

## QUOKKA FINDS A FRIEND

KATIE STEWART

ISBN (HB): 9781760994204

YEAR LEVEL: F-2

### ABOUT THE BOOK

When Quokka meets Seal, he wants to be friends. Quokka thinks that making Seal smile would be a great way to start. But, despite his best efforts, Seal doesn't smile. Can they be friends after all? This latest picture book from children's author Katie Stewart features much-loved Australian animals and aims to teach children the value of understanding each other's differences.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Katie Stewart is an author and illustrator. Born in the north of England, she came to Australia at the age of nine. She started her working life as an archaeologist and ethnohistorian, went on to teaching and then to being a mother. She later worked in a school library, but her lifelong dream was to be what she is now. She is married to a farmer, has three children and lives north of Northam, where her love of animals means she has a lot of pets and takes lots of nature photos. In her spare time, she tries to play the harp or wanders the countryside with a metal detector amusing the neighbours and occasionally finding an interesting piece of history. Her books have been shortlisted for the Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year (2020 and 2021) and shortlisted for the WA Premier's Book Awards (2022).

### THEMES

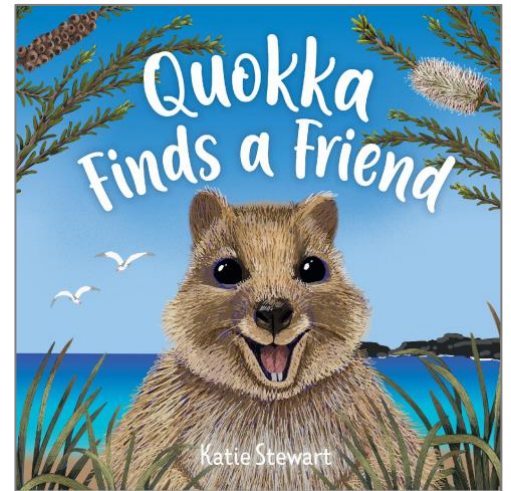
- Friendship
- Emotions
- Differences
- Communication
- Native fauna

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

- F-2 English
- F-2 Science: Biological Sciences
- F-2 The Arts
- F-2 Health and Physical Education: Personal, Social and Community Health
- General Capabilities: Literacy, Personal and Social Capability

### USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author's website: [katiestewartauthorillustrator.com](http://katiestewartauthorillustrator.com)
- Australian Museum – Quokka: [australian.museum/learn/animals/mammals/quokka](http://australian.museum/learn/animals/mammals/quokka)
- Australian Museum – Australian Fur Seal: [australian.museum/learn/animals/mammals/australian-fur-seal](http://australian.museum/learn/animals/mammals/australian-fur-seal)



## CLASSROOM IDEAS

### Discussion questions

1. Look at the book's cover. Who do you think will become Quokka's friend?
2. Identify these parts of the book: front cover, back cover, title, author/illustrator, blurb and spine.
3. The author has included the epigraph: 'Everyone is a little weird. Finding a friend who lets you be weird your way is special.' Who is this message for and what do you think it means?
4. After reading, consider how the epigraph relates to the story.
5. Retell the story in your own words.
6. Re-read the story, identifying the feelings of each character. What makes you think they are feeling this emotion?
7. Why did Quokka fall into the rock pool?
8. How does Seal help Quokka?
9. Why does Quokka think that looking at a shiny shell makes people smile every time?
10. How does Quokka show perseverance in the story?
11. What are some of the ways Quokka and Seal communicate their needs, likes and dislikes?
12. What does it mean to be a good friend? Do you think Quokka and Seal are good friends to each other?
13. Did you like the story's ending? Why or why not?
14. What tense is used in this story? Give 3 examples.
15. How do you think Quokka felt when Seal didn't smile at first? Did this change later in the book?
16. What does the story teach us about trying new things?
17. Has anyone seen a quokka or fur seal in real life?
18. Create a character profile for Quokka or Seal. Include their appearance, personality, likes and dislikes.
19. Make a list of action verbs from the story. Can you use each in a new sentence?
20. What is the purpose of this story? To inform, persuade or entertain?
21. Read another text or watch a short clip that features a quokka (fiction or non-fiction). What is similar and different about how the quokkas are portrayed?
22. Why are some words from the story written in larger, bold font? Experiment with placing the emphasis on other words instead and discuss whether this affects meaning.
23. Can you think of antonyms for these words from the story: smile, small, funniest, easy, everybody, lost, together.

### Creative Writing

1. Write an information report on quokkas, fur seals or another animal that lives on an island habitat. Present your work to the class.
2. Write a short story about making a new friend. Your story should include an introduction, a complication and a resolution.
3. Imagine you're in the story's setting. How would it look, sound, smell and feel?
4. Predict what could happen next after this story ends.
5. Rottnest Island, off the coast of WA, is home to the largest population of quokkas in the world. Find out the rules visitors on the island must follow to protect quokkas, then make a poster explaining the rules.

### The Arts

1. Take turns acting out different emotions, including those identified in the text.
2. Work in pairs to re-enact the story.
3. An important theme in this story is friendship. Use various art materials to create a collage that represents friendship.
4. Choose your favourite part of the story and create an artwork of the scene.
5. Consider the colours used in the illustrations. How do they make you feel?
6. Use air-dry clay or modelling dough to create a sculpture of a character from the story.
7. Use a paper plate and available craft supplies to create a funny face. Will it make a friend smile?

## Science

1. Where can quokkas be found in the wild? How does their habitat fulfil their needs?
2. Where can fur seals be found in the wild? How does their habitat fulfil their needs?
3. Can you name another animal that is similar to a quokka? What physical features do they share? (e.g. pouch, tail, fur.)
4. Explore the physical and behavioural characteristics of quokkas and fur seals by watching video clips of them in the wild. Record your observations through writing or drawing, then compare them with your classmates.

## Health and Physical Education

1. Make a list of ways Quokka tries to make Seal smile. What are some ways you could try to make a friend smile?
2. What are some similarities and differences between Quokka and Seal?
3. Consider a friend, what are some ways they are similar and different to you?
4. What does the story teach us about different personalities and interests?
5. How does Seal show that he appreciates Quokka, even though Quokka couldn't make him smile?
6. How could you show appreciation for a friend's efforts, even if they don't succeed?

## Mathematics

1. Sequence these events from the story in order using the time connectives: *first, next, then, finally*.
  - a. Quokka meets Seal.
  - b. Quokka tries to make Seal smile.
  - c. Quokka falls into the rock pool.
  - d. The two friends watch the sunset together.
2. Use everyday language of location and direction, such as 'between', 'near', 'next to' and 'behind' to describe an image from the book in detail.
3. How many birds can you spot in this story?