

AVA SPARK

Hello, I'm Here!



ALEX
FIELD

Illustrated by
JOANNA
BARTEL

TEACHING NOTES

SYNOPSIS

My name is Ava Spark, and I probably speak in a different way to you. Come and join me and my friends as we welcome the super awesome new girl, Liv, to our school. Are you ready? Because I am and I'm here!

#sparkaconversation

'A real feel-good story that beautifully captures the power of friendship.'
Danielle Brown, 2 x Paralympic gold medallist, speaker, inclusion champion, award-winning author

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alex Field has written twelve books. *I'm a Tiger* was shortlisted for the Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year Award. Alex's son used a communication aid much like the one Ava uses to speak. Alex and her son had lots of conversations about really important things like cricket and food, especially cake. Alex has spent half her life living in Sydney, Australia and the other half living in London, England. She wishes there was a plane that could take her from London to Sydney in two hours instead of 21 hours! Alex can be contacted on Instagram: alexfield_author

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Joanna Bartel is an Adelaide Hills-based illustrator with a background in graphic design, copywriting and secondary school Art/Design and English teaching. She draws much of her inspiration from family life with three young kids, experiences in teaching, and childhood memories with three brothers and lots of cousins. Joanna has a particular love for character design and seeks to celebrate both diversity and the minutiae of everyday life in her work.

EDUCATIONAL APPLICABILITY

Ava Spark: Hello, I'm Here! is the first book in a brand new uplifting series featuring school, friendships and sparky conversations for readers aged 7+. The story follows life through the eyes of 10-year-old Ava Spark as she navigates the trials and tribulations of home, friendships and school. Ava is sparky, just like her name, strongminded, and wants to join in with her friends despite her disability. Using her eye gaze machine lets her do this. Key themes are diversity, inclusion, friendship, family ties and determination.

KEY THEMES

1. Communication
2. Friendship
3. Countries
4. Sports Day



Written by
Alex Field

Illustrated by
Joanna Bartel

Published by
New Frontier Publishing

Please share your work with us on Instagram @newfrontierpublishinguk

I. LET'S COMMUNICATE

One of the main themes of the book is COMMUNICATION. What do you think COMMUNICATION means? Being able to communicate is one of the most important skills we need for life. Almost everything we do involves communication – everyday tasks such as learning at school, asking for food and drink, sorting out problems, making friends and having fun.

What do we know about the main character of the book – Ava? Ava talks in a different way to most of you in that she uses a communication aid called an eye gaze machine. She calls this – Swiftie!

Ava's eye gaze machine

Communication aids, also known as Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) aids, can help children like Ava communicate in a variety of ways:

Electronic devices: These can be specially designed or a standard computer, tablet, or smartphone with specialist software or apps. Some electronic aids use a computer-generated voice to play messages aloud, while others convert typed text into speech. This is the type of device that Ava has.

Low-tech methods: These include simple communication books with pictures or symbols.

Switches and other control devices: These can be operated by hand, foot, body, head, breath, or eye.

Mounting systems: These can be used to position switches and control devices.

Positioning and support systems: These can help people access the communication aid, especially if they use a wheelchair.

The right communication aid for a person depends on their needs, abilities, and personal preferences. Some people may also combine communication aids with other forms of communication, such as gestures, facial expressions, pictures, and signing.



There are lots of other ways to communicate. Some are listed below:

- Using sign language, for example, British Sign Language (BSL)
- Braille
- Makaton – this uses symbols (pictures), signs (gestures) and speech
- Facial expressions

Choose one form of communication from the ones listed above and **find out** more about it.

OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

Hieroglyphics

Ava's twin sister, Flo, is doing a project on ancient Egypt. The ancient Egyptians communicated with each other using picture writing called hieroglyphics. There were no vowels in the ancient Egyptian alphabet, only 24 hieroglyphs, each standing for different sounds. They could be read from left to right, right to left or top to bottom! The problem was no one knew what they meant. It wasn't until 1799, when the French uncovered a large black slab of stone in Rosetta, Egypt, that a clue to the meanings were found. The Rosetta stone, as it is known, had ancient Greek writing on it and scholars who understood the ancient Greek writing guessed that the hieroglyphs meant the same as the Greek message.

Find out more about hieroglyphics.

Morse Code

Samual Morse invented a code in 1844, using electrical currents along a wire to make signals. Dots and dashes were made using an on-off switch. They stood for different letters and numbers, for example, one dot and one dash is the letter 'a'.

... --- ... This famous Morse code signal spells, 'S.O.S.' (Save our Souls) and is sent by ships in trouble.

Find out more about the Morse Code.

Smoke Signals

Native Americans used smoke to send messages to other tribes (because it was quicker than sending a person with the message). The people on look out could warn the tribe of approaching enemies by sending up a sudden cloud of smoke. Short, fast puffs of smoke meant the enemy was big and well-armed.

Find out more about smoke signals.

Animal Language

It's not just humans who communicate with each other. From dancing to whispering, animals communicate in all sorts of ways. **Find out** how the following animals communicate with each other.

- Whales
- Elephants
- Bees



2. FRIENDS FOREVER

Ava has lots of friends at school and she's excited (and a little nervous!) to be chosen to look after the new girl, Liv. At first, Ava finds it extra difficult to communicate with Liv. Liv is shy and comes from a different country. How does Ava (and her friends) make Liv feel welcome? If you were asked to be in charge of looking after a new person at school, how would you make them feel welcome?

You could:

- Ask them questions
- Include them in your games/conversations
- Have empathy
- Show kindness
- Raise their self-esteem

SPARK CONVERSATIONS

Even if you aren't looking after a new person in your class, why don't you speak to someone in your class (or even in your school) you wouldn't usually speak to? Or help a friend who is finding something difficult?



KINDNESS CARDS

If you can be anything – BE KIND! **Cut out** these kindness cards for yourself and your friends.



**Today, I will be helpful
to people who need me**

What I do matters

I'm here for you

I'm kind to myself

**Now is the perfect
time to start being
kind**

**I'm strong, confident
and kind**

I choose kindness

**I start the day with a
smile**

3. COOL COUNTRIES

New girl, Liv, is from Australia. What do you know about Australia? **Put together** a fact file about the country. You can include:

- a map
- the main cities
- geographical features
- the animals
- the vegetation
- the weather
- differences between England and Australia

If you've enjoyed creating this fact file, why not do one for England or even ancient Egypt!

FACT FILE

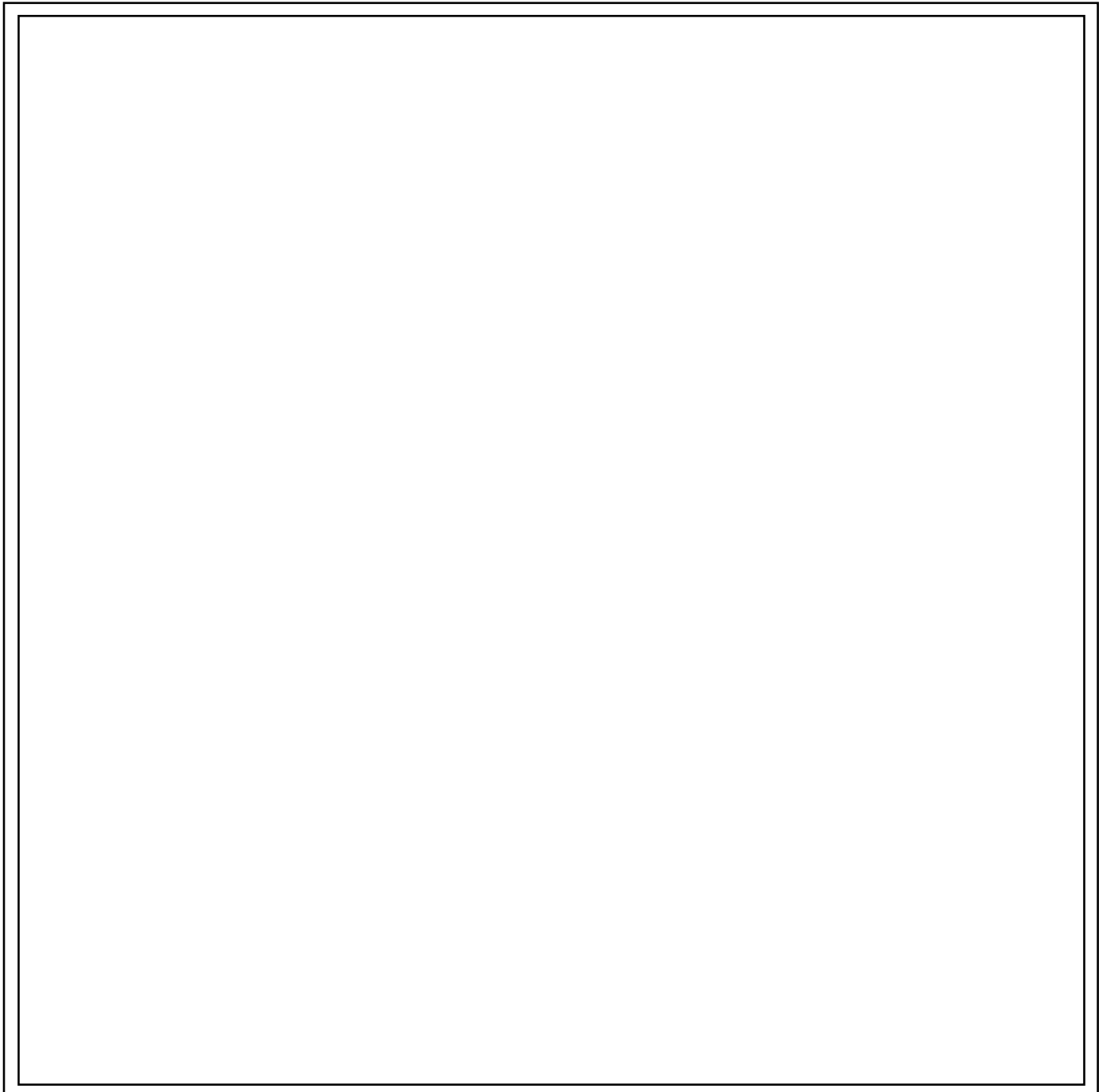
4. IT'S SPORTS DAY

We're a Team!

Ava and her friends decide to create their own teams and relay race for Sports Day. They spend a lot of time and effort deciding on mascots, outfits and team members. Have you ever had to organise an event or participated in an event at your school Sports Day? Imagine Sports Day is in a few weeks' time and hold a planning meeting with your friends. What team event will you enter? What is your mascot? Ready! Steady! Go!

Design a Poster

Design a poster to advertise all the events happening at Sports Day. Three-legged race? Egg and Spoon race? 100m sprint? Will there be refreshments? Where is it being held? Note to teachers: show students images of similar posters and note their features. Are they effective in drawing in the readers' attention?



FUN WORDSEARCH ACTIVITY

Can you find all the words in the *Ava Spark: Hello, I'm Here!* wordsearch?

Name:

Class:

Date:

word search

AVA SPARK, HELLO, I'M HERE!

H H T O D R A C L S Y R C
G N N M I N H K C A J O H
N T F N O S W A D R M A Y
D E R E R A H S R M V U E
U A I L A R T S U A E P M
G M E O U R E N G L A N D
R S N E O E I T F I W S R
P T D P S C H O O L T O O
M R S T A Y L O R M O L H
E A H T R A M S L S I M Q
E E I D D E R F O V C Y S
O O P H E I T T E I B L A
N I A N N I W R T E A M R

ALBIE
AUSTRALIA
AVA
COMMUNICATION
DEN
ENGLAND
FLO
FREDDIE

FRIENDSHIP
JACK
LIV
MARTHA
MIYA
MRDAWSON
MRSHARE
MRSTAYLOR

MUM
OLIVER
SCHOOL
SPORTSDAY
SWIFTIE
TEAMS

SOLUTION TO THE WORDSEARCH ACTIVITY

Answer Sheet

word search

AVA SPARK, HELLO, I'M HERE!

H H T O D R A C L S Y R C
G N N M I N H K C A J O H
N T F N O S W A D R M A Y
D E R E R A H S R M V U E
U A I L A R T S U A E P M
G M E O U R E N G L A N D
R S N E O E I T F I W S R
P T D P S C H O O L T O O
M R S T A Y L O R M O L H
E A H T R A M S L S I M Q
E E I D D E R F O V C Y S
O O P H E I T T E I B L A
N I A N N I W R T E A M R

ALBIE
AUSTRALIA
AVA
COMMUNICATION
DEN
ENGLAND
FLO
FREDDIE

FRIENDSHIP
JACK
LIV
MARTHA
MIYA
MRDAWSON
MRSHARE
MRSTAYLOR

MUM
OLIVER
SCHOOL
SPORTSDAY
SWIFTIE
TEAMS

DESIGN A COVER ACTIVITY



Why don't you have a go at designing your own cover for the book?
You could include elements from the book's cover or use your own ideas.

Please share your work with us
[@newfrontierpublishinguk](#)

Do you want to receive regular
teachers' resources, and news on our latest
releases, competitions and
author events?

Sign up to our educational newsletter!

