



*The Small Five*  
Teaching Notes

# The Small Five

## Synopsis

You've probably heard of Africa's 'Big Five': the lion, leopard, buffalo, rhino and elephant. But did you know there are five little animals who share their names, and can fit in the palm of your hand?

See what happens when the 'Small Five' go up against their big cousins – in a battle of wit, wills, and some extraordinary skills!

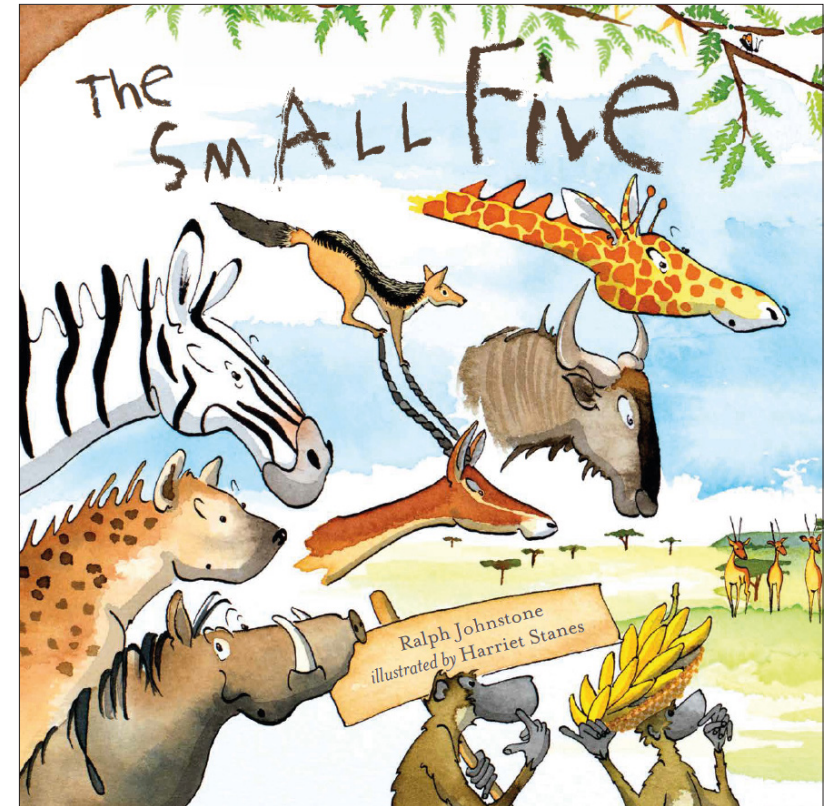
A little rhyme with a big heart.

## About the Author

In over 20 years working as an editor and corporate writer, Ralph Johnstone has always had a secret hankering to write a children's book. Now, with the help of Africa's "most fun and fearless characters", he has done just that! Ralph first encountered the Small Five while helping a Kenyan safari company develop activities for its children's club – and fell in love with them on the spot. He says that visitors to Africa always thrill to see the fearsome lions and majestic elephants, but the little guys always get a raw deal. "After all, they're just as robust and wily – in fact, some of them, like the leopard tortoise and rhinoceros beetle, are even tougher than the Big Five!" Ralph was inspired to share his fascination for these small creatures with children, and wrote *The Small Five* to bring them into the big picture. Ralph grew up on a traditional Malaysian fishing boat in Singapore and, after spending his younger years in Asia, moved to Africa in the early 1990s. Since 2008, he and his family have called Australia home.

## About the Illustrator

Harriet Stanes was born in 1973 in Dorset, England. She moved to the island of Guernsey during her teen years and went on to study Graphic Design and Illustration in Bath. Following numerous visits to East Africa she relocated to Kenya in 1999 having been lured by adventure and safaris with friends some years earlier. Living on the outskirts of the cosmopolitan metropolis of Nairobi, with the edge of an entire animal kingdom close by, she was absorbed by the sights, colours and dramas of life in Kenya. Armed with a dip pen, little pots of ink and a fine tipped brush, Harriet developed her illustrative style by pulling ideas from the humour found in the detail of this extraordinarily colourful life.



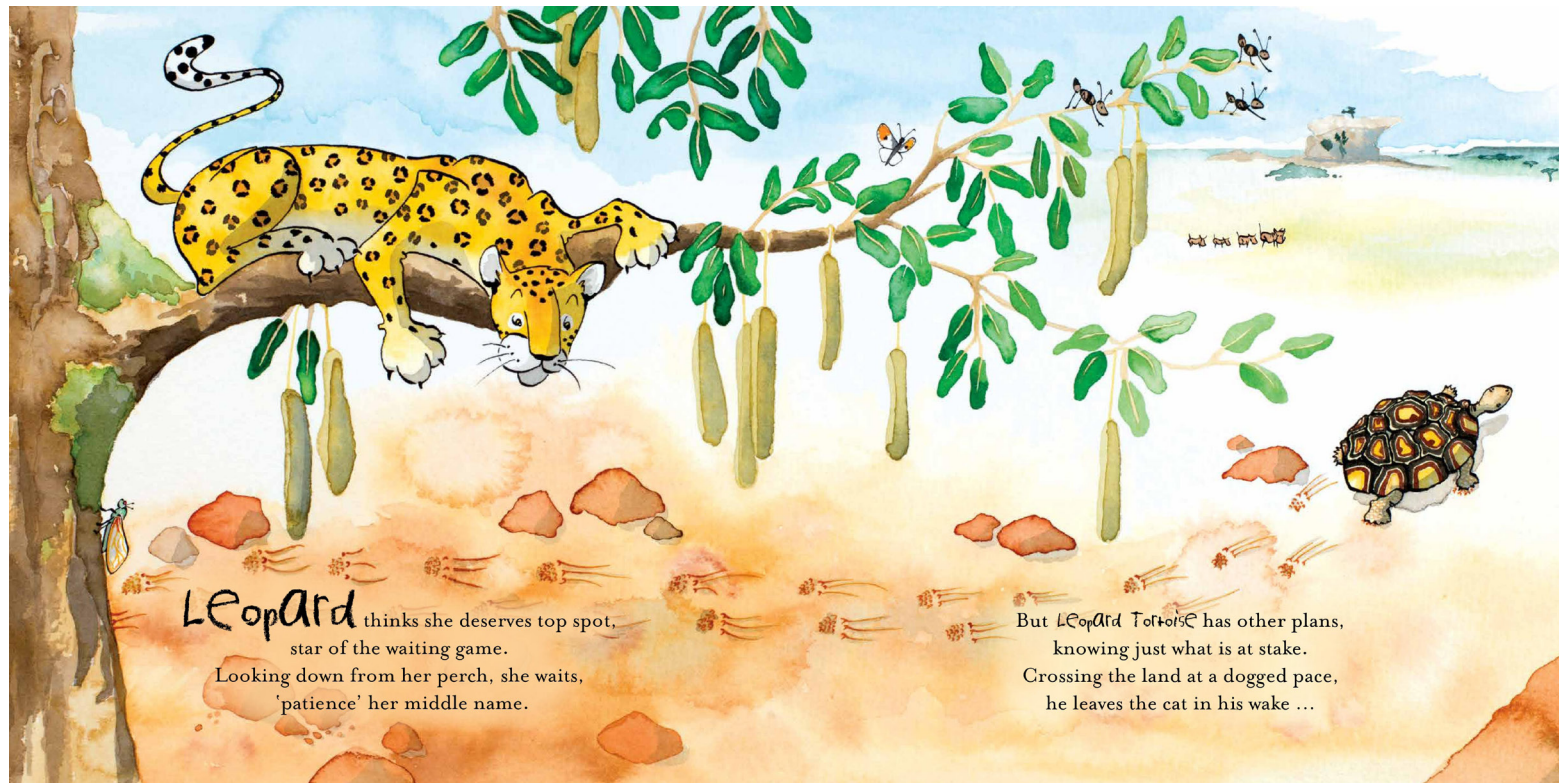
## Discussion Topics and Activities

### Discussion Topics

1. Show the children the front cover of the book. Can they read the title? What animals can they see on the cover? Ask them if they can make any guesses as to what the story might be about?
2. Have the children seen any of the amazing animals in the story, either in real life or perhaps on a documentary? Ask them to describe the experience.
3. As a joint exercise, do some research on the Small Five with the class, especially why they are named after their counterpart in the Big Five.
4. After reading the book, ask the children what they thought of the story. Which is their favourite part and why?

### Activities

1. **Animal Research Report** - choose one of the animals from the story and do some research on them. Using the information that you find, fill in the animal research report on the next page.
2. **Reading Comprehension** - in the box are a list of eleven words used to describe either a member of the Big Five or the Small Five. Read through the book once more and sort the words into the correct boxes. Remember, some words are used to describe both the Big Five and the Small Five.
3. **Maze Activity** - Buffalo Weaver Bird has flown far away from her nest. Help her find her way back to her eggs.



Animal Name: \_\_\_\_\_

This animal is an/a  amphibian  reptile  fish  bird  mammal

Draw the Animal



Size:

Colour:

What it eats:

Where it lives:

Predators:

Two interesting facts about the animal

Draw the Animal's Habitat



1.

2.

## Reading Comprehension

thorny

kind

patient

strong

tiny

grumpiest

dozy

fantastic

sleek

little

tough

**The Small Five**

**The Big Five**

# Maze Activity

