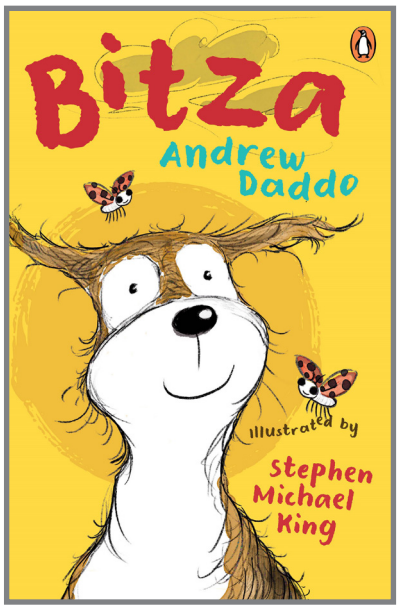
Bitza (Book 1)



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SCIS: 5558902

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary

SYNOPSIS

I'm Bitza the dog! A bit Labrador and a bit Poodle. A bit Kelpy and Staffy and maybe even Hound. Lots of different dog bits make up the lot of me. I'm also a bit lost.

A good dog always looks after its ball, which is why I followed Jasper and the ball thief home from the park. She was looking for a dog, I was looking for a home.

It's perfect … unless Dad gets his way.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Daddo has managed to have a crack at just about every aspect of the entertainment industry. He's appeared on TV and stage, presented radio programs and podcasts, and even made movies. Best of all, Andrew is an accomplished author. He has written 28 books including picture books, chapter books, short story collections, novels and a vague biography – he's hard to pin down. He also talks up literacy in schools.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Stephen Michael King has been described as an artist who 'draws from the inside out', and it is this gentle, intuitive truth that gives heart and playfulness to his work. Stephen Michael King is an internationally renowned, award-winning author and illustrator whose career has spanned over thirty years, producing more that one hundred titles. He has worked with a stable of Australia's best children's book authors including Glenda Millard, Margaret Wild, Nick Bland, Peter Carey and Tim Winton. Books that Stephen Michael King has written and illustrated include: *Three; Rainbow Bear; Mutt Dog!; Leaf;* and *Milly, Jack and the Dancing Cat*. His books have been translated into over twenty languages, and he is frequently honoured in children's book award categories – including winning the CBCA Book of the year, and the Prime Minister's Literary Award.

THEMES

- Belonging
- Relationships
- Caring for others
- Caring for a pet

STUDY NOTES

WRITING STYLE

Bitza is written in first person, from the point of view of Bitza the dog, observing and commenting on his life with his human owners.

- Questions:
  - What are the advantages and disadvantages of only having Bitza's point of view?
  - How does the author communicate the thoughts and feelings of the human characters in the story?
- Activities:
  - Choose a chapter in the book then try rewriting the chapter: a) from Jasper's point of view. b) in 3rd person (as if you're an invisible observer of everything that's happening and telling us about it)
  - Choose a favourite animal. Do some research into its behaviours and habitat, then write a short story from that animal's point of view.

VISUAL LITERACY

Bitza has fun, bright illustrations on the cover, as well as internal black and white illustrations throughout the book.

- Questions and activities:
  - How do the illustrations help with understanding the story, as well as the emotions of the characters?
  - Take a look at the cover. What do you think the book will be about?
  - Now read the blurb on the back cover. Add to your previous answer. Is there anything else you feel may happen after reading the blurb?
  - Now read the book. At the end, write down if you guessed the plot correctly. What happened that you expected and what surprised you?

KEY THEMES

Belonging

The first book in the Bitza series follows how Bitza finds a new home. There are a few different people who Bitza feels he belongs to, which are conveyed throughout the book.

- Questions and activities
  - Can you name some of the times when Bitza feels he belongs with Jas and her dad? What are some things he says or does to convey this?
  - Bitza is written from the point of view of the dog, Bitza. Find some examples in the book of how this writing style helps to convey Bitza's feelings about belonging.

Relationships

Sometimes Bitza, Jasper and Dad think they understand what the other is thinking or feeling but they don't always get it right.

- Questions and activities
  - Find an example in the book where there is a misunderstanding between characters.
  - Can you think of a time when you didn't properly understand what someone was thinking or feeling? e.g. Perhaps a friend or sibling who is usually talkative seems very quiet, so you might start to wonder what you did to upset them.
  - Talk together about some of the ways you might approach a situation like this with a friend or sibling. e.g. You might simply ask if they are okay. Or invite them to do an activity with you.

Caring for others

All the characters in the stories show their care for others in different ways.

- Questions and activities
  - Create a table with a column for each character in the story and list a few ways they show they care for someone

else (e.g. Bitza, Dad, Jasper, Peggie).

Responsibility for pets

In the Bitza series, Jasper learns that caring for another living creature is a big responsibility. As she gets to know Bitza, she begins to learn more and more about the best way to keep him healthy and happy.

- Questions and activities
  - List some of the things Jasper learns from her dad and from Bitza about how to keep a dog happy and healthy. Divide your list into 2 columns: Tips from Dad & Tips from Bitza.
  - If you have a pet, list all the things you do to help keep it happy and health. Then do some further research to find out other ways to help you care for your pet. Use the attached a table with tick boxes for each item to be checked off each day.
  - If you don't have pet, choose a pet that you'd like to care for and do some research to find out the way you could help to provide good care for that pet. (Remember that having a pet is not always possible for a family to take on for a variety reasons.)

SAMPLE – Helping to care for my dog

MY TASK	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
Morning walk or play							
Check water bowls							
Feed							
Fill treat toys							
Collect poo in yard							
Afternoon walk, play or training time							
Check water bowls							
Bath							

Now it's your turn...

CARING FOR _____

MY TASK	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN

Bitza Word Search

A P W P O S H A K E
B P E W B A L L C I
I O E G J A S P E R
T O C P G W A T E R
Z D I G G I N G U F
A O C H A S E E L B
S T I C K S I T E O
D C H E W A L K A N
A C O L L A R Z D E
D H P A R K F O O D

digging	Jasper	Peggie	Bitza
collar	water	chase	stick
food	lead	ball	walk
shake	bone	park	dad
chew	poo	wee	sit

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