

Teachers' Notes  
for  
*Aussie Kid Heroes*

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Illustrator: Marjory  
Gardner

## SYNOPSIS

*Aussie Kid Heroes* tells the remarkable true stories of some of Australia's youngest heroes. At different times and in different ways, each brave, clever, adventurous, creative, athletic, caring or enterprising young Australian in this book has done something to be proud of.

## THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Have you ever read a *Guinness World Records* book? If you haven't, the library may have some. See if you can borrow one or look at it in the library.
2. What similarities can you see between the sort of stories that are included in *Aussie Kid Heroes* and the sort of stories that are included in *Guinness World Records*?
3. What are the main differences you can see between the stories in *Aussie Kid Heroes* and the stories in *Guinness World Records*?
4. Now look closely at the style of the writing in *Guinness World Records*. What similarities can you see between this and the style that the author uses in *Aussie Kids Heroes*?
5. Why do you think the author wrote in this style? Do you think she might have done so deliberately? What are some advantages of writing only a paragraph or two about each hero, instead of longer stories?
6. Now look at the illustrations. Write down three words that best describe the style of the pictures.
7. Do you think this style suits the book? Why/why not?
8. Why do you think the four illustrations on the cover were chosen to go on the cover? Would you have chosen these illustrations? Why/why not?
9. What do you think is the best thing about the illustrations? Do you have a favourite illustration? If so, what do you like about it?
10. Pick three stories you like from *Aussie Kid Heroes* that haven't been illustrated. Draw pictures for them, trying to use a similar style to Marjory Gardner's.

## ISSUES TO CONSIDER

1. Look up the definition of 'hero' in the dictionary. Do you agree with this definition? If not, what would your definition be?
2. What sort of person do you normally think of when someone talks about a hero? Write down at least three adjectives.
3. Do you think ordinary people can be heroes, or only those with extraordinary abilities? Why do you think this?
4. Some of the children in 'Brave Kids' rescued people from very dangerous situations. Do you think they would have been scared? Do you think *you* would have been scared in that situation? Do you think people can still be heroes even if they get scared?
5. Many of the children in *Aussie Kid Heroes* achieved amazing things even though they were faced with disabilities or illnesses. Do you have a disability, or do you know someone with a disability? If so, how does that disability make things harder for you/them?
6. What are some ways you could be considerate of or caring towards someone with a disability?
7. Many of the children in 'Caring Kids' had to help look after their parents or siblings who were sick. How do you think this would have affected their everyday lives? What do you think is heroic about looking after sick people?
8. The young people in the 'Ambassadors' section helped to raise awareness about issues they thought were important. Why do you think this is a good thing to do?
9. Are there any social or environmental issues that concern you? (For example: racism, global warming, drug and alcohol addiction, poverty.) If so, what are some ways that you could raise awareness of these issues, and help to improve the situation?
10. Would you like to be famous one day, or become a hero? If so, what would you most like to be famous for?
11. Do you think this is a realistic goal? If so, what steps could you take to make it more likely to happen?

## CREATIVE RESPONSE

1. Choose three superheroes and write down for each one what makes them different from other superheroes, and what their strengths or superpowers are. Now pick one hero from each section of *Aussie Kid Heroes* and write down what each one's 'superpowers' are. (For example: quick thinking abilities, a loving nature, intelligence.)
2. Pick your favourite hero from the whole book and design a superhero costume for them. Try to make their costume suit what they are famous for. You can also add gadgets with special uses or powers to the costume.
3. Use your design to create a poster about the hero you have chosen. Make the illustration of the hero big and colourful, and add information around the edges of the poster explaining what the hero is famous for, and what the gadgets you've added to the costume are used for.
4. Design your own Helpful Machine (like Arda Yilmaz on p.20). Draw a diagram of your invention and label its features, explaining what each part does. Underneath your diagram make sure you describe what the machine is used for and how it is helpful.
5. Pick one of the stories from the 'Brave Kids' section and draw a cartoon strip of it. Make sure you clearly show the events that took place, and how the story ended.

## RESEARCH

1. Pick one hero from the book and see what other information you can find about them. (Hint: try to pick someone well-known.) Put together a powerpoint presentation about the person to share with your class. Include information about their early life and family, as well as what they did to become famous.
2. Pick one of the following stories: Shipwreck Rescuers (p.3), Youngest Navy Boy (p.23), Given Away to Circus (p.36), Young Migrant 'Father' (p.74) or Island Survivors (p.75). Find out what else was happening in Australia at the time this story happened. Research the time period, what types of clothes people wore, what jobs they had and what their lives were like. Take down notes in dot point form, then share the information you've found with a friend.
3. Look through the 'Sports Stars' section and find the sport that you know least about. Research the history of that sport and draw a timeline, marking in the important events or developments in the history of the sport.

4. Can you find a hero in the book who came from your city, town or nearby area? If so, do some more research about that person. Where were they born? What school did they go to? Do they still live in your area?
5. Find out more about the author and the illustrator. For somewhere useful to start, try visiting Dianne's website at [www.enterprisingwords.com](http://www.enterprisingwords.com), and a page about Marjory at [www.showtell.com.au/victoria/illustrators/marjory\\_gardner.htm](http://www.showtell.com.au/victoria/illustrators/marjory_gardner.htm). You could also check the library for other books they've written or illustrated.

## CREATIVE WRITING

1. Pick one of the following stories: Miss Crocodile Dundee (p.5), Wild Boar Attack (p.7), Courageous Rescuer (p.8), Kidnap Hero (p.10), Saved Her Dad (p.12) or Bush Rescue (p.75). Imagine you are that person and write a diary entry describing what happened to you that day, how you felt and what you did. Try to make your diary entry as exciting as possible.
2. Look through the 'Adventurers' section. If you were able to choose, what adventure would you most like to get on? (It doesn't have to be one from the book.) Write a short story about your imaginary adventure, with yourself as the main character. Before you begin, plot out what will happen in the story: the introduction, the complication, the climax and the resolution. Remember to use all five of your senses – sight, touch, taste, hearing and smell – to describe things in your story.
3. Pick a story from *Aussie Kid Heroes* that you think is particularly amazing. Pretend you are a journalist from a local newspaper and write an article about the hero you have chosen. Make sure you use the five Ws – who, what, when, where and why – when you are describing what happened. Pick an attention-grabbing title for your article.