

# Exploring the 2009 CBCA Short List



The e:lit Teachers' Guide to the Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year Awards

# About this Guide

The e:lit Guide to the short-listed titles in the 2009 Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year awards provides a real literary expedition for you and your students to explore some very special books within the book week theme of **Book Safari**.

Some of the features in this guide include:

- support for most short-listed titles, including those for older readers
- many original comments from the authors and illustrators that have been gathered – just for these notes
- highlights the role of illustrators
- ideas and activities that have been organised in three main levels and coded based on Bloom's Taxonomy:
  - Starting out (**R**emembering, **U**nderstanding)
  - Branching out (**A**pplication, **A**nalysis)
  - Going deeper (**C**reating, **E**valuating).
- opportunities for students to create reviews or book trailers (see page 31).

It is assumed that prior to undertaking the activities in this guide, students have already been introduced to and read the titles, and of course, that teachers will adapt these activities to suit their students in the format for the activity as well as presentation.

No matter what theme you are investigating there is probably an opportunity to enhance it with a literature component:

- investigating war – then delve into *A Rose for the ANZAC Boys*, *Then or Simpson and His Donkey*
- if you are playing with language you can't ignore *The Word Spy*
- if you are analysing relationships then sample *Nobody Owns the Moon*, *Sunday Chutney*, *Perry Angel's Suitcase*, *The Wish Pony*
- for fantasy – *Lamplighter*, *The Wizard of Rondo*, *Finnikin of the Rock*
- for adventure – *Alive in the Death Zone*, *White Silence*, *Captain Congo and the Crocodile King*

- for families – *Puffling*, *Tom Tom*, *Collecting Colours*, *Polar Boy*, *How to Heal a Broken Wing*, *Audrey of the Outback*, *Kill the Possum*, *Applesauce and the Christmas Miracle*
- for society – *Tales for the Outer Suburbs*, *Leaf*, *Special Kev*, *Home and Away*

... and of course they all cross many other themes too!

These are just a smattering of the beautifully created books that have been produced by our wonderful authors and illustrators. If you haven't already, take time to explore the books – turn off the television, the computer and the MP3 player and relax and unwind with these great Australian books!

So whether it is an individual study, group analysis or class investigation these and other great Australian books will take you all on a real safari adventure!

Don't forget to visit the **Children's Book Council of Australia** website for heaps of helpful support and information.

[www.cbca.org.au](http://www.cbca.org.au)

## Book trailers (Special feature)

A simple guide to help teachers and students create book trailers has been included on page 31.

## About the author of this Guide

Christopher Cheng is a school teacher by profession and holds an MA in children's literature. He is a passionate advocate of Australian children's books. He is also on the advisory board for *First Opinions*, *Second Reactions* from Purdue University, an international children's literature journal.

[www.chrischeng.com](http://www.chrischeng.com)

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# Sunday Chutney

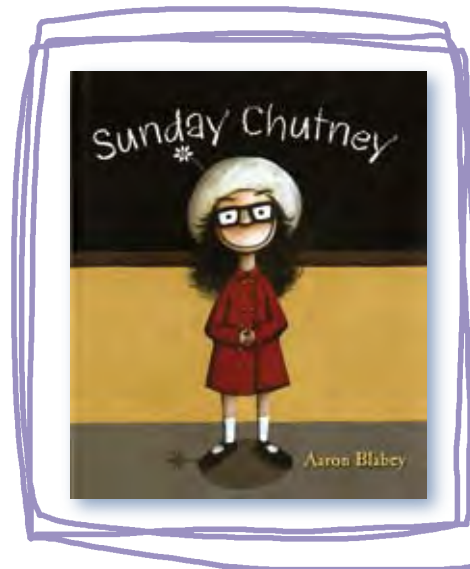
Author and illustrator: Aaron Blabey

ISBN: 9780670071791

Publisher: Viking, Penguin Group, Australia

www.penguin.com.au

RRP: \$24.95



## Starting out

- List all the things that Sunday Chutney does like and all the things that she does not like. **(Re)**
- List all the things that Sunday Chutney says about school. **(Re)**
- Retell the story in your own words. **(Un)**

## Branching out

- Discover all the places Sunday Chutney has been by looking closely at the illustrations. Locate these on a map. **(Ap)**
- Compile your own 'like and don't like' chart. Compare charts with other class members. Compare your chart with Sunday Chutney's chart. **(An)**
- Draw a picture of who you imagine you would be in ten years' time. Write about it. **(Ap)**
- Why do you think Sunday Chutney sometimes feels lonely? **(An)**
- If you could have one wish what would it be? **(Ap)**
- Discuss what happens in your class when a new child arrives and then compile a list of essential information that a new child should know about your school. **(Ap)**
- Role-play a new child coming to the class. **(Ap)**
- Survey your class to find out everyone's favourite places. Compile a chart and locate them on a map. **(An)**
- Write about your favourite place. **(Ap)**
- In groups discuss what makes a favourite place. **(An)**

## Going deeper

- Create a podcast for a new child introducing them to your school. **(Cr)**
- Design your own spacesuit. **(Cr)**
- Use magazine pictures to design the perfect fashion outfit for yourself. **(Cr)**
- Investigate the customs and traditions of another culture. Prepare a presentation in dance, song and food from that culture. **(Ev)**
- Consider the difficulties in living in another land. **(Ev)**
- Make your own Sunday Chutney book about yourself. **(Cr)**

## Author comments

I moved around a lot when I was a kid. Sometimes that was cool. And sometimes it wasn't.

Accordingly, I have quite a lot in common with Ms Chutney (apart from the bit about the optometrist). I think my books work best when they are personal and for that reason I think Sunday may well be my favourite.

# Collecting Colour

Author and illustrator: Kylie Dunstan

ISBN: 9780734410221

Publisher: Lothian Books, Hachette Australia

www.hachettechildrens.com.au

RRP: \$28.99



## Starting out

- How do the characters weave the baskets? **(Re)**
- Make a list of the main events in the story. **(Re)**
- Why is colour so important in this book? **(Un)**
- Make a list of the facts that you know from the book. **(Re)**
- Where did the colour for dyeing come from? **(Re)**

## Branching out

- Investigate what the other uses for the baskets could be and what important ceremonies they might have been used for. **(Ap)**
- Rose dreams of the beautiful coloured mats she will make. Write about your own dreams. **(Ap)**
- Look at the final double page spread. Make a list of words to describe how each of the characters might be feeling. **(An)**
- Look closely at the illustrations.
  - Examine the materials the illustrator has used. **(An)**
  - Discuss the viewpoints of the illustrations. **(An)**
- Investigate dyeing with natural substances such as beetroot, berries and turmeric. Establish procedures for making the dyes and work out which are the most effective. Construct a chart with the results. **(Ap)**
- Pandanus leaves were made to make the baskets and mats. What other natural resources are used by Aboriginal peoples? Could we use baskets and mats like this in our western culture? **(An)**
- Compare a basket made from pandanus leaves with that made from plastics. Discuss the advantages or otherwise of both. **(An)**

## Going deeper

- Draw, paint or create a collage of your favourite scene from the book. **(Cr)**
- Write or draw a procedure for making the baskets and mats as they do in this book. **(Cr)**
- Make some dyes using natural colouring. Try the dyes you have made on different materials. Dye some wool and dye some hard-boiled eggs. Try dyeing some threads before weaving mats and display the woven mats on your classroom walls. **(Cr)**
- Use ropes and natural raffia to make coiled mats. **(Cr)**
- Make a booklet with directions for dyeing a T-shirt. **(Cr)**
- Design something else that could be woven out of the coloured pandanus leaves. Draw the object and write a description of it. **(Cr)**
- Discuss how traditional Aboriginal people used natural resources in many parts of their lives. **(Ev)**

- Discuss the importance of our natural resources. What human-made objects have replaced natural made objects? **(Ev)**
- 'Natural products are better than human-made products.' Prepare arguments for and against this statement and then debate. **(Ev)**

## Author comments

For me, *Collecting Colour* is as much about friendship as it is about learning an indigenous Australian cultural activity. Of course, the skeleton of the story is built around the process of making the fibre art but at the core of the book is a contemporary cross-cultural friendship between two little girls.

It was important to me when writing this book that it could stand alone as a picture book and not be sectioned exclusively to the 'educational' genre. It was also important that the book be created with the approval of the Injalak artists, fibre artists and committee.

*This book has also been short-listed for The Crichton Award for New Illustrators.*

# Home and Away

Author: John Marsden

Illustrator: Matt Ottley

ISBN: 9780734410566

Publisher: Lothian Books, Hachette Australia

[www.hachettechildrens.com.au](http://www.hachettechildrens.com.au)

RRP: \$28.99



## Starting out

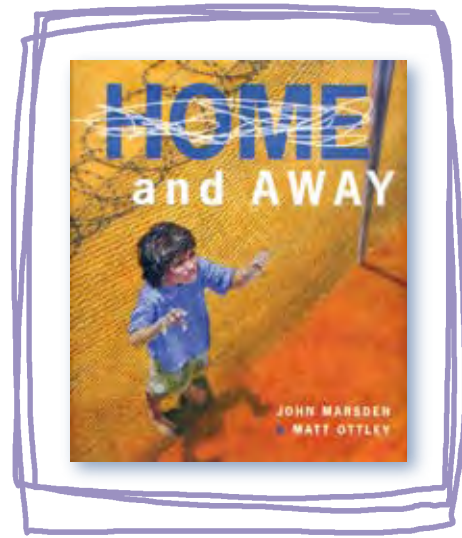
- Why do you think the illustrator scribbled through the word 'home' on the title page? **(Un)**
- Summarise the story. **(Un)**
- Why do you think the illustrator uses illuminated letters and a pointer in the early pages? **(Un)**
- Construct a timeline of events in the book **(Re)**
- Look at the illustrations for 8 September. Describe in your words what is happening. **(Un)**
- Who put the family into prison? Why? **(Un)**
- Look at the diary text. What is it written on? **(Un)**
- What is happening on the page for 30 September? **(Re)**
- What are the different styles of illustration used in the story? **(Un)**

## Branching out

- What is the effect of the handwritten text? How does this affect the story? **(Un)**
- What happens to the family between 29 September and 1 October? Write diary entries for a selection of dates. **(Ap)**
- What do the different points of view of the illustrations tell you? **(An)**
- In the beginning of the book there is a description of the characters. Are the characters the same at the end? Write a description of the characters as they appear at the end of the book. **(An)**
- On 17 September Grandma died. Why do you think this happened? What impact did this and the other deaths have on the surviving characters? **(An)**
- Describe what is happening and who drew the illustration of 28 September. **(An)**
- Why do you think Josh and Emily visit?
- Research recent immigration criteria for entry into our country. Are these appropriate? Could they be changed? **(Ap)**
- If you were Toby how would you wish to be treated? **(Ap)**
- Invite a government spokesperson to discuss immigration and then write a report. **(An)**
- Both the author and illustrator comment about empathy. Discuss how this is portrayed in this book and how it can be applied to our daily lives. **(Ap)**

## Going deeper

- Investigate reasons put forward by governments for putting refugees into prison. Do you think these reasons are valid? Justify your reasoning. **(Ev)**
- What do you think happens at the end of the story? Write that part of the story. **(Cr)**



- Investigate and discuss alternatives to putting refugees in prison. **(Ev)**
- Write about your own feelings towards the treatment of refugees. **(Cr)**
- Write to a government minister expressing your thoughts opinions and suggestions. **(Ev)**
- Discuss the author's comments about the title. **(Ev)**

## Useful websites

[www.johnmarsden.com.au](http://www.johnmarsden.com.au)  
[www.mattottley.com](http://www.mattottley.com)

## Author comments

Like many Australians, I felt despair and impotent rage, that crimes against humanity were being committed in our name by those to whom we'd entrusted the management of our country. Hundreds and thousands of Australians have acted in various and admirable ways to try to right these wrongs. My way is to use the pen.

One element common to all crimes is a lack of empathy, and so I tried to write a book that would increase the ability of readers to empathise with displaced persons.

The title, *Home and Away*, I pushed for it, because I liked its connection with two Australian icons: the TV show, and the football season. The phrase is used light-heartedly in those contexts, but it must resonate rather differently for people who want to be home and have been forced away. Justice and humanity demand that we share our homes with them.

## Illustrator comments

I was sent the text to John Marsden's book about two years ago, and I knew immediately that I wanted to do the book. Empathy is something sorely lacking in the world, and that's what this book does so beautifully: shows us, in an exquisite way, what it is to walk in someone else's shoes. I have just been inside a detention centre, and have met some of the inmates, and more than ever I'm so completely glad that John and I created this book. When I heard personally from people who had escaped from repressive regimes or war-torn countries, and I saw the anguish in their eyes, and felt my heart breaking as I listened to their stories, the book became even more important to me. I hope it touches the hearts of others too.

# Nobody Owns the Moon

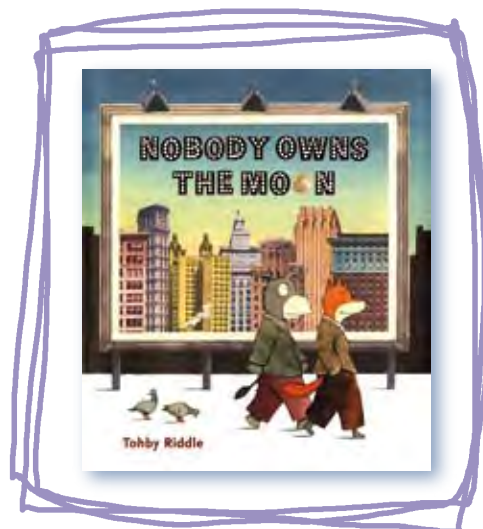
Author and illustrator: Tohby Riddle

ISBN: 9780670071609

Publisher: Viking, Penguin Group Australia

[www.penguin.com.au](http://www.penguin.com.au)

RRP: \$24.95



## Starting out

- What other animals could have been chosen that, like fox, could successfully make a life for itself in the city? **(Un)**
- Where is this book set? **(Re)**
- Why do you think Clive and Humphrey were accepted as residents of the city? **(Un)**
- Why did Humphrey weep? **(Un)**
- Look at the illustrations. How does the author show that Clive and Henry are part of the city? **(Un)**
- Retell the story. **(Un)**

## Branching out

- Create a mindmap on the concept of friendship. **(Ap)**
- What makes Clive a good friend? Describe the kind of person would make a good friend for you. **(An)**
- How would you handle a friend like Humphrey? What could you do? **(Ap)**
- If you were going to assist somebody like Henry what could you do? **(Ap)**
- Why do you think Henry did not recognise the importance of the blue envelope? **(An)**
- Why do you think the author chose a fox and a donkey as the main characters? What characteristics do these animals have that make them fit so well? **(An)**
- Research homelessness. Where do homeless people go at night? Discuss attitudes to homelessness. Find out why people are homeless. **(Ap)**
- Identify the characteristics of friendship within your school. Prepare a questionnaire to gather information on characteristics of friendships. Record the results. **(Ap)**
- Imagine or think of a time a friend treated you badly. How did you react? Role-play the situation. What should you do in such a situation? Was your reaction appropriate? Role-play an appropriate action. Devise strategies for dealing with broken friendships. **(Ap)**
- In verse write about your feelings when you have treated a friend badly. How did you feel? What did you do? Why did you treat the friend this way? Would you react differently now? **(Ap)**

## Going deeper

- Continue the story after Humphrey hugged Clive goodnight. **(Cr)**
- Discuss the different parts of friendship. **(Ev)**

- Discuss why friends are important. **(Ev)**
- Form a panel and discuss views on homelessness. **(Ev)**
- Investigate ways you can assist homeless people. **(Ev)**
- The two friends see the play 'Nobody Owns the Moon'. What do you think this play is about? Write a synopsis for your play. **(Cr)**

## Useful websites

[www.tohby.com](http://www.tohby.com)

## Author comments

Like a lot of my books, I started writing *Nobody Owns the Moon* for the sheer fun of the idea – but soon enough other more complex ideas arose in the story about friendship and belonging, and I found these moving and meaningful too. These ideas met with concepts I'd had about rendering the city visually – and I couldn't wait to get started.

# Captain Congo and the Crocodile King

Author: Ruth Starke

Illustrator: Greg Holfeld

ISBN: 9781876288914

Publisher: Working Title Press

[www.workingtitlepress.com.au](http://www.workingtitlepress.com.au)

RRP: \$24.95



## Starting out

- Summarise the story. Rewrite this story as a narrative. **(Un)**
- List the characters in the story and write a character profile for each of them. **(Re)**
- List the aids the characters take on their adventure. **(Re)**
- List the visual and written gags that are in this book. **(Re)**
- How do the author and illustrator pay homage to the TV shows of this genre? **(Un)**
- What is amusing about the way the crocodile grabs the child (page 20)? **(Un)**

## Branching out

- How does the author represent the thoughts of characters as distinct from the dialogue? **(An)**
- What TV characters are Captain Congo and Mr. Pug like? **(An)**
- Investigate museums and their role in the 21st century and then prepare a presentation. **(Ap)**
- Design a questionnaire about the benefits of museums. Then survey people in school and in the wider community about their thoughts on museums. Graph the findings and then prepare a report on them. **(Ap)**
- What genre of TV show does this book resemble? What are the similarities and differences? **(An)**
- Why would the professor be buying a one-way ticket at the end of the story (page 46)? **(An)**
- Captain Congo used a bear spray to repel the crocodiles. If you were Congo what would you do? **(Ap)**
- Devise a new way to repel crocodiles. Write an explanation and build a model. **(Ap)**
- Why did adventurers take ancient treasures and artefacts from new territories? **(An)**

## Going deeper

- Draw a map showing the travelled routes of the adventurers on this mission. **(Cr)**
- Create a storyboard for another Captain Congo adventure. **(Cr)**
- Do you think that it was a fair trade that the museum sent the villagers a pizza oven and a gramophone in place of the crocodile head. **(Ev)**
- Research repatriation of ancient treasure and artefacts. Prepare an argument for and against then conduct a debate. **(Ev)**
- Develop a segment of this story into a TV script or animation. **(Cr)**



- Examine museum labels and then create a label to accompany the display of the jewelled crocodile head in the Chicago museum. **(Cr)**
- Design a museum to house objects of your interest or speciality. **(Cr)**

## Useful websites

[www.ruthstarke.itgo.com](http://www.ruthstarke.itgo.com)

[www.panicproductions.com.au](http://www.panicproductions.com.au) (Greg Holfeld)

## Author comments

Working on this book was a great delight and fascination for me, not only because it's my first graphic novel, but because it was such a co-operative and local production. Greg and I worked extremely closely on translating all the elements of the story to the page, and we benefitted so much from the encouragement and professional eyes of our publisher and editor.

## Illustrator comments

*Captain Congo* has a smart-aleck penguin, an urbane gorilla, early 20th century style, high adventure, and the words of a brilliant writer. Why WOULDN'T I want to draw it?

# The Big Little Book of Happy Sadness

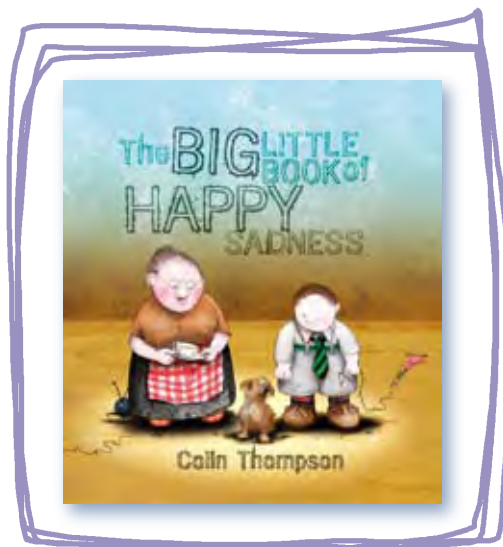
Author and illustrator: Colin Thompson

ISBN: 9781741662573

Publisher: Random House Australia

[www.randomhouse.com.au](http://www.randomhouse.com.au)

RRP: \$14.95



## Starting out

- Why do you think it was the three-legged dog's last day? **(Un)**
- What was the big empty place inside George? **(Un)**
- List the characters in the story. Write a description of each. **(Re)**
- Summarise the book. **(Un)**
- List the types of legs George and his grandmother made for Jeremy and how they were constructed. **(Re)**
- Why do you think Jeremy had only three legs? **(Un)**
- Why do you think George was lonely? **(Un)**
- What do you think might have happened to George's parents? **(Un)**
- List all the happy things in the book. List all the sad things in the book. Discuss the lists. **(Re)**

## Branching out

- Investigate other picture books created by Colin Thompson and find the silhouette of the character that appears somewhere in these books. **(An)**
- Interview a vet. Find out what happens to injured animals. What could they do for a dog like Jeremy? **(Ap)**
- Investigate the pets looked after by students. What pets are kept? What do they have to do to look after the animal? Graph and table the results. **(Ap)**
- Why are Grandma's words 'A dog isn't just for Christmas, it's for life.' significant. What do these words mean? **(An)**
- Imagine other types of legs that could have been made for Jeremy and their uses. Draw a picture and include labels and descriptions. **(Ap)**
- Discuss the rules for looking after a dog. **(Ap)**
- Investigate organisations such as the RSPCA. How does animal adoption work? Why do people obtain animals from shelters? **(An)**
- Do you ever feel lonely? What do you do when you feel lonely? **(An)**

## Going deeper

- Create your own picture of a very happy Jeremy and George and grandmother. **(Cr)**
- Discuss what you should do if you see an injured animal. **(Ev)**
- Collect pictures of dogs. Look at their legs. Build a model leg. **(Cr)**
- Create a guide on the keeping of dogs as pets. Include rules and instructions. **(Cr)**
- Why do children sometimes feel lonely? **(Ev)**

- Do you agree that all pets should be obtained from animal shelters? Debate this question. **(Ev)**
- Discuss keeping a classroom pet, the rules and procedures needed and the roles and responsibilities required. What would be the most appropriate pet? **(Ev)**

## Useful websites

[www.colinthompson.com](http://www.colinthompson.com)

## Author comments

I grew up as an only child without a father and lived with my grandparents who, like George's in this story, were kind but lived on another planet. I was very lonely a lot of the time and my best friend was my cat, Tigger. Being alone so much I escaped into books and my imagination.



# How to Heal a Broken Wing

Author and illustrator: Bob Graham

ISBN: 9781406307160

Publisher: Walker Books

www.walkerbooks.com.au

RRP: \$27.95



## Starting out

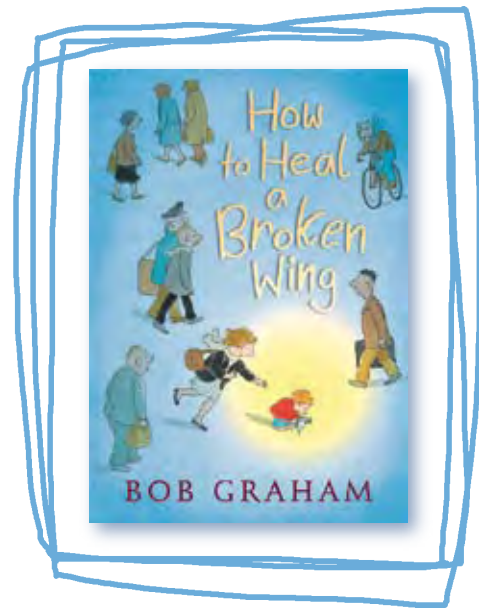
- List the main characters in this story and then list all the other people mentioned or drawn in this story. **(Re)**
- List the events that happen in the story. **(Re)**
- Summarise the story including information that is in the illustrations as well as the written text. **(Un)**
- Where do you think the bird went when it was released? **(Un)**
- Compare the written text with the illustrations. Is this the same story? **(Un)**
- Where do you think the book is set? Why? **(Un)**
- How long was the bird in the cage? How do you know? **(Un)**
- What do you think are the themes behind the book? **(Un)**

## Branching out

- What technique does the author/illustrator use to highlight Will in the large pictures? **(An)**
- Could the events in this book really happen? Give reasons for your answer. **(An)**
- Beginning with the blurb on the back of the book, which is unfinished, write a summary of the book. **(Ap)**
- What can be discovered about this family from investigating this book? **(An)**
- Why do you think the bird flew into the window? **(An)**
- Why do you think only Will saw the fallen bird? **(An)**
- Investigate some of the ways devised by humans to stop birds flying into glass. **(Ap)**
- Retell this story from the perspective of the mother or father. Identify parts that are similar and parts that are different? **(An)**
- Identify the ways that the illustrator shows that time has progressed in the illustrations. **(An)**
- What is noticed about the people passing by in the scenes where Will and his mother discover the injured bird? **(An)**

## Going deeper

- Write a poem describing your feelings about finding an injured animal. **(Cr)**
- What would you do if you found an injured animal? Write down a procedure for the care of an injured bird. What problems could you encounter? What other animals could you care for if they were injured? Describe what you would do. **(Ev)**
- Propose suggestions to make people more aware of the environment that is around them. **(Ev)**
- Design a way to stop birds flying into glass windows. **(Cr)**
- Discuss the notion that our lives are too busy to notice the small things of this world. **(Ev)**



## Author comments

I have long wanted to write a story about a pigeon, but I never set out with this particular book in mind. My stories only ever reveal themselves to me as I go along. I start with certain triggers, (memories, experiences) and together with time and a lot of sticky tape a narrative will gradually appear in the form of words and pictures. Nothing is ever certain, I have no particular formula.

I have mixed feelings about all my books. I can look at them afterwards and see things I could have expressed differently. But I liked the economy in this book, trying to say more with less.

# Leaf

Author and illustrator: Stephen Michael King

ISBN: 9781741691160

Publisher: Scholastic Australia

[www.scholastic.com.au](http://www.scholastic.com.au)

RRP: \$19.99



## Starting out

- Who are the main characters in the story and what do they do? (Re)
- Retell the story in your own words. (Un)
- What are the themes that run through *Leaf*? (Un)
- Why do you think the author only uses text for the sound words? Make a list of similar words not in the book. (Un)
- Is it possible to grow a seed into a plant in your hair? (Un)
- List all the hazards the boy encounters growing the plant on his head. How does he solve these? (Re)
- Over what period of time is this book set. (Un)
- Create a timeline for this book. (Re)

## Branching out

- Why do you think the adult wanted to cut off ALL the boy's hair? How did the boy feel? (An)
- Grow a seed in a range of different materials. What do you need for the seed to grow? Research and record your observations on a class chart. Draw a graph. Write a procedure for growing a plant from seed. (Ap)
- Look at the page where the dog gets wet by the watering can suspended in a tree. Why is the boy doing this? (An)
- What should the boy have done to water his head and not the dog? Draw a diagram to show how it would work. (Ap)
- When he is sleeping the boy imagines the growing plant being attacked. In what other situations could you imagine the growing plant being attacked? (An)
- What are some other situations in which it would be difficult growing a plant on your head? What solutions could you provide? (Ap)
- How would you feel if something happened that you didn't want to happen? Write a poem to describe your feelings. (Ap)
- List the main events in the story. Which events could happen? Which events could not happen? (An)
- Produce a presentation to explain the life cycle of a plant. (Ap)

## Going deeper

- Create other unusual ways of growing a plant. Draw a picture. Describe what is unusual about it. (Cr)
- Write your own 'Leaf' story about creativity. (Cr)
- If people knew that plants could be grown in such unusual circumstances what would they do? Prepare a discussion. (Ev)
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of growing plants in such unusual circumstances. (Ev)
- Make a booklet that lists the essential criteria for growing seeds to plants. (Cr)

## Useful websites

[www.stephenmichaelking.com](http://www.stephenmichaelking.com)

## Author comments

Even though I'm considered an author in the bookish world, the truth is that I often find words intrusive and overpowering. I do know that even before my first book was published I've wanted to do a book without words.

The great thing about *Leaf* is that when it came to me, it was instantly apparent that it didn't need words ... The outcome was the words found on the endpaper; a mantra I wrote to myself 'truth can be mute, silence is a word, stillness is not void, quiet has a voice'. I also added some sound effects. The sound effects were a great tool for drawing you into the story, a noise that was useful for creating a deeper quiet for the end of the story. (There are no sound effects after the boy's haircut, the book becomes silent.)

... As well as writing and illustrating, I design all my books too. I love holding the finished *Leaf* ... representative of me as a person, more than any of my previous books. It's quiet, it speaks through pictures, not words ...

I think *Leaf* can be interpreted in many ways, but as I was creating, it became apparent that it was about creativity, ideas, intuition, nurturing your true self, even if your personal truth appears insignificant to begin with. There were all these themes and more.

# Special Kev

Author and illustrator: Chris McKimmie

ISBN: 9781741755503

Publisher: Allen and Unwin

[www.allenandunwin.com](http://www.allenandunwin.com)

RRP: \$29.95



## Starting out

- List the main characters in this story. **(Re)**
- Why do you think Special Kev's aunty was called Aunty Pav? **(Un)**
- List the slang expressions in the book. What do they mean? **(Re)**
- What happens on April Fool's Day? How does it relate to the book? **(Un)**
- Why did special Kev tie Nicky to a tree? **(Un)**
- Describe the game 'Ned Kelly' in your own words. **(Un)**
- List all the animals found in the story. Why do you think so many birds are included? **(Re)**
- Mum said, 'We are all made of stars. We are all special.' What does this mean? **(Un)**

## Branching out

- What styles does the illustrator use and what does this convey? **(An)**
- Special Kev receives silly presents on his birthday. What silly present would you give him? Construct a silly present. **(Ap)**
- Would a star certificate be a good present? Why or why not? **(An)**
- Research slang sayings. Compile a list. Where do they originate and what do they mean? **(An)**
- Why do you think Special Kev chucked the bike in the lake? Who is the lady in this picture and what is she doing? What do you think she is thinking? **(An)**
- If you could give a special present to your best friend what would it be? Describe your present. **(An)**
- Do you think Special Kev's punishment was fair? Why or why not? What do you think would have been an appropriate punishment? **(An)**

## Going deeper

- Create a game based on the slang sayings and their meanings. **(Cr)**
- Dad made Special Kev a good present on his birthday – a scrub turkey from old stuff found around the house. Make your own present for someone special from used goods. **(Cr)**
- Discuss punishment in the book – how it is implemented and whether it is appropriate. **(Ev)**
- Create rules for the classroom and appropriate punishment for breaking rules. **(Ev)**
- Form a panel and in small groups discuss loneliness. **(Ev)**
- Look at the author's website. Choose an illustration (or a number of illustrations) and create an accompanying story. **(Cr)**



## Useful websites

[www.chrismckimmie.com](http://www.chrismckimmie.com)  
[www.starregistry.com](http://www.starregistry.com)

## Author comments

Most of my ideas for books seem to start with an incident mentioned or observed. *Special Kev* was initially about a boy who knew too much and was ostracized. I changed this to being about how we are all at some stage isolated from a group and, by extension, how some groups are isolated from a society.

When I was growing up in Perth, Western Australia I was surrounded by aunties and uncles and my grandmother who was Italian and Catholic. The Catholics were an isolated group. It was the state school kids versus us and my family grew up with a 'them versus us' attitude. So I drew on a lot of this for the story and so this book talks about being alone that is part of growing up.

# Applesauce and the Christmas Miracle

Author: Glenda Millard

Illustrator: Stephen Michael King

ISBN: 9780733322495

Publisher: ABC Books

www.abcbooks.com.au

RRP: \$24.95



## Starting out

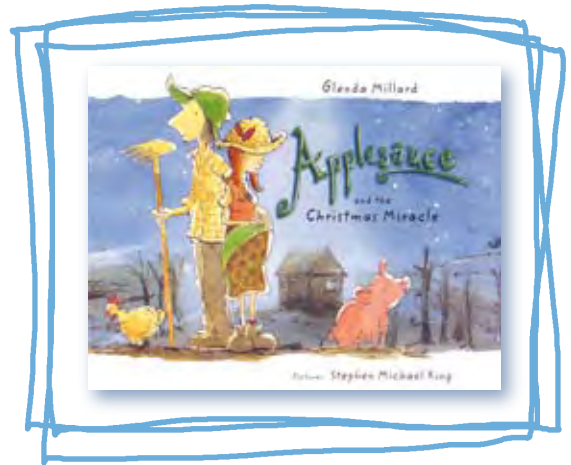
- List all the characters in the story including the animals other than humans. You will need to look closely at the illustrations. **(Re)**
- Retell the story in your own words **(Un)**
- Make a timeline of the events. **(Re)**
- Owl said 'Christmas comes from the heart.' What does this mean? **(Un)**
- Make a list of words to describe the bushfire and its effects. **(Un)**
- Why was Applesauce's heart empty? **(Un)**
- Why do you think the shed was still standing after the bushfire? **(Un)**
- Why did Applesauce think there would be no Christmas? **(Un)**

## Branching out

- Read other Christmas picture books. How are they the same and how are they different? **(An)**
- The three aunts brought very special gifts. What gift would you bring? **(Ap)**
- What would be a Christmas gift that only you could give to someone very special to you? **(Ap)**
- Write your own description of the environment after a bush fire. **(Ap)**
- Compare your Christmas day with this Christmas day. **(An)**
- Discuss the importance of family and friends. **(An)**
- Identify the similarities and differences between this story and the traditional Christmas story. **(An)**

## Going deeper

- Write your own 'Christmas from the heart' story. **(Cr)**
- Discuss what happens to the bush after a fire goes through. Make a list of ways people can prepare for bushfires. Create a bushfire awareness poster. **(Cr)**
- Make damper using the recipe provided by Jackie French (see the end of these notes). **(Cr)**
- Discuss what you would do in a bushfire or in a fire in the city. **(Ev)**
- Discuss and practise what you do in emergencies. **(Ev)**
- Discuss what Christmas means to you. **(Ev)**



## Useful websites

[www.stephenmichaelking.com](http://www.stephenmichaelking.com)  
[www.jackiefrench.com/oct06.html](http://www.jackiefrench.com/oct06.html)

## Author comments

In paying tribute to the traditional Christmas story, I also felt it was important to write my story in such a way that it could be enjoyed and understood by people of all faiths, cultures and creeds. I hoped they would relate to the values of compassion, kindness, the support of friends and family, and the celebration of new life. Upon reflection I suppose I wanted to write about a Christmas more like the ones I had experienced as a child, when we were satisfied with much less.

## Illustrator comments

With *Applesauce* my main concern was to allow the words to do their job. Everything was in the words. Glenda's work doesn't need pictures. ... Within the illustration I wanted to try to connect some of the traditional Christmas colours to the Australian theme without it being an obvious intrusion ... Apart from that, my illustration stayed earthy and cool. Overall my input was about adding tone and mood. I managed to fit in two silent spreads. Stillness speaks volumes and these moments were probably my strongest; the empty sky and the empty landscape.

... I love illustrating Glenda Millard's work. We both put a lot of ourselves into our work and we both love making beautiful books for children.

# Tom Tom

Author: Rosemary Sullivan

Illustrator: Dee Huxley

ISBN: 9781876288983

Publisher: Working Title Press

www.workingtitlepress.com.au

RRP: \$24.95



## Starting out

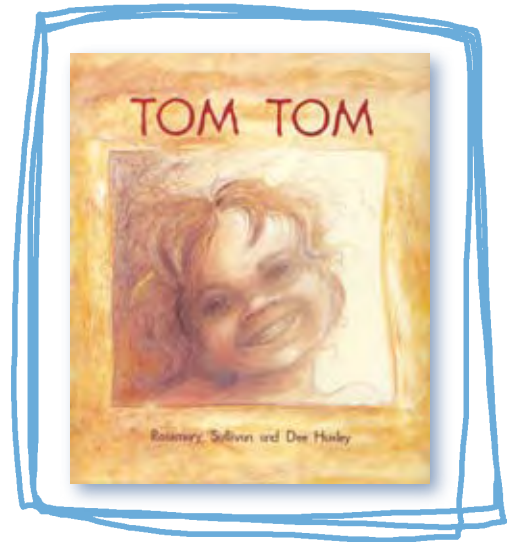
- List all the people in the book. Draw a family tree. **(Re)**
- Write down events that happen in Tom Tom's day. **(Re)**
- What do you think is the favourite activity of the children on the Lemonade Springs? **(Un)**
- Why does the teacher drive around in the little white bus? **(Un)**

## Branching out

- Compare your family to Tom Tom's family. **(An)**
- List the events that happen in Tom Tom's usual pre-school day. List the events that happen in your usual school day. Compare the days. **(An)**
- Along with your classmates, time yourselves through a day to find out how long each of you spend doing different activities. Construct a graph of the time spent doing different activities. Compare results. **(Ap)**
- Investigate other cultures around the world and find out how children spend their day. **(Ap)**
- Why would they shut the windows to keep the *debil-debils* out? **(An)**
- Why do you think Lemonade Springs had that name? **(An)**
- When playing in the Aboriginal cubby house Tom Tom imagines he is living in the old days. What do you imagine when you are playing by yourself? What imaginary games do you play? **(Ap)**
- *Ku tek* and *debil-debil* are Aboriginal words. Find other Aboriginal words and their English equivalent. **(Ap)**

## Going deeper

- Write a procedural text about how to make damper. **(Cr)**
- Design games the children could play in the water. **(Cr)**
- Create your own imaginary game. **(Cr)**
- Discuss living in Lemonade Springs. **(Ev)**



## Author comments

I wrote *Tom Tom* because I wanted to write about the Aboriginal children ... Not only did I want indigenous children to see themselves in the book, I wanted children everywhere to see all the things we have in common, but also the very different ways people in Australia live.

It is very rewarding that Dee Huxley and I were able to create a picture book that has been so warmly received by both indigenous and non indigenous people.

*Tom Tom* is important because it adds to the body of literature indigenous children can read and relate to. It has been incredibly important to me, because previously I was just someone who wanted to write books, and now I am an author, even if of only one book!

## Illustrator comments

A culmination of a 'less is more' text, an appreciation and admiration now of the people and landscape of the Northern Territory, led me to illustrate Rosemary's picture book.

As *Tom Tom* was the second book of this genre (*You And Me: Our Place* written by Leonie Norrington was the first), I wanted to approach it differently in medium and technique. The result – soft and multi-layered, like *Tom Tom*.

# Puffling

Author: Margaret Wild

Illustrator: Julie Vivas

ISBN: 9781862915985

Publisher: Omnibus Books, Scholastic Australia

www.scholastic.com.au

RRP: \$27.99



## Starting out

- List the main characters in this story. **(Re)**
- List the natural history facts about puffins obtained from this book. **(Re)**
- What does a puffin have to do before it can enter the water? **(Re)**
- Who are Big Stripy Beak and Long Black Feather? **(Un)**
- Why couldn't Puffling leave the burrow straight after he was born? How long did it take? **(Un)**
- Why do you think Puffling never went right out of the burrow while his parents were away? **(Un)**

## Branching out

- Research animals. Construct a chart of animal information including: the name for the animal; the name for the offspring; group names for the animal. **(Ap)**
- Research how other animals look after their young. **(Ap)**
- Create your own Puffling story using a different animal. It might feature a human! **(Ap)**
- Write your own Puffling story using the illustrations but not these words. **(An)**
- Write about Puffling's feelings, as he was alone and preparing to leave the burrow. **(An)**
- Write a scientific description about pufflings. **(Ap)**
- Create a presentation of animals and their offspring. **(Ap)**
- Classify a collection of animals into different groups. **(Ap)**

## Going deeper

- Role-play this story. **(Cr)**
- Research the natural history of puffins. Construct an information report about puffins and include labelled diagrams. **(Cr)**
- What do you think Puffling thought as he watched his parents leave for the final time? Discuss how you feel when you are left alone. **(Ev)**
- Construct a model of a puffin nesting area. **(Cr)**
- Discuss growing up – Is it the same for all animals? **(Ev)**
- Recommend reasons why we need to protect our wildlife. **(Ev)**
- Design signs to protect puffin nesting areas. **(Cr)**
- Invent a device to protect puffin chicks from predators. **(Cr)**
- Discuss in a group how children are protected as they grow up. **(Ev)**
- Write a verse about your family and growing up. **(Cr)**

## Author comments

In an article about puffins I came across the term 'puffling' which is what the baby birds are called. I loved the word. It immediately sparked my imagination, so I started creating a story about a little puffling who is cheeky and bold and impatient to go out into the world. To do this, I drew on my observation of small children who often take pride and pleasure in their growth and abilities. For example, they love having their height measured to show how they've grown, or they enjoy flexing their muscles to show how strong they are becoming.

I hope some young readers might see themselves reflected in the story, and realise that they, too, have the courage and competence to embark on new ventures.

# The Wish Pony

Author: Catherine Bateson

ISBN: 9781741663242

Publisher: Woolshed Press, Random House Australia

www.randomhouse.com.au

RRP: \$15.95



## Starting out

- List the main characters in this story and their characteristics. **(Re)**
- Compile a timeline of events. **(Re)**
- Why did Ruby have a falling out with her best friend Sarah? How do they resolve this? **(Un)**
- 'If wishes were horses, beggars would ride.' What does this mean? **(Un)**
- Why do you think Ruby was upset about Magda using her mum's cup? **(Un)**
- Why did Ruby want to create a garden? **(Un)**

## Branching out

- Discuss Magda and her role in the book: who she was going to see, why she refused to take back the Wish Pony. Write a biography of Magda. **(An)**
- 'There you are, you dears. Moving on ... Work's done here', Magda says, 'New job about to start.' (page 102). What work had Magda done? What do you think her new job will be? **(An)**
- What was important about the relationship between Magda and Ruby? **(An)**
- Magda and Ruby describe themselves in five words (page 9). Describe yourself in five words. **(Ap)**
- Every night they played the name the baby game (page 95). What name would you give the new baby? What does your name mean? Why was your name chosen for you? **(Ap)**
- Why do you think the author finishes most chapters with a section in italics? What is the purpose of having this section in a different font? **(An)**
- Find some of the books Magda gives away and read them yourself. Why were books so important to Magda? **(An)**
- Examine the importance of the Wish Pony to the narrative. **(An)**
- In many communities older people are revered and stay with families. How do families in your community look after old people? **(An)**
- Make a list of other 'lucky' objects. What are they supposed to do? Do these 'lucky' objects work? **(An)**
- If you had a Wish Pony, what would you wish for? **(An)**
- Discuss the role of best friends. What would you do for your best friend? What would you expect your best friend to do for you? **(Ap)**
- What were the reasons for Ruby creating the special garden? **(An)**



## Going deeper

- What would you write in an apology letter to Sarah? Imagine a time when you needed to apologise to somebody. What would you do? Create a letter or card to express your apology. **(Cr)**
- Ruby developed a business venture – Prancing Pooches. Develop your own business venture. Design a brochure and magazine advertisement for it. **(Cr)**
- If you were teaching an older person like Magda to use a computer what would you do? What would be important for them to know? Compile a list of instructions and create a guide to help an older person use a computer. **(Ev)**
- Discuss the issue of ignoring older people. **(Ev)**
- If you were creating something special (like Ruby did) for someone what would it be and who would it be for? Present your answer as a talk or visual presentation. **(Cr)**
- Do best friends need rules about how to treat one another? **(Ev)**

## Useful websites

[www.catherine-bateson.com](http://www.catherine-bateson.com)

## Author comments

I love the idea that throughout our lives we find unexpected guardians or mentors whose presence can slightly alter life's course. Magda is a slightly cranky mentor whose book basket pays tribute to some of the books I grew up with as a child. I was an only child and in my imaginary worlds the division between reality and fantasy blurred and shifted. I hope I've managed to convey some of this in *The Wish Pony*.

# Polar Boy

Author: Sandy Fussell

ISBN: 9781921150388

Publisher: Walker Books

www.walkerbooks.com.au

RRP: \$14.95



## Starting out

- Identify the human and animal characters in this book. **(Re)**
- Summarise the story. **(Un)**
- Write a detailed character description of one of the characters. **(Re)**
- List all the facts in this book. **(Re)**
- When was this book set? What clues are given in the story? **(Un)**
- What does the phrase 'learn by the seat of your pants' (page 75) mean? What have you learnt this way? **(Un)**
- List the onomatopoeia words in the book. What do they describe? **(Re)**

## Branching out

- Research the non-human animals in the book. Why are they so important? What do they signify? **(An)**
- Construct a family tree for Iluak or for yourself. **(Ap)**
- Find all the uses of animal skins mentioned in this book and then compare these uses to the use of animal skins today. **(An)**
- Find out more about the Northern lights. How are they formed? When and where do you see these lights? **(An)**
- Research to discover the important things to an Inuit's life. **(An)**
- Grandma's chatter is like a 'harem of seals' (page 29). Compile a list of other animal collective nouns. **(An)**
- Iluak says 'I try to imagine a world with more sun and less ice. A world where you can take your gloves off in mid winter' (pages 71–2). Construct a chart contrasting your world with Iluak's. **(Ap)**
- How is friendship like caribou string (page 101)? **(An)**
- Compare and contrast the life of Iluak to the life of a boy today. **(An)**
- How are prophecies woven into the story? **(An)**
- Describe all the ways that the non-humans and the animals are an integral part of this story. **(An)**

## Going deeper

- Are all the things you own essential? What do you need? What do you want? Discuss your answers with your classmates. **(Ev)**
- Experiment with ice cubes and water. Build a wall of ice cubes. How does water that you add make it stronger? Write instructions for building an ice wall. **(Cr)**
- The construction of an igloo is described on pages 26–29. Rewrite these as step-by-step directions. Construct a model of an igloo. **(Cr)**
- Debate whether people today should be able to hunt whales if it is part of their culture. **(Ev)**



- Investigate and discuss the issues surrounding 'scientific' whaling. **(Ev)**
- Discuss the nomadic life and how it would change and what we would have to do each day if we belonged to a nomadic tribe. **(Ev)**
- Investigate the Inuit life today. Prepare a travel brochure and podcast to entice people to visit the land. **(Cr)**
- Write a synopsis that would continue the life of Iluak. **(Cr)**

## Useful websites

www.sandyfussell.com

## Author comments

Writing *Polar Boy* was a wonderful journey for me. My feet will never go where my words went – across the ice and back through history – but my imagination goes back there all the time.

When I read an account by the Danish polar explorer, Rasmussen, about early contact with the Igulik people, I was immediately fascinated by the sense of timelessness on the ice. The Inuit people and their ancestors have lived a life of harsh struggle and adversity for centuries but at the same time celebrating the beauty and spirituality of those same surroundings.

As an author I relished the challenge of trying to describe this world. Everything is white. Everything is wet and cold. There is no metal, no wood, no trees and few animals. Similes and adjectives were hard to find. I had to try and invent other ways to say 'snow' and 'ice' but in the end I felt I had achieved it – because I would sit at my desk shivering as I wrote.



# Then

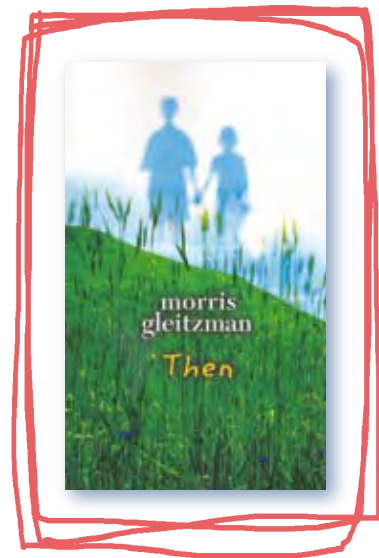
Author: Morris Gleitzman

ISBN: 9780670072781

Publisher: Viking, Penguin Group Australia

www.penguin.com.au

RRP: \$19.95



## Starting out

- Make a list of the events in the story. **(Re)**
- What do you think are the main themes of the story? Write a description about these themes. **(Un)**
- Explain why Felix dragged Aamon out of the house at the end of the story. **(Un)**
- Why do you think Zelda had to die? **(Un)**
- On the end pages the author wrote a note to the readers. Why do you think this was necessary? **(Un)**
- How is loss and grief portrayed in this book? **(Un)**

## Branching out

- Research information on the holocaust. How is this applicable in the book? **(An)**
- How does Felix change in the developing narrative? **(An)**
- She 'may be only 6 but she's got the kindness of a ten-year-old' (page 89). What does this say about Zelda, and about Felix? **(An)**
- Discuss arguments. How do they occur? How are they resolved? Role-play different solutions for a possible argument. **(Ap)**
- Investigate ways of preserving foods (page 121). Why would this have been so important to the characters in this book and when this book was set? **(An)**
- Investigate the author's website (see the end of these notes) for the other listed books to read. Find the books and write a summary of how they interrelate with this title. **(Ap)**
- Write about your own feelings about war and the impact it has on children and childhood. **(Ap)**
- Examine why eggs are so important in this story. **(An)**
- Why did people shelter the Jews during the war? **(An)**
- Felix does something that he didn't want to do (page 133). Have you ever done something that you didn't want to do? How did you feel? How did you resolve this? **(Ap)**
- Why do you think the author begins each chapter with the word 'Then'? **(An)**
- How were the Jews treated in this novel? **(An)**
- Locate and read books about a specific historical event such as this. Write your own story based on this researched history. **(Ap)**

## Going deeper

- Choose a scene from the book and illustrate it using the details the book provides. **(Cr)**
- Create a trailer or podcast to promote this book. **(Cr)**
- Felix and Zelda invent a machine to feed chickens automatically (page 15). Construct a model of this machine and write a description about how it operates. **(Cr)**

- In groups devise alternatives to fighting when disagreements occur at school. **(Ev)**
- Read *Once*, the first book in the series. How do these two books interrelate? Propose an outline for another book about Felix. What might it be called? **(Cr)**
- Discuss Felix's comment 'Why do people start wars when they know so many sad things are going to happen?' (page 52). **(Ev)**
- Discuss stories, the stories we read and the stories we tell and how they help us remember. **(Cr)**
- Write a verse to express your feelings about the death of Zelda. **(Cr)**

## Other titles in this series

*Once*

## Useful websites

www.morrisgleitzman.com

## Author comments

This story comes from my imagination, but it was of course inspired by an all-too-real period of history. In particular it was inspired by the people who risked everything to shelter strangers. That generosity and bravery will always shine for me, and is made even brighter by the darkness of that time.

# Audrey of the Outback

Author: Christine Harris

Illustrator: Ann James

ISBN: 9781921272189

Publisher: Little Hare Books

www.littleharebooks.com

RRP: \$14.99



## Starting out

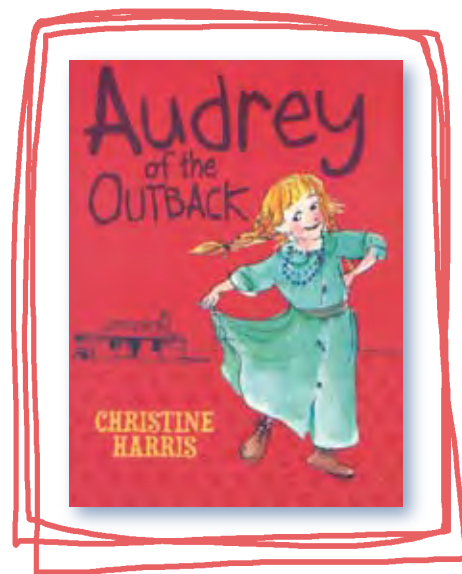
- List the challenges faced by Audrey and her family in this book. **(Re)**
- Who are the main characters in the book? Compile a list of words to describe each character. **(Re)**
- Retell Audrey's story in your own words. **(Un)**
- Audrey lay outside on her swag and imagined bunyips (page 44). What are bunyips? Describe and draw your own bunyip. **(Un)**

## Branching out

- Collect images of outback Australia set in Audrey's time. **(Ap)**
- Swaggies carried all their essentials wrapped in or attached to their roll. What was the roll? If you had to be a swaggie what would you carry? Make a list and discuss this. Draw what might go in your own swag, then create your own swag. **(Ap)**
- At the end of the book there is a list of 'interesting words' that are very Australian. Compile a list of other 'very Australian' words that are not in normal use and give their meanings. Interview parents and older relatives or refer to books to make a list. Make a matching game using these words and their meanings. **(Ap)**
- Write a description of Audrey's house. Write a description of where you live. Draw plans of both. Compare both places. **(Ap)**
- Audrey is often talking to Stumpy. Who is Stumpy? Why did Audrey want Stumpy to go away (page 134)? Create your own imaginary 'friend' like Stumpy. Write a description of this 'friend'. Compose a conversation between you and your imaginary friend. **(Ap)**
- Compile a list of chores that Audrey has to do. Compile a list of chores that you have to do. Compare the two lists. Whose chores do you think are harder? Justify your answer. **(An)**
- What type of school does Audrey go to? Compare your school and Audrey's. Construct a chart showing the similarities and the differences. **(An)**

## Going deeper

- Audrey poses some big questions. What are they and what answers did she unravel? Compile a list of big questions that you would like to discover answers to. Choose a question, either yours or Audrey's. Research this and write a report about your big question. **(Ev)**
- Audrey says 'How come girls are allowed to cry when people are looking but not boys?' (page 157). Debate this question. **(Ev)**



- 'I want to be a teacher' says Audrey to her mum, '... it's easy' (page 92). But it doesn't quite work out the way Audrey hopes. What happens when Audrey is the teacher? Role-play Audrey as the teacher. If you were Audrey what would you have done differently? Compile a list of things that teachers do in one day. What is easy or hard about what the teachers have to do? Discuss this in groups. **(Ev)**
- Design the perfect classroom. **(Cr)**
- Write an outline for another Audrey story. **(Cr)**
- Make a podcast or videocast promoting *Audrey of the Outback*. **(Cr)**

## Next title in this series

*Audrey goes to Town*

## Useful websites

www.christineharris.com

## Author comments

The best thing about readers' responses to the Audrey books is how much they love Audrey. She is so real that I can't quite call her a 'character'. She is a 'person'. Readers see Audrey as someone they like and want to be friends with, which is wonderful. (I like her too.) The world of our recent past is often hidden from children, so it's been exciting to open that door for youngsters to peer through.

# Perry Angel's Suitcase

Author: Glenda Millard

Illustrator: Stephen Michael King

ISBN: 9780733322556

Publisher: ABC Books

www.abcbooks.com.au

RRP: \$14.95



## Starting out

- Write a description of each character in the story. Draw the family tree. **(Re)**
- Construct a timeline of the events of this book. **(Re)**
- Describe the Kingdom of Silk. **(Re)**
- Why is the suitcase so important to Perry? What did he have in his suitcase? **(Re)**
- Was Layla worried by Perry coming to the Kingdom of Silk? Explain your response. **(Un)**
- Why is the Day of Cake and Thankfulness (Chapter 11) so important and such a good name? **(Un)**
- Why was the arrival of Perry so important to the Kingdom of Silk? **(Un)**
- Layla was a child of unquenchable curiosity (page 25). What characteristics does she demonstrate? **(Un)**
- Where is the book set? How do you know? **(Un)**
- Why was it important for Madonna to hatch her eggs and the duck eggs (page 74)? **(Un)**

## Branching out

- The preacher says '... in the kingdom of silk. It is the closest place on earth to the Kingdom of Heaven ...' (page 112) Why do you think he said this? **(An)**
- Why do you think Layla is such an important member of the Kingdom of Silk, especially to Griffin? What are some reasons for a child like Perry to go to the Silks? **(An)**
- Compare your family to the Kingdom of Silk. **(An)**
- Describe yourself. What characteristics do you have? Could you be a member of the Kingdom of Silk? **(An)**
- Each of the Silks and Layla has a special gift to greet Perry (page 29). What would you take if you were greeting Perry? **(An)**
- Imagine yourself in Perry's shoes, or think of a time when you would have felt like Perry. Write a poem to describe your feelings. **(Ap)**
- Griffin kept treasure under his bed. Write about the treasures you would keep and where you would keep them. Why are they important to you? **(Ap)**
- Perry was silent for a long time. What would you do if you were in a similar situation? **(Ap)**
- At Easter the Silks had their promises bowl (page 72). Apply the promises bowl activity just like they do in the book to your class. **(Ap)**
- Make a list of things you would be thankful for if you had a Day of Cake and Thankfulness. Describe this day. In small groups role-play a day of Cake and Thankfulness ceremony. **(Ap)**



## Going deeper

- Construct wings like those worn by Layla and the Silks. **(Cr)**
- Paint eggs as the Silks did (Chapter 7) using paints or felt pens. **(Cr)**
- DMDGA are the letters on Perry's suitcase (page 46). They construct a word game. In pairs make your own sentence for these letters. With a partner (or in small groups) using the initials of your names construct your own word games. **(Cr)**
- Discuss welfare and adoption in relation to the story and real life. **(Ev)**
- Why was Layla so protective of Perry at school? Discuss what happens when students are threatened or bullied and what should be done at school. **(Ev)**

## Other titles in this series

*The Naming of Tishkin Silk*  
*Layla Queen of Hearts*

## Useful websites

[www.stephenmichaelking.com](http://www.stephenmichaelking.com)

## Author comments

I have enormous admiration for people who voluntarily nurture the child of a stranger, especially one whose background is vastly different to their own. In the first two Kingdom of Silk books I aimed to show the resilience of the Silk family, their ways of dealing with the tragic or the mundane and the power of love and belonging. My goal in introducing Perry Angel into the Silk family was to find out how family members and the wider community would react to having a stranger in their midst and also how Perry, whose only experience of family was one of change, disappointment and rejection, would adapt to life with the Silks.

## Illustrator comments

Probably all of Glenda's stories make me cry or at least attack me on some deep emotional level ... I don't know if it's Glenda's words or some deeper truth within them. I just know that it's a privilege to illustrate her work and that those words make me aware of why I love to illustrate books.

# The Wizard of Rondo

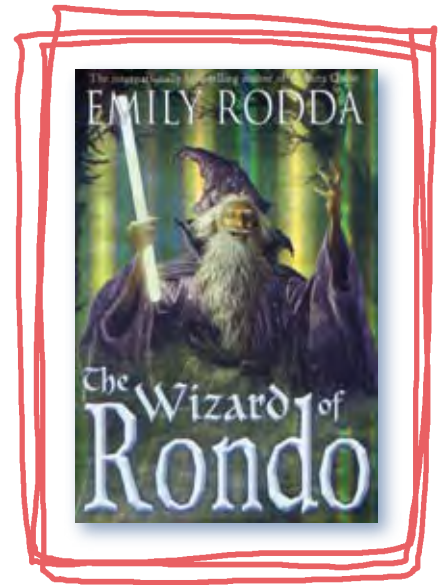
Author: Emily Rodda

ISBN: 9781862917927

Publisher: Omnibus Books, Scholastic Australia

[www.scholastic.com.au](http://www.scholastic.com.au)

RRP: \$29.99



## Starting out

- Mimi and Leo return to Rondo and with the rest of the team are on a quest to clear Wizard Bing's apprentice. Retell in your own words how they do this. **(Un)**
- List all of the characters in *The Wizard of Rondo*. Create a list of their characteristics. **(Re)**
- Choose one character and write a detailed description about this character based on your list. **(Un)**
- Create a timeline of the events that happen in Rondo. **(Re)**
- Retell how the characters in the book outwit the Blue Queen. **(Un)**
- Describe in your own words the world of Rondo. **(Un)**

## Branching out

- Bertha has to make a choice (Chapter 31, page 314) whether to save her farm friends or to save Mimi. Why do you think she decides to search for Mimi? **(An)**
- Why do you think the author created the character of the Blue Queen? Could this story unfold without this character? **(An)**
- If you encountered the Blue Queen or Spoiler what would you do to outwit them? Do you think the Blue Queen and Spoiler are treated fairly in this book? **(An)**
- Why do you think the author created the world of Rondo? Do you believe these adventures could occur in our world? Give reasons for your answer. **(An)**
- In this book a magic music box is the portal to another world. What object would you choose to transport you to another world? Describe the object. Describe your fantasy world, the characters that dwell there and what happens in it. **(Ap)**
- What traits of Mimi and Leo do you not like? How could they change these? **(An)**

## Going deeper

- Choose one event that happens and act this out. **(Cr)**
- Construct a model or draw an image of your interpretation of Rondo. **(Cr)**
- Could a fantasy world exist? Discuss this question. **(Ev)**
- Conduct a debate on the possibilities of the existence of 'other' worlds. How would you know if other worlds existed? Could other worlds exist without our knowledge? **(Ev)**
- This is the second book in the Rondo series. Create an outline for another Rondo book. Invent some new characters. Write a description about your new characters. **(Cr)**
- Do the actions of Mimi and Leo and the questing team justify what happens in the end? Discuss. **(Ev)**

- The key allows access to the world of Rondo. What would happen if the key was destroyed? What might happen to the world of Rondo if the music box is damaged? Write about your feelings of the world of Rondo. Would you like to be part of this world? How could you make it a better place? **(Ev)**

## Previous title in this series

*The Key to Rondo*

## Useful websites

[www.emilyrodde.com](http://www.emilyrodde.com)

## Author comments

*The Wizard of Rondo* is written in a light, humorous and thoroughly engaging style. The world and the characters of Rondo are richly described and vividly brought to life. The writing melds the fast-paced, action-packed style of *Deltora Quest* with the finely crafted flavour of Rodda's earlier work and will therefore appeal to both dedicated and reluctant readers.

(Courtesy of Scholastic)

# Monster Blood Tattoo

## Book Two: Lamplighter

Author: David Cornish

ISBN: 9780399246395

Publisher: Omnibus Books, Scholastic Australia

[www.scholastic.com.au](http://www.scholastic.com.au)

RRP: \$19.99



### Starting out

- Create a mind map of the key parts of the story. **(Re)**
- Write your own synopsis of the book. **(Un)**
- Why do you think the author created this language as explained in the Explicarium? **(Un)**
- What is the task of the Lamplighter? **(Re)**
- Describe Rossamund's training at Winstermill Manse as the prentice Lamplighter. **(Un)**
- Construct character profiles for Rossamund and Threnody. **(Un)**
- Identify key incidents in the time of this Lamplighter. **(Re)**
- Prepare a list of criteria for being a Lamplighter. **(Un)**

### Branching out

- Using the Prentice Schedule (Appendix 8) choose a day and write about that day. **(An)**
- Describe how you would feel being a prentice Lamplighter. **(An)**
- If you could choose to be any character in the book who would you be and why? **(An)**
- Working in groups, compile information about each of the main characters and their role in the book. Construct a chart showing how they interact. **(An)**
- Choose a battle scene from Chapter 26 and then rewrite the language of the Lamplighter into the language of today so that a reader without the Explicarium and without knowledge of the text would understand. **(An)**
- 'I am sorry to have slain thee, whispered Rossamund' (page 523) over the dying monster. Why was he sorry? Would you be sorry if you were Rossamund? In what situations could this apply today? **(Ap)**
- Why do you think Rossamund did not want the markings (page 529) while Threnody did? What do you think the markings were? **(An)**

### Going deeper

- Illustrate the battle scene of Rossamund and Threnody with a monster. **(Cr)**
- Why do you think the author has constructed this story with the language differences, the use of the Explicarium and the differences in time periods? Does this make the book more interesting for you? Defend your argument. **(Ev)**
- Write an outline for the third book in the series. Create other words and phrases that would be added to the Explicarium. What do you think will happen to Rossamund? **(Cr)**



- Create your own nicker that a Lamplighter might encounter. Write a description and construct a model or draw it. Remember to include how this monster could be defeated. **(Cr)**
- Design a new tool to assist the Lamplighters in their duties. **(Cr)**
- Compile a review for *Lamplighter*. **(Ev)**
- Prepare an argument for or against the role of the Lamplighter in this society. **(Ev)**

### Other titles in this series

*Monster Blood Tattoo Book One: Foundling*

### Useful websites

[www.dmcornish.com](http://www.dmcornish.com)

### Author comments

David Cornish has enjoyed all kinds of fantasy, reading *The Lord of the Rings* at age twelve and progressing to Mervyn Peake's Gormenghast trilogy. His reading of *Titus Alone* inspired him to create his own world in words and illustrations, and his early concept of a country and its city Brandenbrass was the first incarnation of this fantasy. Over thirteen years, this world was documented in twenty-seven closely written and illustrated notebooks and David was encouraged to transfer his fantasy creation to a story. The result – the first in the series entitled *Monster Blood Tattoo Book One: Foundling* – and *Book Two: Lamplighter*, are rich in allusions to the Half-Continent, and the struggle between monsters and humankind; their respective 'Explicarium' or glossary explaining the lore and history of this world in its own language, a fascinating mixture of faux Latin, Classical Greek and German that nonetheless reads as a fresh new form of expression.

*(Courtesy of Scholastic)*

# Into White Silence

Author: Anthony Eaton

ISBN: 9781741663259

Publisher: Random House Australia

[www.randomhouse.com.au](http://www.randomhouse.com.au)

RRP: \$24.95



## Starting out

- What was the motive behind Rourke's adventure? **(Un)**
- Describe the physical environment of the Antarctic as portrayed in the book. **(Re)**
- List the main characters in the book and their roles and fate of the RAVEN crew. **(Re)**
- Construct a timeline of events as portrayed in the book for the writer and another for the lieutenant. **(Re)**
- Retell the story of the Lieutenant. **(Un)**
- What are the two narratives woven into this book. **(Un)**
- What defeats the expedition in the end? **(Un)**
- Discuss what drives people to undertake such dangerous adventures. **(Un)**

## Branching out

- Compare and contrast the experiences of Easton to the journal of Lieutenant William Downes. **(An)**
- Identify and discuss the main themes behind the book *Into White Silence*. **(An)**
- How does the writer portray the futility of the adventure? **(An)**
- Identify the non-fiction elements in this book. How does this affect the narrative? **(An)**
- Were the actions of the crew of the RAVEN appropriate? Suggest alternative actions. **(Ap)**
- List the criteria for the type of people who would endure life in the Antarctic. **(An)**
- Read some of the non-fiction titles referenced in the bibliography. How do these enlighten your experience of this book? **(An)**
- Prepare a visual presentation of life in the Antarctic. **(Ap)**
- Research some of the expeditions mentioned. What were the experiences of these explorers? What did they achieve? **(An)**
- Discuss people's fascination with the Antarctic. **(Ap)**
- Construct a model of the Antarctic now and as it would have been in the Lieutenant's days. **(Ap)**
- Research early polar explorations. In a group propose questions such as what equipment was used, what drove these explorers. Then investigate and analyse the questions and present your findings to the whole class. **(An)**
- Describe your feelings if you were on board the RAVEN and had just been informed that you were stuck in the ice and would be spending winter on the RAVEN (page 268). **(Ap)**
- Compare modern Antarctic expeditions with the Lieutenant's. **(Ap)**
- What other dangerous endeavours are left for humans to engage in? Predict how they might be undertaken. **(Ap)**

## Going deeper

- The author describes this book as heavily gothic. How is this portrayed? **(Ev)**
- Downes' diary concludes with him stepping out into white silence. Discuss what could happen next and then write what you think would be the next entries in the diary. **(Cr)**
- Prepare an audiovisual presentation designed to attract people to establish life in the Antarctic as a permanent residence. **(Cr)**
- Expeditions to the Antarctic are extremely dangerous and a waste of time and money – debate. **(Ev)**
- Prepare a discussion on the criteria that embodies heroism. **(Ev)**
- Identify a local hero and write about why they are a hero. **(Ev)**
- Dangerous endeavours are non-existent today – debate. **(Ev)**
- Discuss how individual members of society are affected when the structure of civilisation is removed. **(Ev)**
- Invent a machine that would enable a solo explorer to survive in the Antarctic. Create and label a diagram. Explain how this machine works. **(Cr)**
- 'For there are no easy answers here, no neat or happy endings. You will have to make your own decisions about the tale of Lieutenant William Downes, come to your own judgements and draw your own conclusions' (pages 388–9). Respond to this statement. **(Ev)**

## Useful websites

ANARE  
[www.aad.gov.au/default.asp?casid=7309](http://www.aad.gov.au/default.asp?casid=7309)  
[www.aad.gov.au/default.asp?casid=24](http://www.aad.gov.au/default.asp?casid=24)  
[www.hazeledwards.com/antarctica.htm](http://www.hazeledwards.com/antarctica.htm)  
[www.anthonyeaton.com](http://www.anthonyeaton.com)

## Author comments

When I set out to write this novel, the book I had in my head was very different from the one I ended up writing. Originally, I'd intended this to be something of a boys-own-adventure kind of thing; a throwback to the golden days of polar exploration (though it was always going to end badly...) I didn't realise that the end product would be so heavily gothic, and would take me to some pretty incredible places – both physically and emotionally. I had the opportunity to travel south to Antarctica to research the book, and that trip changed everything about how I see myself, my world, and my role as a writer and storyteller.

# A Rose For The ANZAC Boys

Author: Jackie French

ISBN: 9780732285401

Publisher: HarperCollins Publishers

www.harpercollins.com.au

RRP:\$15.99



## Starting out

- List the tasks performed by the women who 'fought' in the war. **(Re)**
- 'But it is also in war – in any adversity – that humans sometime show their greatest courage, loyalty and love' (page 265). Describe how that was demonstrated in the characters in this book. **(Un)**
- World War I was called the Great War. Compile a list of facts that you can elicit from this book about this war: **(Re)**
- Why was World War I known as the war to end all wars? Which countries fought in this war and for what? **(Un)**
- In groups, discuss the themes and characters in this book. Construct a profile of the characters. **(Un)**
- What was in the food parcels that were sent to the soldiers? **(Un)**
- What is the significance of the title of this book? **(Un)**

## Branching out

- Research the women's auxiliary who 'fought' in the wars. Why did they 'fight'? **(An)**
- In groups, prepare a presentation describing how humans show their greatest courage, loyalty and love today. **(Ap)**
- In groups research the history of the ANZACs. Look especially for information that reveals the stories 'behind' the ANZACs. Find a story that inspires you. Prepare a presentation about one of these 'stories' of people who fought in these wars. **(An)**
- Present an argument to defend the statement that this is a book that all people should read. **(An)**
- 'To Midge's surprise the men regarded the prisoners with sympathy' (page 171). Why do you think Midge was surprised? Would you have been surprised? **(An)**
- Discuss how you could celebrate ANZAC Day in your school, or in your community. **(Ap)**
- Compile a collection of images from World War I that describe your feelings and attitudes towards this book and the war. Prepare this as a keynote presentation with appropriate music. You might consider a dramatic script as well. **(Ap)**
- Write an article for the newspaper of the day telling what the women who went to war did. **(Ap)**
- Write a letter from Midge to her aunt describing her experience in the operating theatre (pages 146–52). **(Ap)**
- How were the people in this book heroic? **(An)**

## Going deeper

- Prepare a presentation showing where the Australian military are serving today. Include information on what they are doing and why. **(Cr)**



- The author writes '... we need to know the past to understand today' (page 265). Discuss what this means and how it applies to this book and how you see this statement applying to you. Present your discussions. **(Cr)**
- Write a short fictional story using the diaries and letters and your researched history of the ANZACs. **(Cr)**
- Make the Soldiers Biscuits and the ANZAC Tiles (pages 284–5) as presented in the book. **(Cr)**
- Debate the topic that only veterans should parade in ANZAC Day marches. **(Ev)**
- Create a book trailer to promote this book at school and for display on the web. **(Cr)**
- Discuss ways that countries can resolve differences of opinion. **(Ev)**
- Do you agree that all international controversies should be settled through the United Nations? **(Ev)**

## Useful websites

www.jackiefrench.com.au  
www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac/  
www.awm.gov.au/atwar/

## Author comments

*A Rose for the ANZAC Boys* is a book about war. War is not glorious, but sometimes in wartime people reach the greatest heights of love and kindness and humanity. It's a book about 'the forgotten army' – the uncounted tens of thousands of women volunteers of World War I.

... Those extraordinary girls and women began the war as school girls, housewives, or hostesses, and ended as a body of unstoppable, experienced and probably very stropy women.

From them we can learn:

- selflessness – 'doing your bit' – and the extraordinary things it can achieve
- dedication – giving to others provides more joy and fulfillment than any amount of self-indulgence. (Who is happier, do you think, Rose Macpherson of this book, or Paris Hilton?)

... People ran cheering with excitement in the streets when World War I was declared. We still have wars, but no-one except those who make the profits cheer them.

The women who served in World War I went on to change the world. Things CAN change.

# Finnikin of the Rock

Author: Melina Marchetta

ISBN: 9780670072811

Publisher: Viking, Penguin Group Australia

www.penguin.com.au

RRP \$24.95



## Starting out

- What is the significance of the title? (Un)
- Construct a timeline of events in the book. (Re)
- Create a mind map identifying the key events of the story. (Re)
- Summarise the story for a literary journal. (Un)
- What are the main themes or ideas flowing through the book? (Un)
- The Land of Skulkendore is divided into a number of kingdoms. Compile descriptions about each of the kingdoms. (Re)
- Write a description comparing the Kingdom of Lumatere before and after the unspeakable. (Un)
- What is life like for the exiled people of Lumatere and also for those trapped inside? (Re)
- Present in words and pictures a profile for each of the main characters and how they develop. (Un)
- This book is separated into three parts. What are they and what is the significance of each? (Un)

## Branching out

- Discuss how the author's comment about the characters is evident. (An)
- The author has included a poem by Primo Levi in the book. Does reading the book influence or affect the reader's interpretation of the poem? If so, how? (An)
- Use the maps in the book to plot Finnikin's journey. (An)
- Compare and contrast the different kingdoms in the land of Skulkendore. (An)
- Discuss the importance of each of the main characters to the developing narrative. (An)
- Finnikin is writing his Book of Lumatere. Investigate what he would have used to record his writings. What will the book contain? (An)
- Explain how religion and spirituality are woven into the book. (An)
- Discuss the statement '... only a few have been privileged enough to have a childhood' (page 335), as it applies to the novel. Discuss the relevance of this statement in the world today. (Ap)
- '... good people stood by while evil takes place.' (page 235). Discuss how that can be evident in particular events and circumstances today. (Ap)
- Investigate refugee camps today and identify similarities and difference to the camps described in the book. (Ap)
- Investigate the character of a traditional hero as it appears in literature and demonstrate how this applies to Finnikin. (An)
- Create illustrations for Finnikin and Evanjalín in the three parts of the book.



- Design a questionnaire to elicit information from classmates about their notions of revenge or about heroes. Present a report on the findings. (An)

## Going deeper

- As a group compile a list of your personal reflections on reading the book. (Ev)
- '... he has written the constitution of new Lumatere' (page 379). As a group create and agree to the constitution for the new Lumatere. (Cr)
- Discuss and identify books with similar themes as *Finnikin of the Rock*. (Ev)
- Create a promotional trailer for a collection of fantasy titles. (Cr)
- Debate 'There are worse things than a lie and there are better things than the truth' (page 256). (Ev)
- Prepare an argument to justify views on revenge as it applies to the statement '... we are not ordering the deaths of innocents ... we are taking revenge ...' (page 366). (Ev)
- Prepare an argument to present to our legislators about the treatment of 'exiles'. (Ev)

## Useful websites

www.melinamarchetta.com.au

## Author comments

*Finnikin of the Rock* is just as much about cultural identity and community as *Alibrandi* is. With the characters, Finnikin and Evanjalín, I wanted to explore the impact that loss of homeland has on two young people and the role faith and truth play in their lives.



# Kill the Possum

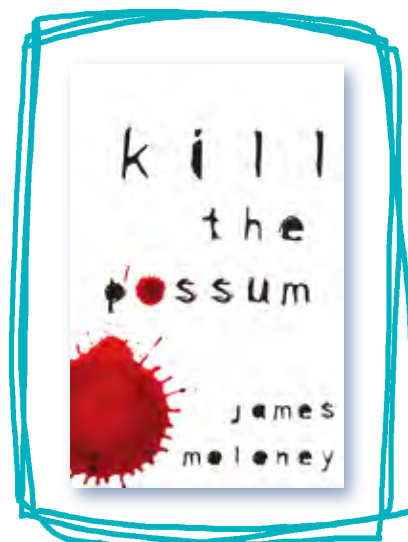
Author: James Moloney

ISBN: 9780143004202

Publisher: Penguin Group Australia

www.penguin.com.au

RRP \$19.95



## Starting out

- Construct a timeline of the main events in the story. **(Re)**
- Build character profiles of Dylan, Kirsty and Tim from your reading of the story. **(Un)**
- What are the main themes of the story? **(Un)**
- Retell the deadly gun scene. **(Un)**

## Branching out

- Discuss the statement 'Let your mates down and it'll stay with you for the rest of your life' (page 147), in general and with particular reference to Dylan. **(An)**
- How does the possum impact on the story? What is the significance of the possum? What is the significance of the title? **(An)**
- What do you think the author was trying to portray in this novel? **(An)**
- How do you think Dylan's relationship with his absent father impacts on the developing narrative? **(An)**
- Domestic violence is not just physical. In what other ways is it portrayed in this book? **(An)**
- Identify the times when killing is portrayed in this novel. How do they impact on the developing narrative? **(An)**
- Compare and contrast Dylan's relationships with Kirsty and Tim, and his grandparents. **(An)**
- Identify the times where revenge is portrayed in this novel. What is the consequence of these occurrences in the book? **(An)**
- Imagine you were Dylan in the death scene. What would you do? **(Ap)**
- Reflect on the violence and intimidation as portrayed in this book. Identify and then discuss the issues and consequences of violence. **(Ap)**

## Going deeper

- Kirsty's mother lied to protect her daughter. Was this justified? Discuss if this was the right thing to do. Is there a case for lying in certain circumstances? Prepare arguments for and against this. **(Ev)**
- Discuss and then debate the issue of killing one person to save another. Is it ever justified? **(Ev)**
- 'Evil shouldn't triumph.' What is evil? Discuss. **(Ev)**
- 'Society doesn't always help the way it should ...' (page 113). Do you agree with this statement? Conduct a debate on the topic. **(Ev)**
- Write a letter that Dylan might have sent to his mother after he visited his father in England. **(Cr)**

- Role-play a meeting between Dylan and his father. **(Cr)**
- Write a review for this book. **(Cr)**
- Make an announcement to be aired on television about community attitudes to domestic violence. Create a print advertisement as well. **(Cr)**

## Useful websites

[www.jamesmoloney.com.au](http://www.jamesmoloney.com.au)

About domestic violence

[www.police.qld.gov.au/programs/crimePrevention/dv/](http://www.police.qld.gov.au/programs/crimePrevention/dv/)

[www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/sp/Dom\\_violence.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/sp/Dom_violence.htm)

[www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/progserv/violence/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/progserv/violence/Pages/default.aspx)

[www.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/tanyaplibersek.nsf/content/tp\\_m\\_dom\\_violence\\_9jun2009.doc.htm](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/tanyaplibersek.nsf/content/tp_m_dom_violence_9jun2009.doc.htm)

## Author comments

It's been four decades since I was a teenager, but what I remember most is the passion for justice that surged through me. The plight of the defenceless and the oppressed could send me into a rage. At times I must have driven my friends and family mad with the need to discuss and debate the moral dilemmas of the day. The more patient of them, or was it the more devious, delighted in throwing up moral ambiguities to cut through my black and white views. I suppose *Kill the Possum* comes out of that experience – the idea that there can be a just end for even the most complicated problem, when in fact humanity is such a complex organism and reality such a brutal teacher; that in the end we all made our own accommodations and get on with life.

*Kill the Possum* is undoubtedly a dark book but I wrote to speak to all those adolescents who are like I was. They are still there, despite what the media might want us to believe and they still debate, they still think, they still feel passionately. To them it's personal.

# Tales from Outer Suburbia

Author and illustrator: Shaun Tan

ISBN: 9781941149173

Publisher: Allen and Unwin

www.allenandunwin.com

RRP : \$35.00



## Starting out

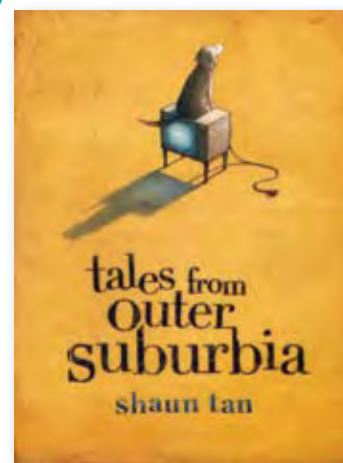
- List the way Shaun Tan has presented the stories. List the styles of presentation he uses. **(Re)**
- Retell the stories. **(Un)**
- What are the themes in this book? **(Un)**
- This book is grounded in suburban life but also has elements of fantasy. List the features of each as found in the stories. **(Re)**
- Looking at the story of Eric:
  - List of all the small things that Eric found (page 8). **(Re)**
  - What are some of the questions Eric might have asked (page 11)? **(Un)**
  - Why do you think Eric left? **(Un)**
  - What do you think this story is about? **(Un)**
- Looking at Grandpa's story (page 41):
  - Retell it in your own words. **(Un)**
  - Write the text that can replace the single-page illustrations. **(Un)**
  - What do you think were some of the objects that they found (page 50)? **(Un)**

## Branching out

- Explain what you think was the author's point in writing this collection of stories. Compare your opinions to what the author has written about this book at the end of these notes. **(An)**
- Write a tale of your own that is grounded in suburbia but that also involves elements of fantasy. **(Ap)**
- Role-play the grandparents' argument. **(Cr)**
- Think of other small things that Eric could have found (pages 18–29). Draw them. Construct a diorama like Eric's thank you gift. **(Ap)**
- In Grandpa's story did this type of wedding really happen? Compare this wedding with those of today. What are the similarities and what are the differences. Which would you prefer and why? **(An)**
- Discuss how each of these stories are linked to the themes of the book. **(An)**
- The author uses different styles and media to illustrate the stories. What does this achieve? **(An)**

## Going deeper

- Create your own illustrations for some of the written text. Write the text for some of the illustrated stories. **(Cr)**
- Choose one of the tales. Present this story as a podcast or videocast. **(Cr)**



- Draw or construct a model of your own missile. How would you decorate it? What other practical uses could your missile have? Write an instruction brochure for the conversion of an armed backyard missile to an object with a more practical use. **(Cr)**
- Conduct a panel discussion about the futility of war. **(Ev)**
- Each story in the book is about a strange situation or event that occurs in an otherwise familiar suburban world; how ordinary people react to these incidents; and how their significance is discovered, ignored or simply misunderstood. Follow the author's comments below to create your own story. **(Cr)**
- Write instructions for making your own pet. Use the author's instructions (page 82) as a guide for your own creation. **(Cr)**
- Grandpa made the statement 'a place lovers are doomed to visit at least once.'. (page 50). Do you agree? **(Ev)**

## Useful websites

www.shauntan.net

## Author comments

This book was a chance to explore a narrative form I've always been interested in: very short image-stories that are related but separate, a bit like a coherent dream, or something like a music album. It was also a chance to revisit my feelings of growing up in suburbia, of finding significance in a world that I used to be quite dismissive about as a younger person, thinking that good ideas are always somewhere else.

I hope it offers an interesting variation on a genre that might be called illustrated books (more broad than graphic novels). I hope too that it might inspire some children and adults to think more imaginatively about their immediate, everyday surroundings.

The form of my stories can be easily emulated by creative writing students. In most cases, stories began with a strange sketch: taking a familiar suburban environment (or an event from memory) and putting something odd into it, and that leading then to a written story. As an exercise, students can use either drawing, or collage, or a mixture of those as a way to trigger ideas.

# The Word Spy

Author: Ursula Dubosarsky

Illustrator: Tohby Riddle

ISBN: 9780670072279

Publisher: Viking, Penguin Group Australia

www.penguin.com.au

RRP: \$24.95



## Starting out

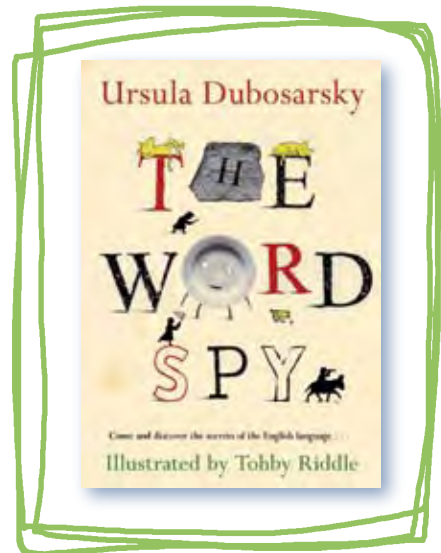
- Make a list of all the different word activities that are mentioned in the book. Write a short description for each activity. **(Re)**
- Who is the Word Spy? **(Un)**
- Create a list of homophones (page 142) that you know. **(Un)**
- At the end of the Word Spy's introductory letter it says 'P.S. there's a secret message for you ... and a part of the message [is] at the end of each chapter...' What is the message? (You can go to pages 243–4 for clues.) **(Un)**
- List all the different word activities mentioned. Write a definition for each. Play a matching game. **(Re)**

## Branching out

- Look at Tongue Twisters (page 154). As the Word Spy says try saying them as fast as you can. What happened? Why? **(Ap)**
- Create a list of onomatopoeia words (page 149). Make up some of your own. **(Ap)**
- Discuss what makes this book different to other language activity books. **(An)**
- Look at the headings, sub headings and the different fonts and settings throughout the book created by the illustrator: What effect do you think he achieved and why do you think he did that? **(An)**
- Punctuate unpunctuated passages. See if the same passage can be punctuated in different ways (Chapter 3). **(An)**
- Make a pangram with as few letters as possible (pages 82–4). **(Ap)**
- Create a list of palindrome words (pages 105–8). **(Ap)**
- Choose one activity and develop a 'game' based on it. Write the rules for the game and play the game with one or more of your classmates. **(Ap)**
- Invent some of your own tongue twisters and try them out. What makes a good tongue twister? **(Ap)**
- Look at Alphabets (pages 3–19) and then research other alphabets. Write a short explanation of some of those including how they were used and when. **(Ap)**

## Going deeper

- Construct a rule book for the different forms of punctuation. Make display cards to hang around the room. **(Cr)**
- Discuss what makes an original word game. Create an original word game. Write the rules. Play the game. **(Cr)**
- Brunch is a portmanteau word. Why do you think they were created? Create some of your own portmanteau words with definitions. Construct a game using these words. **(Cr)**



- Some books also have illustrated letters. Write a narrative and use some letters in a similar illustrated style. **(Cr)**
- Invent a new alphabet (page 15). Create an explanatory key for the new alphabet. After writing a letter to classmates in the new alphabet discuss the problems that arose. **(Ev)**

## Useful websites

www.ursuladubosarsky.com  
www.tohby.com

## Author comments

It started as a NSW Department of Education School Magazine column – designed to make playing with language fun and interesting for all sorts of readers, so as to have a very broad appeal. That's also why I invented the character 'the Word Spy', to give the book a kind of personality, to lead children into it ...

I was a word-loving, language-loving child (and remain so as an adult!) so for me it's been a way of sharing that love and energy and excitement of language with other children.

... So I think it is answering a real need – pleasurable child-focussed non-fiction about the very building blocks of society – words and language.

# Simpson and his Donkey

Author: Mark Greenwood

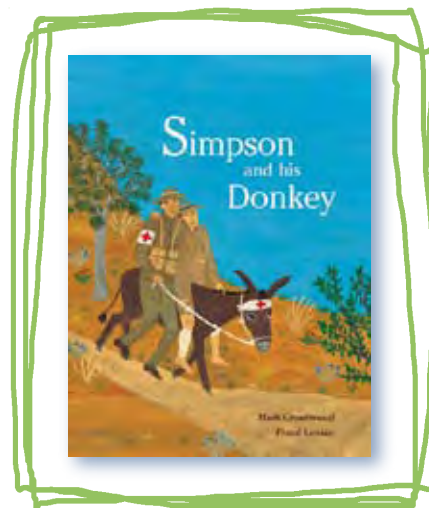
Illustrator: Frané Lessac

ISBN: 9781921150180

Publisher: Walker Books

www.walkerbooks.com.au

RRP: \$27.95



## Starting out

- Construct a timeline of Simpson's life. **(Re)**
- Closely look at the illustrations. Were the soldiers always fighting? Compile a list of activities that you can see the soldiers in these illustrations doing while they are away at war. **(Re)**
- When was this book set? How do you know? **(Re)**
- Why do you think Jack and the other stretcher men wore armbands? Did it help them? **(Un)**
- This story is told from the perspective of the allies. Retell the story from the perspective of the Turks. **(Un)**

## Branching out

- Compile a list of features/traits that you know about Simpson from reading this story. Supplement this by referring to other material. Write a biography about Simpson. **(Ap)**
- Look at the illustrations showing Simpson's grave. Who was present? What else can you see in the illustrations? Why do you think the Indian gunners gathered poppies? **(An)**
- Why do you think the author included Jack's early life in the story? **(An)**
- Why do you think the illustrator created the picture of Jack being shot the way she did? **(An)**
- Read the General's words on the final pages. Why do you think the author included these words? What do they mean? Rewrite these in your own words. **(An)**
- 'Lest we forget' is an often-used phrase. What does it mean? Where did it originate? Why is this phrase important? Why is it important not to forget? **(An)**

## Going deeper

- Write a verse that expresses your thoughts and feelings about the words 'Lest we forget'. **(Cr)**
- When Simpson was buried at Hell Spit soldiers gathered. What were they doing? What do you think they would have said? Discuss this with a group and enact your interpretation of this gathering. **(Cr)**
- Do you think Jack was worried or scared about leading his donkey up Dead Man's Ridge? What gives you this thought? Create a conversation that Simpson might have had with his donkey as they were climbing the path. **(Cr)**
- During World War I wives and mothers baked ANZAC biscuits which were packed in food parcels and sent to the Australian soldiers in the trenches. Why did they do this? What was special about the ANZAC biscuits? Make some ANZAC biscuits yourself (see website below for the recipe). **(Cr)**

- Should children be allowed to march in ANZAC Day parades? Conduct a poll in your class. What are the arguments for and against this? Conduct a debate on the question. **(Ev)**
- It's hard to put yourself in Simpson's place but in what situations do you think you could be like Simpson? Discuss in groups and role-play any one situation. **(Ev)**
- Compare this war and wars today. What are the similarities and differences that you notice (eg: the soldiers attire, weapons used)? Write about your feeling on war and what happened at Gallipoli. Is there any justification for going to war? Debate this in your class. **(Ev)**

## Useful websites

[www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/anzac/biscuit/recipe.asp](http://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/anzac/biscuit/recipe.asp)  
(The ANZAC biscuit recipes)  
[www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/anzac/](http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/anzac/)  
[www.awm.gov.au/](http://www.awm.gov.au/)  
[www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/gallipoli/](http://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/gallipoli/)  
[www.franelessac.com](http://www.franelessac.com)  
[www.markgreenwood.com.au](http://www.markgreenwood.com.au)

## Author and illustrator comments

The idea for *Simpson and his Donkey* emerged on a trip to the Australian War Memorial. In the grounds there is a bronze statue of a man with a donkey. Seeing that statue was the catalyst for this book. We conceived the idea of writing a book about Simpson when Frané asked Mark a very simple question, 'Why is there a statue of a man with a donkey?'

# Alive in the Death Zone

Author: Lincoln Hall

ISBN: 9781741663372

Publisher: Random House Australia

www.randomhouse.com.au

RRP: \$29.95



## Starting out

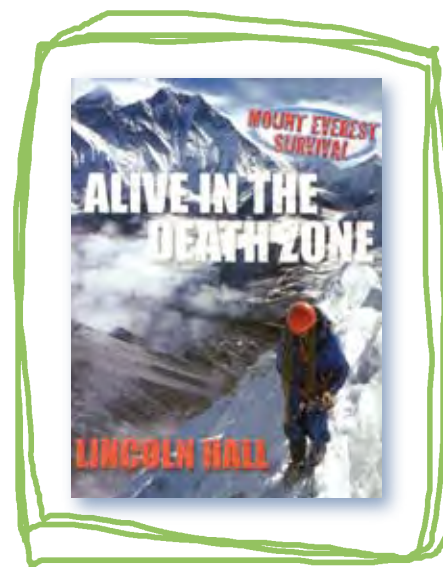
- What do you think the title tells you about the book? (Un)
- Look at the front end papers. Find Everest. What symbols are used? (Re)
- What is the Death Zone? (Re)
- Find answers to the questions and highlights on the back of the book. (Re)
- How many camps are there to the summit? (Re)
- List the equipment used and carried by the climbers. Draw and label a diagram of an Everest climber and all their equipment. (Re)
- What are the dangers climbers of Mount Everest face? (Un)
- How could Lincoln Hall have had no visible signs of life and still be alive (pages 80–1)? (Un)
- List incidents from Lincoln Hall's near fatal climb. (Re)

## Branching out

- Plot on a map the journey Lincoln Hall took to get to Everest from his home in Australia. (Ap)
- Why is it so dangerous climbing Everest? What are the dangers of reaching the summit? Why do you think people climb Mount Everest? (An)
- Describe the biggest challenge you have ever faced. (Ap)
- When climbers reach the summit of Everest they often have their photos taken with memorabilia. What would you take to the top of Mount Everest? (Ap)
- Write down words to describe the feeling of the Sherpas when they had to leave the body of Lincoln Hall on the mountain. (An)
- Create a paper maché model of Mount Everest showing the route taken. (Ap)
- What do you think went through Andrew Brash's mind when they discovered the body of Lincoln Hall – and when they realised he was alive? (An)
- What is the most amazing discovery that you have ever made? Write a verse to describe this feeling. (Ap)
- What near impossible goal would you like to achieve. Discuss the ways you will need to prepare for this. Is this goal achievable? (Ap)

## Going deeper

- Prepare a detailed list of criteria that must be undertaken for a climb of Mount Everest. What do you think are the most important considerations? Rank them. (Ev)
- Play the climbing Everest board game (end paper). Construct your own Climbing Everest board game using the highlights and incidents from Lincoln Hall's climb. (Cr)



- Invent tools that you think will make climbing mount Everest easier. Describe the tools and their uses. (Cr)
- Conduct a debate about the value or otherwise of climbing Mount Everest and performing other near impossible feats. (Ev)
- Prepare a podcast addressing the eye-opening journey into mountaineering on the back of the book that could be used as a promotional tool for the book. (Cr)
- 'There are no great adventures left to accomplish.' Discuss. (Ev)

## Useful websites

www.lincolnhall.net

## Author comments

In an era where fictional adventures for children and young adults continue to hit the heart and the soul, I see *Alive in the Death Zone* as a great vehicle to champion real life adventures. In this book of my own experiences my readers can discover not only the true magnificence of our wonderful natural world, but also the amazing scope of the human spirit. Fantasy is good, but reality is inspiring.

## Other short-listed titles

### The Story of Chicken

Authors: C. Nicholls and J. Paterson Illustrators: Rod Walker

Publisher: Kondinin Group www.kondinin.com.au

ISBN: 9781876068523 RRP: \$24.50

### Tuart Dwellers

Author: Jan Ramage

Publisher: WA Department of Environment and Conservation

ISBN: 9781876615307

### Every Picture Tells A Story

Author: John Ross

Publisher: Craftsman House, Thames and Hudson

www.thamesandhudson.com

ISBN: 9780980354034 RRP: \$29.95

# Mending Lucille

Author: J R Poulter

Illustrator: Sarah Davies

ISBN: 9780734410337

Publisher: Lothian Books, Hachette Australia

www.hachettechildrens.com.au

RRP: \$28.99



## Starting out

- Describe the illustrations in this story (Re)
- Why is the doll important? (Un)
- Retell the story in your own words (Un)
- What is the significance of releasing the bird? (Un)
- What is the significance of the red thread of stitching throughout the book? (Re)
- How is mummy portrayed in the book? (Un)

## Branching out

- Make lists of words that describe different emotions such as grief, loss and loneliness and then discuss. (An)
- Use the lists of feeling words to write a verse describing different feelings. (Ap)
- Look at the front and back end pages. Discuss what these pages convey. (An)
- Why do you think Daddy didn't answer the questions about the mother coming back? What do you think has happened to the mother? (An)
- What are the different ways and techniques that the illustrator has used to show that the mother is no longer physically present? (An)
- Look at the picture of the girl watching till the big bird disappears. What is your interpretation of this picture? What emotions are evident? (An)
- What would you do to help a lonely friend? (Ap)
- Gifts are often given to comfort people grieving. Discuss appropriate gifts for people who are grieving: younger people, parents, or for grandparents. (Ap)
- Develop a questionnaire about healing and loss and people's attitudes and initiatives. (An)
- Rewrite this story from the point of view of the father, Chrissie or the doll. Discuss how these viewpoints differ from that of the little girl. (An)
- Why do you think the little girl is unnamed in this story? (An)
- Discuss how people you know have handled grief. (Ap)
- Investigate how different cultures express grief. Prepare a visual presentation of different ways of expressing grief. (Ap)
- Discuss favourite toys and your feelings when the toys are missing or damaged. (An)

## Going deeper

- Discuss what should be done when an injured animal is found. (Ev)
- Discuss emotional healing. (Ev)
- Cards with verses written inside are often sent to comfort grieving people. Examine and then create sympathy cards. (Cr)
- Sew a comfort doll. (Cr)

- Draw your own picture showing emotions of grief and loss in the photo realistic style of the illustrator. You might want to base your art on magazine pictures of people. (Cr)
- What should happen when a family pet dies? (Ev)
- Discuss ways that schools should support grieving students. (Ev)

## Useful websites

[www.sarahdavisillustration.com](http://www.sarahdavisillustration.com)

## Author comments

I grew up hearing folk say of little children experiencing traumatic events in their lives, 'Oh they will get over it, they are young!'. But my observations of those around me and experiences in my own life told me very different. This was especially true when loss, not necessarily death, of a parent or central career was concerned. They did not 'get over it'.

## Illustrator comments

This book is like a word painting. There aren't very many words in the story, but it still manages to say so much, and has such a powerful atmosphere, because it's written in a way that conjures up strong images. When I first read it, I could see some of the pictures as clearly as if I'd painted them already – especially the girl watching the plane, and finding the bird under the bush, and the image of the father in the cage.

It's nice to have a chance to work on something so complicated that deals with difficult feelings and situations.

## Other short-listed titles

### Miss Llewellyn-Jones

Author: Elaine Forrester Illustrator: Moira Court

Publisher: Fremantle Arts Press ISBN: 9781921361173

### How Weird Is That?

Authors: Gyan and M. S. Dawson

Publisher: Museagency ISBN: 9323482009257

### Pilgrim

Author: Jo Oliver

Publisher: New Frontier Publishing ISBN: 9781921042850

### Collecting Colour

See page 22 for this title.

# Making book trailers

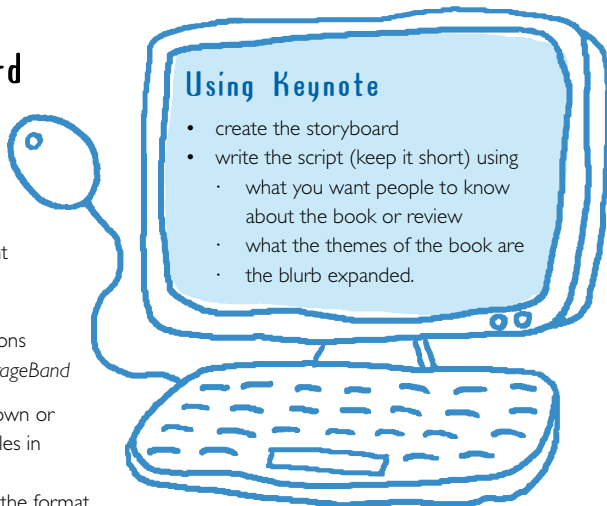
Just like movie trailers promote movies, book trailers promote books; they give a glimpse into a book without giving too much away. Making a **book trailer** is easy to do and students love this activity. It is a great way for students to analyse their understanding of the books they have read. You can also create book reviews with this method. This activity also helps to make connections to the integration of ICT with literacy.

Here are some simple steps to making a trailer using Apple's *iLife09* and *iWork09* software for Macs. (Similar software also exists for PCs.)

## Construct a storyboard

### Use Keynote

- decide on a template
- create the content
  - insert text
  - insert visuals
  - create transitions
  - export to *GarageBand*
- add music (your own or from the sound files in *GarageBand*)
- export the file in the format required
- send the file to the host
- send out links to the trailer and you are done (more or less)!



You could include a movie that might be

- an author interview
- a review
- appropriate mood-setting scenery
- special effects – remember they are 'special'.

You might also consider a series of images with no text and adding all the text as voiceovers.

Assemble the frames, keep transitions similar, time the presentation and adjust accordingly. Import the file to *GarageBand*. Add sound effects, music and voiceovers.

You can find some free images at the Apple Student Gallery:

<http://edcommunity.apple.com.au/gallery/student/>

or use your own photographs or illustrations.

With sound effects – if the ones that come with *GarageBand* don't appeal to you then create your own or look in the student gallery.

When working on the content you might have

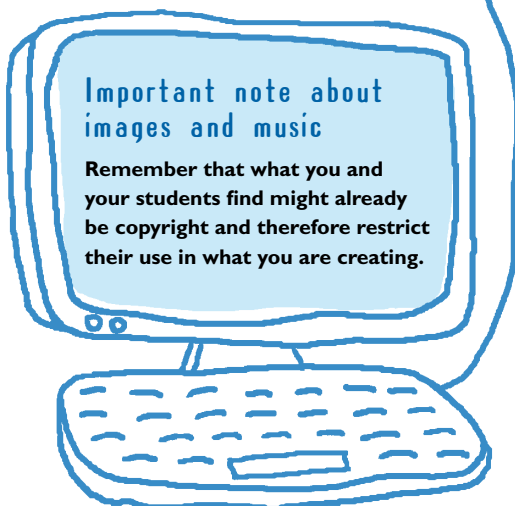
- images and text
  - just images
  - just text
- ... they all might include voiceovers!

## Add content

- insert text (script) to frames
- insert images, either those from the book or from free sites or ones you have created.

### Remember

- the text might be the images
- not to **FILL** the screen with too much content.



## Extra hints!

And finally, here a few extra hints about making trailers to help you on your way!

- Don't make it too long – 1 to 1½ minutes is long enough.
- Limit the number of styles and fonts used.
- Remember to use the colour palette.
- Include the cover, publication details, author names and websites.
- If you are including a movie, keep the camera still (jumpy images rarely work!).
- Make sure the sound is clear.

## Useful websites

Keynote tutorials: [www.apple.com/au/iwork/tutorials/#keynote](http://www.apple.com/au/iwork/tutorials/#keynote)

*GarageBand* tutorials:

[www.apple.com/au/ilife/tutorials/#garageband](http://www.apple.com/au/ilife/tutorials/#garageband)

Now if you really want to make a Hollywood production, you might want to investigate [www.apple.com/au/ilife/imovie/](http://www.apple.com/au/ilife/imovie/) and the tutorials [www.apple.com/au/ilife/tutorials/#imovie](http://www.apple.com/au/ilife/tutorials/#imovie).

And here are some other websites to use for other information:

[www.thecreativepenn.com/2008/12/03/book-trailers-11-steps-to-make-your-own/](http://www.thecreativepenn.com/2008/12/03/book-trailers-11-steps-to-make-your-own/)

[www.slav.schools.net.au/downloads/08pastpapers/3Ireimagine/trailers.ppt](http://www.slav.schools.net.au/downloads/08pastpapers/3Ireimagine/trailers.ppt)

[www.squidoo.com/booktrailers](http://www.squidoo.com/booktrailers)

[www.chrischeng.com/trailers.htm](http://www.chrischeng.com/trailers.htm)

# Books to help teachers encourage young writers

e:lit has a wide range of practical and informative resource books that can be used in conjunction with *Exploring the 2009 CBCA Short List* to promote Australian children's literature and encourage young readers and writers.

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## Writing (better) stories

Vivienne Nicoll-Hatton (Editor)

This book will inspire and assist your own teaching of writing. It provides a structure for developing a teaching program, plus chapters from children's authors on how to get students writing and keeping them writing.

**Member: \$25 (inc gst) Non-member: \$30 (inc gst)**

## Brain storms!

Superior stories for superior kids

Vivienne Nicoll-Hatton (Editor)

A companion volume to *Writing (better) stories*, *Brain storms!* collects 45 award-winning stories by primary students for classroom use. Beautifully crafted, these stories can be used for the type of analysis outlined in *Writing (better) stories*, or simply read for enjoyment. Your students will respond to the comedy, observations and tragedy that these stories offer.

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Practical approaches to using poetry in the classroom

Mandy Tunica

**Member: \$22 (inc gst) Non-member: \$32 (inc gst)**

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Helping children to choose books

Alyson Simpson

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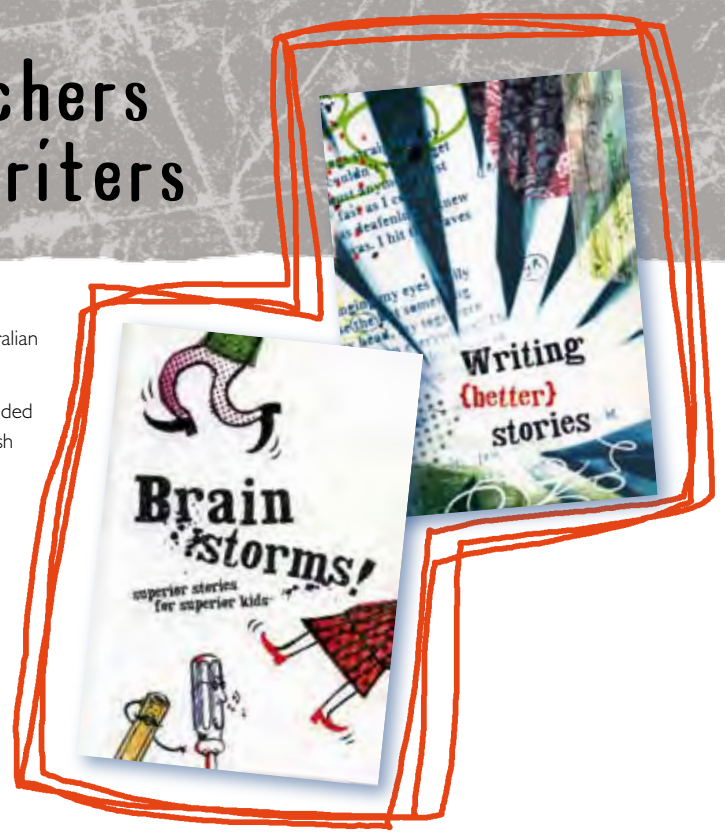
## Writing like a writer

Teaching narrative writing

Libby Gleeson

**Member: \$ 22 (inc gst) Non-member: \$28 (inc gst)**

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