



# TEACHERS' RESOURCES

## RECOMMENDED FOR

Middle primary (ages 9–11; years 5 to 7)

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## KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English
- **General capabilities:** Critical and Creative Thinking; Literacy

## REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Fun and humorous book about discovering who you are and accepting it
- Strong emphasis on language
- Explores the idea of allowing people to be who they are at heart.

## THEMES

- Friendship and family
- Courage and Identity
- Manners and tolerance
- Empathy, diversity and difference

## PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia

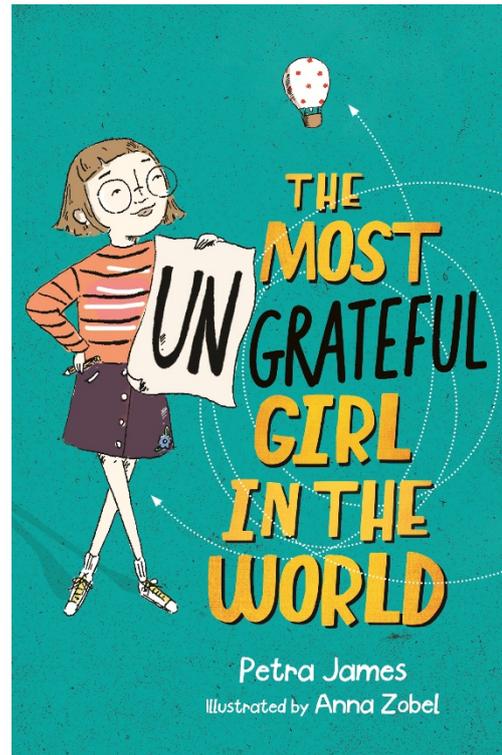
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## The Most Ungrateful Girl in the World

Petra James

Illustrated by Anna Zobel

## PLOT SUMMARY

When Izzy Winkle – **The Most Grateful Girl in the World** – enters a competition to find **The Most Ungrateful Girl in the World**, she is plunged into a hidden society of secret agents, brave pigeons and warring manners.

Daphne du Bois, **Etiquette Queen of the Southern Hemisphere**, says children should be seen and not heard. Horace Unthank, **Professor of Appalling Behaviour**, says children should **roll** in mud, **helter-skelter** down hills, **chew** furiously, **spit** words while chewing furiously ...

With the help of her best friend Katie Skittle, Izzy must beat the **Top Ten Ungrateful Girls**, and save the world from fibs, nits and rudeness.

A catastrophe of good and bad manners and the girl stuck in the middle.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Petra James is the author of several middle-grade novels, such as the Arkie Sparkle series and *Hapless Hero Henrie*.

Originally from a small town in New Zealand, she spent three years in the United Kingdom before moving to Australia, where she has worked in publishing ever since.

Unlike the Ungrateful Girls in this story, she is very polite and well mannered.

## AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Petra James says:

Manners aren't what they used to be, and I was thinking about how kids today learn them (often via a barrage of DON'Ts).

In the Old Days, people revered and respected manners, there were books and courses on etiquette, and you judged the measure of a person by the way they behaved.

Manners, kindness and gratefulness began fermenting in my head and Izzy Winkle, a Grateful Girl who wants to become an Ungrateful Girl, emerged. Izzy is trying to go against her grateful nature, which gave me the chance to explore both sides of the Manner Question.

Before I knew it, Daphne du Bois, Horace Unthank, Molly Bloom, the Department of Manners and The Ungrateful Girls had all jostled their way into the story.

## WRITING STYLE

### Questions

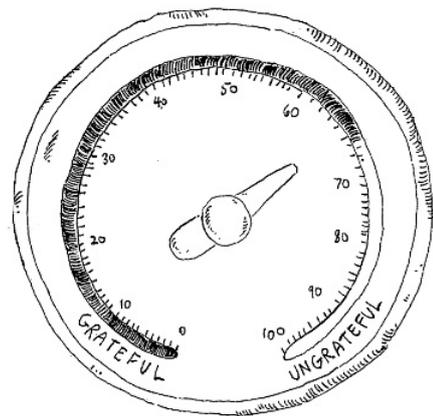
1. The author uses many different devices to help tell the story: lists, quotes, signs and flyers, rules, podcast transcripts, book extracts. Which of these methods do you think is most effective? Can you think of any other methods that could have been used?
2. How do you think the illustrations help support and expand the narrative? Find an example of each.
3. Do you think the ending of the story is satisfying? Why did this ending suit the story?
4. Look at the note to the reader on page 1. Do you think this helps the reader get a sense of the style of the book? What does this tell you about the character of Daphne du Bois?

### Activities

1. On pages 46–51 there are lists from Daphne's book *Good Manners are the Grammar of a Grateful Life* and also Izzy's 'ungrateful' versions of these lists. Create your own lists using a different topic (for example, behaviour on public transport) and write them from both Daphne's (grateful) and Izzy's (ungrateful) points of view.
2. Look at the dictionary entries on page 73. Do you think these are real words? Look them up in a dictionary. Then create your own words and meanings to add to *The Unthankian Dictionary*.
3. Pretend you are Horace Unthank, or one of the Top Ten Girls, and create your own 'sparkling wise words' for the chapter opener pages. Style them as Daphne has, adding your name below each one.

## PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Look at the cover of the book. What do you think the story will be like?
2. Why do you think the 'UN' in the word 'ungrateful' is separated as it is? Do you think this adds a layer of meaning to the cover?
3. Do you think the character on the cover looks grateful or ungrateful?
4. On the back cover there is a picture of an Ungrateful Meter. Are there other ways this information could have been given to the reader? Draw one of these ways, either as a bar graph or pie graph. Or create your own graph.



## KEY STUDY TOPICS

### Characterisation

Characters in the book include: Izzy Winkle, Katie Skittle, Horace Unthank, Daphne du Bois, Molly Bloom, the Top Ten Girls, Charlie Prodnose and A and Z/Y.

1. How does the author clearly set up Izzy's motivation in the book? Do you think this is resolved? How does Izzy change throughout the book? Do you think she learns something?
2. We only see Daphne in a scene at the end of the book (previously she's only remembered by Izzy or talked about). Do you feel that you know her well as a character before Chapter 18?
3. Were you surprised when it was revealed who Molly was? Do you think there are clues to Molly's identity throughout the story?
4. Why do you think Charlie Prodnose wanted to enter the competition?



### Manners

Manners – both good and bad – are a central part of the story. Izzy prides herself on her good behaviour and is shocked when she at first practises being 'bad' on her parents.

1. Do you think that manners are important?
2. What would happen if everyone behaved the same way? For example, what would happen if everyone in the world had good manners? What would happen if everyone in the world had bad manners? Why do you think Molly said that it was important to let people be the way they were born? Do you think Daphne's plan of forcing people to be good-mannered would work?
3. Can you think of some rules that exist at your school to help make it a pleasant place to be? Create

a document listing some of these for your class to share (and add to) throughout the year. Make a note of anything that happens to change these rules.

4. Look at the Top Ten Girls list on page 188–189. Create a list of what the Top Ten Grateful Girls might look like. Give them names and special subjects just like the Top Ten Ungrateful Girls

### The importance of names

The author has created many characters with very different personalities. She has deliberately chosen names that reflect their likes, dislikes, habits and manners. For example, Horace *Unthank* is very messy, rude and loud. Charlie *Prodnose* is a stickybeak and enjoys worming information out of people. Molly *Bloom* is positive, caring and full of wonder at the world.

1. Choose five characters from the story and list their personality traits that can be connected to their name in some way.
2. The Top Ten Girls are listed on pages 188–189. Create another list of girls (and boys) who might have been runners-up in the competition. Give them names, special subjects and favourite sayings.
3. Horace Unthank teaches people how to be 'ungrateful'. What are some other qualities that could be taught by an expert?



### KEY QUOTES

1. *Can you believe the hundreds and thousands of things we miss every single day because we're blinking up to 29,000 times?* (pp. 3–4)

Do you think this is true? Think of what you did this morning before school. Imagine something extraordinary that could have happened to you if



you hadn't blinked. Write a short story about what this could have been – be as creative as you like. It doesn't have to be realistic.

2. *We looked at each other for a moment – as though we were going to say something else but our words were shy and hovered between us.*

*There was something about Molly Bloom.*

*It was as though she could see deep inside me and was having a good sneaky peek. (p. 40)*

Have you ever thought someone could tell what you were thinking? Why do you think some people have this effect on us? Do you think this is a good thing? Can you think of examples of when you and a friend could communicate without talking?

3. *He stopped his story and looked at us. 'The two towns, you see, were like night and day. Black and white.'*

*'Is that the moral?' I said. Mr Scribner said every good story had a moral. (p. 80)*

What do you think the moral of the story is in *The Most Ungrateful Girl in the World*? Can you think of other stories with a similar moral?

4. *Courage and instincts. That's what Molly had said. I guess this was the courage part. The part where I had to go deep-me diving and find something to power me up. (p. 195)*

Do you think Izzy is a courageous character? Why or why not? Do you think in this scene that Katie is responsible for giving Izzy courage? Can you find other places in the book where this happens?

## THEMES

- **Friendship.** A central part of the story is Izzy's friendship with Katie. Do you think Izzy having a best friend makes her stronger as a person? Make a list of all the times one of your friends has helped you recently. Then make a list of the times you've helped your friend.



- **Courage.** Izzy has to build her courage throughout the novel to achieve her goal. Do you think other characters show courage throughout the story? (For example, do you think Charlie was courageous for entering the competition disguised as a girl?) Have there been times when you have had to be brave or courageous, even when you haven't felt like it?
- **Empathy.** The Top Ten Girls are the best at being ungrateful. But did you feel empathy for any of the girls? If so, how do you think the author got you to feel that way? Do you think the illustrations helped build empathy for those characters?



## ACTIVITIES

### Writing exercises

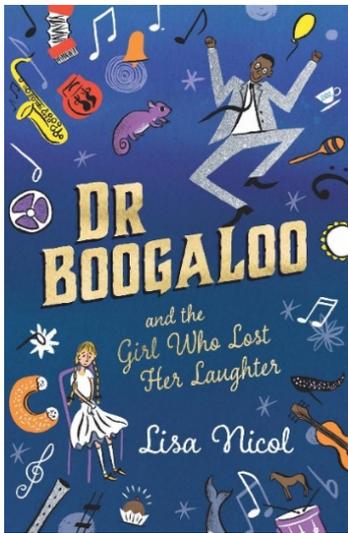
- The author uses the device of telling a story within a story – Horace Unthank tells Izzy and Katie the tale of Margaret Swillsworthy and Ned Knight in Chapter 5. Can you think of other novels that use this device? (Or TV shows or movies?) Reread Chapter 4 and then write the story about Horace meeting Daphne du Bois at a Writers' Festival.
- Horace tells the girls about *The Unthankian Dictionary* on page 73. Write your own entries for these same words, but write them for *The Thankian Dictionary*.
- Pretend you are one of the judges of The Most Ungrateful Girl in the World competition. Write a judge's report for the Top Ten Girls after Round One. Include strengths and weaknesses, and a compelling argument for giving the score you choose.

### Performance exercises

- Pretend you are in the Top Ten. Decide on an ungrateful speciality and write your Creed of Ungratefulness to the rest of the class.
- There is a podcast of Daphne's address to the United Nation on pages 42–44. Create a podcast transcript (or even a recording if you have the equipment) from Horace Unthank's point of view at the same event.



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



*Dr Boogaloo and the Girl Who Lost Her Laughter*  
by Lisa Nicol

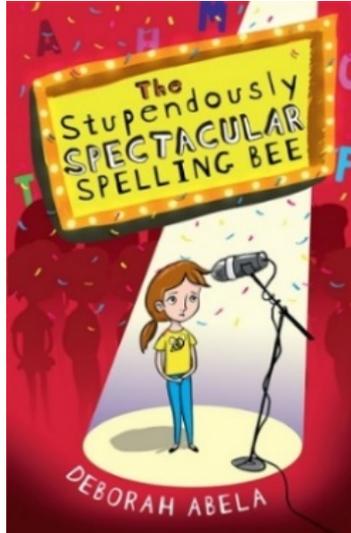
Dr Boogaloo was no ordinary doctor. Not at all like the one you might visit if you had a sore tummy. No, Dr Boogaloo was a very different type of doctor. He treated folks who suffered from rather unusual complaints. And how did he treat them? Why, with the most powerful medicine known to mankind . . . Music!

Blue was no ordinary girl. For starters, her name was Blue. But what was truly extraordinary about Blue was the fact that she hadn't laughed for 712 days. Not a hee hee, a ho ho or even a tiny tee hee.

According to Dr Boogaloo, music can cure anything. (Of course, you need the right dose of the right music. No point listening to a jive if you're in need of some boogie-woogie, and you can't just substitute a toot for a blow!) But no laughter was definitely a case for alarm.

Can Dr Boogaloo compose a cure before Blue loses her laughter forever?

*Teachers' resources available.*



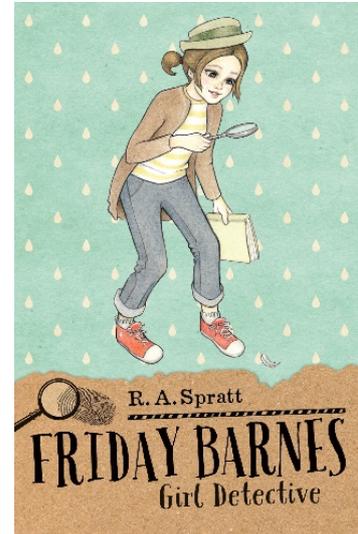
*The Stupendously Spectacular Spelling Bee*  
by Deborah Abela

India Wimple can spell. Brilliantly. Every Friday night, she and her family watch the Stupendously Spectacular Spelling Bee. When the Wimples suggest she enter the next Bee, India says she's not good enough – but her family won't hear it and encourage her to sign up.

There are plenty of obstacles to reaching the finals: something in India's past has made her terribly shy, and moving on to each round involves finding the money to make it happen.

And finally, there's Summer Millicent Ernestine Beauregard-Champion, a spoilt rich girl who is determined to win – and isn't afraid to step on anyone who gets in her way.

*Teachers' resources available.*



*Friday Barnes: Girl Detective*  
by R. A. Spratt

When girl detective Friday Barnes solves a bank robbery she uses the reward money to send herself to the most exclusive boarding school in the country, Highcrest Academy.

On arrival, Friday is shocked to discover the respectable school is actually a hotbed of crime. She's soon investigating everything from disappearing homework to the Yeti running around the school swamp. That's when she's not dealing with her own problem – Ian Wainscott, the handsomest boy in school, who inexplicably hates Friday and loves nasty pranks.

Can Friday solve Highcrest Academy's many strange mysteries, including the biggest mystery of all – what's the point of high school?

*Teachers' resources available.*



## ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
The Most Ungrateful Girl in the World	Petra James	9780143793670	5-7	\$16.99		
Dr Boogaloo and the Girl Who Lost Her Laughter	Lisa Nicol	9781760892364	5-7	\$14.99		
The Stupendously Spectacular Spelling Bee	Deborah Abela	9781925324822	5-7	\$14.99		
Friday Barnes 1: Girl Detective	R. A. Spratt	9781760890735	5-7	\$15.99		
<b>TOTAL</b>						

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