



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Primary aged readers
(ages 8–11; years 3 to 6)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English
- **General capabilities:** Literacy; Critical and creative thinking

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- With his primary teaching background, Tim Harris is passionate about getting kids to use their imaginations, and Chegwin's story will inspire and encourage creative and divergent thinking and innovative ideas.

THEMES

- Imagination
- Running a hotel or a business
- Creative problem solving
- Family
- Friendships
- Solving mysteries
- Humour

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia and Tim Harris

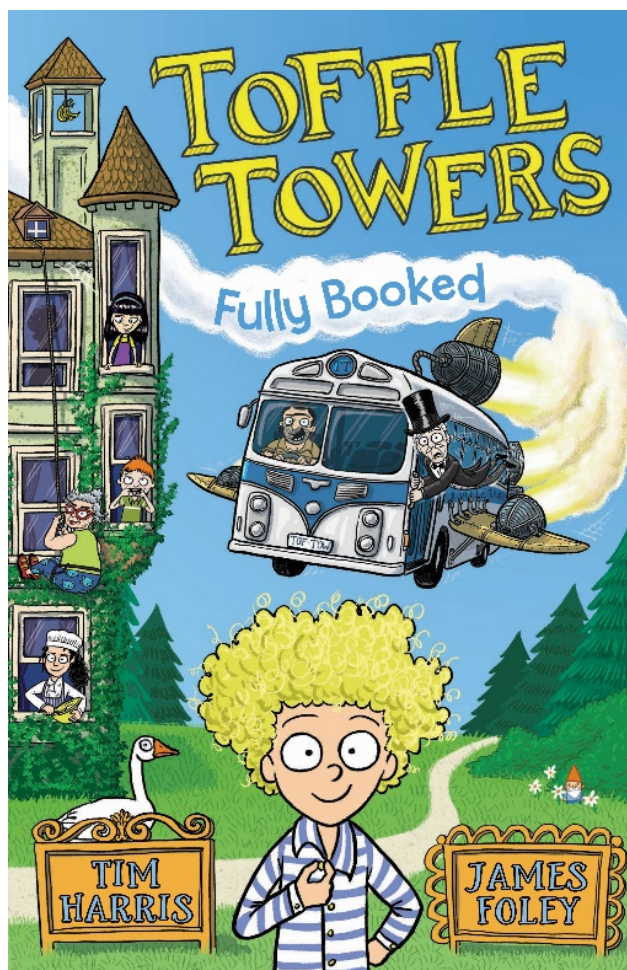
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Toffle Towers 1: Fully Booked

Tim Harris

Illustrated by James Foley

PLOT SUMMARY

Toffle Towers is about to be inherited by the next generation.

Chegwin Toffle is only ten years old. But he isn't going to let that stop him from turning this run-down hotel into a success. Chegwin is determined to transform Toffle Towers from a boring hotel for grown-ups into an incredibly exciting destination for children (and their families).

But running a hotel isn't easy. Chegwin has a lot to learn, and his tendency to drift off into daydreams isn't helping.

Chegwin has plenty of ideas. But can he turn his madcap daydreams into reality?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tim Harris is one of the most exciting authors in Australia. His first book, *Exploding Endings: Painted Dogs & Doom Cakes*, was awarded Honour Book at the 2017 KOALAs. Tim's second series, *Mr Bambuckle's Remarkables*, contains his trademark quirkiness, mixed with a touch of poignancy. The lead book was awarded a CBCA Notable in 2018, and the series was shortlisted for the REAL Awards in 2018 and 2019.

A former primary school teacher of 15 years, and advocate for creativity and short stories, Tim's presentations and workshops are dynamic and entertaining. He is a sought-after presenter, having worked in hundreds of schools across Australia.

Tim lives in Sydney with his wife and three young children.

Find out more about Tim at timharrisbooks.com



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

James Foley is a children's author and illustrator. He makes picture books, comics and middle-grade novels. His books include the Toffle Towers series, *Total Quack Up*, *Brobot*, *Dungzilla*, *Gastronauts*, *My Dead Bunny* and *The Last Viking*. James is an ambassador for Books In Homes and Room to Read Australia.

Find out more about James at jamesfoley.com.au



AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Tim says:

The nod to the inspiration for *Toffle Towers* is in the title: *Towers*. While watching the much-loved British comedy *Fawlty Towers*, I began asking myself a bunch of 'What if . . .?' questions regarding hotels. What if a kid inherited a hotel? What if said kid had to run the hotel? What if the hotel was running out of money? What funny situations do hotels open themselves up to? A seed was planted, and I couldn't wait to get started on ideas.

Choosing characters was a crucial part of the brainstorming process. I wanted to have a daydreaming main character, and our likeable protagonist Chegwin takes this dreamy characteristic to the extreme. He simply can't help himself when a new idea pops into his head. He was the perfect candidate to inherit the hotel. With someone like Chegwin in charge of a failing hotel, the possibilities were endless!

Hotels are busy places (usually – Toffle Towers hasn't had a guest for almost two years!), so I needed a cast of supporting characters – people who had been at Toffle Towers long before Chegwin arrived on the scene. It was important to make each character as unique as possible; to give them quirky character traits.

The other essential stage of the drafting process was naming the characters. I like to use names that give a hint as to what the character is like. For example, Rufus Corkindrop is quite clumsy, Pepper Perry is a fiery chef, and Barry Rake is the head groundskeeper. With such a big cast, these quirky names help the reader to quickly place each character.

Like Mr Bambuckle in *Mr Bambuckle's Remarkables*, I also wanted the main character to have a good heart and be kind. Chegwin is a very considerate boy, and he likes to consider the needs of others.

It was lots of fun watching James Foley weave his illustrative magic and bring the cast to life. He has certainly captured the essence of each character.

Toffle Towers is also the first book I've written almost exclusively in one voice. By this, I mean the main story is written in third person, past tense. Both *Exploding Endings* and *Mr Bambuckle's Remarkables* contain several first person, present tense stories. The switch made writing *Toffle Towers* quite a challenge.

I hope you enjoy meeting Chegwin and the cast of zany characters!



ILLUSTRATOR'S INSPIRATION AND PROCESS

Designing the hotel

James says:

I had Tim's descriptions in the text to work from – Toffle Towers is built from limestone blocks, it has a left and right wings, it's three storeys tall, and there's a central bell tower with a wheelbarrow hanging in it. The lobby has a reception desk with a marble counter top, and there's a dividing staircase with a portrait of Terence Toffle looking down. That was basically it.

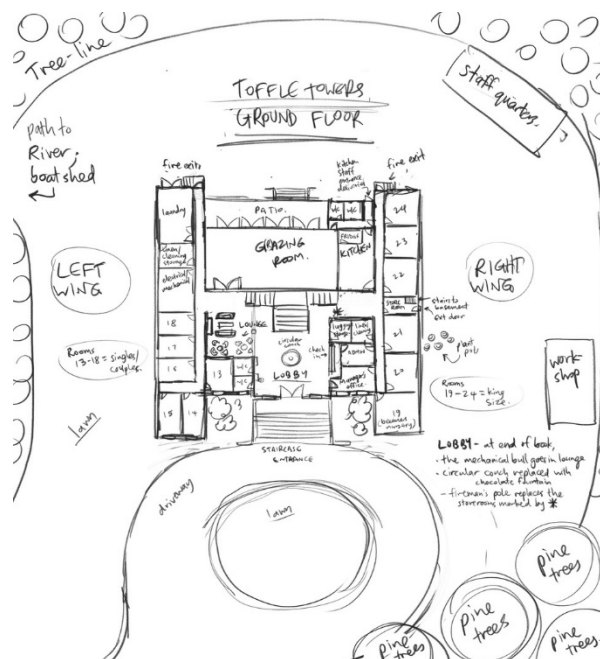
From there I had to figure out what the rest looked like.

- What architectural styles might the hotel have?
- How will the inside be decorated?
- What style of furniture might there be?
- How is the hotel laid out, i.e. where do things like the gazing room actually go?

I tried to think about all the features that you'd normally expect from a hotel, e.g. toilets in the lobby, a room to keep luggage in, a place for pamphlets and flyers to go, several clocks on the reception wall, etc. I actually made rough layouts of all three floors of the hotel, just to get my head around it – overkill, probably, but it helped me to feel like it was a real place.

I based the outside of the hotel on a real manor house in the UK (although it does not have an orange wheelbarrow in a bell tower). I based the inside on some real hotels I found on the internet, and also took some inspiration from the house style in *101 Dalmatians* and the X-mansion from the X-Men movies.

Here are some examples of the early work I did on the hotel concept while developing ideas and refining the style and look of the book's illustrations.



The illustrating process: from sketch to final illustration

Here are a couple of examples of how my illustrations develop from sketch to final illustration. I always do several rough sketches, testing out character poses and layout, before completing the final illustration.

The flying shuttle bus:



Chegwin and his parents arriving at the hotel:



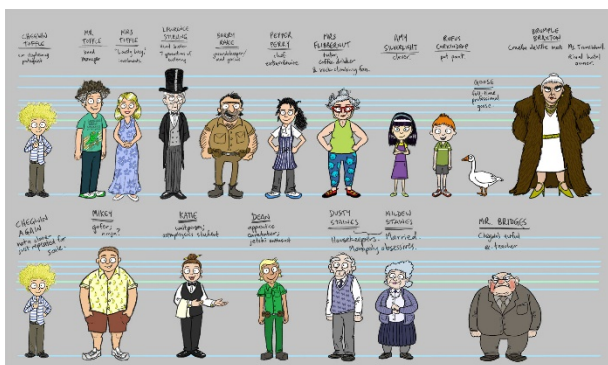
Chegwin giving a speech:



Character design

I always spend a lot of time on character design. For *Toffle Towers*' huge cast, I used Tim's descriptions of physical features and personality characteristics from the text, then elaborated and exaggerated.

One of the key things to keep in mind with any cast is to make sure that everyone looks different enough from everyone else. You can make each character unique by making sure they're different heights, different shapes, and their outfits are different colours. Each character should be instantly recognisable.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

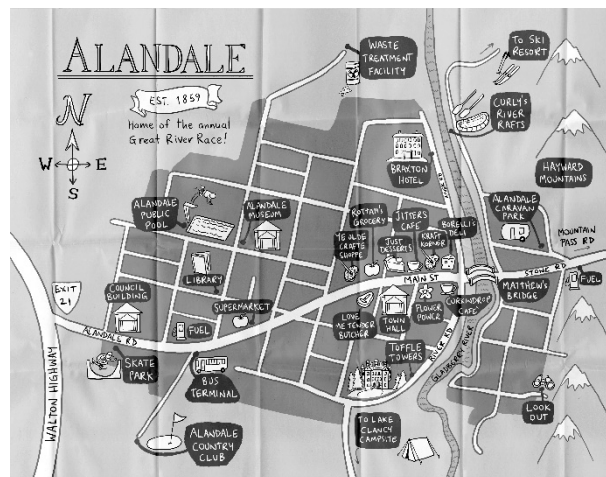
Guest reviews

Look at the reviews of the hotel on the back cover. After reading the book, write your own review of what a guest at Toffle Towers might think of their stay. What would they like? What would they dislike?

Make a list of what *you* think would make a hotel the best place to stay ever. Dream big!

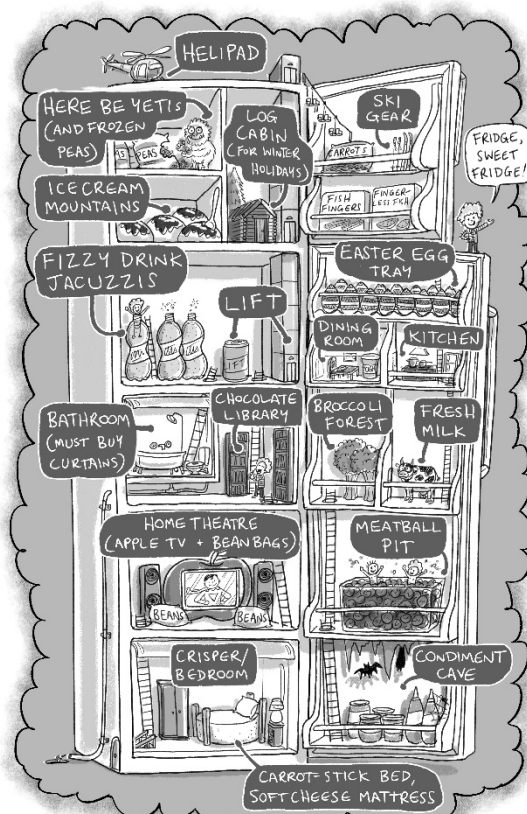
Maps

Look at the map of Alandale that James Foley has drawn for the inside front cover of the book. Draw a map of your neighbourhood, noting your favourite places and the places most important to you. You could use symbols to mark the different types of shops or places, as James has done.



Imagining objects in new ways

Use your imagination to come up with new ways to look at household objects, as Chegwin has done in Chapter 1 (pp. 1–4) when he daydreams about what it would be like to live in a refrigerator. Draw a picture of what you imagine!



Inside Chegwin's mind

On pages 13 to 20, readers can see a debate inside Chegwin's brain between his logic and his imagination. Discuss the difference between logic and imagination. How does Tim show the two different sides?

INSIDE CHEGWIN'S MIND



Chegwin's Imagination



Chegwin's Logic

Which of the following words would you associate with logic and which ones with imagination?

Analysis	Creativity
Problem solving	Intuition
Reasoning	Practical
Playful	Spontaneous
Rigid	Innovative

Are logic and imagination really on opposite sides? Think of how Chegwin's imagination and daydreaming actually help him to solve practical problems in new and innovative ways. Can you name some of the problems that Chegwin solves using his imagination?

Research is now showing that the two styles of thinking are more connected than we might think. Here's an article that explains more about convergent and divergent thinking:

theconversation.com/exploding-the-myth-of-the-scientific-vs-artistic-mind-57843

Strange things people might inherit

Chegwin has inherited a hotel. Look at James's illustrations of other strange things people might inherit on pages 39 to 43. Now come up with your own ideas for something strange that a person might inherit. Draw your ideas!



Barry's projects

Toffle Towers hasn't had any guests for months, and Barry the caretaker has been so bored that he had to invent projects to do. Look at some of his modifications to the hotel rooms on pages 69 to 72. Now come up with your own ideas for what weird things Barry might have changed around the hotel!

Uses for sixty thousand litres of milk

Help! Chegwin has accidentally ordered sixty thousand litres of milk instead of sixty! Check out the ideas he comes up with to use the milk on pages 120 to 123. What would *you* do if you were in the same situation?

Chegwin's list of possible uses for milk, or James's drawings of strange things people might inherit, are examples of what is called divergent thinking. Tim Harris often warms up before writing by creating abstract lists. It forces his brain to think outside the box for creative possibilities.

It has been said that some universities test their students' divergent thinking by asking them to create lists – e.g. 100 ways to use a paperclip. Try it next time you get stuck and need inspiration to solve a problem or to get creative!



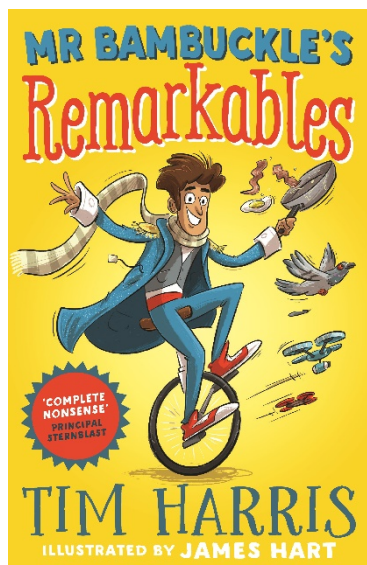
Tongue twisters

On pages 143 to 148, Pepper challenges Chegwin to order items from the shops using tongue twisters to try to catch out the shopkeepers. Here are some classic tongue twisters – say them three times fast without making a mistake!

- *She sells sea shells by the seashore.*
- *I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream!*
- *Red lorry, yellow lorry*
- *A proper cup of coffee from a proper copper coffee pot*

See if you can make up your own tongue twister of something you might ask for at a shop. Make it as difficult to say as you can, using words that have similar sounds, or repetitive elements.

FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



Mr Bambuckle's Remarkables
by Tim Harris

He's the first teacher to cook us breakfast.

Is his spark-maker beetle really that dangerous?

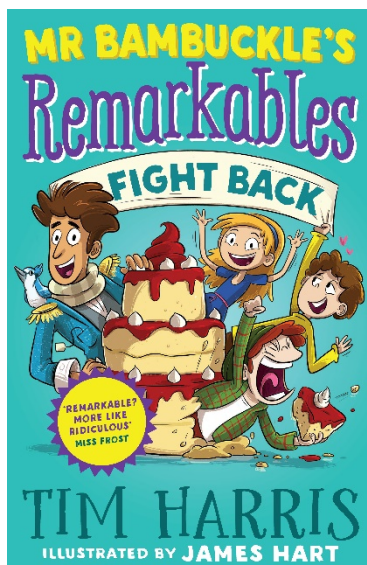
I heard he drank yak's milk in Mongolia.

He's the only person who isn't afraid of Canteen Carol.

My mum says he used to be in the circus.

The class in room 12B has a new teacher, and nothing is ever going to be the same . . .

Teachers' resources available.



Mr Bambuckle's Remarkables Fight Back
by Tim Harris

I wish Mr Bambuckle would come back.

Who will cook us breakfast now?

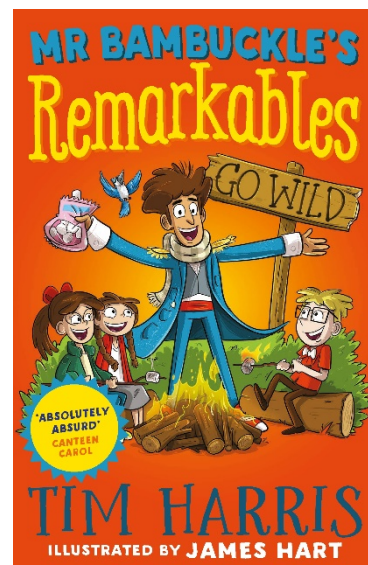
Miss Frost gave me detention just for answering a question.

Mr Bambuckle said I'm about to discover magic – but how?

There are some pretty strange things going on.

It's almost as if Mr Bambuckle could hear us . . .

Miss Frost says discipline is the new order, but not if the class in room 12B has anything to do with it . . .



Mr Bambuckle's Remarkables Go Wild
by Tim Harris

Meet your new assistant principal – Miss Frost!

Uh-oh, that's not good.

At least we're away on camp.

Mr Bambuckle lets us eat marshmallows before dinner!

Is that a spark-maker beetle?

Shh! What was that noise?

The class in room 12B are having fun in the wilderness. Until Miss Frost crashes camp . . .

WORKSHEET: Dialogue

Tim Harris likes to have fun with character dialogue – for instance, Barry and Larry’s conversations in *Toffle Towers*. Now it’s your turn. Choose two characters – they could be well-known figures from pop culture or literature, or someone you know, or you could make up your own characters.

Write a conversation between these two characters. Try to keep the conversation flowing, and don’t worry about adding dialogue tags yet – just write down the actual words these characters are saying to each other on the solid black lines below.

Then, once you’re done, go back through and add in dialogue tags on the dotted grey lines.

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WORKSHEET: Divergent thinking

Practise divergent thinking by creating a list of ideas, as Chegwin does with his uses for sixty thousand litres of milk, or the list of strange things people might inherit. Pick a topic and write it in the space below. Then, set a timer for ten minutes and write as many ideas for your topic as you can.

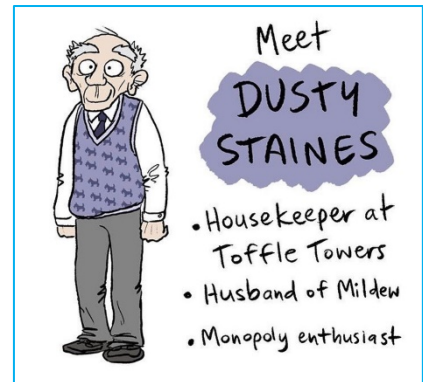
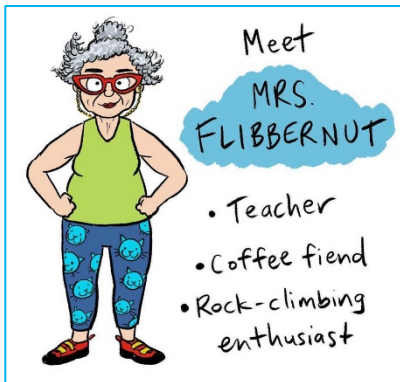
TOPIC:

IDEAS:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

WORKSHEET: Character profiles

Here are some examples of character profiles that illustrator James Foley created for *Toffle Towers*.



Choose some of the other characters from *Toffle Towers*, draw a picture of them and write a profile listing at least three facts you know about that character, or one of their favourite quotes.

ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
TOFFLE TOWERS 1: FULLY BOOKED	Tim Harris	9780143795421	3-6	\$14.99		
Mr Bambuckle's Remarkables	Tim Harris	9780143785859	3-6	\$14.99		
Mr Bambuckle's Remarkables Fight Back	Tim Harris	9780143785873	3-6	\$14.99		
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Mr Bambuckle's Remarkables on the Lookout	Tim Harris	9780143793144	3-6	\$14.99		
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