



## RECOMMENDED FOR

Upper primary  
(ages 10–13; years 6 to 7)

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## KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English
- **General capabilities:** Critical and creative thinking; Information and communication technology capability; Literacy.

## REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Communicate through speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing
- Use language to shape and make meaning according to purpose, audience and context
- Think in ways that are imaginative, creative, interpretive and critical
- Express themselves and their relationships with others and their world

## PREPARED BY

Gail Erskine

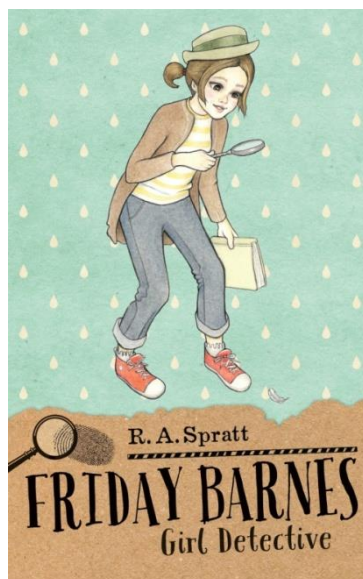
## PUBLICATION DETAILS

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## Friday Barnes: Girl Detective

R. A. Spratt

## KEY NOTE

*Friday Barnes: Girl Detective* is no ordinary adventure story. It is told in an ironic and humorous vein, using sophisticated vocabulary and references to other book titles for added satirical emphasis.

The characters are portrayed almost as stereotypes. For example: Friday as a gifted girl with poor social skills, her parents as absent-minded professors, student bullies and rich people who like to sue others. It is these parodies that imbue *Friday Barnes* with humour and make her like us.

## PLOT SUMMARY

Friday Barnes is not your average eleven year old girl. Highly intelligent, she decides that the best way to be in control is not to be noticed both at home and at school.

She has a distinctly different family. Both her parents are professors of theoretical physics, and her adult siblings' names, Quantum, Quasar, Orion and Halley, reflect their obsession with their work. They seem to be examples of absent-minded professors.

Only Uncle Bernie, an insurance investigator, can be relied upon to listen and assist Friday. When he is in trouble and about to lose his job, Friday solves the crime of the stolen diamond. With the \$50,000 reward money she enrolls herself in an exclusive boarding

school, which she thinks will suit her talents and save her from a 'life of boredom and drudgery.'

However, she soon discovers that at this school there are more crimes to be solved and her usual strategy to go unnoticed backfires from the very first day. In addition, Friday is very confused as to why Ian Wainscott, the best looking boy in the class, takes an instant dislike to her and causes her pencil case to explode.

The swift resolution, with its link to the first crime, is quite unexpected, as is the cliff hanger ending. This ensures the reader will want to seek out the next adventure of Friday Barnes.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

R.A. Spratt is an award winning author and television writer. She is best known for writing the *Nanny Piggins* series.

R.A. Spratt got her first writing job in 1997, as a staff writer at *Good News Week* (a satirical TV game show). Hence this influence on her style of writing in *Friday Barnes: Girl Detective*. R.A. has gone on to write for dozens of TV programs. After several years of writing comedy, she started writing pre-school drama and in recent years has mainly written children's animation.

R.A. Spratt wrote her first book, *The Adventures of Nanny Piggins*, in 2006. It was published in Australia in March, 2009, and the USA in August, 2010.

R.A. Spratt lives in Bowral, Australia, with her husband and two daughters. She enjoys gardening and napping, but rarely gets the time to do either.

R.A. has written 9 instalments in the *Nanny Piggins* series. She has just finished writing the first book in her new series, *Friday Barnes: Girl Detective* and plans to write a film script based on the *Nanny Piggins* books before writing the second book in the Friday Barnes series, *Friday Barnes: Under Suspicion*.

Check out her website: <http://raspratt.com/>

## LANGUAGE

Use language to shape and make meaning according to purpose, audience and context.

### Purpose and audience

Watch R. A. Spratt talk about her new book on the link below:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qoFP4My2Nrc>

### Questions and activities:

1. Discuss the purpose of writing this book and who it is written for (e.g. audience).

2. From the way the author talks during this short clip how would you describe her?
3. Is this reflected in her writing? What is your evidence from the text?

### Intertextuality

This term was developed by the poststructuralist Julia Kristeva in the 1960s, and since then it's been widely accepted by postmodern literary critics and theoreticians.

Basically, when writers borrow from previous texts, their work acquires layers of meaning. In addition, when a text is read in the light of another text, all the assumptions and effects of the other text give a new meaning and influence the way of interpreting the original text.

This concept may need to be introduced to primary students and explored so that readers understand the layers of meaning that add to and enhance the humour.

### Definition:

Intertextuality is the shaping of a text's meaning by another text.

Here are examples of intertextuality included in *Friday Barnes: Girl Detective*:

Robinson Crusoe: Compared to her siblings' names and the reasons for this difference in relation to Friday's name (p. 3).

Agatha Christie movies, Belgian accent and Hercule Poirot: Friday acting like a detective (p. 14).

Jane Austen, Charles Dickens and Charlotte Bronte: The only friends Friday made at school (p. 43).

Jane Eyre and Madeline: Description of the dorm (p. 84).

Lord of the Flies: In relation to the students of Highcrest Academy (p. 103).

### Questions and activities:

1. In small groups, get students to choose one example of intertextuality used in the story and explain its meaning.
2. How has the use of referencing other texts added to the meaning in this story? Explain how the use of this technique has enhanced the story?

### Humour

Writing funny stories is one of the hardest forms of the craft. You may have a great sense of humour, but capturing that in your writing takes skill and practice. Here are some of the techniques that R. A. Spratt employs that you may want to use in your own writing.



**Irony:** The expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect. A simple way of putting it is that irony usually signals a difference between the appearance of things and reality.

**Hyperbole:** Exaggeration used to evoke strong feelings or create an impression which is not meant to be taken literally. Often involves a surprise or unexpected event or consequence.

**Parody:** The opportunity to imitate the style of an individual, place, object or institution with a nonsensical approach.

**Activity: critical and creative thinking**

1. Ask students in pairs to individually list the five events in the story that they consider to be the funniest. The pairs will then link up to share their lists and together form the top three funniest events. Students critically analyse their top three events and determine which technique the author used. Class to then share and collate.

Individual Examples from *Friday Barnes: Girl Detective*:

Climb Mt Everest with the aid of suction shoes (p.67) - Hyperbole

A lemon tart with serious consequences (p.151) - Hyperbole

Green pork pie hat (p.154) - Parody

2. Students write about a short humorous event that has happened to them at school or at home.
3. Consider which technique (e.g. irony, hyperbole, parody) could be used to make this paragraph even funnier and rewrite the event.

**Vocabulary**

In writing this story, R. A. Spratt, has used sophisticated words to lend a sense of importance to Friday and to accentuate the humour of the situations.

Examples of sophisticated language:

Minutia; mandatory; macrobiotic; botulism; conjugate; pugilist; fedora; conundrum; magna cum laude; immaculately; eccentrically; devolutionary; semiotic; dowdy; epiphany; mediocrity; narcissistic; nemesis; thwart; eccentric; alpha student.

**Questions and activities:**

1. Ask students to be 'word detectives' and keep a dictionary of all the new words they learn and allow them to discover their meanings.
2. Has the use of these adult words added to the story? Why do you think that R. A. Spratt chose to use them?

3. List examples of words on a class display around a picture of Friday or a magnifying glass.

**Characterisation**

In the NSW English K – 10 syllabus, students in stage 3 should demonstrate appropriate and responsible use of information sources and technologies considering, where relevant, different points of view and/or stereotyping.

The characters and setting in the story could almost be described as a form of stereotyping. However this is used as a literary technique to enhance the humour of the story.

Examples:

Absent-minded professors as parents; nerdy students have poor social skills and love reading; Highcrest Academy Headmaster's sole aim seemed to be to expel a student as a means of keeping students under control.

**Questions and activities:**

1. Create a mind map of the Highcrest Academy students and teachers with key ideas that describe their character.  
  
Learn how to use MS word to create this in your computer.  
  
<http://mindmapcentral.com/learn-to-create-a-mind-map-in-word-heres-how/>
2. Draw Friday's family tree with key descriptive words or phrases.
3. Why did Friday like to go unnoticed? How did she achieve that at her primary school? What happened to this strategy when she went to Highcrest Academy?
4. Using magazine/ internet images draw or create some new clothes for Friday that would have helped her go un-noticed at Highcrest Academy.

**Story structure**

*Friday Barnes: Girl Detective* is told as a third person narrative and follows a conventional detective story structure, with small diversionary actions (sequence of events) leading to the resolution of the crime.

Answer these questions to de-construct the plot and help you to complete the cloze passage story structure worksheet.

1. Who is the protagonist, the main character?
2. Who is the antagonist, the character who most gets in the way of the main character getting what they want?
3. What does the protagonist want?



4. What is the conflict? In other words, what stops the main character from getting what they want?
5. Which incident near the beginning of the book sets the story in motion?
6. What happens at the climax of the story?
7. What happens in the story's resolution? How does it end?

### Cliff-hanger endings

#### Questions and activities:

1. What is the purpose of this type of ending?
2. How did you feel when this story ended?
3. Brainstorm all the possible ideas for what will happen in the next *Friday Barnes* book.
4. Create a book trailer for *Friday Barnes*.  
View examples of completed book trailers and discuss:
  - What is the purpose of a book trailer?
  - Who is the audience?
5. Analyse these examples of book trailers in order to evaluate why they work.

*Sammy Keyes Book trailer:*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLzY1kapyio>

*The Christmas Wish Book Trailer:*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLzY1kapyio>

*The Haunting of Charles Dickens by Lewis Buzbee:*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57upgLWSDN8>

*The Vicious Deep:*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwQgal46XzE>



## WORKSHEET: HOW TO MAKE A BOOK TRAILER

Read the book and consider what the story is about. Who are the most important characters and what are the key points?

1. Write a 30-second to 1-minute trailer script and remember to keep it short and sweet.
2. Visualise your trailer by gathering images and music.
3. Try using Story Scrapbook, Tristan Bancks' free transmedia story brainstorming app:  
<http://www.tristanbancks.com/p/story-scrapbook.html>
4. Complete your book trailer if you are using still images or shoot and edit if you are using video.
5. View your trailer and reflect on it to see if you have achieved your purpose. Edit if necessary.
6. When you are satisfied, share it with your class or add it to your school website.



## WORKSHEET: NEWSPAPER REPORT

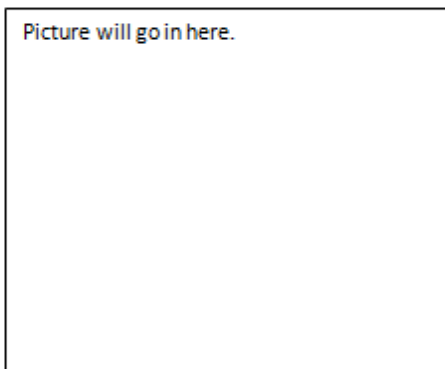
Let's learn what makes a good newspaper article and grab the reader's attention by an arresting headline (adapted from <http://www.primaryresources.co.uk/english/englishDg.html>).

Use the newspaper template to complete your report on the crimes which Friday Barnes has solved.

<h1>Name of Paper</h1>		
Date	YOUR DAILY FAVOURITE NEWSPAPER	Price

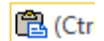
## WRITE HEADLINE HERE

Picture will go in here.



Continue writing here

Continue writing here



Caption for a picture

Start writing here.



## WORKSHEET: STORY STRUCTURE

Stories need a narrative drive – something pushing the story forward. Try filling out the following 'story template' and see if you can work out what it is that drives this story.

Friday Barnes: Girl Detective is the story of \_\_\_\_\_ (protagonist / main character), a \_\_\_\_\_ (description of protagonist/main character) who, after \_\_\_\_\_ (first major story turning point), decides to \_\_\_\_\_ (character objective that drives the action). The character is prevented from achieving their goal by \_\_\_\_\_ (main obstacle or antagonist). We know that \_\_\_\_\_ (the protagonist/main character) has succeeded or failed when \_\_\_\_\_ (achievement that represents success or failure.)

You can see that, after the first turning point, there is something driving the action – the narrative, in other words.



## ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QUANTITY	TOTAL
Friday Barnes: Girl Detective	R. A. Spratt	9781742759623	6 - 7	\$15.99		
<b>TOTAL</b>						

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