

## These notes are for:

- Years 4, 5, 6 & 7
- Middle Years
- 8+ Years

## Key Learning Areas:

- English – Writing, Reading
- History
- HSIE / SOSE

## Example of:

- Junior Fiction
- First Person Narrative
- Third Person Narrative
- Historical Fiction

## Experience of:

- Cultures & Civilisations
- People & Places
- Myths & Legends
- Beliefs & Religion

## Values addressed:

- Doing Your Best
- Care & Compassion
- Understanding
- Inclusion
- Fair Go

## Themes:

- Aztecs
- Freedom and Choice
- Friendship
- Slavery
- Heroes & Heroines

\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

Walker Books Australia      Ph +61 2 9517 9577  
 Locked Bag 22                  Fax +61 2 9517 9997  
 Newtown, N.S.W., 2042

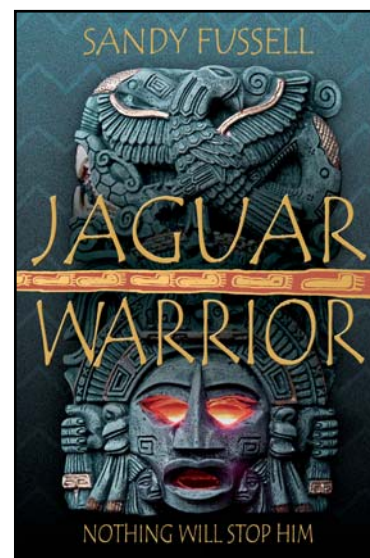
For enquiries please contact Melissa Hamilton:  
 mhamilton@walkerbooks.com.au

Notes © 2010 Walker Books Australia Pty. Ltd.  
 All Rights Reserved

## Jaguar Warrior – Overview

### Jaguar Warrior

By: Sandy Fussell  
 ISBN: 9781921529290  
 ARRP: \$14.95  
 NZRRP: \$ 16.99  
 No. of Pages: 224  
 March 2010



## Outline:

*Jaguar Warrior* is Sandy Fussell's sixth novel for children, following the success of her *Samurai Kids* series and also *Polar Boy* which was short-listed for CBCA Book of the Year for Younger Readers 2009.

Sandy Fussell draws on her fascination with history to create a brilliantly researched, evocative tale and a page turning adventure.

Imprisoned in a box, Atl waits for death. He is not afraid. Anger burns too deeply within him. Then, unexpectedly, Atl is released. Released to deliver an urgent message. But it is not the mission that sets him running. It is the sudden chance for freedom. Nothing can stop this Jaguar Warrior. Not even the one who hunts him.

This accessible and action-packed story with interesting characters will engage young readers while expanding their knowledge of an ancient culture.

## Author/Illus. Information:

**Sandy Fussell** has loved books from the moment she could read and always wanted to be a writer. In school, she wrote what she refers to as "booklets" and "terrible plays that the teacher made the class perform". After school, Sandy forgot about writing for a long time and started a family. She came back to writing after one of her children stopped reading. Sandy suggested that they write a book together; she would write what he told her to. Afterwards, she realised her love of writing was reinvigorated! Sandy knew that she wanted to be the boss and set out to write more and now she can't stop. For more information on Sandy please visit the following websites; [www.sandyfussell.com](http://www.sandyfussell.com) / [www.samuraikids.com.au](http://www.samuraikids.com.au)

## How to use these notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.



### Classroom activities for *Jaguar Warrior* - Chapters 1-5:

- Ask students to write down the two different perspectives of Heumac and Ichtaca, regarding Atl's escape. What do they believe is his purpose and how do their views differ?
- Atl is a slave and must do as his master tells him. When he is released he is excited to be finally free. But Atl finds that even a free person cannot always choose what they want to do. Atl must make a choice between saving the lives of the people in Tenochtitlan or running away and beginning a new life. Hold a debate with the topic: *Atl should take the message to Purepecha*. Some arguments for: he has a responsibility to friends left behind; it is the honourable thing to do; Ichtaca is trusting him; he knows what it is like to be a slave so he should try to help make sure all the city's children don't become slaves. Some arguments against: Atl has no responsibility to a city that was going to sacrifice him; his life is his own and it doesn't belong to Tenochtitlan; he has been waiting a long time to be free; everyone should be free.
- What do Atl and Lali do to get rid of the crocodile? At first they were going to use violence, how did thinking and problem-solving prove more effective? Discuss.
- What do Lali and Atl eat for breakfast? Research different cultures and the type of breakfasts that they eat. Why is breakfast an important meal for the day? Create a school survey about breakfast. What is the most popular food for breakfast?
- Huemac is an Eagle Warrior, but in Chapter 5 he is also described as "teeth bared in a cruel crocodile smile". What other animals would you attribute to Heumac? What animals would you attribute to Lali? Create a list.
- After reading Chapter 1 write a brief description of Atl. How old do you think he is? What city is he from? What do you think he looks like?
- A myth is a story explaining something about the world. Ancient cultures had many myths to explain why the sun rose. The early Greeks believed it was the god Helios driving his fiery chariot across the sky. The Aztecs believed a human sacrifice was necessary and if the sacrifice was acceptable the sun would rise again. Make up your own myth to explain why the sun rises.
- We live in a completely different world to Atl and Lali. Some of these differences are because of the climate and geography where we live and others are related to technology. Make a list of the things Lali packed when she was running away. What food? What weapons? Make a list of what you would take.

### Classroom activities for *Jaguar Warrior* - Chapters 6-10:

- Read pp56-57. What different animals are used to describe human characteristics. Create a list of animals and the human characteristics you could associate with them. E.g.  
  - cunning = fox
  - wise = owl
  - busy = bee
- What is the definition of a merchant? What goods would this merchant have most likely traded in? Why would a jaguar pelt have been so valuable? How would being a merchant be an easy way to source and deliver information? Discuss.
- The Aztecs believed people had an animal spirit double, a 'nahual', who acted as their protector. They developed the characteristics of their nahual and some people could change into that shape. Make a list of the birds and animals mentioned in the book so far. Which would you choose as your nahual and why?
- Atl and Lali place themselves at risk by going back for the slave boy. Create a list of pros and cons for this action. How has this hindered them, but why have they made the right decision?

## Classroom activities for *Jaguar Warrior* - Chapters 11-15:

- *Jaguar Warrior* is written from two points of view. The first point of view is that of Atl. It is written in first person. The reader sees directly through Atl's eyes "In the darkness, I imagine her smirk." The second point of view is Huemac, the Guard Captain. It is written in third person. "Huemac remembers the boy's smirking face." In these chapters how do these points of view help us as readers to understand what is going to happen? List the moment when Atl realises that something may be wrong (and where we know the truth).
- "I purposely used a combination of first and third person to develop different relationships between the reader and the characters of Atl and Huemac," Sandy said. "I wanted readers to feel what Atl felt and to sympathise with him. With Huemac, I wanted to create initial distance between the character and the reader. I wanted the reader to observe what Huemac did and felt but not to feel strong a connection or empathy. I hoped the reader would draw closer to Huemac as he developed and changed through the course of the story." – Sandy Fussell
- Read Chapter 13. What do Atl, Zolan and Lali all share in common? How has this brought them together?
- On p114 Zolan says his parents traded him for a piece of feather art. This was very valuable in Aztec times. Collect feathers and make your own feather art picture.
- How does Zolan tell time, what does he use as a calendar? Research methods of telling time and measuring space in different ancient cultures. How were the sun, moon and stars often used?
- What is leprosy? What causes it and what are the symptoms? How is it treated today? Research.
- On pp126-127 Zolan makes chocolatl, a chocolate drink, for the leper priest. Write a method procedure for how to make chocolatl.
- What is the myth of the Night Wind? From the description given draw an image of the Night Wind.

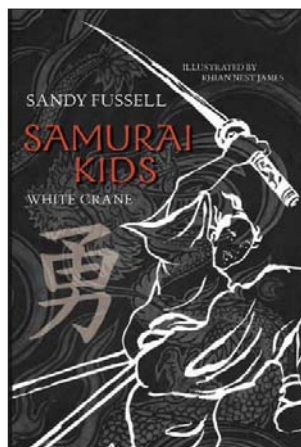
## Classroom activities for *Jaguar Warrior* - Chapters 16-20:

- Discuss the phrase "knowing your enemy", in relation to Lali and the Captain. How does Lali use the Captain's weaknesses and fears to her advantage?
- Zolan, Lali and Atl offer the gods what is most precious to them. What is the most precious thing to you? What would you sacrifice in a time of great need?
- Draw a map of Atl's journey from Tenochtitlan to Purepecha - showing the island city of Tenochtitlan, the lake, the mountains and forest, the Purepechan border, Lake Patzcuaro and Tzintzuntzan.
- This story has shown that in Aztec society there were two elite groups of warriors - the Eagle Warriors and the Jaguar Warriors. Research to find out what made them different. Draw each type of warrior.
- Research Task - The Aztec people had many gods and used their images everywhere - to decorate plates, jewellery and temples. Find a picture of an Aztec god. It does not have to be one mentioned in *Jaguar Warrior*. Draw a large circle, the size of an A4 page. Decorate this plate with a picture of your god and some smaller pictures to show what that god was responsible for.

## Classroom activities for *Jaguar Warrior* - Chapters 21-24:

- What does it mean to be free? Write a story, newspaper article or speech about what it means to be free? Why is freedom important and should not be taken for granted?
- Atl feels betrayed by Ichtaca when the man he loved and trusted imprisons him for sacrifice. He feels betrayed by Lali when he learns the Guard Captain is her father because he believes she is selfishly placing him in danger. The priests of Tzintzuntzan betray Ichtaca. And Atl is tempted to betray Ichtaca and Tenochtitlan. Sometimes it is hard to determine what is right and what is wrong. Is Ichtaca doing the wrong thing? Is Lali doing the wrong thing? Is Atl? Discuss.
- Sometimes what we see as wrong today was not considered wrong in an earlier time or culture such as the Aztecs. Huemac is hunting Atl because he believes Atl must be sacrificed or Tenochtitlan will be defeated and many people will die. He is also happy to hunt the boy because he holds a grudge against him - Atl dropped hot turtle soup on him and scarred his leg but the priest Ichtaca saved Atl from punishment. In the end Huemac condemns the boys to death at the hands of the Purepechans but tries to save Lali and make up for his neglectful parenting. Does he deserve to be rewarded with a hero's death - to return as a butterfly for a brief period? Discuss.
- A hero is someone who is exceptionally brave and courageous or fights for noble causes. Who are the heroes in *Jaguar Warrior*? Do heroes sometimes make mistakes?

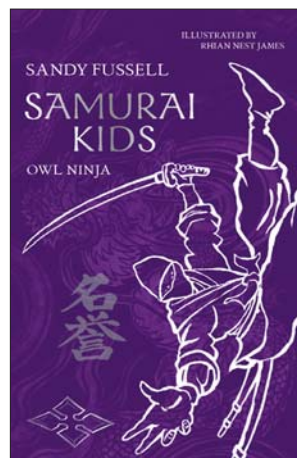
## More great fiction from Sandy Fussell:



**Samurai Kids Book 1**  
**White Crane**  
by Sandy Fussell  
illus. by Rhian Nest James

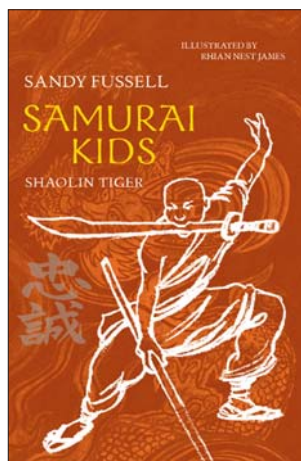
ISBN: 9781921150203  
Arrp: \$14.95  
Nzrrp: \$16.99  
Ext: 256pp  
Published March 2008

Teachers' Resources Available  
Play Resource Available



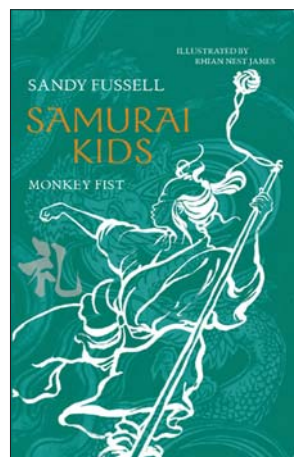
**Samurai Kids Book 2**  
**Owl Ninja**  
by Sandy Fussell  
illus. by Rhian Nest James

ISBN: 9781921150371  
Arrp: \$14.95  
Nzrrp: \$16.99  
Ext: 272pp  
Published October 2008



**Samurai Kids Book 3**  
**Shaolin Tiger**  
by Sandy Fussell  
illus. by Rhian Nest James

ISBN: 9781921150906  
Arrp: \$14.95  
Nzrrp: \$16.99  
Ext: 272pp  
Published April 2009



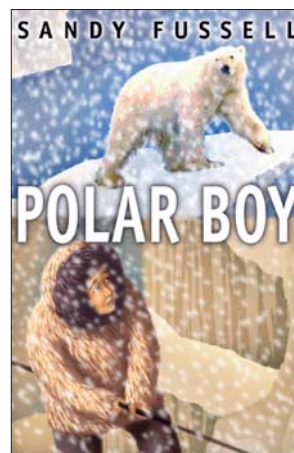
**Samurai Kids Book 4**  
**Monkey Fist**  
by Sandy Fussell  
illus. by Rhian Nest James

ISBN: 9781921150913  
Arrp: \$14.95  
Nzrrp: \$16.99  
Ext: 272pp  
Published August 2009



**Samurai Kids Book 5**  
**Fire Lizard**  
by Sandy Fussell  
illus. by Rhian Nest James

ISBN: 9781921529467  
Arrp: \$14.95  
Nzrrp: \$16.99  
Published September 2010



**Polar Boy**  
by Sandy Fussell

ISBN: 9781921150388  
Arrp: \$14.95  
Nzrrp: \$16.99  
Ext: 208pp  
Published August 2008

Teachers' Resources Available  
Shortlisted for the CBCA Book of the Year Awards 2009: Younger Readers Category