

Lamont Books Standing Order

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Teacher Notes and Activities

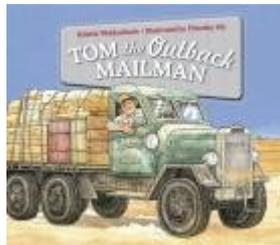
Tom The Outback Mailman

By Kristin Weidenbach & Illustrated by Timothy Ide

ISBN 9780734412249

\$28.99

Based on her bestselling book, MAILMAN OF THE BIRDSVILLE TRACK, Kristin Weidenbach has written a lively, engaging version for younger readers, capturing the humour, excitement and ingenuity of a classic slice of Australia's fast-vanishing history. Timothy Ide is a South Australian illustrator with a genuine feel for the beauty and hardship of life in the Australian outback.



Teacher notes taken from those prepared by Robyn Sheahan-Bright and supplied by the Publishers, Hachette Children's. A full version is available at www.hachettechildrens.com.au/9780734412249

Themes:

- Iconic Australian Heroes
- Australian Outback
- Postal Delivery
- Geography & Climate of Birdsville Track
- Droughts and Floods

Discussion Points and Activities:

- Tom Kruse is described as a 'real Australian hero'. Discuss this statement with reference to the meaning of the word 'hero' and how we as Australians define heroes.
- Research the lives of other such ordinary heroes. Discover (through researching) heroes in your own suburb, town, city, state and nation.
- Read about awards in Australia which honour bravery or contributions to science, culture or history. How worthy were some of these recipients, in your opinion?
- Conduct a debate about heroism. What does it mean? Debate with reference to some revered or under-recognised figures.
- You might like to invite someone who has lived in the outback to address the class and even show them pictures of the environment to stimulate further discussion.
- Make a list of words or concepts suggested in the book which relate to outback life (eg. tucker, swag, gibbers, hunting dingoes). Use them as triggers for further discussion and research with the students.
- The Birdsville Track is widely known but many people have never visited it because it is so remote and difficult to traverse. Research the area, and its landmarks such as Sturt Stony Desert or the Birdsville Pub.
- Research the impact of the weather – rain, floods, drought, windstorms etc.– on the outback and how people living there tackle such challenges.
- This book shows the dramatic change in the landscape when rain falls in this arid country. Research how droughts and floods have affected this region.
- Invite students to make a list of the things they notice in this book which are different about life then, as opposed to now. Make another list of objects depicted in the story which are not so common today.
- What values or qualities did this story suggest Tom had? What values are necessary to do this sort of work, year after year and what does this reveal about Tom's values? What about the values of the people he delivers mail to, year after year?
- Improvise a scene from one of the paintings included in this book. Try to convey the emotions which the illustration suggests to you.
- Create a tourism promotional poster advertising a trip to the Birdsville Track. (Have a look at how such trips are promoted by the companies that operate them.)
- Have the children complete the attached quiz about Tom's travels.