

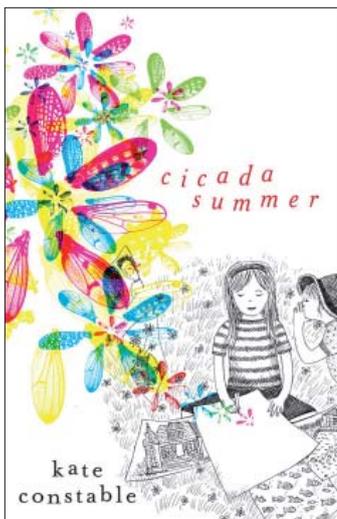


cicada summer

An exciting mystery story highly recommended for literature circles.

- Suitable for ages 9-12, especially girls
- Contains an intriguing storyline which will promote lots of discussion, while being slim enough not to daunt less confident readers
- Atmospheric Australian country town setting
- Themes include mystery, ghosts, community, family, overcoming grief
- See over for a list of discussion questions to use in the classroom

What Others Have Said:



‘A deserted house, a grieving girl; the perfect ingredients to take you on a journey between reality and fantasy. *Cicada Summer* makes you believe that anything is possible. My skin prickled, my pulse raced and I couldn’t put the book down until I’d finished.’ – **Glenda Millard**

‘*Cicada Summer* is a treasure of a story, a story to slip into your pocket like a feather or a perfectly round stone – for keeps.’ – **Penni Russon**

‘Kate Constable has created an exciting and engaging story that also reveals deep emotional truths about family, friendship and loss. Beautifully written, *Cicada Summer* is both poignant and gripping.’ – **Eva Mills, Associate Publisher at Allen & Unwin**

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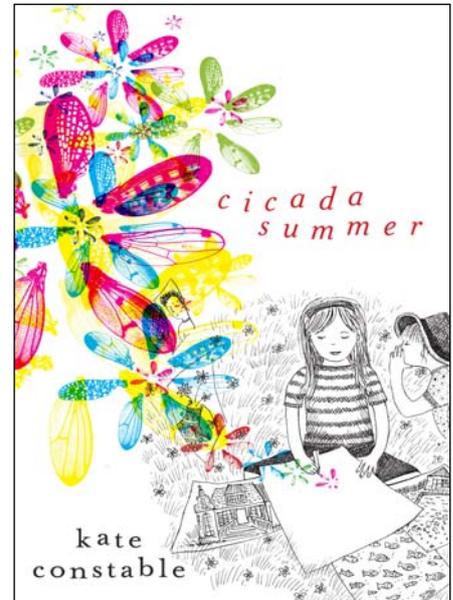


Cicada Summer

By Kate Constable

May 2009 ISBN 978 1 74175 828 3 pb

This is a superb book - gentle and so well written I reread whole chapters for the sheer enjoyment of the reading! Upper primary teachers should definitely consider this book for reading out loud, for text study or for inclusion in a literature circle.



Gently reflecting the twin values of family and friendship, *Cicada Summer* will captivate your class as they read of the enigmatic Eloise and her struggle to communicate. She is a lonely yet resilient 12 year old, wary of people. She takes risks, and although unable to speak, watches with an artist's observant eye.

Moving to the country supposes a fresh start for Eloise and her dad. With his grandiose ideas of developing his mother's long empty house, he hopes Eloise will find her voice, lost after her mother died. Not happy to see them, Eloise's Gran, Mo, is wrapped in her own reclusive world, and is even less happy when her son leaves for the city. Initially unhappy with this unwanted situation, Mo retreats to her study, while Eloise grabs an old bike from the garage to ride to Mo's abandoned house, briefly seen on the way. There she walks into a time when the house is full of people, the garden cared for and a child of her own age there to be her friend.

This book is most suitable for upper primary classes (years 5-7):

- as a text, read aloud novel or part of a literature circle (see below)
- to read alongside other novels which reflect the values of family and friendship, such as *Bridge to Terabithia* (Katherine Patterson) , *Painted Love Letters* (Catherine Bateson) *Angel* (Phil Cummings) *Rain May* and *Captain Daniel* (Catherine Bateson) *Tom's Midnight Garden* (Philippa Pearce), and so encouraging connectedness between texts
- as part of a study using the well rounded characters and settings to exemplify core understandings, giving the students time for reflection and appraisal of their own values
- as part of an interdisciplinary study of one of the many themes: Family, Friendship, Fantasy, Time slip, Grief, Father daughter relationships, Grandparents or Neighbours

Sample discussion questions overleaf.

These notes were written by Fran Knight. Fran has reviewed children's books for magazines such as *Magpies* and *Fiction Focus* and for teacher newsletters. Her articles about using books in the classroom can be found in *The Literature Base*, *Magpies*, *ACCESS* and *Viewpoint*.

Fran's contribution to teacher librarianship has been recognised with the South Australian Teacher Librarian of the Year awarded in 2005, and Honorary Life Membership of SLASA (School Library Association of South Australia) in 2007.

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Contact Kate Justelius -Wright, Educational Marketing Department
Ph: +02 8425 0150 Fax: 02 9906 2218 Email: KateJ@allenandunwin.com

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Discussion Questions:

- 1 How different is Mo's old house now to what it once was?
- 2 How important are Eloise's drawing skills to the progress of the story?
- 3 As an informal oral activity, discuss why Eloise is drawn to the old house.
- 4 Compare Eloise's father with his mother, Mo. What similarities do these two people have and how are they different? How do these similarities and differences affect Eloise? What characteristics are also present in Eloise?
- 5 How is the author able to invite the reader into Eloise's world without the character speaking?
- 6 Why has the author included the Durrani family as Mo's next door neighbours? What do they add to the story? Compare the two families presented in this novel.
- 7 The term 'art deco' is used to describe Mo's old house. Use the opportunity with your class to research the term, and see if there are any examples of this style of building in your community to visit.
- 8 Once the class has finished reading the book, draw a timeline of events both before, during and after the story is set. As a formal writing activity, ask the class to consider what will happen in the future
- 9 Compare Eloise's father's plans for Mo's house with the plans they settle on at the end of this novel. Some students may like to draw up the plans for the original development, and the plans for the artist's retreat. Invite your class to offer examples they know of where plans for housing and building projects have been changed.
- 10 Look closely at the time slip chapters. How does the author achieve this time slip? How does the reader know that Eloise is in a different time?