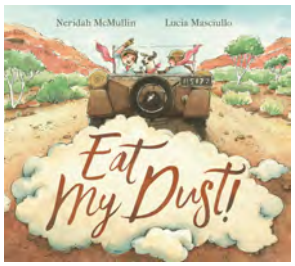
Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Eat My Dust!

Author: Neridah McMullin
Illustrator: Lucia Masciullo
ISBN: 9781760654191
Publication Date: August 2023

*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

The amazing true story of Jean Robertson and Kathleen Howell, who helped map Australia. In 1928, girls don't drive cars, let alone race them, until two fearless and intrepid best friends make history, racing across Australia and beating the land speed record ... with Barney the dog in tow!

Author/Illustrator Information:

Neridah McMullin loves history and true stories. An author of eight books for children, Neridah is also an award winning short story writer and poet. Her latest picture book, published by Walker Books Australia in 2021, is called Drover, and is the true story of legendary drover, Edna Jessop. Neridah loves footy, family, birdwatching, walking her dog and meeting other people's dogs.

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

Ages: 5 to 8 years

Key Learning Areas: English

Genre: Picture Book

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Discussion Questions and Activities

Before Reading

Before reading, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author/illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb

What do you think the story might be about from looking at the title only? Do your ideas change after seeing the cover?

Activity:
Write your own story using the title of the picture book.

Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Revisit your answer after reading the story to see if your predictions were correct.

Discuss the title of the book. Do you think this is a good title? Why or why not? If you were asked to choose an alternative title for the book, what would it be? Remember, a good title should capture the audience's attentions and give them some idea of what the book is about.

Exploring the Text

Exploring the Text

Discussion:

- Who do you think the audience for this book is? Why?
- Is the book an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? How can you tell?

Literary techniques allow a writer to convey a deeper meaning in their text.

- What techniques can you find in this text? e.g. metaphor, imagery, alliteration, personification
- What deeper meaning can you draw from the text?

Exploring the Illustrations

Discussion:

- How do the illustrations add to the story?
- Do you think the illustrator has effectively told his story visually?

Activity:
Cover the text in the book and write your own story following the illustrations.

Discussion:
Choose one of the spreads and have a class discussion about the following illustration decisions:

- How do the illustrations add to the story?
- How do you think the people are feeling? What clues might there be in the pictures?
- Is there a main colour in this spread? How does it make you feel?
- Do the colours change from spread to spread? Why might that be?
- Do the pictures take up the whole page, or are they framed?
- Are any of the words bigger on the page than the others? Why could that be?

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Exploring the Text **in Depth**:

1. Using a map of Australia trace the journey that the two women take by car across Australia.

2. As a class make two lists. List all the physical obstacles that the women would have encountered. Then list all the social and psychological obstacles the women would have encountered.

3. Ask your class to research the role of women in Australia in 1928. What was an average life like for a young woman? What would they have been interested in? How many of them worked? What age did they get married? Have a class discussion about the differences between life for those young women and how it is for women today. Has it changed much?

4. When we read stories about people who push boundaries and do things that are unexpected how does it make us feel? Do we feel inspired? Ask the students to write a story where they imagine themselves breaking a record. What record would it be? How would they do it? What would they have to overcome in order to make it happen?

5. Using the illustrations in Eat My Dust! Ask the class to write a descriptive poem about the Australian outback. how do they imagine it would look and feel? Do the illustrations in the book give a sense of danger, isolation or adventure or all three?