

## GRANNY GROMMET AND ME

DIANNE WOLFER AND KAREN BLAIR

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YEAR LEVEL: K–3

### ABOUT THE BOOK

*My granny and her friends go to the beach, and I come too. It looks like lots of fun. But I don't want to go in the water. There are strange things under the waves ...*

A story that many young reluctant swimmers will identify with, *Granny Grommet and Me* is about the power of our elders to transform scary experiences into exciting ones. Watching Granny and her friends duck and dive and twist and turn, enjoying catching waves and revelling in the bracing and invigorating ocean spray, helps a junior grommet gain enough confidence to appreciate the wonders that lie beneath the surface of the water.

This book was inspired by the real Granny Grommets, a group of surfing/boogie-boarding ladies in Albany, Western Australia.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dianne Wolfer is an award-winning author. Her book, *Lighthouse Girl*, served as inspiration for PIAF's *The Giants* and was adapted into a stage production by Black Swan State Theatre Company. One of Dianne's picture books, *Photographs in the Mud* (set along the Kokoda Track), was inspired by a wartime anecdote, has been used as an international peace reference and was also published in Japanese.

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Karen Blair is an award-winning Western Australian author and illustrator of nearly 20 children's books. Her books have been published in eight countries, and she has illustrated for some of Australia's most acclaimed authors. She has worked as a primary art teacher and creates books from her home studio in Fremantle where she lives with her husband, two children and small dog.

### THEMES

- Friendship and relationships with seniors
- Self-esteem and self-discovery
- Marine environments and ecology

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

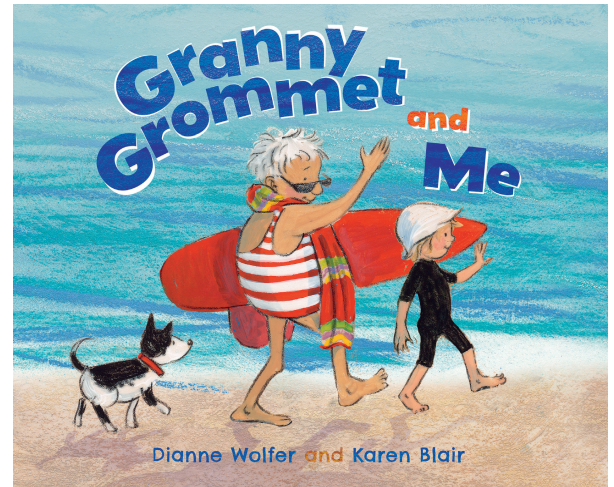
K–3 English

K–3 Health and Physical Education

K–3 HAAS

### USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author's website: <https://diannewolfer.com>
- Illustrator's website: <https://www.karenblair.com.au>
- [www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/campaigns-and-events/slip-slop-slap-look-look-look](http://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/campaigns-and-events/slip-slop-slap-look-look-look)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2SAXiA\\_dbQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2SAXiA_dbQ)



## CLASSROOM IDEAS

### Discussion questions

1. A grommet can have a few different meanings. It's the name of the tiny tube inserted into the eardrum to help with glue ear is called a grommet. It is also a word used by the Australian surf community to describe young, skilled surfers. It can be used as a term of respect for young children learning to surf. Why do you think Granny is called a grommet in this story?
2. Name the four things the Granny Grommets do to stay safe in the water.
3. What do we do to stay safe when we go out in the sun? Slip, slap, slop, seek and slide. Watch Sid the Seagull in the video from the Cancer Council. <https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/campaigns-and-events/slip-slop-slap-look-slide>
4. In the story, the little child is frightened to go in the water because he doesn't know what is under the waves. What do you think he might be frightened of and why?
5. Think of a time when you were frightened to do something new.  
What were you frightened to do?  
Why were you frightened to do it?  
What did you do to overcome your fear? Did someone help you? Did you practice a skill? Did you ask for help?  
Did you end up overcoming your fear?  
How did you feel?  
Talk to your neighbour about the experience.
6. When the little girl is on the surfboard, she shuts her eyes and clenches her toes because she is frightened. Our bodies give us signs when we feel strong emotions.  
How might you feel when you are scared? What symptoms do you notice in your body?  
How might you feel when you are very happy? What symptoms do you notice in your body?
  - Choose one of the feelings discussed and label a body outline with the symptoms.  
For example: Scared – butterflies in the tummy, clenching fingers, shutting eyes, shaking head.  
Happy – smiling, happy eyes, bubbles of happiness in chest, feel like jumping around.
7. The little child feels safe when the grannies surround him in the water. There are people in our lives who make us feel safe and who we can talk to when we have problems.  
Do you have someone like this in your life? It could be your family members, guardians, caregivers, teachers, etc. It is usually an adult, but sometimes our pets give us comfort.
  - Ask the children to draw around their hand and put the names of five people they trust, one on each finger. Discuss how these are the people you trust, who you can turn to when things get tough.

### Sentence work

1. Developing complex sentences with the conjunctions *because*, *but* and *so*. (Activity taken from [The Writing Revolution](#)).
  - We use conjunctions or connecting words to join two sentences together.
  - We use 'because' when we want to explain something.
  - We use 'but' to indicate a change of direction. We use 'so' to tell us what happens as a result of something else.

Write about the experience you discussed in Question 5 above using the following sentence starter.

- I was frightened to (what were you frightened to do?) because (what were you frightened would happen?).
- I was frightened to (what were you frightened to do?) but (how did you overcome your fear?).
- I was frightened to (what were you frightened to do?) so (what happened in the end?).

For example:

- I was frightened to stroke the cat because I thought it would scratch me.
- I was frightened to stroke the cat, but mum told me it would be okay if I was gentle.
- I was frightened to stroke the cat, so I gently tickled it under the chin first.
- I enjoyed tickling the cat, its fur felt soft and silky.

2. Alliteration is the repetition of the same sound in a series of words in a sentence.  
The author uses alliteration in the title of the book and to describe what the grannies do in the water e.g. 'Doris ducks and dives.'
  - Find two other examples of alliteration in the book.
  - Look at the video of Sid the Seagull from the Cancer Council again and highlight the alliteration here.
  - Take the sound of the first letter of your name to write a sentence, using alliteration, to say how you would move in the water.
  - Draw a picture to go with your sentence.
3. Creating regular past tense verbs  
The book is written mostly in the present tense. Practice changing these into the past tense by adding 'ed'. For example:  
Today I check the ocean.  
Yesterday I checked the ocean.
  - Continue with the following verbs: twist, turn, zoom, tickle, laugh, brush, explore, show, suggest, float, listen, open.
  - Discuss that the verbs that end with an 'e' only need a 'd' added.
  - Sort the past tense verbs into those that end with an /ed/ sound, those with a /t/ sound and those with a /d/ sound.

## Paragraph writing

1. Discuss things that the children have enjoyed doing at the weekend. Ask if any of them did something new or different. Make a list on the whiteboard of all the interesting action verbs found in the book. The children can choose 3–5 of these verbs, or some of their own, to write a paragraph about something they have enjoyed doing on the weekend. Discuss the meaning of some of the more unusual verbs in the book, such as sunblock, hit (the surf), wade, soak, clench and peer.

## Art and Biological Sciences

1. Give each child a paper outline of a person for them to decorate as themselves. Put their names on it across the chest so it can be read easily. Put them all up around the classroom, each one touching the next one, with a sign such as, 'In this class, we all look out for each other' (or some other affirmation that you decide on as a class).
2. At the end of the book, the child is happily snorkelling in the water, looking at all the 'wonderfully strange' creatures and plants in the ocean. Brainstorm with the class all the different things that can be found in the ocean.
  - Each child will choose one underwater plant or animal and create a colourful drawing of it.
  - They can then research and write one or two interesting facts about their drawing.
  - Create a wonderful frieze on the wall with all the pictures and information.
  - Spend five minutes each day reading together all the interesting facts, then have a quiz at the end of the week/term to give the students the opportunity to share what they have learned.