

Exploring the 2010 CBCA Short List

Christopher Cheng and Sophie Honeybourne



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

About this Guide

Exploring the 2010 CBCA Short List, the e:lit Teachers' Guide to the short-listed titles in the Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year Awards provides a real literary journey for you and your students to explore some very special books. From the many hundreds of titles by Australian authors and illustrators the CBCA has chosen the titles featured here.

For each title is included publishing details, activities and synopses and themes. Whatever theme is being studied, there is probably an opportunity to enhance it with a literature component using this guide. As you must be aware, literature is one of the three interrelated strands of the new national English curriculum: '... Students learn to interpret, appreciate, evaluate, and create literary texts such as narrative, poetry, prose, plays, films and multimodal texts in spoken, print and digital/online content.' (From the draft curriculum.)

The activities in this guide reinforce these learnings and understandings. They have been designed for use in the classroom to support students in a guided, deep and inspirational exploration of these fantastic texts.

Guided reading activities are included to support teachers in using the text as an authentic context for teaching literacy and literature in a scaffolded and engaging way.

Before reading activities will enable students to 'build the field' and orientate them to the subject, genre and themes in the text.

During reading activities scaffold students to stop and explore the text as it develops, engaging in content, characters, settings and themes in order to build their understandings.

After reading activities are investigated through **Bloom's Taxonomy**, an essential tool to ensure these activities are underpinned by quality, higher-order thinking. There are activities for each of the 6 levels: **Remembering, Understanding, Application, Analysis, Creating, Evaluating.**

Language focus activities at *word level, sentence level and text level* are included in order to support teachers in using the text as an authentic context for teaching language and grammar features (in line with the new Australian curriculum).

Why literature?

- Literature helps readers to understand life today and yesterday.
- Literature helps readers imagine.
- Literature helps readers to escape to another world.
- Literature helps readers have fun!

As C.S. Lewis has said: 'Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become.'

About the authors

Christopher Cheng holds a Master of Arts in Children's Literature and was a primary school teacher (for many years at Sydney's Taronga Zoo). He created the 2009 shortlist guide. Now he is a full time children's author writing fiction (including historical fiction), picture books and non-fiction titles. He is a passionate advocate for Australian children's literature and popular international speaker. He is on the advisory board for *First Opinions*, *Second Reactions* from Purdue University, an international children's literature journal; on the board of e:lit; and in 2009 was the recipient of the Lady Cutler Children's Award for services to children's literature.
www.chrischeng.com
http://chrischengauthor.blogspot.com

Sophie Honeybourne is currently working as a primary school teacher at North Sydney Demonstration School. After gaining a B.A. Hons in English Literature from Exeter University in the UK, she began her career as an Exhibition Coordinator in Europe. Sophie later discovered her passion for teaching and migrated to the sunny shores of Sydney seven years ago to complete her Master of Teaching at the University of Sydney. Since then she has enjoyed working with a diverse range of students to delve into quality Australian literature and explore new technologies.

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Isabella's Garden



Author: Glenda Millard
Illustrator: Rebecca Cool
ISBN: 9781921150333
Publisher:
Walker Books Australia
www.walkerbooks.com.au
RRP: \$27.95



Theme Life cycles, seasons, gardens, nature and the environment

Readership Ages 5–8 (guide only)

Synopsis

Following the well-known structure of 'The House That Jack Built', *Isabella's Garden* tells the tale of growth and seasonal change, beginning and ending with 'the seeds that slept in the soil all dark and deep' and how they bloom and flourish and ultimately lead to new growth. Told with great warmth, this is a comforting story about the cycle of life in its many forms.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Create a small school garden either in a garden bed or in pots. Take photos of each stage to record what you did. Observe and measure plant growth.
- Explore the seasons where you live. Research local indigenous seasons and compare and contrast with the four western seasons. How do we know what season we are in by looking around us?
- Find photos on the internet of the different seasons and create an image wall.
- Write an explanation about the life cycle of a plant. Animate it using PhotoStory.
- Read the traditional nursery rhyme 'The House that Jack Built'.

During reading

Read to the following page references then stop and complete the activity:

- *Page 2* – Predict what you think the book will be about and how it will progress as you move through it.
- *Page 6* – How do we know what season this is?
- *Page 8* – Draw a series of cartoon images to illustrate the plant's life cycle from seed to flower. Write statements under each image to describe the growing stage.
- *Page 10* – Research and create a list of Australian birds which have red breasts. Choose one and write an explanation about its life cycle.
- *Page 14* – Write an acrostic poem about AUTUMN.
- *Page 18* – Jack Frost is a traditional English folklore character. Explore images of him on the Internet then, write similar alliterative couplets to describe him spreading frost across the landscape.

- *Finish* – The illustrator has used lots of patterns for the people's clothes. Create your own collage of characters to add to the book using off-cuts of material.

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Create a chart of each of the season and record what happened in that season according to the title. (Re)
- Write a summary of the story to explain it to a parent. (Un)
- Write a scientific report on each stage of plant growth (Ap)
- Investigate the requirements for optimal plant growth and locate plants that are native to your area. (An)
- Discuss fresh fruit and vegetables and then conduct a debate on maintaining market gardens in the suburbs. (Ev)
- Design a new food plant. Write a scientific report on why it is so important and how it grows. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- List all the technical language the author uses to describe plants. Use it to build a word bank for writing about the life cycle of a plant.
- Locate all the verbs in the text and discuss regular and irregular past tense.

Sentence level

- Find examples of alliteration in the book. Discuss why the author uses this in her writing. Write your own alliterative sentences to describe something in your school garden.
- The author personifies most of the elements and features in the garden. Discuss the purpose of this device and what makes it effective. Create your own personifications about your school garden.

Text level

- The story structure is cyclical. Why has the author used this structure for the text? How would a linear structure change it?
- Compare and contrast this story and 'The House that Jack Built'. What elements of language and grammar do they both use?

Useful websites

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/kindergarden/child/school/sgintro.htm>
www.abc.net.au/gardening/stories/s2169794.htm
www.global-garden.com.au/gardenkids.htm

Author comment

On my way home after finding my mother-in-law on her knees trying to feel if the daffodil bulbs were pushing up shoots because she couldn't see them, I thought about all the plants in my own garden that had come from Belle's; the clump of rare orange nerines near the clothesline, and the mound of hardy pink ones that grow where nothing else will. The cymbidium orchids under the lemon scented gum, the ivy geranium that scrambles over the old cubby house and the pot of fishbone fern growing near the back door.

It was then I resolved to write this book. I wanted to convey the cycle of nature but more than that, I hoped that the real Isabella would find comfort and pleasure in knowing that her garden will go on and on forever because of her generosity.

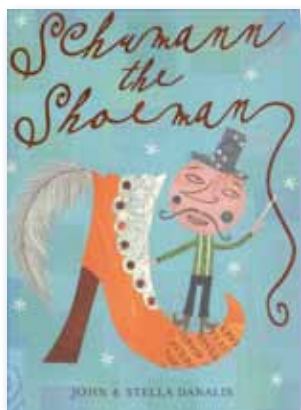
Glenda Millard

Illustrator comment

Illustrating the book has been an amazing experience. It has always been something that I have wanted to do but never known how to go about it. I have learnt heaps (and am still learning) in making the leap from visual artist to illustrator.

Rebecca Cool

Schumann the Shoeman



Author: John Danalis
Illustrator: Stella Danalis
ISBN: 9780702236211
Publisher: University
of Queensland Press
www.uqp.com.au
RRP: \$24.95



Theme Creativity, craftsmanship, consumerism, relationships, occupations, cobbler

Readership Ages 5–10 (guide only)

Synopsis

For a world where nothing seems to last, here is a tale that will stay with you forever. *Schumann the Shoeman* is a story with soul. This book is a beautifully wrought fable which contrasts traditional workmanship with modern production and our throw-away culture. Schumann's tale is poignant, blending the humour of his whimsical shoes of all shapes and sizes with the sorrow of the loss of his craft and the silliness of the ironic ending.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Build a wall of images of shoes printed from the Internet and cut from magazines.
- Draw a still life composition of your own shoes.
- Trace the outline of the shoes you have drawn onto another piece of paper and create a shoe-shaped collage from used newspapers, magazines, wrapping paper, envelopes and unwanted student work.
- Create definitions for the words *craftsman*, *artisan*, *boutique*, *mass production* and *factory* and discuss the differences between them for both the producer and the consumer. If possible go on an excursion to places which exemplify the differences e.g. a local cafe and a fast-food restaurant.
- Discuss the impact that big businesses and corporations that specialise in mass-production can have on local businesses when they open up. For older readers, research the 'Wal-Mart' effect in the USA.

During reading

Read to the following page references then stop and complete the activity:

- *Page 2* – Discuss how Schumann's shoes can be both practical and 'a work of art'. Do you think his job makes him rich? Why or why not?
- *Page 6* – Why is the shoe factory more successful than Schumann's shop? How might these new shoes change people's perception about what shoes are for?
- *Page 10* – Compare and contrast the illustrations for the town setting and the forest setting. How do the author and illustrator convey the message that the forest will make Schumann happy?

- *Page 18* – Schumann has designed shoes for lots of different animals. Choose an animal he has not yet made a shoe for and design your own. Write a short paragraph to explain how your design meets the animal's lifestyle and characteristics.
- *Page 26* – Did you expect Schumann to die? How does this make you feel? Write an obituary for him.
- *Finish* – Considering the book follows the style of a traditional fairy tale how does the ending complement or contrast this. Rewrite the story with a more traditional 'happy' ending.

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Describe the character of Schumann the Shoeman. (Re)
- Explain why Schumann's crafted shoes were so special. (Un)
- Choose a product and create a scrapbook of manufactured and handcrafted versions of the item. (Ap)
- Compare and contrast manufactured goods with handcrafted products. (An)
- Debate the topic: 'Handcrafted goods are better than manufactured items'. (Ev)
- Choose a manufactured product that we use everyday and then create hand made versions of the product and plan a marketing campaign. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Create a list of new or unknown vocabulary and discuss why the author might use these words and how they add to the text.
- Schumann is a play on words. Investigate other surnames that may have had origins in the jobs people did. Compile a list of these. Think some up yourself!

Sentence level

- Examine the use of similes and metaphors in the book. Create your own similes and metaphors to describe some of the shoe pictures you have in the room or on the front and back covers of the book.
- Find examples of written language the illustrator has included in the recycled paper collages. What additional information or messages do these scraps provide us with?

Text level

- The book has a strong coda, or moral message. What is it? How can we use this message to reflect on our own lifestyles?
- The story uses a number of different settings. Jointly create a huge collage map of the world Schumann lives in and label it with the places, events and lessons he learns. Discuss how a physical map can also become a story map.

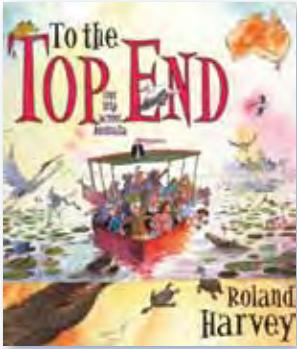
Useful websites

www.uqp.uq.edu.au/teachers_notes.php
www.google.com.au/imghp search 'shoes'
www.stelladanalis.com
www.peripheralvision.com.au

Author comment

This story was inspired by a power tool after buying a shiny new drill – twice! As I waited for a second time in the long returns queue, I noticed the other 'new' broken things being returned. Our grandparents' generation used to make things that lasted a life-time, and sometimes more. So I decided to write a story that would remind people about the joy and value of making things with care, that last. Schumann also follows the timeless tradition of the 'hero's journey' (so beautifully laid out by Joseph Campbell). Many of the familiar tropes are imbedded into Schumann's story; the call to adventure (however reluctant), the pathless path (the lonesome road), the forest, the guides (the shoeless animals), the great challenge (the centipede), the return to the village (via the shoe).
John Danalis

To the Top End: Our trip Across Australia



Author and Illustrator:
Roland Harvey
ISBN: 9781741758849
Publisher: Allen & Unwin
www.allenandunwin.com.au
RRP: \$24.99



Theme Journeys, adventure, family, Australia, travelling, holidays

Readership Ages 5–10 (guide only)

Synopsis

Henry, Penny, Frankie, Mum and Dad embark on their most exciting adventure yet – from Tassie to the very tip of the Top End. Then go back and see if you can find a football in the illustrations on each page.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Invite someone into the school who has travelled around Australia. Students should ask questions about their trip.
- View a travel program about Australia showing some of its highlights and then look through some travel brochures.
- Students write a recount of a holiday they have taken with their family and share it with the class.
- Brainstorm a list of Australian wildlife. Tick each animal off as you meet it in the book. Use information books and the Internet to add to the list.
- Create a huge wall display map of Australia. Add small pictures and labels to it in appropriate places as you journey through the book.

During reading

Read to the following page references then stop and complete the activity:

- *Page 6* – Uncle Kev has already done lots of adventurous things in the book. Write a character profile of him. Predict what he might do next.
- *Page 8* – Create your own version of the 12 days of Christmas using some of the other Australian animals on your list.
- *Page 14* – List the collective nouns the author has created. Create some of your own for some of the Australian animals on your list.
- *Page 18* – They eat ‘apple and yabbie’ ice-cream. Create a menu of other unusual ice-creams with an Australian theme.
- *Page 22* – List the sentences that describe the rainforest. View a video of a rainforest or visit a website online, then jointly write more descriptive sentences.
- *Finish* – Draw and illustrate your own route map of the story onto a map of Australia.

After reading – Bloom’s Taxonomy

- Construct a table of the places visited and the activities undertaken by the travellers as well as others. (Re)
- Locate the places visited on a map and then choose a destination and perform a dramatisation showing what happened. (Un)
- Create a cartoon strip showing a holiday trip, choose a place in Australia and then create a page inspired by the book. (Ap)
- Survey class members about travel destinations, the good and bad and reasons why and graph results. (An)
- Discuss methods of travel and tourism and how they affect the environment. (Ev)
- Create a multimedia campaign – *There’s nothing like Australia* – to promote Australia as the best place on earth to holiday! (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Inside the front and back covers are plays on words using compound words e.g. why did the butterfly? List all the compound words and see if you can add to the list with some of your own.
- Create a list of age-appropriate sight-words from the book.

Sentence level

- List all the nouns for each location/environment and build up technical word banks. Choose one environment, research it and then write an information report about it.
- Focus on building noun groups with adjectives and adjectival phrases. Find examples in the text then practise writing your own to describe the movements of Australian animals.

Text level

- Discuss chronological sequencing as a major structural feature of recounts.
- Explore the difference between literary and factual recounts. Re-write this trip as a factual recount without personal comments.

Useful websites

www.tourism.australia.com/en-au
www.australia.com/index.aspx
www.australianmuseum.net.au/Wild-Kids-Habitats

Author and illustrator

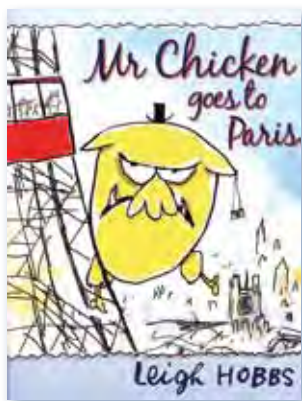
‘The urge to draw has always been really powerful. I always had trouble finding stories to illustrate. I started commissioning writers and pestering experts of different sorts to give me something to illustrate, a history story, or something about science.’

Roland enjoys watching people at work and at play, mentally sketching them while they go about their business. He has always loved the outdoors and some of the scenes from *At the Beach* and *In the Bush* (other titles) are from real life – Roland really did make kelp sandals (like the ones in *At the Beach*) for his son, James!

‘I love coincidences. And when a succession of stupid mistakes produces a happy outcome, it’s bliss.’

Extract from an interview with Roland Harvey
www.rolandharvey.com.au
www.allenandunwin.com/default.aspx?page=311&author=8

Mr Chicken Goes to Paris



Author and Illustrator:
Leigh Hobbs
ISBN: 9781741757699
Publisher: Allen & Unwin
www.allenandunwin.com
RRP: \$24.99



Theme Travel, friendship, Paris, tourism

Readership Ages 3–8 (guide only)

Synopsis

Mr Chicken has taken up his friend Yvette's invitation to visit Paris. As they journey together through the City of Love, Mr Chicken is overcome by the magic of all the city has to offer – and the inhabitants of this most stylish city don't quite know what to make of him.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Learn the glossary of French words on the front page. Hold a French immersion session in the classroom where students eat some French food and practise some of their new words.
- Find France and locate Paris on a map. Explore a Paris city guide and make a 'top ten' list of things you would like to do in Paris.
- Write a recount of a recent holiday. Students can bring in holiday photos and share their experiences.
- Create your own passport like the one Mr Chicken has on the inside front cover.

During reading

Read to the following page references then stop and complete the activity:

- *Page 3* – Look at the faces of the people around Mr Chicken and discuss how they might be feeling. Imagine you are one of these people and write a story about your plane trip.
- *Page 11* – In the last three pictures we see Mr Chicken in different tourist locations. What are all the other tourists doing? Why is this? Do you think Mr Chicken notices? Write a diary entry about his day.
- *Page 16* – Design your own postcard of the Eiffel Tower and then write on the other side, describing the tower and what happens when Mr Chicken climbs it on the outside.
- *Page 22* – Write a description of Mr Chicken's personality. Compare and contrast this with the image of him on top of Notre Dame. How does the setting change Mr Chicken? What do you think the tourists are thinking? Read a shortened version of the *Hunchback of Notre Dame* and re-visit the image for further discussion.
- *Finish* – Re-draw one of the scenes from the book with a new Mr Chicken character who is small, fluffy and cute. How does this change the story?

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- List the places that Mr Chicken visited on his Paris adventure. (Re)
- Find pictures of the places Mr Chicken visited in Paris and then retell Mr Chicken's story. (Un)
- On a map locate Paris, all the places Mr. Chicken visited and the order in which he visited them. (Ap)
- Categorize attitudes and features of friendship. (An)
- Discuss the difficulties of communication in a foreign country. (Ev)
- Create a multimedia travel guide for a favourite destination for children showing the must-see places. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Locate all the verbs in the book associated with Mr Chicken. Categorise them into feeling and acting verbs. Add some more of your own.
- Create a list of French and English words, which are quite similar.

Sentence level

- Identify the sequencing connectives and adverbial phrases in the story and discuss how they help us to specifically sequence events and actions as the story unfolds.
- The text has some simple dialogue that would be a good introduction to the use of speech marks for younger students. Identify and discuss some examples.

Text level

- There are two stories happening simultaneously in this book. The first is evident but the second only unfolds in the illustrations. Use the illustrations to create a different story about Mr Chicken written from a tourist's perspective.
- Use the text as a basis for a study of factual and literary recounts of events. Identify text structures and features. Write your own recount about a trip of your own using these features.

Useful websites

www.leighhobbs.com
www.hello-world.com/French/index.php?prf=EN
iguide.travel/Paris
www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g187147-c5402/Paris:France:100.Things.To.Do.In.Paris..html
www.sacred-destinations.com/france/paris

Author comment

I've always had a passionate interest in history and architecture. While in Paris I was intrigued by the idea of a character so grotesque visiting the famous sights, that the attention of the camera-wielding tourist hordes (who were driving me crazy) would be focussed on him rather than say, the Mona Lisa. Mr Chicken, from *Hooray for Horrible Harriet* was an obvious choice. Introducing a French friend, Yvette also added another layer about the nature and bonds of childhood friendship.
Leigh Hobbs

Fox and Fine Feathers



Author and illustrator:

Narelle Oliver

ISBN: 9781862918061

Publisher: Omnibus Books,

Scholastic Australia

www.scholastic.com.au

RRP: \$27.99



Theme Self-image, jealousy, relationships, adaptation, camouflage, protection, forests

Readership Ages 5–9 (guide only)

Synopsis

Lyrebird, Coucal, Pitta and Nightjar are ground birds of the Australian forest floor. Although as different from each other as it is possible to be, they always watch out for danger and warn each other to hide. One day, Lyrebird, Coucal and Pitta are preening and performing and forget to look out for wily Fox. Only Nightjar, with his patchy, dull feathers, is on watch for danger. Can he warn the others in time?

Guided reading

Before reading

- Explore Australian forest habitats and identify and label the animals that inhabit them.
- Write information report posters on: lyrebirds, coucals, pittas, nightjars and foxes.
- Discuss camouflage and brainstorm examples of animals that camouflage themselves.

During reading

Read to the following page references then stop and complete the activity:

- *Page 4* – Complete a prediction chart to predict what dangers the ground birds might face in the forest.
- *Page 10* – Hot seat Lyrebird, Coucal and Pitta in turn. How have their opinions about themselves changed? What might happen now that they have changed their behaviours from looking out for each other to being obsessed with themselves?
- *Page 12* – Hot seat Nightjar. How is he feeling compared to the other birds? Create and act out a situation where the other birds bully and taunt Nightjar about his looks, then hotseat Nightjar again.
- *Page 24* – Create a news report about what Fox attempted to do in the forest and interview him about what happened. Draw a wanted poster for Fox.
- *Finish* – What lessons have all of the birds learned? Write these up as a coda to the narrative.

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Prepare a chart listing the animals from the book and facts about them. (Re)
- Find out more information and then explain how camouflage operates in the forest. (Un)

- Using natural products like leaves and sticks create a picture from *Fox and Fine Feathers*. (Ap)
- Design a questionnaire to gather information about how students protect siblings or animals. (An)
- Conduct a debate on the need for the eradication of foxes and other non-native animals from the natural environment. (Ev)
- Create a trailer that will promote the wonders of the forest and use musical instrument to add a forest soundscape. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- List all the verbs used to describe the birds. Identify suitable synonyms to replace them and discuss how, if at all, this changes the meaning of sentences.
- Focusing on words ending in -y, explore spelling rules and find suitable examples from the text.

Sentence level

- Build technical language noun banks to describe each bird or other animal.
- Explore all the creative action verbs used in the text. Choose a new animal and build a list of suitable action words to describe how they might move.

Text level

- Discuss the genre of fables in narrative. Identify how the structure of a fable differs from other genres. Focus on teaching the coda.
- Focus on the section of the text where Fox attacks. Identify how the author uses language features and structures to build pace and tension.

Useful websites

www.narelleoliver.com
www.birdsinbackyards.net/resources/birds.cfm
www.birdsaustralia.com.au/about-birds/australian-bird-calls.html
www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/rainforest/
www.adl.brs.gov.au/forestsaustralia/
www.daff.gov.au/brs/publications/series/forest-profiles

Author comment

Fox and Fine Feathers continues my interest with camouflage. At the age of eight, I encountered a Tawny Frogmouth camouflaging as a broken branch in a tree near my aunt's farmhouse. Later I came across another nocturnal bird – the Nightjar. That discovery, and a later sighting of a nightjar, planted the seed of a story idea, which became *Fox and Fine Feathers*.

Fox and Fine Feathers is also inspired by my love of fables, especially the old Aesop's fables where the fox is tricked or is able to trick. I wrote *Fox and Fine Feathers* as a fable with the European Red Fox as the villain because this introduced creature has brought about the decline in numbers of many Australian native animals.
Narelle Oliver

The Hero of Little Street



Author and illustrator:

Gregory Rogers

ISBN: 9781741145243

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

www.allenandunwin.com

RRP: \$29.99



Theme Friendship, adventure, history, fun, art, galleries,

Readership Ages 5–8 (guide only)

Synopsis

Escaping from a gang of bullies, a boy slips into a grand old gallery – the perfect hiding place, full of mystery and treasures. Enchanted by the magic of painting and befriended by a mischievous dog, the boy ventures into the world of a famous Vermeer painting – and he and his new friend are transported to Little Street, Delft in seventeenth century Holland. But the streets of Delft are a dangerous place for a dog, and the boy has to use every ounce of his ingenuity to rescue his canine mate from an untimely fate on the butcher's block.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Try to visit an art gallery with an old masters gallery, or view a slideshow of Vermeer and similar artists' paintings. Discuss what they tell us about life in 17th century Holland.
- On computers or using an IWB, complete the interactive art activity based on Vermeer and life in 17th century Holland (see website resources).
- Discuss how unexpected events can change a story suddenly. List unexpected events that have happened to you, or brainstorm those you remember from other stories.
- Create a drama freeze-frame where students create a still image of an old painting. Take photos of their group poses and analyse on an IWB. Un-freeze frames so students can act out their paintings in role.

During reading

Read to the following page references then stop and complete the activity:

- *Page 2* – How is the boy feeling right now after being chased by the bullies? Hot seat him, then, create a written caption for the last image.
- *Page 8* – Look at the angles the illustrator has drawn the pictures from on the double page spread. Discuss how this changes our perspective to the boy and our relationship with him.
- *Page 10* – We see the boy climbing into the picture. Predict what is going to happen next. How will it end?
- *Page 18* – Choose one of the people you can see in the windows and write an account from their perspective of what happens with the boy and the dog. Present it on tea-stained paper as a scroll.

- *Page 26* – The events of the book have changed the original painting. Compare and contrast the two paintings. Argue as to which one you prefer and why.
- *Finish* – Write a recount from one of the bully's perspective as to what happened.

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Construct a table showing the main events in the story and the characters involved. (Re)
- Choose any double-page spread and write the dialogue that could accompany the pictures. (Un)
- Produce a painting in the style of the 'old masters' with an image of the student. (Ap)
- Compare and contrast the paintings of the 'old masters' to those being painted today. (An)
- Prepare a list of criteria to judge a painting or sculpture. (Ev)
- Devise a programme to attract children to art galleries. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Create some one-word speech bubbles for different action sequences.
- Using post-it notes, write and stick on appropriate action verbs for what is happening throughout the book.

Sentence level

- Build compound sentences for different scenes, focusing on building descriptive language.
- Examine the difference between first person and third person by writing speech bubbles and captions for the same image.

Text level

- Create a timeline of events which build the complication and lead to the resolution. Choose one point, change it and then alter all the subsequent events to see how this changes the story.
- Discuss how a book without any words can be just as effective as a book with words. Create your own cartoon sequence to tell a story.

Useful websites

www.nga.gov/feature/vermeer/index.shtm
www.nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/johannes-vermeer
www.nga.gov/kids/zone/dollhouse.htm
www.essentialvermeer.com/

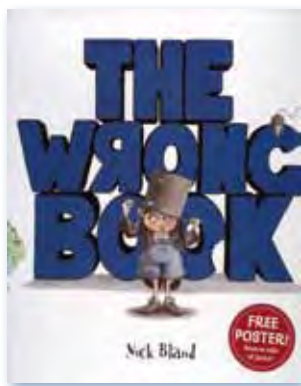
Author and illustrator

Gregory Rogers' fascination with the Elizabethan period is wonderfully shown in the books, *Boy the Bear*, *the Baron*, *the Bard*, *Midsummer Knight* and this title *The Hero of Little Street*. As Greg states in his prelude to *The Hero of Little Street* '... adventure can be found in the most unlikely of places.

I often wonder about the real lives of people in paintings. The older the painting, the more curious the people. I have long admired the paintings of Vermeer and Van Eyck and this book gave me the perfect opportunity to step inside and see for myself.

Extract from an interview with Gregory Rogers
www.allenandunwin.com/default.aspx?page=312&author=230

The Wrong Book



Author and Illustrator:

Nick Bland

ISBN: 9781741693409

Publisher:

Scholastic Australia

www.scholastic.com.au

RRP: \$15.99



Theme Identity, children's book themes and genres, imagination, fantasy,

Readership Early Readers Ages 4–7 (guide only)

Synopsis

This is a book about Nicholas Ickle, who's trying to tell his story. But every time he starts, someone new invades the page. Nicholas keeps telling them they're in he wrong book, but they keep coming. Can he get his story out before the book ends?

Guided reading

Before reading

- Speculate about the cover. What might the title 'The Wrong Book' mean? Create several different possible storylines.
- If this book is wrong, what might the 'right' book be?
- Create a list of movies which include a range of different famous book characters. Are there any books which do the same?
- Create a top ten list of your favourite book characters of all time.
- Discuss why it can be a good idea to include well-known characters in new books.
- Inform students as to the role of a narrator. Discuss different the types of narrator that appear in books.

During reading

Read up to the following page references then stop and complete the activity:

- *Page 2* – What can you see at the edge of the page? What hint does this give you about the story?
- *Page 4* – What does Nicholas mean by saying 'You're in the wrong book!?' Where should the elephant be? What books might you find an elephant in?
- *Page 8* – Now that Nicholas has an elephant and a monster in his book, who do you think might appear next? How do you know?
- *Page 16* – Over the last few pages, the other characters have been busy doing things. Create a table listing the characters and their actions as shown in the pictures.
- *Page 18* – How do you think Nicholas feels when all the other characters are busy doing things and ignoring him? Create a drama pose to show how Nicolas is feeling then hot-seat him.
- *Finish* – Was the book really about Nicholas? Why or why not? Provide evidence for both arguments by creating a conscience alley to walk through.

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- List all the characters in the story. (Re)
- Write a summary of the story. (Un)
- Present a dramatisation of the story. (Ap)
- Research the 'wrong' characters that appear and find out what books they might come from. (An)
- Evaluate Nicholas' reactions to the characters appearing in his book. (Ev)
- Create the RIGHT book for Nicholas Ickle. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Focus on the contraction 'you're' and use as a teaching point to explore further common contractions. Teach alongside homonyms so that students can use the contraction in the correct context.
- Create a word bank of the wrong characters. Add other typical characters you find in children's books.

Sentence level

- Use the question marks, exclamation marks and full stops to explore question, exclamation and statement sentences. Students can create some of their own.
- As the book progresses, Nicholas uses stronger modality to register his disapproval. Create a modality cline of strong and weak words and discuss how using strong words can provide more emphasis and exaggeration.

Text level

- The author uses a different font for some of Nicholas's words. Why does he do this? What information does it give the reader?
- Why does the illustrator give hints regarding the character who is to come on the next page? What does this make the reader want to do? Create a new hint and a new character for an extra page.

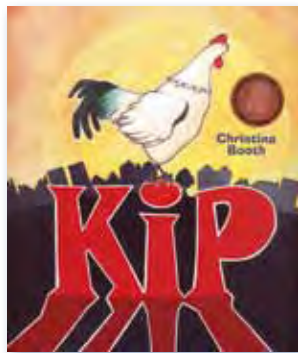
Useful websites

www.dltk-teach.com/books/index.htm
www.how-to-draw-cartoons-online.com/

Author comment

Simplicity is something that isn't always easy to find and this book couldn't be simpler – it is probably the book closest to my heart. It is an autobiographical work (the name Nicholas Ickle comes from the first sentence I was heard to utter as a toddler). As a kid I could never understand why I wasn't the centre of attention all the time. How dare the world continue to rotate while I was trying to get my share of the spotlight? I was quite insistent that it not have a peachy ending because that would be a dishonest conclusion to the lesson. I wanted to do a 70s' book and bring to life the kinds of characters that occupied my bookshelf and I only ever draw from memory because I think the bits picked up by the mind's eye communicate far more clearly than perfection ever could.

Nick Bland



Author and Illustrator:
Christina Booth
ISBN: 9781921136412
Publisher:
Windy Hollow Books
www.windyhollowbooks.com.au
RRP: \$24.95



Theme Community, pets, relationships, chickens, backyard pets, food, poultry, city/country life

Readership Pre-school Ages 3–7 (guide only)

Synopsis

When Kip finds his voice and begins to crow he causes all sorts of problems for Mrs Bea's neighbours. Reluctantly Mrs Bea sends him away but much to the neighbours' surprise, life is not as good as they thought it would be without him.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Study farm animals as a whole class. Colour and name different animals and create a wall display.
- Use other texts to inspire a study of life cycles (e.g. *The Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle). Explore the life cycle of a chicken.
- Set up a hatchery in the classroom (see websites such as Living Eggs or similar).
- Discuss the impact of keeping farm animals in a suburban environment. Complete a PMI chart (plus, minus, interesting).

During reading

Read to the following page references then stop and complete the activity:

- *Page 4* – We see Kip grow up. Label each picture with technical language to describe a chicken so we can see Kip's developing features.
- *Page 8* – Write a letter from Mr James to Mrs Bea complaining about Kip's noise and how it affects him.
- *Page 14* – Kip is making a lot of Mrs Bea's neighbours very angry. How does Kip feel at this point? Create a conscience alley to walk through about whether or not it is fair to keep a cockerel in your back garden.
- *Page 18* – What happened? How do we know?
- *Finish* – Kip has brought the neighbourhood together. Why do you think they changed their minds? Choose one character and write a diary entry from them about Kip going away and coming back.

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Create a timeline showing the events that happened on each day. (Re)
- Retell the story as drama in a play. (Un)
- Gather a collection of images of different types of chickens and how they survive. (Ap)

- Survey the attitudes of adults towards keeping chickens in city backyards. (An)
- Prepare arguments and conduct a debate about the benefits of keeping poultry in the city. (Ev)
- Design a model of the perfect enclosure to keep chickens in the city. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Explore onomatopoeia in the form of animal noises. Add noises to the farm animal display.
- List all the technical language in the book about chickens, including verbs and nouns. Use it to build the field to create an information report about chickens.

Sentence level

- Look at noun groups to build information and add interest. Create your own about other features of a chicken such as wings, claws, combs and wattles.
- Identify speech marks and discuss how they tell us who is talking and how they are doing it.
- Create a new neighbour and jointly construct a short speech they might make about Kip.

Text level

- Look at the cock-a-doodle-do pages. Discuss why the author uses these to build interest and tension in the book. Create your own for another farm animal.
- Explore the landscapes at the bottom of each page. Choose one and describe it. How do these pictures give the reader information? Students can paint their own skyline picture for the classroom.

Useful websites

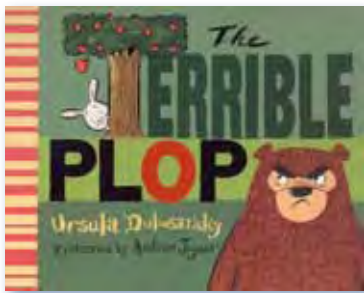
www.christinabooth.com
www.windyhollowbooks.com.au/tn_kip.pdf
www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/birds/info/chicken.shtml
www.abcteach.com/directory/theme_units/farm/
www.livingeggs.com.au/

Author comment

Outside my studio is a cackle of hens. One is the mother of a famous rooster named Kip. The yard is quieter now that he has been adopted by a farmer near Deloraine in Tasmania and the hens are quite happy about that but when he first started to crow, the neighbours never complained. In fact, they were busy complaining about noisy parties, rubbish trucks early in the morning, school alarms, screeching cars and aeroplanes, not about a crowing rooster.

Kip is a story mostly about a noisy rooster and unhappy neighbours. However there is also the story about all the noises we have in the city that we often don't notice but are there all the time. And then there is the important story of finding blame when really it is only an excuse.
Christina Booth

The Terrible Plop



Author:
Ursula Dubosarsky

Illustrator:
Andrew Joyner

ISBN: 9780670071418

Publisher:
Viking, Penguin

Group Australia

www.puffin.com.au

RRP: \$24.95



Theme Fear, misunderstandings, rumour, animal stories, animal poetry,

Readership Ages 5–7 (guide only)

Synopsis

A little rabbit learns that some things in life aren't as scary as they seem. Based on a Tibetan myth, it is about a sound in the forest that sets all the animals running for their lives from the Terrible Plop.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Brainstorm with students about things that they are afraid of. Students can draw pictures.
- Play a game of Chinese Whispers and discuss with students how messages get changed and exaggerated.
- Discuss the title of the book. What could the terrible plop be? What might it look like? Students draw their ideas and write descriptive sentences.

During reading:

Read to the following page references then stop and complete the activity:

- *Page 2* – Draw a rabbit with a thought bubble to show what it is thinking and feeling.
- *Page 6* – Why did the rabbits run away? What scared them? What do they think the terrible plop might be? Draw what you think might happen next.
- *Page 12* – List all the animals that are running away. How has the illustrator shown that all the animals are afraid?
- *Page 15* – Construct a venn diagram to compare and contrast adjectives to describe how the bear and the other animals are feeling. Why is the bear not worried about the terrible plop?
- *Page 20* – The rabbit faces two very difficult choices. What are they? What would you do in the rabbit's situation, and why? Write a simple argument in favour of one choice or another.
- *Finish* – What do the rabbit and bear do? What does this tell us about their characters? Create character profiles for them both.

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- List the characters and map the events that happened. (Re)
- Explain what this story is about and draw a picture to show this. (Un)
- Take a collection of photographs of students showing different emotions, then write descriptive phrases about the emotions. (Ap)

- Conduct an investigation into how spoken phrases change when playing the 'whispers' game. (An)
- Discuss rumours, how they start and the effect they can have on people. (Ev)
- Invent a machine that can differentiate rumour from truth and then explain how it could be used. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Focus on -op words using consonants and consonant blends. Build a word bank.
- List CVC and single syllable action verbs (e.g. hop, stop, skip) and explore the double and add -ing rule.

Sentence level

- List all the adjectives in the book. Create new adjectives to describe each character. Work towards building noun groups.
- Round red apple is an alliteration. Create other alliterations for food or animals.
- Examine the question marks and exclamation marks in context. How does the context for each differ?

Text level

- Clap the rhythm. Jointly construct a story poem with a similar rhythm.
- Discuss how poetry can also recount an event or tell a story. Students could re-tell the story in prose.

Useful websites

www.ursuladubosarsky.com
www.andrewjoyner.com.au
www.parapal-online.co.uk/picture_dict/zoo.html
www.switchzoo.com/zoo.htm

Author comment

I wrote the book by surprise. I was reading a Tibetan myth, called 'The Plop', which starts off with six rabbits, sitting by a lake, who hear a terrifying sound and start a general stampede in the forest – and somehow it began to form rhymes in my head.

In many ways a book like this is a performance piece and has more in common with drama than other sorts of writing. While I was writing it I would visualize a large group of small children on a mat in front of me – restless, exuberant, lively, sleepy, cranky, wondering, curious, laughing children. Now I love reading the book out loud to groups like this, and the vital, funny illustrations keep that audience utterly gripped and beguiled as every page turns.
Ursula Dubosarsky

Illustrator comment

I tried out several different illustration approaches and the final style of the illustrations was guided by the book's future audience. We all thought of the *The Terrible Plop* as a book to be performed, ideal for story times in libraries and schools and kindergartens. I wanted the illustrations to be quick and easy to 'read', so they would support Ursula's wonderful, funny, rhythmic text. They also needed to have a kind of distinct impact – 'a surprise with each page turn', and they needed to be funny. That involved getting the characters right so basically I just drew until it felt right.
Andrew Joyner

Clancy & Millie and the Very Fine House



Author: Libby Gleeson

Illustrator:

Freya Blackwood

ISBN: 9781921541193

Publisher:

Little Hare Books

www.littleharebooks.com

RRP: \$24.99



Theme Changes, friendship, imagination, moving, play, building

Readership Ages 5–7 (guide only)

Synopsis

Clancy has just moved house. He is missing his old house terribly – the new house is much too big and much too lonely. How will he ever make it his home? As despair takes hold when Clancy hears a small voice. Soon, Clancy with the help of his new friend Millie is building towers to the sky and trains to the street outside, and together they build the home that Clancy thought he had lost forever.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Re-read the traditional fairy tale 'The Three Little Pigs'.
- Hold a discussion about moving house. Students recount their own stories and reflect on their feelings.
- Build a cubby house out of boxes in the classroom. Brainstorm adjectives to describe how students feel when they play in it.
- Create a friendship hand where students draw round their hand and write the name of five friends or family in the fingers.

During reading

Read to the following page references then stop and complete the activity:

- *Page 4* – Compare and contrast the two pictures of the houses. How has the illustrator influenced the reader's perspective about each?
- *Page 10* – List the rooms they explore. What does Clancy remember about each room in the old house and how does it illustrate his feelings about the new house?
- *Page 15* – How does the text tell you what Clancy is feeling when he first goes outside?
- *Finish* – How might Clancy and Millie's game make Clancy feel better? How does it change his thoughts about the new house? Look at the illustrations on the first and last pages. What has the illustrator drawn in the sky? What does it tell us about what Clancy is feeling?

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Recall the facts from the story. (Re)
- Explain the friendship between Clancy and Millie and examine Clancy and his toy dog in the illustrations. (Un)
- Prepare a collection of images showing friendship. (Ap)

- Compare students' reactions to being in unfamiliar situations with Clancy's reactions. (An)
- Write a letter to a friend or parent on how school can be a friendly community. (Ev)
- Design the perfect cubby house. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Use the name Clancy as a starting-off point to explore other words with 'cl-' blends.
- Explore noun plural rules using: room, house, box. Build a list of similar nouns to pluralise.

Sentence level

- Identify all the pronouns in the text and how they are used to maintain cohesion.
- List all the adjectives in the book that describe objects and build a bank (this can be used to label the perspective drawings).
- Identify compound sentences joined by 'and' in the text. Practise turning simple sentences into compound sentences using 'and'.

Text level

- Compare and contrast how the words and pictures sometimes tell a different story. Brainstorm and study other picture books that use this device.
- Identify the orientation, complication and resolution in the text. Re-write a different resolution.
- Write a short passage to describe a character through their actions e.g. when Clancy kicks the stone.

Useful websites

www.libbygleeson.com.au
www.freyablackwood.net
www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=286&id=1636

Author comment

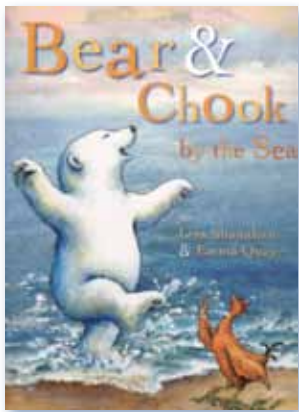
This book was inspired by the experience our family had when my children were very small. We moved from a tiny house to a rambling old mansion. Our two young children, aged four and two were in despair. They cried for days wanting to go back to the comfort of familiar places, and I was very aware from that moment that what suits adults does not necessarily mean the same thing to young children.

Children need the comfort of spaces designed for them and, as the book finishes, they need friends. Somehow, that makes difficult situations bearable.

I was delighted that Freya Blackwood agreed to illustrate the story and I love the exaggeration of the rooms, the pig and wolf clouds and the wonderful box houses that Clancy and Millie create.

Libby Gleeson

Bear & Chook by the Sea



Author: Lisa Shanahan
Illustrator: Emma Quay
ISBN: 9780733618666
Publisher:
Lothian Children's Books,
Hachette
www.hachettechildrens.com.au
RRP: \$16.99



Theme Adventure, friendship, fear, bears, poultry, beaches, holidays

Readership Ages 5–9 (guide only)

Synopsis

Bear and Chook continue their adventures in *Bear and Chook by the Sea*. Bear and Chook are unexpected friends. Bear still likes adventure and Chook would still much rather have the quiet life! One day they decide to go and visit the sea. Chook is worried that they don't know the way and will get lost, but Bear is confident they will find it just around the pond, under the bridge, through the forest and over the mountain! A wonderfully warm read-aloud story about the dreamers in life and those who wish they'd sometimes keep their feet more firmly on the ground.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Hold a discussion about journeys. Students then write or draw recounts of a recent journey.
- Brainstorm different environments. Students can draw and label examples. Discuss what sounds you might hear when you visit these environments and dramatise the experience.
- In pairs or small groups, explore the idea of unusual friendships (e.g. a bear and a chicken). Create some different examples, represent them in drawings and get feedback of ideas.
- Jointly create a list of things you would do if your best friend asked you to do something. Write another list of things you wouldn't do.

During reading

Read to the following page references then stop and complete the activity:

- *Page 4* – Create speech and thought bubbles for Bear and for Chook. Remind students that sometimes what you are thinking inside your head is different to what you say out loud. Hot-seat each character afterwards.
- *Page 8* – Jointly create a list of each place the characters travel through and add the adjective that Chook uses to describe it. Add details of the things they hear in each place and the sound they make. Students use the list to create an annotated travel map.
- *Page 12* – How has Chook's attitude changed once he reached the beach? Write a list of the positive things he says and the activities he does which tell us he is having fun.
- *Page 20* – Use the drama activity 'sculpting' to get students to sculpt each other into Bear and Chook to show how they are feeling. Students explain their thoughts to the class.

- *Finish* – How have Bear and Chook's roles changed on the journey back? What has each of them learned from their adventure?

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Write a description of the characters of Bear and Chook. (Re)
- Explain why Bear's attitudes were changed. (Un)
- Prepare a diary for Chook on the day's events. Rewrite the same diary entry for Bear. (Ap)
- Discuss the features of Bear and Chook that display their friendship. (An)
- Prepare a speech on the importance of friendship. (Ev)
- Create a trailer on the values of friendship. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Jointly construct a list of words that are new to students. Split into groups to use dictionaries to find definitions and create a word bank.
- Create a word bank of -ed verbs. Discuss past and present tense. Practise changing a verb from one to the other in the third person form.

Sentence level

- Identify examples of personification in the text. Write sentences to personify objects in the room as a practice or create alternate personifications for the objects in the text.
- List all the similes and metaphors in the text. Play a simile and metaphor card game or research learning objects online to develop student understandings. Demonstrate understandings by creating a simile colour poem.
- Discuss how some words are written like they sound. Introduce metalanguage of onomatopoeia. Students then create their own onomatopoeic words as examples.

Text level

- Identify the orientation, complication and resolution in the text. Create a coda.
- Discuss the idea of genre in narrative. Brainstorm ideas for genres other than adventure. Jointly re-write the narrative in the style of one of these different genres (e.g. mystery, myth, dilemma stories, horror).

Useful websites

www.lisashanahan.com
www.emmaquay.com
www.australianmuseum.net.au/Wild-Kids-Habitats
www.bbc.co.uk/schools/magickey/adventures/soundmonster_game.shtml

Author comment

I wrote *Bear and Chook by the Sea* because the characters lingered in my mind and there was more to explore in their friendship. I was more secretly fond of Bear, especially his brash fearlessness but I began to appreciate much more deeply Chook's immense daily bravery and how this allowed him to offer the best sort of comfort to a suddenly terrified Bear.

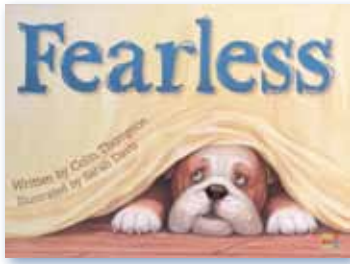
Lisa Shanahan

Illustrator comment

The language for *Bear and Chook by the Sea* is beautiful. I liked the way Lisa had inconspicuously woven in elements from the first Bear and Chook book, but this story also stood perfectly well on its own. It was a joy for us to re-visit old friends, and it gives us even more pleasure to know that children are enjoying a new Bear and Chook adventure.

Emma Quay

Fearless



Author:

Colin Thompson

Illustrator: Sarah Davis

ISBN: 9780733320255

Publisher: ABC Books,

HarperCollins Publishers

www.harpercollins.com.au

RRP: \$24.99



Theme Fear, bravery, family, pets, animals

Readership Ages 5–8 (guide only)

Synopsis

When a new baby is born it is difficult to tell if it will grow up to be big or small or brave or scared of the dark and spiders. Sometimes babies get the wrong name. It's the same with dogs. So when the Claybourne-Willments, who should have been called the Smiths, got Fearless as a little puppy, it seemed a good name for him. Except Fearless wasn't. How does Fearless finally live up to his name? By accident, of course!

Guided reading

Before reading

- Explore synonyms and antonyms. Discuss how a name can become an antonym for a character. Brainstorm examples of this.
- Talk about pets and the different roles they play in families. Students can write a brief information report about their pet.
- The book is about real and imagined fears. Write a list of things you expect people to be afraid of and things you don't. Do a class survey to find out whether these expectations are true or not.

During reading

Read to the following page references then stop and complete the activity:

- *Page 4* – Re-name the dogs so their names suit them. Draw some more dogs and give them a synonym name and an antonym name to describe them.
- *Page 12* – What is unusual or different about Fearless compared to most dogs? Why has the author given Fearless a 'human' voice so that we understand what he is thinking?
- *Page 16* – Explore the concept of personification of objects. Draw some other personified household objects that might scare Fearless.
- *Page 22* – What is Fearless's reaction to the robber? What is the robber's reaction to Fearless? Hot-seat both characters then create thought bubbles to show what they are both thinking and feeling.
- *Finish* – Write a newspaper report for humans about the incident and then write one for dogs. How are the two perspectives different?

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Construct a story map showing the main events of *Fearless*. (Re)
- Examine the illustrations and explain how they add meaning to the narrative. (Un)
- Retell the story by replacing Fearless the dog with another animal. (Ap)
- Design a questionnaire to gather information from class members about family pets. (An)
- Prepare a list of criteria on what makes the best pets. (Ev)
- Design and create a presentation on the perfect pet. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Create a word bank of synonyms and antonyms. Turn some of them into names and draw characters to match them.
- Explore the etymology and meanings of names of students in the class. Discuss how and why names suit people.

Sentence level

- Explore how the author writes intention into the personified household objects by examining the accompanying sentences. Write some of your own sentences for the new personified objects you drew earlier.
- When Fearless talks to the robber, his words are very friendly but the robber doesn't understand him. Write the words the robber thinks he might be hearing from Fearless.

Text level

- Discuss how the author and illustrator have used words and illustrations to create contrasting meanings.
- Watch the trailer for *Fearless*: www.sarahdavisillustration.com/introducing-fearless. The illustrator has added the dimension of sound to the book. Create your own dramatic soundtrack to the book in groups and discuss how it adds meaning.

Useful websites

www.sarahdavisillustration.com.au
www.itsanhonour.gov.au/awards/medals/bravery.cfm
www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/animals/
www.austliangeographic.com.au/journal/the-dogs-of-war.htm
www.rspca.org.au/what-we-do/awards/
www.bulldoginformation.com/english-bulldog.html
www.quia.com/ba/19641.html

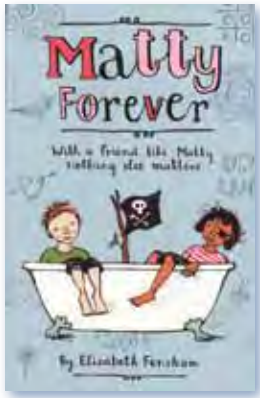
Illustrator comment

Fearless is the star of the story, so I wanted to get to know him in all his dogginess. I always think it's a good idea to look at the real world for inspiration before I start drawing, so I cobbled together my ideas for the character of Fearless relying on memories of the dog I had when I was a kid, who was very like Fearless in some ways and seven real live bulldogs near where I live.

I used them to get a feel for how bulldogs moved and behaved, and how their bodies were built. I imagined Fearless seeing a human face when it's confused, scared or happy, and then tried to draw a bulldog face with that human expression, without losing any of its dogginess – not so easy! I wanted to develop Fearless' family as characters as well, but didn't want to focus on the humans too much, because Fearless is really the unwitting hero of the story and I thought his personality should be the focus.

Sarah Davis

Matty Forever



Author: Elizabeth Fensham
ISBN: 9780702237027
Publisher:
University of Queensland Press
www.uqp.uq.edu.au
RRP: \$14.95



Theme Friendship, loyalty, family, betrayal, acceptance, belonging, reconciliation

Readership Ages 7–12 (guide only)

Synopsis

Bill and Matty are neighbours and best friends. Together they share their deepest, darkest secrets and lean on each other when things aren't right at home. Bill is missing his father and having a hard time at his new school. And Matty is realising that her family is not quite the same as everyone else's. But when new girl Isabella decides she wants Bill all to herself, Bill and Matty discover what true friendship means.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Draw a picture of your best friend and decorate it with words and pictures to describe them and what she or he likes to do.
- Create a list of examples of secrets, sort them into similar categories and discuss why it might be important to keep them.
- Discuss how children might feel if one of their parents goes to prison (be sensitive to student backgrounds with this activity). Write a postcard about an imaginary visit to a prison.

During reading

Read to the end of the following chapters then stop and complete the activity.

- *Chapter 2* – Did you expect Matty to be a girl? Why or why not?
- *Chapter 5* – Make a list of the tests Bill has to pass. Create a cartoon to show four tests you could give a neighbour to form your own club.
- *Chapter 8* – Write your own letter to your teacher about yourself. Get a friend to write a letter about you. Compare and contrast the letters. Do you both think the same about you?
- *Chapter 12* – Draw a picture of Matty's house and a picture of Isabella's house and label them with descriptive phrases. What does each person's house tell you about their character?
- *Finish* – Was Matty's secret as serious as Bill's? How do you think that Bill feels about his father being in prison? How do you know this from the book?

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- List the characters involved and their characteristics. (Re)
- Describe Bill's changing attitudes to Matty. (Un)
- Discuss and write a recount of a first day at school then compare the recounts. (Ap)

- Analyse and classify the attitudes of Bill and Matty and Isabelle. (An)
- Prepare a list of criteria essential for friendship. (Ev)
- Prepare a Welcome To The First Day At School survival pack for children attending school for the very first time. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- List words used to describe how Matty and Isabelle look when we meet them both.
- Create a list of strange, funny and awful names that could be used to describe characters.
- Choose one and create an imaginary character profile. How does the name affect your opinion about the character?

Sentence level

- Create character profiles of the main characters and use them as displays around the room. Focus on building descriptive language.
- The Grubes house is almost magical. Find sentences that describe it and use them to draw a picture of it.

Text level

- How would the book be different if Bill hadn't chosen to tell everyone his secret?
- Write a letter from Bill to his father and one back from his father to Bill that you could use as an epilogue to the book. How does this change the ending?

Useful websites

www.shineforkids.org.au/for_kids/the_visit.htm
www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=286&id=1636

Author comment

Having been briefly engaged to be married at the age of three years old and, as an adult, having watched my two primary-aged sons set off for school with bunches of flowers or cheap tin rings for sweethearts, I believe that children can have special friendships that verge on a very pure love.

Matty and Bill have such a friendship. Their love is expressed through a mutual respect and a delight in each other's company – and it is sealed on the last page of the novel Matty is a strong young girl. She is the source of all information and the instigator of adventures and other enterprises. She is the hero of the novel who, even though betrayed by Bill is the one to forgive.

Elizabeth Fensham

Darius Bell and the Glitter Pool



Author: Odo Hirsch

ISBN: 9781741757163

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

www.allenandunwin.com

RRP: \$15.95



Theme Family, morality, greed, friendship, justice, hope

Readership Ages 10–12 (guide only)

Synopsis

The Bell family's ancestors were showered with honours, gifts and grants of land. In exchange, they have bestowed a Gift, once every 25 years, on the town. The Gifts have ranged from a statue to a bell tower with stained-glass windows, but now it's Darius's father's turn – and there is no money for an impressive gift. It looks as though a wheelbarrow full of vegetables is the best they can do. Darius is determined to preserve the family honour, and he thinks he's found the answer.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Explore the concept of bartering during medieval times, the foundations of Australian colonisation and its place in society today. Hold a 'bartering' day in the classroom.
- Read first-hand accounts of being in an earthquake. Watch videos of earthquakes online.
- Brainstorm novels about friendship. What are the common messages that we learn from these novels?
- Debate the definitions of rich and poor and how they affect our understandings of ourselves and others. Carry out a 'conscience alley' to walk through.

During reading

Read to the end of the following chapters then stop and complete the activity:

- *Chapter 2* – Why is Darius's father Hector so against Cyrus getting a job? Hot seat Hector, Cyrus and Darius about their attitudes to the family, work and their home.
- *Chapter 4* – By now we know that Hector does not have a gift. Create a gift for him, draw it and describe it. Carry out a presentation ceremony explaining the gift's significance.
- *Chapter 10* – Brainstorm all the ways Darius's discovery could be used to help the family get the gift. Predict what will happen next, supporting your arguments.
- *Chapter 17* – How has Darius's understanding of the gift and feelings towards it changed throughout the book so far? Draw a creative timeline annotating these changes in pictures and words.

- *Finish* – What is the message of the book? How did the gift change the townspeople's opinions and the attitudes of the Bells. Draw pictures of the townspeople in the gallery with thought bubbles explaining how they have changed their opinion.

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Describe the process Darius took to convert the cavern to the Glitter Pool. (Re)
- 'Marcel and Hilary and Donald gazed, mouths open in amazement' (p. 184). Illustrate what they might have seen. (Un)
- Darius could tell there was going to be a short story out of this (p. 225). Write the story that Hector would have written. (Ap)
- Examine the statement: 'Some things are too beautiful to be given out of obligation. They should be given out of love' (p. 232), and discuss how this applies to Darius and could apply today. (An)
- Prepare arguments discussing the statement 'Money isn't everything Darius' (p. 165). (Ev)
- The gift was described as '... at its best, at its ideal, something with an exquisite delicacy and expression that stirs the deepest emotions in our hearts' (p. 37). Create that gift. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Throughout reading, list unfamiliar words and use dictionaries to find definitions.
- Build an adjective bank of words used to describe the house and garden. Find antonyms for them.

Sentence level

- Paul likes to use proverbs as a commentary on what happens. List some of the proverbs he uses and discuss how suitable they are in their context. Research further proverbs.
- The author uses some very effective descriptive phrases to illustrate the story's setting. Analyse this language and write some further phrases and sentences to describe the house and grounds.

Text level

- The author sets up a contrast between what Darius's father Hector says and what the rest of the family think. Examine how the author uses description to contradict speech to fully develop a character.
- There are many hopeful moments in the book which are dashed before the next one comes along. Draw a graph to show the emotional journey the reader travels and label high and low points.

Useful websites

www.earthquake.usgs.gov/learn/kids/eqscience.php
www.money.howstuffworks.com/bartering.htm
www.allenandunwin.com/_uploads/BookPdf/TeachersNotes/9781741757163.pdf
www.allenandunwin.com/default.aspx?page=311&author=191

Author

'I love it. For me, writing is great fun. I get to make up a world and I get to look at that world with freshness and curiosity. I've always loved using language, shaping ideas and images with words. It gives me great satisfaction when I think I've produced something really good.

But in turning that story into a book, there's also a lot of hard work – a lot of redrafting and re-editing. So it's not all fun. I like to think of my books as opening doors in the reader's imagination. ...'

Extract from an interview with Odo Hirsch
www.allenandunwin.com/default.aspx?page=312&author=191

Running with the Horses



**Author and
Illustrator:**
Alison Lester
ISBN: 9780670868339
Publisher:
Viking, Penguin
Group Australia
www.puffin.com.au
RRP: \$29.95



Theme Love, war, animals in war, bravery, loyalty, horses, refugees

Readership Age 7+ (guide only)

Synopsis

Ten-year-old Nina lives with her father above the palace stables at the Royal Academy of Dancing Horses. She loves watching the famous white stallions as they parade for the crowds, but her favourite horse is an ordinary mare called Zelda – an old cab horse Nina often pats on her way home from school.

When Nina's world changes dramatically, she and her father have to flee from the city. Their journey over the mountains with Zelda and the stallions seems impossible, with danger at every turn ...

Guided reading

Before reading

- List the top five jobs you would like to do when you grow up. Why have you chosen them? What or who might influence your choices?
- Discuss times when human relationships with other animals become more than just those of pets. How do animals help us in our community?
- Write a diary entry from a child who is caught up in a city during war time.

During reading

Read to the following chapter references then stop and complete the activity:

- *Chapter 2* – Imagine you are Anna and write a detailed description of the horses performing in the Great Riding Hall.
- *Chapter 6* – Anna has to make a difficult decision because she can't take much with her. If you had to leave in a hurry and only take one item, would you take with you and why? Draw and then write about it.
- *Chapter 14* – Zelda has saved Nina and the others. Re-write the account of what just happened from Nina's father or Karl's perspective. Do they think a horse saved them?
- *Chapter 18* – Do you think things will work out for Nina and Zelda? Why? What hints can you refer to in the text?
- *Chapter 24* – Zelda has given everything she has to help Nina. Do you think she is going to survive?
- *Finish* – Did you predict that the book would have a happy ending? Re-write the ending so it is sad or unexpected. How does this change the book?

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- List and describe the main characters. (Re)
- Explain why Nina didn't want Karl to leave. (Un)
- Prepare a collection of images on Dancing Horses and their history. (Ap)
- Design and conduct a questionnaire in the class or school to decide what needs and wants are. (An)
- Conduct a debate on the needs of children today. (Ev)
- Locate interviews with refugees and then create a multimedia presentation on refugees and their assimilation into our society. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Identify all the adverbs in the text and create a word bank. How do these adverbs add interest and detail to the story?
- The book is set in an unknown country. List all the names in the book and words for different landscape features and use these as clues to work out a few possible locations. If this book was set in Australia, what names and landscape words might you expect?

Sentence level

- Identify some of the descriptive phrases and sentences used in the book. Create some more of your own using similar language patterns.
- How does the author use small clues to build tension in the book? Find examples to support your reasons.

Text level

- The creator chooses draw the main characters in a black and white, almost cartoon style. Why do you think she did this? What function or purpose does it serve?
- Some of the background images look like they are photographs. How does this contrast with the painted foreground and the black and white central characters? Why would she choose to use real settings?

Useful websites

www.alisonlester.net
www.awm.gov.au/kidshq/animals/animals.asp
www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/animals/

Author comment

I wrote *Running with the Horses* because I was offered the chance to create a picture book about ANYTHING. I thought of all the things I wanted to put in a picture book; a little girl (me) having to be clever, loyal and brave, wild weather, danger and horses. I loved falling into such a big adventure. It made me remember what it was like being a kid and having to dig my heels in to fight for something I believed in. It's good for kids to be powerful and adventurous, although as a parent it's rather nerve racking. We want to keep them safe all the time but they need adventures.

Alison Lester

The Whisperer



Author: Fiona McIntosh
ISBN: 978073228667
Publisher: Angus & Robertson,
HarperCollins Publishers
www.harpercollins.com.au
RRP: \$19.99



Theme Bravery, friendship, good vs evil, magic, fantasy, mythical creatures

Readership Ages 10–14 (guide only)

Synopsis

Griff is an ordinary boy, working at a circus – but he has an extraordinary ability. He can receive people's thoughts, although in an unfocussed way. When the circus master decides to exploit this talent, disaster ensues. Griff decides to escape, taking fellow circus member Tess and her magical creatures with him. Meanwhile Griff is hearing a cry for help from Lute, the Crown Prince of the realm, under attack from his uncle Janko, who wants to rule in his stead. Escaping from Janko's clutches, Lute encounters Bitter Olof, a bandit with a long history, and Calico Grace, captain of the pirate ship Silver Wind. With allies both magical and human, Griff and Lute must reclaim their inheritance and discover the truth behind their mysterious communication.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Research fantasy and mythical creatures in books and on the internet. Draw a mythical zoo and write labels for the animal cages.
- Discuss the concept of magic and its effect on individuals in terms of their responsibilities. Draw parallels with Harry Potter and other famous magical characters.
- Brainstorm books and movies with other 'misfit' central characters. Explore the concept of the misfit as an unlikely hero and write a character profile of a typical misfit hero/heroine.
- Create a huge class map of Drestonia to which detail is added as the book is read.

During reading

Read to the end of the following chapters then stop and complete the activity:

- *Chapter 4* – We sense that both Griff and Lute are in trouble. What is threatening them? What might happen to them? Write a predictive passage about each character.
- *Chapter 14* – Griff proves his gift can also be a curse. Imagine you are a reporter who witnessed Griff's first performance. Write an article about what happened and how the crowd reacted.
- *Chapter 26* – Griff has his first proper 'mind' conversation with Lute. How does the author's use of a telepathic link deepen our understanding of the characters and the story.

- *Chapter 29* – How does the knowledge about Griff and Lute change the story? How is it going to end? Hot-seat Griff about how he feels towards his long lost twin brother.
- *Finish* – Do you think Lute's decision about what to do with Janko was just? Why or why not? Write an argument for either side.

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Create a mind map outlining key parts of the story and the characters involved. (Re)
- Plot the different routes taken by the characters through the kingdom of Destonia and write outlines of the major events that occurred in the places. (Un)
- Construct a diorama of a scene from *The Whisperer*. (Ap)
- Develop a questionnaire and survey both children and adults' thoughts on mythical creatures. Compare results. (An)
- Investigate mythical creatures in ancient times and discuss their roles. (Ev)
- Create a podcast or other presentation on mythical creatures. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- List the names of characters, creatures and places in the book. Use etymological knowledge to gain insight into the author's hidden intentions when naming each.
- Create the name of a new mythical creature, draw a picture of it and write an information report about it.

Sentence level

- There is a lot of action in this book. Locate verb groups and identify how they help to move the action along and deepen the tension for the reader.
- Explore the use of short sentences in action scenes. How do they 'grab' the reader? Turn short sentences into compound sentences to explore.

Text level

- The book is partly a fantasy genre. What features make it distinctly belong to this genre? Could you argue it belongs to another genre? Why?
- The author uses the structure of parallel storylines which eventually merge. Draw these two storylines annotating what happens where. Create new and different merge points and explore how this would change the story.

Useful websites

www.nationalzoo.si.edu
www.ehow.com/how_4489533_create-own-mythological-creature.html

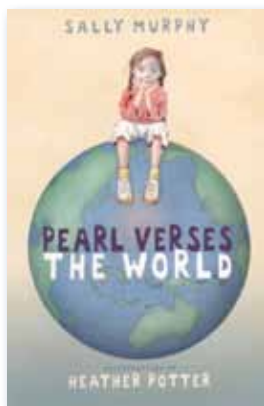
Author comment

This book came along almost by accident. I knew it couldn't work for an adult read, particularly because I was writing adult fantasy in trilogies. It was just a simple but great tale that I sensed was begging to be written.

I love the fact that it was single volume, I especially love that the characters could be larger than life, that I could have some comedy in it as well through characters like Bitter Olof and Calico Grace ... and most of all, I'd kept a promise to myself that I would always write books that I would want to read. This was exactly the sort of book I wanted to read when I was about nine or ten. It's the sort of book I grew up listening to on the 'wireless' as it was called in the 1960s and as school kids we used to sit in class and hear a story being told to us via radio, where we were forced to use our imagination as we listened to fabulous stories of magic and enchantment.

Fiona McIntosh

Pearl versus the World



Author: Sally Murphy
Illustrator: Heather Potter
ISBN: 978192115093
Publisher:
Walker Books Australia
www.walkerbooks.com.au
RRP: \$14.95



Theme A powerful and moving story about loss, grief and isolation. Deals with sensitive issues of dementia from the child's perspective.

Readership Ages 10–14 (guide only)

Synopsis

A moving illustrated verse novel about a girl dealing with isolation at school, and with her grandma's illness at home. At school, Pearl feels as though she is in a group of one. Her teacher wants her to write poems that rhyme but Pearl's poems don't. At home, however, Pearl feels safe and loved, but her grandmother is slowly fading, and so are Mum and Pearl. When her grandmother eventually passes away, Pearl wants life to go back to the way it was and refuses to talk at the funeral. But she finds the courage to deliver a poem for her grandmother that defies her teacher's idea of poetry – her poem doesn't rhyme; it comes from the heart.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Read and listen to a variety of rhyming and non-rhyming poems – compare and contrast.
- Discuss how families differ – students provide own examples.
- Initiate a discussion about how people feel when someone (including pets) dies.
- Students use a diagram/map to identify different groups they belong to.

During reading

Read to the following page references then stop and complete the activity:

- *Page 12* – Hot-seat Pearl to discuss her day at school and how she feels about it.
- *Page 17* – Pearl's mother escapes reality by reading a book. Why does Pearl find it hard to do the same?
- *Page 21* – Draw a cartoon to show a similar problem you might have with someone in your class. Animate it using a software program.
- *Page 29* – Compare and contrast the swimming pool grannies with Pearl's granny. How does this make Pearl feel?
- *Page 35* – Hold a debate about whether or not granny should stay at home. Video it.
- *Page 49* – Discuss safe places. Students draw their own and caption how they feel when they are in their own safe place.
- *Page 64* – Hot-seat Pearl and her mother to explore their reactions to Granny's death.

- *Finish* – Discuss how the funeral helps Pearl to cope. Perform Pearl's funeral poem as Reader's Theatre. Use the illustration on p. 78 to brainstorm adjectives and phrases to describe how Pearl feels now.

After reading – Bloom's taxonomy

- Construct a timeline of events as seen by Pearl. (Re)
- Write in your own words how Pearl was feeling. (Un)
- Granny was a special person in Pearl's life. Students identify a special person in their life and describe their characteristics. (Ap)
- Students compare and contrast Pearl's favourite place in the playground with their favourite places. What is the same/different? (An)
- Prudence was in conflict with Pearl. Discuss conflicts and how they should be resolved. (Ev)
- Chart and make a multimedia presentation on conflict resolution. (Sy)

Language focus

Word level

- Create a list of feeling verbs from the text then use a computer to write the words in appropriate fonts to illustrate them. Create and draw your own fonts.
- Practise changing present tense verbs into the present continuous form (-ing).
- Discuss the use of stanzas in a poem and compare and contrast them to paragraphs.

Sentence level

- Examine the punctuation of poems and compare and contrast to prose.
- Create a word bank of action and feeling verbs from the text.
- Create word banks for different scenes in the text e.g. being in a group of one, mum crying over granny, Pearl preparing her 'defence'.
- Locate adjectival phrases and sentences in the text that Pearl uses to describe other characters.

Text level

- Discuss the use of italics and different fonts in the text. How do they aid the reader's comprehension? Create your own poem using these devices.
- Explore different types of poetry and the functions they perform for the poem content.

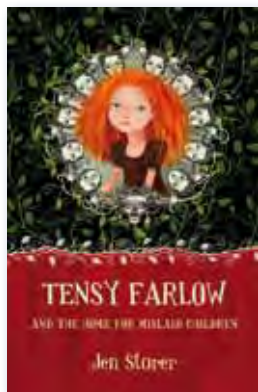
Other useful websites

www.sallymurphy.net
www.poetryarchive.org/childrensarchive/home.do
www.alz.org/living_with_alzheimers_just_for_kids_and_teens.asp

Author comment

I wrote *Pearl Verses the World* when a little girl started whispering parts of her story to me late at night when I was trying to get to sleep. I was really taken by how lonely this character was feeling, and needed to find out why she was so lonely, and what could be done to make her feel better. Once I started writing bits down, and answering these questions I discovered that Pearl's granny was dying, and I cried a lot for her – but I was also crying because I remembered what it was like when my own grandmothers died. It was hard to write a story with so many sad bits, but I really wanted to show that even though sad things happen, life can still be pretty good.
Sally Murphy

Tensy Farlow and the Home for Mislaid Children



Author: Jen Storer
ISBN: 9780670073399
Publisher: Viking,
Penguin Group Australia
www.penguin.com.au
RRP: \$19.95



Theme Friendship, love, loyalty, supernatural, religion, orphans

Readership Age 8+ (guide only)

Synopsis

Dumped in the River Charon, hunted by an accursed river creature and betrayed by the wicked Matron Pluckrose, Tensy Farlow is in mortal danger. She has no parents. Worse still, she has no guardian angel. When she is thrown into the Home for Mislaid Children – a gloomy orphanage where ravens attack, Watchers hover over your bed, and even the angels cannot be trusted – it seems that all hope is lost. Yet could it be that a plucky, flame-haired orphan with a mysterious past is precisely what this dark world needs?

Guided reading

Before reading

- Watch the movie and read the book *The Golden Compass* to introduce the concept of a protector or guardian angel.
- Brainstorm what you think the role of a guardian angel might be. Write a job description and then apply for the role yourself.
- Create a list of books and films, which involve orphans or are set in an orphanage. Draw a picture of the stereotypical orphanage and describe a day in an orphan's life.
- Briefly explore the theory of alternate universes.

During reading

Read to the end of the following chapters then stop and complete the activity.

- *Part 1, Chapter 6* – What are the implications for Tensy now that we know she has no guardian angel? How do you think we should feel about her? Write a prediction about what might happen to her.
- *Part 1, Chapter 5* – Tensy has had a very bad day. Write a letter from her to her dead Grandmother describing what has happened and how she feels about it.
- *Part 2, Chapter 16* – Create a wanted poster for Lythia, describing her status, what has happened to her and why she might be dangerous.
- *Part 2, Chapter 22* – Discuss why you think Tensy was able to clean the ghost's hands. What clues does this give us about Tensy and why she is special?
- *Part 2, Chapter 26* – Matron's dinner did not go according to plan. Dramatically re-create the dinner party scene including the role of a drugged and eccentric Matron and of some of the other dinner guests. Write an account of the dinner from one of the guest's perspectives.

- *Finish* – Who or what did Tensy turn out to be? Refer to the clues in the book which might have hinted at her status and write them out as a list.

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Write a profile for the characters from *Tensy Farlow and the Home for Mislaid Children*. (Re)
- Create images of the supernatural creatures from the book and describe their contribution to the story. (Un)
- Research and produce an information book on supernatural characters. (Ap)
- Compare and contrast the presence of religious imagery of angels and demons in *Tensy Farlow and the Home for Mislaid Children* to those in major religions. (An)
- Discuss views on the presence of angels and demons. (Ev)
- 'Tensy threw her arms around Howard ... It made him feel floppy, like the old bear ... or melty, like chocolate in the sun'. Write a poem about being hugged. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- The author has invented a lot of new words. Create a glossary for these words that could accompany the book.
- Find synonyms for the word 'mislaid'. Why do you think the author chose this word as a part of the title?

Sentence level

- Find and write examples of different characters' speeches. How does the author use language to change the voice and tone of these?
- The book is set in an indeterminate past. What language and setting features does the author use to demonstrate this?

Text level

- The author has created an alternate world. Use a venn diagram to compare and contrast our world and Tensy Farlow's world. Write a travel brochure for a multiple-universe traveller advertising a holiday in Tensy's world.
- Draw a plot map of the book highlighting dramatic events, twists and tension build-ups. List these major complication and resolution points on post-it notes then re-arrange them to explore how structure can change a narrative.

Useful websites

www.jenstorer.com
www.randomhouse.com/features/pullman/books/gc_tguide.html
www.parliamentofreligions.org/
www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/cultural/religion/

Author comment

The book has a wild array of influences. Dickens looms large in the characterizations, settings and humour. The writings of Rudolf Steiner which interested me at the time and I was also reading about Celtic Shamanism which gave me ideas about soul fragmentation and the concept of the co-walker or way-shower. The Elizabethan worldview that places man at the centre of a spiralling vortex, the outer reaches of which consist of the angelic realms or 'celestial spheres' is intriguing ... The outrageous characters in the Home for Mislaid Children (in particular Matron Pluckrose and Mrs Beadle) were inspired by my time spent nursing in country Queensland. But if I expand on this I might get sued ...
Jen Storer

Stolen



Author: Lucy Christopher
ISBN: 9781906427139
Publisher:
Chicken House Publishing
www.doublecluck.com
RRP: \$17.99



Theme Love, modern life, Stockholm Syndrome, abduction, deserts, isolation

Readership Young adult (guide only)

Synopsis

In a moving letter to her captor, sixteen-year-old Gemma relives her kidnapping from Bangkok airport while on holiday. Taken by Ty, her troubled young stalker, to the wild and desolate Australian Outback she reflects on a landscape from which there's no escape. In a story of survival, passion and darkness, Gemma reveals how she had to deal with the nightmare, or die trying to fight it.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Explore a travel website about outback Northern Territory and read survival stories from people lost there. Discuss the issues you might face if that were you.
- Research stories and artworks from indigenous tribes living in outback NT. Explore how the stories and artworks tell stories about a relationship with the land.
- Create a collage of photos and artworks of NT desert landscapes.
- Read articles and first-hand accounts of Stockholm Syndrome. Discuss what motives a captive might subconsciously have when building a relationship with their captor.

During reading

Read to the following pages then stop and complete the activity:

- *Page 9* – What is Gemma's initial reaction to Ty? Does the author provide us with any clues that Ty may not be what he pretends to?
- *Page 74* – After Gemma's first two unsuccessful escape attempts, and Ty's repeated reassurances he won't kill her, where do you think the story is going to go? How is Gemma feeling at this point?
- *Page 114* – Ty calls himself Gemma's 'guardian angel'. Create a conscience alley for points for and against this perspective. Use the arguments to hold a debate.
- *Page 190* – During her escape attempt Gemma strips herself bare. What does this symbolise in the book? Now she is 'bare' what will happen?
- *Page 238* – Gemma and Ty's relationship has changed. List the examples of where Gemma helps Ty, where Gemma starts to fall in love with her surroundings and when she starts to trust Ty. As a reader, how do you respond to these developments?

- *Finish* – Gemma, her parents and the court system all have different reactions to Ty. Write one newspaper article about the kidnapping and trial that condemns Ty and one that justifies his actions.

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Create a mind map of the story. (Re)
- Outline ways Ty had prepared for their life in the desert. (Un)
- Produce a summary report of real-life instances where people have been held captive for long periods of time. (Ap)
- Outline Gemma's changing relationship with Ty and compare this with Ty's relationship to Gemma. (An)
- Prepare arguments for and against Ty's appearance in court and hold a trial. (Ev)
- Write about your feelings about a time when you have been lonely or isolated. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Create synonyms that could be used instead of 'stolen' for the title. How might these change your reading of the book?
- The setting of the novel is significant to the story. Find examples of imagery used to describe the landscape and use it to annotate the picture collage you created Before reading.

Sentence level

- The first person perspective provides us with an insight into Gemma's thoughts. Find some examples of how her inner voice is written and compare and contrast these to her spoken words.
- Ty is often described as having attractive physical qualities. Rewrite these descriptive sentences to describe him as a monster. How does this change your reaction to him?

Text level

- The book is written as one long letter to Ty from Gemma. Discuss how this personal perspective changes the story from the traditional third person narrative.
- Elements of the landscape description are poetic. Write your own poem to describe the outback at a particular time of day.

Useful websites

www.lucychristopher.com
www.mental-health-matters.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=167
www.en.travelnt.com/about-nt/outback.aspx
www.teachers.ash.org.au/jmresources/outback/links.html

Author comment

I initially wrote this book to explore a young woman's thoughts and feelings of belonging towards a particular Australian landscape and whether the influence of place can inform a young person's thought process and relationship towards another person. Further into writing the book I realised that it was also about an exploration of relationships. I became interested in exploring how a young woman would navigate herself away from a relationship that was potentially damaging for her. How would she find the inner resolve to see things honestly and to do what she needs to do to save herself
Lucy Christopher

The Winds of Heaven



Author: Judith Clark
ISBN: 9781741757316
Publisher: Allen & Unwin
www.allenandunwin.com
RRP: \$22.99



Theme Family, rural life, hope, women's rights, growing up, friendship, depression, suicide, mental illness

Readership Young adult (guide only)

Synopsis

Fan was strong and beautiful and Clementine thought she'd always be like that. But Fan was seeking something, and neither she nor Clementine knew exactly what ... An unforgettable and deeply moving story of two young women, and how their childhood experiences and the choices they make as teenagers determine their fates.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Discuss the concepts of poverty, teenage pregnancy and family violence. Access charity websites to explore how charities try to break these cycles.
- Read and view a variety of indigenous stories from the Western NSW region.
- Read and discuss accounts from the 1950s and 60s about white attitudes to indigenous people, including the White Australia policy.

During reading

Read to the end of the following chapters then stop and complete the activity:

- *Chapter 2* – Compare and contrast Clementine's ideas of her home and Fan's home. Discuss the sense imagery used to describe her interpretation of Lake Conapaira. Create your own poem to describe feelings through imagery.
- *Chapter 4* – What is Fan's relationship to the old spirit man and how does it define her understanding of herself? How does she use this as a source of strength when her mother beats her?
- *Chapter 10* – What do the last few chapters tell us about Clementine? Write an imaginary diary entry from her perspective about one of the events mentioned. Think about how her 'voice' has changed from young child to teenager.
- *Chapter 13* – How has the dynamic between Clementine and Fan changed on this visit? Where do you think the author is going with the storyline? Where would you go and why?
- *Finish* – Clementine asks a series of questions of herself at the end to see if she could have stopped Fan from committing suicide. Re-write a synopsis of the book as if she had chosen one of these options and how it had changed Fan's actions.

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Identify the main events in the story and where they occur. (Re)
- Retell a summary of the events that happened in each of the four parts. (Un)
- Reflect on the sentence 'She doesn't feel home anymore.' (p. 236) and prepare a poem that Fan could have written. (Ap)
- Compare and contrast the lives of Fan and Clementine and also Australian life in the 50s and early 60s to life today. (An)
- In groups discuss the question: Would it have been different if Fan had grown up in the city instead of far away at Lake Conapaira? (p. 266) and, then present your findings. (Ev)
- Create a TV/radio advertisement or trailer to make teenagers aware of teenage depression. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- List all the indigenous words Fan uses and create a word bank or dictionary for them. Discuss how using an indigenous word in an English context can change the meaning of that word.
- There are lots of examples of colloquial Australian and bush language. Find some and discuss how they add a unique perspective to the characters.

Sentence level

- Examine imagery and personification used in the book, including the title. Create passages or poems based on imagery to describe the Australian outback.
- The Australian landscape plays a major part in the book. Using images of Australian landscapes in the form of paintings and photos from the 1950s to today, write descriptive passages of the bush.

Text level

- The book is structured as a recount Clementine tells when she is old, but interestingly the author does not use an older narrator's voice throughout. How would one older narrator's voice change the readers' interpretation of the book?
- Re-write a sequence of events as letters from Clementine to Fan and back. How would you include depth to Fan's character if her writing is child-like and with words misspelled?

Useful websites

www.abc.net.au/indigenous
www.thesmithfamily.com.au
www.sunrisefoundation.org.au
www.reach.org.au
www.youthsayno.wa.gov.au/dating_violence/index.htm

Author comment

My initial impulse for *The Winds of Heaven* came from the landscape of the Central West, which I remembered from childhood. It's an elemental landscape, and very fitting for the growing up of the two young girls, Clementine and Fan. Although Fan takes her own life, I don't regard *The Winds of Heaven* as 'a suicide novel.' Fan's decision doesn't emerge from teenage angst, but from the kind of society in which she lives. To the outsider, hers is an unnecessary death, yet Fan dies for a purpose: to give her children a chance in life, to set them free from the cycle of deprivation that threatens the quality of their existence. Isolated, without encouragement or assistance, she sees her own vanishing as their only way out.

Judith Clark

Liar



Author: Justine Larbalestier

ISBN: 9781741758726

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

www.allenandunwin.com

RRP: \$22.99



Theme Self-image, relationships, genetics, family, the 'other', fantasy, horror

Readership Young adult (guide only)

Synopsis

Micah Wilkins is a liar. But when her boyfriend, Zach, dies under brutal circumstances, the shock might be enough to set her straight. Or maybe not, especially when lying comes as naturally to her as breathing. Was Micah dating Zach? Did they kiss? Did she see him the night he died? And is she really hiding a family secret? Where does the actual truth lie?

Liar is a breathtaking roller-coaster read that will have you up all night, desperately seeking for something true.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Brainstorm known texts where the central character doesn't fit in. Build a fictional character map for the 'other'.
- Discuss the concepts of truth and lies. Share stories about when you have lied for a good reason, or told the truth and it has created problems. Debate the issue.
- Explore genetics and DNA concepts online. Carry out basic DNA science experiments. Survey and graph similarities between families e.g. number of members with blue eyes.
- Read and view other recounts of first love. Write diary entries for characters.
- Create a blog about the book so as it is read, students can add their comments and ideas and debate new revelations

During reading

Read to the following page references then stop and complete the activity:

- *Page 46* – Create a conscience alley of students, which 'Micah' (in role) has to walk through, listening to arguments for and against to establish if she killed Zach.
- *Page 188* – How does the knowledge that Micah is a werewolf change the story so far? Why did the author wait so long to reveal it? Predict what will happen next.
- *Page 233* – We learn about Micah through her relationships with others. How does our developing understanding about her relationship with Zach reveal different parts of her character? What does her new friendship with Sarah and Tayshawn reveal?
- *Page 261* – We find out Micah was in werewolf form when Zach was killed. Do you think she killed him? Why or why not?

- *Finish* – Discuss the concept of 'happy endings' in literature. Was this one? What would be a 'happier' ending?

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- List the truths and lies told in *Liar*. (Re)
- Discuss whether the author might have used the device of a werewolf as a metaphor for being a teenager providing arguments for and against. (Un)
- Prepare a podcast or multimedia presentation to demonstrate lying being a common part of society. (Ap)
- Design and conduct a survey to gather people's perception and implementation of truth. (An)
- Prepare arguments for and against Micah being responsible for Zach's death and then present these in a juried trial. (Ev)
- Create a trailer or video on the theme of love. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Brainstorm synonyms of lies and truth to build a thematic word bank. Create metaphors for both.
- Examine the language of the horror genre. Experiment by turning a descriptive passage into a horror passage by changing single words.

Sentence level

- The author often uses the five senses as a descriptive device. Find examples of these and write further sentences that respond through the senses.
- Discuss the difference between writing from a first person and a third person perspective. Re-write some first person sentences in the third person.

Text level

- Rather than being divided into numbered chapters, the book is divided into sections (before, after, family history) and these are revisited throughout. How does this structure change your reading of the book?
- The settings described in this book are not of the horror genre. Adapt them into the horror genre by painting different settings and then writing passages to describe them. How would this alter the mood of the novel?

Useful websites

www.hjustinelarbalestier.com
www.lycanthropes.org/shapeshifter/sser-emp.htm
www.dnafb.org/?gclid=COOQlcTwnaECFQ5HegodohiwwQ

Author comment

Liar grew from my own experiences as a liar. When I was a kid I made up romantic tales of my derring-do in the wilds of the Northern Territory, of my parents meeting during the Spanish Civil War (never mind that they weren't born then). I don't think anyone believed me. My stories were too outrageous and I wasn't very convincing. Didn't stop me though. I've since discovered that many of my fellow novelists <http://justinelarbalestier.com/blog/2006/09/21/john-green-and-the-art-of-lying/> were liars as kids. It got me thinking about the connections between lies and stories, the reasons we lie, and what it would be like to lie about everything. How would you live such a life? Why would you live like that?

Justine Larbalestier

Extract from author's website

Jarvis 24



Author: David Metzenthen

ISBN: 9780413010043

Publisher:

Penguin Group Australia

www.puffin.com.au

RRP: \$15.95



Theme First love, adolescence, sexuality, responsibility; identity, community, love, loss

Readership Young adult (guide only)

Synopsis

So far, Marc E. Jarvis has lost a white football boot, a school tie and a best friend. But there's more in store for him when he completes Work Experience at a local car yard – where his world is truly rocked, shocked and shaken. Then Marc meets Electra. And nothing will ever be the same again ...

A story of true friends, crazed coaches, shooting stars, and loves lost and found.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Brainstorm a list of male teenage characters you know in books or films. Create a list of these characters' common characteristics.
- Create a picture and word board to demonstrate the typical teenage male stereotype. Compare and contrast this to a typical teenage female stereotype.
- Discuss the public perceptions of private and public schooling. How do we define teenagers by the school they go to?
- Interview students who have been on work experience and discuss their responses. Write up a profile of a typical work experience week. Is there one?

During reading

Read to the end of the following chapter references then stop and complete the activity:

- *Chapter 5* – Why isn't working in a car yard a suitable experience for a private school boy? What does this tell us about Marc?
- *Chapter 9* – The last few chapters give us an insight into Marc's teenage concerns. Analyse his immediate concerns and his longer-term, serious concerns as part of a venn diagram.
- *Chapter 19* – How is Marc's developing relationship with Mikey and his friends providing him with a different perspective on life? Write diary entries from Marc and Travis set six months ago and at the present time discussing attitudes towards gay people.
- *Chapter 32*. After a week of work experience, what has changed in Marc's life? How have his relationships with others enabled him to make these changes? Choose one of the other characters and write a profile of them including how they influence Marc.

- *Finish* – Marc has now loved and lost two girls. Project forward and imagine how this might affect his future relationships. Write a passage about a relationship Marc has in ten years' time.

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Construct a chart showing the relationships of the main characters to Marc and list the characteristics of each. (**Re**)
- 'I tend to worry, I know I do, but only because I think there is lots of things to worry about (p. 1)'. Outline how this applies to Marc. (**Un**)
- Describe Marc and Electra's developing relationship from Electra's point of view. (**Ap**)
- Design a questionnaire, conduct a survey and analyse the results on first love then write a feature article for a newspaper. (**An**)
- 'I know that the choices people make hopefully lead to something better. But it's also true that some things you have no choice about can change your life (p. 161)'. Discuss this statement in relation to teenagers today and recommend strategies for making appropriate choices. Present this in an appropriate format. (**Ev**)
- Design a manual for surviving work experience. (**Cr**)

Language focus

Word level

- Examine the words Marc uses to catalogue girls he doesn't know, and girls he does know. Is there a difference, if so what is it?
- Create a word catalogue from a teenage girl's perspective of Marc and Travis.

Sentence level

- Examine the metalanguage of car salesmanship and find examples in the book. Refer to real-life examples in newspapers. How is this language specific to this domain?
- Explore gay and lesbian sub-culture in art and language. How is it represented as 'other' to heterosexual culture?

Text level

- The author intersperses the book with brief memories of A.A. How do these create a sub-plot to main narrative? How do they help to push the main narrative forwards?
- As the book is written from Marc's perspective, we are exposed to his personal thoughts and doubts. How do these compare and contrast with how others view him?

Useful websites

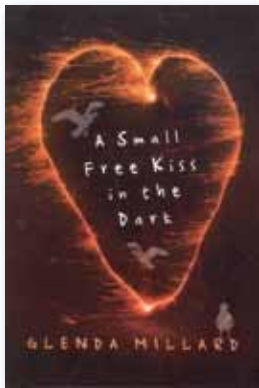
www.parentline.com.au/parenting-information/teens.php
www.kidshelp.com.au
www.youthsayno.wa.gov.au/dating_violence/index.htm

Author comment

I wrote *Jarvis 24* because I chanced upon the 'voice' of Marc Jarvis, after one of my friends told me about his son who worries about everything. I could identify with this, as I am a self-diagnosed stresshead. I also believe most people, whether they are old, middle-aged, young or little, worry about life and what's going on (or not going on). Then I saw a girl sprinting in my local park, logging her times into a computer; she was so fast and stunning I had to write about her ... and things just went from there. *Jarvis 24* means a lot to me because Marc has a beautifully mangled view of the world. He is the kid I wish I had been, to a great extent.

David Metzenthen

A Small Free Kiss in the Dark



Author: Glenda Millard
ISBN: 9781741756586
Publisher: Allen & Unwin
www.allenandunwin.com
RRP: \$16.95



Theme Love, loss, war, relationships, refugee, orphan, homelessness

Readership Young adult (guide only)

Synopsis

Two young boys, an old tramp, a beautiful lost dancer and her baby – rag-tag survivors of a sudden war – form a fragile family holding together in the remnants of a fun fair. This is a vivid, poetic story about life in the margins and the power of empathy and imagination to triumph over adversity.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Read first-hand accounts of modern wars or other fiction set during wartime.
- Research the issue of war refugees on the internet through international aid organisation websites.
- Discuss the genre of apocalyptic books and movies. Watch an apocalyptic war movie set sometime in the future.
- Explore homelessness in Australia. Create a photo montage of homeless people from the internet and create life stories around them.

During reading

Read to the end of the following chapters then stop and complete the activity:

- *Chapter 3* – Write a diary entry as if you were Billy or Skip about Skip's first few weeks as a homeless person.
- *Chapter 6* – In an unlikely way Skip is happier than he has ever been. Why is this? How does this contrast with his surroundings? How does the author use Skip's naivety as a device for the reader to view his world?
- *Chapter 10* – Write a postcard from Max to his mother about his perfect day. Draw a picture of them all on the beach with the war torn skyline in the background as a front cover.
- *Chapter 17* – Discuss how Skip has changed throughout the book so far. How have his relationships developed with the other characters and what is he learning?
- *Finish* – Skip becomes an unlikely hero. Write a further chapter set 10 years in the future to describe the man Skip has become and what has happened to Billy, Max and Sixpence.

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Construct a story map of Skip's life as revealed in this title. (Re)
- Using chalks, illustrate the main idea of the story in the style Skip might have chosen. (Un)

- Prepare and present a collection of images of refugees during wartime. (Ap)
- Investigate and explain Skip's statement, 'I didn't want Max to be like me, always looking and never finding' (p. 66). (An)
- Discuss Billy's statement 'No man is poor who has sixpence in his pocket' (p. 128) and then write a letter to the government expressing your thoughts and possible government actions. (Ev)
- Create a short animation or video on homelessness or war and the impact on the individual or society. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Red and black are personified and described in chapter 4. Brainstorm further words that could be used to symbolise these colours then write a colour poem.
- Identify and explore some of the similes Skip uses to describe beautiful things or moments. Create similes to describe the war torn city as if you were looking through Billy's eyes.

Sentence level

- Focus on Skip's artistic descriptions of light, shade and beauty. Write descriptions using similar language of impressionist artworks.
- Locate some of Skip's sentences which sound childlike. Examine how the author creates his voice through these sentence structures. Practise creating more in a similar style.

Text level

- The author essentially uses a chronological structure to develop the story. Rearrange some of the chapters to explore how a change in structure could change tension in the book.
- Create one chapter yourself from Billy's perspective. How does his voice change the reader's understanding of their desperate situation?

Useful websites

www.nationalgeographic.com/eye/refugees/refugees.html
www.justsalvos.com/index.php?content=5
www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/sp/settlement.htm
www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/section_ihl_refugees_and_idps!Open

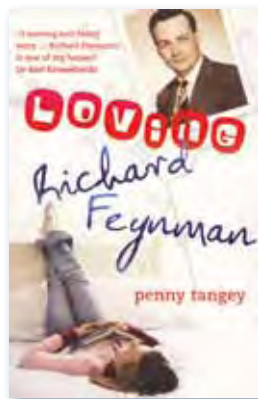
Author comment

... I began to wonder what life would be like for a very young homeless boy. Would he become part of a support network of some kind? How would such a group form? Would it be by choice or some other reason? What if they were drawn together because of circumstances beyond their control? Could that group become a substitute family? Could it be likened to an 'Urban Tribe'?

I ... considered using war as the event which threw an unlikely group of people together. ... so I began and got to know Skip, the main character, who is homeless at twelve years of age. Through Skip and his compelling desire to find love, acceptance and a family of his own, I sought to demonstrate the great motivational power of hope.

Glenda Millard

Loving Richard Feynman



Author: Penny Tangey
ISBN: 9780702237256
Publisher:
University of Queensland Press
www.uqp.uq.edu.au
RRP: \$17.95



Theme Self-image, popularity, teenage angst, family break-up, relationships, social activism, role of women, nuclear physics, Nobel laureates

Readership Young adult (guide only)

Synopsis

Richard Feynman was a Nobel Prize-winning physicist. Catherine is a science-loving fifteen-year-old. Richard helped build the atom bomb. Catherine's just trying to survive school. When your life is falling apart around you, is talking to a dead physicist normal? Catherine thinks so, but it isn't until her life begins unravelling that she learns whom she can really trust.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Research and write a biography about Richard Feynman.
- Create two wall displays of images of a typical teenage male pin-up and Richard Feynman. Discuss why he is an unlikely teenage pin-up.
- Write profiles of typical teenage group stereotypes e.g. popular girls, jocks, nerds. Discuss why most teenagers conform to these stereotypes.
- Choose your own 'unlikely' hero/pin-up and write a letter to him/her about your day at school.

During reading

Read to the end of the following dates then stop and complete the activity:

- *Thursday 6th April* – What have Catherine's initial descriptions of school told us about how she views the world? How does this align with her description of herself as a mathematician? Imagine you are Catherine and write a character profile for yourself.
- *Sunday 14th May* – How do Catherine and Chloe's actions and conversations about other people in their school contrast with their personal feelings about being nerds?
- *Friday 16th June* – Catherine has found out that her parents have split up. How do you think this changes her attitude towards her world? Will it make her more perceptive or her views even more black and white?
- *Sunday 16th July* – Catherine's social standing is slowly shifting; yet she does not realise it yet. Create a table to show how Catherine sees herself, how others see her and how their actions demonstrate this. Write a character profile of Catherine from someone else's perspective.

- *Finish* – In most books the central character goes on a journey where they 'grow' in some way. Do you think that Catherine 'grew' in this book? Why or why not? Write an argument.

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Construct a timeline of the main incidents in the story and the characters involved. (Re)
- Describe the changing relationships of the central characters in the story. (Un)
- From Catherine's entries in her diary construct a character profile for Richard Feynman. (Ap)
- Catherine's nana tells her that things were different for women in the 50s. Identify some of those women's issues of that time. Compare it to today and present it as a report. (An)
- Form a panel to discuss viewpoints on the statement made to Richard Feynman 'it's a terrible thing that we made' (p. 131). (Ev)
- Identify an issue that is worth 'fighting all the way' (pp. 137–9) and prepare acceptable means of demonstrating protest. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- The author uses a lot of modern, and sometimes offensive, slang (e.g. jocks, nerds, gay, retard). Find examples and discuss whether it should have been included or not.
- Explore quotations and the place they have in our society. Examine quotations from the book, and how they set the scene for each 'chapter'.

Sentence level

- Write out all the personal comments Catherine makes over a few chosen pages as speech bubbles around her picture. How do these help us to build a character profile of Catherine? What if they weren't included?
- What role do the P.S.s play in the book? Write your own for letters that do not have any.

Text level

- The book is written as a series of letters. How does this device affect our reading of the story?
- Pages of the book have faint exercise book lines in the background. Why has the publisher done this? What does it add to the book?

Useful websites

www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/physics/laureates/1965/feynman-bio.html
www.nobelprizes.com/nobel/physics/1965c.html
www.imdb.com/name/nm0275509/bio
www.atomicarchive.com/Bios/Feynman.shtml
www.inventors.about.com/od/astartinventions/a/atomic_bomb.htm
www.youth.csa.gov.au/index.aspx

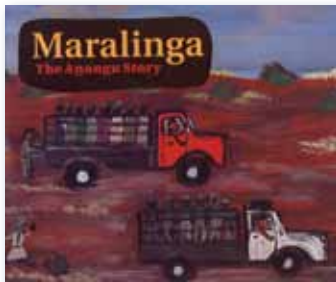
Author comment

What most interests me about Richard Feynman was his capacity to inspire very strong feelings of admiration both in people who knew him, and in people who read his books ... I had the idea of writing the book in letter format because Feynman wrote a very beautiful letter to his first wife two years after she died.

I hope that people who read *Loving Richard Feynman* will want to learn more about Richard Feynman but for me the book isn't just about him. It's about a girl idolising someone to the extent that she not only can't see their faults but also can't see other people's good points.

Penny Tangey

Maralinga: The Anangu Story



Authors: Yalata and
Oak Valley Communities
with Christobel Mattingley
Illustrators: Yalata and Oak
Valley Communities
ISBN: 9781741756210
Publisher: Allen & Unwin
www.allenandunwin.com.au
RRP: \$35.00



Theme Nuclear testing, indigenous Australians, history, politics, uranium mining, Aboriginal language, Maralinga,

Readership Age 8+ (guide only)

Synopsis

In words and pictures the Yalata and Oak Valley community members, with author Christobel Mattingley, describe what happened in the Maralinga Tjarutja lands of South Australia before the bombs and after.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Research the geography of the Anangu traditional lands. Locate them on a map, find out about local language groups and use the glossary at the back of the book to make a language display with pictures.
- Read Anangu traditional stories and view art from the region.
- Explore global political issues in the 1950s and 60s including the Western world's reaction to the threat of communism and a potential nuclear holocaust. Read accounts of the fear generated by the Cuban missile crisis to provide background information.
- Discuss the politics of nuclear testing. Explore other nuclear test sites around the world and the impact that testing has had on the local environment. Debate why governments tested nuclear bombs.

During reading

Read to the following page references then stop and complete the activity.

- *Page 5* – Listen to the story and draw your own map of what you think the landscape looks like. Label your map.
- *Page 9* – Now you have read about Anangu life, describe a typical day in the desert. How did they get water? What did they eat? Film the account to create an oral narrative.
- *Page 15* – Write a diary entry from a whitefella's viewpoint about an Aborigine he met, and hot-seat an Aboriginal person about a whitefella they met. Compare and contrast the viewpoints.
- *Page 35* – Create a list of roles students can play of whitefellas, mission workers, Anangu people and government officials. Hold a town meeting to discuss the problem of what to do with the displaced people.
- *Page 45* – Engage in further research about the bombs and then write a newspaper article about their effects on the local population.

- *Finish* – How do you think the Anangu people feel after their long journey to reclaim their land? Create an artwork inspired by these feelings.

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Create a chart of the facts that appear in the book. (Re)
- Retell segments of the story. (Un)
- Research and collect photographs about the testing of atomic bombs in South Australia and present the findings. (Ap)
- Compare and contrast life in the Yalata and Oak Valley communities with those of the students today and in earlier times. (An)
- Prepare arguments and then conduct a debate about uranium mining in Australia and about the decision to relocate the Anangu people. (Ev)
- Research and then design and create a method of disposing of the radioactive waste material. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Practise pronouncing words in the Pitjanjatjara glossary and listen to Pitjanjatjara spoken online.
- Draw pictures to match the Pitjanjatjara words in a central desert artistic style.

Sentence level

- Focusing on the first-hand Anangu accounts, discuss how the Pitjanjatjara English language patterns differ from standard Australian English.
- Read and list the chapter headings. How do they set the tone for the text?

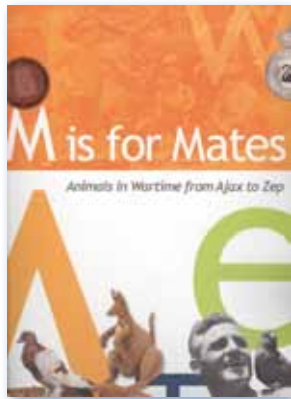
Text level

- Discuss how oral cultures transfer key knowledge and understandings. Debate the similarities and differences between oral and written cultures.
- Although this is an information text, it is very much the product of its authors. Explore how the text would differ in perspective if white people wrote it.

Useful websites

www.environment.gov.au/parks/uluru/culture-history/culture/tjukurpa.html
www.naa.gov.au/about-us/publications/fact-sheets/fs129.aspx
www.arpansa.gov.au/pubs/basics/maralinga.pdf
www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/05/11/1052280486255.html
www.allenandunwin.com/_uploads/BookPdf/TeachersNotes/9781741756210.pdf

M is for Mates: Animals in Wartime from Ajax to Zep



ISBN: 9781877007392

Publisher:

Department of Veteran's Affairs in association with the Australian War Memorial

www.dva.gov.au

www.awm.gov.au

RRP: \$24.95



Theme War, animals, friendship, bravery, alphabet books,

Readership Age 6+ (guide only)

Synopsis

Without the service of animals many more Australians would have lost their lives during wartime. Find out more in this educational book, filled with photographs and designed for primary students.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Make a list of all the wars Australian service men and women have fought in.
- Discuss ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day. Brainstorm all the things we do on these days and talk about why they are important.
- Visit your local war memorial. Discuss why it is there and what function it serves.
- Brainstorm a list of animals. Sort them into those that humans can train to help them and those they can't.
- Try to predict what each letter might stand for. Check as you go through the book.

During reading

Read to the following page references then stop and complete the activity.

You will also find orange 'Things to do' boxes throughout the book as extra activities to complete.

- *Page 9* – Complete the activity on the page where you have to make a list of other jobs dogs have in our community. Could you replace dogs with another animal? Why or why not?
- *Page 15* – Write a poem about Simpson and his donkey Murphy to commemorate their bravery.
- *Page 25* – Create a list of all the mascots you know, and where you see them. Why do animals make good mascots?
- *Page 33* – Discuss the messages the posters used. Design your own animal poster to persuade humans to come to war.
- *Finish* – Why do you think the authors wrote a book about animals in war? What do the animal stories tell us about the stories of people?

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- List all the animals that appear in the book. (Re)
- Explain how the animals were used during wartime. (Un)
- Choose an animal and create a war poster like those for the letter P. (Ap)

- Compare and contrast how animals were used in the various wars. (An)
- Prepare arguments and then conduct a debate on the use of animals during wartime. (Ev)
- Design the perfect animal to accompany humans in war. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- List all the acronyms you can find in the book. Why do organisations use acronyms? Create one for your own name.
- Copy out the *M is for Mates* alphabet. Can you think of any different words you could use instead?

Sentence level

- Find some other war photos on the Internet using the websites at the back of the book. Create your own labels for these.
- Create simple statement sentences to describe what some of the animals or objects are, e.g. Kangaroos are an Australian marsupial.

Text level

- Examine how the authors have made this book interactive for the reader. What else could they do to engage the reader?
- This is a factual text. Write some fictional letters, stories or poems, which could be included in the book to add further interest.

Useful websites

www.awm.gov.au/kidshq

www.australiansatwar.gov.au/default.html

www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/animals

Australian Backyard Explorer



Author: Peter Macinnis

ISBN: 97806442276841

Publisher:

The National Library
of Australia

www.nla.gov.au

RRP: \$29.95



Theme Australian explorers, survival, history, adventures, wilderness survival

Readership Age 8+ (guide only)

Synopsis

Australian Backyard Explorer tells the story of the many intrepid individuals who explored the Australian continent in the first 120 years of European settlement. It includes little known explorers as well as the old favourites, such as James Cook, Edward John Eyre, Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills. There are tales not only of tragedy, conflict and death, but also of loyalty, amazing perseverance and wonder over the new animals and landscapes they encountered.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Discuss what it means to be an explorer and what kind of people wanted to explore unknown lands. Write a character profile of the 'typical' explorer.
- Write an imaginative story about an early explorer in the Australia.
- Research famous Australian explorers and create a large timeline as a classroom display to which you can add information as you read through the book.
- Visit the National Library of Australia digital online collection of explorer's pictures.
- Research your local indigenous tribe. Ask an elder to come into school to explain about bush tucker, tracking and the Dreamtime.

During reading

Read to the end of the following chapters then stop and complete the activity:

- *Chapter 3* – There were many basic obstacles explorers faced in the past that we don't have to face today. What were they? Create a table to compare and contrast explorers' transport, equipment, food and communication in the past and today.
- *Chapter 5* – There were no cameras during the 1800s so explorers had to paint and draw. Select your own native flora from the school grounds and create a botanical drawing of it.
- *Chapter 6* – Choose one famous explorer and write their journal entry.
- *Chapter 10* – When disaster struck in the bush, explorers had to make hard choices. Create a list of dangers explorers faced. Choose one and write an old-fashioned newspaper report about how it affected an imaginary explorer.

- *Finish* – Were the explorers of the past brave or foolish? How have they affected our lives today? Hold a class debate!

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Prepare a chart showing any of the information remembered from the title. (Re)
- Explain the importance of explorers in opening up Australia. (Un)
- Prepare a collection of images on one of the explorers and explain what they did and why it was important. (Ap)
- Design and conduct a survey on attitudes to 21st century exploration and analyse results. (An)
- Conduct a debate on the topic: 'Modern exploration is a waste of money and there is nothing left to explore'. (Ev)
- Prepare a manual including an inventory of goods required for a modern day explorer. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Create word banks for technical language associated with different chapters such as food, flora, fauna, mapping.
- The book uses lots of different fonts for different purposes. Discuss how this aids the reader's location and comprehension skills.

Sentence level

- Examine some of the journal entries from explorers in the past. Create a dictionary of old fashioned words and phrases, with modern translations. Examine how the grammar differs.
- Visit the NLA archives online and create factual labels that could be used to illustrate the pictures and aid comprehension for the reader.

Text level

- Find examples of all the different text types in the book. How does the inclusion of all these different types add interest to the book?
- Follow one of the projects. Use your experience to go back and edit the instructions to further improve them.

Useful websites

www.members.ozemail.com.au/~macinnis/index.htm
www.trove.nla.gov.au
www.teachers.ash.org.au/jmresources/achievers/explorers.html
www.anbg.gov.au/flora
www.australianfauna.com

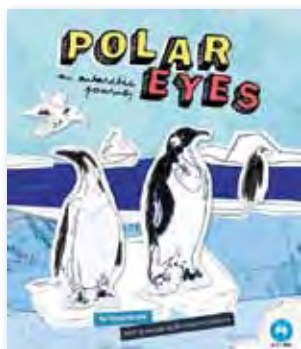
Author comment

I wrote *Australian Backyard Explorer* because I knew there was more to the story of exploration than I ever heard about in school lessons. They faced challenges of planning, preparing, finding their way, recording where they had been and much more. There was a whole science and technology involved, as well as a lot of craft, even simple things like knowing which birds show you the way to water.

History is too sanitised, too dismissive of the pain of walking on gibber plains in thin-soled footwear and blissfully unaware of the foot-worn, aeons-old, tracks that cross the 'trackless wastes'. The explorers knew these tracks well, calling them 'native roads'. I wanted to address some of these.

Peter Macinnis

Polar Eyes: An Antarctic Journey



Author: Tanya Patrick

Illustrator:

Nicholas Hutchenson

ISBN: 978064309610

Publisher: CSIRO

www.csiro.au

RRP: \$24.95



Theme Conservation, scientific discovery, Antarctica, animals, exploration

Readership Age 8+ (guide only)

Synopsis

Where do penguins go to dance? What is it like to sleep in an igloo? And have you ever wondered how ancient ice can be used as a time machine? Discover the answers and more in *Polar Eyes*, a new interactive children's book about Antarctica from CSIRO.

Guided reading

Before reading

- Watch documentaries and movies about Antarctica.
- Research the history of famous Antarctic explorers (including Shackleton) and their race to be the first to reach the South Pole.
- Brainstorm all the difficulties you would face if you had to set up a research station on Antarctica. Then try to match each problem with a solution.
- Start a classroom wall display to which you can add facts about Antarctica as you read through the book.

During reading

Read to the following page references then stop and complete the activity:

- *Page 9* – Scientists have to make lots of careful preparations before travelling to Antarctica. Why is this? Make a list of all the equipment you would pack for a trip to Antarctica.
- *Page 27* – As the ship moves into Antarctic waters, how does the surrounding seascape change? Write a diary entry as if you were a passenger on the ship.
- *Page 35* – Why is it important to study things like extremophiles and moss? What can they help us understand for the future?
- *Page 41* – Climate change is threatening this unique environment. Research the issue further then write a newspaper report about the issue and how what happens in Antarctica could threaten the rest of the world.
- *Page 61* – Now you know how Antarctic researchers live (and survive if necessary) design your own Antarctic research base, labelling all its features.
- *Finish* – Choose one of the animals mentioned in the book, research it and create your own electronic presentation about it to show to the rest of your class.

After reading – Bloom's Taxonomy

- Make a list of the human and other animals in the book. (Re)
- Collect images and articles of Antarctica in a multimedia presentation. (Un)
- Write a diary entry for a day in Antarctica and present as a podcast. (Ap)
- Complete the activity on p 56 on Animal behaviour and compare results. (An)
- Prepare arguments for and against exploration in the Antarctica. (Ev)
- Create a musical presentation of Underwater Songs (with accompanying animal images) as described on p. 21 about Humpback whales. (Cr)

Language focus

Word level

- Create an Antarctica word wall listing all the words you would only find when talking about Antarctica.
- Write a list of sub-headings you could use to organise a report about an Antarctic animal and use them to organise your electronic presentation.

Sentence level

- The headings and sub-headings use many different fonts. Create your own special Antarctic font and re-write some of the headings in it.
- Explore the difference between the use of first person and third person in the text. How do they help the reader to clearly define sections on each page? What different tones do these voices strike in the book?

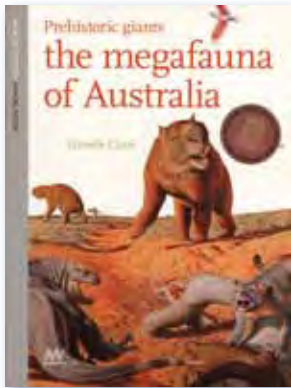
Text level

- Identify all the different text types that are used in the book. What other ones could you add to create further interest?
- Follow some of the hands-on activities then write an explanation as to how the activity or experiment helps you to learn about that particular feature of Antarctica.

Useful websites

www.classroom.antarctica.gov.au
www.discoveringantarctica.org.uk
www.polar-eyes.blogspot.com
www.csiro.au/science/PolarEyes.html

Prehistoric Giants: The Megafauna of Australia



Author: Danielle Clode
ISBN: 9780980381320
Publisher:
Museum of Victoria
museumvictoria.com.au
RRP: \$24.99



Theme Megafauna, extinction, climate change, animals, vertebrates, prehistoric animals, palaeontology

Readership Age 8+ (guide only)

Synopsis

Step back to a time when giant goannas and marsupial lions stalked the Australian bush. Imagine herds of two-tonne Diprotodon roaming the plains, and flocks of flightless ducks bigger than emus striding across the shallow inland sea. *Prehistoric Giants*, the second in the Museum of Victoria Nature series, is a guide to the Australian megafauna of the Pleistocene – a time when humans shared the land with giants. Richly illustrated and brought to life by the art of Peter Trusler and others, *Prehistoric Giants* will reveal an Australia you've never seen before.

Language focus

Word level

- Research the metalanguage of animal classification. Classify a modern Australian animal using the system.
- Compare and contrast the Latin and English names for animals. Explore the etymology of English words which come from a Latin origin.

Sentence level

- Examine specialist noun groups used to create factual descriptions of animals. Build your own noun groups to describe modern Australian animals.
- Locate the use of general nouns in the context of factual texts. Why are they used?

Text level

- Choose an extinct megafauna and write an information report about it.
- Explore how the repetitive structure of each animal's section (headings, metalanguage, images) aids reader comprehension.

Useful websites

www.museumvictoria.com.au/prehistoric/mammals/australia.html
www.abc.net.au/science/ozfossil/megafauna/links/default.htm

The complete units for *Megafauna* and *Lost!*, including the Guided reading activities and Author/illustrator comments, can be found and downloaded at:
www.elit.edu.au – Go to CBCA 2010 Guide.

Lost! A True Tale from the Bush



Author:
Stephanie Owen Reeder
ISBN: 9780642276865
Publisher:
The National Library of Australia
www.nla.gov.au
RRP: \$29.95



Theme Australia's past, family, survival, pioneer life, art, Victoriana, toys

Readership Age 8+ (guide only)

Synopsis

How long do you think you would survive in the Australian bush in winter with no food and very little water? Almost 150 years ago, three young children found themselves in just such a predicament. Somehow they managed to keep going for over a week. During that time, they walked nearly 100 kilometres in a desperate bid to find their way home. Even after almost everybody else had given up, their father continued to search for them. Experience pioneer life in Australia in the 1860s as you join Isaac, Jane and Frankie on their remarkable journey.

Language focus

Word level

- Look at the chapter titles. Why has the author chosen them? What do they add to the story?
- Create a list of native flora and fauna that the children encountered. Alphabetise the list as if you were going to put it in an index.

Sentence level

- The author has carefully chosen existing images from the 1800s and written captions for them. Choose some other paintings or drawings of Australian colonial life and scaffold students to create their own captions.
- Rewrite some of the children's words using modern-day language to create a point of comparison to show how language has changed.

Text level

- Look at the factual sections at the end of each chapter describing aspects of life in the 1860s. Choose one further aspect the author does not include, research it and create your own double page to inform the readers.
- The book uses a combination of fictional text and factual inserts to tell the story. Why would you choose to do both as an author rather than just one or the other?

Useful websites

www.trove.nla.gov.au/
www.abc.net.au/tv/outbackhouse/history/AUSTRALIA.htm
catalogue.nla.gov.au/ (search for images by William Strutt)

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For 38 years, e:lit – the Primary English Teaching Association (formerly PETA) has supported Australian primary teachers with a mission to improve the English and literacy outcomes of Australian students.

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