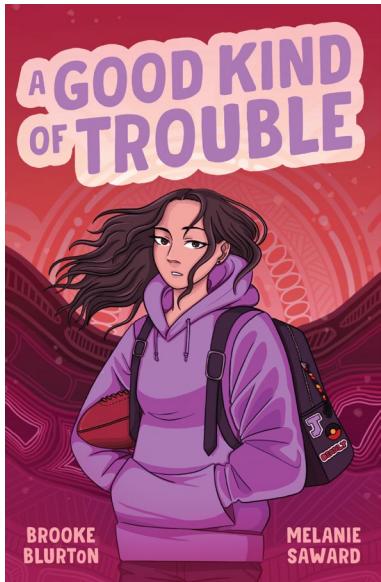


# Classroom Resources

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## A Good Kind of Trouble

Brooke Burton and Melanie Saward

### BOOK SUMMARY

A brilliantly warm-hearted new series from Brooke Burton and Melanie Saward, full of high school longing, friendship, footy matches and dreams to change the world!

It's funny how your life changes.

I used to worry about playing footy and whether my first kiss would be with a boy or a girl. I used to worry about having enough time after school to go for a run with my best friend, Loz, and whether she'd ever look at me the way she looks at my brother, Poss.

But a new girl came to school and there's something about her... I suddenly got the courage to stand up to our history teacher about teaching our true history with books written by Blakfullas. And somehow she did too!

At first we were on top of the world – and we might even have a chance to change it just a little bit. But now I'm banned from footy and I wonder... is it all going to be worth it?

### KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

- AC9E7LE01
- AC9E7LA01
- A\_TSICP2
- A\_TSIC3

### THEMES

- Families
- Ethics and Social Justice
- LGBTQIA+
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

**Recommended Reading Ages:** 12+

**Resources Created For:** Lower Secondary

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## Before Reading

1. Using the front cover only discuss the following:
  - a) What are we told about the main character?
  - b) Where might the novel be set?
  - c) Are there any clues given about the events or themes of the novel?
2. Read the blurb on the back of the book and make predictions and observations about what will happen in the novel based on this and the cover.

## During Reading

Write brief chapter summaries as you read, keep them short and include only key plot/character development points.

- Include important quotes that reflect these key points.

### Setting

The narrative takes place in a small (fictitious) regional town called Parkerton somewhere near the coast on [Noongar Country](#). This Country covers the south-west corner of Western Australia.

1. Use the link above to find out the area that this Country includes.
2. The [Map of Indigenous Australia](#) shows the many First Nations groups that are covered by this Country.
3. What do students think could be some of the challenges of living in a regional town like Parkerton?

### Language and literary techniques

1. The novel is written as a first-person narrative from the point of view of the protagonist, Jaime. This includes regular diary entries, which will form Jamie's English assessment piece in response to the set reading of *The Diary of Anne Frank*.
  - a) Have any students also read this book?
  - b) Who was Anne Frank?
  - c) What does she write about in her diary?
  - d) What connections might be made between Anne Frank's story and this narrative e.g. prejudice, persecution, isolation, struggle for self-identity
  - e) Does anyone keep a diary or journal now? In what way can journalling be helpful?
  - f) What, if any, insights do Jamie's diary entries give the reader that they don't get in the rest of the novel?
3. Students could start and maintain a diary/journal during the reading. This might reflect their thoughts on the narrative as well as any connections they identify with or observations they make.
  - a) They could do this as a plain written journal or create a junk journal like Stella's (there are many ideas online).
4. Even though Stella Jones sounds like a wadjela name, with her long brown curls, dark eyes and brown skin, she's definitely a Blakfulla. I hold my breath, knowing that she'll be sent back to sit with us. Mrs Camden is nice enough, but she's got a habit of grouping all us mob together. (p. 6)

How does the early quote inform the reader and foreshadow themes of the book?

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5. The narrative includes several words from the Noongar language. Use the context of each word to predict the meaning and then see if it can be confirmed from authoritative sources. This [vocabulary list](#) is a good place to start.

Word/phrase	Meaning based on context	Confirmed definition
Wadjela p. 6		
Nyorn p. 48		
Warra wirrin p. 61		
Winyarn p. 48		
Goona p. 69		
Kartwarra p. 198		

6. As well as words in traditional language, First Nations characters in *A Good Kind of Trouble* use words from Aboriginal English e.g. gammin, deadly, Blak and mob.

- Identify Aboriginal English vocabulary used throughout the novel.
- Write definitions for these words using contextual clues and/or students' understanding of them at use in their own lives and in the media.

## Characters

- For Jamie, Stella, Loz and other key characters have students create character profiles which include the following aspects. For each point include an example or quote from the novel:
  - Feelings
  - Actions
  - Significant events
  - How do they change over the course of the novel?
- Construct a character web to show the connections between key, secondary and peripheral characters.

## Themes

- Opportunities for young people, particularly those from a First Nations background, seem to be limited in Parkerton. Jamie sees a football scholarship as her best chance to access more opportunities than Parkerton can offer.
  - Why do students think opportunities for young First Nations people in Parkerton are so limited? They might like to go back to what they discovered about this region of Western Australia.
  - What do we learn about Jamie and her family that may also mean that her opportunities to access further education or experiences outside of town will be difficult?

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- c) *He doesn't talk about how my sister—cousin Treasure was the first out of any girl in Parko to get a footy scholarship to a city school, because all the teachers try not to talk about Treasure. I think they're worried she isn't a good one to look up to.* (pp. 10–11)
  - (i) Readers are given clues as to what happened after Treasure went to the city. How does her experience reflect the cultural gap between First Nations and white students, particularly those from rural or remote areas?
2. Throughout *A Good Kind of Trouble* there are many references to the racism and exclusion experienced by First Nations students in Parkerton. Much of this is not overtly hostile or violent, but rather is what might be referred to as bias, microaggressions or systemic racism.
  - a) Have students heard of these terms? What do they think they might mean?
  - b) Introduce students to the different kinds of racism that people can face. The [Racism. It Stops With Me.](#) website is an excellent resource.
  - c) Examples of the less obvious racism that Jamie and her peers have to deal with includes:
    - (i) The formal English language used in school, both spoken and written.
    - (ii) Convict dress-up day in primary school.
    - (iii) The History textbook used by the school.
3. Kinship is an important part of First Nations culture and sense of community. For many First Nations people, the group of people who form family, or kin, and the responsibilities that form part of those relationships can be very different from what many other Australians experience. This explanation and video from [Deadly Story](#) might be helpful for students.
  - a) How does Jamie's family provide an example of some First Nations kinship structures?

## After Reading

1. When Jamie and Stella are given their social justice project, it is essentially only focused on the disparity and inequality within the school and the curriculum in relation to the Aboriginal students. Then as they start to think more deeply about it, they realise that it is not only First Nations students being sidelined, excluded or stereotyped.
  - a) Are there any aspects of their school that students feel do not properly reflect the diversity of the student population today? Consider:
    - Names of buildings, houses/teams, classes
    - Textbooks
    - Cultural or religious celebrations
    - Books held in the library
    - Subjects students can study
  - b) How might these exclusions or stereotypes be addressed by the students and/or the school?
  - c) In small groups, ask students to put together a proposal to take to their SRC (or the student representative body that the school has) or school leadership to ask for change in one of the areas they have identified to help make the school more representative of its students.

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2. *Don't just tell them you want them teaching the proper history and our language, get them to think about the writers they're teaching you about, the musicians, the sportspeople.' 'What about the scientists, Granny?' Loz pipes up. Granny smiles her big grin at Loz. 'Oh yes, bub, our mob were the first astronomers and scientists. You're Nancy King's daughter, aren't you?' (p. 153)*  
For many years there was a perception that sport was the only arena of 'excellence' or 'success' for First Nations Australians, and many of those people are well known.
  - a) Do students know of any First Nations Australians who have excelled outside of the area of sport?
  - b) Do any students know about the contributions of First Nations Australians to astronomy or science?
  - c) Ask students to research the contribution of First Nations Australians to an area of academic research or knowledge.
3. Jamie is very comfortable with her bisexuality; it is only the fact that she appears to be the only queer student that makes her feel isolated at times. As Penny points out, it is unlikely she is the only one. In fact, it is implied that there are students who are not comfortable or willing to come out. Refer to the conversation between Jamie and Missy (pp. 168–69).
  - a) Why might Missy be hesitant to make her sexuality known to her peers?
  - b) What are the benefits of having the history of diverse groups of people known by everyone?
  - c) After her conversation with Missy, Jamie also considers the wider implications of what she has raised in other subjects like Health and PE. Can students think of other subjects that would benefit from a wider consideration of gender and sexuality?
4. Chapter 14 is titled 'Dream Big'.
  - a) Jamie dreams big about football, but also the other opportunities that playing in the AFLW might give her, like going to university. She and Aunty Pat also dream about how her HASS project might improve things for other children like Rudy and Little Pippa.
  - b) What do students dream big about, both for themselves and for others?
  - c) Are they doing anything to work towards this?
  - d) Use an activity such as vision boarding or a word cloud for students to create a visual representation of one of their big dreams.

## About the Authors

Brooke Blurton is a proud Noongar-Yamatji woman and broke records as the first Indigenous and bisexual Bachelorette for Network Ten's reality television franchise. Brooke is a passionate mental health advocate and champion of young people, especially First Nations and queer youth, and all people of colour. Brooke developed her passion for mental health advocacy as a youth worker by reflecting on her own challenging journey and educating young people about essential life skills, including Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid. Brooke is an RUOK Ambassador, supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart via the Uluru Youth Network, and is a champion for LGBTIQ groups. She lives in Melbourne.

Melanie Saward is a proud Bigambul and Wakka Wakka woman. She is a writer, editor and academic based in Tumur (Ipswich), Queensland. Her debut novel *Burn* was published in 2023 and her first romantic comedy novel, *Love Unleashed*, was published in 2024.

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