



Invisible Dogs

Educator Notes



Written by Kiah Thomas
Illustrated by Jake A Minton

Published by Little Book Press, October 2026
Recommended for ages: 3–6
ISBN (Aus): 9781923141698

Plot Summary

Have you ever seen an invisible dog?

You'll never meet a better dog than Charlie. He always comes when he's called, never needs a bath and is always allowed in the car ... even when he's soaking wet! Sometimes it's a little lonely when no one else can see your dog. But best friends have a funny way of helping you find exactly what you need.

A beautiful story about the unexpected ways our wishes come true.

Themes

- Family
- Pets
- Community
- Imagination
- Wishes
- Home life and routine

Rich and interesting words: invisible, waggy, escalators, apartment, impossible, whine

Key Curriculum Learning Areas

Early Years Learning Framework:

Learning Outcome 2 – Children are connected with and contribute to their world

The child in the story forms a friendship with Daphne and discovers Daphne 'needs help sometimes'. The book intentionally leaves out what kind of help that is, to leave space for interpretation. Helping others in the community can allow children to develop a sense of connectedness, seeing themselves as part of a community and broadening their understanding of the world in which they live.

Learning Outcome 5 – Children are effective communicators

Invisible Dogs doesn't explicitly specify whether the dog is real or imaginary. It allows young readers to make up their own mind, while dropping clues throughout (for example: 'you don't even have to feed them!'). Giving children context allows them to derive meaning from the texts they engage with, supporting their critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities.

Australian Curriculum

Learning Area: English

Foundation

Language: Language for interacting with others	Explore different ways of using language to express preferences, likes and dislikes. (AC9EFLA02)
Language: Language for expressing and developing ideas	Explore the contribution of image and words to meaning in stories and informative text. (AC9EFLE07)
Literacy: Phonic and word knowledge	Recognise and generate rhyming words, alliteration patterns, syllables and sounds (phonemes) in spoken words (phonological awareness). (AC9EFLY09)
Literacy: Examining literature	Recognise different types of literary texts and identify features including events, characters, and beginnings and endings. (AC9EFLE03)

Conversation Starters

Before Reading

- This book is called *Invisible Dogs*. Can you see the dog on the cover? What else can you see on the cover?
- Ask children to make predictions about what they think this book is about. Does the front and back cover give us any clues as to what the book is about?
- Children (particularly very young children) may not know what the word 'invisible' means. Take a quick moment to explain that 'invisible' means you can't see something. Giving children meaning for words allows them to make connections and comprehend the overall story.

While Reading

- *Even a really big invisible dog can fit in a small apartment.* Explain what an apartment is, as some children may not have prior knowledge of an apartment.
- Jake's illustrations display a sense of imagination and frivolity. Point out to children the difference between the illustration styles of the visible dog and the invisible dogs throughout.
- *And maybe you both learn that Daphne needs help sometimes.* The book doesn't specify what kind of help Daphne needs. This could spark a discussion with children about what she might need help with. Have you noticed anyone in the community receiving help or assistance?
- *And maybe you're a little bit glad that you listened to your dog and your mum.* This page is a nice opportunity to discuss how going out in nature, even for a quick walk, can often lift your mood. You might like to explore other ways that we take care of ourselves when we are feeling sad or unhappy.

After Reading

- Allow children to practice their narrative retell skills. What are some things that Charlie the invisible dog did in the story?
- In the story, the child and her mum cannot have a real dog, as their apartment is too small. Discuss why dogs may not be suitable for certain living arrangements, including limitations around space, time and energy. You might like to include comparing different breeds of dogs and coming up with a dog that would suit an apartment. This allows opportunity for children to explore the responsibilities of owning certain animals in an age-appropriate context.
- You may like to go back through the book and point out the visible dog compared to the invisible dogs. Do you notice anything about the visible dog and his owner?

Further Activities and Discussions

According to *Pets in Australia*, a national survey of pets and people in 2025, dogs remain the most popular pet – owned by 49% of Australian households. 86% of pet owners said their pets have positively impacted their lives. You might like to discuss how animals can make us happy, and how many people form loving companion relationships with their pets.

Dogs come in a wide variety of breeds, sizes and shapes. Explore different dog breeds together, taking time to notice their different features. For example, long fur vs short fur, pointy ears vs floppy ears, etc. This also presents an opportunity to talk about the different needs of different breeds. For example, working dogs require much more exercise and mental stimulation than other dogs, due to their high energy levels. Children may like to discuss what kind of dog breed they like best and why.

Discuss other animals that children may have as pets. Ask them to draw a picture of their pet, or bring in a photo of their pet. While some children do have pets, many children don't. You may like to talk about which 'invisible' animal they'd like to have as a pet, like the child in the story.

Check out the activities on our website: <https://littlebookpress.com.au/pages/activity-times>

About the Author

Kiah Thomas is one of Australia's most exciting writers. In 2022, her debut middle-grade novel *The Callers* was published by the prestigious American publisher Chronicle Books. Her illustrated junior fiction series *Lone Wolf* was also released in the United States by Holiday House (released in Australia by Hardie Grant Children's Publishing). Her two most recent titles, *Two Turtles* and *Too Big to Be a Fairy*, were both named CBCA Notable Books. Kiah lives and works on Wurundjeri land in Naarm/Melbourne.

About the Illustrator

Jake A Minton is an illustrator and graphic novelist living in Melbourne with his cat. After being shortlisted for the Little Hare Illustration Prize in 2020, he has gone on to create CBCA-recognised picture books *There's No Such Book* and *Two Turtles*. Jake is also the illustrator of the bestselling graphic novel *Inked* and the popular junior-fiction series *Zombie Diaries*. In 2025, he was awarded first prize in the Established Illustrator category of the SCBWI Australian Picture Book Illustrator Award.