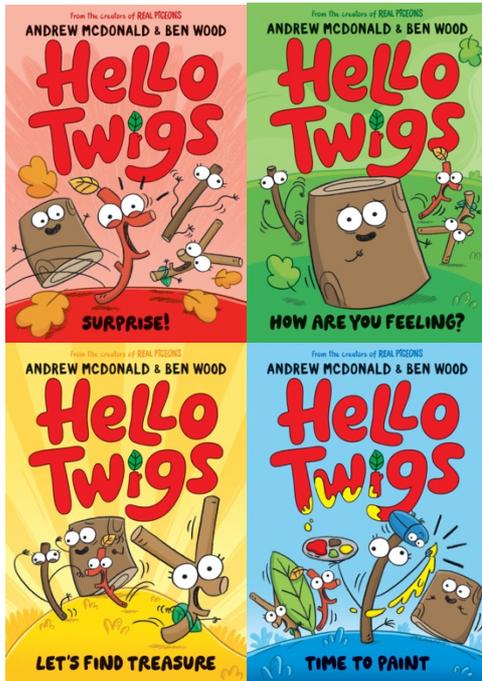


## Teacher's Notes



*Hello Twigs (books 1-4)*

**Written by Andrew McDonald**

**Illustrated by Ben Wood**

**Teacher's Notes by Bec Kavanagh**

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### LEARNING OUTCOMES

#### RECOMMENDED FOR

Junior fiction readers (ages 4+, grades P-1)

#### KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: English
- General capabilities:
  - AC9EFLA06
  - AC9EFLA07
  - AC9EFLE02
  - AC9E1LE03

### THEMES

- Imagination
- Feelings
- Friendship
- Problem-solving

### SYNOPSIS

Meet the Twigs – Noodle, Ziggy, Stump, and Red. Hello Twigs! These funny, simple stories are perfect for children developing their confidence in independent reading. Each book introduces a simple problem for the twigs to overcome and explores issue like friendship, adventure, problem-solving and feelings.

In **Time to Paint**, Noodle (who is a twig, but also an artist) decides to paint a picture. But what will she do when she can't find anything blue to paint with?

In **Surprise**, Red wants to be a wild twig, but when he tries to surprise the others he just ends up scaring them. Can he come up with a surprise that won't upset his friends?

In **How Are You Feeling**, the Twigs explore feelings when Stump is feeling great sadness about no longer being stuck to the Big Tree.

In **Let's Find Treasure**, Ziggy wants to find a treasure, but she's not sure what treasure is! In the end, the real treasure turns out to be something unexpected.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

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**Andrew McDonald** is the author of *Hello Twigs* and *Real Pigeons*. He lives on Wurundjeri Country, in Melbourne, Australia, where he makes up stories and writes them down. He loves writing books that make kids laugh, gasp and wonder about the world. His books have been shortlisted for prizes such as the Australian Book Industry Awards, the Readings Children's Book Prize, and the YABBA, KOALA and KROC children's choice book awards. In his spare time, Andrew likes to read books, eat cake and jump on the bed. Sometimes, all at once!

**Ben Wood** is not a woody twig, even though his name implies it. He is actually the illustrator of *Hello Twigs* and *Real Pigeons*. Fun! He has illustrated many other books and is drawn to stories that are funny and heartfelt. When not drawing Ben likes to read, eat overstuffed burritos, swim, run and walk his energetic dogs. Ben's books have been included on the Children's Book Council of Australia's 'Notables' lists, and shortlisted for the Readings Children's Book Prize and the Australian Book Industry Awards. When not in the studio, Ben speaks in schools and runs workshops about illustration. He lives in Naarm/Melbourne.

## THEMES

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### Friendship

Friendship is a central theme in each of the books. In *Time to Paint*, Noodle demonstrates friendship by painting a picture of Ziggy. In *Surprise*, Red learns that friends don't like it when you scare them. In *How Are You Feeling*, the twigs learn how to look after a friend who is feeling sad. And in *Let's Find Treasure*, the twigs work together to help their friend find a treasure and solve her problems.

In addition to this, each book explores individual themes such as:

- Art
- Creativity
- Exploring
- Treasure
- Sadness

All of the stories explore themes that young readers will be familiar with – feelings, friendship and working together to solve problems.



## WRITING STYLE

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Andrew McDonald introduces familiar themes to readers using simple language to help young readers build their confidence in reading independently. The stories are written mostly in dialogue – we learn what's happening in the story through what the characters say to each other. What *isn't* dialogue? Imagine a scene where one of the twigs is trying to convince the other twig to give them something. Can you write a conversation between the two twigs that show what's happening in the story? What other information do you need to include as the writer?

The writer also uses **adjectives** (describing words) to make the story more interesting. Underline five adjectives in the books that you think make the story more interesting – why? Come up with three adjectives to add to your own story.

## COMPREHENSION

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- Who are the Twigs? Write down one fact that you learn about each of them as you read the books.
- What phrase is repeated in all of the Twigs books?
- What does Stump use to make paint for Noodle?
- What colour paint is Noodle missing? The Twigs can't think of anything blue in nature to use as paint – can you?
- What clever plan does Noodle come up with to get the blue from the sky? Why doesn't it work?
- What does Noodle do when she realises she can't make blue paint?
- What kind of twig is Red Twig? What do wild things do?
- Why is Red trying to surprise the other Twigs? How do the other Twigs react to his surprises?
- What does Red learn about surprises? How does he make it up to the other Twigs for scaring them?
- What are some of the words the Twigs use in *How Are You Feeling* to describe their feelings? What type of words are these? Come up with three words to describe the way you're feeling right now.
- What makes Stump feel great sadness? What things make you feel sad?
- What is a joy sound? What joy sound do each of the twigs make? What would your joy sound be?
- How do the Twigs help Stump to feel better?
- Ziggy says that 'Twigs can go anywhere and do anything'. Is she right? Is there anywhere a twig *can't* go?
- Where do the Twigs look for treasure? Where do they end up finding it?
- What are some of the qualities an explorer needs to survive?
- What does Ziggy realise when she reaches the top of the big rock?
- What does Ziggy find in her backpack at the top of the big rock? How does she use her findings to solve her problem?



## WRITING EXERCISE

Stories are interesting because they have characters who want things, and obstacles that stand in their way. Imagine a story where the character got everything they wanted – would it be very interesting?

For each of the books in the *Hello Twigs* series, figure out who the book is about, what they want, and what's stopping them from getting it. Enter your findings into the table below.

	Who is the book about?	What do they want?	What's standing in their way?
<b>Time to Paint</b>			
<b>Surprise</b>			
<b>How Are You Feeling</b>			
<b>Let's Find Treasure</b>			

Now use the **last** column to come up with a plan for your own Hello Twigs story. What will you call it? Who is the story going to be about? What do they want? And what's standing in their way?

Now comes the hard part – how are they going to solve the problem to get what they want? Write a possible ending to your story that shows your twig solving their problem in order to get what they want.

## ILLUSTRATION STYLE

Ben Wood uses simple shapes (such as squares, circles, rectangles and triangles) to draw the twigs and their home. Explore the book and try to identify some of the basic shapes used to bring these characters to life – can you use them to draw your own Twig?

The Twigs are more than just outlines though – they're characters in the story who do things and have feelings. What lines in the illustrations show movement? Do different lines show different types of movement?

The Twigs don't have human faces, but we can still tell what they're feeling because of the expressions they make. Discuss some of the ways you move the parts of your face to show how you're feeling. How do the Twigs? What kind of expressions do the twigs make to show how they're feeling?

Can you combine these three elements – shape, movement & expression – to draw a scene of your favourite Twig from the series?



## CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

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1. In *Time to Paint*, Stump uses nature to make different colours of paint for Noodle. What can you find in your garden or kitchen to make your own natural paint?
2. Find an interesting stick outside and give it a name and personality. Give it a costume and turn it into a new character for the books. Use the instructions in the back of *Let's Find Treasure* to help you.
3. What do you notice about where the Twigs live? How would you describe their habitat? Make a diorama that shows their habitat based on one of the scenes in the book.
4. A treasure is different for everybody – what treasures do each of the Twigs imagine in *Let's Find Treasure*? Draw a picture of your own treasure.
5. Many words in *Hello Twigs* will be familiar to you, but you might find some that are new. Make a list of any new words that you find – write down the meaning of each of them, and practice using them in a sentence.
6. Sometimes we can use stories to help us work out how to overcome problems we're facing in our own life. Choose a problem the Twigs face in one of the book and compare it to a problem you've faced – describe the similarities and differences between your story and the Twigs'.

## RELATED READING

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- *Narwhal and Jelly* by Ben Clanton
- *School of Monsters* by Sally Rippin
- *Hello Piggy* by Mo Willems
- *Wombats!* by Maddie Frost
- *Real Pigeons* by Andrew McDonald and Ben Wood

