



Jackie French – best-selling author

Ballarat, 1854. The goldfields are awash with people in search of their fortune. Into their midst enters Sam, a homeless teenager, who is taken in by the Puddlehams, who run 'the best little cook shop on the diggings'. Before she knows it, Sam is caught up in the diggers' feverish dreams of freedom and independence.

Jackie French presents a fresh and vivid portrait of life on the goldfields, perfect for incorporating into your unit of study on Gold. The novel is enriched with an author's note and further explanations of historical details, a short history of the Eureka Rebellion and a recipe book and instruction manual from 'Mrs Puddleham's compendium of useful recipes' such as 'How to cure maggoty meat'!

Through the use of the timeslip device, Jackie French steers readers to an understanding of the importance of the Eureka uprising to the future of Australia and the development of our democracy.

This novel allows any unit of work on Gold to segue naturally from the HSIE/SOSE curriculum to a study of Civics, Citizenship and Government.



Jackie French

Jackie French is a full-time writer who lives near Braidwood in the Araluen Valley, NSW. In 2000, her novel *Hitler's Daughter* was awarded the CBCA Younger Readers' Award. *To the Moon and Back* won the Eve Pownall Award in 2005. Her books appear consistently in the CBCA Awards, most recently *A Rose for the Anzac Boys* in 2009.

Teaching Tips

- Compare and contrast Sam's modern world with life on the goldfields.
- Dramatise Peter Lalor's speeches, complete with soap box, from Chapter 27. Discuss the language used in his speeches.
- Explain the reference: 'The past is always with us, and Eureka...the stockade fell, but the message changed Australia.' (page 252)
- Divide the class into two and, after guided research and discussion, have appointed representatives debate the causes, consequences and significance of the stockade from both the diggers' and the troopers' points of view.
- Hold a Eureka Day. Decorate the classroom with Southern Cross flags. Encourage students to dress in appropriate period clothing, sharing a plate of food from the time (see recipes at the back of the book!).
- In groups, students research one of the following aspects of life on the goldfields to present to the class:
 - Work
 - Education
 - Housing
 - Food
 - Family life and entertainment
- Discuss what the Eureka flag symbolised to the diggers.
- Research and play Australian folk songs that celebrate the spirit of Eureka such as Louis McManus' 'Beneath the Southern Cross' (1983) and Mark McKenna's 'Ballad of Eureka' (2006). Song lyrics can be found on the internet.
- Create a timeline of the events leading up to the Eureka Stockade.
- Build a class glossary of new words encountered through a reading of this novel: democracy, liberty, nepotism, tyranny, stockade ...

Comprehensive teaching notes for this novel can be downloaded from www.scholastic.com.au/teachertoolkit