



Teachers' Notes

How to Talk to a Frill-neck Lizard

JAMES MOLONEY
ILLUSTRATED BY SIMONE LINEHAN

OMNIBUS BOOKS

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Category	Mates series
Title	How to Talk to a Frill-neck Lizard
Author	James Moloney
Illustrator	Simone Linehan
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INTRODUCTION

Cody and Bern are brothers. They live on an outback cattle station and see lizards around all the time. But Tarantula the frill-neck lizard is the first tame one. The boys feed it insects on the back verandah and Cody even thinks he can tell what the lizard is thinking. When the boys' Uncle Mo visits and sees how fast Tarantula can run, he 'borrows' him to run in the lizard races in town. Tarantula is the fastest lizard Bern and Cody have ever seen, but that doesn't mean he can win the big race. Not without Cody's secret weapon.

From tall tales to spooky stories and everything in between, Mates are all-Australian stories for Aussie kids, illustrated in colour on every page.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Moloney is a CBCA Book of the Year (Older Readers) Award winner and has written over 30 books for children, from early reader books to young adult novels. He is a full-time writer who lives in Brisbane.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Simone Linehan is a professional designer and graphic artist who lives in Adelaide with her family.

ACTIVITIES

1. Art

- a) What do we find out about the characters of Bern and Cody and Uncle Mo from the illustrations in *How to Talk to a Frill-neck Lizard*?
- b) What can you tell about where the characters live from the illustrations?
- c) Consider whether you would have picked the same events to illustrate. Why do you think Simone Linehan has chosen these specifically? Would you change anything? If you would, why?
- d) Choose a chapter of the story that appeals to you and illustrate it yourself.
- e) If you took away the words, the pictures in *How to Talk to a Frill-neck Lizard* would tell the story. Over a week, compose a visual diary where you draw an event that happens to you each day.

2. English

- a) Look at the opening sentence of the story. Why and how does it interest the reader and encourage them to read on? Practice writing some 'hook' sentences of your own.
- b) Consider how the twist at the end of the story increases its effect. How has the author kept it secret? What clues are there along the way?
- c) Some of the words in the story are presented in different fonts. Why are they highlighted and what effect do the fonts have on the words themselves? How do they help to convey meaning?
- d) Write three sentences that explain how the title links with the story.
- e) Write your own short review of *How to Talk to a Frill-neck Lizard*.

3. Creative Activities

- a) Create a poster advertising the famous Eulo Lizard Races.
- b) Invent a new blurb for the back cover of *How to Talk to a Frill-neck Lizard*.
Remember, you are trying to entice people to read it!
- c) Write a short story about an unusual pet that talks or whose thoughts you can hear. What would a pet dinosaur tell you? What would you say to a talking flea?
- d) Create your own camouflage frill-neck out of folded paper. What colours will you use to make your frill blend into your background?

4. Natural History

- a) Research frill-neck lizards on the internet. Write down five unique facts and compare them with your classmates. Here are some useful websites:

<<http://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2006/02/09/2042948.htm>>

<<http://www.australianfauna.com/frillednecklizard.php>>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frill-necked_Lizard>

<<http://www.kidcyber.com.au/topics/frilledliz.htm>>

- b) The frill-neck lizard was pictured on Australia's old two cent coin, no longer in circulation. Ask your parents if they have any old two cent coins and make a rubbing by placing a piece of paper over the coin and shading over it.
- c) Gather together five other objects that link with the ideas and themes in the story. Present your objects to the rest of the class or group and explain how they are linked.
- e) The frill-neck lizard is a member of the dragon family, a sub-species of lizards. Do some research to find out about some other dragon lizards and what makes them similar.

- f) The frill-neck lizard has many ways to defend itself. List four of its natural defenses and describe how and why they work so well.

5. Geography

- a) Frill-neck lizards live in northern parts of Australia. Research exactly where and shade this area on the map below.
- b) What identifies *How to Talk to a Frill-neck Lizard* as an Australian story? Do you think it could take place anywhere in the world?
- c) Find and mark the town of Eulo on the map below.
- d) Organise your own lizard race using your classmates. Map out a big circle, stand in the middle and have a race to the edge.
- e) What safety aspects are particular to your state? Why?
- f) Think about safety in your classroom or school environment and write ten guidelines to improve it.



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