ENGL3007  Children's Literature

Course Co-ordinator:  Associate Professor Peter Peterson
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Ph: (02) 4921 5158
Fax: (02) 4921 6933
Email: peter.peterson@newcastle.edu.au

Course Overview
Brief Course Description
This course provides a representative survey of children's literature from the 1980s to the present day. Topics investigated will include the nature and social context of children's literature, the relationship between text and illustration, the presentation of social issues in writing for children, the role of imagination and fantasy, and the representation of Australian childhood.

Contact Hours
Lecture for 2 Hours per Week for 13 Weeks
Tutorial for 1 Hour per Week for 8 Weeks (Weeks 2 – 9)

Course Objectives
On successfully completing the course, students will be able to demonstrate an awareness of the range of current children's literature and to engage in informed discussion of:
- fundamental linguistic and literary properties of literature written for children
- the inter-relationship of text and illustration in "picture books"
- the presentation of cultural variation, human relationships and social tensions in forms accessible to children
- the role of fantasy and imagination in children's literature

Course Content
The course will cover a range of topics relating to current children's literature, including:
- Social and cognitive contexts of children's literature: fantasy and realism; constructions of the child; innocence and experience; censorship; entertainment and education
- The role of illustrations in children's books
- Themes in current children's literature: growing up in Australia; multicultural backgrounds; humour and imagination; human relationships; social issues

Assessment Items
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essays / Written Assignments</th>
<th>*Two take-home assignments, equivalent to 1500 words each (2 @ 30%) = 60%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Essay of 2000 words = 40%</td>
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</table>

Assumed Knowledge
nil

Course Outline Issued and Correct as at: Week 1 Semester 2 2006

CTS Download Date: 29 June 2006
Reading Materials

A. Books to purchase

*ENGL3007 Children’s Literature: Course Notes* (available from NUSA Office)

- **Crew, Gary & Woodman, Steven** - *The Watertower* (Era Publications 1994)
- **Crew, Gary** - *Boy Overboard* (Puffin 2002)
- **Hathorn, Libby & Rogers, Gregory** - *The Rabbits* (Lothian Books 1998)
- **Scieszka, Jan & Smith, Lane** - *The true story of the three little pigs, by A. Wolf* (Puffin Books 1991)
- **Winton, Tim** - *Blueback* (Pan McMillan 1997)

B. Highly recommended for purchase

- **Crew, Gary & Tan, Shaun** - *Memorial* (Lothian Books 1999)
- **Crew, Gary & Wilson, Mark** - *I said nothing* (Lothian Books 2003)
- **French, Jackie** - *Hitler’s Daughter* (Harper Collins 1999)
- **Gilman, Phoebe** - *Something from nothing* (Scholastic 1992)
- **Martin, Bill & Archambault, John** - *Knots on a counting rope* (Henry Holt 1987)
- **Norman, Lilith & Young, Noela** - *Grandpa* (Margaret Hamilton Books 1999)
- **Todd, Trevor** - *The revenge of the three blind mice!* (Margaret Hamilton Books 1999)

Callaghan Campus Timetable

**ENGL3007 CHILDREN’S LITERATURE**

Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science

Semester 2 - 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture and Workshop</th>
<th>Tuesday 11:00 - 13:00</th>
<th>Tuesday 13:00 - 14:00</th>
<th>Tuesday 14:00 - 15:00</th>
<th>Tuesday 17:00 - 18:00</th>
<th>Wednesday 11:00 - 12:00</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[V101]</td>
<td>[MCG28C]</td>
<td>[MCG28C]</td>
<td>[MCLG59]</td>
<td>[W238]</td>
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<td>Wks 2 - 9 only</td>
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<td>Wks 2 - 9 only</td>
<td>Wks 2 - 9 only</td>
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</table>

Plagiarism

University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. A student plagiarises if he or she presents the thoughts or works of another as one’s own. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:

- copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;
- using another’s ideas without due acknowledgment;
- working with others without permission and presenting the resulting work as though it was completed independently.

Plagiarism is not only related to written works, but also to material such as data, images, music, formulae, websites and computer programs. Aiding another student to plagiarise is also a violation of the Plagiarism Policy and may invoke a penalty.

For further information on the University policy on plagiarism, please refer to the Policy on Student Academic Integrity at the following link -


The University has established a software plagiarism detection system called Turnitin. When you submit assessment items please be aware that for the purpose of assessing any assessment item the University may -

- Reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or
- Communicate a copy of this assessment item to a plagiarism checking service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking).
- Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking
Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations

Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date, as advised in the Course Outline, unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension of time for submission of the item. University policy is that an assessment item submitted after the due date, without an approved extension, will be penalised.

Any student:
1. who is applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or
2. whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal written examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment;

must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, to the appropriate officer on the prescribed form. Please go to the Policy and the on-line form for further information, particularly for information on the options available to you, at:


Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:

- Requests for Special Consideration must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the date of submission or examination.
- Requests for Extensions of Time on Assessment Items must be lodged no later than the due date of the item.

Your application may not be accepted if it is received after the deadline. Students who are unable to meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak to their Program Officer in the first instance.

Changing your Enrolment

The last date to withdraw without financial or academic penalty (called the HECS Census Dates) is:
For semester 2 courses: 31 August 2006

Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of semester and prior to the commencement of the formal exam period. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of semester will result in a fail grade.

Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of semester/trimester, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of semester/trimester must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with the Student Enquiry Centre.

To change your enrolment online, please refer to

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/changingenrolment.html

Contact Details

The Faculty of Education and Arts
Room: GP1-22 (General Purpose Building)
Phone: 02 4921 5314

The Dean of Students
Dr Jennifer Archer
Phone: 02 4921 5806
Fax: 02 4921 7151
resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au

Various services are offered by the University Student Support Unit:

Web Address for Rules Governing Undergraduate Academic Awards
STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS

The University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with a disability or chronic illness.

If you have a disability or chronic illness which you feel may impact on your studies, please feel free to discuss your support needs with your lecturer or course coordinator.

Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this type of support. To register please contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, or via email at: student-disability@newcastle.edu.au

As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester.

For more information related to confidentiality and documentation please visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website at: www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability

Online Tutorial Registration:
Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system:


Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

Studentmail and Blackboard: [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/)
This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date. Late assignments will be subject to the penalties described below.

Hard copy submission:
- **Type your assignments**: All work must be typewritten in 11 or 12 point black font. Leave a wide margin for marker’s comments, use 1.5 or double spacing, and include page numbers.
- **Word length**: The word limit of all assessment items should be strictly followed – 10% above or below is acceptable, otherwise penalties may apply.
- **Proof read your work** because spelling, grammatical and referencing mistakes will decrease the value of your work.
- **Staple the pages** of your assignment together (do not use pins or paper clips).
- **University coversheet**: All assignments must be submitted with the University coversheet: [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/school/hss/studentguide/index.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/school/hss/studentguide/index.html)
- **Assignments are to be deposited at any Student Focus. Focus are located at:**
  - Level 3, Shortland Union, Callaghan
  - Level 2, Student Services Centre, Callaghan
  - Ground Floor, University House, City
  - Ground Floor, Administration Building, Ourimbah
  Any changes to this procedure will be announced during the semester.
- **Do not fax or email assignments**: Only hard copies of assignments will be considered for assessment. Inability to physically submit a hard copy of an assignment by the deadline due to other commitments or distance from campus is an unacceptable excuse. Assignments mailed to Schools are accepted from the date posted.

- **Keep a copy of all assignments**: All students must date stamp their own assignments using the machine provided. Mailed assignments to schools are date-stamped upon receipt. However, it is the student’s responsibility to produce a copy of their work if the assignment goes astray after submission. Students are advised to keep updated back-ups in hard copy and on disk.
Online copy submission to Turnitin
In addition to hard copy submission, students are required to submit an electronic version of the essay only to Turnitin via the course Blackboard website. Prior to final submission, all students have the opportunity to submit one draft of their essay to Turnitin to self-check their referencing.

Assignments will not be marked until both hard copy and online versions have been submitted. Marks may be deducted for late submission of either version.

Special Consideration/Extension of Time Applications
Students wishing to apply for Special Consideration or Extension of Time should obtain the appropriate form from the Student Focus.
http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/forms/index.html

Penalties for Late Assignments
Assignments submitted after the due date without an approved extension of time will be penalised by the reduction of 5% of the possible maximum mark for the assessment item for each day or part day that the item is late. Weekends count as one day in determining the penalty. Assessment items submitted more than ten days after the due date will be awarded zero marks.

Return of Assignments
Students can collect assignments from a nominated Student Focus during office hours. Students will be informed during class which Focus to go to and the earliest date assignments will be available for collection. Students must present their student identification card to collect their assignment.

Preferred Referencing Style
In this course, it is recommended that you use the Harvard in-text referencing system (similar to the APA system) for referencing sources of information used in assignments. Inadequate or incorrect reference to the work of others may be viewed as plagiarism and result in reduced marks or failure.

An in-text citation names the author of the source, gives the date of publication, and for a direct quote includes a page number, in parentheses. At the end of the paper, a list of references provides publication information about the source; the list is alphabetised by authors' last names (or by titles for works without authors). Further information on referencing and general study skills can be obtained from:

No Assignment Re-submission
Students who have failed an assignment are not permitted to revise and resubmit it in this course. However, students are always welcome to contact their Tutor, Lecturer or Course Coordinator to make a consultation time to receive individual feedback on their assignments.

Re-marks
Students can request to have their work re-marked by the Course Coordinator or Discipline Convenor (or their delegate). Three outcomes are possible: the same grade, a lower grade, or a higher grade being awarded. Students may also appeal against their final result for a course. Please consult the University policy at:

Student Communication
Students should discuss any course related matters with their Tutor, Lecturer, or Course Coordinator in the first instance and then the relevant Discipline or Program Convenor. If this proves unsatisfactory, they should then contact the Head of School if required. Contact details can be found on the School website.
Student Representatives
We are very interested in your feedback and suggestions for improvement. Student Representatives are the channel of communication between students and the School Board. Contact details of Student Representatives can be found on the School website.

Essential Online Information for Students
Information on Class and Exam Timetables, Tutorial Online Registration, Learning Support, Campus Maps, Careers information, Counselling, the Health Service and a range of free Student Support Services can be found at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading guide</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49% or less</td>
<td>Fail (FF)</td>
<td>An unacceptable effort, including non-completion. The student has not understood the basic principles of the subject matter and/or has been unable to express their understanding in a comprehensible way. Deficient in terms of answering the question, research, referencing and correct presentation (spelling, grammar etc). May include extensive plagiarism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>50% to 64%</td>
<td>Pass (P)</td>
<td>The work demonstrates a reasonable attempt to answer the question, shows some grasp of the basic principles of the subject matter and a basic knowledge of the required readings, is comprehensible, accurate and adequately referenced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65% to 74%</td>
<td>Credit (C)</td>
<td>The work demonstrates a clear understanding of the question, a capacity to integrate research into the discussion, and a critical appreciation of a range of different theoretical perspectives. A deficiency in any of the above may be compensated by evidence of independent thought. The work is coherent and accurate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>75% to 84%</td>
<td>Distinction (D)</td>
<td>Evidence of substantial additional reading and/or research, and evidence of the ability to generalise from the theoretical content to develop an argument in an informed and original manner. The work is well organised, clearly expressed and shows a capacity for critical analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85% upwards</td>
<td>High Distinction (HD)</td>
<td>All of the above, plus a thorough understanding of the subject matter based on substantial additional reading and/or research. The work shows a high level of independent thought, presents informed and insightful discussion of the topic, particularly the theoretical issues involved, and demonstrates a well-developed capacity for critical analysis.</td>
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Alteration of this Course Outline
No change to this course outline will be permitted after the end of the second week of the term except in exceptional circumstances and with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of any approved changes to this outline.
ENGL 3007  Children’s Literature

ASSESSMENT

Assignment 1  30%  1500 words  Due: 5pm Friday 18 August

Discuss the complementary roles of text and illustration in two (2) children’s books. Choose two contrasting examples to demonstrate different ways in which text and illustration may interact. Include at least one book that has not been discussed in class.

Assignment 2 (Essay)  40%  2000 words  Due: 5pm Friday 22 September

The Children’s Book Council of Australia issues an annual shortlist of books being considered for its Children’s Book of the Year Awards. Select three (3) books from those that were shortlisted from 1993 to 2006. Include at least one book from the “Younger Readers” category and one from the “Picture Book of the Year” category. Do not include Information Books. For each of your selected books, justify its inclusion in the Children’s Book of the Year shortlist.

To ‘justify’ the inclusion of a particular book in the shortlist, you will need to give reasons why the book is considered to be of excellent quality. Judgments will need to be supported with evidence drawn from the books themselves, referring to specific features of the book which you see as particularly worthy of mention. Depending on which books you choose, relevant features could include the quality of the illustrations, the interplay between text and illustration, the author’s craft, narrative perspective, success in involving the reader, thematic relevance, innovative approach to social issues, and/or any other features that have been mentioned in class as contributing to excellence.

[The shortlist is accessible on the web through the Children’s Book Council of Australia website: www.cbc.org.au. A hard copy will be placed in Short Loans.]

Assignment 3  30%  1500 words  Due: 5pm Friday 29 October

Imagine that you have been asked to assemble a collection of children’s books published since 1993 which demonstrate the contribution of children’s literature to current social issues. Create an annotated shortlist of 8-10 books that would be relevant to such a collection. For each book listed, give a brief statement about its distinctive contribution to the overall theme. Include an introduction of approximately 200-300 words to the collection explaining your interpretation and delimitation of the theme.
# ENGL 3007  Children’s Literature

## LECTURE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18 July</td>
<td>Introduction: What is “children’s literature”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25 July</td>
<td>The reader and the author: the “implied reader”?: the author’s craft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 August</td>
<td>Text &amp; illustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8 August</td>
<td>Fairytale &amp; folk story; building from the known</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>15 August</td>
<td>Fantasy &amp; imagination</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>22 August</td>
<td>Humour: Just for fun?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>29 August</td>
<td>Addressing social issues through Children’s Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>5 September</td>
<td>Culture &amp; identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>12 September</td>
<td>Personal relationships: family &amp; home; friendship &amp; jealousy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>19 September</td>
<td>Relationships across generations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>26 September</td>
<td>Death &amp; loss</td>
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</table>

**Mid-Semester Recess**  
**Mon 2 October to Friday 14 October**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Workshop</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>17 October</td>
<td>Environmental issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>24 October</td>
<td>Representing history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>31 October</td>
<td>No class</td>
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</table>

## WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>Books</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18/19 July</td>
<td>——</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25/26 July</td>
<td>How to read children’s books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1/2 August</td>
<td>The author’s craft</td>
<td>Blueback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8/9 August</td>
<td>The role of illustration</td>
<td>The Rabbits; Fox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>15/16 August</td>
<td>Folktale genre</td>
<td>The true story of the three little pigs; The revenge of the three blind mice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>22/23 August</td>
<td>Fantasy &amp; Imagination</td>
<td>The Water Tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>29/30 August</td>
<td>Humour</td>
<td>[own choice]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>5/6 September</td>
<td>Culture &amp; identity</td>
<td>The Rabbits; Boy Overboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>12/13 September</td>
<td>Personal relationships</td>
<td>Way Home; Grandpa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ENGL3007 Children’s Literature

Background reading (Short Loans list)


Sell, Roger (ed.) *Children’s Literature as Communication.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.


ENGL3007  Children’s Literature

Book List by Themes

**Text and Illustration**

Baker, Jeannie  
*Window*  (Julia MacRae Books 1991)

Briggs, Raymond  
*The Snowman*  (Penguin 1980)

Browne, Anthony  
*Piggybook*  (Julia MacRae Books 1986)

Gilman, Phoebe  
*Something from nothing*  (Scholastic 1992)

Hutchins, Pat  
*Rosie’s Walk*  (Puffin Books 1970)

Rodda, Emily & Kelly, Geoff  
*Power and Glory*  (Allen & Unwin 1994)

**Folkstory genre**

McNaughton, Colin  

Morimoto, Junko (trans. Isao Morimoto)  
*The two bullies*  (Random House Australia 1997)

Munsch, Robert & Mortchenko, Michael  
*The paper bag princess*  (Scholastic 1982)

Ross, Tony  
*Jack and the beanstalk*  (Puffin Books 1980)

Scieszka, Jon & Smith, Lane  
*The true story of the three little pigs, by A. Wolf*  (Puffin 1991)

Wagner, Jenny & Roennfeldt, Robert  
*The werewolf knight*  (Random House 1995)

**Fantasy and Imagination**

Baillie, Allan & Harris, Wayne  
*DragonQuest*  (Scholastic Australia 1996)

Fienberg, Anna & Barbara; Gamble, Kim  
*Tashi*  (Allen & Unwin 1995)

Fox, Mem & Argent, Kerry  
*Sleepy bears*  (Pan Macmillan Australia 1999)

Wild, Margaret & James, Ann  
*The midnight gang*  (Omnibus Books 1996)

**Challenging the Child’s imagination**

Browne, Anthony  
*The Tunnel*  (Walker Books 1992)

Crew, Gary & Woolman, Steven  
*Caleb*  (Era Publications 1996)

Crew, Gary & Woolman, Steven  
*The Watertower*  (Era Publications 1994)

Marsden, John & Gouldthorpe, Peter  
*Norton’s Hut*  (Lothian Books 1998)

Van Allsburg, Chris  
*The wreck of the Zephyr*  (Hutchinson 1984)

**Humour**

Allen, Pamela  
*Mr McGee and the biting flea*  (Viking 1998)

Allen, Pamela  
*Belinda*  (Viking 1992)

Carroll, Jessica & Smith, Craig  
*Billy the Punk*  (Random House 1995)

Clement, Rod  
*Grandad’s Teeth*  (Angus & Robertson 1997)

Dodd, Lynley  
*Hairy Maclary from Donaldson’s Dairy*  (Puffin Books 1985)

Fox, Mem & Argent, Kerry  
*Wombat Divine*  (Omnibus Books 1995)

Honey, Elizabeth  
*45 & 47 Stellar Street and everything that happened*  (Allen & Unwin 1995)

Honey, Elizabeth  
*Not a nibble*  (Allen & Unwin 1996)

Jennings, Paul & Smith, Craig  
*The cabbage patch fib*  (Puffin Books 1988)

Jennings, Paul  
*Unreal! Eight surprising stories*  (Puffin Books 1985)

Matthews, Penny & Norling, Beth  
*The best pet*  (Omnibus Books 1997)

Murphy, Jill  

Whatley, Bruce & Smith, Rosie  
*Tails from Grandad’s attic*  (Angus & Robertson 1996)
Historical

Crew, Gary & Tan, Shaun: Memorial (Lothian Books 1999)
Farrer, Vashti: Escape to Eaglehawk (Millennium Books 1991)
Morimoto, Junko: My Hiroshima (Angus & Robertson 1992)
Thompson, Colin & Pignatoro, Anna: The staircase cat (Hodder Headline 1998)
Tonkin, Rachel: What was the war like, Grandma? (Reed Books Australia 1995)

Social and Environmental issues

environment

Baker, Jeannie: Where the forest meets the sea (Julia MacRae Books 1987)
Crew, Gary & Wilson, Mark: I said nothing (Lothian Books 2003)
Winton, Tim: Blueback (Pan Macmillan 1997)

culture and identity

Ellis, Deborah: Parvana (Allen & Unwin 2000)
Heasley, Murray: Shuz (Omnibus Books 1993)
Kidd, Diana & Bancroft, Bronwyn: The fat and juicy place (Angus & Robertson 1992)
Marsden, John & Tan, Shaun: The rabbits (Lothian Books 1998)
Martin, Bill & Archambault, John: Knots on a counting rope (Henry Holt 1987)
Pallotta-Chiarolli, Maria: Tapestry (Random House Australia 1999)
Syme, Marguerite Hann: Chickpea (Scholastic 1997)

relationships: (1) friendship

Hathorn, Libby & Rogers, Gregory: Way Home (Random House 1995)
Wagner, Jenny & Brooks, Ron: John Brown, Rose and the midnight cat (Kestrel 1977)
Wild, Margaret & Brooks, Ron: Fox (Allen & Unwin 2000)

(2) family

Blume, Judy & Trivas, Irene: The Pain and The Great One (Heinemann 1985)
Crew, Gary & Scott, Annmarie: In my father’s room (Hodder Children’s Books 2000)

(3) across generations

Baillie, Allan & Wu, Di: Old Magic (Random House 1996)
Bryan, Janeen & Cox, David: Leaves for Mr Walter (Margaret Hamilton Books 1998)
Burningham, John: Granpa (John Cape 1984)
Fox, Mem & Vivas, Julie: Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge (Omnibus 1984)
Norman, Lilith & Young, Noela: Grandpa (Margaret Hamilton Books 1998)

(4) death/loss

Hathorn, Libby & Elivia: Grandma’s Shoes (Penguin Books 1994)
Kidd, Diana: I love you Jason Delaney (Angus & Robertson 1996)
Wild, Margaret & Brooks, Ron: Old Pig (Allen & Unwin 1995)
Extracts from Blueback and Magpie Island


His mother pitched over the side, her fins flashing upwards. The boat rocked a little and Abel pulled his mask on and followed her.

He fell back into the water with a cold crash. A cloud of bubbles swirled around him, clinging to his skin like pearls. Then he cleared his snorkel – phhht! – and rolled over to look down on the world underwater.

Great, round boulders and dark cracks loomed below. Tiny silver fish hung in nervous schools. Seaweed trembled in the gentle current. Orange starfish and yellow plates of coral glowed from the deepest slopes where his mother was already gliding like a bird.

Abel loved being underwater. He was ten years old and could never remember a time when he could not dive. His mother said he was a diver before he was born; he floated and swam in the warm ocean inside her for nine months, so maybe it came naturally. He liked to watch his mother cruise down into the deep in her patchy wetsuit. She looked like a scarred old seal in that thing. She was a beautiful swimmer, relaxed and strong. Everything he knew on land or under the sea he learned from her.

With a quick breath he followed her down. He clutched his bag and screwdriver and felt the pressure prick his ears. On the bottom his mother had found what they came for. Abalone.

In a seam along the smooth granite rock, the shellfish grew round and silver like shiny hubcaps. They clamped tight to the rock and only a hefty screwdriver could budge them.

Abel saw the flash of his mother’s screwdriver. She prised an abalone off the rock and a little puff of sediment rose around her. The muscle twitched in its shell. The meat was white with a green lip. His mother shoved it into her bag and moved along to pick out another.

Abel ran out of breath. He kicked back to the shining surface and hung there panting fresh air for a moment. His mother came gliding up with three abalone in her bag already. Her snorkel whooshed beside him. In a moment they dived again to work along the bottom, picking abalone and filling their bags. Up and down they went, hanging onto each breath, taking a couple of abalone from each clump, leaving the rest to breed and grow. Small fish came out of the weed and crevices to snaffle bits of meat and pick over the sediment they stirred up. Wrasse, sweep, scalyfins, blennies, foxfish and blue devils – all kinds of reef fish – darted about them in bursts of colour.

On the deepest dive, at his limit, Abel was almost at the end of his breath when he felt a rush in the water behind him. It felt like something big, like his mother passing. But at the corner of his eye he saw a blue shadow that blocked out the sun. He whirled around to see a huge mouth and an eye the size of a golfball coming at him. The mouth opened. He saw massive pegs of teeth as it came on in a terrible rush. Abel screamed in his snorkel and pushed hard off the bottom but the big blue shadow suddenly had him by the hand. The abalone he was holding came tearing out of his fingers. Abel thought he was about to die. He felt pain shoot up his arm. A vast flat tail blurred across his body. And then it was gone.

Near the bottom, in the mist left from their abalone gathering, a huge blue shadow twitched and quivered. There it was, not a shark, but the biggest fish he had ever seen. It was gigantic. It had fins like ping pong paddles. Its tail was a blue-green rudder. It looked as big as a horse.


This is the story of a magpie.

He lived high and free in the open countryside in South Australia where a big triangle of land called Eyre Peninsula pushes out into the sea. He was young and happy. He had been hatched in a wide scraggy nest made of sticks that were as hard and knotty as knuckles. His mother had laid two eggs in it; beautiful eggs they were, with spots on them, and touches of lovely colour – blue and grey and lilac. Magpie hatched out in three weeks.

At first he was a disgusting sight, naked and floppy, with a big bald head and little useless wings. He couldn’t keep his balance properly when he was sitting in the nest. But he grew very quickly. His beak was always open and pointing upwards, waiting for his mother or father to drop something into it. A beetle maybe, or a worm or a soft fat grub. His beak was a hungry, noisy beak, stretching higher than his sister’s and gobbling everything quicker than a wink. When his feathers came he grew plump and strong.