

Picture book

### Key Curriculum Areas

English  
Health  
Art

### Themes

Coping with change  
Resilience  
Emotions  
Time  
Seasons

## Through the Gate

**Author/Illustrator:** Sally Fawcett

**Publisher:** EK Books  
**Price:** \$24.99  
**ISBN:** 978-1-925335-41-5  
**Publication Date:** May 2017  
**Audience:** Children aged 3–8

### Notes prepared by

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### SYNOPSIS

*Through the Gate* tells the story of a child who has just moved house and is struggling to cope with all the changes in her life. She relates to the dilapidated house she has moved to, as she sits sad and forlorn upon its broken front step. But, as the story unfolds, the house is gradually repaired paralleling how the child's perception of her new situation improves. Each time the child passes 'through the gate', into the world beyond, she notices more of her surroundings and discovers that her new life has some wonderful things in it. The messages delivered through this story can be understood at different levels — literal and metaphorical. Nothing stays the same and difficult times will pass. A little effort in maintenance can improve our physical surroundings, yet our perceptions also colour our world. These messages are relevant to both children and adults, as we all



## **AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR INTERVIEW**

### **1. What was the inspiration for the story?**

One day I was drawing little houses using shapes. I had a square house and a circle house and a triangle house. My triangle house looked sad. I didn't want my house to be sad, so I tried flipping and turning the triangles to make it appear happy, but it didn't matter what I did with the triangles it still looked sad. I stopped fiddling and started washing my pile of dishes. While I washed I thought of the sad little house and how I really didn't want it to be sad. Then a wave of inspiration hit. I dried my hands sat at my computer and tapped out the draft of this story all before completing the dishes!

### **2. What was the most rewarding part of this project?**

Seeing this book in print was incredibly rewarding. Although I wrote the words to this story quite quickly, the illustrations took me a long time in between other commitments of parenting and teaching. After completing the illustrations I waited 6 months to see my book in print. It was a long process, but well worth the wait as I am really proud of how this book has turned out.

### **3. What was the most challenging part of this project?**

Waiting! I wrote the words to this story in 2014—two years before I received the contract to have it published. I had the images in my head from the day I wrote the story, but I hadn't drawn a thing until January 2016. Luckily my mind saved those ideas and when I got the go-ahead I scribbled them all down in a day, making a little dummy draft of the book. It was very messy, but all the ideas flowed. The final illustrations took me a LOT longer. I'm very slow at drawing!!!

### **4. What media did you use to create your illustrations? Can you briefly describe your process?**

I drew up my rough illustrations in pencil then enlarged them on a photocopier. I then traced my enlarged drawings onto watercolour paper. I coloured them using Derwent inktense pencils. For the larger areas such as the skies I shaved the colour off my pencils and added water making inky watery paint that I could then use to do wet on wet technique.

## TEACHING NOTES

### Whole Class Reading

- **Before Reading**
  - Show the cover to the class and ask the students what they think the book might be about.
  - Read the back cover blurb. Does this give them more of an idea of what the book could be about?
  
- **During Reading**
  - Throughout the story is a 'spot the difference' game. On each double spread of the house readers can develop their observation skills by discovering the changes in house renovations and seasons. There are at least 5 changes to find on each spread.
    - What is different about the house?
    - What has changed in the garden?
    - How would you describe the sky?
    - Can you find the cat?
  
  - On subsequent readings you could focus on the changes in the girl as she walks to school. Her mood is reflected in her posture and expression as she progresses through a variety of emotions.
    - How do you think she feels?
    - What tells you she feels this way?
    - Have you ever felt like this? Why?
    - What do you notice about the colour as the girl walks to school?
    - Why do you think the colour is gradually increasing?
  
- **After Reading**

#### **Classroom Ideas:**

(BLM sheets could be laminated and used for small group activities or photocopied for individual use)

## ENGLISH

- Oral language discussion questions. (See BLM 1)
- Write a book review (See BLM 2)
- Reading Comprehension (See BLM 3)
- Sequencing Activities (See BLM 4, 5, 6)
- Identify all the words in the story that are different ways of walking and looking (BLM 7)
- Brainstorm any other words that could be used instead of LOOKED and WALKED

## HEALTH

- Discuss what the girl in the story did to improve her mood. (She looked for positive things around her, asked a girl to join her, she kept putting one foot in front of the other and walked through the difficult time)
- Discuss the other things that helped to improve how the girl was feeling. (time, house renovation, weather)
- Brainstorm changes that have happened in the students' life. Discuss how the changes made them feel.
- Brainstorm situations that have made the students feel sad/afraid/confused. Write them on cards.
- In small groups discuss the difficult situations on the cards and decide on actions that could improve the situation.
- Write or draw a situation / action / outcome for the girl in the story then do the same for a difficult time in the students' lives.

## VISUAL ARTS

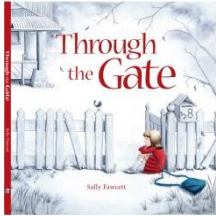
- Discuss the use of colour in the book.
  - Paint a picture using only grey.
- Discuss how different colours can convey emotions.
  - Paint an emotion using only one colour.
- Look at the girl's expressions and posture.
  - Draw a character looking sad and then looking happy.

### Oral Language Comprehension Questions

Page Turn	Questions	Check
1	What is wrong with the house?	
2	How do you think the girl feels? Why?	
3	What does 'plodded' mean?	
4	What is different about the house?	
5	What does 'mooch' mean? Can you 'mooch'?	
6	What has the bird been doing over the last week?	
7	Do you think the girl likes puppies? Why?	
8	Can you find 2 things that have changed on the house?	
9	Why do you think she invited another girl to join her?	
10	Can you find 3 things that have changed in the garden?	
11	Why do you think the girl is 'marching' to school?	
12	How do you think the house was fixed-up while the girl was at school?	
13	Why does the girl have a new smile?	
14	Why do you think the girl is skipping?	
15	Who was waiting for the little girl to come home?	

# Book Review

BLM 2




Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Characters:	Setting:
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What happens in the story?

Did you like the story? Give it a score out of 5 stars.



Draw a picture on the back of this page.

## Reading Comprehension

BLM 3

1. Describe the house at the beginning of the story.

---

2. Why is the girl unhappy at the beginning of the story?

---

3. What does 'mooched' mean?

---

4. What does the little bird do during the story?

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5. What happens to the house during the story?

---

6. What happens to the garden during the story?

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7. What happens to the girl during the story?

---

8. What season do you think it is at the end of the story?

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9. What makes you feel sad? \_\_\_\_\_

10. What makes you feel happy? \_\_\_\_\_

**Sequencing Activity**  
Cut out and order the sentences.

BLM 4

The bird finished building his nest.

The birds laid 3 little blue eggs.

A little bird sat alone on a bare branch.

The bird began to build a nest in the bare branches.

The little bird found a mate to share his nest.

3 chicks hatched in the nest.

**Sequencing Activity**  
Cut out and order the sentences.

BLM 5

The girl picks some flowers for her mother.

The girl is unhappy about moving house.

The girl feels a new smile appear on her face.

The girl's shoe laces come undone.

The girl makes a friend.

The girl pats a puppy.

**Sequencing Activity**  
Cut out and order the sentences.

BLM 6

Plants have been planted in the attic window.

The house is old and falling apart.

The old couch and rubbish have been removed.

The garden is blooming and the house looks new.

The broken window and roof have been fixed.

The fence has been fixed and painted.

# Vocabulary

BLM 7

Colour all the ways of walking in **red**.  
Colour all the ways of looking in **blue**.

wandered

plodded

mooched

gazed

marched

looked

glared

walked

stared

Can you think of any other words  
that could be used instead of  
walked?

Can you think of any other words  
that could be used instead of  
looked?