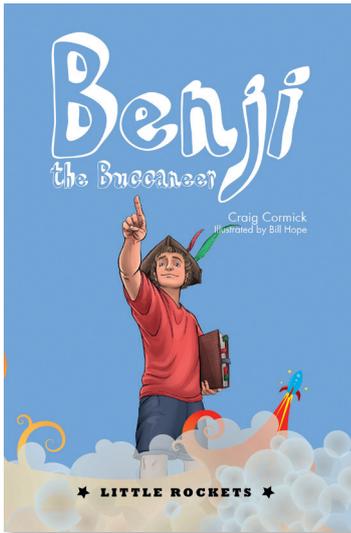


TEACHERS' NOTES

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Benji the Buccaneer

Written by Craig Cormick

Illustrated by Bill Hope

Synopsis

Benji dreams about being a pirate and would rather go sailing on a pirate ship than go to school. One day a mysterious bus arrives at his local bus stop and offers him the opportunity to fulfil his dream, as the bus transforms into a pirate ship and heads out to sea. Benji meets a very strange group of people on the bus/ship, and they appoint him captain for the day. However, after encountering pirate-hunters, sea monsters and ghostly skeletons he slowly begins to understand that there is a lot more to being a pirate than just having enthusiasm.



Author Motivation

The author's motivation in writing this book was to stretch the imagination of the readers in a fun way and subtly show the importance of learning – even for pirates!

Author Background Information

Craig Cormick has been writing stories since he first learned to write. He has published 20 books for adults and children. By day he works as a science communicator in Canberra, but at other times he lives in a strange world of fun and imagination. He has three grown up children and a young five year old who loves being a pirate.

Illustrator Background Information

Bill Hope's need to fill a blank space with detail has been



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likened to a 'nervous twitch' and his process as being able to 'open a valve in the back of my head and let out whatever is rattling around in there.' Bill has a penchant for meticulous detail, expansive imagery and creating layers of narrative.

Educational Applicability

Benji the Buccaneer reinforces the concepts of the importance of education and learning.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Before and during reading the book:

1. Benji wants to be a pirate. What do you think a pirate would do in a typical day?
2. Do you think this is what a real life pirate might do?
3. In the story, Benji relies on different crew members for help. Have you ever had someone help you? What did they do for you?
4. Have you ever imagined being something else for a day? What did you imagine?

After reading the book:

1. Why did Benji want to be a pirate?
2. How many things can you name that Benji didn't know enough about to be a good pirate?
3. Benji gets some of the information he needs from books. Where else could you go to find out information that you need?
4. Benji decides to go back to school at the end of the story. Why does he decide this?

ACTIVITIES

Design

Have children make their own pirate hats or pirate flags. They can be made from cardboard or paper and coloured in.

Language

What sailing words does Benji have to learn? Discuss other sailing words and what they mean. Possible words could include: above board, adrift, the coast is clear, loose canon, keep a wide berth.

Emotions

How does Benji feel when he finds he does not know enough to be a good pirate?

Creative Writing

Ask the children to invent their own pirate names and names of pirate ships. Use existing names such as Blackbeard, Captain Kidd, Long John Silver, Black Bart or the Pirate Queen Teuta, as examples.



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MARKETING AND SELLING POINTS

1. *The book will be marketed with the other books in the Little Rockets series. www.littlerockets.com.au*
2. Craig Cormick has been awarded the ACT Book of the Year Award (1999) and a Queensland Premier's Literary Award (2006)
3. Amazing illustrations and a gripping story helps to encourage reluctant readers
4. There are seven other books in the Little Rockets series



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