

## LOOKING UP

SALLY MURPHY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY AŠKA

ISBN (PB): 9781925164572

YEAR LEVEL: Y2–6

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Pete is hoping – desperately hoping – for a telescope. There’s nothing he wants more for his birthday. But when a mysterious card arrives in the mall, what Pete wants is turned upside down.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sally Murphy is a mother, wife, teacher, speaker, website manager, reviewer and author. She was born in Perth and now lives in Dalyellup, Western Australia. In 2001 she decided to dedicate herself to her dream of becoming a children’s author and has now published over 40 books. Sally is also a children’s book reviewer who runs the site [aussiereviews.com](http://aussiereviews.com).

### THEMES

- Astronomy
- Family
- Friendship
- Forgiveness

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Y2–6 English

Y2–6 Earth and space sciences

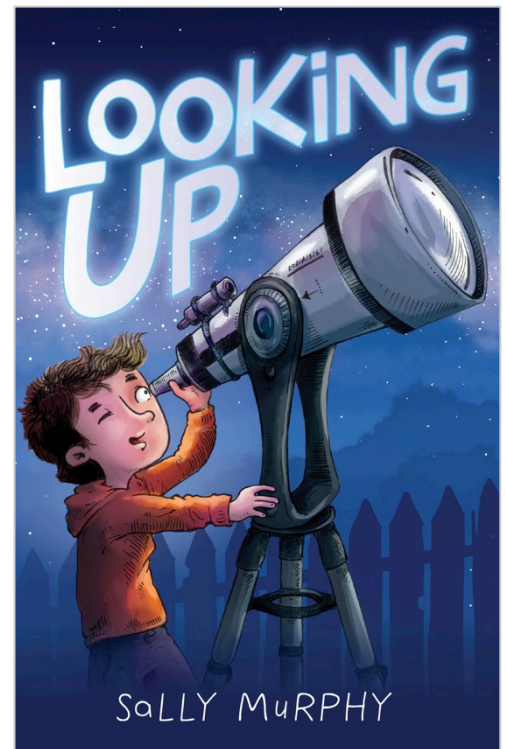
### USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author’s website: [sallymurphy.com.au](http://sallymurphy.com.au)
- Illustrator’s website: [askillustration.com](http://askillustration.com)

### CLASSROOM IDEAS

#### Discussion questions

1. Use three adjectives to describe your first impressions of the characters Pete and Mum. How do they seem similar/different to one another? How would you describe their relationship?
2. *Why would his mother not want him to meet his grandfather? ... What could Grandad have done that was so terrible?* (p. 43) In groups of four, brainstorm a list of ideas why Mum lied to Pete.
3. Have you ever told a lie? Why did you do it? How did it make you feel – guilty? Anxious?
4. Has someone ever lied to you? How did this make you feel – sad? Angry? Did you forgive them?
5. *Pete knew Mum was getting ready to say something. He wasn’t sure he was going to like what she said, but after the silence of the last day, he knew talking about it would be better.* (p. 47) How does Pete and Mum’s relationship change after she discovers he visited Grandad? Do you think Pete should have gone without her permission? Why is it important to talk about things that upset us?
6. Do you think it was Mum’s or Grandad’s fault that Grandma died?
7. What does the word ‘regret’ mean? Can you think of a time where you have made a mistake and wished that you could go back in time to change it?
8. What are some of the benefits of Mum and Grandad finally reconciling?
9. How are the themes of family, friendship and forgiveness represented in this book? Write a paragraph describing a situation when you have forgiven someone who really upset you. How did you feel afterwards? Relieved? Glad?



## Creative writing

1. Narrative writing – Using a narrative planning framework (exposition; conflict; rising action; climax; falling action; resolution), write a short story based on one of the following writing prompts:
  - a. Imagine you receive a mysterious birthday card from an unknown relative and decide to contact them. Describe your adventures after meeting this person. Remember – they could be anyone! (A pop star? A millionaire? Let your imagination run wild.)
  - b. Imagine that a mission has been chartered to one of the planets Pete spots through his telescope. Write a story about the challenges your characters will encounter in space.
  - c. Write a short story about a lie that goes horribly wrong for the lead character.
  - d. Write a short story inspired by the themes of family and forgiveness.
2. Metaphorical language – *Her face was a storm of emotions. But Mum didn't speak. She closed the card, looked at the front again, opened it, reread the inside, swallowed and closed her eyes.* (p. 17)
  - a. What do you think Pete means by 'a storm of emotions'?
  - b. Create a definition for the term 'metaphor'. In pairs, hunt for other similes and metaphors throughout the book. Can you create some of your own?
  - c. How does the author use physical descriptions of Pete's mum (i.e. her body language) to *show* that she is upset, as opposed to *telling* the reader this? Experiment with this approach of 'show, don't tell' when writing your own short stories.
3. Recount – Pete is excited to discover he has a grandad. What kinds of fun things do you like to do with your grandparents or other family members? Write a recount of a favourite day you have spent with them and create an accompanying illustration.
4. Continue the story – Write the next two chapters of the book. How will Pete's relationship with Grandad continue to develop? How will Mum cope?
5. Book review – Author Sally Murphy runs the website [www.aussiereviews.com](http://www.aussiereviews.com). Read some examples of her work and write your own review of *Looking Up*. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the book? To whom will you recommend it and why?

## Earth and space sciences

1. Astronomical advertising – Grandad tells Pete he was an astronomer before he retired. Research what this job involves and create a persuasive poster encouraging students to study astronomy. Do you think you would like to do this job when you grow up?
2. Space jargon – Pete wants to use a telescope to *see which were really stars, and which were planets, to make out the clusters of stars which to the naked eye masqueraded as one.* (p. 6)
  - a. What do the words 'cluster' and 'masquerade' mean?
  - b. What is the difference between a star and a planet?
  - c. Pete sees a rare comet on his birthday. What is a comet?
3. Curious constellations – What is a 'constellation'? Can you name some famous constellations? Where and why did they get their names? Can you spot any of them in the night sky? (Hint: remember most are only visible at certain times of the year.) What is 'light pollution' and how does it affect stargazing?
4. Telescopes – Who invented the telescope and how does it work?  
(Link: [discoverykids.com/articles/how-do-telescopes-work](http://discoverykids.com/articles/how-do-telescopes-work))
5. Who was Galileo Galilei? Research and write a short biography, including his major discoveries.
6. What are some of the different kinds of telescopes scientists use today? What is the Hubble Space Telescope used for? (Link: [kidsastronomy.com/telescopes.htm](http://kidsastronomy.com/telescopes.htm))
7. Build your own refractor telescope – What faraway objects are you able to see more clearly with it?  
(Link: [hometrainingtools.com/a/telescope-optical-science-project](http://hometrainingtools.com/a/telescope-optical-science-project))
8. Model of our solar system – Can you name the planets in our solar system and the order they extend out from our sun? Working in pairs, use this knowledge to create a diagram or scale model.
9. Planet fact sheets – Select one planet in our solar system and create a fact sheet using the following subheadings: name; position in solar system; discovery; rotation on its axis; size; gravity; orbit; surface conditions; atmosphere; temperature; distance from Earth; interesting facts; image of planet. Include a reference list.