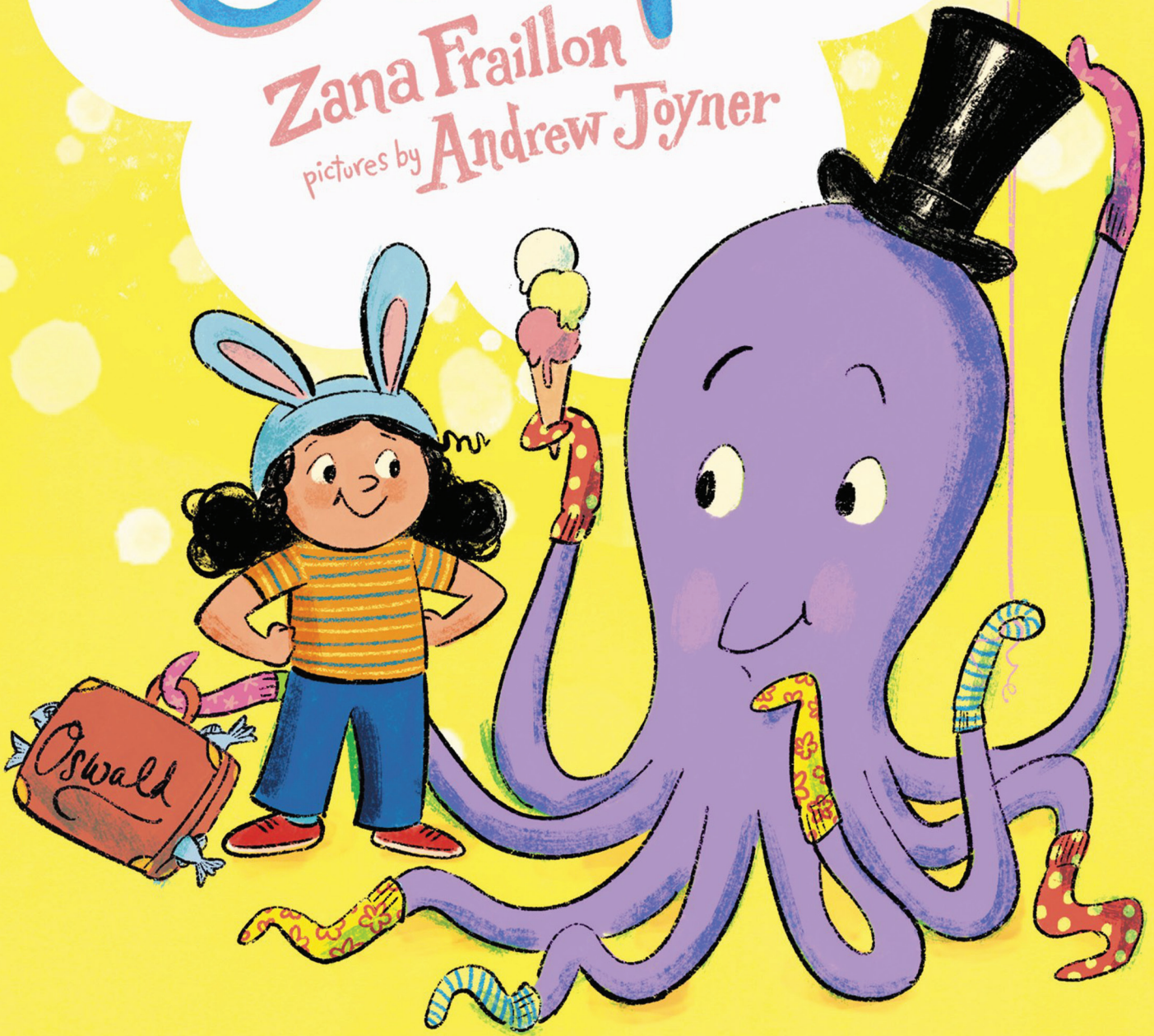
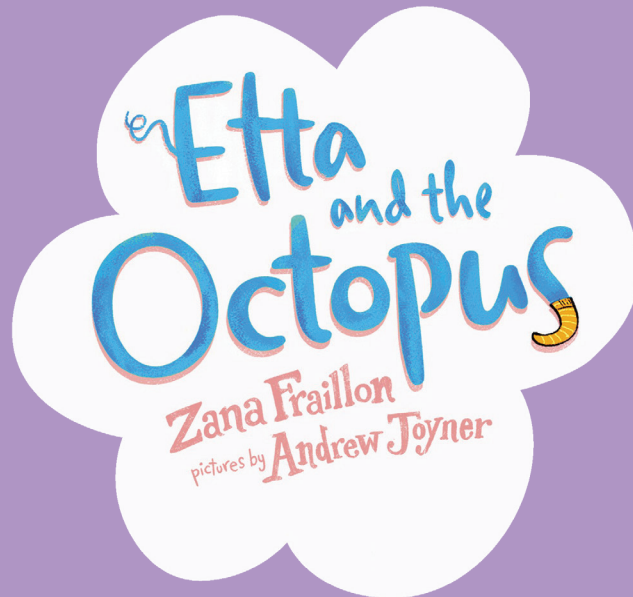


# Etta and the Octopus

Zana Fraillon  
pictures by Andrew Joyner



TEACHERS RESOURCES



## Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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# INTRODUCTION

*Etta and the Octopus* is a hilarious, fully illustrated tale about an unlikely friendship between a girl and an octopus that is perfect for newly independent readers, from one of Australia's most respected writers for children and an award-winning illustrator.

## **FOUND!**

***One octopus!***

***Likes to eat tuna sandwiches.***

***Goes by the name of 'Oswald'.***

It all began when Etta decided to take a bath . . . And realised she wasn't alone. On the floor lay a brown suitcase with *Oswald* written on it in fancy writing. And in the bath sat Oswald. Etta had never had an octopus in her bath before.

Etta feels sure someone must be missing their octopus and is determined to return Oswald, but he seems a little less enthusiastic.

When a rude lady with a net and a stick turns up to claim him, Etta must decide where Oswald really belongs.

In seven short chapters Zana Fraillon tells a charming story about friendship. For despite being a somewhat difficult houseguest, Etta discovers that she actually quite likes having him around!

# THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several ideas relevant to curriculum topics Science and English Language and Literacy and Visual Literacy might be identified in this novel:

## **SCIENCE**

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/science/>>

**Discussion Point:** Research octopuses and discuss their unique features. Etta's Octopus Fact Sheet (p 16) could include some real facts. [See also **Worksheet 2** and **Bibliography.**]

**Discussion Point:** How happy do you think an octopus would be living in an aquarium tank? Should sea animals be kept in captivity?

**Discussion Point:** In 2016, an octopus named Inky actually escaped from New Zealand's National Aquarium. Read about this in Sy Montgomery's *Inky's Amazing Escape*, illustrated by Amy Schimler-Safford (Simon & Schuster, 2018). See also Erin Guendelsberger's *Inky the Octopus*, illustrated by David Leonard (Sourcebooks Inc., 2017).

## HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/>

### FRIENDSHIP

**Discussion Point:** What does this story suggest about friendship?

**Discussion Point:** Etta is initially a little concerned about Oswald's antics but later enjoys them. What changes her mind?

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>

### NARRATIVE STYLE

**Discussion Point:** Why do you think the story is told in third person, rather than from Etta's first person point of view?

**Activity:** Language can be used in a playful way to describe an activity, by juxtaposing words, for example, 'They walked in the promenades, and promenaded through the walkways.' (p 40) Try writing a sentence like this by juxtaposing words, for example, 'They paraded on the dance floor and danced on the parade.'

**Activity:** Test your students' comprehension of words used by discussing the events which take place in this story. [See also **Worksheet 3.**]

### CHARACTERS

**Major Characters:** Etta and Oswald. **Minor Characters:** Marina Prinkle Esquire, Officer Morris.

**Discussion Point:** How would you describe Etta?

**Discussion Point:** What sort of person is Marina Prinkle?

**Discussion Point:** Etta's Granny is mentioned a number of times. Where do you think she is?

### WRITING TASKS

**Activity:** Write another short story about Oswald's antics.

**Activity:** Write an acrostic poem using the letters in 'Oswald Octopus'.

**Activity:** In order to keep Oswald busy Etta suggests a number of activities: they made cubbies, put on a puppet show, made cupcakes, and played board games. What other activities might Etta have suggested to keep Oswald busy? Write a few sentences describing them.

**Activity:** Write an expository text describing octopuses and some of their unique features.

**Activity:** Make a funny list of foods that Oswald might like to create in Etta's kitchen, for example, seaweed pancakes.

## VISUAL LITERACY

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>>\_

**Discussion Point:** Oswald is said to be helpful but on p 37 he is actually removing the posters, not putting them up. And he steals the ice-cream, balloons and newspaper which he gives to Etta (pp 38–9). Examine all the illustrations closely and encourage students to discuss the details they discover in them.

**Activity:** Create a comic strip version of Etta meeting Oswald.

**Activity:** Design a new cover for this book.

**Activity:** What is the craziest thing you can imagine Oswald doing? Draw a picture of him doing it. [See also **Worksheet 1.**]

## FURTHER ACTIVITIES

1. Etta wears a very fetching hat with bunny ears. Make a hat just like it.
2. Design a Missing Octopus Poster and draw a picture of Oswald on the poster. Make him look as charming as possible! Then compare your students' pictures and display them.
3. Read other picture books, fiction and non-fiction books about octopuses and establish a display in your classroom. [See **Bibliography**].
4. Craft an octopus from a paper plate or a toilet roll. [See 'Fifteen Easy Octopus Crafts for Kids' *Kids Craft Corner* <https://kidzcraftcorner.com/octopus-crafts-for-kids/> for ideas.]
5. Locate any songs about octopuses and share them with your students, for example, The Beatles' song 'Octopus's Garden' is available as a picture book by Ringo Starr. [See **Bibliography**.] The Wiggles also have several songs about Henry the Octopus [See **Bibliography**.]

## CONCLUSION

This is an hilarious tale by gifted wordsmith Zana Fraillon enhanced by Andrew Joyner's brilliant illustrations. Etta has found a friend, and with eight arms he is going to be very useful to have around!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Zana Fraillon (she/ her) was born in Naarm (Melbourne), but spent her early childhood in San Francisco. Her 2016 novel, *The Bone Sparrow*, won the ABIA Book of the Year for Older Children, the Readings Young Adult Book Prize and the Amnesty CILIP Honour. It was also shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards, the Queensland Literary Awards, the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize, the Gold Inky and the CILIP Carnegie Medal. Her book *The Lost Soul Atlas* won the 2020 Aurealis Award for Best Children's Fiction and was shortlisted for the 2021 Children's Book Council Award for Book of the Year: Older Readers. Her most recent picture book, *The Curiosities*, illustrated by Phil Lesnie, was a 2021 Aurealis Award winner.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Andrew Joyner** is the illustrator and author of numerous children's books, including the #1 New York Times bestseller *Dr. Seuss's The Horse Museum*, *The Pink Hat*, *Love Was Inside*, as well as *Too Many Elephants in this House* and *The Terrible Plop*, both by Ursula Dubosarsky. His books are now published in more than twenty-five countries. He lives with his family in Strathalbyn, South Australia.

Find out more at [andrewjoyner.com.au](http://andrewjoyner.com.au)

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

**Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright AM** operates *justified text* writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. Her publications include *Paper Empires: A History of the Book in Australia 1946–2005* (co-edited with Craig Munro) (UQP, 2006). In 2011 she was recipient of the CBCA (Qld) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award, in 2012, of the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Outstanding Services to Children's Literature, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021 she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.



# WORKSHEETS

## WORKSHEET 1. OCTOPUS FACTSHEET

**Complete this list with other facts you have discovered.**

1. The plural for Octopus is Octopuses or Octopi.
2. Octopuses have three hearts and blue blood. Two of the hearts serve to move blood past their gills, while the third pumps blood through the rest of the body.
3. Octopuses have eight arms not tentacles. (Squid, cuttlefish and nautilus have tentacles.)
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

## WORKSHEET 2. COMPREHENSION

- a) Several words appear in this text which you may not be familiar with. List and try to define these words by looking at the context in which they appear.

Some examples to get you started:

Distracted (p 30)	
Appreciated (p 38)	
Deposited (p 42)	
Peckish (p 62)	

- b) What adjectives could you use to describe Oswald?

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- c) Finish these sentences:

Etta likes having Oswald as a friend because he is ...

Oswald likes to eat ...

Oswald doesn't like ...

During their walk in the Big City, Oswald gives Etta ...

Marina Prinkle visits Etta because she wants to reclaim ...

**Answers for Worksheet 2a:** 1. Has a tendency for attention to wander from the topic at hand. 2. Was grateful for... 3. Placed or dropped into position. 4. Hungry.