

## Teacher's Notes



### *We're Moving Away*

**Written and Illustrated by Niña Nill**  
**Teacher's Notes by Bec Kavanagh**

These notes may be reproduced for use within schools free of charge, but not offered in any part for commercial sale.

Copyright © Hardie Grant Children's Publishing 2023.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

#### RECOMMENDED FOR

3+ aged readers (grades P-1)

#### KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: English
- General capabilities:
  - AC9EFLA07
  - AC9EFLE02
  - AC9E1LA08
  - AC9E1LE02

### THEMES

- Moving
- Change
- Saying goodbye
- Starting new things
- Home
- Migrating
- Diversity

### SYNOPSIS

In *We're Moving Away*, the main character is moving to a new country. They make a list of all of the things to take with them and all of the things they'll leave behind. They say goodbye to friends and family, and leave their house to move to a new country where everything is different.

When they arrive at their new house, it's empty and they feel sad and unsure. But they write new lists – of familiar things to unpack and new things to buy, of places to visit and people to meet. Bit by bit, the new house starts to feel like home too.

*We're Moving Away* captures all the uncertainty of moving away, acknowledging the fear that often accompanies a big move while pointing towards the joys of a new beginning.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

---

Niña Nill is a children's book creator based in Brisbane, Australia, where she lives with her husband, two adorable kids, and a growing number of houseplants. She loves illustrating stories for children, from the magical and whimsical to the quiet and ordinary. One of her earliest memories is copying her mum's drawing of a cat under a row of flowers and she has been drawing ever since.

## THEMES

---

### Home

The last line of the book is 'and we are home again'. Discuss the meaning of home in the story. What does it take to feel at home somewhere? Ask students to reflect on what makes them feel at home – is it people, pets, being close to their friends, or perhaps special objects, or a place to be alone? How would it feel to say goodbye to and/or discover these things?

### Difference

One of the things the book explores is difference – the things that make us different as people, and differences in place, in families, in language, in tradition. What are some of the differences you can spot in the book? How does it feel to be different? What are some of the things that we can do to celebrate differences and make sure that everyone feels welcome?

## WRITING STYLE

---

Niña Nill uses simple language, and sparingly, to show what is happening in the story and allows the pictures to do a lot of the work. Sometimes using *fewer* words can be more powerful, because it allows the reader to experience the emotion of the book for themselves, rather than the writer telling them how to feel.

Discuss the meaning of the phrase **show, don't tell**. In this book, the writer-illustrator literally shows us what is happening through the illustrations, but we can also use words to show things, by describing how they feel, taste, smell, look and sound. Choose one of the scenes in the book and try to 'show' it using words.

## COMPREHENSION

---

- How does the main character in the book feel about moving away?
- Why can't they take all of their things?
- What are some of the things that appear on the list of things to leave behind? What are some of the new things they buy in the new country?
- What is the word used to describe someone moving from one country to another? What are some of the reasons that people make a big move like this?
- How does the main character's expression tell you how they're feeling? How do you think they're feeling when they say goodbye to their friends? What is their expression in this scene?



- What are some of the new places the character in the book might go when they arrive in their new country?
- Describe some of the differences between where they move from and where they move to?
- What do you think makes a house into a home? What happens to make the character in the book feel at home again?

## WRITING EXERCISE

---

Write about a time when you've felt unsure or out of place. Reflect on how things became more familiar, or the way people you met helped you to feel more comfortable.

## ILLUSTRATION STYLE

---

A lot of the illustrations in the book are realistic and create scenes to show what is happening and how the character/s are feeling. But the illustrator also uses a visual collage to capture all of the things the main character has to bring, leave behind, unpack and buy. What are some of the things on these lists? How do these images help to give you a sense of how much is changing? What else do they tell you about the character and what's important to them?

The illustrations also help to give a sense of how the character is feeling, through the expressions on their faces as they move through each of the scenes. Describe the expression on the main character's face when they first see their new home.

## CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

---

1. In the book, the character makes a list of things they need to take with them to their new home. Imagine that you're moving away, and you can only take one small suitcase of things. What would you put in the suitcase? Draw a picture of all of the things on your list.
2. Think about how lonely and uncertain the character in the book feels when they arrive in an unfamiliar country without all of their family and friends. Make a welcome kit for someone arriving to your school for the first time. Fill it with things that might make them feel more comfortable or help them to find their way around.
3. How do we stay in touch with friends and family overseas? In the book, we see the main character speaking to their family using a screen. One of the other ways we can stay in touch is to write letters or postcards. Write a letter or postcard to one of your friends or a family member, and tell them about something new you've done recently.
4. Draw a picture of the place you feel most at home. What are some of the things that make it feel like home? Look at the last few pages of the book – what details reveal the way that this house has become a home for the main character?



## RELATED READING

---

*We're Moving* by Adam and Charlotte Guillain

*The Journey* by Francesca Sanna

*A Hundred Thousand Welcomes* by Mary Lee Donovan

*Tilly* by Jane Godwin

*Clancy & Millie and the Very Fine House* by Libby Gleeson

