

# Unicorns Do NOT Exist (YES, They Do!)

## Teaching Notes

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Illustrator: Sian Moore



### Synopsis:

Isla truly believes in unicorns and all their magical powers, but she knows Tommy does not believe. She tries to convince Tommy unicorns are real by using household items to create “evidence” a unicorn has stopped by. She uses glitter, sprinkles, playdough and costumes but still, Tommy does not believe. Until ... a magnificent unicorn appears in Isla’s bedroom.

### About the Book

- **Purpose:** The book is hoped to help keep magic alive in children's lives just that little bit longer, inspire creativity, curiosity, and encourage children to always stick up for what they believe in ... even if that may be unicorns.
- **Target Audience:** Suitable for Kindergarten to Grade 3 students.

### Learning objectives:

- Understanding the main ideas and messages in the story.
- Developing basic reading and comprehension skills.
- Encouraging imagination and creativity.

### Before reading:

- Introduce the book by looking at the cover.
  - What can children see?
  - What is the main character, Isla, doing on the cover?
  - Ask students what they think the story is about.
- Introduce key vocabulary words with pictures and simple definitions:
  - What is a unicorn?

### During reading:

- Ask simple questions about what is happening in the story.
- Encourage students to predict what might happen next.
- Discuss the characters' feelings and actions. How does it make Isla feel when Tommy doesn't believe her?
- Stop at key points to ask students what they think about the story so far.
- Have students spotted any hidden unicorn features while reading? (Hidden unicorn tail on p5, unicorns shadow in the bush on p9, unicorns horn in the window on p14).

### After reading:

- **Discuss the main message or moral of the story:**
  - What is the main idea of the story?
  - What is Isla trying to prove to Tommy?
  - How did Isla support her belief that unicorns do exist? (Glitter, glue, sprinkles, costumes, playdough).
  - What other ways could Isla have proved unicorns exist? What is another way you would prove to Tommy that unicorns exist?
  - Compare the book to another story the students have read – are there any similarities?
- **Vocabulary/writing:**
  - Discuss what magical and mythical creatures are.
  - What other types of magical/mythical creatures are there?
  - What words can be used to describe mythical/magical creatures? Create a simple wordsearch or crossword with the words students suggest for a secondary activity.

- **Creative writing exercise for advanced/older students:**
  - Use the text of the book as an introduction to create their own short story about a mythical creature.
  - Or follow the theme of the book and swap out the unicorn for a magical/mythical creature of their choice (eg: dragon, mermaid, fairy, goblin, troll) and Isla's name for their own. How will they prove the magical/mythical creature exists?
- **Features/characteristics of a unicorn:**
  - Together discuss and identify the main features of a unicorn (horn, head, body, legs, tail).
  - After the discussion, have students draw a picture or create (paint, craft, build) a unicorn and include all the features. See ideas below. Have students label the unicorn as an extra writing exercise if they have drawn it.

### Arts and crafts activities:

- Have students draw a picture of their favourite part of the story.
- Create a magical trail using items mentioned in the book, allowing students the freedom to use their own ideas and imagination along the way.
- **Craft your own unicorn:**
  - **Toilet paper tube unicorns** – Build your own unicorn using a toilet paper roll, rainbow wool, glitter, glue, paint and markers. Find the full instructions [here](#).
  - **Paper plate unicorns** – Create a unicorn face out of a paper plate, coloured paper, markers, wool, glue, glitter or glitter paper and googly eyes. For full instructions click [here](#).
  - **Handprint unicorns** – Get students to dip their hand in paint to make a handprint on paper. Once dry add all the features of a unicorn using craft supplies and markers. For full instructions click [here](#).
  - **Love heart unicorns** – Use a love heart shape as a base to craft a unicorn face and then add all the features using markers, glue and glitter. Watch how to do it [here](#).
- Make your own **unicorn flower crown** or colour in a unicorn headband. Find colour and non-colour printable unicorn headbands [attached](#).
- Make **unicorn slime** or **playdough**. [Click here for a recipe](#).

### Drama:

- **Explore how a unicorn might behave** – ask students to give examples.
- Pretend you're a magical unicorn: What movements and sounds might a unicorn make?
- **Dress ups/costume making:** Create a unicorn dress up or a dress up of characters in the book with items you have at home or/at school provide them for the class/ask students to bring in items/materials to use.
- Put on your costumes and act out a scene from the book with the class.

## **Baking:**

Make a sweet treat for a unicorn. There are a number of recipes online. Here are some of the author's favourites to try:

- Unicorn poop cookies – [click for recipe.](#)
- Unicorn fudge – [click for recipe.](#)
- Unicorn sugar cookies – [click for recipe.](#)
- White chocolate unicorn bark – [click for recipe.](#)

## **About the author:**

**Elisia Seeber** is an author, journalist, and digital producer living in Perth, Western Australia. With a Bachelor's degree in Communications and Media, her writing career focused on nonfiction, until a very special little girl reminded her how wild and wonderful our imaginations can be, reigniting her childhood love for creative writing. She hopes her stories will inspire creativity and curiosity, encouraging children to always stand for what they believe in — even if that is unicorns.

## **About the Illustrator:**

**Sian Moore** is a freelance illustrator from Wales. She graduated in 2014 after four years of studying illustration and now works from home with “help” from her two young daughters. She works digitally to create her illustrations and over the years has worked with a variety of children's magazines, recently stepping into the world of publishing and realising her dream of illustrating picture books.