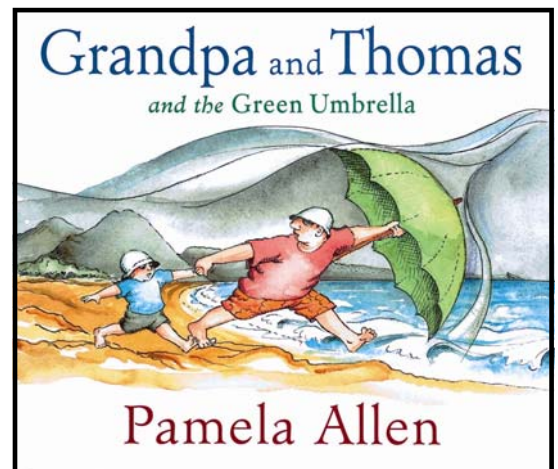


# TEACHER'S BOOK NOTES

## Grandpa and Thomas and the Green Umbrella

Written & Illustrated by Pamela Allen



### About the author

Pamela Allen is a phenomenon in the world of children's books. In more than twenty years she has produced over thirty picture books, many of which have won prestigious awards and commendations both in Australia and overseas.

Pamela's books are full of the music of language; they are 'fragments of theatre', designed to be read aloud and shared between an adult and a child. Eight of Pamela's titles were adapted for the stage by Patch Theatre Company, and performed in the Sydney Opera House. In 2004, *Grandpa and Thomas* won the Children's Book Council Book of the Year Award: Early Childhood and *The Potato People* was named an Honour Book in the same category in 2003. *Grandpa and Thomas and the Green Umbrella* has been shortlisted for the 2007 Children's Book Council Book of the Year Award: Early Childhood.

Pamela's picture books have earned classic status through their enduring popularity with the very young.

### Synopsis

The sun is shining and the sea is singing. Grandpa and Thomas go to the beach.

But all of a sudden, the sun goes, the wind blows and the green umbrella flies bowling and bobbing away.

This is the companion book to the best-selling *Grandpa and Thomas* (2003). Pamela Allen has again captured that special bond between a grandparent and grandchild through a combination of simple text and expressive illustrations.

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The story begins as a typical day at the beach with sand sculpting, swimming and a packed lunch. Then suddenly, when the weather turns for the worse, Grandpa and Thomas are forced to struggle and scramble in order to put away their things. The illustrations are filled with movement and emotion, with each illustration depicting a different moment or perspective, alternating on each page between the use of colour and lines.

## Activities

- Discuss with the class what Grandpa and Thomas do in the story to prevent themselves getting sunburnt. Ask if students are able to identify other ways Grandpa and Thomas could have prevented themselves from getting burnt. Students could design posters to inform people like Grandpa and Thomas what they should do to prevent themselves from getting sunburnt at the beach.
- As a class discuss healthy and unhealthy foods. You might ask:
  - 'What foods can you see in the book?'
  - 'Is this food healthy or unhealthy?'
  - 'What other food do you think Grandpa and Thomas may have taken to the beach?'

Students could then draw pictures of themselves enjoying a healthy picnic at the beach with family or friends.

- As a class, discuss the way in which movement is depicted throughout this book. Focus on particular illustrations that demonstrate movement, such as the illustration where Grandpa is throwing the stick. You might ask:
  - 'What makes it look like Grandpa is moving?'
  - 'What makes it look like the stick is moving?'
  - 'Is there only one stick in the picture?'
  - 'How does this sense of movement make you feel about the book?'

Talk about other things that move, eg a car or a bike. Students could then draw pictures of objects that move using one or more of the techniques Pamela Allen has used to depict movement in her illustrations.

- Grab your sunnies and your zinc cream and head on down to 'between the flags' for some sand sculpting fun! Even if your school is not near the beach, you might role-play a day at the beach in your school playground!

Serious sand sculptors use a special kind of sand called 'heavy sand' (often used on building sites) and it is different to the sand you see on the beach because each grain is square, which means it sticks together better, like building blocks. The sand on the beach is smoother and rounder so it doesn't stay together quite as well. Some beaches near the mouths of rivers have better sand for sculpting as it isn't worn down by the surf.

The most important part of making a sand sculpture is the preparation, or what sculptors call 'pound up'. Pound up involves building wooden walls in a square or rectangle shape. These walls are called

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'forms'. After the forms are built they are filled with sand, like a sandpit, right to the top. After the forms are full sculptors set to work making sure that the sand is pounded down as hard as possible by whacking it, jumping on it and watering it.

Water is really important; the water helps the sand stick together and helps it to set hard as it dries out. If the sand isn't compacted hard enough the sculpture might collapse later. After the sand has had time to set you can begin to carve into the sand block left behind. If you don't have the time (or equipment) to make forms, a bucket is the next best thing. Fill your bucket with sand that is damp, not too wet and not too dry but somewhere in between, then push the sand down as hard as you can into the bucket. Find a good spot, flip your bucket over and very carefully remove it, leaving the sand behind on the ground. Now you have the beginnings of your sculpture. If you want to go the extra step ask your parents if they have old buckets that they can cut the bottoms out of. That way you can start with the buckets upside down and fill the sand in from the top. This allows you to build up on top of each layer that you pound up with cups and containers like the professionals do with their smaller forms.

Now the fun part—carving. Carving gives the sculpture all of its detail and character. You can use almost anything to carve and most of the professional sculptors actually use cooking and dental utensils. You could use anything from icy-pole sticks to old keys. Even water pistols can be used to cut holes through the middle of your piles. Try to visualise what you want to carve out before you get started and then go wild! Water spray bottles are a great idea to have handy while you are carving to keep the sand damp. Every once in a while you should spray your sculptures so they don't dry out. Students could collect items you find on the beach, such as sea shells and seaweed, to decorate their sculptures.