



# When Friendship Followed Me Home

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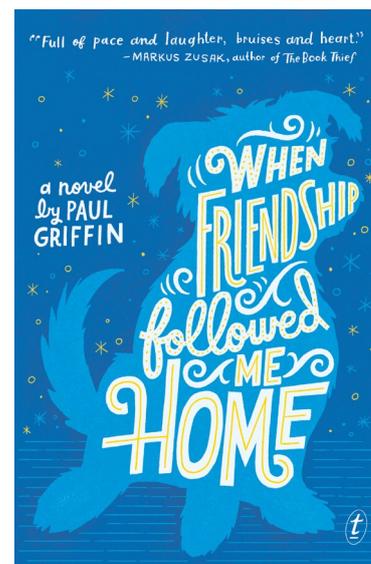
ISBN 9781925355499

RRP AU\$16.99

Fiction, paperback

RECOMMENDED SCHOOL YEAR LEVEL: 6–9

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## TEXT’S TEACHING NOTES FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

- ▶ Text’s teaching notes are designed for teachers to explore the novel in line with the *Australian Curriculum: English*.
- ▶ Questions are divided into stages: from pre-reading to post-reading and include suggested tasks for assessment.
- ▶ An ACARA coding system connects each task to the *Australian Curriculum: English*. It includes links to strands, modes, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.
- ▶ Refer to the legend below and the accompanying [Australian Curriculum: English Scope and Sequence reference chart](#) to decipher these codes.
- ▶ Students can record their responses in writing through reading journals, online discussions or verbally in classroom discussions.

<b>Strands</b>	LA – Language    LT – Literature    LY – Literacy
<b>Modes</b>	W – Writing    L – Listening    R – Reading    S – Speaking
<b>General capabilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Literacy</li> <li> Intercultural understanding</li> <li> Personal and social capability</li> <li> Information and communication technology</li> <li> Critical and creative thinking</li> <li> Numeracy</li> <li> Ethical behaviour</li> </ul>
<b>Cross-curriculum priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Sustainability</li> <li> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures</li> <li> Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia</li> </ul>

## SYNOPSIS

Ben Coffin has never felt like he fits in. A former foster kid, he keeps his head down at school to avoid bullies and spends his afternoons reading sci-fi books at the library.

All that changes when he finds a scruffy abandoned dog named Flip, who leads him to befriend fellow booklover Halley. For the first time, Ben starts to feel like he belongs. But as their story unfolds Ben’s life begins to unravel, and he must discover for himself the truth about friendship and the meaning of home.

Equal parts heartbreaking and heartwarming, *When Friendship Followed Me Home* is a breathtaking story about life, loss and the meaning of family.



## BEFORE READING

1. What do you know about therapy dogs? Research the role that animals can play in helping others. Choose one animal or therapy method as your focus for a presentation to convince people to support the program. (ACELT1613) ⚙️ R LT
2. When things are difficult, who are the people you depend on the most? Create a mind map of the circle of family, friends and perhaps pets who are your best support. What skills do they have that make them part of your support group? (ACELT1613) ⚙️ 👤 R LT
3. What is something you find difficult or challenging? How might something like animal therapy help you to make that challenge easier? (ACELY1714) 📖 W LY
4. Look at the opening page of the novel. How does the image and the Star Wars quotation in the epigraph create interest? What does it make you think about? Why do you think it has been included? (ACELT1619) ⚙️ R LT

## WHILE READING

1. What does Mold compare social media to on page 3? How does he attempt to make social media sound like it's been around for centuries? (ACELT1619) ⚙️ ⚖️ R LT
2. What does Ben do to appear like others and fit in? How successful is he? (ACELT1622) ⚙️ R LT
3. Why do you think Tess refers to Ben as 'Traveller'? Support your ideas with evidence from the novel. (ACELT1619) 📖 ⚖️ R LT
4. Ben refers to a spotlight of sunshine that falls on Halley and makes her 'gold for around ten or eleven seconds' (p.51). How does the metaphor reflect their growing relationship? How else are colors used to give an impression of Halley? (p.56) (ACELT1613) ⚙️ R LT
5. Why do you think Ben gave his money away after selling the books? In particular, what reason do you think he chose to give the money to Rayburn? (ACELT1613) ⚙️ R LT
6. Why is the story that Ben and Tess create together so important to them? (ACELT1619) 📖 ⚖️ R LT

## AFTER READING

### CHARACTER

1. Other characters, such as Halley's mum and the book seller, knew that Halley and Ben would get along. What do Halley and Ben have in common? (ACELT1622) ⚙️ R LT
2. In what way do Flip and Ben share similar life experiences? (ACELT1622) 📖 R LT
3. What do we learn about Halley and Ben through their reading preferences? (ACELT1622) ⚙️ R LT

## STYLE AND STRUCTURE

1. Why do you think the writer has chosen to include visual images in the novel? (p.36 and p. 47). (ACELT1610) 📖 R LT
2. Why do you think the writer does not reveal everything about Ben's and Halley's lives at the beginning of the novel? How does it change the way that we relate to the characters? (ACELT1767) 📖 R LT
3. According to Ben, one of the rules of storytelling is that there has to be an orphan. What other rules does he refer to (p.49)? Does the novel *When Friendship Followed Me Home* obey these rules? If you were to create a guide for the rules of writing a book like *When Friendship Followed Me Home*, what do you think the rules would be? Come up with five rules. (ACELA1528) 📖 🌐 R LA

## THEMES

### Chance

1. Ben describes the moment he 'crack[ed] the alley door' and 'flip[ped] [his] life upside down' (p.7). What is he suggesting about chance? (ACELT1626) ⚙️ ⚖️ R LT
2. Make a list of moments in the novel where something seems to fall into place for the characters, despite the challenges they must face in the process. For example, when Ben stopped talking when he lived in the foster home, Tess came to work with him and they ended up being a family. (ACELT1627) 📖 R LT
3. What is the difference between chance and fate? How would you classify events in the novel? For example, was it chance or fate that brought Halley and Ben together? Be prepared to justify your answer. (ACELT1627) 📖 R LT

### Friendship and Family

4. When Ben finds himself on the street, he questions whether it would be easier to allow himself to die (p.170). What role do friends and family play in Ben's ability to keep going? (ACELT1619) ⚙️ R LT
5. Family is not always made up of people you are related to. Consider who makes up Ben's family in the novel. Create a mind map to illustrate the connections between characters. (ACELT1619) ⚙️ R LT
6. What makes Flip a valuable and perfect friend for Ben? (ACELT1627) ⚙️ R LT

### Loss

1. How have the losses that Ben has experienced changed the way that he deals with life? (ACELT1627) ⚙️ R LT
2. Halley knows that she may not survive, but she is most upset by Ben's inability to believe that there is anything after death. What does this tell us about how Halley is coping with the idea of death? (ACELT1627) ⚙️ R LT



3. We cannot stop loss from occurring; it is a natural part of our life. But some losses teach us how to value what we have in our life and help us to find hope where we may not have seen it before. Can you find an example in the novel where a loss has been followed by something positive? (For example, how do Mrs and Mrs Lorentz feel about Ben moving in with them?) (ACELT1619) ⚙️ R LT
2. I always felt like a stranger, even to myself sometimes. I just didn't know where I fit in or what I was supposed to do or be in life, like maybe I was a mistake.' (p. 8) Explore how the characters cope with challenges in the novel. (ACELT1635) ⚙️ R W LT
3. The title of the novel *When Friendship Followed Me Home* suggests that meeting new friends is something that happens by chance. Explore the connection between chance and friendship in the novel. (ACELT1635) ⚙️ R W LT

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### RESPONDING

1. Imagine you are Ben. Halley's parents have asked you to speak about her at a memorial service. What would you say about Halley? What message do you think Halley would have wanted to leave for her friends and family? (ACELT1627) ⚙️ R W LT
4. Imagine you are one of Ben's reading students in the library. Retell the first visit to the library from their point of view. What was it like to meet Flip? How did it feel to become a better reader? (ACELA1548) ⚙️ W LA