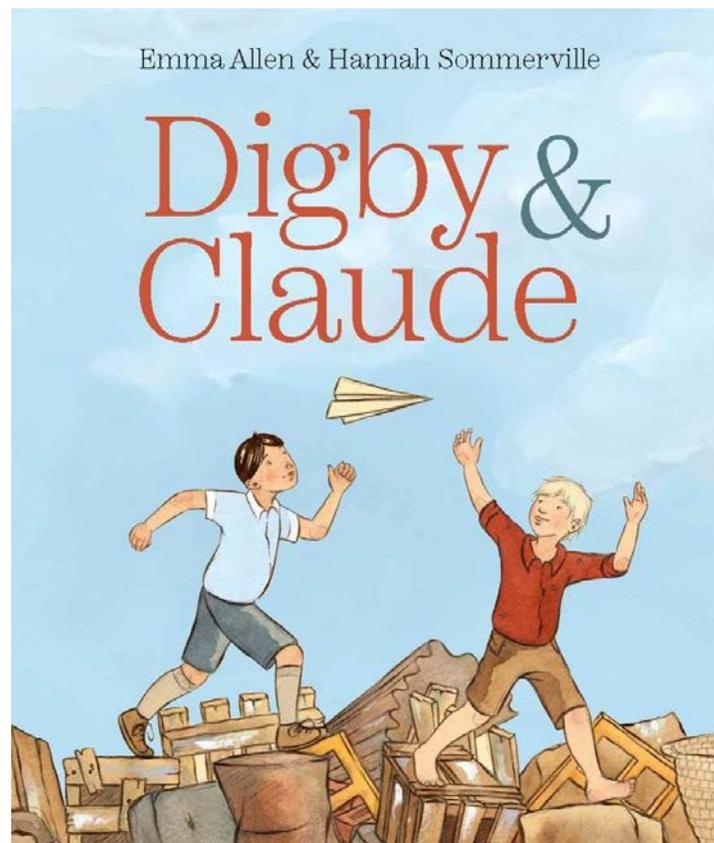


TEACHERS' NOTES

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**Digby & Claude****by Emma Allen, illustrated by Hannah Sommerville**

Published by National Library of Australia, September 2018, ISBN: 9780642279279  
Recommended Year Levels: Foundation to Year 3

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**Author: Emma Allen ([emmaallenbooks.com](http://emmaallenbooks.com))**

Emma Allen worked as a children's speech and language therapist for many years. She is fascinated by literature and the arts. Emma has a Master's Degree in Creative Writing, and she is currently working towards her PhD. Her debut picture book *The Terrible Suitcase*, illustrated by Freya Blackwood, won the CBCA Children's Book of the Year for Early Childhood Award in 2013. She has created two other picture books with illustrator Hannah Sommerville:

*Grandma, the Baby and Me* (featured in the *Playschool* DVD *Faces and Feelings*) and *My Friend Ernest* (Shortlisted in the Speech Pathology Australia Awards). Emma lives in Canberra and is the mother of three young children.

**Illustrator: Hannah Sommerville (hannahsommerville.com)**



Hannah Sommerville creates picture-book illustrations using watercolour, pen and pencil. She studied creative arts at the University of Wollongong. Hannah has created two picture books with Emma Allen, as well as illustrating *I Just Couldn't Wait to Meet You* by Kate Ritchie. Hannah is the mother of two small children and she lives on the South Coast of New South Wales.

## About the Book

Digby's street is soon going to look different; old houses are going to be demolished and new apartments will be built. Digby loves Main Street but he isn't sure he wants it to change. With plans of his own, and his new friend Claude by his side, Digby explores what it really means to belong.

Together, Claude and Digby create their own world: a hideout where they can think and play. Day by day, as their cubby house grows, so too does their friendship. The boys build their hideout and come to realise that the best places of all are places where you belong.

When Claude isn't allowed to play anymore, Digby builds a door to their special place and throws away the key. He misses Claude dearly. But the summer brings with it new children for Digby to make grand plans with. They imagine and play and, in their games, Digby always gets to be king.

From award-winning author Emma Allen and talented illustrator Hannah Sommerville comes a thought-provoking story about building and creating a sense of home in an environment of change.

The information section at the back of the book offers insight into the history of Australian houses, including architectural styles and building materials. A look at Australian slums of the early twentieth century encourages discussion of past and present standards of living and what it means to live in modern-day Australia

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM CONTENT

- Learning Area(s)
  - English
  - Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)
- General capabilities
  - Personal and Social Capability
  - Critical and Creative Thinking
- Digital Classroom
  - Year 3 'Changing Streetscapes'

<http://www.nla.gov.au/digital-classroom/year-3/themes/changing-streetscapes>

## Introductory Activities

These are activities to do before reading to prepare students for the concepts/themes explored in the book. They are not necessarily curriculum based.

- Look at the cover of the book with the class. What do you think this book will be about? What do you see that makes you say that?
- Talk about your street/suburb and how it has changed.
- Talk about how the area around your school has changed.
- Why have these changes happened?

## FOUNDATION

### English

**Content description:** Construct texts using software including word processing programs (ACELY1654—Scootle)

#### Elaboration

- using simple functions of keyboard and mouse including typing letters, scrolling, selecting icons and drop-down menu

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- Why do we need to make plans for making things like buildings?
- Lists are also a form of planning. What do we make lists for?

### Activity

- Digby and Claude drew plans of their cubbyhouse before they built it. Draw a plan of your house or apartment.
- On the computer, create labels to identify each room. Print them out, cut the labels out and paste them onto your plan.

## HASS

**Content description:** The places people live in and belong to, their familiar features and why they are important to people (ACHASSK015—Scootle)

#### Elaborations

- identifying the places they live in and belong to (for example, a neighbourhood, suburb, town or rural locality)
- describing the features of their own place and places they are familiar with or they are aware of (for example, places they have visited, places family members have come from, imaginary places in stories, or places featured on television)
- identifying how places provide people with their basic needs (for example, water, food and shelter) and why they should be looked after for the future

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- Discuss the types of houses in your suburb or town. What are they made from? Are there any very old houses? Are they like any of the houses featured at the end of *Digby & Claude*?
- What are some of the differences between old and new houses?

### Activity

- Digby's suburb is changing as old buildings are pulled down and new ones are erected. Do you live in an old or a new house or apartment? Draw a picture of your house and everyone who lives there.

**Content description:** The reasons why some places are special to people, and how they can be looked after (ACHASSK017—Scootle)

### Elaborations

- identifying places they consider to be 'special' (for example, their room, a play area, holiday location or an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander place of family significance) and explaining why the place is special to them
- describing the features of places that are special to them based on what they see, hear, smell and feel
- discussing different ways they could contribute to caring for special places including those that are unique

### Discussion/Inquiry Question

- Discuss what makes houses, rooms or other places special for different people. What role do special places play in people's lives?

### Activity

- Digby and Claude build a cubbyhouse that is very special to them. Have you ever built a cubbyhouse? Draw a picture of your cubbyhouse or of your favourite room in your house. Include some things that make this place special for you.

## YEAR 1

### English

**Content description:** Read decodable and predictable texts using developing phrasing, fluency, contextual, semantic, grammatical and phonic knowledge and emerging text processing strategies, for example prediction, monitoring meaning and re-reading (ACELY1659—Scootle)

### Elaboration

- using contextual and semantic knowledge to make predictions about a text's purpose and content

### Discussion/Inquiry Question

- How does author Emma Allen build up the tension in the story so that, when Claude stops coming to their secret hideaway, we care about what happens to Digby and their impressive cubbyhouse?

### Activity

- Retell *Digby & Claude* as a short story, a comic strip or a play.

**Content description:** Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning about key events, ideas and information in texts that they listen to, view and read by drawing on growing knowledge of context, text structures and language features (ACELY1660—Scootle)

### Elaborations

- using elements in books and screen texts, for example illustrations, diagrams, sound and movement, to support reading
- making connections between the text and students' own experiences, and between information in print and images
- making inferences about characters' feelings and motives

### Discussion/Inquiry Question

- Discuss how the author and illustrator of *Digby & Claude* make us care about what is happening to the main characters, their cubbyhouse and the changes to their street.
- How would you feel if some of the old houses on your street were knocked down and replaced?

### Activity

- Write and illustrate a story about building your perfect cubbyhouse or hideout. Show what it is made from, where it is and why it is special to you. Do you have a secret password?

**Content description:** Create short imaginative and informative texts that show emerging use of appropriate text structure, sentence-level grammar, word choice, spelling, punctuation and appropriate multimodal elements, for example illustrations and diagrams (ACELY1661—Scootle)

### Elaborations

- referring to learned knowledge of text structure and grammar when creating a new text
- applying new vocabulary appropriately in creating text
- learning how to plan spoken and written communications so that listeners and readers might follow the sequence of ideas or events
- beginning to consider audience in designing a communication involving visual components, selecting images for maximum impact

### Discussion/Inquiry Question

- Discuss the importance of words and images in the planning process both for creating things and for explaining how to create things to an audience.

### Activity

- In *Digby & Claude*, the boys use plans and diagrams to explore ideas for their perfect cubbyhouse. Create an illustrated diagram showing how to build a cubbyhouse.
- Present your diagram to the class, and explain to them how they could build a cubbyhouse just like yours.

## HASS

**Content description:** Pose questions about past and present objects, people, places, and events (ACHASSI018—Scootle)

### Elaboration

- posing questions with the stems ‘where’, ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ about families, celebrations, places and the weather

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- What makes your suburb a good place to live in? Are there things you particularly like or dislike about it?
- What is the oldest building in your suburb? What is the newest?

### Activity

- While Digby and Claude were busy building their cubbyhouse, changes were happening in their street. Research your suburb or town.
- Create a wall poster showing where your suburb/town is, what type of houses it has, when it was first built and why you like living there.

**Content description:** Compare objects from the past with those from the present and consider how places have changed over time (ACHASSI023—Scootle)

### Elaboration

- using comparative language when describing family life over time and/or comparing features of places, such as ‘smaller than’, ‘bigger than’, ‘closer’, ‘further’, ‘not as big as’, ‘younger/older than’, ‘more rainy days’, ‘fewer/less’, ‘hottest/coldest’, ‘sunnier’, ‘windier than’

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- Discuss the changes to your suburb/town over the years. Is it bigger or smaller? Are the houses bigger or smaller? Are there more or fewer houses as compared to flats and apartments? Are there many old houses in your suburb/town?
- Why do places change over the years?

### Activity

- *Digby & Claude* is about experiencing change and adapting to it. Find pictures or descriptions of what your suburb/town looked like when your parents or grandparents were children.
- Write a list comparing your suburb/town then and now.
- Present your findings on a wall chart.

**Content description:** Activities in the local place and reasons for their location (ACHASSK033—Scootle)

### Elaborations

- identifying the activities located in their place (for example, retailing, medical, educational, police, religious, office, recreational, farming, manufacturing, waste management activities), locating them on a pictorial map, and suggesting why they are located where they are

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- Have the names of some shops changed over the years? Are there different types of shops now? Why is it important to have these amenities close to where you live? What do children do who live a long way from these amenities?

### Activity

- Have a close look at the pictures of the street that Digby lives in. Make a list of the shops on his street.
- Make a map of your suburb/town showing where you can find the following: a petrol station, a chemist, a cafe or restaurant, a bookshop, a butcher's shop, a grocery shop, a doctor's surgery, a dentist's surgery, a hospital and a primary school.

## YEAR 2

### English

**Content description:** Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts, and share responses with others (ACELT1596—Scootle)

#### Elaboration

- discussing relevant prior knowledge and past experiences to make meaningful connections to the people, places, events, issues and ideas in the text

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- Why do children build cubbyhouses? Why do people build and live in houses?
- What is the difference between a house and a home?

### Activity

- In *Digby & Claude*, the boys build a cubbyhouse, echoing the efforts of the builders across the road. Make a list of the essential things you would include in your ideal cubbyhouse.
- Write a description of your favourite cubbyhouse, or one that you would like to create.

**Content description:** Use interaction skills including initiating topics, making positive statements and voicing disagreement in an appropriate manner, speaking clearly and varying tone, volume and pace appropriately (ACELY1789—Scootle)

#### Elaboration

- asking relevant questions and making connections with personal experiences and the contributions of others

### Discussion/Inquiry Question

- Discuss the issues raised in the debate, focusing particularly on buildings in your own suburb or town.

### Activity

- In *Digby & Claude*, the old is making way for the new. Organise a debate on the topic: 'New buildings are good, old buildings are bad'. Select debaters to present each side of the case, and have the class vote on which team presented the most convincing arguments.

**Content description:** Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning and begin to analyse texts by drawing on growing knowledge of context, language and visual features and print and multimodal text structures (ACELY1670—Scootle)

### Elaborations

- making connections between the text and students’ own experiences and experiences with other texts, comparing authors’ differing point of view on a topic
- making connections between information in print and images
- predicting, asking and answering questions as they read, and summarising and reviewing meaning

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- Discuss how text and illustrations work together in a picture book to tell you the whole story. Which part of the story did you most identify with? Was it told by the text or the illustrations?

### Activity

- Read the text on each page of *Digby & Claude*, making a list of what you are learning about the story. Go through the book again, this time just ‘reading’ the story told by the illustrations. Make a list of what you are learning about the story from the illustrations. Are they telling you different things to the text?
- Write two short paragraphs, one telling the story told by the text and the other the story told by the illustrations.

**Content description:** Create short imaginative, informative and persuasive texts using growing knowledge of text structures and language features for familiar and some less familiar audiences, selecting print and multimodal elements appropriate to the audience and purpose (ACELY1671—Scootle)

### Elaborations

- learning how to plan spoken and written communications so that listeners and readers might follow the sequence of ideas or events
- using vocabulary, including technical vocabulary, appropriate to text type and purpose
- predicting, asking and answering questions as they read, and summarising and reviewing meaning

### Discussion/Inquiry Question

- Discuss the importance of using the right words to describe technical subjects such as construction or building.

### Activity

- Give a talk about building a cubbyhouse and the adventures you have in it. Include information about where you built it, what it was made from, who shared your adventures, what problems you encountered and what happened to the cubbyhouse in the end.
- Answer questions from the audience.

**Content description:** Construct texts featuring print, visual and audio elements using software, including word processing programs

### Elaboration

- experimenting with and combining elements of software programs to create texts

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- Discuss the types of material you can access online about the history of heritage buildings. Which sources are the most useful? Which provide the most interesting information?

### Activity

- Create a book online outlining the history of a heritage building in your suburb/town/state. Include photographs that you have accessed online of the building and the people associated with it. Access the National Library's Trove website to find quotes from newspaper articles about the history of the building.

## HASS

**Content description:** Pose questions about past and present objects, people, places, and events (ACHASSI034—Scoutle)

### Elaborations

- developing inquiry questions about a historical site (for example, 'What does it look like now?', 'What condition is it in?', 'What was its purpose?', 'How might its use have changed?', 'How was it built/created?', 'Who built it?', 'How is it now used?', 'Why is it important?')
- posing questions using the stems, 'How do I feel about ...', 'What would it be like to ...' and 'What effect ...'

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- Identify the oldest building in your suburb/town. Discuss what the world was like when that building was built. What did children wear then? What toys did they play with? How were their lives different to yours?

### Activity

- In *Digby & Claude*, the old buildings are being pulled down to make way for new flats for families to live in. Make a wall chart about the oldest building in your suburb/town. Include information about when it was built, what it has been used for over the years and who has lived and/or worked there. Include images/photographs of what it has looked like over the years and what it looks like now.

**Content description:** Explore a point of view (ACHASSI038—Scoutle)

### Elaborations

- discussing why some places are considered special or significant by others (for example, by parents, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Peoples, their grandparents or familiar elders, their friends, returned soldiers, wildlife workers)
- examining the points of view of older generations about changes over time (for example, changes to the natural or built environment, changes to daily living)

### Discussion/Inquiry Question

- Discuss the changes that have occurred in the lives of children since your parents/grandparents were young.

### Activity

- Digby and Claude were children in the 1930s, nearly 100 years ago. Interview your parents or grandparents about what life was like when they were children. Where did they live? What games did they play? Where did they build cubbyhouses?

**Content description:** The importance today of a historical site of cultural or spiritual significance in the local area, and why it should be preserved (ACHASSK045—Scootle)

### Elaborations

- discussing why a particular site has heritage significance/cultural value for present generations (for example, it provides a record of a significant historical event, has aesthetic value, reflects the community's identity)

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- Discuss the importance of looking after historical sites and buildings. What can we learn from the past? Is change always good?

### Activity

- In *Digby & Claude*, old buildings are being pulled down to make way for new buildings. Research a heritage-listed building in your suburb or town. Find pictures of it over the years and make a list of reasons why it is important to conserve and restore this building, rather than pull it down.

## YEAR 3

### English

**Content description:** Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts, and share responses with others (ACELT1596—Scootle)

### Elaborations

- discussing relevant prior knowledge and past experiences to make meaningful connections to the people, places, events, issues and ideas in the text

### Discussion/Inquiry Question

- Discuss how working on a project together can help you make friends. What can you do to make newcomers feel a part of your community?

### Activity

- Digby created a new community for himself through the building of his cubbyhouse. Write a story, poem or play about building a cubbyhouse in a public place such as a park or bushland. Include information about where you built it, what you built it from, where you got the building materials from, who helped you and who became a part of your cubbyhouse community.

**Content description:** Discuss how language is used to describe the settings in texts, and explore how the settings shape the events and influence the mood of the narrative (ACELT1599—Scootle)

### Elaborations

- identifying and discussing the use of descriptive adjectives ('in the middle of a vast, bare plain') to establish setting and atmosphere ('the castle loomed dark and forbidding') and to draw readers into events that follow
- discussing the language used to describe the traits of characters in stories, their actions and motivations: 'Claire was so lonely; she desperately wanted a pet and she was afraid she would do anything, just anything, to have one to care for'

### Discussion/Inquiry Question

- Discuss how text and illustrations can combine to tell a story.

### Activity

- In *Digby & Claude*, author Emma Allen describes how Digby felt when change came to where he lived: 'These changes filled Digby with wonder, but he also felt sad that the old buildings were soon to be empty'. However, when Claude leaves, the author simply says, 'The next day, Digby built a door. He covered it with sticks and threw the key away'. It is the double-page spread of small-vignette illustrations of Digby that tells us how he felt about this. Examine these images and write a description of or a poem about how Digby felt when Claude went away.

**Content description:** Create imaginative texts based on characters, settings and events from students' own and other cultures using visual features, for example perspective, distance and angle (ACELT1601—Scootle)

### Elaborations

- drawing on literary texts read, viewed and listened to for inspiration and ideas, appropriating language to create mood and characterisation
- innovating on texts read, viewed and listened to by changing the point of view, revising an ending or creating a sequel

### Discussion/Inquiry Question

- Discuss how stories can be presented from the perspective of different characters and how this can give you new insights into the story.

### Activity

- Rewrite the story of Digby and Claude from the perspective of one of the children who moved into the new flats. Describe where they lived before, why they moved house, what they thought about their new home and how they felt when Digby invited them into his special place.

**Content description:** Use software including word processing programs with growing speed and efficiency to construct and edit texts featuring visual, print and audio elements (ACELY1685—Scootle)

## Elaboration

- using features of relevant technologies to plan, sequence, compose and edit multimodal texts

## Discussion/Inquiry Question

- Discuss how the addition of visual material enhances the storytelling process.

## Activity

- Input your story into the computer. Edit it and add appropriate illustrations, images, maps, photographs and other visual elements.

## HASS

**Content description:** How the community has changed and remained the same over time and the role that people of diverse backgrounds have played in the development and character of the local community (ACHASSK063—Scootle)

## Elaborations

- exploring photographs, newspapers, oral histories, diaries and letters to investigate how an aspect of life in the local community (for example, transport, entertainment, the natural and built environment, technology) has changed over time (for example, from the time of European settlement to the present day)
- comparing photographs from the past and present of a specific location to identify the change or continuity (similarities and differences over time) associated with people, events/developments, places or ecosystems
- identifying individuals and groups from the past of diverse backgrounds (for example, gender, culture, ability, age, socioeconomic circumstance) who have contributed to the community's development (for example, economic, social, cultural, civic or environmental contributions) and character (for example, culturally diverse, multi-faith, prosperous, helpful)
- exploring how the contributions of individuals, groups and organisations are recognised (for example, parades, Australia Day Awards, monuments)

## Discussion/Inquiry Question

- Discuss why buildings change over the years and the factors that lead to them either being pulled down or being preserved and looked after.

## Activity

- The buildings pulled down in *Digby & Claude* were obviously not deemed worth saving. Choose a significant heritage building in your suburb/town/city or state and find out as much as you can about its history. Explore the National Library's Trove website for photographs, newspaper articles, books and other material about the building.
- Create an illustrated timeline of the life of this building over the years. Include information about when and how it was built, who lived and worked there, and how it changed over the years.

**Content description:** The similarities and differences between places in terms of their type of settlement, demographic characteristics and the lives of the people who live there, and people's perceptions of these places (ACHASSK069—Scootle)

### Elaborations

- exploring people's feelings for place and the factors that influence people's attachment to place, through reading and viewing poems, songs, paintings and stories
- discussing why it is important to protect places that have special significance for people (for example, a wetland, a sacred site, a national park or a World Heritage site)
- exploring different types of settlement, and classifying them into hierarchical categories (for example, isolated dwellings, outstations, villages, towns, regional centres and large cities)
- investigating the diversity of people who live in their place (for example, surveying the school community about age, birthplace and ancestry) and comparing them with a school in another place in Australia or neighbouring country

### Discussion/Inquiry Question

- Discuss why we should conserve areas that are important to our community. How can you contribute to making this happen?

### Activity

- Digby was very attached to his cubbyhouse—it was his home away from home. Select a place in your area that is special to you, your family or your community. Write a newspaper article championing this place and explaining why it should be looked after.

**Content description:** Who makes rules, why rules are important and the consequences of rules not being followed (ACHASSK071—Scootle)

### Elaborations

- identifying familiar rules, how rules protect the rights of others, what their responsibilities are to others, and the consequences when rules are not followed
- identifying who has the authority to make rules (for example, at school or in a sporting club)

### Discussion/Inquiry Question

- Discuss why some places are out of bounds to children. Why it is important to follow the rules relating to them?

### Activity

- In the 1930s, children like Digby were allowed to play wherever they liked, including on building sites. Make a list of the places children are banned from playing in today.
- Create signs like the 'no swimming' or 'no diving' signs found at beaches to show why these places are dangerous for children to play in.

**Content description:** Why people participate within communities and how students can actively participate and contribute (ACHASSK072—Scootle)

### Elaborations

- investigating an individual's contribution and why it was recognised (for example, an individual who was awarded an Order of Australia)

- exploring the motivations of people who have contributed to communities (for example, local community volunteers, leaders and Elders)

### Discussion/Inquiry Questions

- Discuss the importance of being a part of and contributing to your local community. How can you contribute? What can you do to help others?

### Activity

- Digby creates a community of children, drawn together by their interest in his special hideout. Identify someone who has been recognised for their contribution to your community. Create a poster about them, showing who they are, what they look like, what their contribution was, and how and why they were recognised.

## Concluding Activities

These activities are closely linked to the F-3 English and HASS Curriculum links mentioned above.

- Produce a creative response to the text:
  - Create a mural, a musical or a play based on *Digby & Claude*.
  - Design/construct a model of Main Street, where Digby lived, or of your street.
  - Write a story about your street. Who lives there? How many people do you know? What sorts of houses does it have? Are there any shops?
- Walk around the block and note the different styles of houses. How old are they? What would they be like inside?
- Discuss the different types of houses students live in.
- Discuss how geography affects housing types.

## Further Reading

- Books
  - Jeannie Baker, *Belonging* (Walker Books)
  - Maree Coote, *Robyn Boid Architect* (MelbourneStyle)
  - Carson Ellis, *Home* (Candlewick Press)
  - Bob Graham, *Spirit of Hope* (Walker Books)
  - Emma Allen and Freya Blackwood, *The Terrible Suitcase* (Omnibus)
  - Emma Allen and Hannah Sommerville, *Grandma, the Baby and Me* (Omnibus)
  - Emma Allen and Hannah Sommerville, *My Friend Ernest* (HarperCollins)
  - Corinne Fenton and Hannah Sommerville, *Chasing Shadows* (Hybrid Publishing)
  - Kate Ritchie and Hannah Sommerville, *I Just Couldn't Wait to Meet You* (Random House).
- Websites
  - Digital Classroom Module: Changing Streetscapes ([nla.gov.au/digital-classroom/year-3/themes/changing-streetscapes](http://nla.gov.au/digital-classroom/year-3/themes/changing-streetscapes))
  - Google Maps Street View ([google.com.au/maps](http://google.com.au/maps))
  - National Library of Australia collections ([nla.gov.au](http://nla.gov.au))
  - Trove ([trove.nla.gov.au](http://trove.nla.gov.au))