

OFF THE SHELF



Issue 18 December 2015



THE LISTIES
EXPLAIN THEMSELVES



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PENGUIN
TEACHERS'
ACADEMY

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getting kids fired up
by science

WELCOME

It might've felt like it was never going to arrive but it's finally here: say hello to the end of term four and a well-deserved summer break. It's time to recuperate, reenergise and reflect. And now that the lessons are almost over and exams are through, everybody can take some time for themselves and read whatever they want.

It's been another huge year for *Off the Shelf*, so we figured why not keep that ball rolling and take 2015 out with a bang. In this issue: we have limited success in getting *Ickypedia* creators The Listies to stay on topic; teacher Rebecca Johnson talks about a new approach to primary school science; we look at an exciting digital innovation in picture books; and John Boyne gives some insights into the creation of *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain*.

Thanks for your ongoing support of Penguin Teachers' Academy. We have a lot of fun delivering such diverse content throughout the year, and we've loved getting your feedback at various festivals, conferences and events. We can't wait to welcome you back in 2016, and we look forward to an even bigger and more exciting year ahead.

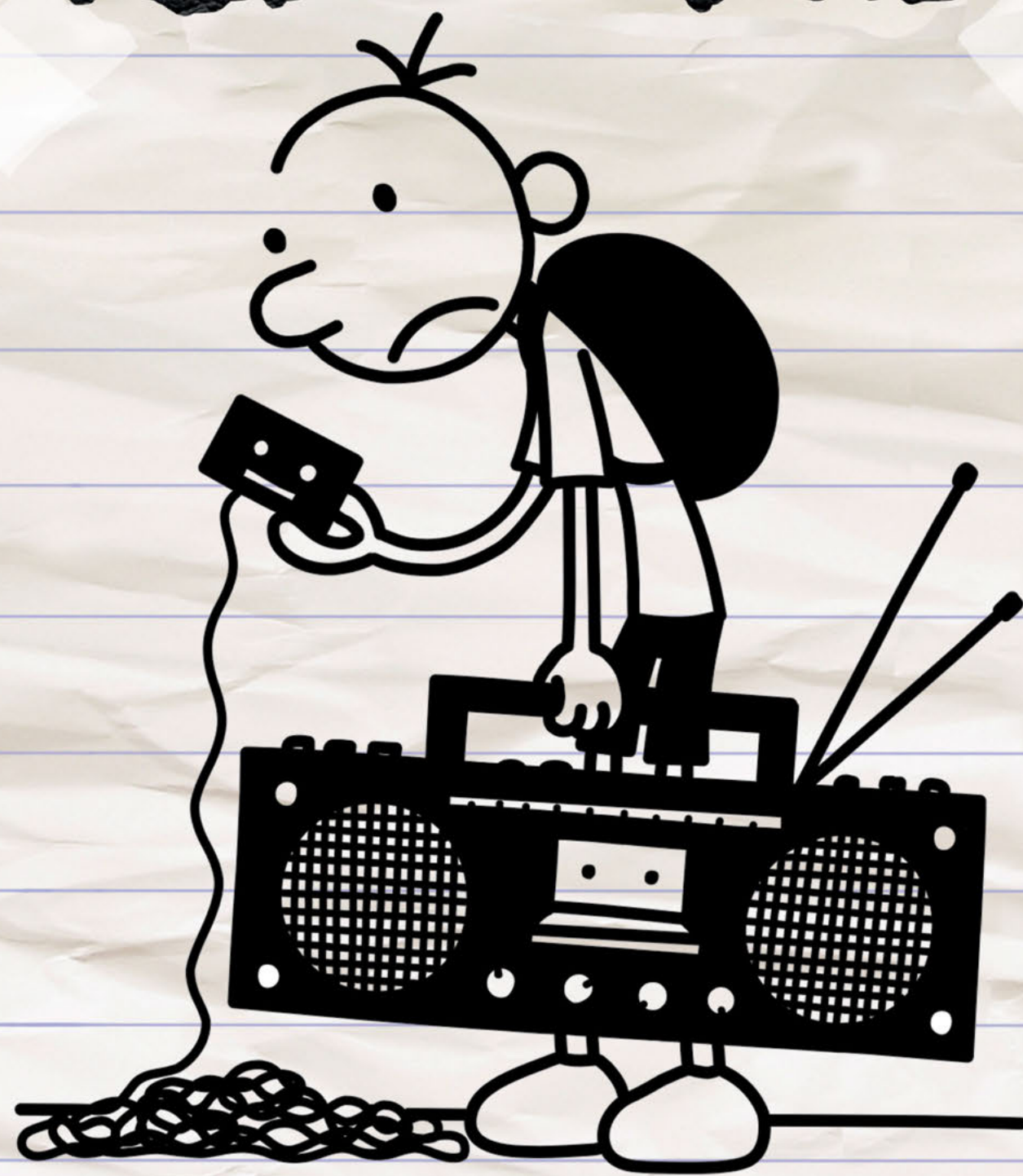
Tye Cattanach

Marketing Manager (Education)
Penguin Books

CRANKING
IT UP TO 10



DIARY
of a
Wimpy Kid
OLD SCHOOL



Jeff Kinney

OUT
NOW



FOR MORE INFO

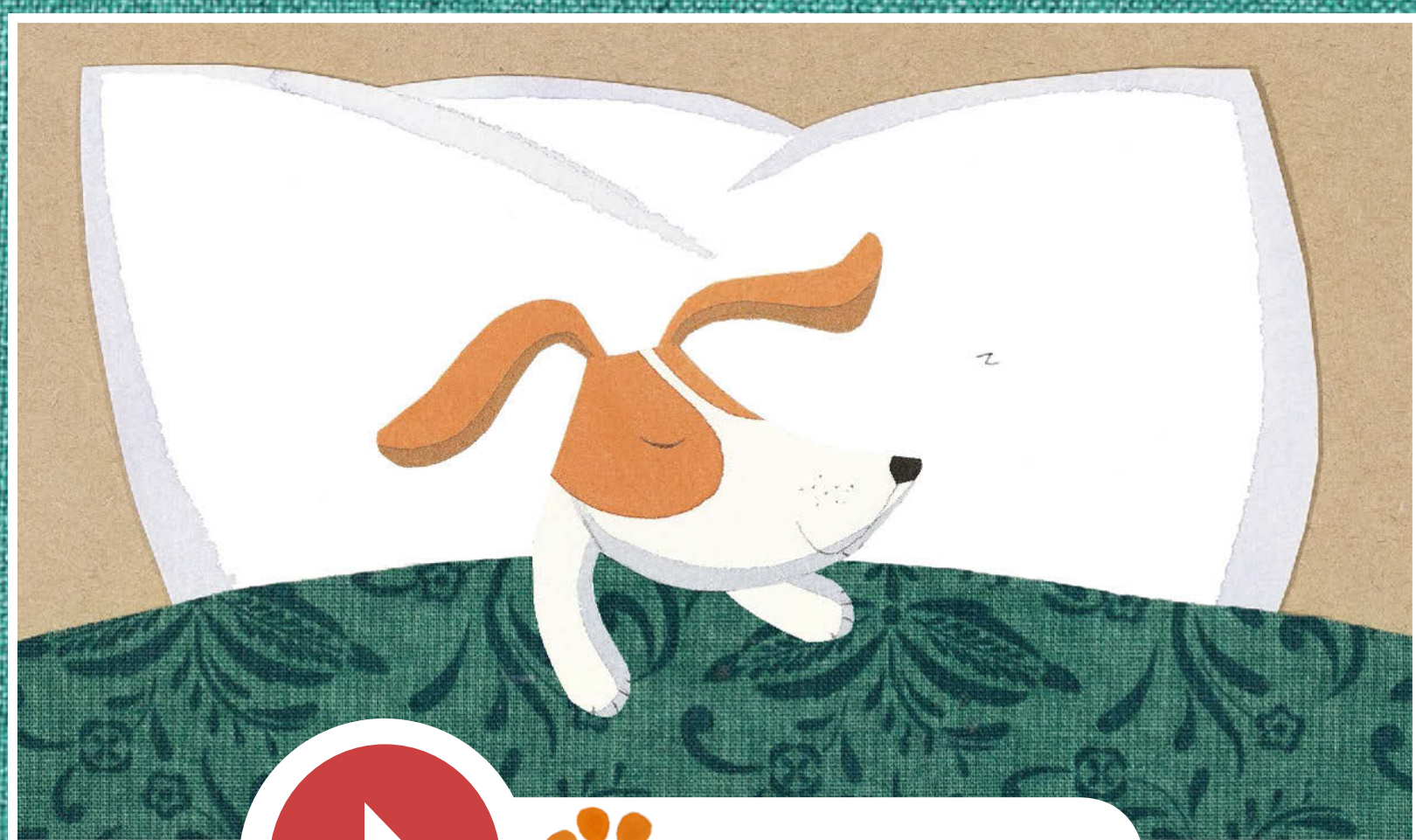
my DOG BIGSY

ALISON LESTER

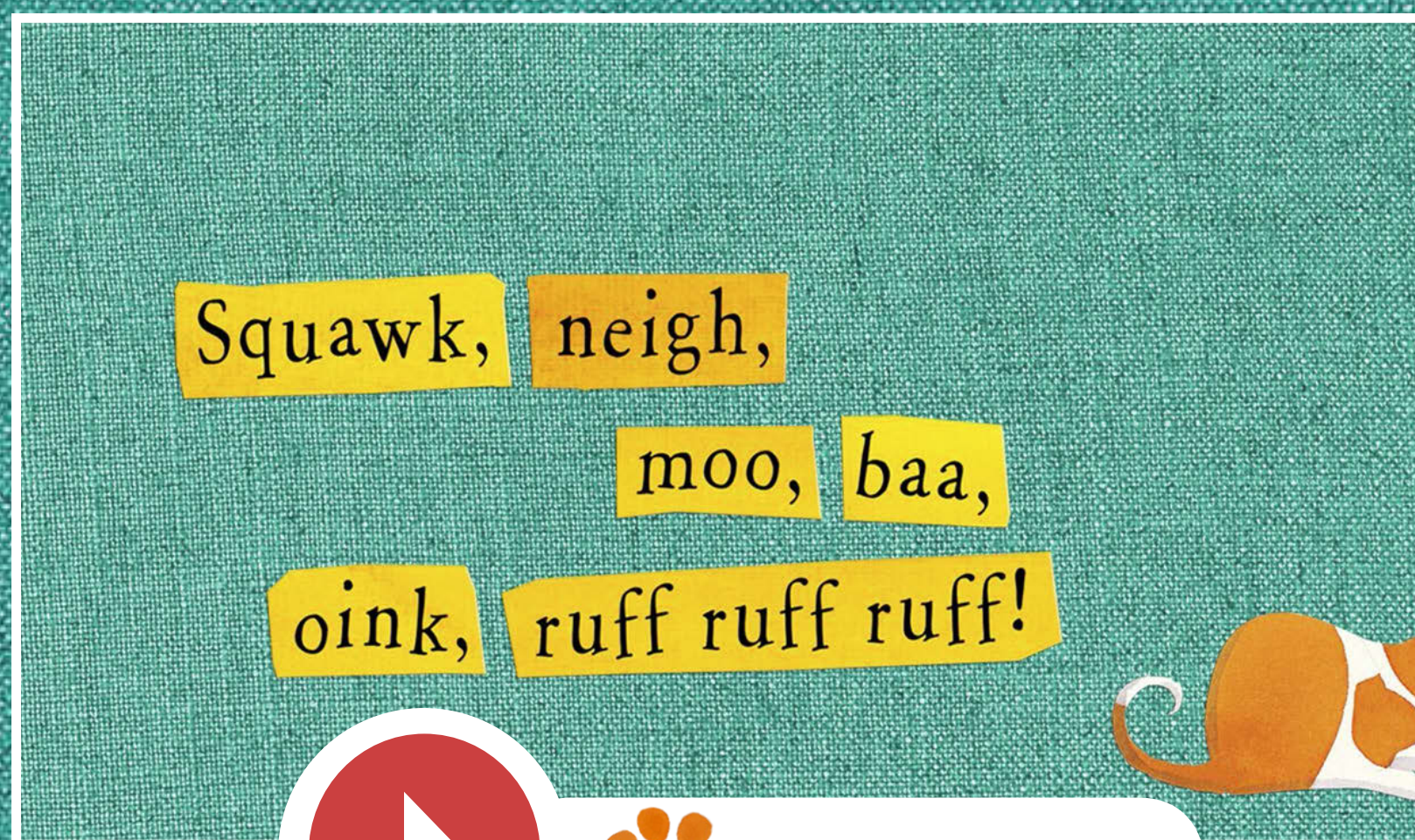
Squawk,



From Australia's favourite picture-book creator comes this energetic story about a little dog who causes a big commotion.



Watch video



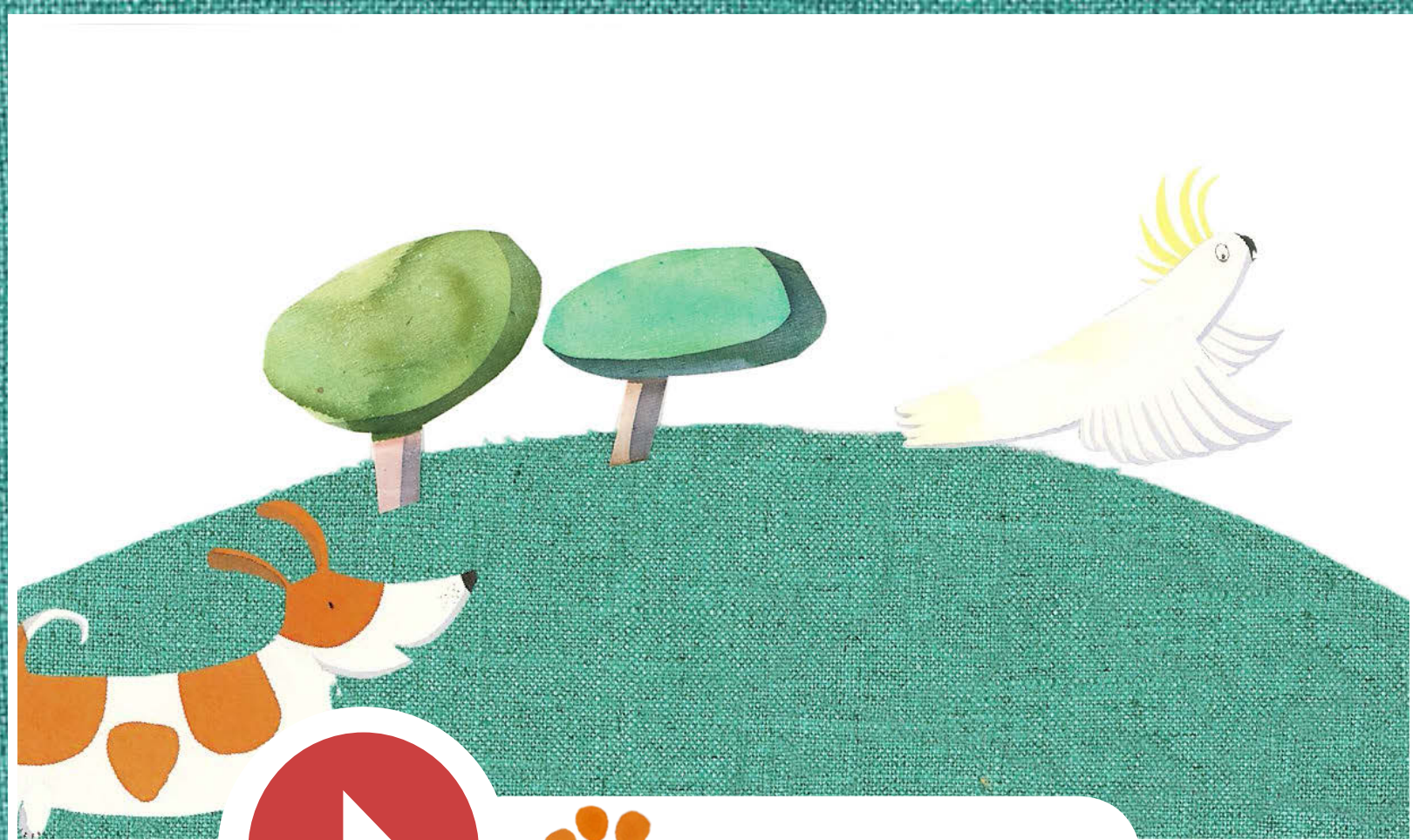
Squawk, neigh,

moo, baa,

oink, ruff ruff ruff!



Watch video



Watch video



Watch video



ruff ruff ruff!



quack,



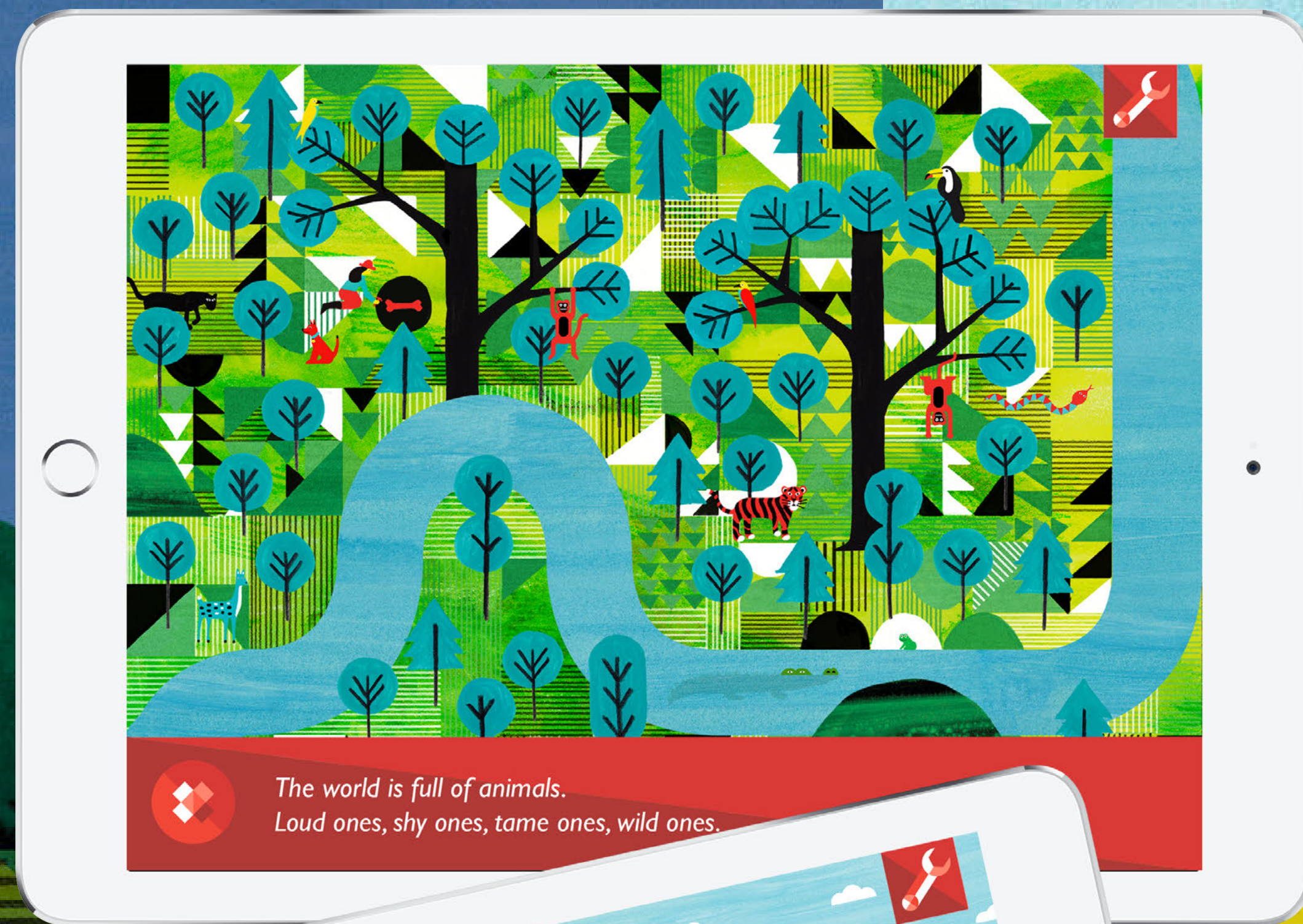
IT'S A BIG BEAUTIFUL WORLD

The notion of what a picture book can be, and what it can mean to readers, has been completely transformed. *Big Beautiful World* is a standout example of the exciting innovations happening around illustrated storytelling and digital devices.



Developed by a powerhouse creative team including authors **Clair Hume** and **Davina Bell**, and illustrator **Marc Martin**, *Big Beautiful World* is available through the **iTunes App Store**. So it is an app, but you might also call it “a picture book for tablets”. It combines the best of a physical book – great illustrations, engaging narrative and educational elements – with all the magic of technology.

Big Beautiful World empowers children to explore independently, to read and listen at their own pace, and to go on a journey way beyond their usual horizons. It’s also a lot of fun.



When children first open the app, they're treated to a huge, gorgeously detailed illustration of the "Big Beautiful World" by Marc Martin. The scene is comprised of different environments, from coastal to urban to country, and is populated by all sorts of different characters – people who are at work and at play, all of them with their own story to tell.

Using taps and swipes, readers can zoom in on different scenes, meet different characters, and discover new things about the world.

"Children can read the story in any direction and in any order they like," says Clair Hume, who co-authored the story with Davina Bell. "You don't have to start at a particular page and end at another. The world is multi-layered, so children can roam freely and, whichever way they go, it still works as a story."

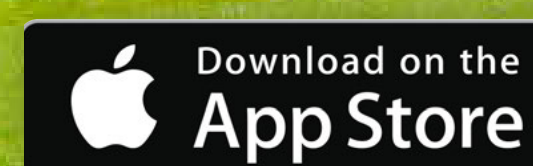
All of the scenes and stories in *Big Beautiful World* are presented with text and accompanying voiceover, which helps build reading and language skills in young readers.

"It offers early learning concepts – like shapes, sounds and colours. And it gives children who can't read yet independence, so they can look at the screen and listen to the story on their own without an adult hovering," Hume says.

And the storyline offers plenty of more complex ideas for older readers.

"There are characters doing different kinds of jobs, travelling, and enjoying all sorts of lifestyles. It has some good discussion points that teachers and parents can use," says Hume.

"The story will evoke a sense of adventure, and get kids thinking and talking about the many diverse ways people live, work and play. We hope it will broaden their minds about what else is out there in the world."





FOR MORE INFO

What do you *WISH* for?



Try the
Wishing Website!

Click to get started

Includes classroom activity
guide for teachers!

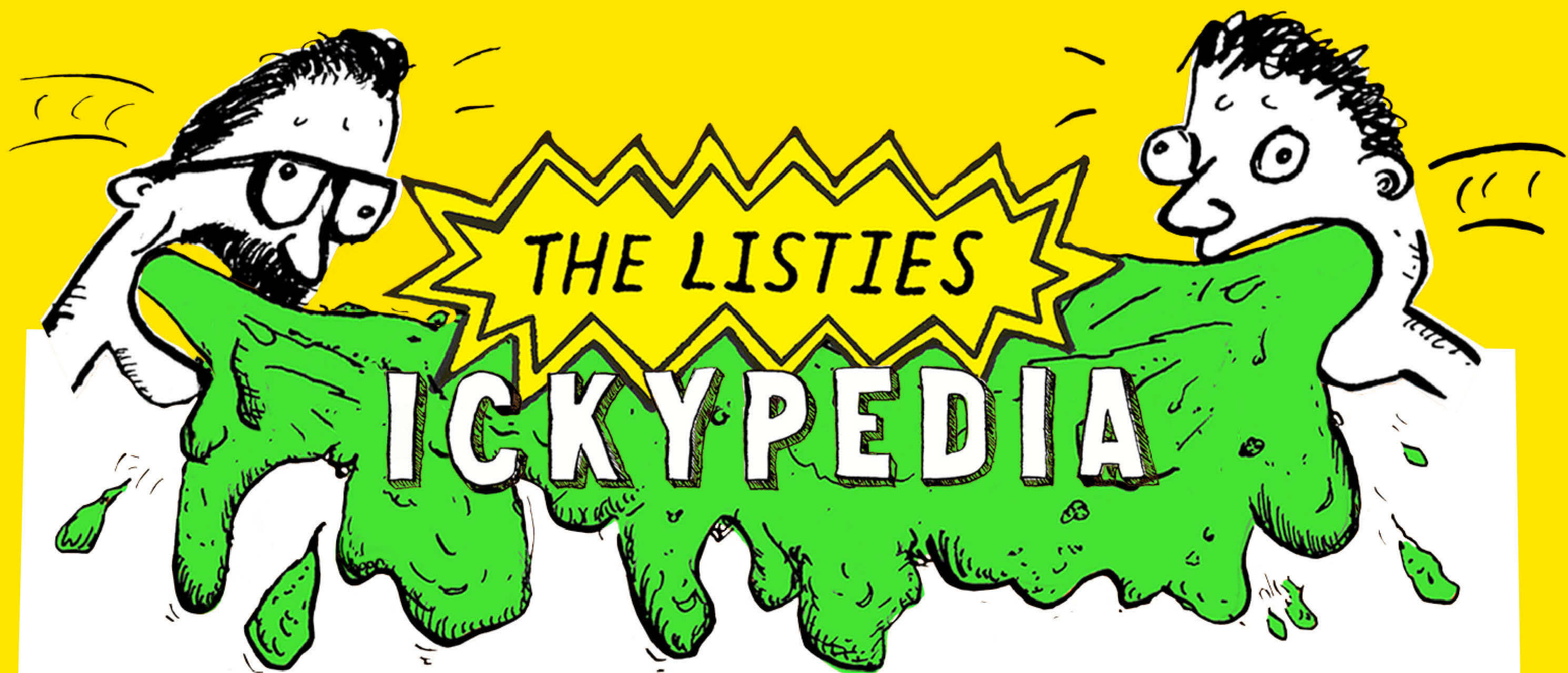
- Tuning in
- Group discussion
- Shared reading
- Visual literacy
- Practical activity – let's wish together!





THE LISTIES

EXPLAIN THEMSELVES TO A
TEENAGE INTERROGATOR



Ickypedia is a hilarious (and bestselling) collection of crazy, smelly and just plain disgusting words, scribbles, “pooetry” and quizzes by Australian comedy duo **The Listies**. The book is a hit in bedrooms, playgrounds and secret hideouts – and classrooms, thanks to the ingenious and inventive wordplay. One holdout, though, is **Year 10 student Bridie Connolly**, who here challenges The Listies to account for their unorthodox approach to literature...



This book is aimed at children. What do you hope they gain from it? (e.g. fun, humour, etc)

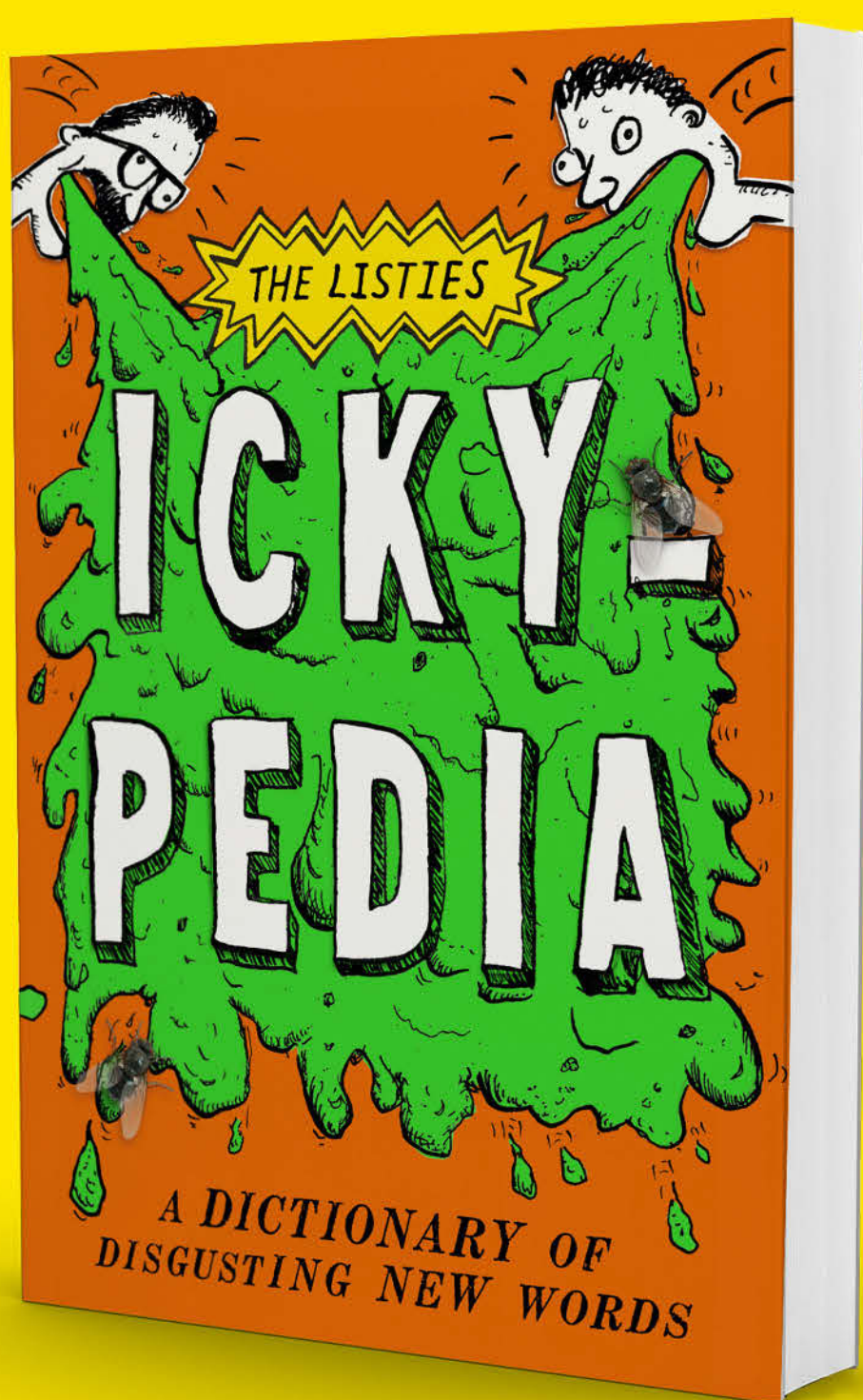
We do indeed hope they gain fun, humour and most of all, heaps of etc! Kids love etc! As a kid my favourite pastime was etc. There are many facts that most children don't know, such as who invented spewing (CHUCK NORRIS), what you call five musicians playing fruit (A QUINCETET), and what it's called when your parents kiss in front of you (A PSYCHOPASH).

Anyway, we were aiming to make a book that we would've enjoyed at the age of eight, so we loaded it with the sort of disgusting, horrible and icky subjects we were unfortunately interested in, and crammed the pages with as many drawings and scribbles as we could fit. It was a lot of work for Bruno, our graphic designer, who laid out the pages with over 100 fonts! We are told he is currently sitting on a beach somewhere warm, drinking a complicated drink out of half a coconut.

Do you think the 'silly' nature of this book will encourage kids who would otherwise not read to read?

Possibly this is true. To those children who don't normally 'do books' we would recommend reading the words and looking at the pictures, as reading the pictures and looking at the words makes the whole thing a lot more difficult. The book ends up being a bit like Egyptian hieroglyphics if you do that (not to be confused

with PYROGLYPHICS, which is an ancient type of language involving fireworks). The other thing we would say to new readers is don't sneeze into your open book, the ACHOO-GOO will cause BOOKERS to form and glue the book shut. Also don't LAMBINATE your book (i.e. squish it between two lambs), as librarians get upset.



FRUIN To ruin a perfectly unhealthy snack by adding fruit to it.

SPEWTIFUL A beautiful spew. See also POOTIFUL.

UDDER PANTS Undies for cows. *COWVIN KLEINS*

ICKYPEDIA A disgusting book you should never, ever read.



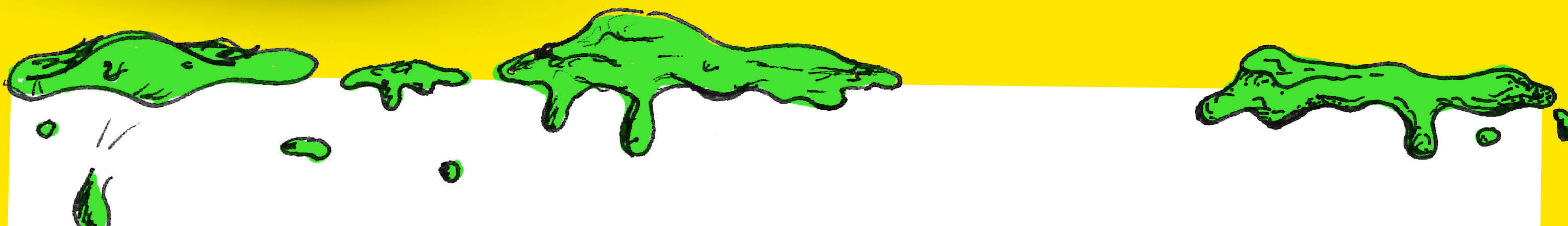
Do you think this book is educational for its young readers? With the 'big' words used?

We fink dis iz act-chew-alley the merst edumacashtional berk dat Pingu has eva published Peeps the world ova willl learn, like, sooo mutch frerm itt. Ermahgerd! *

(*This answer was written in INGLISH, a language in which words are written exactly the way they sound)

Do you think parents are happy for their kids to read this kind of book? Some parents may deem it inappropriate. Have you thought about this?

It's true, the book probably isn't icky enough for some parents. There is probably not enough POOETRY in the book, not enough KNOCK-NOT jokes. They would probably like options on the "Is my foot on fire" flowchart, and there is a censored section in which the letter X has been government-edited out that parents would probably like reinstated. To them we say, we are very sorry. We tried.



Where did “The Listies” come from?

The Big Bang originally. Or actually maybe the BIGGISH BANG, which is the one that happened before the Big Bang that got the other one started. After that we evolved from the primordial soup into upright beings and met at uni doing theatre shows together. We still perform together on stage and do shows all over the place.

Do you think it’s a problem that kids may use some of these phrases for “evil” and not “good”?

Mmmm, this is a very good question. We think the problem is telling if people are in fact good or evil in the first place. Possibly the trick to telling if someone is evil is to check if they say “bwah ha ha ha ha” a lot, possibly followed by a thunderclap and the manic laughter of their henchmen.*

(*or henchwomen)



How/why did you come up with the idea to write the commentary on the page numbers throughout the book?

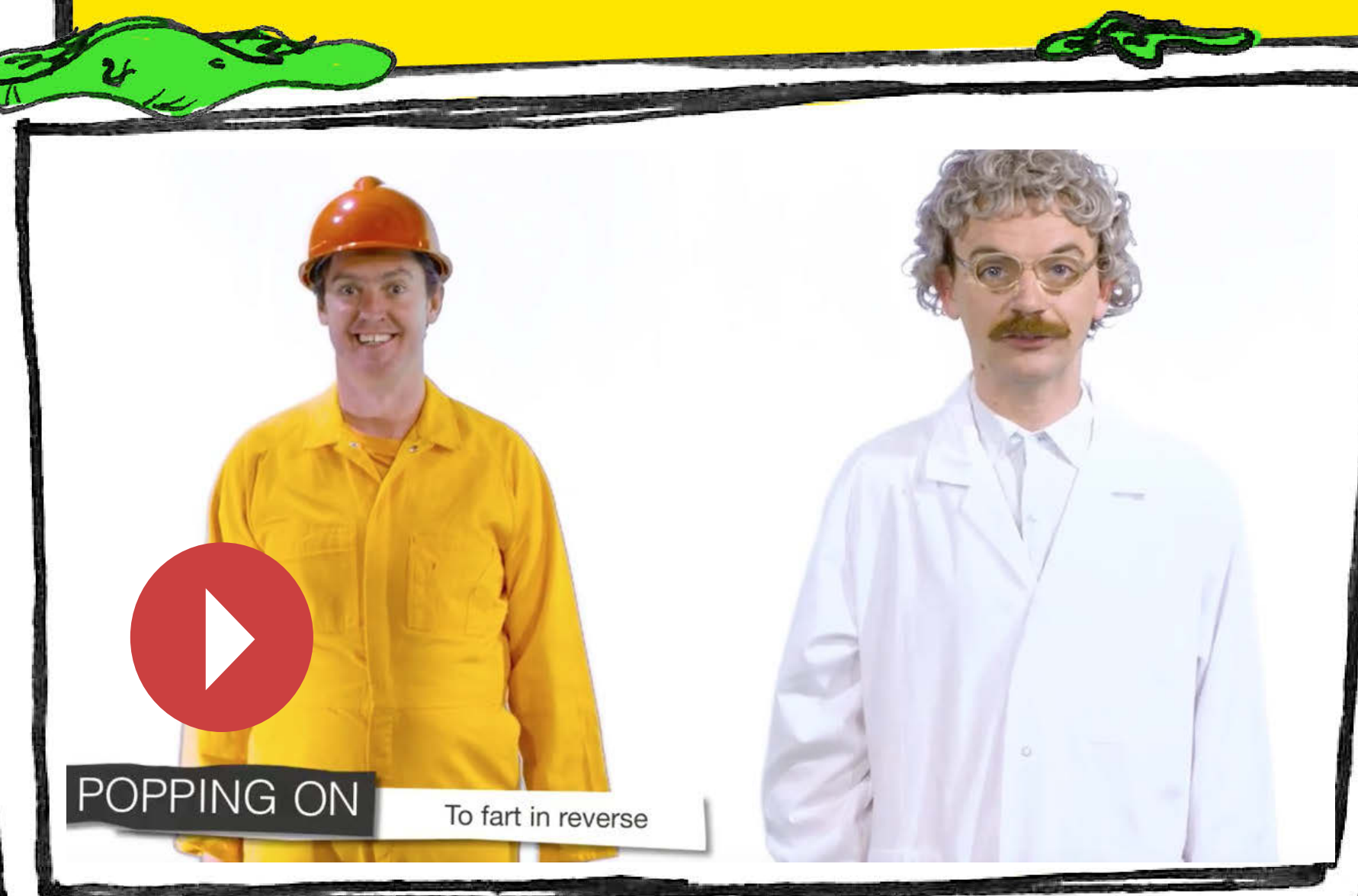
We realised that there is a lot of wasted paper in the bottom bit of most pages and we wanted to put it to work! Also, we wanted to send our graphic designers and editors mad. And it worked (see answer to question 1).

SEE THE LISTIES LIVE THIS CHRISTMAS
 The Listies know all the right buttons to push to make your kids – and you – shriek with laughter. Bring the whole family to an interactive Christmas show that greets the holidays / with a cheeky grin.

Watch these ridiculous, stupid and GROSSTASTIC videos from The Listies



NACHOLEPSY to fall asleep face down in your nachos



POPPING ON To fart in reverse



PENGUIN
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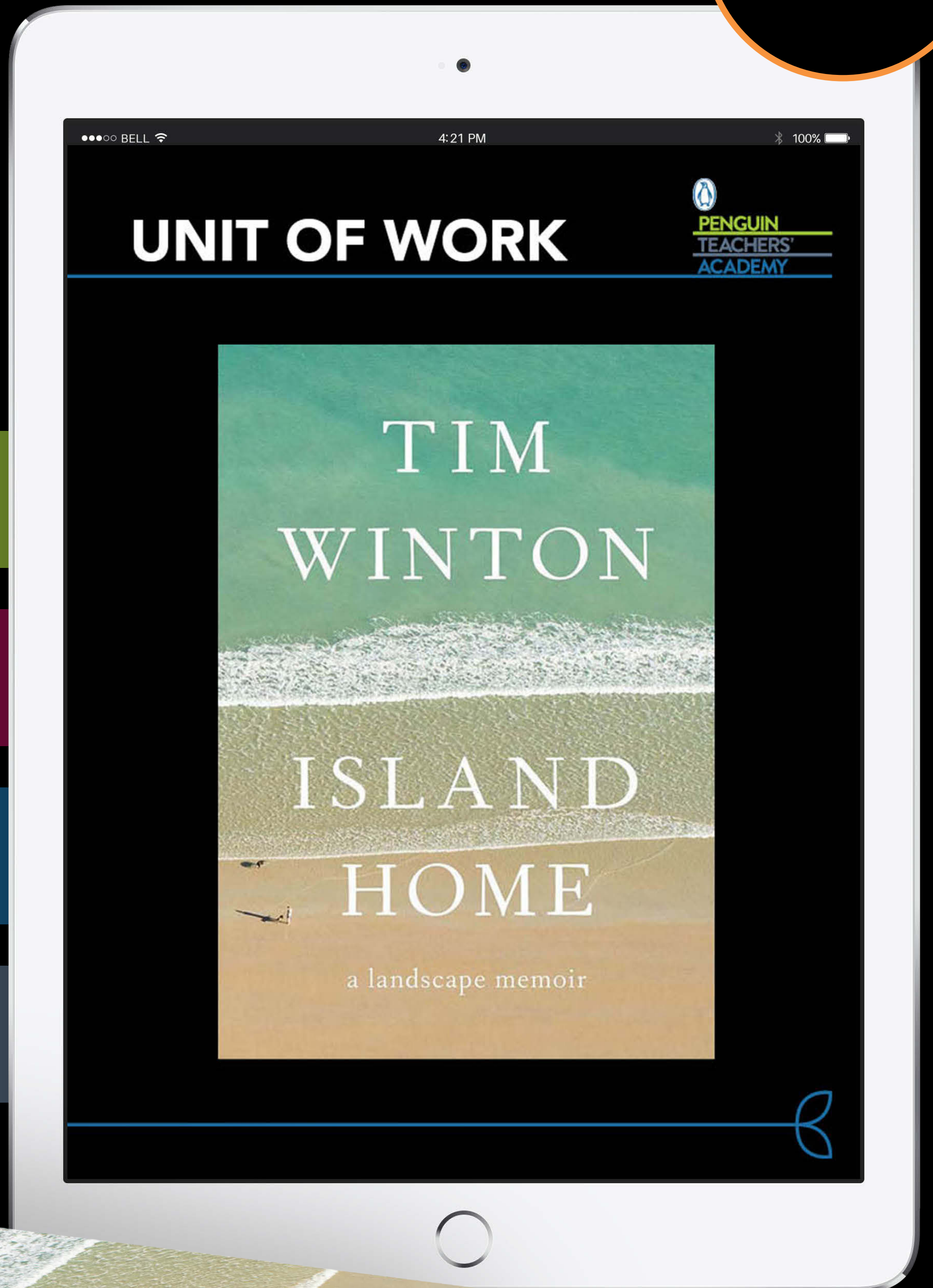
TEACHING NOTES

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

CREATIVE WRITING TASKS

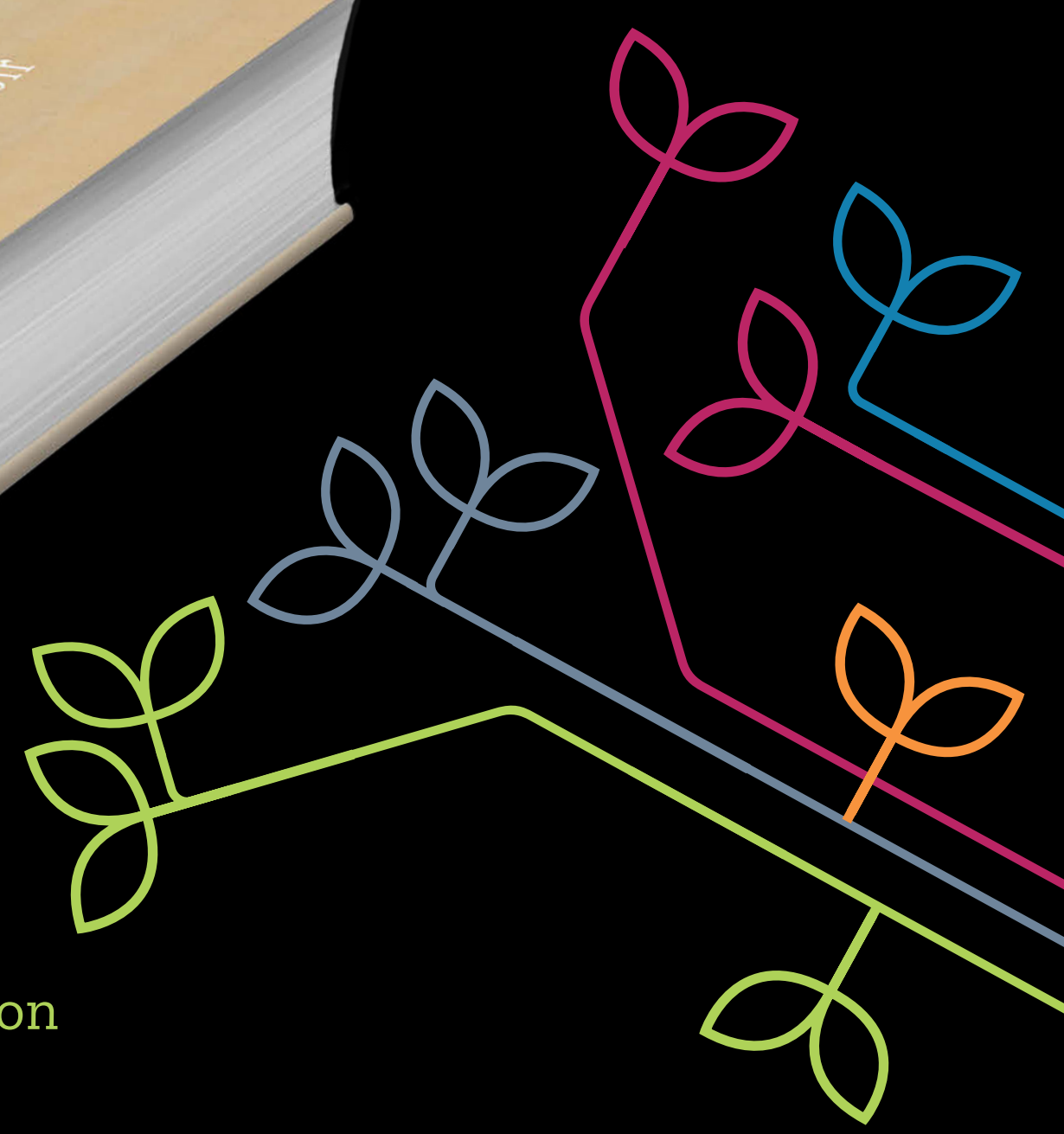
ESSAY TOPICS

PRINT & SHARE



These teaching notes are intended to be used as an introduction to the study of Tim Winton's *Island Home: A Landscape Memoir*, and an accompanying documentary film.

They can be used in the classroom as an inspiration for group or individual tasks, or as part of any unit of work on Masculinity, Identity, Place and Belonging, The Australian Landscape or Australian Literature.



FOR MORE INFO

JEFF KINNEY



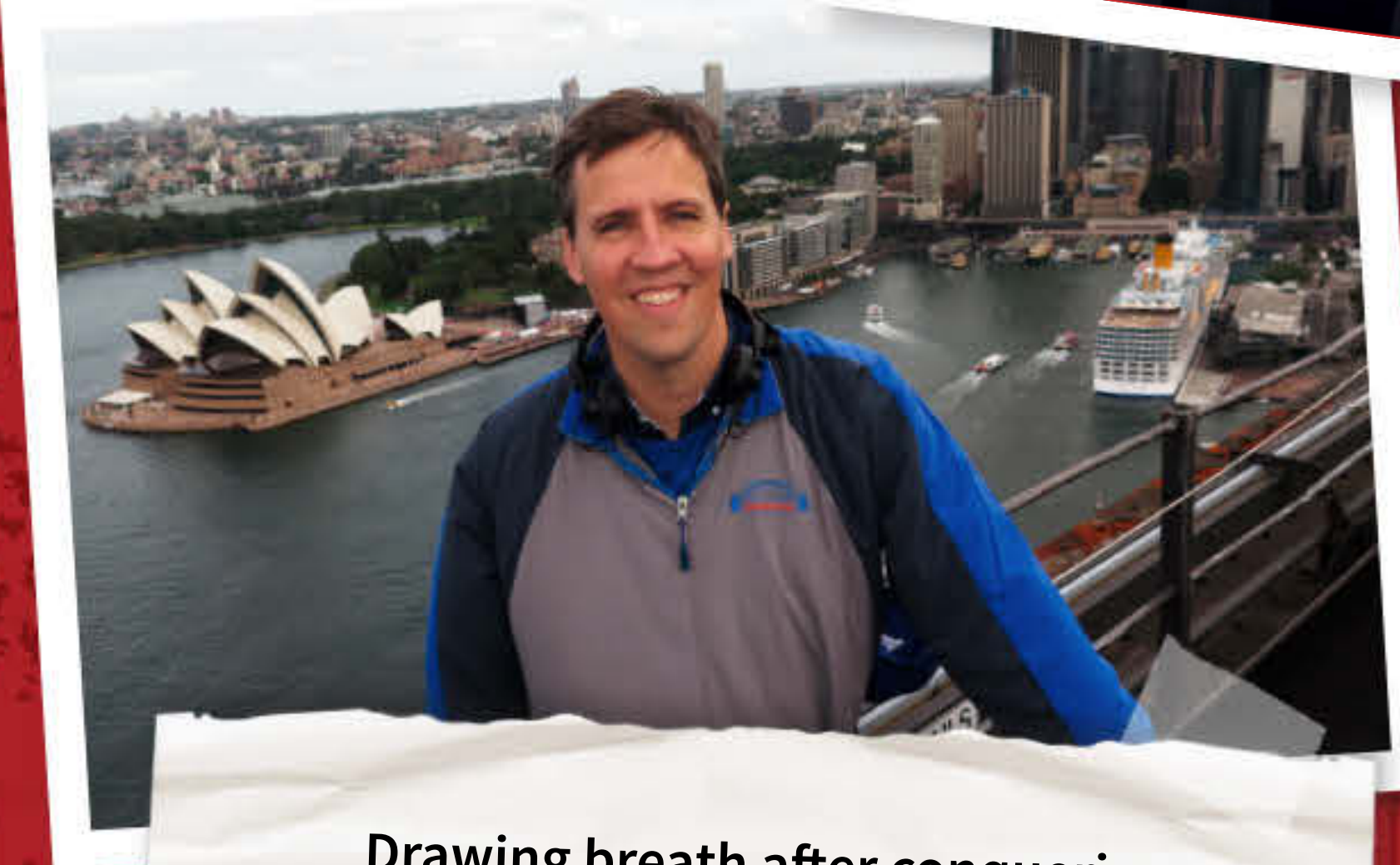
IN AUSTRALIA

The creator of the world's funniest book series visited Sydney in November, as part of his *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Old School* world tour. And he definitely left his mark...



Winners of the 2015 *Wimpy Kid* Read-a-thon enjoy their grand prize – hanging with Jeff!

WATCH VIDEO:
See what Jeff got up to while he was visiting Australia



Drawing breath after conquering the Sydney Harbour Bridge



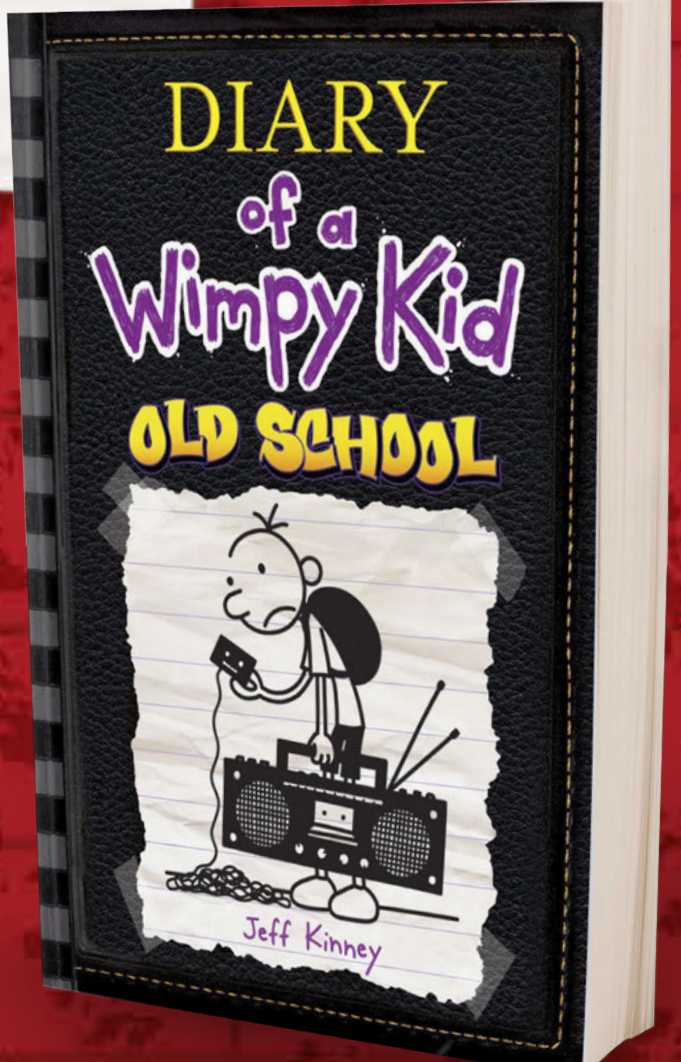
Plenty of adult *Wimpy* fans made themselves known



Meeting loyal readers after a sold-out show at the Opera House

CLICK THE COVER
→

for more *Wimpy Kid*





THE LISTIES

ICKY- PEDIA

A DICTIONARY OF
DISGUSTING NEW WORDS

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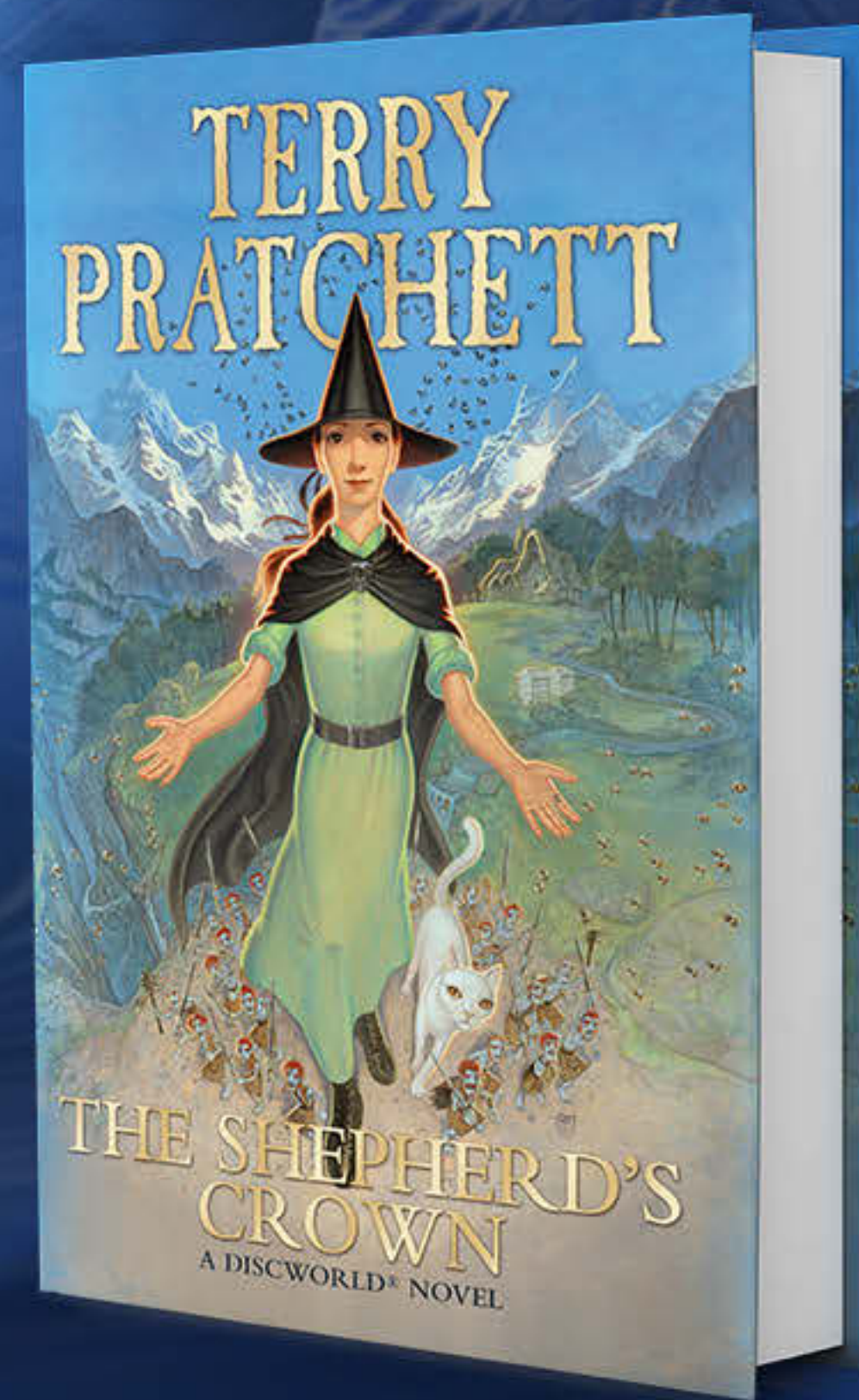
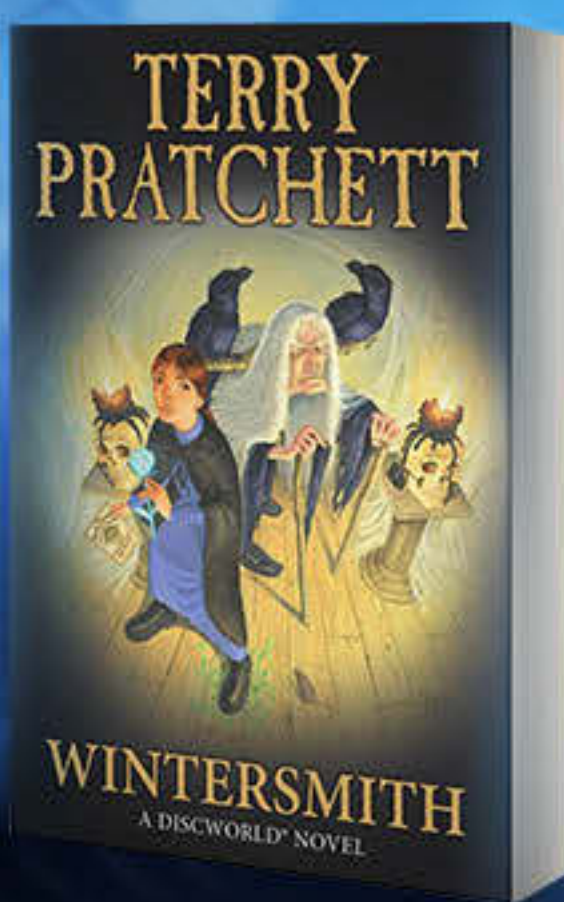


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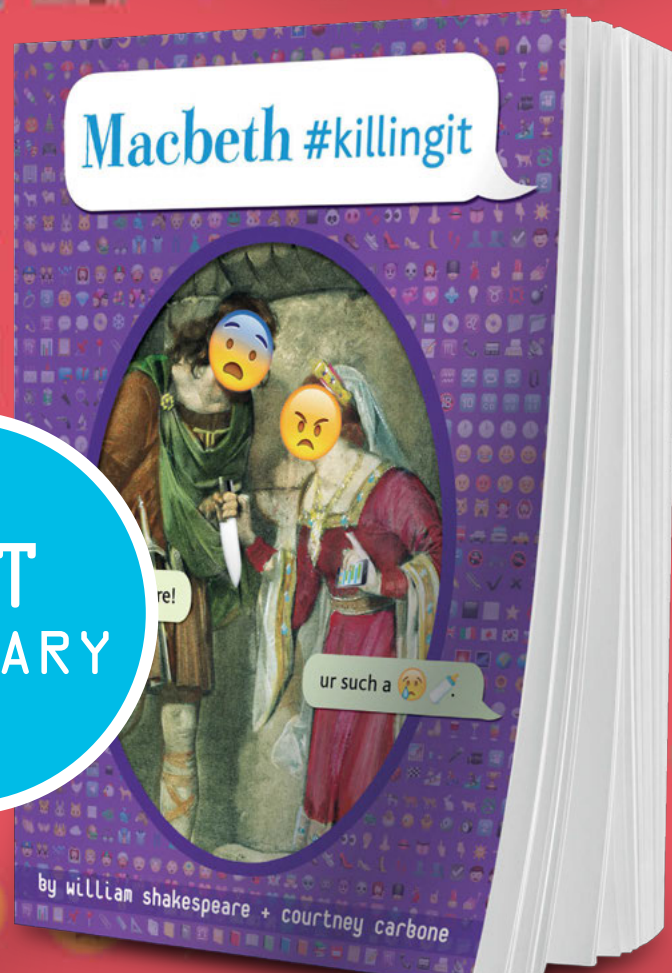
OMG IT'S SHAKESPEARE! 😊



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OUT FEBRUARY

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From One Boy to Another

Ten years ago, John Boyne wrote *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. Now he returns with *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain* – another WWII story but told from an entirely different point of view.



In this powerful, unforgettable novel we meet orphan Pierrot, who is forced to live with his Aunt Beatrix, a servant in a wealthy household at the top of the German mountains. The Second World War is fast approaching and Pierrot quickly discovers this is no ordinary house – this is the Berghof, Adolf Hitler’s home.

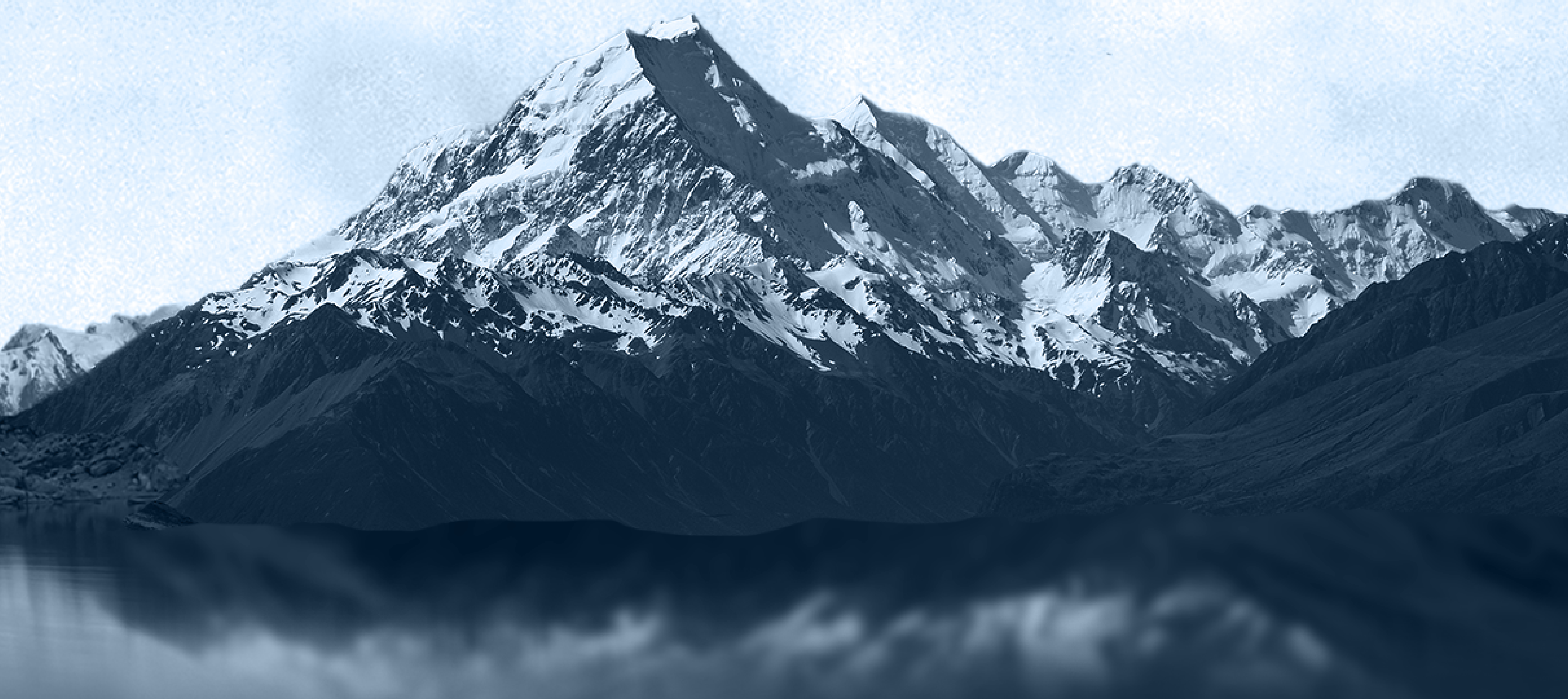
We took the opportunity to ask John Boyne a few questions about his remarkable new novel.

What was it that you wanted to explore when you started writing *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain*?

One of the great questions regarding the Second World War is how an entire nation could fall so completely under the spell of one man that its citizens would participate in such heinous acts? The notion of how simple it is to be brainwashed was my main theme, and I hoped that in my central character, Pierrot, the reader would observe how easily it can happen.

What was the hardest part about writing Pierrot’s character?

It’s important that the reader still cares about Pierrot throughout the story, and it’s not easy to write that when he’s doing so many terrible things and hurting the people who love him, particularly his aunt. I wanted the reader to believe that somewhere inside “Pieter”, the bad side of his character, still lay “Pierrot”, the good side. This took a lot of work.



Part of your research involved visiting the Berghof. What were your feelings when you went there, given its history?

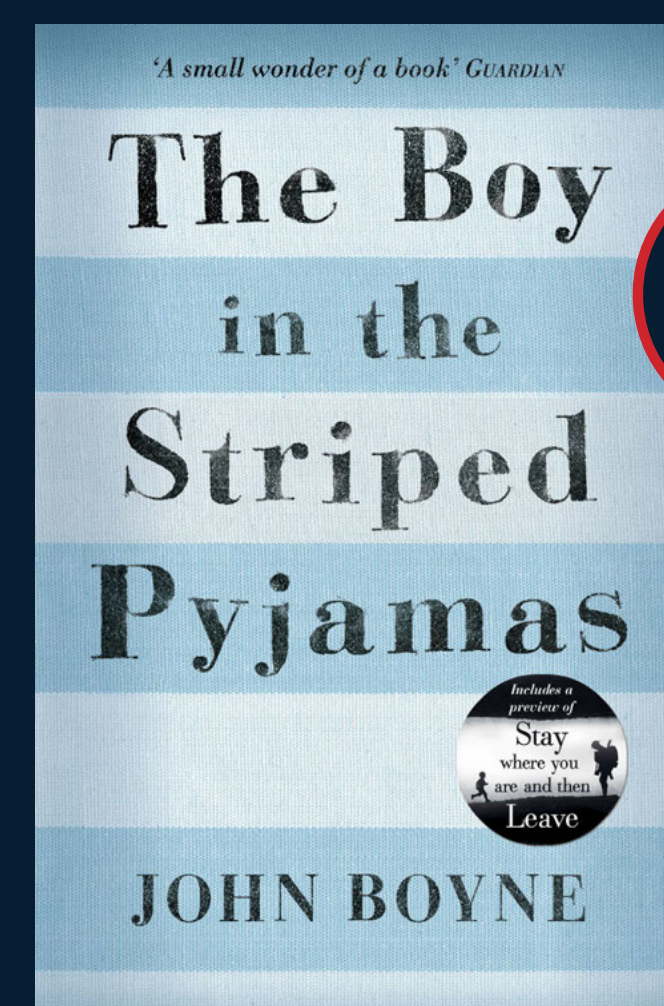
The strange thing about the Berghof and the Obersalzberg is how beautiful it is up there. You feel removed almost entirely from the world. The views across the Alps are extraordinary, so it's quite difficult to reconcile a place of beauty with a place that was the source of so much chaos and tragedy. Walking around the one remaining building and knowing that Hitler walked there is a chilling experience.

Why did you make Pierrot's childhood friend Anshel deaf?

I wanted to bring a deaf character into the story simply because there are deaf people in the world, and blind people, and people who can't walk, and so on. I wanted Pierrot's friend to have this particular characteristic but for it not to be an issue for either of them. He's deaf but they still manage to communicate without any difficulty.

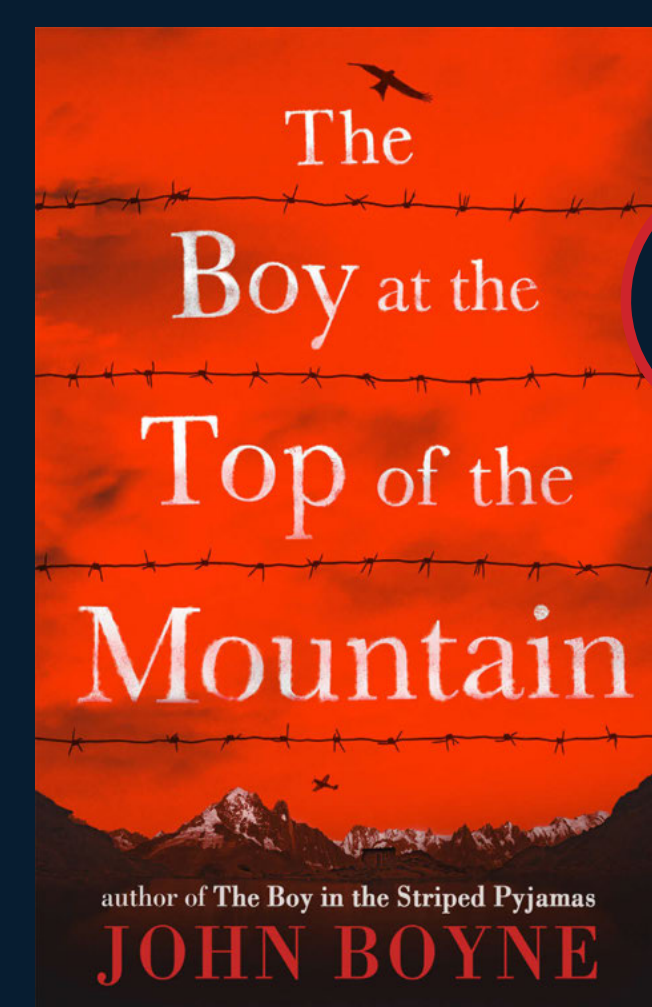
This is the second book you've written that's set during WWII, and you've written another that's set in WWI. Why are these periods of such interest?

The experience of children in wartime and the role that children play in war are things that fascinate me. Happy lives are usually built on happy childhoods, and when childhoods are marred in some way it can have tragic effects. Also, during wartime we see so many different aspects of human nature: bravery, cowardice, fear, grief, loss, etc – great themes for a novelist.



If you were a high school teacher, what would be the top three essay questions you'd ask students to discuss for this book?

- 1) Identify the moment that Pierrot begins to change and explain why?
- 2) Why is it so important for Pierrot to earn Hitler's affection, and why does Hitler appear to like Pierrot?
- 3) How would it be possible for a character like Pierrot to come to terms with the things he's done and go on to live a happy life?



[Download *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain* Teachers' Resources.](#)



WATCH VIDEO: John Boyne discusses some of the characters and themes of *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain*



WATCH VIDEO: John Boyne reads an extract from *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain*

eye to eye

Graeme Base



A journey of imagination and possibility, from one of Australia's favourite picture book creators.

Eye to Eye will give you an amazing new perspective on the world!



FOR MORE INFO

When
children ask
if school is
open on a
Saturday...

**You know
something
is working!**



Fifteen years ago, Rebecca Johnson initiated a new model for teaching science as a specialist subject. In October this year, she was awarded the 2015 Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary Schools. Here she talks about how children can be inspired by the wonders of science.



Fifteen years ago, Sharon Millar, my principal at Windaroo Primary School (30 minutes south of Brisbane), agreed with my reasons for feeling that science was a subject area in crisis. Even though my idea went against the Department of Education's preferred model, she backed it, which not all bosses would have done. I am really glad to have won the award for her sake, not just my own.

I feel really passionate about the need to give science more attention in primary school.

Teachers are so busy. There is so much to do, and the curriculum is getting more and more crowded. Science is one of those subjects that requires a lot of extra prep time to teach properly. It's resource-heavy, time-consuming to set up (especially if you have to hunt down equipment that hasn't been returned) and, to be honest, not a subject all teachers feel really confident teaching.

Let's face it, science subjects in the latter years of secondary school are not a prerequisite to teaching, so it's not uncommon for teachers to have a limited amount of experience with some of the content. That's not a criticism; that's just the reality. Phys ed, music and languages other than English have long been accepted as needing specialist qualities to teach, and I feel the same about science. I couldn't teach music for quids.

Australia is not producing enough scientists or science teachers. If we can make kids crazy about science in primary school (which we do easily because it is so much fun), then they will be more likely to take it on, not be afraid of it in high school, and perhaps make a career of it.

My teaching partner, Caroline Kuss, and I are able to focus only on science, and we have these wonderful science rooms that are fully set up and resourced, so we feel we can really do it justice. We have also completely landscaped and gardened two acres of land around our block with native, indigenous food plants (bush tucker) and endangered species, and have established a substantial market garden for growing vegies. If we had to teach a whole lot of other subjects as well as science, we could never have done this.

The money for all of this has come from winning science competitions, grants and selling our vegies.



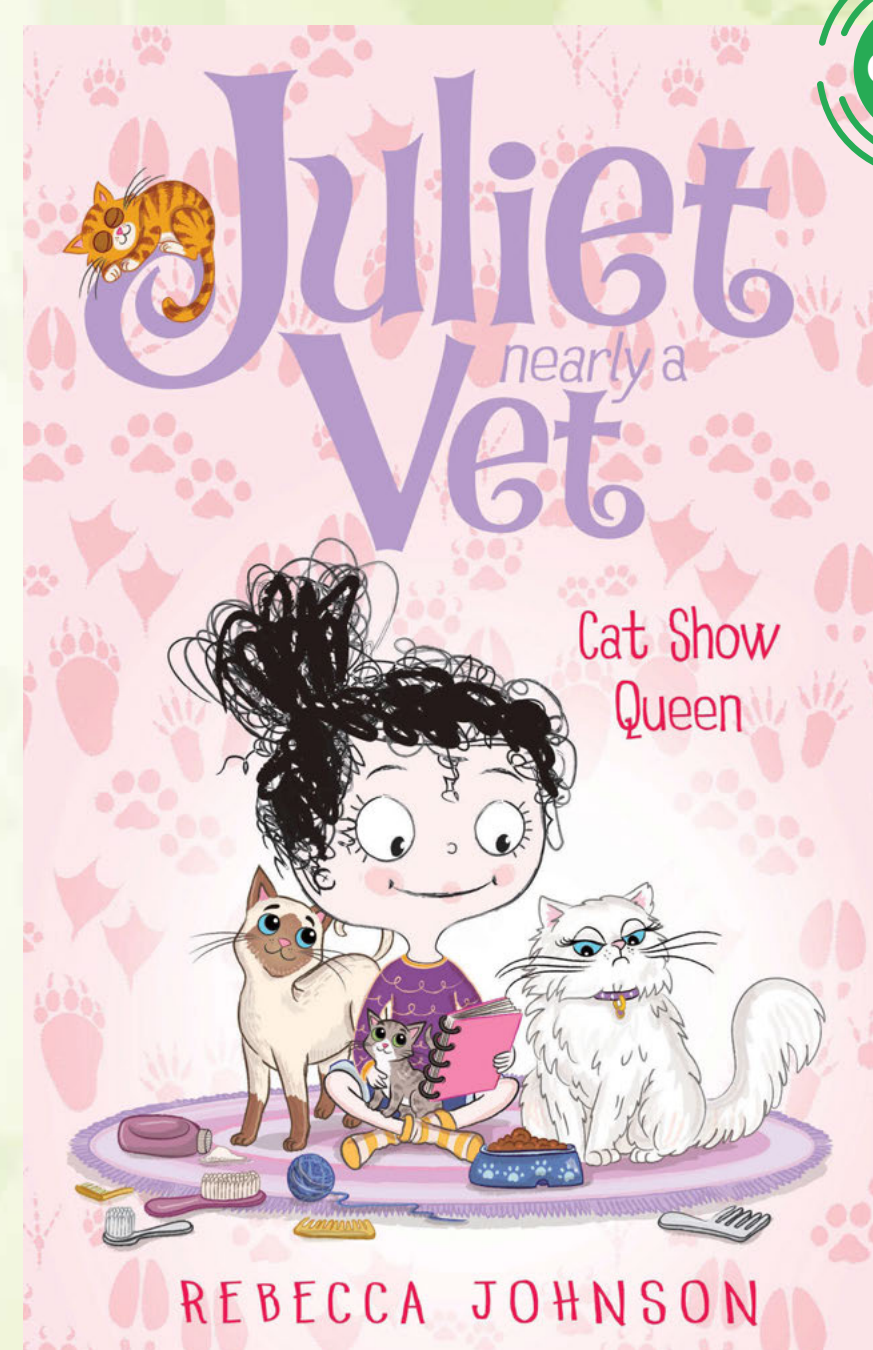
Most of the specimens (bones, animals that have died and been preserved, shells, etc) we have in the rooms have been donated by the school community, because they respect the value we place on science education.

I've always loved science. I grew up next door to a vet, John Winmill (he died at age 99, just a few months ago, and we'd been friends since I was ten). He used to let me follow him around while he inspected animals on local properties, and used to ask me what my diagnosis was on things, which I loved. He challenged me to think above my years, and made me feel like I was nearly a vet. This is definitely where my idea for the series *Juliet, Nearly a Vet* came from, and where my love for all things scientific began. I hope that I can continue to inspire some of my students to choose science as a career, as Mr Winmill did for me.

Winning this award highlights the advantages of teaching science in this way, and I hope our model is seriously considered nationally. When you have children asking if you're open on a Saturday as you shuffle them out the door of your classroom, you know something is working.

Juliet *nearly a* Vet

Rebecca Johnson is the author of the bestselling book series *Juliet, Nearly A Vet*.



The tenth and most recent book is *Cat Show Queen*

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THE THRILLING NEW

SERIES FROM JOHN FLANAGAN



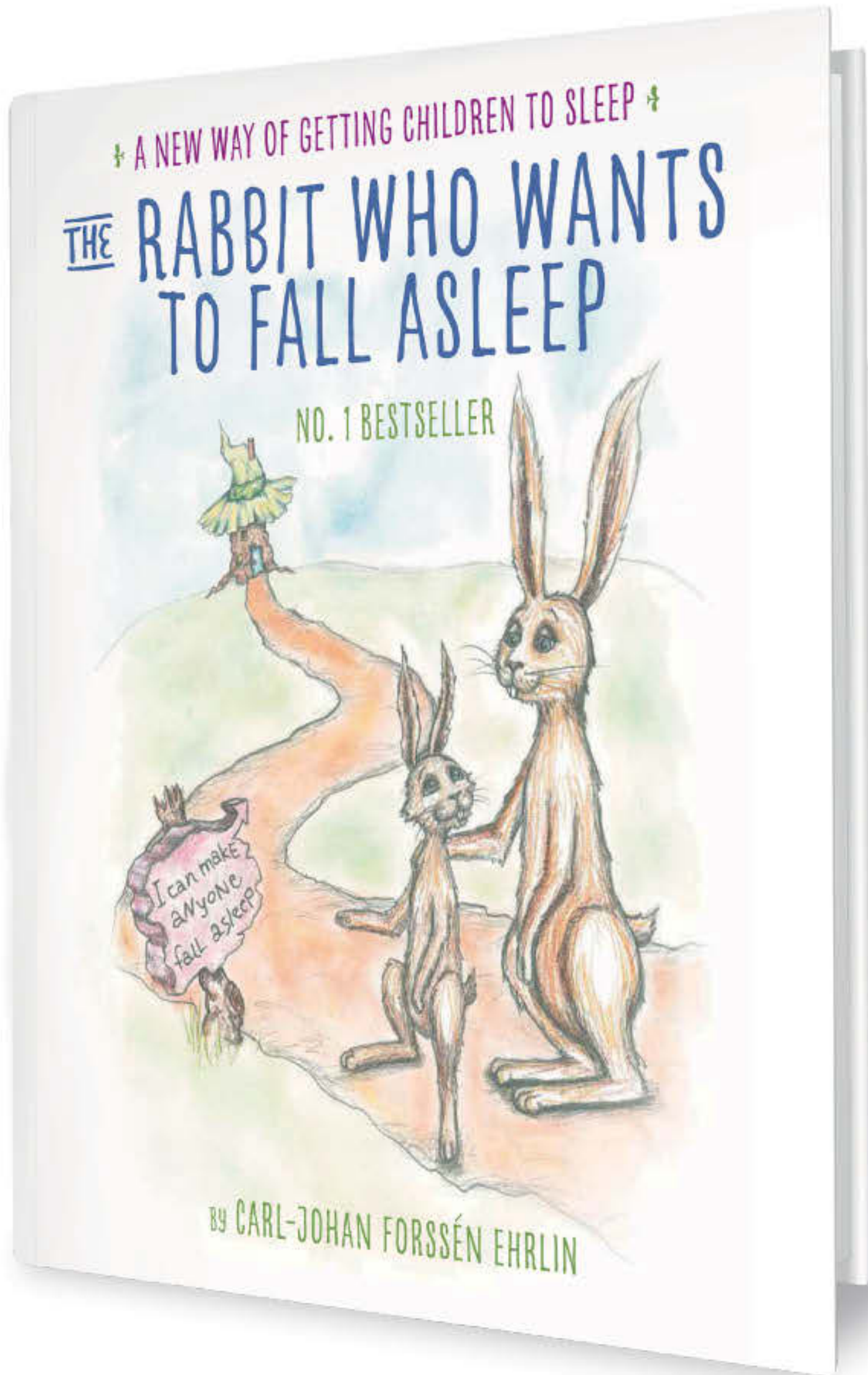
RANGERS' APPRENTICE

THE EARLY YEARS

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HOW HEROES
BECOME LEGENDS



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