



# TEACHERS' RESOURCES

## RECOMMENDED FOR

Preschool to lower primary  
(ages 3–6; preschool to K)

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## KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English, Visual Arts, Maths
- **General capabilities:** Literacy, Critical and creative thinking, Personal and social capability, Visual literacy

## REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- To discuss new vocabulary, respond to texts and share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts.
- To use and experiment with different materials, and create artworks to communicate ideas to an audience.
- To explore mathematical concepts about measurement and geometry
- To explore the different kinds of transport throughout history.

## THEMES

- Families
- Trains
- Transport
- Birthdays
- Diversity
- Fun
- Parks

## PREPARED BY

Karen Blair and Penguin Random House  
Australia

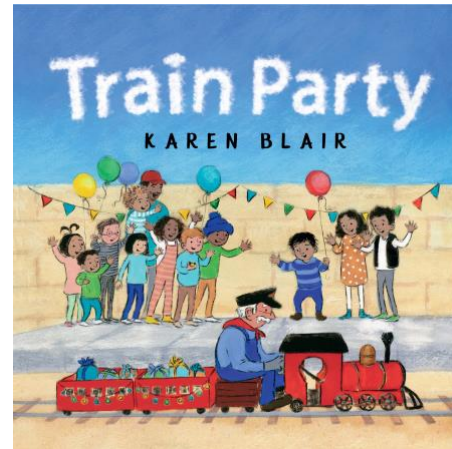
## PUBLICATION DETAILS

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## Train Party Karen Blair

## PLOT SUMMARY

A delightful rhyming picture book that celebrates all of the fun of a train-themed birthday party.

*Red, blue and green,  
yellow and black.  
Here come the trains!  
Clickety-clack.*

### All aboard the train party!

A wonderful picture book to share and to treasure. Perfect for train fans to enjoy together, both young and old. A classic picture book in the making, sure to appeal to children (and adults) who love books about trains and transport!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Karen Blair** grew up in Perth, Western Australia, where she spent a lot of time drawing and writing. She has always adored picture books and as a child would make her own at school and even in the holidays. Karen was very excited when she was awarded 3rd place in the CBCA Make Your Own Book Competition in Year 8. She was even *more* excited when the first book she illustrated, *With Nan* (by Tania Cox), was awarded Honour Book in the CBCA Book of the Year Awards.

Karen loves to draw characters that are young, old and in between, as well as the wonderful places and creatures that we encounter in Australia – in the bush, the sea, the outback, or at home. She has a background in painting landscapes and loves incorporating this into her illustrations.

Karen lives in Fremantle, Western Australia, with her husband, daughter and son, cheerful little dog and grumpy old cat. She works from her studio which looks over a garden that attracts lots of local birds. Karen also has a wonderful part-time job teaching primary-school art. She loves helping children learn new ways to bring their creative ideas to life through art.

### Karen says:

I was inspired to write *Train Party* after our family was invited to two children's birthday parties at the local miniature railway within two weeks of each other. It was such a delightful place in a park, with lots of other families out for the day or also celebrating birthdays. I was really amazed by the whole set-up – the mini station, the replica miniature trains, the beauty of the surrounding area, and the joy of the journey. It wasn't until I sat on the train and really felt the repetitive 'clickety-clack' of the train passing over the tracks that I was inspired to start writing it there and then! I was also taken by the delightful fact that the drivers take such care of the trains, often build them themselves, and are happy to share them with the public on weekends. I wasn't until I started researching miniature railways that I realised they have been going for nearly a century and are still popular all around the world!

I love that they are just the right size for children, but are actually a bit small for adults so often parents are scrunched up in the little carriages, but still having a great time. My son was also very interested in trains at the time I wrote it, so we spent a lot of time building tracks at home and playing with trains.

The illustration technique I used for *Train Party* is done in two separate layers. The background scenery is done on watercolour paper – with a

layer of watercolour paint, then a texture called pastel primer, then a layer of pastel on top. This was to give a really vibrant, colourful and textured background to reflect the natural world the train travels through. The top layer is called acetate – its clear plastic is laid over the top of where I drew the characters and trains and then coloured with acrylic paint. This is actually a technique that animators used to make cartoons before they were done on computers. The reason I chose this was to give the feel that the characters and trains are passing through the landscape and really stand out from the background.

## PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Look at the front cover of the book. Read the title together. Can you see what the title *Train Party* is referring to? What do you think the story will be about?
2. Read the blurb at the back of the book. What kind of things are you now expecting to see inside the book? What questions do you have?
3. Just inside the cover, before the title pages and the start of the story, are some illustrated pages. These are called 'endpapers'. What do the endpapers in the front of the book show you? What do they add to what you've already guessed about the story? (When you've finished reading the book, try looking at the front and back endpapers together. Do they reflect what happens in the story?)

## KEY STUDY TOPICS

### Maths – measurement and geometry

1. How many characters are in this story? How many families? How many birthdays? How many trains? How many cakes?

### Positional Language

1. After reading *Train Party*, find all the words that describe where the train or family are, e.g. 'Under the trees, around the old shack, passing the pond' and make a list.
2. Explore the features of the map on the endpapers of *Train Party*.
3. Build or draw a track and have children add features, e.g. station, trees, tunnel, bridge, round house.
4. Move a toy train around the track and have children describe its position.

### Extension

1. Children could then draw their own track with features.



2. Children could build a real track with toys.

### Art and craft activities

#### **Build a Box Train**

Find a box a child (or two) can sit inside. Add recycled elements such as jar lids for wheels, or card tubes for smoke stacks, to boxes to build a train that can be painted, then joined end to end in the classroom or outdoors to make a long train. Sing some train-themed songs together, such as 'Down at the Station'.

#### **Draw a Train**

*Who would be on your train?*

Draw a train carriage and let children decide who would be on their train.

Their family? Their pets? Their friends?

Children can draw them in their carriage and colour the train and passengers.

Would it be a **red** train? A **blue** train? Another colour? Or a **rainbow** train?

Research different kinds of train in books or on the internet. Discuss how trains have changed. What were they used for?

Have you ever been on a steam train? How are they different from modern trains? Who are the people who work on steam trains and what do they do?

Make a class poster of different trains through history and why they are important (e.g. travel, freight, connecting people).

#### **Cake Collage**

Discuss how you celebrate birthdays in your family. Do you have a cake? What would your cake look like? How many candles will you have at your next birthday? 'Build' the cake by using cut pieces of coloured paper. Use pop sticks or paper straws for candles, and pieces of mixed collage paper for decorations.

#### **Trains**

Have you ever been on a train? What did it look like? Why did you go on the train? Maybe you have been on a miniature railway?



# ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
Me and You	Deborah Kelly and Karen Blair	9780670079247	Pre-K	\$24.99		
Something Wonderful	Raewyn Caisley and Karen Blair	9780670078455	Pre-K	\$24.99		
Hello from Nowhere	Raewyn Caisley and Karen Blair	9780670075003	Pre-K	\$24.99		
<b>Train Party</b>	<b>Karen Blair</b>	<b>9781760899578</b>	<b>Pre-K</b>	<b>\$19.99</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>						

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