Teachers' Resources

Hijabi Girl

Melek had a hard time when she started at this school, partly because of wearing the hijab.

But she was also loudly impulsive, impatient and loved books. Not very 'Angelic', despite the meaning of her name in Turkish.

Then Melek wears her footy colours hijab, designed by her fashionista mother. Other times she wears her hijab in school colours.

Who wrote and illustrated this book?

- Co-writers; Hazel Edwards **www.hazeledwards.com** best known for '*There's a Hippopotamus on our Roof Eating Cake*' and 'Misfit'.
- Ozge Alkan is a YA/children's librarian.
- Illustrator: Serena Geddes **www.serenageddes.com.au** is best known for illustrating the '*Lulu Bell*'series and worked for Walt Disney Australia.

What is the story about?

The "HIjabi Girl' story is about 8 year old Melek who is at school with kids from many cultures. Unable to find a book character in a hijab for the Book Parade, Melek writes her own. New girl Tien is a cartoonist and draws 'everything' that happens at school.

Their classroom has Fab Science projects, a Rainbow Reading Chair and a Corridor of Cartoons. Plus Zac's Reading Rat. And Lily who likes the 'olden days' like vintage clothes and history.
Melek solves all problems, even rescuing soccer-mad Zac in the pool. And luckily her fashionista mother designs club colour- coded hijabs for footy fans.

Social Media.

Recent media about Islamic issues stress FEAR of the unknown.
Facts help reduce fear.
So do stories.
A book enables you to live in another world for the length of that story and beyond.And maybe, afterwards you know more about others' lives and can understand their viewpoints better.

Theme: Coping successfully with being different.

- These were ideas we wanted to include, especially the comments made about girls who wear hijabs...'Are you bald? Why are you wearing a towel on your head? Have you got cancer?'
- Melek has a Hijabi Barbi.
- Zac, the soccer-mad, owner of Rattus Rattus, the pet rat, bullies Melek
- Melek proves she can lifesave, wearing her hijab (burkini) swimming gear, and rescues Zac who claims he was just pretending to drown.
- Zac is not keen on reading, but Miss, the teacher, allows Rattus Rattus to stay as long as Zac reads to him. Others may have a reading dog, their class has a reading rat.

Why the book was written?

Book Parades are popular events in schools. Students dress up as characters from favourite books. A student in a hijab wanted to find a book for her age group, with a character wearing a hijab. Ozge, the librarian couldn't find one. So Hazel accepted the challenge to co-write a fun, junior chapter book.

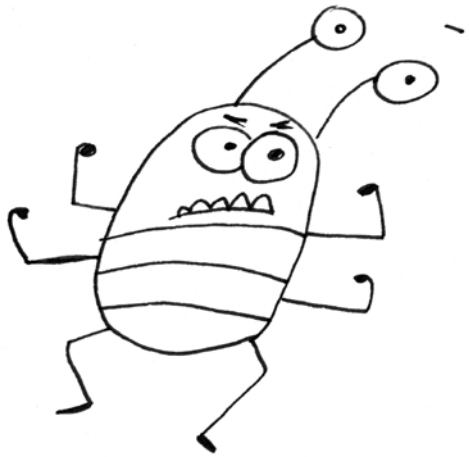
Hijabi Girl

Ideas to discuss.

1. If someone wears special clothes or eats certain food, is it ok to ask why?
- What is halal food?
- What is kosher food?
- What is a hijab?
2. Where are your parents and grandparents and great grandparents from? What can you tell us about their culture?
- The types of food eaten? The clothes worn? And what their homes and towns were like?
- Is there something you found funny or different from the way you live now?
- What games did they play? What was school like for them?'
3. Is your name hard to say? Have you been given a nickname?
4. What's the difference between a compliment and an insult?
5. Has anyone ever been mean to you? What is the worst thing they have said, and what did you do?
6. In what ways can you show respect for others' customs?
7. Some libraries have Reading Pets. In what ways might an animal help you read better?
8. Living Book Parades. How can you become the book? Dress ups? Another way?
9. If you were asked to design your perfect classroom, what would you include?
10. You are starting a sports team. What will you need? List 5 things.

Characters.

- Who is your favourite character from the book? Why?
- Melek is always being asked why she wears a hijab in school colours. If you were Melek, what would you say?
- You are Zac. Your Reading Rat is allowed to stay in the classroom as long as you read to it. Which 3 books will you share with your pet rat?
- Imagine you are Tien who is good at drawing.
- Draw a 'selfie' of yourself and Tien.
- You are a designer like Melek's mother. Draw or make hijabs in footy club colours or a pattern design.
- Lily is the dress-up guru. She loves history and finding out about clothes worn in the past. What will she wear next Book Parade? Why?
- Miss, the teacher, uses quirky labels for corners of the classroom. Make a map of the classroom.



Activities.

1. Put on your own Book Parade of characters.
2. In groups of 3-4 , choose a favourite scene. Act it out. Record on your favourite device.
3. Design outfits for the Hijabi Barbi doll which are culturally appropriate.
4. Corridor of class characters. Design your own.
5. You have landed in outer space. They have different customs there. List 5 hints for space travellers visiting this place.
6. Lucky Dip: Place the names of things to find out about (which may be mentioned in 'Hijabi Girl') in a lucky dip bag. Choose one.
- Mosque
- Hijab. (When do you say hijab and when do you say hijabi?)
- Halal food
- Ramadan
7. The BEST teacher. Design a job description for the BEST teacher you could ever have.
8. Swimming Race. Experiment with different kinds of swimming gear.

Hijabi Girl

Challenge.

1. Design a Rainbow Reading Chair for your place.
2. List your own A to Z of 26 of something. Adjectives to describe others?
3. Design a cover.
- Easy to read title.
- Contrasting colours.
- A clue to the type of story inside e.g. funny.
4. Miss suggested windscreen wipers for glasses as their next Science Project. Design yours.
5. Find out about the story of 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin'.
6. Write a follow up story AFTER the end of the book. How will Melek organize the girls' Aussie Rules match?

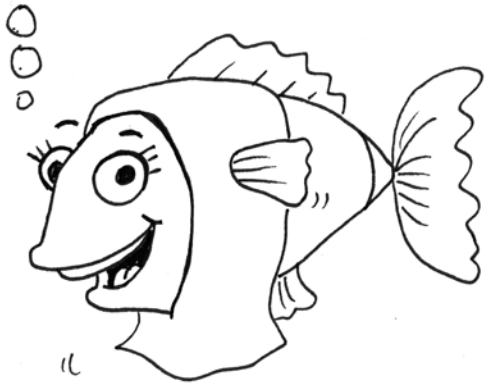
Curriculum Relevance:

- Diversity
- Identity
- Anti-Bullying
- Creative problem solving

Recommended for 8 year olds plus, beginning readers or shared as a class serial.

Key Learning Areas.

English. Art, Creative & critical thinking. Literacy. Cultural understanding. History unit; Celebrations. Australia's engagement with Asia (Via Tien, and her Vietnamese family).



Why Study This Book?

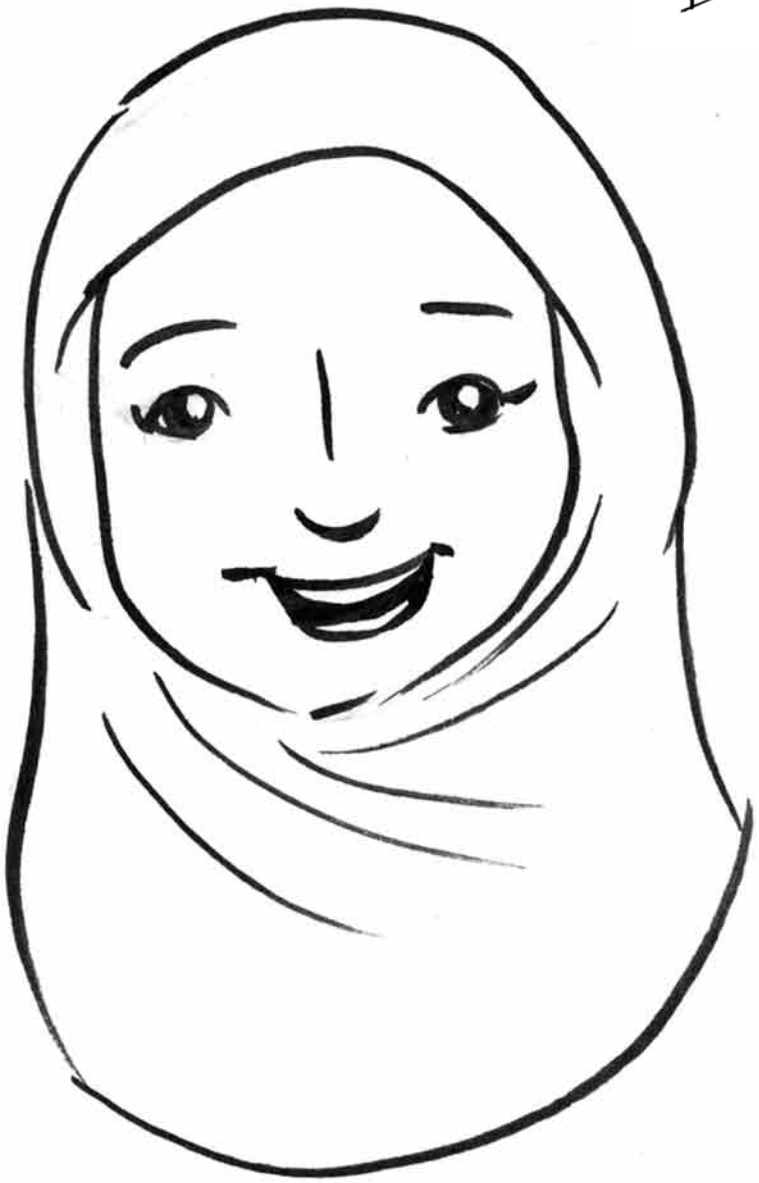
- Diversity in food, clothing and cultures
- Anti-bullying strategies
- Problem-solving
- Helping others
- Positive depictions of families, friendship & other cultures.

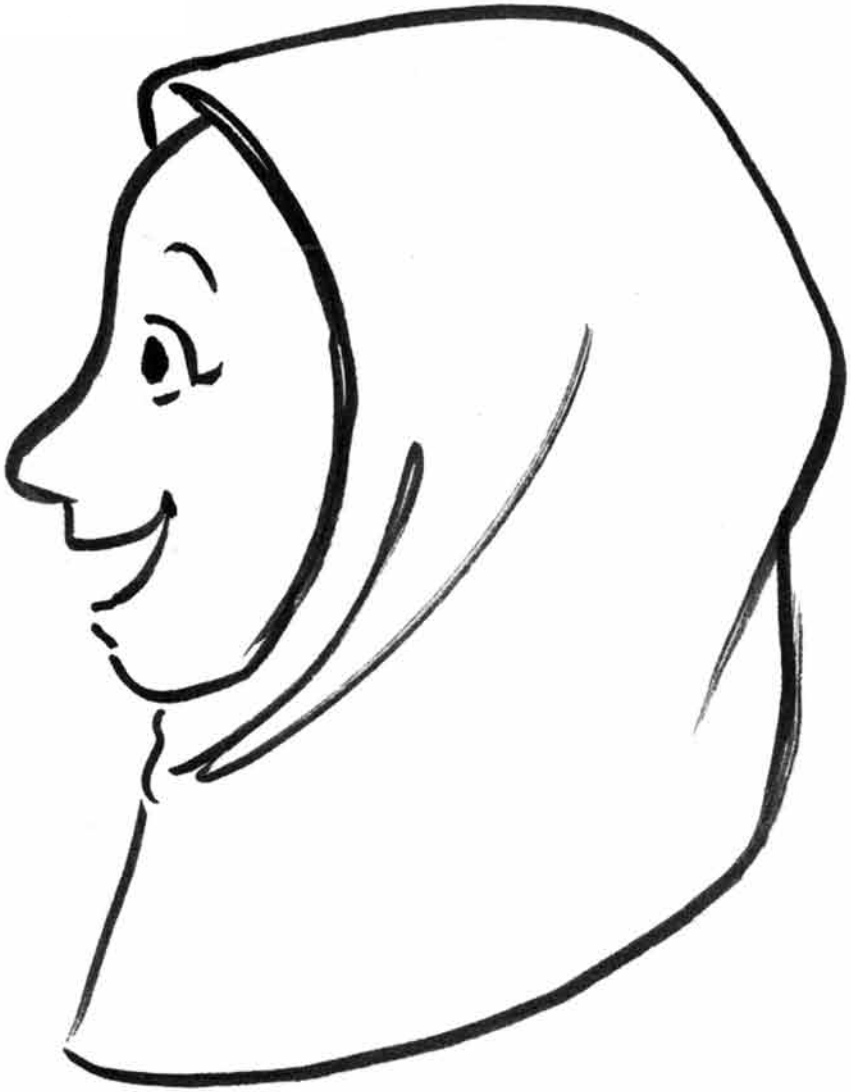
HOW/Co-Writing.

- We listened to each others' ideas.
- The title was changed several times.
- **Hazel Edwards** Since both authors lived an hour's drive apart, they plotted the story on Skype, starting with the character outlines.
- Food, clothing and customs were checked by Ozge. In the artwork, Melek had to have a longer skirt and sleeves for modesty.
- **Ozge Alkan** Co-author; is a YA children's librarian who wears a hijab and is a keen 'Aussie Rules' fan who wears a red & black hijab in her team's colours.
- **Serena Geddes** was asked to illustrate 'Hijabi Girl' by Hazel 12 months earlier. Serena grew up in Melbourne with a diverse and colourfully cultured group of children from Greece, Italy, Hungary, Japan and Poland. Melek and her friends reminded her of her childhood growing up, and she was happy to bring them all to life in this book.
- REAL Aussie Rules Hijabi Girls with footy fan colour coded hijabs designed by fashionista mother. (This happened AFTER we wrote the story.)

Create your own footy colour hijab or design a pattern or print.

Hijabi Girl





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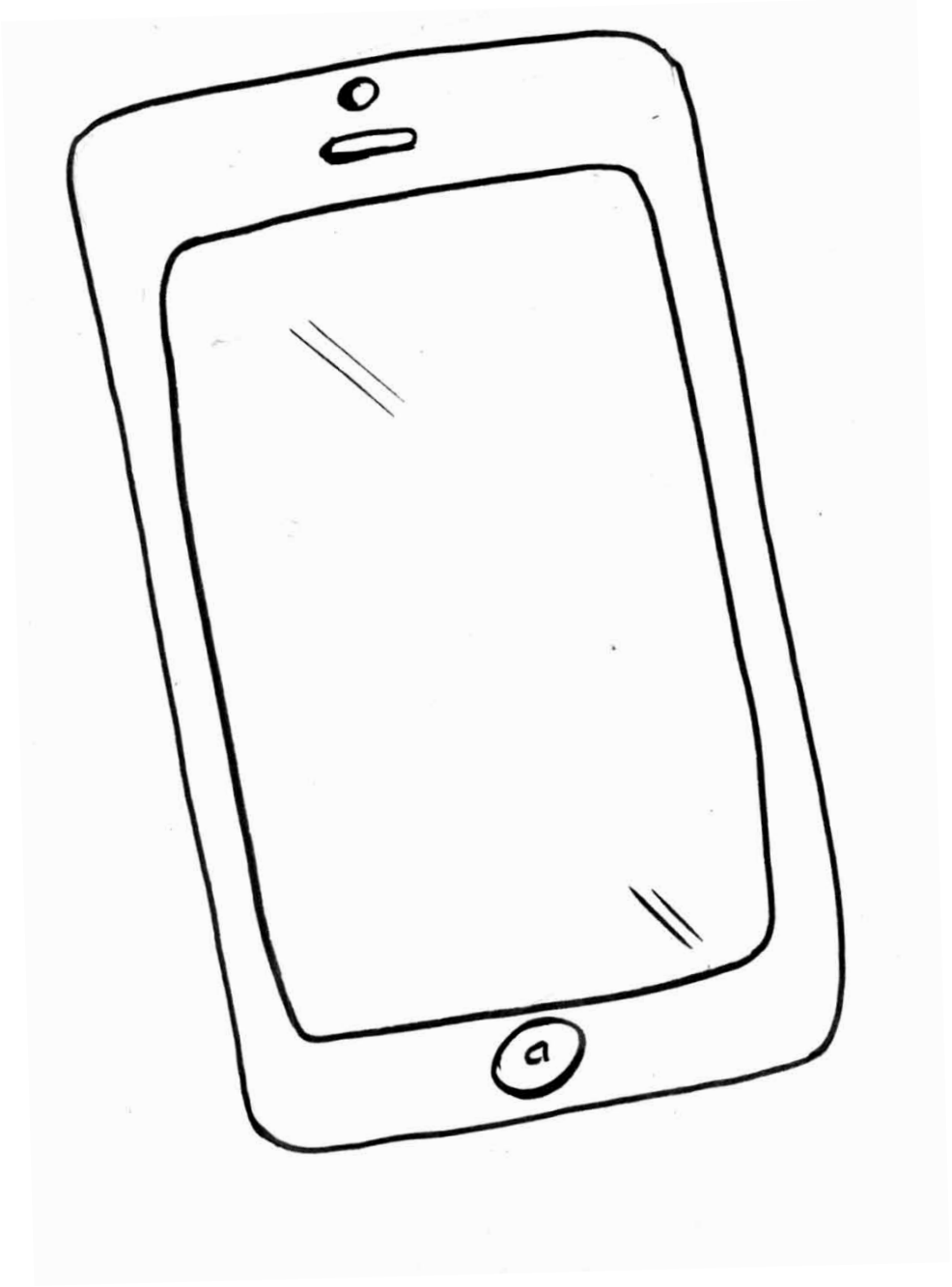
Selfie!

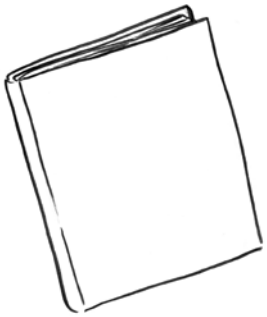


Hijabi Girl

Title of Book:

Who is the Author and Illustrator?

Why do you love this book?



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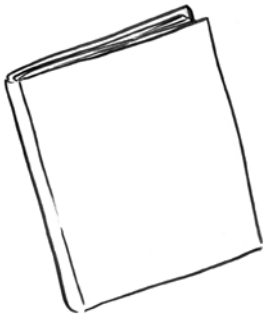

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http://www.hazeledwards.com/page/hijabi_girl.html

Classroom Map!

http://www.hazeledwards.com/page/hijabi_girl.html

Hijabi Girl

The Writing Process.

- Idea
- Plot outline
- Proposal to publisher via synopsis. Many rejections.
- Decide book format e.g. junior chapter book
- Develop characters
- Drafts (10)
- Research - Visited Immigration Museum & Islamic Museum. Talked with students.
- Re-writing
- Art brief especially cover. Adding Serena's suggestions.
- Editing
- BCB (Back cover blurb)
- Proof reading.
- Publication

ART BRIEF & Role of Illustrator.

An Art Brief is given to the illustrator, this is an overview of the story and characters. The manuscript for 'Hijabi Girl' is approximately 5,000 words. Once the illustrator reads it, she roughs up some ideas that will reflect parts of the story through visual imagery.

Character Descriptions - Hijabi Girl Melek: Vivacious girl of 8-ish wearing hijab with Hijabi Barbi doll and is an Aussie Rules fan.
Vietnamese Tien with many pencils and art supplies. Her cartoons included.
Miss (teacher) strict but fashionable glasses & red shoes.
Zac, soccer-keen with pet Rattus Rattus.
Lily : Pink Princess-type clothes. Keen on history and what clothes were worn in the 'olden days'. Mainstream primary school. Lots of well known 'bookish' detail in book parade characters

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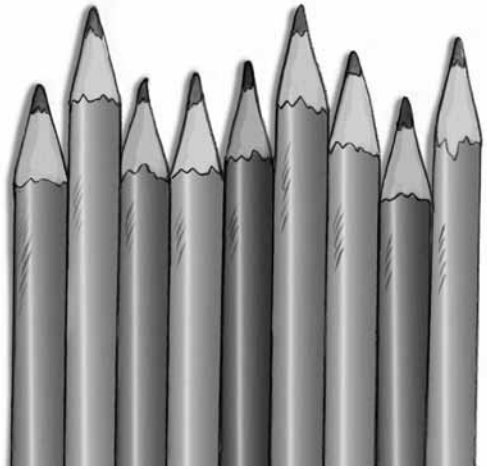

COVER BRIEF: Dramatic collage of fun primary school life including Melek in school- coloured hijab, football (soccer & girls' Aussie Rules), swimming, Hijabi Barbi doll, Rattus Rattus the Reading Rat. And boy character Zac. Important to have girl and boy characters on cover.

Serena's Approach - She wanted to ensure the cover was fun and colourful using Tiens illustrations to capture the playfulness of the book. She researched books that were for readers of the same age and researched clothing that would help create the look of Melek, Tien, Zac, Lily and of course Rattus Rattus. Serena hand drew the characters, scanned them into Photoshop and painted the cover digitally. She supplied 3 coloured covers options before the final cover was chosen. Which do you prefer and why?

Hijabi Girl

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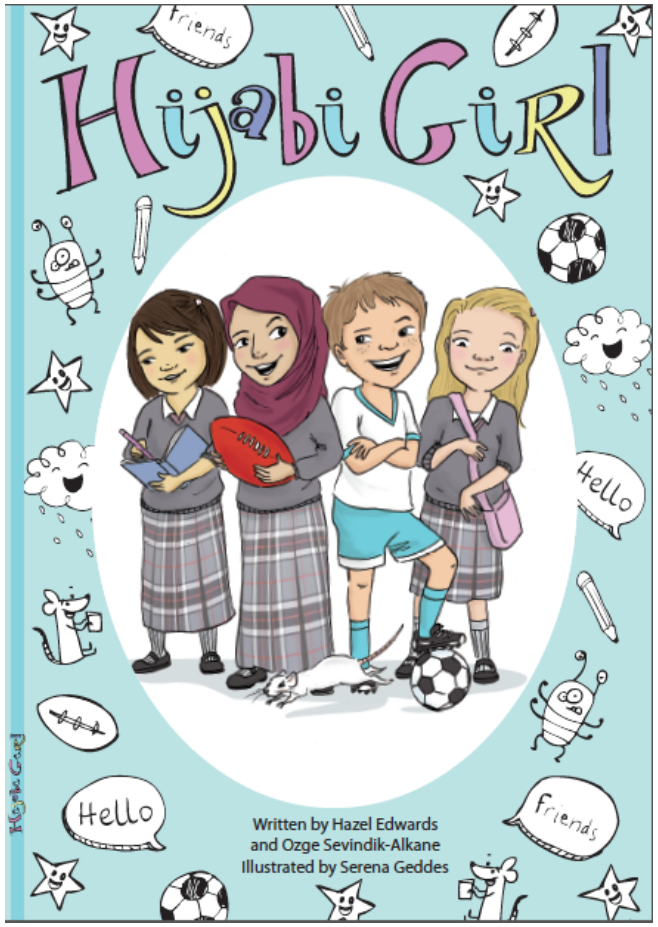
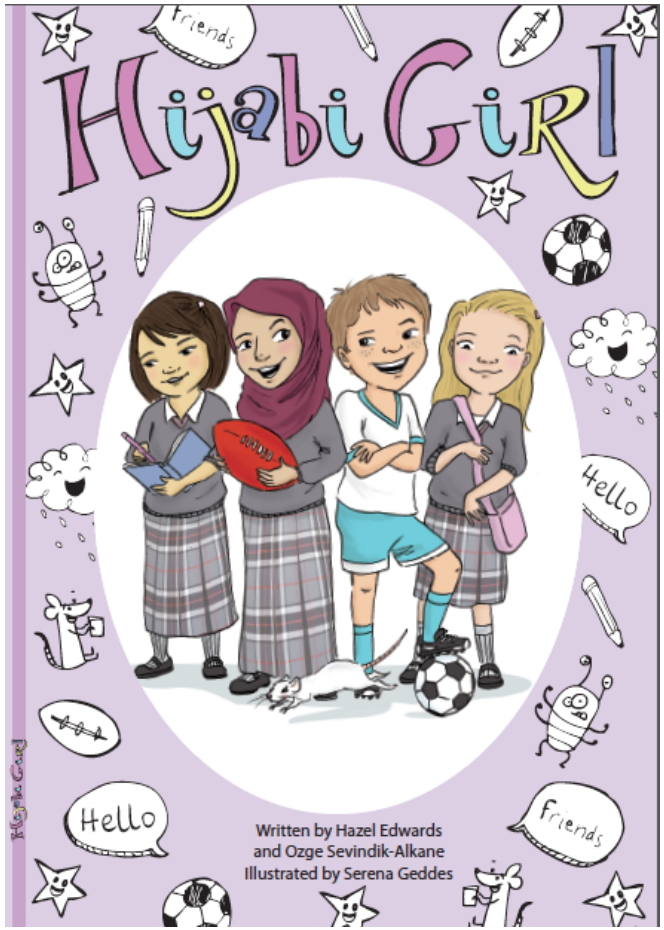
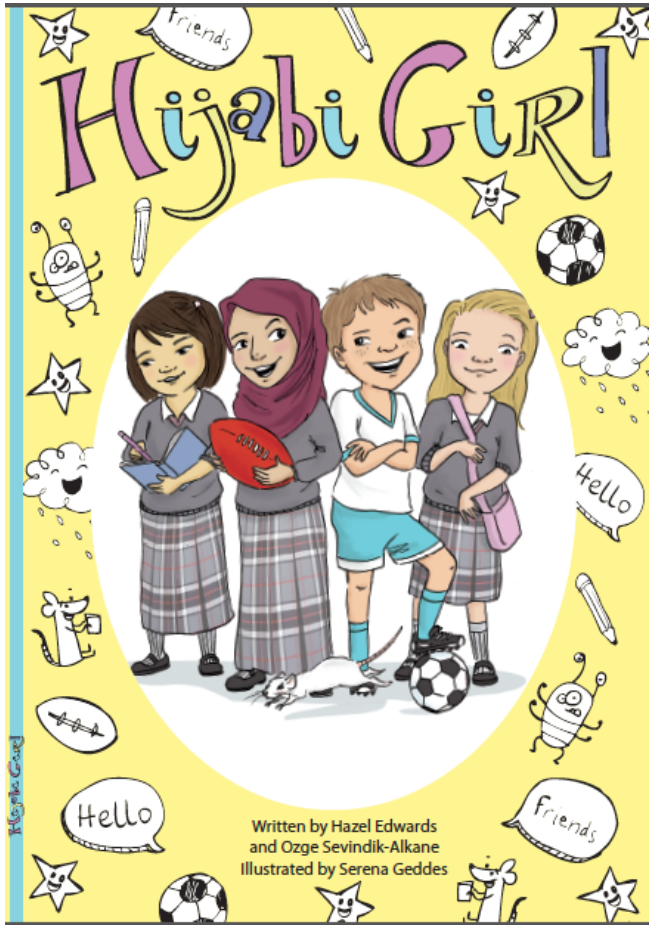
Cover options







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Hijabi Girl

Explaining Culturally Important Words.

What These Words Mean.

- ***Hijab***

Hijab is a head scarf Muslim women choose to wear. Loose fitting clothes cover most of their body except face, hands and feet. A hijab is typically worn on reaching puberty but children like Melek can decide they want to wear a hijab earlier. Like any religion there are differences in opinion about the religious rulings and some Muslims do not believe wearing a hijab is necessary.

A “hijabi” is a colloquial term for someone who wears a hijab.

There are challenges to being fully covered and wanting to play sport or do activities. Fashion designers have made hijabi friendly outfits for lifeguards, footy players, and Olympic runners.

There is a children’s doll that wears a hijab called Fulla doll. It comes with hijabi accessories.

- ***Halal***

Halal simply means permissible. It is most often used in referring to food. For a food to be considered halal, it must not contain any pork or alcohol products.

- ***Muslim***

Muslims are the people that practise the religion of Islam. There are 1.6 billion Muslims in the world. About half a million Muslims live in Australia. Melek’s family is from Turkey which has the eighth highest Muslim population in the world.

- ***Pide***

Pide is a type of Turkish bread. Fun fact “the country with the largest per capita consumption of bread is Turkey with 199.6 kg (440 lb) per person. Turkish people eat more than three times their own body weight in bread annually.” Other Turkish food commonly eaten in Australia are kebabs. The shish in shishkebab comes from the Turkish word şiş which means a knitting needle.

Hijabi Girl

Title:"Hijabi Girl"

ISBN: 978-0-9943583-5-6

eISBN 978-0-9943583-6-3

Authors: Hazel Edwards & Ozge Alkan

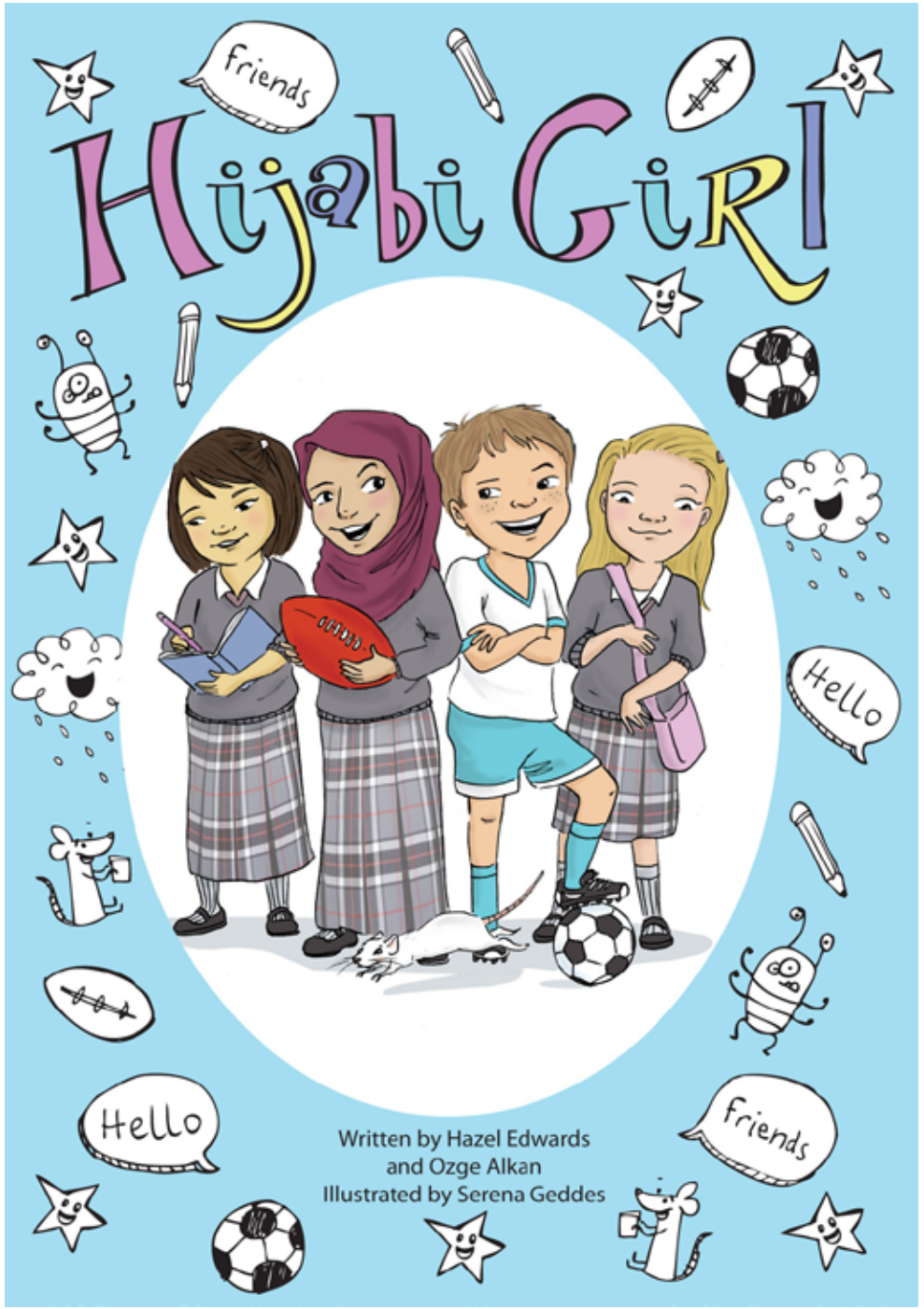
Illustrator: Serena Geddes

Publisher: Bookpod

Available in print & e format.

Feb 2016 release.

Intended readership: 8 plus

Format: Junior chapter book for newly independent readers.

Teachers' Notes & Activities