paper collage, PVA glue, string, ribbon). Seal with shellac. Next, cover sealed side with block ink using a roller. Finally, flip this cardboard textured stamp over and, with the wet side facing downward, press firmly onto paper and apply pressure with a clean roller or printing press. Leave to dry. Finally, create your dog by cutting up, collaging and layering different colours/textures/patterns of recycled paper on a separate piece of A4 paper. When satisfied, cut out dog and glue onto your textured background.

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