

Being Jack

Susanne Gervay

Book Summary

The fourth and concluding book about Jack - an ordinary boy who does extraordinary things. Jack is in Year 6 now and still loves his photography, surfing, and crazy family.

Curriculum areas and key learning outcomes

The outcomes for this novel study are drawn from the new NSW English Syllabus. The outcomes in brackets refer to the National Curriculum codes.

EN2-1A, EN2-4A, (ACELY1680, ACELY1692),
EN2-6B, EN2-10C
(ACELT 1605), EN2-11D, EN2-7B, EN2-2A

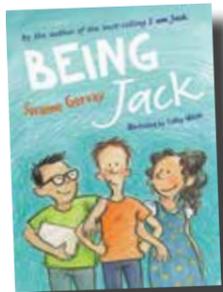
Themes and Curriculum Topics

- Bullying
- Relationships
- Self awareness
- Exploring rights, values and responsibilities
- Reading and viewing
- Visual Narrative
- Speaking and Listening
- Thinking Imaginatively, Creatively and Interpretively

Appropriate Ages:

9+

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Notes By Rebekah Stanton



Being Jack

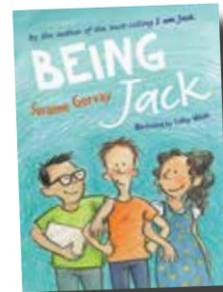
Susanne Gervay

Contents

- Introduction
- About the Author/Illustrator
- Author Inspiration

Study Notes on Themes and Curriculum Topics

Questions and Activities
Bibliography
About the Author of the Notes



Being Jack

Susanne Gervay

Introduction

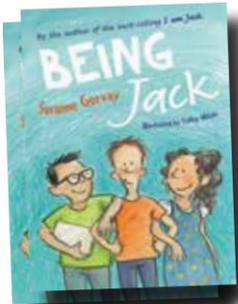
Being Jack is the fourth and concluding book about Jack - an ordinary boy who does extraordinary things. Jack is in Year 6 now and still loves his photography, surfing, and crazy family. Things are going well for him, particularly at school where he isn't bullied any more. But he notices that his best friend Christopher is being taunted and is starting to miss school and hiding out and avoiding everyone. And when a football match turns ugly and Jack and Christopher witness some unfair dirty play, they know that, again, the bullying has to stop. Ages: 9+

About the Author

Susanne Gervay is the author of books for children and adolescents widely recognized for their importance in social justice. Her books are endorsed by Room to Read, Life Education, the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, The Children's Hospital Westmead, Variety the Children's Charity, the Cancer Council and many other organisations. Born in Sydney, she is the daughter of Hungarian refugees and was deeply honoured when she received an Order of Australia for children's literature. She is a mother of two fabulous kids. As head of the Society of Children's Writers and Illustrators Australia East and New Zealand, Writer Ambassador for Room to Read, Role Model for Books in Homes, Patron of Monkey Baa Theatre, she supports the children's book community and literacy. She is also committed to heritage and restored The Hughenden Hotel associated with Australia's first philosopher.

Author Inspiration

"Rock music, girls, guys, love, loss, bullying, life - that's what I write about because it's important, funny, sad and real. I didn't know I was going to be an author. I just wrote because I had to. Because it helped me work out things like - Why did Mum and Dad argue? How could my son be bullied at school? What was love? Friendship? Why is there war? Terrorism? How come my dog made me laugh? Will I ever look OK? What's it mean being here? I'm inspired by my kids, parents and the people who touch my life and have a strong commitment to emotional truth."



Being Jack

Susanne Gervay

Notes on Themes and Curriculum Topics

Characters:

- Jack – main character
- Mum – Jack's Mother
- Rob – Jack's Stepdad
- Nanna – Jack's Nanna
- Sammy – Jack's sister
- Anna – Jack's friend
- Christopher – Jack's friend
- Paul – Jack's Friend
- Becky - classmate
- Jasmin - classmate
- Mrs Lopez - teacher
- Mr Angelou - teacher
- Puppy – pet dog
- Ollie – pet dog
- Puss – pet cat
- Grandad – Nanna's late husband
- Hector – pet rat
- Ponto – potato onion experiment
- George Hamel – a previous bully and captain of the football team
- Winger Ratko – nasty classmate
- Maggie – classmate
- Leo – Rob's son

Reading and Viewing

The Reading and Viewing questions are designed to assess a student's comprehension of the text. Questions 1 to 3 are literal reflections of what has

occurred in each chapter. Questions 4 and 5 draw on the reader's inferential knowledge of the text, while question 6 is evaluative and requires students to think beyond the text. These questions are a useful comprehension assessment tool.

Visual Narrative

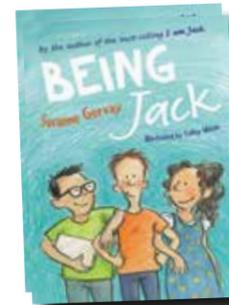
The visual narrative of this book comes in the form of drawn illustrations by Cathy Wilcox. These illustrations are found throughout the book and enhance both the literal interpretation of the story and the inferred understanding for the reader. The illustrations particularly aid the communication regarding loss and death. They depict both Grandad's closeness and absence. They are a major contributor to our understanding of the text and are well worth discussing with your class.

Before Reading

Speaking and Listening

Interact effectively in pairs and small groups. (EN2-1A)

Activity: Before reading the first chapter, students get into pairs and ask the other person everything they already know about the other stories in the "I am Jack," series. The pairs then join with another pair to share their combined prior knowledge.



Being Jack

Susanne Gervay

Chapter 1: Lights On!

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- What is the name of the family dog?
- What does Jack have for dinner?
- Who is Rob?
- Why does Jack change the light bulb instead of Mum?
- Why does Jack make the comment, "What an original name," when talking about Puppy?
- Explain the reasons why you think Jack's creation, Ponto, will or will not work?

Chapter 2: Clean Socks

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning (EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- What time does Jack wake up?
- What does Jack do before his paper run?
- What is the name of the teacher who tells Winger off?
- Why do Mum's eyes go all dopey when Rob

- offers to take Jack and Sammy to school?
- Why does Jack call Sammy's project a dog-elephant?
- List the ways Rob is being a good role model.
- Who in your life is a good role model? Why?

Chapter 3: Riding the Wave

Speaking and Listening

Students express their point of view EN2-1A

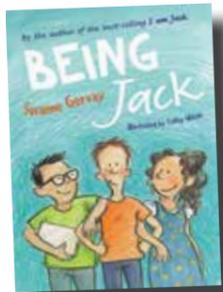
Activity: In pairs, students discuss what they think will happen in the story. After reading three chapters, students discuss their predictions.

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- What is the job that Jack and Rob need to complete before they can go surfing?
- Which tool reminds Jack of his Grandad?
- What special name did Grandad call Jack?
- Why did Jack say "Grandad. Grandad," when he saw the sea eagle?
- What do you think George Hamel did to Jack?
- The quote from Albert Einstein that is on the shed wall above the tool shadow board says,



Being Jack

Susanne Gervay

“Anyone who has ever made a mistake has never tried anything new.” Do you think this is true? Give one example from your own life to support your argument.

Illustration: See page 26. Draw students attention to the illustration. Why are the spanners different from each other?

Chapter 4: The World's Greatest Cook

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- Who did the second BBQ belong to?
- Why is Nanna rolling Christmas serviettes?
- What did Rob's apron have written on its front?
- What does everyone find funny about Rob's apron?
- Why does Jack think Rob shouldn't be using the BBQ?
- Do you think Jack's response to the BBQ exploding was appropriate or an over reaction? Why?

Thinking Imaginatively, Creatively and Interpretively

Respond to a text. Justify interpretations of a text. EN2-10C

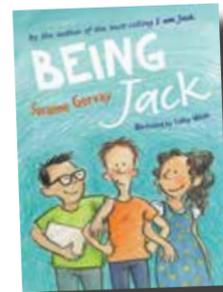
Activity: In groups of 3, role-play the scene when the BBQ explodes and Jack runs out to put out the fire. The characters for this scene are Mum, Rob and Jack. Perform the role-play within your group 3 times so that each person has a chance to be each character. Students then join another group, choose their favourite combination of roles and perform to the second group. Groups reflect back to each other positive feedback and contribute constructive comments about each performance.

Chapter 5: Hot Sausages

Speaking and Listening

Identify the purpose and audience of specific texts. Distinguish between different forms of English EN2-6B

Activity: On pages 33-34 is an online dialogue that occurs between Jack and his friends. Discuss the differences between this language and the paragraph before it.



Being Jack

Susanne Gervay

- What is the purpose of each section of the text?
- Why is it acceptable for words to be stretched or shortened?
- When do we use this in our own writing?
- What are the similarities in the messaged text and spoken dialogue?
- What are the differences between written conversation and verbal conversation?

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- Who came for lunch?
- What game is being played in the park?
- Who distracts Nanna from keeping score?
- Why does Jack drop the ball?
- Why does Rob have to wear the apron?
- Jack says, “I'm a funny guy,” shortly after Rob says, “I'm a good-lookin' bloke.” They both responded to comments made by others in a similar way. Why do you think that is?

Illustration: see page 39. Draw attention to the illustration. What happening? What occurred right before this picture? What happened right afterwards? How does the illustrator, Cathy Wilcox, create movement in this illustration?

Chapter 6: Red Socks

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

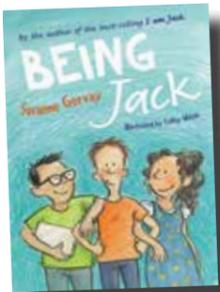
Activity

- What country do the Trans come from?
- What did Grandad do to receive medals?
- What is the big event happening at school for Jack?
- Why does Jack get a sick feeling when he sees George Hamel?
- Given their family history, is it surprising Jack and Christopher are friends? Why? Why not?
- What makes George Hamel a hero? Do you think he is a hero? Why?

Thinking Imaginatively, Creatively and Interpretively

Identify creative language features in imaginative texts that contribute to reader engagement. EN2-10C (ACELT 1605)

Activity: Discuss the ways the author has used a variety of language devices to create tension, pace and mood. How has Susanne Gervay kept your attention as a reader? Start a class list of language tools that are displayed so that students can draw on them when they are writing.



Being Jack

Susanne Gervay

Chapter 7: Games On

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- What are the names of the two teams playing the game?
- What does Christopher do with his glasses?
- What does Jack see through the lens of his camera?
- Why is Jack crouching instead of standing on the sideline?
- Why doesn't Jack think Hawkie's fine?
- The image of Coach is very descriptive. What picture does it paint of him? Describe it in your own words.

Chapter 8: Legends

Speaking and Listening

Use information to support and elaborate on a point of view. EN2-1A

Activity: After answering question six from the reading and viewing section, students share their interpretation and reasoning with the class.

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and

inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- What does Rob have for Jack?
- What book is Jack's class looking at?
- Who does Anna describe as her Mockingbird?
- Why isn't Jack in the mood to see Rob?
- Why doesn't Nanna look up when Jack tells a joke?
- How would you complete the task Mr Angelou sets the class?

"Now everyone get out your exercise books. I want you to write down the name of one person who you think is a mockingbird. It can be personal or historical or a public figure or whoever you like. Explain why you feel that person is a mockingbird." (p. 58.)

Chapter 9: Wee Puddles

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- What does Rob wear to protect himself from receiving third-degree-burns?
- What does Nil Desperandum mean?
- Who is Hector?
- Why does the dog flap need widening?



Being Jack

Susanne Gervay

- How does Jack feel about Leo?
- Why do you think Nil Desperandum is significant to Jack?

Chapter 10: Cliff Tops and Beaches

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- What does Jack want for his birthday?
- Why is Rob acting strange?
- What did Jack call Rob?
- Why can't Rob leave the sink?
- What does Anna know about what happened in the cricket match?
- When Leo is looking at Jack's picture wall they have a conversation. Jack and Leo have different reasons for feeling sad. What are the differences and similarities in their situations?

Thinking Imaginatively, Creatively and Interpretively

Use visual representations, including those digitally produced, to represent ideas, experience and information for different purposes and audiences. EN2-10C

Activity: Jack's photo wall is a snap shot of all the people he loves, using a skill he loves. It is a tribute. Discuss what a tribute is with the class. Have they ever heard of it before? Can they think of any other example of a tribute?

Using their own skills and passions, students create a tribute for someone or a series of people they love. They can use any form or medium. It is recommended that students sign off their plan with the teacher prior to commencing in order to guide students. This would be a great activity coming into Mothers or Fathers Day.

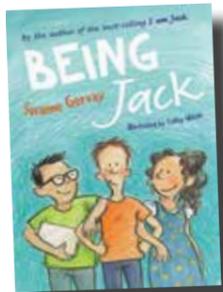
Illustration: see page, 70. Draw student's attention to the illustration. Ask your student's to tell you what they think this picture is telling you about the story. Who is in it? What are they doing? How does it add to your understanding of what has happened in the story?

Chapter 11: Bags Can Fly

Speaking and Listening

Listen and contribute to discussions to share ideas. Use information to support and elaborate on a point of view. EN2-1A

Activity: Divide students into pairs. Give the pairs the following topic to debate. Jack should take the video of the scrum to Mr Angelou.



Being Jack

Susanne Gervay

The student in each pair whose name is first in the alphabet is arguing that he should take the video to Mr Angelou, while the remaining student is arguing against that he shouldn't. Give 30 seconds thinking time for students to prepare their arguments. Each student has 30 seconds to explain their reasoning to their partner. At the teacher's instruction, the students take turns in rebutting and arguing their position.

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- Where is Leo going?
- What are the details of Jack's birthday party?
- What did Jack do when they found Christopher's bag up the flagpole?
- What does it mean to get 'hammered' by a wave?
- Why does Christopher have to fix his bag?
- What do you think Jack should do with the video footage of the scrum?

Chapter 12: Ping Ping

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and

inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- What do Christopher and Jack find so funny when they are watching the film footage?
- How does Christopher want to handle the situation with Winger and Jasmin?
- What tag does Jack have on his bag?
- Why do Christopher and Jack swap bags?
- What do you know about where Christopher lives?
- Why do you think Jack likes to fix things?

Expressing Themselves

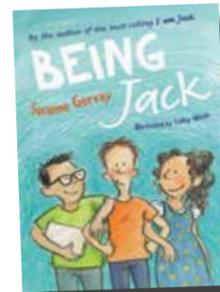
Discuss how people from different cultures may respond differently to characters, actions and events. EN2-11D

Activity: Do you think Jack will be helpful or unhelpful to Christopher? Using helpful and unhelpful as your headings, create a T chart to explore the reasons that support each point of view.

Writing and Representing

Express a point of view for a particular purpose in writing, with supporting arguments. EN2-7B

Activity: Once the chart is complete, students write a persuasive text to consolidate and apply their ideas.



Being Jack

Susanne Gervay

Chapter 13: Strategy day

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

1. What does Jack buy from the cake stall?
2. Why do Christopher and Jack's teeth turn green?
3. Why doesn't Mr Angelou watch the film?
4. Why do you think Jack likes Anna?
5. Why does Jack think Christopher won't like the scrum footage?
6. Where would you look for Jack's father?

Chapter 14: Mad Saturday

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

1. What is Nanna in charge of?
2. What is Mad Saturday referring to?
3. Why is Anna helping to make the invitations?

4. Why does Jack think Rob has left him stranded?
5. Describe what the invitations look like.
6. Why is the grass, "screaming for help?" (p. 102)

Thinking Imaginatively, Creatively and Interpretively

Use visual representations to present ideas for different purposes. EN2-10C

Activity: Design and make your own invitations to Jack's birthday party.

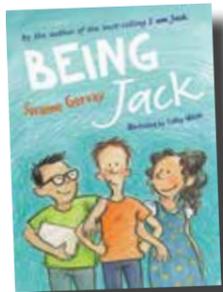
Chapter 15: The Eagle

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

1. What is significant about today?
2. Where does Jack go with Nanna and Samantha?
3. What does everyone do when they reach Grandad's grave?
4. Why do they put cookies out for Grandad?
5. Why does Jack think Grandad is an eagle?
6. Why do you think zooming in would give Jack the feeling of flying?



Being Jack

Susanne Gervay

Chapter 16: Walk in my shoes

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- Why didn't Christopher come out to play football with Jack?
- What does everyone play at lunchtime?
- What does Jack dream about?
- What happened to Christopher's glasses?
- What motivates Jack to do something to help Christopher?
- Why is Christopher so afraid? Use all the information you know so far.

Expressing Themselves

Draw connections between themselves and the worlds of texts, and share responses with others. EN2-11D

Activity

Arrange students into groups and ask them to find a space in the room where they can sit in a circle. Guide the groups through a discussion of the following questions.

- Have you ever seen someone being bullied on a

- TV show? What happened?
- Have you ever seen a friend being bullied?
- What was it like for them?
- How did it stop?
- If you saw it again would you behave differently?
- Have you ever been bullied?
- Have you been able to stop it?
- What are some of the things Jack did to stop himself or Christopher being bullied?
- How does it feel to be bullied?
- What can you do to help a friend or yourself when being bullied?
- How can you stop yourself from bullying other people?

Each group selects a representative to summarise and report back to the class.

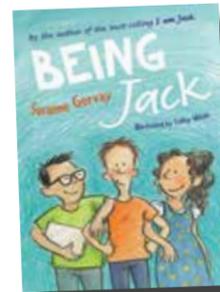
Chapter 17: The Shoebox

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- What does Jack take photos of before school?
- What is in the box Nanna gave Jack?
- What is Jack's Mum wearing on her head in the wedding photo?
- Why will Jack show Mr Angelou the whole film?



Being Jack

Susanne Gervay

- How did Nanna know something was worrying Jack?
- Why did Jack share all his worries with Nanna?

Chapter 18: Where's Four-Eyes?

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- Who is making fun of Christopher?
- Where does Jack take George Hamel to have their conversation?
- What does George promise to do about Winger and Christopher?
- How do students keep their phones hidden at school?
- Why is Jack trying to talk to George Hamel?
- When Jack is talking to George Hamel, he uses a few strategies to help him through the difficult conversation. What are these strategies? Have you ever had to use them yourself? Give an example.

Thinking Imaginatively, Creatively and Interpretively

Use visual representations, including those digitally produced, to represent ideas, experience and information for different purposes and audiences.

EN2-10C

Activity:

Create a visual representation of a tool kit that you could give to a person who is being bullied. Include strategies, encouragements, and truths about how they can expect to be treated.

Illustration: see page 130. Draw student's attention to the illustration.

At the start of chapter 18 there is an illustration of a blank face with glasses. Ask the students what the connection is between the illustration and the title of the chapter. See if you can find any other illustrations that offer a similar literal interpretation of the text.

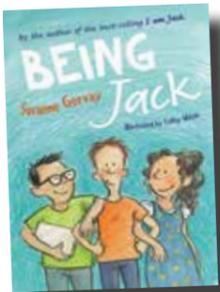
Chapter 19: Even If You Don't Win, How Can You Lose?

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- Where is Jack's Dad?
- What does Jack do after school?
- What does Jack's Mum come home with from



Being Jack

Susanne Gervay

Suzie's Super Discount Store?

- Why does Jack pace across his bedroom?
- How does Jack's conversation with Nanna help him to make the decision to call his Dad?
- How do you think Jack's actions will affect Christopher?

Chapter 20: Plans Afoot

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- Who is going on the trip to Genoa Caves?
- What are Jack's Mum and Rob doing while the others are away?
- What did Nanna bring with her on the trip?
- Why is the view out the train window a photographer's heaven?
- What does Jack mean, "Nanna must have a sixth sense?" (p. 147)
- Do you agree that Jack should keep this trip to visit his Dad a secret from his Mum? Why? Why not?

Chapter 21: We're a Team

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and

inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

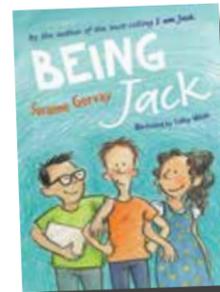
- What does Samantha think Jack is doing while she and Nanna are on the tour of the caves?
- Where does Jack actually go while Samantha and Nanna do a tour?
- Who does the smaller bike belong to?
- What are stalactites?
- How is the landscape in Genoa Caves different to that of Jack's home?
- Seeing his Dad was a very brave thing for Jack to do. What are the other times Jack has shown he is brave?

Writing and Representing

Plan, compose and review imaginative texts. EN2-2A Understand how a range of language features can shape readers' understandings of subject matter. EN2-7B

Activity

- Discuss Jack's visit to see his Dad with the class. Discuss what it might have been like for Jack to see his Dad. Review all things we know about how Jack feels about his Dad.
- Ask students to write a letter as Jack, to his Dad, describing what it was like to see him. Encourage students to plan their letter and use language that conveys both thought and feeling. Students are to use at least one simile and one metaphor in their letter.
- Discuss how language devices such as



Being Jack

Susanne Gervay

metaphors, similes and high modality words and phrases can influence and change the mood and tone of a text.

Chapter 22: Endless Summer

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- Who messaged Jack?
- What decorations have been used to prepare for Jack's birthday?
- What does Anna give Jack for his Birthday?
- What does it mean, "Leo's slotted in?"
- Why does Jack hope Anna likes his shirt?
- Why doesn't Jack's Dad feel like a dad? What do you think could happen to help improve their relationship?

Chapter 23: Thirteen

Reading and Viewing

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning. EN2-4A (ACELY1680, ACELY1692)

Activity

- What role does Christopher have at Jack's party?
- What sort of cake did Jack have at his birthday party?
- Who arrived first at Jack's party?
- What makes talk, girl talk?
- What made the party a success?
- What makes, "being Jack," OK?

Questions for reading and discussion:

The questions for reading and discussion are integrated into the teaching and learning activities.

Bibliography

New NSW English Syllabus
http://www.harpercollins.com.au/authors/50009323/Susanne_Gervay/index.aspx
http://www.cathywilcox.com.au/Cathy_Wilcox/Welcome.html

About the author of the notes

Rebekah Stanton (Bachelor of Education – Primary) is a teacher, a passionate reader and a believer that books are the gateway to growing the imagination. She is the Creative Director of mybabymoments.com.au and also runs her own book club. Rebekah is a firm believer that no one is ever too old to be read to. She is married to Matt and together they have a wonderful daughter, Bonnie.