



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Readers aged 6–8

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English, science
- **General capabilities:** Literacy, personal and social capability, critical and creative thinking
- **Cross-curriculum priorities:** Health and physical education, sustainability

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Encourage discussion around imaginative play, childhood aspirations, astronauts, astronomy, space, science, scientists, STEM, sustainability, the planet(s), the moon landing anniversary
- Develop independent reading

THEMES

- Friendship (including intergenerational)
- Dreams and ambitions
- Science – gravity, light and sound, space and space travel, invention, sustainability, the planets, the moon and moon landing anniversary

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia

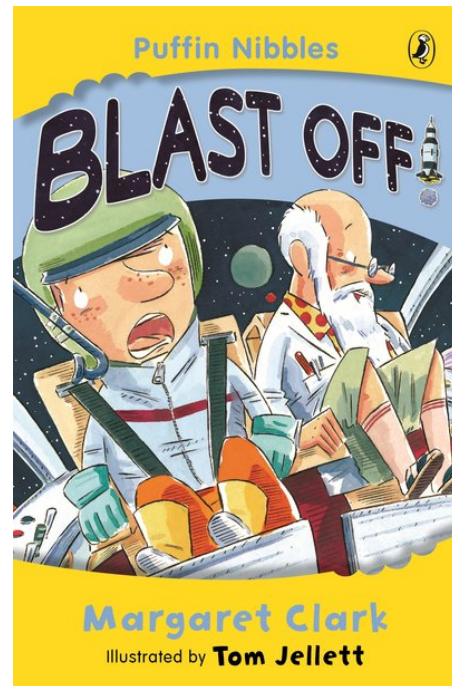
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Blast Off!

Margaret Clark
Illustrated by
Tom Jellett

PLOT SUMMARY

Adam wants to be an astronaut. It's all he ever thinks about. One day he discovers Mad Marvin and his amazing space bubble, and it's time for blast off!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Margaret Clark is one of Australia's most prolific and popular writers for young people. With over one hundred books about relationships, friendships, and social issues, Margaret has won numerous local and international awards, and her books are published all over the world. Her books touch upon the concerns that most young people have today – making and keeping friends, sibling rivalry, school environments, and social issues that can create confusion.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Tom Jellett is an acclaimed children's book illustrator whose work includes a series about a little pirate (*The Littlest Pirate*) and the *Sporty Kids* series, written by Felice Arena.

His picture books with Justine Clarke and Arthur Baysting, *The Gobbledygook is Eating a Book* and *The Gobbledygook and the Scribbledynoodle* have been Australian bestsellers. His other acclaimed picture books include *Why I Love Footy* and *Why I Love Summer* with Michael Wagner, and *Grandpa's Big Adventure* written by Paul Newman.

Questions

1. Have a look at the cover of this book (including the title) – what does it tell us about the story inside?
2. How do the illustrations help to tell the story?

Activities

1. Can you tell us in one sentence what *Blast off!* is all about?
2. Do you dream about doing something amazing one day? Share with the class what that might be
3. Tell us about an interesting neighbour you might have. What makes them so interesting?
4. In 2019 we celebrated a very special space travel anniversary – can you tell us what that was?
5. Can you name the astronauts who landed on the moon all those years ago?

WRITING STYLE

Questions

1. Margaret Clark has written a **first chapter book**. How many chapters are there in this story?
2. The **story arc** goes a bit like this:
 - **Introducing the characters**
 - Introducing Adam, his family and his cousins.
 - **Introducing the major theme of the book**
 - Adam's dream of being an astronaut and what he will do to make that dream come true.
 - **Introducing a problem**
 - Adam is mocked for wanting to make his dream a reality.
 - Mad Marvin's house is seen as a 'no-go' zone.
 - **Solving the problem and ending the story**
 - Adam meets Mad Marvin who is in fact, not mad at all but a fellow dreamer and inventor.
 - Adam 'kind of' gets to ride in a spaceship and understand a little bit more about space travel.

Activities

1. Write a short story and see if you can use a similar story arc – introduction of characters and plot, plot, problem, conclusion.
2. Draw some illustrations to complement your short story.
3. Create a **storyboard** to tell a story with a similar arc.



KEY STUDY TOPICS

Topic

Dreams and ambitions

Questions

1. Adam dreams of being an astronaut. Can dreams come true in your opinion?
2. Can you give us an example of when a dream HAS come true?

Activities

3. Draw a picture of you with a big 'dream bubble' coming out of your head and inside the dream bubble, draw an illustration or include words to show us what your dream is.
4. Write a poem about your DREAM and share it with the class

Suggestion:

- Use the letters: D.R.E.A.M. to do an acrostic poem
5. Describe the machine that Mad Marvin uses to help him feel like he's achieving his dream of being an astronaut.
 6. Draw a rocket or space ship that you would have built to take you into space.

Topic

Science

There were some words in the story that are 'science related' and that very specifically describe what it would be like to travel into space

Questions

1. Can you find some words that we use in scientific language?
 - a. For example: the stars, planets, 'speed of light', gravity, scientist, astronauts.

Activities

1. Write the 'scientific' words on a sheet of poster paper and write their meaning next to them.
2. Do you know the names of any famous scientists?
 - Why are they famous?
3. Write a short paragraph on why you'd like to be a scientist.
4. Mad Marvin has developed a fantastic 'space bubble' to ride in. Mad Marvin is much older than

Adam and his brothers and cousins but is just as excited about having fun and inventing things.

- Bring a photo to school of your favourite 'older' person – someone who has inspired you to dream big – and do a five minute presentation to the class about this person.
 - Make a video clip of you introducing your favourite 'older' person – make sure you tell us why they're your favourite and then introduce the clip and show it to the class.
5. Describe your dream invention and how you would go about making it.

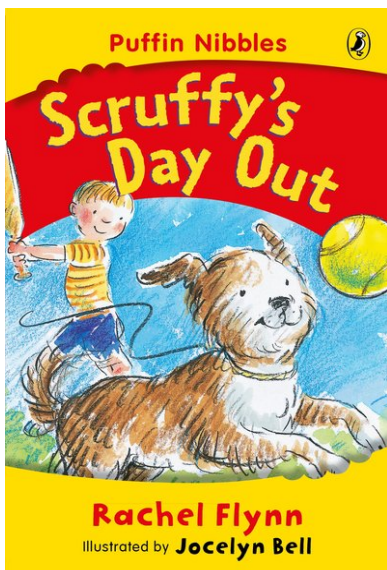
GENERAL ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities

- Write a short story (remember your story arc) about a woman who invented a robot
- Go to the library and find two books on the planets and/or space. Have a quiet read. Tell your teacher one or two things that you learnt from reading the book/s.
- Watch the footage of man landing on the moon and describe what the moon looked like.
 - Use this as a starter to your description: When the astronauts landed on the moon 50 (change according to the year activity is undertaken) years ago, the moon looked like . . .
- Learn the planet song:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLhqWE3kxgQ>
- Practise it until you feel like you can all sing it to the school at assembly!
- Looking after planet earth is very important. As a class make a list of all the things that you're doing to help preserve planet earth and ensure it is a safe place to live for hundreds of years to come.
- Discuss the sorts of things you as a class can do to help sustain the environment and pick ONE or TWO things to do that will help make a difference.
- Every day when you come together as a class, talk about the different things you have done in the last day to help make a difference and maintain your commitment to changing those one or two things.



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



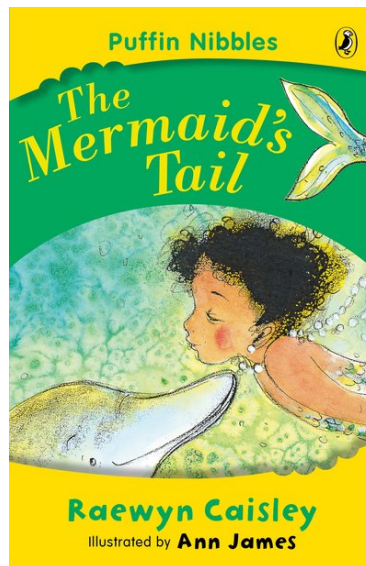
Scruffy's Day Out

by Rachel Flynn and illustrated by Jocelyn Bell

Dad nearly runs over a stray dog! A very scruffy stray dog . . . but who does it belong to?

If you enjoy *Scruffy's Day Out* you will also enjoy other Puffin Nibbles in the series.

Teachers' resources available.



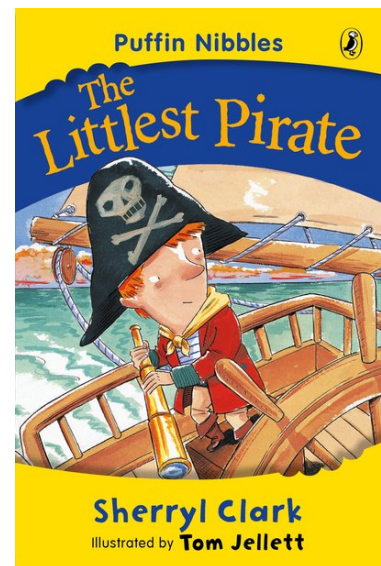
The Mermaid's Tail

by Raewyn Caisley and illustrated by Ann James

Crystal longs to be a mermaid. So her mother makes her a flashing silver tail. But the tail doesn't feel real enough, until the night Crystal wears it to bed.

If you enjoy *The Mermaid's Tail* you will also enjoy other Puffin Nibbles in the series.

Teachers' resources available.



The Littlest Pirate

by Sherryl Clark and illustrated by Tom Jellett

Nicholas Nosh is the littlest pirate in the world. He's not allowed to go to sea, and he's bored. Very bored. 'I'll show them,' he says.

If you enjoy *The Littlest Pirate* you will also enjoy other Puffin Nibbles in the series.

Teachers' resources available.



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
Blast Off!	Margaret Clark and Tom Jellett	9780143301851	P-4	\$9.99		
Bad Buster	Sofie Laguna and Leigh Hobbs	9780143300335	P-4	\$9.99		
Fairy Bread	Ursula Dubosarsky and Mitch Vane	9780141311753	P-4	\$9.99		
Scruffy's Day Out	Rachel Flynn and Jocelyn Bell	9780141311692	P-4	\$9.99		
The Littlest Pirate	Sherryl Clark and Tom Jellett	9780141313382	P-4	\$9.99		
The Mermaid's Tail	Raewyn Caisley and Ann James	9780141306155	P-4	\$9.99		
TOTAL						

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