

A Boy and a Ball

Author: Phil Cummings
Illustrator: Phil Lesnie

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Synopsis

The cloudless sky suddenly roared like thunder. Shadows, swift and frightening, descended. The boys brother grabbed him by the arm. Run, quickly, But my ball. Leave it.

From the Prime Ministers Literary Award-shortlisted creators of Feathers, comes this compassionate tale of a family's search for a safe place to call home.

Author Bio

Phil Cummings was born in the small seaside town of Port Broughton in South Australia. He is the youngest of eight children with four brothers and three sisters. Life as a kid for Phil was a fabulous adventure.



He was on a farm for the first eight or nine years of his life. When his family left the farm they moved to the mid north of South Australia to a railway town called Peterborough. His older brothers worked on the steam trains. The windows in his house would rattle constantly as the trains rumbled through the rail yards. When Phil left school he worked in a local garage, in the abattoirs and played sport constantly until he left to attend teachers' college.

Phil's interest in writing began with poetry and writing songs. With the beginning of teacher training, Phil was exposed to a great deal of children's literature, particularly picture books. Phil decided to sit down and write one!

He mistakenly believed it would not be difficult at all! His work was rejected time and time again but, having the writing bug, he kept on going. He soon learnt that writing for children was a lot harder than he ever imagined.

Six or seven years after his first attempts, Phil had a book published. Goodness Gracious!- illustrated by Craig Smith - was published by Omnibus Books in 1989.

Illustrator Bio

Phil Lesnie is a Sydney-based illustrator of children's books. He is also a children's bookseller. It is entirely possible that he hasn't read a title written for adults since he became one. He works primarily in watercolour, because in a watercolour painting even mistakes look lovely. He is the illustrator of Feathers, which was shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards in 2018. His first three books were CBCA Notable books in 2015, 2016 and 2018. But his first cat, Cassidy, is notable all of the time.



[Click here](#), to see a clip of Illustrator Phil Lesnie reading A Boy and a Ball



Curriculum Links

HASS

Year 5

ACHASSI099 Examine different viewpoints on actions, events, issues and phenomena in the past and present

Year 6

Concepts for developing understanding:

The content in the history sub-strand provides opportunities for students to develop historical understanding through key concepts including sources, continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy and significance.

ACHASSK136 Stories of groups of people who migrated to Australia since Federation (including from ONE country of the Asia region) and reasons they migrated

THE ARTS: VISUAL ARTS

Year 5 and 6

ACAVAM114 Explore ideas and practices used by artists, including practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to represent different views, beliefs and opinions.

ACAVAR117 Explain how visual arts conventions communicate meaning by comparing artworks from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks

Themes

- Acceptance
- Compassion
- Detention
- Hope
- Refugees and Migration
- Resilience
- War

Read the book, without showing the illustrations.

Then read the book, showing the illustrations.

Do the illustrations change the way you feel about the book?

If so why?

Visual Arts

Look closely at the illustrations, what is the figure that appears on (nearly) all of the pages?

What do you think it is? What do you think it's meant to represent?

Read a few picture books that deal with the same topic.

Discuss how you feel about the different stories? Illustrations?

What makes a good picture book?

Refugees

** Keep in mind the experiences of the individuals in your class before you undertake a discussion on refugees.*

Have a number of resources available when looking at this topic.

See the next page for other picture books, novels, graphic novels and non fiction titles you might like to use.

Ask the students if they have heard of the word Refugee.

What is a refugee?

Use a simple book like 'What is a Refugee?' (see next page) as a starting point for discussion.

What are some of the reasons a person may find themselves displaced and without a home?

At the time of this publication, there are at least 79.5 million people around the world have been forced to flee their homes.

<https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/figures-at-a-glance.html>

Australia is a country built on immigration.

As well as looking at the current refugee crisis, look at historical migration to Australia.

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/a-brief-history-of-immigration-to-australia>

Ask the students to research their own family stories.

How far back can they go?

Find out when their parents/grandparents/great grandparents came to Australia. and Why?

Read books that deal with the same topic.

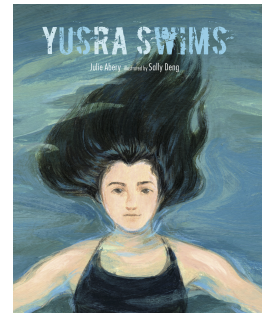
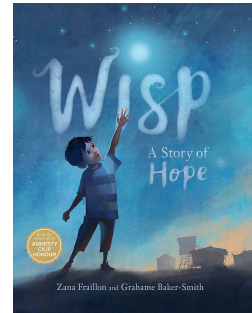
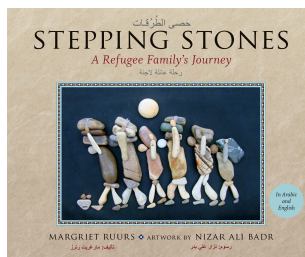
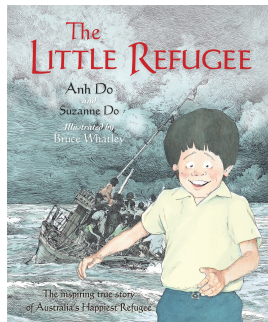
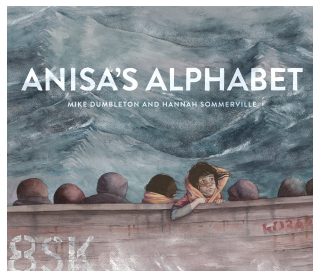
- Discuss how you feel about the different stories? Illustrations?
- How are the stories similar?
- How are they different?

Discuss what makes a good picture book.

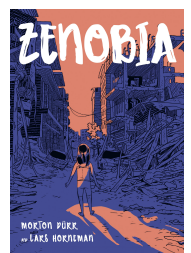
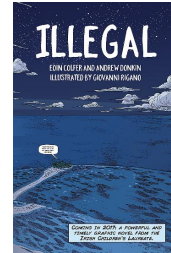
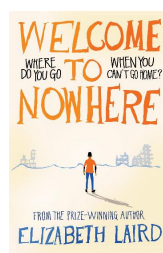
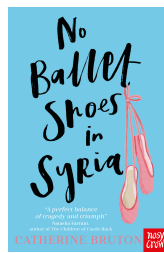
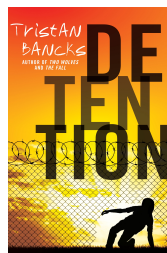
There is no right or wrong answer, so encourage the students to talk about what they like and dislike in a picture book.

* For more in depth stories have a look at a novel. or graphic novel

Picture Books

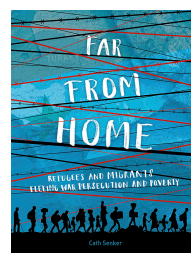
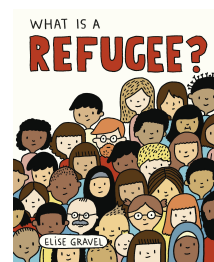
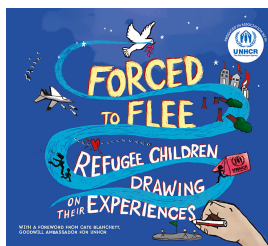


Novels



Graphic Novels

Non Fiction



Forced to Flee - *this is aimed at general audience of 14+, but there are elements of the book that are suitable to share with Upper Primary aged classes.

