STANLEY

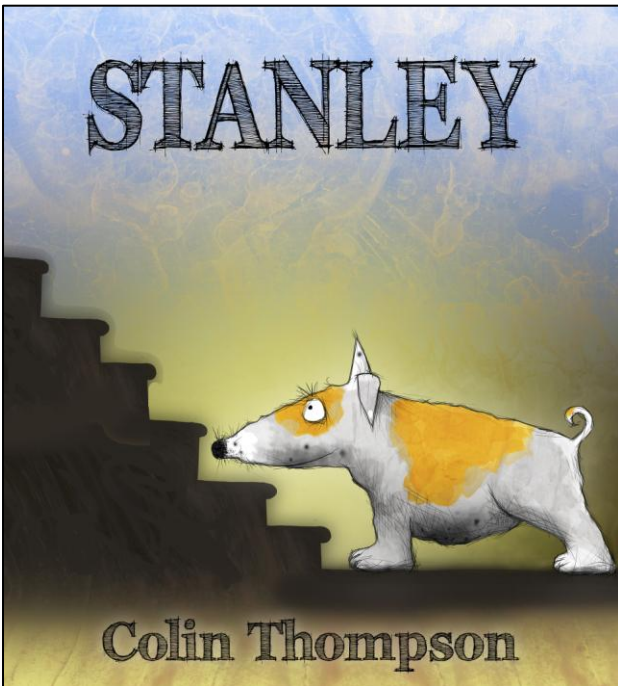## By Colin Thompson

Book Summary:

'It was very quiet in Stanley's house. There were no brothers or sisters, no dads or grannies, not even a cat, a budgie or a goldfish.'

Stanley lives with his human, Gerald, and Gerald's mum. Life is peaceful, but sometimes Stanley feels quite lonely...

But then one day another dog steals his favourite red rubber ball at his park, and sets in motion a chain of events that will change Stanley's life forever.

Curriculum Areas and Key Learning Outcomes:

Stanley suits the following Australian Curriculum content descriptors:

English

Foundation (Kindergarten/Prep)
ACELA1786 ACELT1575 ACELT1783
ACELY1650 ACELY1651
Year 1
ACELA1453 ACELT1581 ACELT1584
ACELY1660   ACELY1661
Year 2
ACELA1469   ACELT1589 ACELT1591
ACELY1670   ACELY1671

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Notes by: Nicole Hughes

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR–ILLUSTRATOR

Colin Thompson lives in Bellingen NSW and has been writing and illustrating children's books since 1990. He has published more than 70 books with most being self-illustrated. He has won numerous awards including, The Children's Book Council of Australia Children's Book of the Year Award in the picture book category for *The Short and Incredibly Happy Life of Riley* in 2006. He has also had four other books shortlisted in this category.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS
- **English**
- **Personal and Social Capability**

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

Children enjoy narratives about animals. *Stanley* cleverly connects children through the personification of a family pet. The subject matter is familiar to many children in today's society but *Stanley* manages to portray change in a positive way. The illustrations are engaging and capture children's imagination. Both the text and illustrations generate many opportunities for discussion and innovations.

THEMES

- Friendship
- Family
- Pets
- Loneliness
- Feelings

NOTES PREPARED BY

<u>Nicole Hughes</u>

Nicole has been a primary school teacher for close to 20 years in both NSW and the ACT. She has also worked at the University of Canberra with Pre-Service teachers in Humanities and Social Sciences as well as Curriculum and Pedagogy. She was a Literacy Advisor for the U Can Read program and an Executive Literacy Officer with the ACT Education Training Directorate. Currently she is working in the Southside Senior Introductory English Centre in the ACT. She has a passion for books and loves taking children on journeys through picture books to ignite their own passion for literacy.

Teaching and Learning Activities

<u>Pre- reading</u>

Building the field and activating prior knowledge
Activity:
Explore the theme of pets with the class by surveying the students' pet ownership. Make a class graph and display the information visually for reference.
As a class discuss needs of pets. Using the jigsaw strategy have students make lists of the needs of pets and then join other groups until there is a refined class list of pet needs. Display these needs near the class graph. Be sure to discuss both physical and emotional needs.

Reading and viewing

Before reading: predicting

- Display the front cover of the book. Ask guiding questions: *Who is Stanley? What is this book about? Who does he belong to? Do you think the dog looks happy? Why/why not?* In groups of two conduct a think, pair, share activity. Make a list of predictions and display for reference.

Read the book through for enjoyment.

After reading: questioning

- Compare actual story with predictions. Were the predictions similar or different?
- How would the story be different if it was called Gerald? Why do you think the author chose to tell the story centred on Stanley?

Exploring illustrations

- Discuss with students that Colin Thompson is the author as well as the illustrator of the book. Explain to the students that illustrations in picture books can be one of three things 1) They can realistically reflect the story 2) They can enhance the story and add extra information or a deeper meaning to the story or 3) They can be totally different to the story and tell a completely different narrative to the text.
- Display the illustrations on an interactive white board and cover the text (or in pairs provide illustration spreads and some sticky note pads). Ask students guiding questions about each illustration and allow them to annotate e.g.
  What do you see in this picture (colours, shapes, people, objects etc.)?

What perspective is the illustrator using i.e. are people/objects up close/far away? Front on or facing away? Etc.
Do you think this is a happy picture? Why/ Why not?
How would you change the picture if you were able to?

- After exploring each picture, read the text and ask the students if the illustrations fit into category 1, 2 or 3 or alternatively a combination of them. Ask the students why they think Colin Thompson chose to illustrate *Stanley* in this way.

- Look specifically at the two pages where Gerald looks down at his shoes. Discuss a top down perspective and have students draw the two representations (a template could be provided for students to colour). Ask the students if they think there is any significance i.e. Gerald had old boring shoes at the beginning of the book but when Felicity and her family came into the book he had new more exciting ones. Compare this to the illustrations in the book.

Exploring characters

- Look at the first three pages describing the characters of Stanley and Gerald. Point out the differences between the physical descriptions, the descriptions of their likes and personalities. Discuss whether or not they think the descriptions are accurate.

- As a class jointly construct a description of one of the other characters using text from the book. i.e. Lulu looked as if … She liked …

- In groups make character profiles for each character using the same format and draw a picture. Come together as a class and share the character profiles.

- Have the students in groups or individually write down questions they would ask the characters. Play *Hot Seat* and have the students ask the questions as another student (or the

teacher) asks the questions. Answers must be given from the characters perspective.

- As an extension activity students can write character profiles of themselves.

- Jointly construct a timeline for Stanley e.g.

At the beginning of the story Stanley felt_____ because_____

In the middle of the story Stanley felt_____ because_____

At the end of the story Stanley felt_____ because_____

Have the students justify their reasons using examples from the text and illustrations.

- Students can then independently do timelines for other characters (including their own illustrations).

Making Connections and Comparisons

- Review the timelines that the students have created. Discuss what Stanley's family was like at the beginning of the text and what it was like at the end. Jointly construct a Venn diagram comparing both families. Together with students, teacher constructs a PMI for each family structure.

Stanley's family at beginning of the book		
Plus	Minus	Interesting
Don't have to share	Lonely	Love each other
Stanley's family at the end of the book		
Plus	Minus	Interesting
Not lonely	Noisy	Love each other

- Discuss with the class different family structures. Teacher models for the class how their family is similar and different to Stanley's family (at the end of the book). Independently students compare the similarities and differences between their own families. A template graphic organiser could be made up or students could draw comparisons.

Exploring adjectives

- Review the character profiles focusing on the likes of the characters. As a class re-read the text about Stanley's ball, particularly focusing on the adjectives, **wonderful, beautiful, red, rubber** ball**.** Discuss how these words add meaning to the text i.e. we can picture the ball but we also know how the character feels about it.
- Brainstorm other adjectives that could be used to describe Stanley's ball i.e. round, bouncy, chewy etc.

- In pairs students can think of adjectives to go with Gerald's Lego. Come together and make a class list.
- Individually students choose a personal item that 'makes their tail quiver' and was 'love at first sight'. Students then think of at least 5 describing words for their special item. They then read their adjectives to the class and see if they can guess what the item is. The teacher could model this process first with an artefact of their own.

Writing and responding

Procedural texts

Procedural texts are texts that give instructions on how to do things. There are various ways that students can explore this text type while connecting with the book. Some examples include:

- *Recipes and cooking, in particular biscuits*
- *How to look after/ feed/groom a pet*
- *How to teach a pet a trick.*

Persuasive Texts

Persuasive texts or expositions are texts which try to convince a reader of a particular point of view. There are various ways that students can explore this text type while connecting with the book. Some examples include:

- *Trying to convince parents to let them have a pet*
- *Writing a letter from the perspective of Stanley asking Lulu for his ball back*
- *An exposition on family is important*