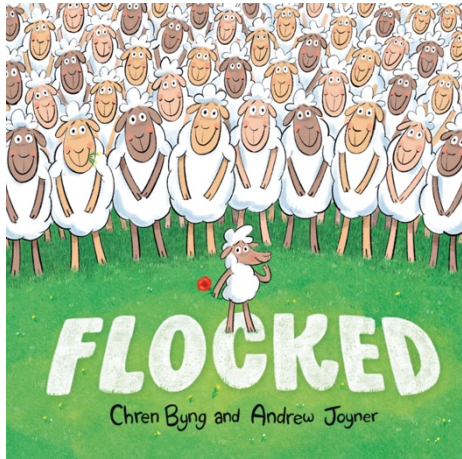


## Teacher's Notes



### *Flocked*

Written by Chren Byng

Illustrated by Andrew Joyner

Teacher's Notes by Bec Kavanagh

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### LEARNING OUTCOMES

#### RECOMMENDED FOR

3+ aged readers (grades 1+)

#### KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: English
- General capabilities:
  - ACELA1432
  - ACELA1786
  - ACELT1575
  - ACELT1783

### THEMES

- Adventure
- Overcoming fear
- Celebrating differences
- Being brave
- Family
- Independence

### SYNOPSIS

Welcome to the flock. In the flock everything is warm, safe, happy and, well, the same. But one day one of the flock's smallest members starts to wonder if maybe there is happiness to be found *outside* the flock! Outside is chaos. It's big and scary and different. But outside the flock there are also new things to discover, and this small sheep discovers that even though the flock will always be home, there are new adventures on the outside.

*Flocked* is an easy-to-read story about being brave and celebrating difference.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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**Chren Byng** was born in America, but soon moved to her mother's homeland, Australia, where she grew up by the beach. In her day job as a children's book publisher, Chren has edited and published award-winning and bestselling books from many of Australia's most-loved authors and illustrators. She aspires to have one-tenth of their talent. Chren lives in Sydney with her partner and their young children.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

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**Andrew Joyner** is an Australian illustrator and cartoonist. His first book, *The Terrible Plop*, written by Ursula Dubosarsky, was shortlisted for many awards, including the CBCA Book of the Year 2010 and the PM's Literary Awards 2010. In 2013, Andrew illustrated Jan Ormerod's *The Swap*, which won the 2014 CBCA Book of the Year, and has been translated into 14 languages. Andrew has achieved huge success in both Australia and overseas with his books now published in more than 25 countries. Along with his children's book work, Andrew illustrates regularly for newspapers and magazines, both locally and internationally. He lives in Strathalbyn, South Australia, with his family and nineteen pets.

## THEMES

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Whether it's starting a new school or trying out something new and different for the first time, all readers will relate to the central theme of *Flocked* – the uncertainty that comes with unfamiliar things. *Flocked* explores this in a way that is gentle and easy to understand, particularly for readers in the first year of school where so many experiences are new and potentially intimidating! Teachers can use this charming story to discuss:

- How we feel about new experiences
- How to be brave when we have to do something on our own for the first time
- Who the members of our 'flock' are, and how they support us when we need them (even if they aren't with us)
- Celebrating differences

## WRITING STYLE

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Writer Chren Byng makes good use of repetition in *Flocked*, with the beginning of the book an insistent chant of sameness. This insistence is reinforced by the short statements on each page where the flock tells the new sheep why being part of the flock is the best option instead of allowing them to make up their own mind. But when the new sheep breaks away from the flock, although the earlier statements still flow across the pages, there is more space – the writer uses punctuation to create pauses where the imagination of the reader can creep in. What is life really like outside of the flock? Readers will learn how punctuation can be used in different ways to change the meaning and rhythm of a piece of writing, and could also discuss the use of repetition and third person as persuasive tools.

## COMPREHENSION

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- What are some of the good things about the flock? Why do you think the new sheep wants to leave?
- Why do you think people choose to do the same thing as everyone else? Should the other sheep in the flock be more adventurous?
- 'You are happy in the flock'. Is this true just because someone else tells you it is? Who gets to decide what makes you happy? What can you do if you don't know what makes you happy?
- What does the flock remind you of in your own life?
- What kind of punctuation does the writer use in the story? What is the difference between a full stop (.) and an ellipsis (...)? How would the story change if you changed the punctuation in it even more (try adding a question mark, or an exclamation mark to one of the lines and see what happens!)
- Where do you first see the little red flower? Why do you think it's important?
- How does it feel to be different to everyone else? How can we make being different less scary for the people around us?
- Which character would you be in the story and why?

## WRITING EXERCISE

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Write about a time that you've had to do something new on your own. How did it make you feel? How did your family or friends react? Share your stories in class and discuss the similarities and differences between your experiences.

## ILLUSTRATION STYLE

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Readers will already be familiar with Andrew Joyner's illustrations. One especially noteworthy element is the way that he starts the story in his usual animated style but, as the new sheep leaves the flock, introduces different techniques to highlight the differences of 'outside'. Readers can discuss the way that the different mediums (collage, texture, paint) have been used to contrast and isolate the image of the sheep making its way into the unknown. How does Joyner bring these elements together in the end, and what do you notice about the final image?



## CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

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1. Discuss the differences between the images and the text – when the text is saying ‘outside, everything is wild. Outside, everything is chaos’, what do the pictures tell you? Are they describing the same emotions? Write two lines about feeling happy. Now draw two pictures to go with them – one picture should try to capture the same emotion (happiness) and one should try to show a different emotion (sadness, anger). How does the meaning of your words change when the picture does?
2. Talk about the different styles Andrew Joyner uses to show the difference of the outside world. Using one of these styles, draw a picture of a place the sheep might go to on their adventures.
3. Imagine if the story was about a different kind of animal (like a shark, or a kangaroo) – which parts would change and which parts would stay the same?
4. Write a letter to the sheep telling them about something exciting that they might find on their adventures.

