



Teachers' Notes

Hanging out

Mates series

Written by Catherine Bateson
 Illustrated by Adam Carruthers

Teachers' notes by Anita Jonsberg

OMNIBUS BOOKS

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Illustrator	Adam Carruthers
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Introduction

When Ben visited his cousin Weston in Sydney, he had a great time. Together they travelled on the monorail, admired animals at the zoo, and walked the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Ben, who was fond of a yarn, dismissed each experience by exaggerating the attractions of his home town on the outskirts of Melbourne – everything, he said, was much better there.

Now Ben must face up the consequences of his tales: Weston is coming to stay. With the help of family and friends, Ben realises that it is not necessary to make up stories about his home town: it is every bit as exciting as Sydney – just very different.

Hanging Out is a story of mateship, pride and growing up.

About the Author

Award-winning Australian author Catherine Bateson credits a childhood spent in a secondhand book store with sparking her career as a poet and author of young adult fiction. A published poet, Bateson made the transition to fiction by creating *A Dangerous Girl* and its sequel, *The Year It All Happened*, verse novels that reflect the concerns and speech of modern Australian teens. In *Painted Love Letters* she tells the story of Chrissie, a teen who must deal with the death of her mother to lung cancer and the tragedy's effect on other family members, while *Rain May and Captain Daniel* finds an inner-city mother and daughter adapting to platypus, fruit bats, and other quirks of life in rural Australia. In addition to writing novels and poetry, Bateson has worked as a creative writing teacher for over a decade. In her spare time she hosts writing workshops for students and appears at poetry and writing festivals.

About the Illustrator

Adam Carruthers is an illustrator and graphic designer based in Melbourne, Australia. He lives in Altona with his beautiful wife, Jodie, gorgeous daughter Eden & their two little dogs, Tasha and Chloe.

Activities

NB: Please check all websites for suitability on the date of proposed use. If certain sites are blocked in your school, see your IT administrator to have them unblocked, or to get the address of a proxy server.

English

1. Ben is fond of a 'yarn'. A yarn is a story that features incredible events, related as if it is fact. What 'yarns' did he tell his cousin Weston?
2. Why do you think he told them?
3. Is a yarn the same as (or synonymous with) a lie? Why or why not?
4. On the whiteboard, make a list of ten words. Discuss what synonyms each has. If appropriate, use the 'synonyms' feature on Microsoft Word, and discuss whether all the synonyms actually mean the same as the original word and how some are only used in specific situations (contexts).
5. Read Henry Lawson's story 'The Loaded Dog'. What incredible events occur? Why is the story funny, despite being about a dangerous event?
You can also read some stories of 'Crooked Mick' [an archetypal Australian figure] if you click here:
<http://members.ozemail.com.au/~macinnis@ozemail.com.au/speflood.htm>
[There is also a book in the Mates series entitled *Crooked Mick*.]
6. Make up a 'yarn' of your own. You can base it on your town or city, or on a particular person who lives there. When everyone has finished, gather together and share your stories.
7. How do Ben's friends and family get him out of a potentially sticky situation? Why do you think they help him?
8. Write a list of the lessons Ben may have learned from his experiences.
9. Form two teams (one for and one against) and hold a debate. The topic could be "(Insert your town or city name) is the best place in Australia".

A useful link to debating for young students is:

http://www.actdu.org.au/archives/actein_site/owndebate.html

Art

1. Look carefully at the illustrations. How do they contribute to telling the story?
2. What do we find out about the places Ben and Weston live from the illustrations?
3. How does the position and framing of the illustrations help to create and maintain interest in the story?
4. Consider the cover of the novel. What does it suggest about the story? Draw or paint an alternative cover.
5. Create an extra character – perhaps Weston’s mother or father, or another of Ben’s friends. Illustrate them in a similar style to Adam Carruthers’.
6. <http://www.adamcarruthers.com/illustration/about.html>
7. Examine other style elements: the illustrated borders at the top and bottom of the pages. What do they show? How do they help the reader engage with the story?

Creative activities

1. Create a poster or pamphlet to highlight the attractions of your town or city.
Some tips are:
 - Make your title clear and to the point. Use a large and simple font – people should be able to see the writing clearly from a distance.
 - Use as few words as possible. A poster should communicate most of its message visually.
 - Use clear and simple language that will appeal to your target audience.
2. Make a model of Ben or Weston’s home.
3. Make a short film about your town or city, showing it at its best.
4. Recount an experience you have had in another place. If you have travelled interstate, choose the most exciting place to talk about. You may wish to create a PowerPoint presentation to show others the place you choose.
5. Turn the events of the novel into a clay-mation film.

Society & Environment

1. Melbourne and Sydney were both contenders for the site of the capital of Australia. You can find out about this here:

<http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/federation/>

2. Weston is enthralled with his encounter with a lyrebird. You can hear and see a lyrebird here:

(A good, if long, video of a lyre bird at Adelaide Zoo imitating construction work):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WeQjkQpeJwY&feature=related>

(An excellent, very funny video of Attenborough and lyrebird):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOFy8QkNWWs&feature=related>

(A lyrebird beat-boxing):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZbmBS5JTkM&NR=1>

3. Compile a fact file about a lyrebird. Include: habitats; feeding; nesting; characteristics. Find appropriate images to illustrate each section. The following links are useful:

<http://australian-animals.net/lyrebird.htm>

<http://www.avianweb.com/lyrebirds.html>

4. Research the most interesting plants and animals (flora and fauna) in your town or city. What are they and what is it about them that is unusual or impressive? Are there any plants that are used by industry or Indigenous people? What are they used for?

Geography

1. Locate Sherbrooke Forest and Port Phillip Bay on a map. Find out their co-ordinates. How far is each away from a] Sydney and b] Melbourne CBD?
2. What methods of transport are most widely used in a] Sydney and b] Melbourne?
3. Ben lives near 'Puffing Billy'. You can find out about the train here:

Official Puffing Billy site:

<http://www.puffingbilly.com.au/>

There are a couple of children's stories about Puffing Billy that can be viewed online [the books are for a young age group but have good illustrations]

<http://www.aussierailtales.com.au/index.html>

Why are steam engines no longer used for transport [other than as tourist attractions]?

4. Which Indigenous peoples live in a) Melbourne and b) Sydney?

Useful links are:

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/barani/main.html> (may show images of deceased people)

<http://www.magicdestination.com/melbourne/>

5. What are the main exports of a) New South Wales and b) Victoria?

Useful links are:

http://www.business.nsw.gov.au/aboutnsw/Trade+and+Investment/B1_exports_nsw_austr.htm

<http://www.tdtvictoria.org.au/rightmove/activity3.htm> (scroll down for some useful facts and resources)

6. How do their climates differ?

http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/environ/other/aus_climates.shtml