

The Friendly Games

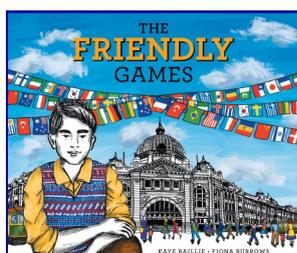
By Kaye Baillie & Illustrated by Fiona Burrows

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In 1956 Melbourne hosted the Summer Olympic Games. Student John Wing was so proud of his country, one of the friendliest places on earth. But when world tensions dominated the news, John wrote an urgent letter suggesting how to change the Closing Ceremony to bring all nations together as one.



Teacher Notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher. A full version is available on our website.

Themes:

- The Olympics
- Inclusiveness
- World Peace

Discussions Questions:

- Before reading *The Friendly Games* examine closely the book's front cover. Ask students where they think this story is set and if they think it is a modern-day story, how old the boy on the cover looks, and what might the boy be about to do. Discuss what in the image gave them clues to their answers – scaffold these replies by suggesting things that can influence our thinking such as colour, clothes, framing, subject matter, architecture and transport, and the font used in the title.
- After reading the story, why do you think John chose to remain anonymous when he wrote his letter? How did John feel when he saw the Closing Ceremony?

History and Social Sciences:

- *The Friendly Games* can be used to discuss elements of Australian history during the 1950s, as well as Olympic history more broadly. For example, the story takes place in an era heavily influenced by the recent end of World War II. What may have been some of the reasons that there were tensions between nations at the Melbourne Olympics? What was life like in Children's Homes in Melbourne at the time? When did the Olympic Games start? What is the history of the Games?
- Younger students can focus on the differences between life in modern times and the past. In what ways does the world around John differ from our own time? How do technology and communications differ now (for example, John watches the television in a shop window; he delivers a handwritten letter)? How are these differences made clear in the illustrations?

Visual literacy:

- Ask students to look closely at the spread where John looks at Olympic magazines. How many Olympic sports do they recognise?
- In the scene where John has a meal with his parents, how has the illustrator shown his parents' culture and traditions?
- Compare the illustration of John on the first page with the page where he watches the Opening Ceremony through the shop window. How has the illustrator shown John's age and development?
- Students can study flags found in the book and on the front and back cover. Which countries do the flags represent? Students can choose a flag to draw then write a small description about the details of that flag and why those details are important to that country.

Activities:

- Complete the 'Fill in the Gaps' and the 'True & False' activities attached.

Fill in the gaps

John was born to C_____ parents. He spent his first e_____ years at a Children's Home in C_____, V_____.

If any squabbles arose, they were s___ s_____ out.

When John was eight, he got a big shock because _____
_____.

John would never again see _____.

John was able to follow Olympic Games by r_____ and n_____.

John felt sorry for the people of Melbourne because _____

_____.

Not many people had televisions in 1956 but John was able to see one in a s____
w_____.

People queued waiting for the movies but afterwards they walked jumbled up.

This gave J___ an idea to change the C_____ C_____.

The 1956 Olympic Games were held at the famous M_____ C_____ G_____.

The Hon. Wilfrid S. Kent Hughes thanked John for his letter by sending his driver with a gift of an O_____ b_____ m_____.

True or False

T	F	When John delivered his letter, he was sure it would work.
T	F	Nobody decorated the streets of Melbourne for the Olympic Games.
T	F	John felt like part of a big family at the Children's Home.
T	F	John wasn't bothered when a fight broke out in the water polo pool.