

# Melbourne Cup Day

**Characters:**  
Asha, Kai, Ella and Logan

**Setting:** *The four children are sitting in a family room and chatting.*

**Asha:** Mum said we don't have to go to school tomorrow and that you can both stay home with us while they're all at the Melbourne Cup.

**Logan:** That's right, everyone here in Melbourne gets the day off for the Cup.

**Kai:** Why? What's so important about the Melbourne Cup?

**Ella:** It's a world-famous horse race that happens in Melbourne on the first Tuesday in November every year. It started in 1861.

**Kai:** Well, it must be a really special cup ... and very old, too.

**Logan:** Yes, the race has been happening for about 150 years. But Dad told us that when Archer won the very first race, the prize was a gold watch and some gold coins. The cup used today was made in 1919.

**Ella:** And now people and horses come to Flemington from all over the world to try to win our cup.

**Asha:** What's Flemington?

**Ella:** It's where they always have the race. It's a beautiful racetrack.

**Asha:** Does everyone in Melbourne go and watch the race?

**Logan:** No, there's not enough space. Lots of people do go, but most people here in Melbourne and all around Australia, watch it on TV.

**Asha:** Mum told me she's always wanted to go to a Melbourne Cup. That's why Dad brought us to Melbourne. It's her special birthday present.

**Kai:** Well, it must start pretty early. Dad said they'll be leaving here before breakfast.

**Ella:** No, the race isn't until the afternoon. They go early to eat, meet lots of people and to look at the horses and what everyone's wearing.



Indicator 1: Reads, memorises or improves a play.  
Indicator 2: Performs as a character in a play.

**Logan:** Yes, my dad says lots of people go because they're more interested in the ladies' hats and dresses than the horses or the races.

**Asha:** Is it a very long race?

**Ella:** Yes, they run 3200 metres ... but it doesn't take them very long to finish it.

**Kai:** Isn't it cruel to make them run so far?

**Ella:** No, most of them love it. Or that's what the horse trainers and jockeys say. The horses wouldn't run so fast if they didn't want to race each other, would they?

**Kai:** Well, I wouldn't like to run that far with someone sitting on my back!

**Logan:** But horses are big and strong and jockeys are small and light. Their saddles hardly weigh anything. They even stand up a bit to make it easier for the horses.

**Ella:** They all really care about the horses. There are vets there to look after them and ambulances, too, in case a jockey is hurt.

**Asha:** Dad said that all the horses in the race have a number and his lucky number is 3.

**Logan:** That's right. The horse with the number 1 on its saddlecloth has won the most races, so it has to carry the heaviest weight. That's how they try to make it even.

**Ella:** And horses that haven't won so many races carry a lighter load. That way, every horse has a chance of winning the cup and the prize money.

**Kai:** I wish they did that at my school, then I might win some races.

**Asha:** Mum told me she loves seeing all the beautiful coloured silks and caps the jockeys wear.

**Logan:** Each trainer has a different uniform for their jockey to wear. This makes it easier to pick out the horses when they're a long way away.

**Kai:** Are you going to watch the race?

**Logan:** Of course! Everyone stops what they're doing and watches it.

**Ella:** That's why it's called 'the race that stops the nation'.

