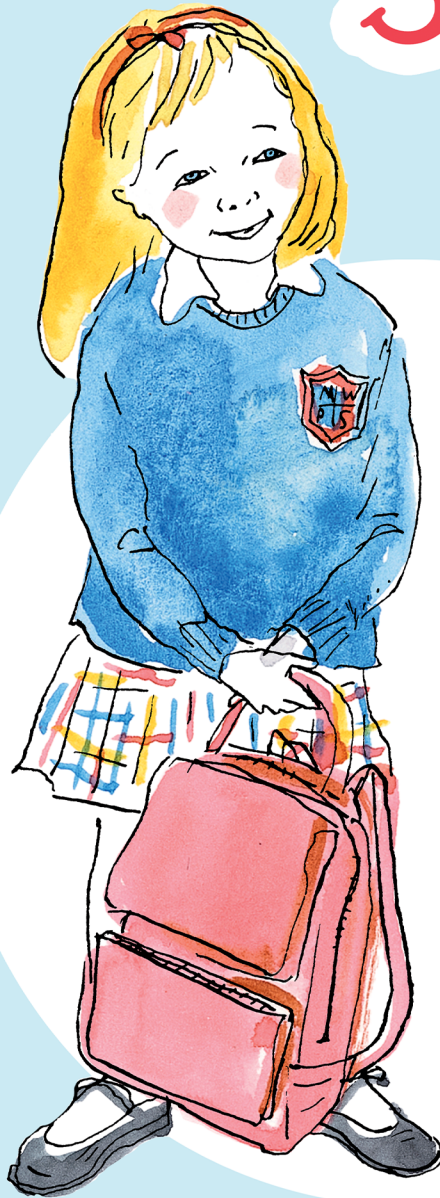


The Isabelle Stories

Izzy &
Belle

Four Books
in One
Volume!



JANE GODWIN
Illustrated by Robin Cowcher

TEACHERS RESOURCES

The Isabelle Stories

JANE GODWIN

Illustrated by Robin Cowcher

Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

Introduction	3
Before & After Reading the Series	3
Themes & Curriculum Topics	3
Specific Topics in Each Story	3
General Story Topics (Books 1–4) in Relation to Curriculum Areas	5
<i>Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)</i>	
<i>English Language & Literacy</i>	
<i>Visual Literacy</i>	
Further Quotes for Discussion	7
Further Activities	8
Conclusion	8
About the Author	9
About the Illustrator	9
Worksheets	10
Bibliography	14
About the Author of the Notes	14

INTRODUCTION

VOLUME 1 IZZY AND BELLE

This is a heartwarming new junior fiction series about an observant, thoughtful six-year-old girl named Isabelle, and about all the big and little things that matter when you're growing up and finding your place in the wide new world.

Six-year-old Isabelle Reddy doesn't have any brothers or sisters. But she does have her dad, her cat Steve, her friend Harry B, and her baby cousin, Bibi, who she's very good at looking after. And then along comes Isobel, a new girl in her Year One class at school. They have the same name, but will they be friends?

There are four gentle stories in one volume, all about Isabelle and her world, its trials and triumphs, its small moments and big dramas: friends, family, school life and growing up, from Jane Godwin, one of Australia's respected writers for children, and with delightful illustrations by Robin Cowcher.

BEFORE & AFTER READING THE BOOK

- Examine the cover of this first book in the series. What does it suggest about the series' themes?
- After you have read the four stories in Volume 1, examine the cover again: what does it suggest to you now?
- After you have read Volume 1, read about the series in reviews and articles and use the notes below to examine the text more closely.

THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

SPECIFIC TOPICS IN EACH STORY

THE WRONG ISABELLE

Topics: Trying hard at school, awards for achievement, friendship, and naming.

Discussion Point: Isabelle desperately wants to win a Star of the Week certificate but it never seems to happen. Do you struggle with similar problems?

Discussion Point: Isabelle feels that some people are awarded Star of the Week when they don't necessarily deserve the prize. Do you think that sometimes people receive awards or prizes when they may not deserve them? And other people miss out? Is the awarding of prizes always fair?

Discussion Point: Isabelle wonders if she needs a middle name like Isobel has. Are middle names important? Do you have one? What would your middle name be, if you were asked to choose it?

Discussion Point: Isabelle and Isobel are two students in a class which contains several people with the same name. (For example, the Olivias are called Ollie, Liv and Olivia.) How many repeated names are in your class? How do you distinguish between them?

TEENAGERS

Topics: Relationship between teenagers and children, getting lost, looking after a baby.

Discussion Point: Do you have teenagers in your family or amongst your friends? How are teenagers different from children?

Discussion Point: What would you have done if you'd accidentally boarded a train without your dad, mum or another adult? Would you have gotten off the train as Isabelle does? What might have happened if Sophie and Stella weren't on that station?

Discussion Point: Do you ever have to look after a baby? What special things do babies like to do with you?

THE SPECIAL PEN

Topics: Favourite things, suspicion of others, forgiveness, family traditions.

Discussion Point: Invite students to name their favourite thing. Why do they like it so much?

Discussion Point: Have you ever suspected someone else of taking something, and then found that you were wrong? How did that make you feel? Did you apologise?

Discussion Point: Have you ever said something to a friend and then wished you hadn't said it? Have you ever had a misunderstanding or argument with a friend? How did you resolve it?

Discussion Point: Do you have a family tradition? What is it?

NOT RUBBISH

Topics: Rubbish can be useful, imagining and building a world, creating a community, art installations.

Discussion Point: Discuss with students the practice of throwing out rubbish and how sometimes things can be re-purposed or recycled. Encourage students to consider the rubbish collected in their own homes. Invite each student to bring small items from home for a session on recycling or repurposing something to make it useful or decorative again. Examples might be items of clothing which have been discarded, accessories such as a hat or a handbag, domestic items such as a cushion or a small lamp.

Discussion Point: Have you ever created a special place outside, like Harry B does? It might be a treehouse or a cubbyhouse, or a whole outdoor room like this one.

Discussion Point: What is an art installation? Have you ever seen one?

Discussion Point: The outdoor house brings all the children's families together for a barbecue, so it has created a community. Neighborhoods are often brought together by outdoor celebrations such as street parties. What brings your community together?

GENERAL STORY TOPICS (BOOKS 1–4) IN RELATION TO CURRICULUM AREAS

Several themes relevant to curriculum topics (Studies of Society and Environment, and English Language and Literacy) are common to all four stories in this first volume in the series.

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

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

Finding One's Identity/Growing Up

Discussion Point: Isabelle is an only child in a single-parent household. She is somewhat shy and anxious to please people. Does she change in the course of these four stories? In what way?

Discussion Point: Izzy is very outgoing but meeting Isabelle changes that in what way?

Discussion Point: Naming is a part of one's identity. Do you think your name suits you? If not, what other name would you choose for yourself? [See also **Worksheet 4.**]

Friendship

Discussion Point: Isabelle befriends 'New Isobel' and also has her old best friend Harry B. How important are friends? How can friends help you?

Discussion Point: Isabelle is happy she has such a good friend in Izzy: 'A friend who forgives you if you make a mistake. A friend who smiles when you say sorry. A friend who doesn't sulk. A friend who doesn't go off and play with other people and leave you out.' (p 94) How important are these qualities in a friend?

Families

Discussion Point: Isabelle and her dad live together. It seems that her mother has died although this isn't mentioned. Izzy has two teenage stepsisters, Sophie and Stella who live in two separate houses at various times. Discuss the fact that families come in different sizes and are made up differently.

Discussion Point: What makes a family? Look around you and you will discover different types of families.

School

Discussion Point: School is a large part of these children's lives. Their teachers are each described very creatively. Miss Amira is Isabelle's teacher. Why does she like her so much?

Discussion Point: Rules are a big part of schooling. What rules are mentioned in these stories?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY

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

Study the writing style employed in these four stories, and examine the following sub-topics:

Narrative Person, Narrative Perspective & Tense

Discussion Point: The stories are told in third person, present tense. How different might the narrative have been, if it had been written in first person?

Literary Devices

Activity: Find examples of the use of literary devices in this book, to describe characters or setting, using the table below to identify examples.

Simile	
Metaphors	
Personification	
Other	

Discussion Point: Language can be confusing when adults use words that are unfamiliar, for example, Isobel is upset and confused when Mr Riled says: 'Take your bags off your pegs because I'll dismiss you from the oval.' (p 30) She's not sure what 'dismiss' means in this context. What other words are unfamiliar or confusing for the characters in this book?

Humour

Activity: Identify any section in the book which you found humorous.

Structure

The structure of each story can be analysed in terms of key narrative features used to engage the reader's attention and to shape the work:

a) *Strong beginnings and endings to chapters* are one way of structuring a narrative, for example:

Beginning: 'How many stops did Dad say? Was it three?' (Teenagers, Ch 4, p 48)

Ending: 'Has Izzy taken it?' (The Special Pen, Ch 5, p 84)

Which other opening or closing sentence was particularly gripping, in your opinion?

b) *Suspense* is the key to any narrative's structure. Read each story and discuss the suspenseful aspects of each story, for example:

1 *The Wrong Isabelle:* Will Isabelle ever win the Star of the Week award?

2 *Teenagers:* Will Isabelle's dad find her and Bibi again?

3 *The Special Pen:* Did Izzy steal Isabelle's special pen?

4 *Not Rubbish:* Will Harry B make a success of his outdoor room?

Characters

Isabelle is the central character but there are many other characters in this book.

Activity: How are Isabelle (Belle) and Isobel (Izzy) different? How are they alike?

Discussion Point: Which character was most intriguing and why? Which character would you like to have heard more about?

Discussion Point: Mr Riled, the assistant to the principal Ms Free, is a little alarming. He 'shouts quite a lot' (p 29). What makes a teacher so bossy?

Discussion Point: From your reading of the stories, how would you describe Isabelle's dad?

Writing Tasks

Activity: Write a note to your friend, using 'picture writing', as Isabelle does when she writes

her name and then Isobel's. (See p 14.)

Activity: Use picture writing to tell a short story. [See also **Worksheet 3.**]

Activity: Write a diary entry by Izzy about meeting Isabelle for the first time.

Activity: Write a letter from Miss Amira to Isobel's parents describing her behaviour in class.

Activity: This book is the first in a series. Write an outline for a possible new story about Isabelle and her friends.

Activity: Test your students' comprehension by asking questions about this text. [See also **Worksheet 2.**]

VISUAL LITERACY

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

Activity: Examine the images of Isabelle and her dad and her friends. Depicting body language is one of the skills of an illustrator. Invite students to create a picture of Isabelle, Izzy and Harry B which gives you some idea of their personalities from the way their body language is depicted. [See also **Worksheet 1.**]

Activity: Series like this one are enhanced by the illustrations. What is distinctive about Robin Cowcher's work?

Activity: Design a new cover for this book.

FURTHER QUOTES FOR DISCUSSION

1. 'There are many things you need to get right at school, and Isabelle likes to get things right.' (p 4)
2. 'Sometimes she gets too excited, but Isabelle has met excited people before, so she knows what to do.' (p 22)
3. 'Some people get Star of the Week when they haven't done anything good at all.' (p 35)
4. 'Isabelle is a tiny bit scared of them. They are teenagers.' (p 41)
5. 'What's a family tradition?' Isabelle asks her dad that night. 'It's something that a family likes doing, and does over and over again.' (p 77)
6. 'Sometimes,' says Dad, 'what you think is a mistake turns out to be even better than what you were trying to do. It makes you look at your drawing in a different way.' (p 100)
7. 'Is that street art?' asks a man walking his dog. 'Did an artist do that?' (p 120)
8. 'Sometimes rubbish is not rubbish at all, says Isabelle. 'Sometimes it's art.' (p 124)

FURTHER ACTIVITIES

1. Compare this first book to other junior fiction series. [See **Bibliography**.]
2. Design a poster to advertise this book.
3. The **title of this series** refers to the central character. What other title might the book have had?
4. What **'gemstone' or 'flower' names** (p 22) can you think of? [See also **Worksheet 4**.]
5. **Make a Diorama** of the 'installation' which Harry B creates out of rubbish in the fourth Story 'Not Rubbish'. (See p 123.)

CONCLUSION

Isabelle is a charming young heroine and these delightful stories not only entertain but also explore common childhood experiences and issues such as finding one's identity, friendship, family and school.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jane Godwin is the highly acclaimed and internationally published author of many books for children and young people, across all styles and ages. Children's Publisher at Penguin Books Australia for many years, Jane was the co-creator with Davina Bell of the Our Australian Girl series of quality historical fiction for middle readers. Jane's books include her novels *A Walk in the Dark*, *Falling From Grace*, *As Happy as Here* (a CBCA Notable Book) and *When Rain Turns to Snow* (shortlisted for the CBCA Book of the Year for Older Readers and for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards) and picture books *Tilly*, illustrated by Anna Walker (shortlisted for the CBCA Picture Book of the Year Award), *Sing Me the Summer*, illustrated by Alison Lester, and *All the Words I Need to Know*, illustrated by Andrew Joyner. Jane is dedicated to pursuing quality and enriching reading and writing experiences for young people, and spends as much time as she can working with them in schools and communities and running literature and writing programs.

janegodwin.com.au

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Robin Cowcher has worked at *The Age* newspaper as a designer and Illustrations Editor. Now freelancing, she illustrates for Spectrum in *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, and has illustrated wine and food books and several children's books, including *Digger* by Mike Dumbleton (2018) and *Little Dog and the Summer Holiday* by Corinne Fenton (2019). *Little Dog and the Christmas Wish* by Corinne Fenton and illustrated by Robin was shortlisted for the 2015 CBCA Crichton Award, and became the theme of the 60th anniversary Myer Christmas Windows display that year. Robin tutors part time in editorial illustration at RMIT.

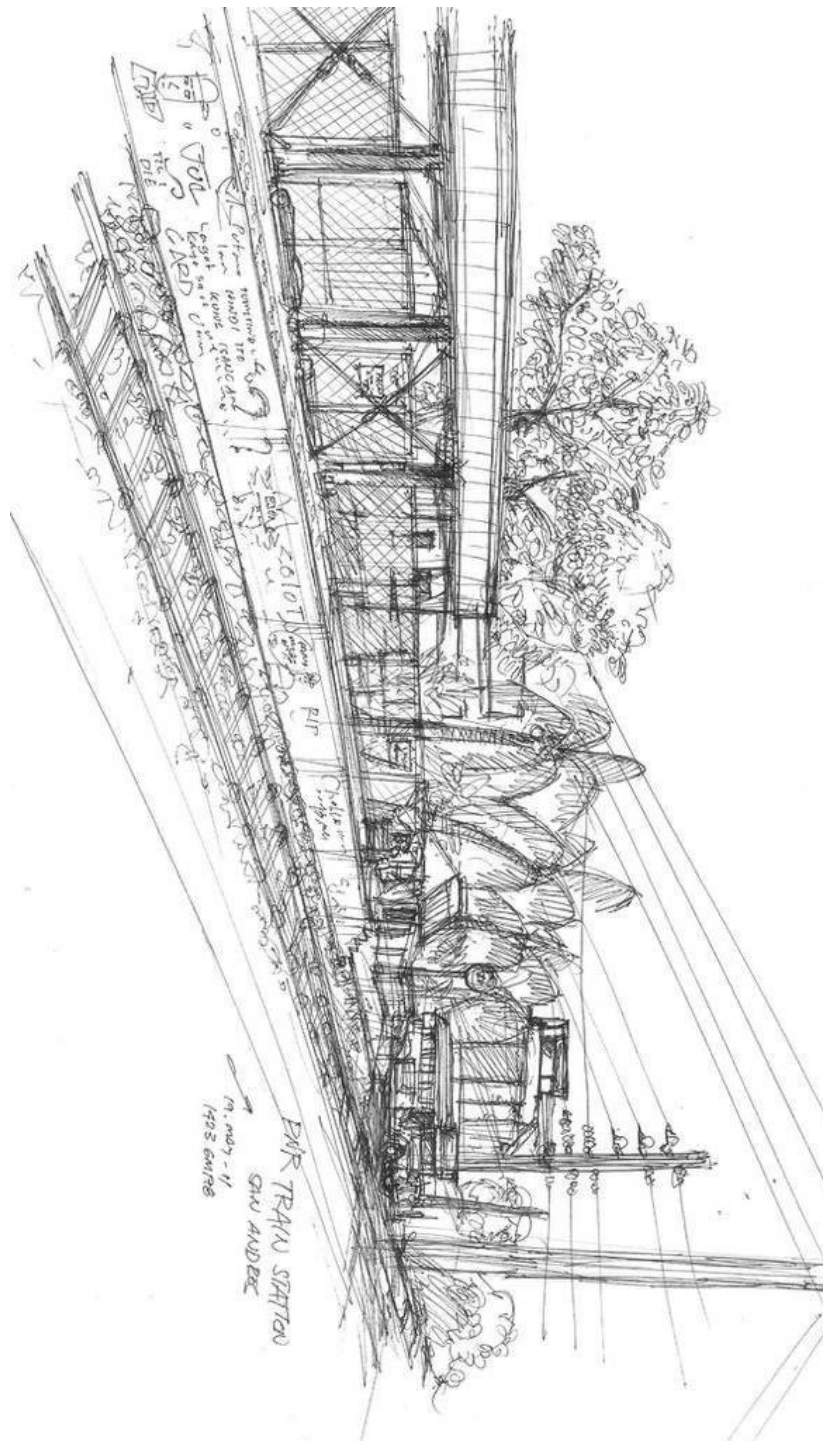
<https://www.robincowcher.com.au/>



WORKSHEETS

WORKSHEET 1 DRAWING ACTIVITY

Add images of Isabelle and Bibi meeting Stella and Sophie on this railway platform and then colour or paint your picture. [You might wish to enlarge to A3 to give you more space.]



WORKSHEET 2 QUIZ

1. Who is Steve?
2. How many Olivias are there in Isabelle's class?
3. Who was Isabelle's best friend before Isobel arrived at her school?
4. What does Isabelle receive Star of the Week for?
5. What are Izzy's stepsisters' names?
6. What does Isabelle give to Izzy to say sorry for accusing her of stealing her special pen?
7. What was the first thing Harry B rescued from the hard garbage?
8. What does Mr Riled call the older kids in the school?
9. What names does Mr Riled give kids in Years One and Two?
10. What do Anna and Dom next door give to Isabelle and her dad?
11. What is the name of Isabelle's baby cousin?
12. What is so special about Isabelle's special pen?



Answers: 1. Isabelle's cat. 2. Three. 'They are called Ollie, Liv and Olivia. And there is an Olive too!' (p 3) 3. Harry B. 4. 'For always being kind considerate and looking after others' (p 33). 5. Sophie and Stella. 6. A horse drawing and a picture letter. (p 92) 7. A big chair. (p 100) 8. You. (p 4). 9. He calls all the Year Ones 'Grade One', and all the Year Twos 'Sonny' or 'Miss'. (p 4) 10. Tomatoes and chillies. (p 17) 11. Bibi. (p 39) 12. It has six colours and a rubber on the end that can rub out pen. (p 72)

WORKSHEET 3 PICTURE WRITING

- Read the following sentences. Then write them out again but replace some words with images:

Isabelle wanted to win Star of the Week.

Isabelle loved her special pencil.

Isabelle likes travelling on trains.

Isabelle's dad is really good at drawing horses.

Miss Amira read Isabelle's class a book.

- Make up your own sentences and add pictures to them!
- Use your full name to make picture writing as Isabelle does on p 14.



WORKSHEET 4 NAMES

Find a middle name for Isabelle. Some of the unusual names discussed were: Stormy, Calypso, Wednesday and Bluey (p 25). Write a name for each letter of the alphabet and then explain why you chose it.

Name	Why I chose this name
A e.g. Anastacia	
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	
G	
H	
I	
J	
K	
L	
M	
N	
O	
P	
Q	
R	
S	
T	
U	
V	
W	
X	
Y	
Z	

BIBLIOGRAPHY

JUNIOR FICTION SERIES:

Barrows, Anna *Ivy & Bean* Ill. by Sophie Blackall. Chronicle Books.

Branford, Anna *Violet Mackerel* (Series) Ill. by Sarah Davis. Walker Books Australia.

Harvey, Jacqueline *Clementine* Rose Random House.

Harvey, Jacqueline *Alice-Miranda* Random House.

Johnson, Rebecca *Juliet, Nearly a Vet* Penguin.

Kane, Kim *Ginger Green, Play Date Queen* Hardie Grant Egmont

Louise, Zanni *Tiggy and the Magic Paintbrush* Ill. by Gillian Flint Bonnier Publishing.

Murray, Martine *Henrietta* Allen & Unwin.

Murrell, Belinda *Lulu Bell*. Ill by Serena Geddes. Random House

Poshoglian, Yvette *Ella and Olivia* Scholastic.

Rippin, Sally *Billie B. Brown* Hardie Grant Children's Publishing.

WEBSITE TEACHING RESOURCES:

'100 Ways to Repurpose and Reuse Broken Household Items by Vanessa Beaty *DIY & Crafts*
May 3, 2014

<<https://www.diyncrafts.com/6081/repurpose/100-ways-repurpose-reuse-broken-household-items>>

'How to Make a Diorama' *WikiHow*

<<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Diorama>>

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.

