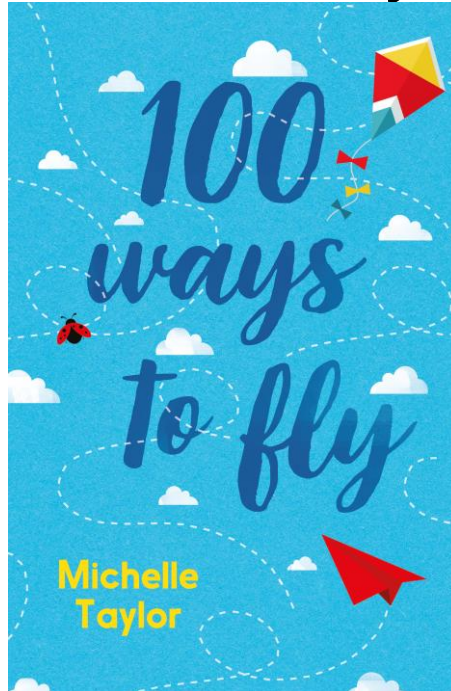


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# 100 WAYS TO FLY

## Michelle Taylor



### Teachers' Notes

Written by a practising teacher librarian  
in context with the Australian curriculum  
(English)

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**SYNOPSIS**

*100 Ways to Fly* is a thought-provoking and humorous anthology that celebrates the English language through clever poems and nonsense verses that explore a diverse range of situations, contemplations, moods and emotions. It is an ideal text to share with younger readers, as it encourages playfulness with and thoughtfulness for the English language. It also conveys the importance of hope, and the place that poetry plays in nurturing wellbeing.

**THEMES**

- Poetry
- Nonsense verses, English
- English Language
- Vocabulary
- Limericks
- Riddles
- Hope

**WRITING STYLE**

Divided into seven sections, *100 Ways to Fly* is a versatile and easy-to-use collection of poems that invites higher-order thinking with seemingly little effort on behalf of the audience. Funny, clever and witty, Michelle Taylor uses vocabulary and structure in a way that allows younger readers to slow down and truly think about language from a whole new perspective. It includes the use of nonsense words and word play.

**STUDY NOTES****'The Word Zoo'**

- Why does *Found* (p3) describe poetry as like '[dropping] my page in a puddle'?
- Discuss the irony of there being no synonym for thesaurus (p4).
- Find the hidden or jumbled words in *What's in a Few Words* (p5). Discuss how the poet has written this verse. Try writing a few stanzas to add to this poem using new words.
- Create your own version of *Catch* (p6-7) using a different verb such as *find* or *follow*.
- Use *Is Was Will* (p8-9) to discuss the importance and purpose of relating words. What is this poem sharing about such words?

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- Innovate on *10 Syllables for All Sorts of Things* (p11-12) by writing your own 10 syllable poems. As a class, brainstorm possible topics for these poems.
- Using the structure of *Doggerel* (p13), write a poem entitled 'Catterel'.
- Use 'Think, Pair, Share' to unpack various verses of *X* (p14-15). Create a classroom display of your ideas to make your learning visible. Try writing your own verses using another letter, such as the letter 't'.
- In response to *I Do and I Don't* (p16-17), brainstorm specific examples for things you could but shouldn't, can but won't, etc.
- After reading *Names* (p18-19), discuss the origin of your name. Why did your parents choose this name for you? What does your name mean? What other names might you have been called? Discuss the importance of names in relation to identity.
- Use *Little Poem Made of Questions* (p20-21) as a launch pad for philosophy. Choose one of the stanzas on which to give a one-minute impromptu speech. In small groups, devise some more questions to add to this poem.

## 'Great Balls of Poetry'

- Using *The Lamington Thief* (p25) as a model, discuss the form and structure of limericks. How do the syllables in each line create rhythm and metre? What role does humour play in the last line of limericks? Write your own limericks.
- How does *Limerick for a Lousy Day* (p26) express the role that poetry can play in our lives?
- Discuss the devices used in *Chickety Wickety Sense* (p28) such as rhyme and nonsense words, and alliteration in *Shauna and Shaun* (p30). How do these contribute to the mood and meaning of the poems?
- Select a poem such as *Three Small Sisters* (p31) to perform to a class or small group.
- Choose another scientific concept such as evaporation or gravity on which to base a limerick similar to that shared in *Rusty Limerick* (p29).
- Create your own stanzas suitable for the poem *Five One Liners* (p32).
- How do verses such as *Sunflower* (p33) say so much in so few words? Why is this such an important feature of poetry?
- Examine the structure and form of the verses in *Seven Riddles* (p34-35). In small groups, try to solve the riddles. (The answers are on p136.) Create your own riddles to share with your class.

## 'The Time of Our Lives'

- Use *Tuck-shop* (p40) to provoke discussion about a range of compound words.
- Using the similes in *Mr Farwig* (p43-44), sketch Mr Farwig.

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- Write an extra verse for *Soccer – A Story in Ten Games* (p47-48) that starts with ‘the tenth time...’. Alternatively, write your own poem about a sport of your choice.
- Discuss the typesetting of *Summer Lies* (p51) and how this adds meaning to the text.
- Discuss point of view as used in *Viewpoints* (p56-57). Write this poem from the parents’ perspective.

## ‘Spooky and Sick’

- Choose one of the poems in this section on which to write a reflection. Why have you chosen this poem? Why does it appeal to you?
- What frightens you? Write a poem to express your ideas.
- *What the Cockroach May Have Said When It Lost Its Head* (p69) shares interesting facts that readers may not have previously known. Write your own poem that shares an interesting fact about a creature of your choice.

## ‘How Many Noses in a Nostril?’

- Use imagery to create your own version of *Trifle* (p77).
- In her Author’s Note, Michelle Taylor writes that the title of the text is a metaphor for the power of poetry. In light of this, and poems such as *Jellybean Rainbow* (p78), discuss the power of metaphors. Try writing a similar poem using a different extended metaphor.
- *The Dog and the Billy Goat* (p79-80) is modelled after Edward Lear’s *The Owl and the Pussycat*. Compare these two poems using a graphic organiser. As an extension, write your own poem, also modelled on Lear’s classic poem.
- What is the message in *Just a Tickle* (p87-88)? Discuss the power of poetry to convey such messages.

## ‘Coming to Your Senses’

- What is the ‘animal’ in *Strange Little Animal* (p94-95)? Write another poem about a different part of the body that is linked to senses, such as the ear or eye.
- In relation to *Visualisation* (p100), discuss the power of imagery and the importance of readers being able to visualise.
- Create an illustration or mime to accompany *Firefly* (p101).
- Discuss onomatopoeia as used in *Fuzz* (p104). Create a word wall for the classroom with a range of onomatopoeic words. Select one of these on which to base on original poem.
- *Swing* (p106) celebrates the wonders of what happens in our ears when we swing. Write a new poem that shares another amazing fact about our senses.

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- Compare *Dance* (p107) with the picture book *Swan Lake* by Anne Spudvilas. How does the poem capture the same love for dancing as the book's illustrations?
- As a class, perform *Boom Crash Poem* (p109) to the school assembly.

## 'A Pocket Full of Poems'

- What strategies do you use to give yourself hope? How might poetry help you with this? After reading the poems in this section, write a reflection that shares the importance of hope.
- What are the main messages in *Little* (p115) and *The Days* (p116)? Have you ever felt like this? How does reading poetry help give you confidence and reassurance?
- After reading *I Want a Best Friend* (p117-118), discuss the attributes of a good friend. What can you learn from this poem?
- Discuss the difference between 'pretty' and 'beauty' (p119).
- Discuss the typesetting in the poem *Hope* (p121). How does the shape of this poem reflect its meaning? As a companion text, read Danny Parker's *Sarah and the Steep Slope*. How are similar ideas expressed in these two works?
- How do the poems *Release Your Wish* (p122) and *High* (p124) reflect the themes of courage and risk-taking? Why are these so important? What would you like the courage to do?
- *What Will You See?* (p126) contrasts two very different ways of seeing the world. Discuss optimism verses pessimism in context with wellbeing.
- After reading *What to Do with Worries* (p130-131), write a reflection that shares your thoughts about the strategies shared in this poem.

**AUTHOR MOTIVATION**

Poetry is not meant to be scary! It's the opposite! It can make you laugh, make you feel normal, even brave, especially if you feel sad or alone.

*100 Ways To Fly* is my third book of poetry for kids, or as I like to say, 'for the big kid in all of us'. When I set out to write *100 Ways To Fly* I wanted this book to be a little different to the others. I work with people who've experienced many difficulties in their lives and struggles with their health, mood and confidence. Some have had traumatic things happen too. I thought, why can't poetry help with some of that?

So, after five years of careful crafting, multiple test runs of poems with children and exercising my imagination muscles until they ached, I bring you these 100 (or so) poems! Poems to celebrate our amazing senses and sense of humour, poems to twist your tongues and thoughts, poems about creatures that live in

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the land of nonsense. I chose titles for each section that long to jump off the page and dance, or run away.

I've had so much fun creating this collection of poems! *100 Ways To Fly* has made me realise all over again that poetry is one of the best ways to keep a sense of wonder with the world. My job as a poet is to help lift you up and take you away from the everyday and to use words to give you a new bird's eye view of things.

There are so many ways 'to fly' in that metaphorical sense and I hope *100 Ways To Fly* does a little of that for everyone who reads it.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Michelle Taylor grew up in Darwin and Brisbane. She has lived in Suffolk, Glasgow, London and the island of Madeira in Portugal. She has been writing and publishing for over twenty years. Michelle has a degree in occupational therapy with many years experience helping people navigate their mental and emotional health. She also has a Master of Arts in which she researched how the role of monsters in stories can empower children and manage fears. Michelle particularly enjoys taking poetry to young audiences. [www.mudanca.com.au](http://www.mudanca.com.au)