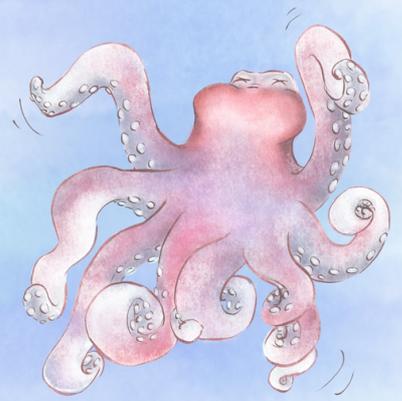


Jolly Ollie

A Teacher's Guide



INTRODUCTION

The Jolly Ollie series is suitable for confident KS1 readers or for sharing with an early years class. At around 1300 words each, they are significantly longer than typical picture books. Each of the stories incorporates interesting vocabulary into an age-appropriate storyline. The books would also suit lower end KS2 learners, especially those who may have slipped back during lockdown and are not yet ready to tackle full chapter books by themselves.

While Book 1, 'Jolly Ollie Octopus', introduces the principal character, subsequent books see him take adventures in far flung lands. Just as octopuses change colour in nature to identify with their surroundings or to express their moods, so does Ollie. Students follow Ollie both on his physical journeys and on his mental explorations, as he learns to understand how he can help himself – and sometimes others – from feeling gloomy. The books are written sensitively, not stigmatising 'bad days' or depression but rather accepting these feelings as something that people live with.

They are written to engage children's imagination, to introduce them to beautiful corners of the world and excite their inner explorer, and to help young readers appreciate that good mental health is achieved with a combination of helping yourself and seeking support. The series are lighthearted, charming stories with a traditional feel. Each book has been created with the intention of opening up lines of communication with children who may relate to some of the deeper messages.

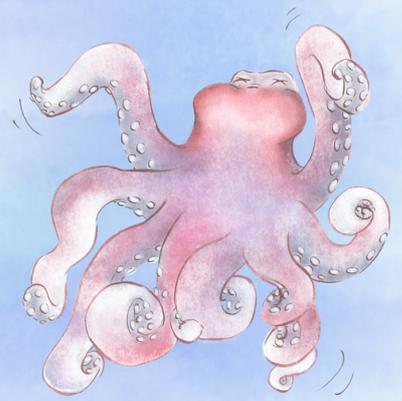
Ollie befriends children around the world, sent on his way by his closest friend Ellie Mae – a little girl living in Scotland. While she would love to have her best friend with her all the time, she understands his need to see new places and selflessly shares him with others. Young readers learn the real meaning of friendship, subtly introduced in layers of charming stories.

POSSIBLE CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

English, Maths, Science, Design and Technology, Geography, Music, PSHE

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BOOK 1: 'JOLLY OLLIE OCTOPUS'

THEMES

friendship, connectivity, self-care, effect of place on a person, under the sea

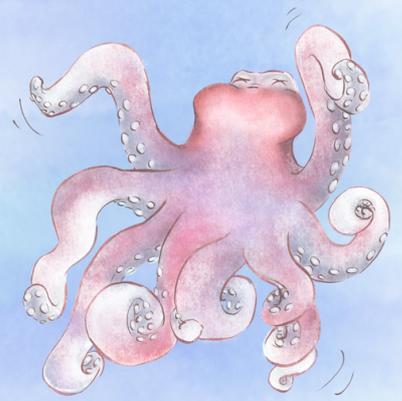
sawubona - literally, 'I see you'. A Zulu greeting that expresses the idea that when you see someone both you and they and all their infinite possibilities come alive



- draw a simple chart, with an x axis showing 'time' and a y axis showing 'mood'. With the help of the class, track Ollie's mood through the book
- ask the class to identify what or who helps him change his mood
- ask students to come up with something they do to help feel better when they are down
- create an Ollie-inspired board to show a) things you can do to help yourself if you're feeling down and b) things you do to help others if they're feeling down
- give small groups one of the fun facts each. Ask them to learn it by heart in their group
- students perform their fun fact for the class, acting out the words
- if musical instruments are available, have someone beat a drum or a tambourine in the rhythm of the words. Everything is written in a simple, even iambic beat
- ask students to identify all the facts we learn about octopus in the story [they have eight arms, three hearts, nine brains, and can change colour]
- have students create their 'dream animal'. What magic skills will it have? What extra body parts does it need?
- these can be made into a beautiful wall display entitled, 'My best friend would be...'. At the top of each drawing, students must name their imaginary beast.

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BOOK 2: "JOLLY OLLIE AND HIS AUSTRALIAN ADVENTURE"

THEMES

friendship, the natural world. Can potentially be used to initiate one-on-one conversations about loss and/or death

mono no aware - literally, 'the pathos of things'. A Japanese phrase capturing the idea that things can become more beautiful simply because they do not last forever



- look at the map of Australia at the back of the book that shows Ollie's travels. Show students on a globe or world map where they can find Australia
- write down all the places Ollie visits and what he does there. Create a 'travel packing list' with students, writing on the board. Try and get 20 items – add some more if needed. Hand out 4x4 grids to students and ask them to fill in the items randomly. Packing bingo!
- students take it in turns to mime an activity that needs one of the items. Once it has been called out correctly they can cross it off their grid. Who can fill in a line first?
- the 'fun facts' introduce some incredible flowers and trees. Use this as an opportunity to talk about some other plants near the school that you can show the students
- go on a nature hunt and see how many different plants can be found
- look at the repeated refrain:
There's a wonderful world to explore. When you think that you've run out of magic, hold on – somehow there's always some more...
- look at when it appears in the book. What does it teach us each time? (Think back to everything discussed about Book 1)
- what real but magical things do the students dream of seeing? It might be a person or a particular kind of animal or maybe it's a place they've heard about.
- have each student write a short story, imagining that they've seen this thing they dream about.

