

Annie and Mitch *By Fleur Beale*

Introduction

When Annie meets Mitch, her life begins to revolve around him – and her friendship with Faith is challenged. But after some months, Annie’s feelings for Mitch weaken and she finds that she needs a friend again. This engaging story explores the social consequences of a first relationship.

Reason for reading

You could use this book with your students:

- to explore ideas about relationships and friendships
- to examine the character development in the story.

Setting the scene

Draw on your students’ prior knowledge. If necessary, introduce concepts or vocabulary to help them access the story. Also communicate the reason for reading.

- Have the students share their ideas about what love is. “What types of love are there? What do you think makes a good relationship?” Alternatively, you could elicit prior knowledge through a “think, pair, share” activity. Write key vocabulary on the board.
- Set up a postbox in which students can anonymously share their experiences of “first love” or voice concerns or questions about relationships they might have. Discuss these experiences or questions as a class or in small groups, being careful to retain the anonymity of the students.
- Introduce any vocabulary that your students may need to access the text. Refer to Worksheet 3 for a list of potentially unfamiliar words. You could carry out this activity before or after reading. (See “Taking a closer look – Exploring language”.)
- Explain that this story is about a girl’s first love and the effect the relationship has on her life, including friendships.

Getting stuck in

Choose the prompts that you feel your students need. Remind them to note any unfamiliar words and check for clues to the meanings in the text or images.

- End page 2 – “Why doesn’t Annie want to go to the party with Faith? Have you ever felt like this?”
- End page 5 – “What do you think might happen now? What would you do in Annie’s position?”
- End page 6 – “Were you right? How would you describe Annie? What about Mitch? What makes you say that?”
- End page 9 – “How is Annie feeling here?” You could talk about her indecision on page 8 and whether the students have ever felt the same sort of indecision (either about relationships or in other situations).

- End page 14 – “How does Faith respond to Annie’s new relationship? What do you think of the way she behaves? What about the way Annie behaves? How would you describe the two of them at this point? What do you think might happen now?”
- End page 16 – Encourage the students to make connections with Annie’s experience on these pages, but be aware of students who may not have experienced a close relationship of this nature.
- End page 19 – “What do you think Mitch is planning?”
- End page 20 – “Were you right?”
- End page 22 – “What do you think of Annie’s and Faith’s behaviour here? Why? Do you agree with what Annie’s mum says about not neglecting Faith? Why or why not?”
- End page 23 – “How has the relationship affected Annie’s life? What do you think will happen now?”
- End page 24 – “Were you right? What do you think of Mitch’s solution? Why?”
- End page 26 – “What has changed for Faith and Annie and why? How do you think things will go from now on?”
- End page 32 – “What has happened here? Is this what you expected?”

Taking a closer look

Choose suggestions that suit your students and reason for reading.

Exploring ideas and opinions

- “Did you enjoy this story? What did you like or dislike about it and why? How do you feel about the unresolved ending?”
- Have the students complete Worksheet 1 (the three-level thinking guide) and discuss their responses in pairs, in small groups, or as a class.
- Discuss how Annie’s relationship with Mitch affected her life in both positive and negative ways. Look at what Annie says at the top of page 18: “I stop being just Annie. Now I’m Annie and Mitch.” You could also look at “Mitch is my life” at the bottom of page 24. “What do you think of what Annie says here? Is it a good thing for a relationship to take over your life? Why or why not?” Encourage the students to make connections with their own experiences.
- Focus specifically on Annie’s relationship with Faith and how it changes in the story. “What do you think of the way Faith reconnects with Annie over summer and how she is there for her at the end? Do you think Annie learns something from her experience? What about Faith? If so, what do they learn? Do you think Annie will behave differently in her next relationship? Why or why not?”
- Also look at “Mum doesn’t understand” on page 21 and “Faith doesn’t understand either” on page 22. “Do you agree with what Annie says here? Why or why not?”

Exploring character

- “How would you describe the characters in the story?” Write the students’ suggestions on the board, perhaps in the form of a comparison chart. Focus in particular on the characters of Annie and Faith and how they develop in the story. “What are some ways the author builds these characters?” Draw the students’ attention to what the characters say and do, including the type of language they use. Also discuss the author’s use of a first-person

narrator. “Does this make you feel more sympathetic to Annie, or can you also see Faith’s point of view? Why is that?” You could also explore how the illustrations convey character and feelings.

Exploring structure

- Give the students the statements from Worksheet 2 and have them sequence them in the correct order.

Exploring language

- Cut out the words and definitions from Worksheet 3 and muddle them up. Hand them out to individual students and have them find their correct “partner”.
- As an alternative to the above, divide the class into two groups and have them complete Worksheet 4a and Worksheet 4b respectively. This activity involves the students in creating the definitions, which they then use to test the other group.
- Have your students complete Worksheet 5 – the cloze activity.

Moving beyond the text

Choose activities that suit your students and reason for reading.

Reading

- Read the GO for IT magazine designed to complement this book – Fab!

Writing

- In pairs, take turns being Annie and Mitch and write the conversation you might have with each other when you next meet. Do you break up? Do you work things out?
- Write a review of the story Annie and Mitch. Remember that a review should give people insight into the story (without telling them the plot) and help them decide whether they want to read it or not. Outline your likes and dislikes and reasons for them, your opinion of the characters and how convincing they are, your impressions of the dialogue, ending, and so on.

Debating

- Hold a class debate on a topic related to the story. Examples could include “Friendships are more important than relationships” or “Being in love means being together forever”.

WORKSHEET 1

Annie and Mitch – Three-level thinking guide

- Level 1 – Reading on the lines (interpreting what the text says on a literal level)
- Level 2 – Reading between the lines (inferring, or interpreting what the text might mean)
- Level 3 – Reading beyond the lines (evaluating ideas by relating them to other knowledge)

Students write “agree” or “disagree” beside each statement and then discuss their responses in pairs, in groups, or as a class. The value of this activity lies in the discussion it generates as students justify their views. The activity is not intended as a test for comprehension.

LEVEL 1	Agree/disagree
Annie is really keen to go to the party.	
Annie is jealous of Faith and Roger.	
Annie dances with other girls.	
Mitch has lived near Annie for a month.	
Mitch is keen to dance with Annie.	
Mitch walks Annie home.	
Annie asks Mitch for his phone number.	
Annie and Mitch talk about everything on the phone the next day.	
Faith wants to know everything about Mitch.	
Annie and Mitch go to the same school.	
Faith is jealous of Annie.	
Mitch buys Annie a ring for her birthday.	
Annie’s parents stop Annie from seeing Mitch.	

Sheet 1 of 2

LEVEL 2	Agree/disagree
Annie does not like Roger.	
All the girls at the party fancy Mitch.	
Mitch is really shy.	
Annie doesn't want to be friends with Faith any more.	
Annie and Mitch are in love.	
Their first kiss is the best kiss.	
Annie's mum is worried about Annie.	
Annie is worried about Faith.	
Faith does not get good marks for her assignments.	
Annie is upset when Mitch dumps her.	
LEVEL 3	Agree/disagree
Faith is a better friend to Annie than Mitch is.	
Girlfriends are more important than boyfriends.	
It is not a good idea to kiss on the first date.	
Boys should make the first move in a relationship.	
Being in love means being together forever.	
It's impossible to fully understand other people's relationships.	

Sheet 2 of 2

Worksheet designed by Barbara Freeman, Wellington, New Zealand, 2007

WORKSHEET 2

Annie and Mitch – Restore the order

Photocopy this worksheet. Cut out the statements and mix them up, keeping an intact master copy for yourself. Give each student a statement. Ask them to arrange themselves so that their statements are in the order of the story. To check that the order is correct, they can read their statements aloud in turn.

I go to the party because Faith is my friend.

I see a boy who looks like he doesn't want to be at the party. He's cute.

I ask Mitch if he's new around town.

Mitch and I dance together the whole night.

I write my phone number on Mitch's hand.

We talk on the phone about everything.

Mitch and I go rollerblading.

Faith is mad at me and won't talk to me.

Mitch and I eat lunch together at school.

Mitch walks me home from school and meets my mum and dad.

Mitch kisses me on the way to the movies.

Mitch buys me a silver ring with a green stone.

I go to the party because Faith is my friend.

Faith and I don't hang out together any more.

We have exams at school, and my grades are slipping.

Mitch and I study together.

All summer, Mitch and I hang out with Faith and Jase.

Mitch and I don't text each other any more.

I need to talk to Faith about how I feel.

Sheet 2 of 2

Note that some words above may have other meanings in other contexts.

Worksheet designed by Barbara Freeman, Wellington, New Zealand, 2007

WORKSHEET 3

Annie and Mitch – Match the meaning

Cut out the words and definitions, muddle them up, and have your students match them.

<i>Word</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Live it up!	Have some fun!
cute	good-looking, attractive
boring	uninteresting
butt	bum, backside, bottom
blades	rollerblades
polite	well-mannered, respectful
proud	pleased, satisfied
floating	feeling very happy
anniversary	a celebration marking the date of an important event
choked up	feeling really emotional
hang out	to spend time together
neglect	to ignore, to leave alone

Word	Definition
dumped	broke up with, stopped going out with
slipping	getting worse, going down
nana	grandmother
adjust	to get used to something
tarnish	to take the shine off

Sheet 2 of 2

Note that some words above may have other meanings in other contexts.

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WORKSHEET 4a – GROUP A

Annie and Mitch – Vocab swap

- Divide the class into two groups and give half Worksheet 4a and half Worksheet 4b.
- In the second column, each group writes definitions for the words in the first column. Where a word has more than one meaning, they may need to check the page listed.
- They then fold the first column out of sight and swap sheets with the other group.
- That group guesses the original word and writes it in the third column. They can go to the page listed if they need help. For an extra challenge, they can guess without referring to the page.
- You could make this a fun competition and give points for every correct word.

Word	Definition (Group A)	Word (Group B)
Live it up! (p. 2)	(p. 2)	
boring (p. 10)	(p. 10)	
blades (p. 11)	(p. 11)	
proud (p. 15)	(p. 15)	
anniversary (p. 19)	(p. 19)	
hang out (p. 21)	(p. 21)	
dumped (p. 22)	(p.22)	
nana (p. 27)	(p. 27)	
tarnish (p. 28)	(p. 28)	

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WORKSHEET 4b – GROUP B

Annie and Mitch – Vocab swap

- Divide the class into two groups and give half Worksheet 4a and half Worksheet 4b.
- In the second column, each group writes definitions for the words in the first column. Where a word has more than one meaning, they may need to check the page listed.
- They then fold the first column out of sight and swap sheets with the other group.
- That group guesses the original word and writes it in the third column. They can go to the page listed if they need help. For an extra challenge, they can guess without referring to the page.
- You could make this a fun competition and give points for every correct word.

Word	Definition (Group B)	Word (Group B)
cute (p. 5)	(p. 5)	
butt (p. 10)	(p. 10)	
polite (p. 15)	(p. 15)	
floating (p. 16)	(p. 16)	
choked up (p. 20)	(p.20)	
neglect (p. 21)	(p. 21)	
slipping (p. 23)	(p. 23)	
adjust (p. 27)	(p. 27)	

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WORKSHEET 5

Annie and Mitch – Fill in the gaps

Add your own words in the spaces to make this passage come alive!

The school year to an end. Summer arrives. The are hot and blue.

Faith me. "Come to the pool. Bring Mitch."

I'm happy she's to me again. I call Mitch and go to the pool.

Faith is with a new boyfriend. "Meet Jase," she

We lie our towels in the The boys get They jump up and

leap the pool. They get and drip all over us. We at them.

They us up and throw us in the

I get home that night and I'm happy. It's good to out with Faith

All the four of us hang out We a lot. We swim. We go to

the movies. We fun.

Try writing your own ending to the story as if you were Annie.