

RECOMMENDED FOR

Lower and upper primary and lower secondary

CONTENTS

1. Plot summary
2. About the author
3. About the illustrator
4. Author interview
5. Illustrator interview
6. Classroom activities and discussion questions by key learning areas
7. Worksheets
8. Resources

TYPE OF TEXT

Picture book

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- English: language, literature and literacy
- History: Historical knowledge and understanding; Historical skills
- Time, continuity and change
- World War I
- Art

THEMES

- War
- Mateship
- Bravery
- Nationalism and patriotism
- Australian history

PREPARED BY

Random House Australia

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MEET THE ANZACS

Claire Saxby & Max Berry

PLOT SUMMARY

ANZAC stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. It is the name given to the Australian and New Zealand troops who landed at Gallipoli in World War I. The ANZAC name is now a symbol of bravery and mateship.

Published in 2014 to mark the centenary of World War 1, *Meet the ANZACS* is the story of how the ANZAC legend began.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CLAIRE SAXBY writes fiction, non-fiction and poetry for children. She has nearly forty books in print with more in production. Her poetry appears in magazines, anthologies, on train walls and in museum resources. Claire lives in Melbourne with her family.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

MAX BERRY is a painter born who was born in 1987 in Katherine in the Northern Territory. Max completed a Bachelor of Design in 2009 at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales in Sydney, majoring in Graphic Design and Textiles. This is his first picture book.

AUTHOR INTERVIEW

1. Can you tell us a little bit about your research for *Meet the ANZACS* and the resources you used?

The first thing I do with a non-fiction project is read, read, read. I gather a wide range of relevant books and immerse myself in the subject. I'll read both children's books and reference books, filling my head with information. I'll also research on reputable online webpages. In this case, that meant the Australian War Museum which is an amazing resource.

2. Why did you choose to write the story in the style that you did?

I wanted the story to be personal, to show the individuals and the atmosphere of the time. I wanted readers to be able to imagine what it might be like to join up, to experience the excitement and sadness, adventure and drudgery of preparation for war.

3. Why did you choose to tell this particular part of the ANZAC story?

So much has been written about the battles of Gallipoli and others battles that contribute to the ANZAC story, I wanted to try something different. Once the uniform is donned, much of the individuality of the men is subsumed. But these men were brothers, sons, fathers, adventurers, job-seekers, travellers and they each have their own story, their own journey to joining up. It's also a fascinating picture of Australia as a young nation, showing it was ready for the responsibilities of nationhood.

4. What was the most challenging part of the project?

Finding an appropriate voice to introduce such a big topic in so few words for young readers. It was also a challenge to distil the information to its essence so that readers could feel they were part of the journey without missing any of the important information.

4. What was the most rewarding part of the project?

I learnt so much! I began to feel like I was meeting some of the soldiers. I read many personal diaries and they helped me to understand why so many men, including my grandfather, rushed to join up. These men were the ages of my own sons, and younger. It brought history to life for me.

5. How do you think the book will help readers to reflect on the experience of the ANZACS in World War 1?

World War 1 seems so long ago, almost abstract, particularly when viewed by young readers. Many men didn't return, and so many others were altered by the war and spoke little of it. The book aims to help them understand that these were young men (and just a few women) who had the same hopes and dreams as young people today. The ANZAC story is as large as a nation, and as small as an individual soldier. I hope that by introducing some of the individuals, readers can feel a connection with their history.

ILLUSTRATOR INTERVIEW

1. As a fine artist, you work in various mediums and formats, for lots of different audiences. What are the main differences between illustrating picture books and your other work as an artist?

I think the key difference is that the flexibility and freedom that you may have with your own practice is lost. Obviously, working as an illustrator, you're given guidelines and objectives that need to be observed. But that's not necessarily a bad thing. The brief for *Meet the ANZACS* called for a number of objects and environments I wouldn't have otherwise had a chance to tackle.

2. This is a historical book, based on a real story. Did you have to do a lot of research to get the historical details right, such as how people looked and what they wore? Were you surprised by how much/little material there is out there about the ANZAC story in the early days of WW1?

Luckily the team at Random House made great efforts to supply me with plenty of reference material. Details of uniforms and locations were particularly important. From the material I was able to gather I found the personal accounts and first hand drawings especially engaging and was pleased that they are accessible.

3. What mediums did you use to create the art? Can you explain a little bit about your process?

For these illustrations I used acrylic on canvas. I collaborated with Random House to decide on the rough layout and sketches. I then elaborated on those sketches and translated them onto the canvas. Broadly speaking, the paintings started with the background, horizon and environment, and then filled out to reach the foreground, people and objects.

4. What was the most challenging part of the project?

I often had to restrain my desire to alter the layouts between the sketch stage and final art. Regularly in my own practice, paintings evolve and end up completely different from what I initially intended.

5. What was the most rewarding part of the project?

I really enjoyed completing these paintings. Each one presented a fresh challenge and I just hope that the audience enjoys them too.

6. Did your opinion of the ANZACS grow or change through the course of the project? How?

This project helped me connect the mythology of the ANZACS with the reality of their experience and added depth to my knowledge of our national history.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. What does the front cover of *Meet the ANZACS* tell you about the book?

- Who is the subject of the book?
- Who is the author?
- Who is the illustrator?

2. Does the back cover give you more clues about the book?

- Does the blurb explain why the three men on the cover are dressed in army uniforms?
- In what time period do you think the book is set?
- What does the blurb tell you about why the ANZAC legend is an important part of Australian history?

3. What do you already know about the ANZACS and World War 1? Make a list and add to it as you read the book.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BY KEY LEARNING AREAS

English

- Story grammar: Create a simple story map of the key elements in the narrative: Setting; characters; beginning, middle and end (See Worksheet 1).
- The story is set in 1914-15 at the start of World War 1. List some of the words in the text, and the objects in the illustrations that give you a clue that the book is set in the past (e.g. clothes, modes of transport, depictions of cities).
- The author has used dialogue throughout the book to try to give an insight into how the soldiers who volunteered at the start of WW1 might have been feeling. How does their language change as the book goes on? For example, from enthusiasm to optimism to boredom and then anticipation and possibly fear. What does this progression tell you about the changing way in which the soldiers viewed war, which they had no previous experience of? Do you think dialogue is an effective tool for conveying attitudes and emotion?
- The Anzac story is considered a key part of Australian history and our national identity. We often refer to the Anzac legend or the spirit of the Anzacs. What is meant by the words *legend* and *spirit* in this context?
- There is a timeline at the back of the book with facts about World War 1. How is the language in this section different from the rest of the book?

History

- How did the WW1 start and when did Australia enter the war? (See the timeline at the back of the book).
 - What were the events leading up to the landing at Gallipoli? (See the timeline at the back of the book).
 - The book ends just as the first Anzac soldiers are about to land at Gallipoli. Start with the timeline at the back of the book and do your own research about what happened next. Use the information to discuss the meaning of the last line of the book: 'War was like nothing they could have imagined.'
 - When the war broke out in 1914, Australia didn't have a national army. The men who signed up for national service had no experience of war and no idea what they were going into, neither did their families. For many of the soldiers, it would have been the first time they left their homes and Australia. Imagine you are one of those soldiers, writing a letter to your family back at home after having experienced the landing at Gallipoli and life in the trenches. (For examples of actual letters see websites such as: <http://www.smythe.id.au/letters/index.htm>)
 - 2014 marks the centenary of World War 1. Why is the War, and the events at Gallipoli in particular, still important today?
- The illustrations for the book were done with acrylic paint on canvas. Do you think this classic medium suits the story? Choose a different medium, such as collage or watercolour, and discuss how this medium might change the tone of the book.
 - Look at the third spread in the book as well as the eleventh. Why do you think the illustrator has chosen to show the men from the waist down? Compare and contrast the position of the legs in both spreads. What does this positioning tell you about the men's journey? Look also at the changes in their clothing.
 - Choose one spread from the book to analyse. Make two columns. In one column write down everything the text tells you about the story on that page. In the other column, write down everything the illustration tells you about the story on that page. Does the illustration tell you extra things that are not in the text?

Art and Visual Literacy

- *Meet the ANZACS* uses both images and text to tell the story of the lead up to the Gallipoli landing at the start of WW1. How does the story change if you read the text only? Or look at the pictures only? How do the text and illustrations work together to tell the story?
- Have a look at the colours the illustrator has used throughout the book. Note the contrast between the colours when the soldiers are at home in Australia, in Egypt and then about to land at Gallipoli. What do the colours tell you about the changing landscapes? Look also at the way the illustrator uses colour to depict changes in place and tone.
- Look at the first spread in the book, but don't read the text. What do you think is going on, in the picture? What clues does the picture offer about the story? Look, for example, at the headline on the newspaper the man is reading. And why are the men who are on the

WORKSHEET 1: SIMPLE STORY MAP

Book title:

Author:

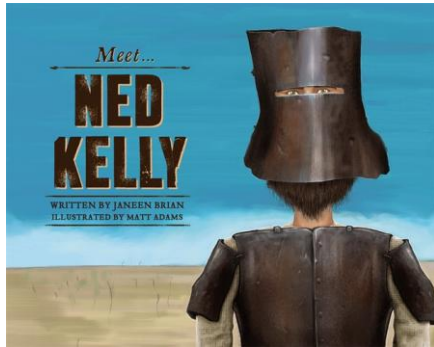
Illustrator:

Characters:

Setting:

Beginning
Middle
End

OTHER BOOKS IN THIS SERIES



COMING SOON

- *Meet Douglas Mawson*
- *Meet Nancy Bird-Walton*
- *Meet Banjo Paterson*