

# GEORGE WIZARD

THE



**TONY ARMSTRONG**

ILLUSTRATED BY **EMMA SJAAN BEUKERS**

**TEACHERS RESOURCES**

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## Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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# INTRODUCTION

'George's heart was full.'

George the Wizard loves life on top of his mountain. He loves speeding around on his flying cloud, playing hide-and-seek with the animals and looking after his crystal gardens.

The only thing missing from life on George's mountain is friends to share it all with. But does George have the courage to show others who he really is?

An uplifting story about friendship and the rewards that come from being the real you, from beloved TV personality Tony Armstrong, with incredible artwork by debut illustrator Emma Sjaan Beukers.

## THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes are covered in this book which might be related to the Australian Curriculum, including:

### HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/>>

### FRIENDSHIP

**Discussion Point:** George seems to have everything he could want, but he lives all alone, and what he most desires is a friend. He doesn't know how to find one, though. Making friends isn't always easy, and children often suffer anxiety when they imagine meeting new people for the first time. George thinks to himself: 'But what if he tried to meet new friends and they didn't like wizards? What if they laughed at his magic?' Discuss the obstacles you face in making new friends and what strategies you use to overcome your fears or uncertainties.

**Discussion Point:** Harriet magically becomes aware of George's dilemma and visits to invite him to her village. After George rescues the villagers from the dragon, they all become his friends. Doing a 'good deed' for someone not only shows them what sort of person you are, but also makes them happy to include you in their friendship group. Have your students ever made a friend in this way, by doing someone a favour or helping them in some way?

### INDIVIDUALITY

**Discussion Point:** Consider this quote: "See, George!" Harriet said. "Your magic is cool! Everyone has their own cool thing. Look at all of us! Imagine how boring life would be if everyone pretended to be the same." Then discuss with students.

### MAGIC AND FANTASY

**Discussion Point:** George is a young wizard who lives on Magic Mountain, where his house is full of magical things. A dragon attacks Harriet's village and a mighty battle ensues, during which George uses his magic to save the day. Ask students if they believe in magic. What magic things have your students ever witnessed?

**Discussion Point:** What is a wizard? Read about the concept and read other stories about wizards.

**Discussion Point:** The occult is suggested by the posters and objects in George's bedroom, as well as the books he has on his shelves there. 'Occult' means supernatural or mysterious. What other synonyms for 'occult' can your students discover?

**Discussion Point:** The characters who live in Harriet's village are typical of European fairytales and include goblins, fairies and a giant. What other character types have your students encountered when reading fairytales from different countries? Read and share fairytales and magical stories from different cultures.

**Discussion Point:** Both the writer and illustrator are First Nations people with European ancestors. Although First Nations stories aren't overt in this narrative, it explores the spiritual as a concept. There are also Australian creatures depicted on several pages. The landscape depicted is very much a fantasy world, but it also relates to the rich and diverse landscapes of Australia. [See **Illustrator's Notes** regarding this.] This makes the book something of a 'hybrid' of fantasy and realism. Which aspects of this fantasy did you identify with?

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY**

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>

The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following aspects:

**Activity:** The book is written in playful and colloquial language. For example:

'Good Greg! You scared the magic out of me!'

'I'm gonna magic you all up a mad feed!'

Make up a dialogue between George and Harriet using colloquial expressions like these.

**Activity:** Imagine another adventure for George, Harriet and their friends. Write a short story based on your idea and give it a title.

**Activity:** Test your students' **comprehension** by asking them questions about the written and visual text. [See also **Worksheet 3** below.]

## **VISUAL LITERACY**

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>

Using various parts of the book's design and illustrations, the visual text of a book combines with the written text to tell the story, as explored below:

**Activity:** The **cover** of a book is an important part of its message. George is depicted in his hat and robe with his wand, standing as if on a stage performing. (The title page depicts George in his wizard's cloak and hat holding his wand, as he is on the cover.) Create a new cover for this book based on your reading of it.

**Activity:** The **endpapers** contain the pattern on George's robe (and on the back endpaper, there's a sneaky peek at the dragon's tail). Look for this pattern and other patterns in the book, and then design another set of endpapers for the book.

**Activity:** Creating magical characters entails giving them distinct **facial and bodily features**. Each of the characters in the book is gifted with features such as wings, bulging eyes or unusual hair. Choose one of them and invite students to draw that character. Then compare how differently they have drawn that character to others in their class. Every artist has a different perspective on what they observe. [See also **Creative Arts** below.]

**Activity:** This is how Emma Sjaan Beukers explains her medium in creating these images: 'All illustrations start as pencil sketches and brainstorming on paper. I also do colour tests on paper to ensure a cohesive palette. I then take my sketches as reference into Procreate on the iPad and Photoshop on my computer to complete the rest of the process. At different stages, I also print out the sketches and illustrations onto paper the size of the final book so I can make sure it all looks good!' The **colours** used in this book are rich, deep and very bright. The **images include details** that students might be asked to investigate or identify, such as animals and objects. What magic objects do you see in the illustrations of George's room? [See also **Illustrator's Notes** below.]

**Activity:** The architecture of the houses depicted in Harriet's village is deliberately medieval and 'magic' in style. But from the hints we're given in the pictures of the inside of his home, George's house is rather different to this. Draw a picture of George's home as you imagine it looks from the outside.

**Activity:** Invite students to draw, paint or collage a scene to accompany the story they wrote above. Create a classroom mural using all the images. [See also **Worksheet 1** below.]

**Activity:** This book employs some comic conventions, such as using speech bubbles and sounds such as 'Kapow!'. Create a **graphic novel/comic version of one** incident in the book, using a template containing a series of smaller images to show the action. [See **Bibliography**.] [See also **Worksheet 4**.]

## **CREATIVE ARTS**

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

1. Several magical creatures appear in Harriet's village – for example, the winged creature Harriet carries on her back when they journey to George's magic mountain, or the giant, who also carries a winged creature on his head. Invite students to draw new characters and to give each of them an interesting name. **Create a 'Gallery of Magical Creatures'** to display in your classroom. [Students might be shown Chris Kennett's drawings for Sally Rippin's *School of Monsters* series to give them another idea of how an artist creates a gallery of quirky characters.]
2. Have fun learning **some simple magic tricks** to share. [See **Bibliography**.]
3. **Create a goblin mask**. [See **Worksheet 5**.]
4. **Create a poster** to advertise this book.
5. **Create a book trailer** to promote this book. [See **Bibliography**.]

## **FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION & RESEARCH**

- This is Tony Armstrong's first children's book, but he has a wide range of media expertise and has appeared on several television programs. (For example, you may wish to watch

segments of 'Great Australian Stuff' at <https://iview.abc.net.au/show/great-australian-stuff>, or 'Tony Armstrong's Extra-Ordinary Things' at <https://iview.abc.net.au/show/tony-armstrong-s-extra-ordinary-things>.)

- Research Emma Sjaan Beukers' other books and illustration work.
- Students might read this book in comparison to other books featuring magic, such as those listed in the **Bibliography**.

## CONCLUSION

George the Wizard and his new friend Harriet survive a battle with a dragon, and as in all good stories, the story ends with them celebrating with their friends by sharing a feast!

## ILLUSTRATOR'S NOTES

My inspiration for the landscape and environment in *George the Wizard* has come from the beautiful and lush forests we have in Australia – from the Otways and Dandenongs in VIC, to the beautiful Daintree in Far North Queensland, and Barrington Tops and the Forest of Tranquillity in NSW. The natural environment around us has so much magic that it is hard to look past what we have right here in our own backyard! George's house and bedroom were some of my favourite spreads to illustrate because I was able to put in all the little details of a magical house. My house is also full of crystals, books and magical items to connect with my ancestors and with the stars and nature, so most of what exists in George's house also exists in my house! I have also put in a few references to Tony being an AFL player. Can you see any in the illustrations? There's a book called 'The Strong Swan' and a few footballs on shelves!

The human characters are an amalgamation of kids I know and how I felt as a kid (and even now as an adult); adventurous when exploring, but shy and awkward when around others. The non-human characters are based on folklore and fairytale traditions (Dutch, Slavic, Nordic, Irish and British) that have been told for thousands of years. The animals in the illustrations have been specifically included for various reasons; the lizard represents the totem for my mob, the googar or sand goanna, the willie wagtails are one of my partner's favourite birds, and the kookaburra is an iconic bird who sings songs, tells us stories through its laugh and is a reference to another book I have illustrated about a family of cheeky kookaburras.

**Emma Sjaan Beukers**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A proud Gamilaroi man, **Tony Armstrong** grew up in rural NSW and played professional AFL for Adelaide, Collingwood and Sydney before going on to become a radio and television presenter, including being the first Indigenous AFL commentator on commercial radio, hosting the ***Marngrook Footy Show*** and becoming a panellist for ***The Colour of Your Jumper***.

In 2020, Tony joined the ABC, where he presented sports news on the ABC News channel, provided commentary for ***Grandstand AFL*** on ABC Sport and hosted the 2020 summer series of ***Offsiders***. Tony is now the full-time sports presenter on ***ABC News Breakfast***, along with numerous other television credits.

In 2023, Tony received the **Bert Newtown Award for Most Popular Presenter** at the Logie Awards, following his **Graham Kennedy Award for Most Popular New Talent** at the 2022 Logie Awards.

As well as being a rising star in Australian media, Tony Armstrong is a talented writer and creator who is currently in the process of developing a slate of television projects. *George the Wizard* is Tony's first children's book.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Emma Sjaan Beukers** is a designer, illustrator and artist working from her home studio in Naarm (Melbourne). Her blend of Indigenous (Ngemba/Ngiyampaa), Dutch and Irish heritage, as well as her own spiritual and occult practices, heavily inspire the art and illustration work she creates, full of nostalgic and familiar nature, spirits, magic, mystery and folklore that makes your inner child jump for joy. See for further information: <https://www.emmasjaanbeukers.com/>

# WORKSHEETS

## WORKSHEET 1. COLLAGE THIS DRAGON

Colour in this dragon and add images of George and Harriet to the picture. Use collage as well as drawing materials.



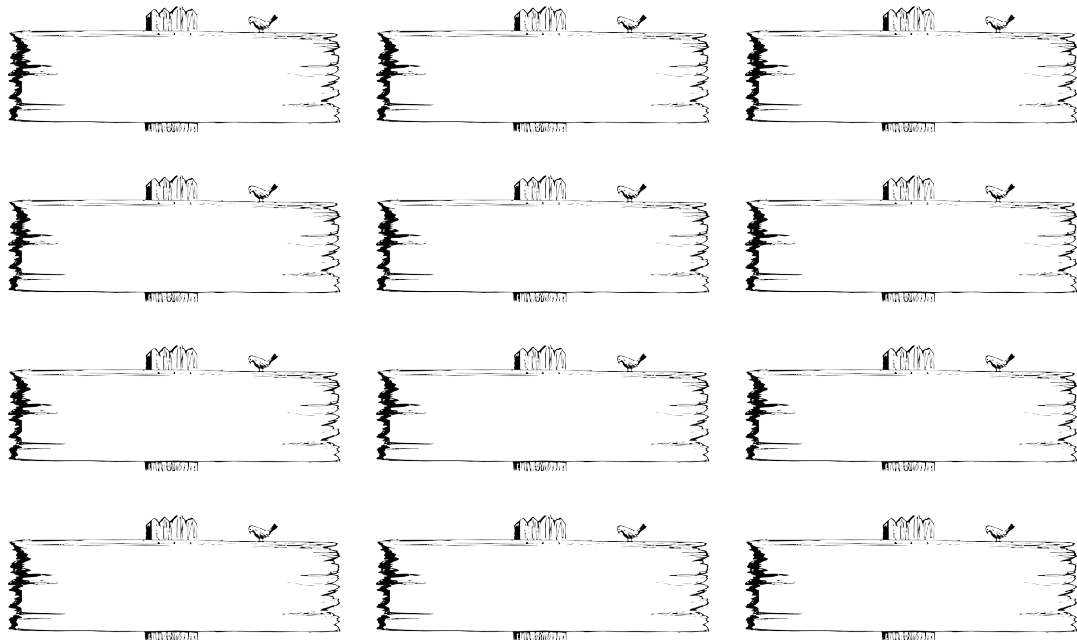


# WORKSHEET 2. MAGIC MAPPING

These are three magic places mentioned in the book: George's magic mountain, the crystal gardens and the supernatural forest. The map of George and Harriet's travels in the novel is depicted below. Photocopy and enlarge to A3 for students to work on.



Invite students to mark on it some imaginary sites that might also appear in a magic locality – for example, 'Perilous Pontoon', 'Gulf of Gremlins' or 'Crevice of Catastrophe'. Write the names of your sites on the signs below. Cut them out and glue them on the map.



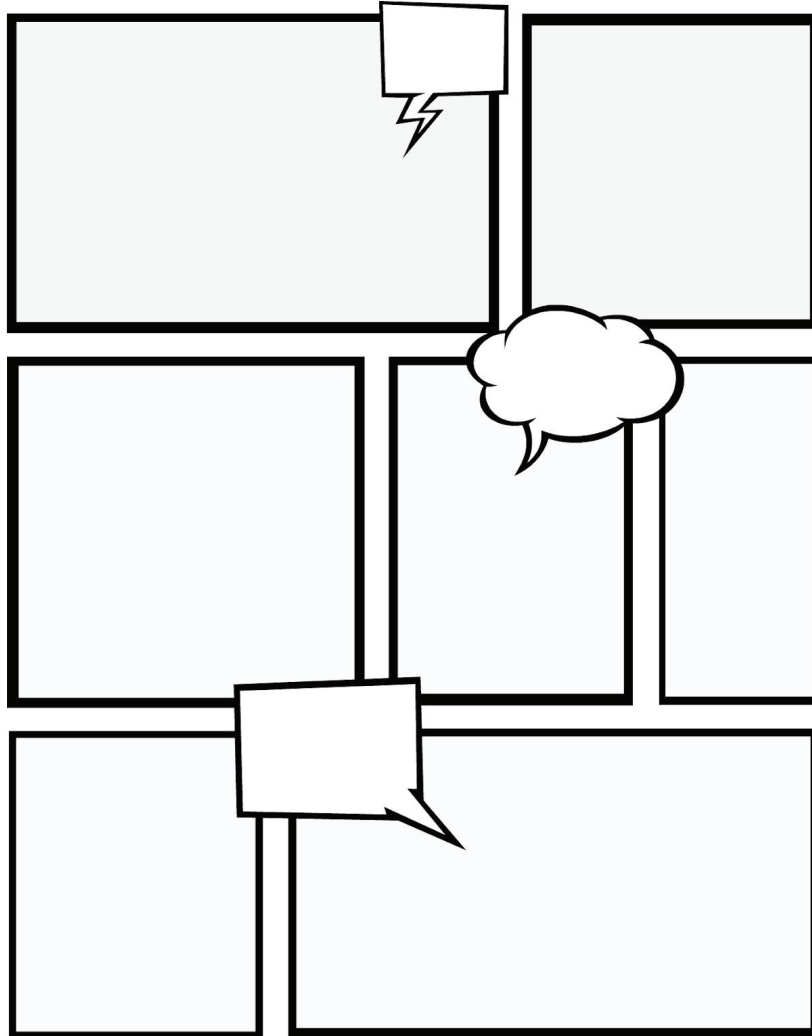
## WORKSHEET 3. MAGIC QUIZ

1. What is a cauldron? (Clue: It appears on one of the pages.)
2. What symbols appear on George's hat and robe?
3. George doesn't have a flying carpet. He has a flying [?] instead?
4. What animals does George feed through the window of his house?
5. How did Harriet know to visit George?
6. How does George protect the villagers from the dragon?
7. Tarot cards are often laid out in the shape of a pentagram to represent the elements of fire, water, air, earth and spirit. The symbol of a pentagram appears on a poster on the page where George is feeding the animals. What else is depicted on that poster?
8. In the battle scene with the dragon, four tiny, winged creatures can be seen. What are they?
9. What does the giant request when George says he'll do magic for the villagers?
10. How does the book end?
11. What animal joins them at the end of the story?

**1. A large pot in which witches and wizards mix magic spells. 2. The moon on his hat, and the moon and stars on his robe. 3. A flying cloud. 4. A lizard and a kookaburra. 5. She could magically hear his wishes. 6. He creates a force field around the village. 7. A blade, a leafy twig and a goblet. 8. Fairies. 9. 'Can I wear your hat?' 10. With a 'mad feed' (or feast). 11. A lizard (or goanna).**

## WORKSHEET 4. GRAPHIC STORYTELLING

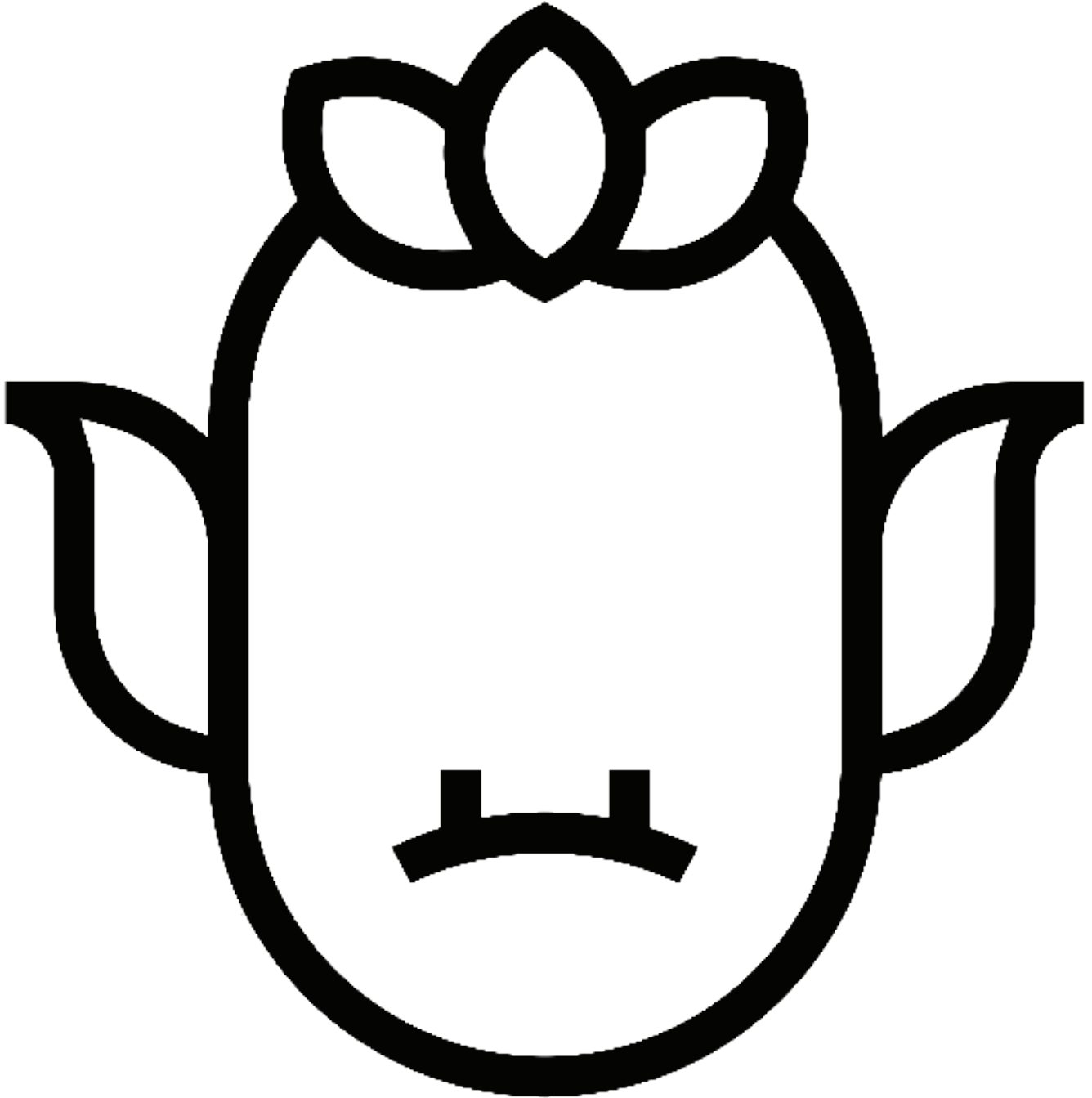
Create a graphic novel/comic interpretation of one of the scenes in this book. Use the layout below as the storyboard for your comic. Enlarge it on a photocopier to give you more space.



Comic Book Template viewed at: <http://www.pinterest.com/pin/365706432212821426/>

## WORKSHEET 5. GOBLIN MASK

Add a mouth, hair or a hat to the image to make a goblin mask. Colour it in or use collage materials to make it more intimidating or funnier. Glue it onto craft paper and cut it out, then add elastic to the sides to put over your head. (Cut out eyes so that you can see through the mask.)



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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

**Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright** operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011, she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland; in 2012, the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia; and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021, she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.