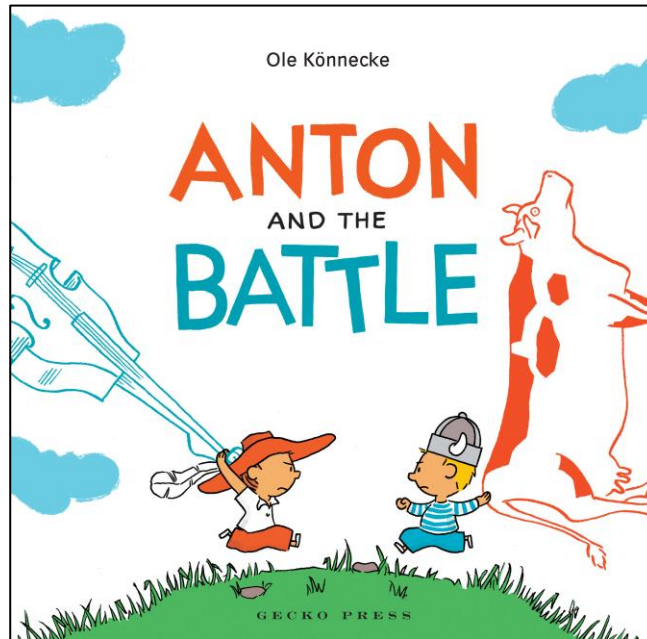




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**Teaching Notes: *Anton and the Battle*  
by Ole Konnecke**



**Synopsis**

When Anton meets his friend, Luke, an epic battle of the imagination ensues, in order to prove which boy is the strongest, the loudest, the hungriest...As the battle rages the contest is disrupted by the appearance of a dog and the boys are forced to take refuge up in a tree from this menace. However, their perilous position cannot subdue their competitive streak for long and soon, full of exaggeration, bravado and intense rivalry, they continue to battle on!

**The Author/Illustrator**

Ole Konnecke was born in 1961 and spent his childhood in Sweden. He now works as a freelance illustrator in Hamburg, Germany. He has won the Jugenbucher prize for children's illustration 2004 and the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis (German Youth literature prize) 2005. He also wrote *Anton Can Do Magic*.

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PO Box 9335, Marion Square  
Wellington 6141, New Zealand

Phone +64 4 801 9333

info@geckopress.com  
www.geckopress.com



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## Themes

This charming picture book with a funny, child-centred story has several themes. These include the power of the imagination and the importance of play. Armed with nothing but cool hats and their imaginations the boys, through play, explore their abilities and try to establish their place in the world.

Another theme explores the relationship of the boys. Friendship and rivalry are closely interwoven in the book as the boys play with one another in a fiercely competitive way and yet remain friends throughout, especially when faced with the common threat of a dog.

The inclusion of a dog allows the author to illustrate the theme of fear as the appearance of a dog undoes all their bravado instantly and the boys are forced to escape the impending threat together.

Another theme is the human desire to succeed and be the best, as shown by their continuing attempts to outdo each other.

## Activities

1. Before reading the book look at the cover image and title. Discuss what you think this story might be about?
2. Anton and Luke are friends. Write a description and draw an illustration of yourself and one of your friends playing together.
3. Look at the hats the boys are wearing. What do the hats make you think of? Why do you think the author/illustrator chose these hats for the characters? Do you think they suit each character? What type of hat would you choose to represent your personality? Design and/or make the hat you have chosen.
4. On the first page of the story Anton is drawn with a speech bubble above his head. What is drawn in the speech bubble? What do you think this symbolises? Think of five other common symbols. Use these as entries to create an illustrated symbol dictionary. For each dictionary entry draw the symbol and explain in a sentence what it stands for.

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5. Throughout the book the author has used different font sizes and capital letters for different words. Why has he done this? What do they help tell the reader about the speech or action? Have they been used effectively? Find some examples from the book.
6. Examine the illustrations in the book. What attracts your attention to a particular picture? What colours are used? What kinds of lines and textures are used? Do the pictures mirror the text or go beyond what the story tells you? Which is your favourite illustration and why?
7. The drawings in the book are reminiscent of *Peanuts* and *Calvin and Hobbes* cartoons. Find and study one of these cartoons. Then compare it with the drawings from the book and note any similarities and differences.
8. Which of the boys do you prefer? Why? Who do you think won the battle? Divide into two teams to debate whether Anton won the battle or not.
9. The book is full of comparatives and superlatives. Create a table similar to the one below. Find five adjectives from the book and add their comparative and superlative forms. Think of ten other adjectives and their comparative and superlative forms to add to your table. Choose three of your adjectives to help create and illustrate three new battle scenes between Anton and Luke.

| Adjective | Comparative | Superlative |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| strong    | stronger    | strongest   |
|           |             |             |

10. Write a review of the book. What did you like about the book? Why? What did you dislike about the book? Why?

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