

**ABC BOOKS/ HARPERCOLLINS TEACHERS NOTES**

**TITLE: MR BEAR BRANCHES AND THE CLOUD CONUNDRUM**

**WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY: TERRI ROSE BAYNTON**

**TEACHERS NOTES BY ROBYN SHEAHAN-BRIGHT**

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## INTRODUCTION SUMMARY

Mr Bear Branches is a thinker. He likes to read about unusual subjects such as 'physics, pterodactyls and the biology of amoebae'.

His friend Lintfrey Longfellow is a dreamer. He's perfectly happy with simple things, like chasing pigeons.

But the two friends love walking and talking together and most of all they love to lie in the grass and watch the clouds ...

One day Lintfrey decides that he wants to lie on top of the clouds.

And Mr Bear Branches has a conundrum. How can he make his friend's wish come true?

This is a delightfully whimsical story for young readers about dreams, friendship and the wonder of the natural world.

## INSPIRATION BEHIND THE BOOK

The idea for this story originated from the disappointment that I felt at a young age upon hearing you could not sit in the clouds. I was often in airplanes as a child and looking down upon the clouds was my favourite part of the whole experience. They always look so perfect for playing on. So when I discovered the truth, it was quite a blow. I wanted to capture that in a story and reveal that all was not lost; sometimes the real world can be as magical as that of your childhood dreams.

## THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

This book can be used in a range of subjects with relevance to a variety of themes and topics in the classroom.

## LANGUAGE LITERACY

- **Story structure is important.** This story is made up of exposition, problem and resolution. Discuss these three aspects of narrative structure with your students.

**Activity:** Mr Bear Branches and Lintfrey enjoy spending time together. Write another story about them, using this structure.

**Activity:** Invite students to create a 'Story Pyramid' by answering simple questions about the book. For guidelines see 'Story Pyramid' *CanTeach*. <<http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/novel10.html>>

- The **choice of words** in a story is important too, and writers make use of various **literary devices** to achieve different effects.

**Activity:** Identify any examples of **alliteration** in this text. (e.g. Cloud Conundrum; plump pillows; barely blinked; tender toes; cramped calves etc.) Have fun too, making up **alliterative names** like 'Bear Branches' and 'Lintfrey Longfellow'.

**Discussion Point:** Find some examples of strong imagery in this written text and discuss other ways in which the image might have been expressed. e.g. 'watching a tortoise-shaped cloud plod across the sky'.

[See also **Blackline Masters 2, 6 and 8.**]

## VISUAL LITERACY

- Picture books can be **landscape, portrait or square** in format or shape. This book is **landscape-shaped**. In picture books a story is told by turning the pages much as a film works in narration, by using a storyboard of connected actions and effects.

**Activity:** How would you use the double page spread to tell the story you wrote above? Make up a storyboard for the visual text. [See **Blackline Master 5** for an outline to use.]

- **Every part of a book is important in its overall design, including the cover, the title page, and the endpapers** at the back and front of the book.

**Discussion Point:** Why has the artist chosen the images on the front and back endpapers? What do they refer to in the story?

**Activity:** Design your own cover for this book.

- **The images are not in four colours as many picture books are, but in two colours – red and brown – on black line drawings.** This gives the book a distinct 'look', rather like books published in the past, before printing technology became advanced enough to use the four colour process.

**Discussion Point:** How does the 'look' of the book echo the story and message of the narrative? [See also **Blackline Master 3 and 4.**]

**Discussion Point:** What art medium has the artist used in this book?

- The **font** or typeface used in this book is a hand-written one.

**Discussion Point:** How does this enhance the look of the book as well?

**Activity:** **Test your students' observation skills** by having them identify things in these pictures. [See also **Blackline Master 8.**]

## CREATIVE ARTS

- **This is a book which might be used in a range of creative activities including craft, dance, music and drama.**

**Activity:** Make a hand puppet of a bear. [See **Blackline Master 7.**]

**Activity:** Create a **diorama** in a box using cotton wool for clouds, and create two stick figures to represent Mr Bear and Lintfrey sitting on their picnic blanket.

**Activity:** Choose some **music** and make up a '**cloud dance**' which expresses the feelings of the two friends as they watch the clouds above.

**Activity:** Act out a scene based on the story you wrote in **Language Literacy** above.

## SOSE

There are **themes** relative to SOSE studies which might be explored in this text:

- **Friendship**

**Discussion Point:** Mr Bear Branches and Lintfrey love to chat about things which interest them. How can you tell that these two characters are friends? What do friends do together? What do friends do for each other?

**Activity:** Write a story about something your friend has done for you.

- **Dreams and Imagination**

**Discussion Point:** What is the difference between a dream and something you imagine? Do you imagine things which are fantastic? (e.g. Becoming a fairy.) Or do you imagine things which are realistic. (e.g. Going to visit Movie World.)

**Activity:** Encourage students to write down a dream or something they imagine they would like to do. [See **Blackline Master 9.**]

- **Problem-Solving**

**Discussion Point:** Mr Bear confronts a problem which seems insurmountable. But he works out a way to make Lintfrey's dream a reality. Discuss problems and how you might confront them using various examples. (e.g. You want to play with a particular toy which belongs to your brother, and which he doesn't want to share with you. How do you resolve this problem?)

There are also **topics** relative to SOSE studies which might be explored in this text:

- **Cloud Formation**

**Discussion Point:** Mr Bear Branches tells Lintfrey Longfellow about how clouds are formed e.g. Evaporation, condensation, etc. Discuss the process of cloud formation with your students.

**Activity:** Clouds can tell us a lot about the weather. Discuss the various changes in colour and shape which occur during different weather events. [See also **Blackline Master 1** for this activity.]

**Activity:** What are the common types of clouds called? See 'Clouds' *Web Weather for Kids* <<http://eo.ucar.edu/webweather/cloud3.html>>

**Activity:** Do some 'cloud appreciation' and go cloud watching with your class!

- **Bears**

**Discussion Point:** How many types of bears do you know of? Research some of them and then discuss the differences between them. [See also **Blackline Master 6.**]

**Activity:** Write **poems** about bears. Invite your students to write an **acrostic** or a **haiku** poem about a bear.

**Activity:** Read other books about bears. [See **Bibliography** for titles.]  
[See also **Further Creative Activities** below.]

- **Mountains**

**Discussion Point:** When you climb to the top of a mountain how does your view of the world change? What might you see which you can't see from the ground? How does being at such a height change the perspective and the size of objects?

**Activity:** Take students on a class excursion to a nearby hill or mountain. Discuss the things they can see, including the clouds.

## **BACKGROUND TO THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR**

**Terri Rose Baynton** lives in the beautiful seaside town of Waihi Beach, New Zealand, among good friends, warm waves and a menagerie of animals. She is a scriptwriter and storyliner for children's television, working with Weta Productions on *Jane and the Dragon* and *The WotWots*, alongside her father, *WotWot* creator Martin Baynton.

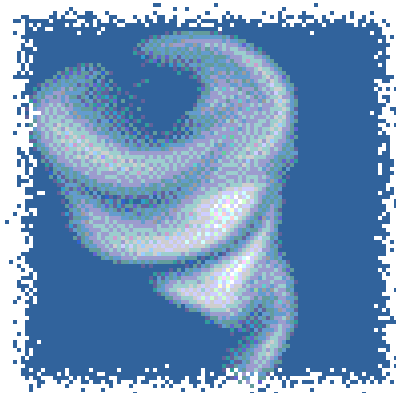
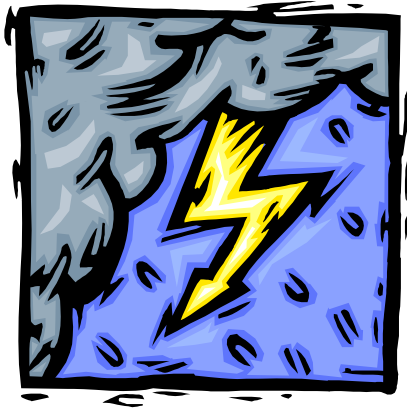
**Activity:** Try to find out more about the author on the internet.

**Activity:** Investigate the medium she works in, and how she has used it.

## **FURTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITIES**

- **Organise a display of books about bears** in the classroom, and display some of the stories, images and objects the students have created in **Language and Literacy**, **Visual Literacy** and **Creative Arts** above. [See **Bibliography** below.]
- **Organise a Program of 'Bear Activities'** based on the book. You might draw inspiration from websites such as 'Bear Activities' *Kids Zone* <<http://www.kidzone.ws/lw/bears/activities.htm>> or from the **Blackline Masters** included in these notes.
- **Find some songs or nursery rhymes about bears and have fun learning them.** e.g. 'Teddy Bear's Picnic Song'; 'Going on a Bear Hunt'; 'Round and Round the Garden'.
- **Have a Bears' Picnic Day** at your school and invite people along to a **Party!** Bring your favourite teddy bear or bear toy to school to join in the fun.
- Create a **Book Trailer** based on the book. See 'Book Trailers' *The Learning Place Ipswich District Teacher Librarian Network* <<http://learningplace.com.au/deliver/content.asp?pid=41987>>

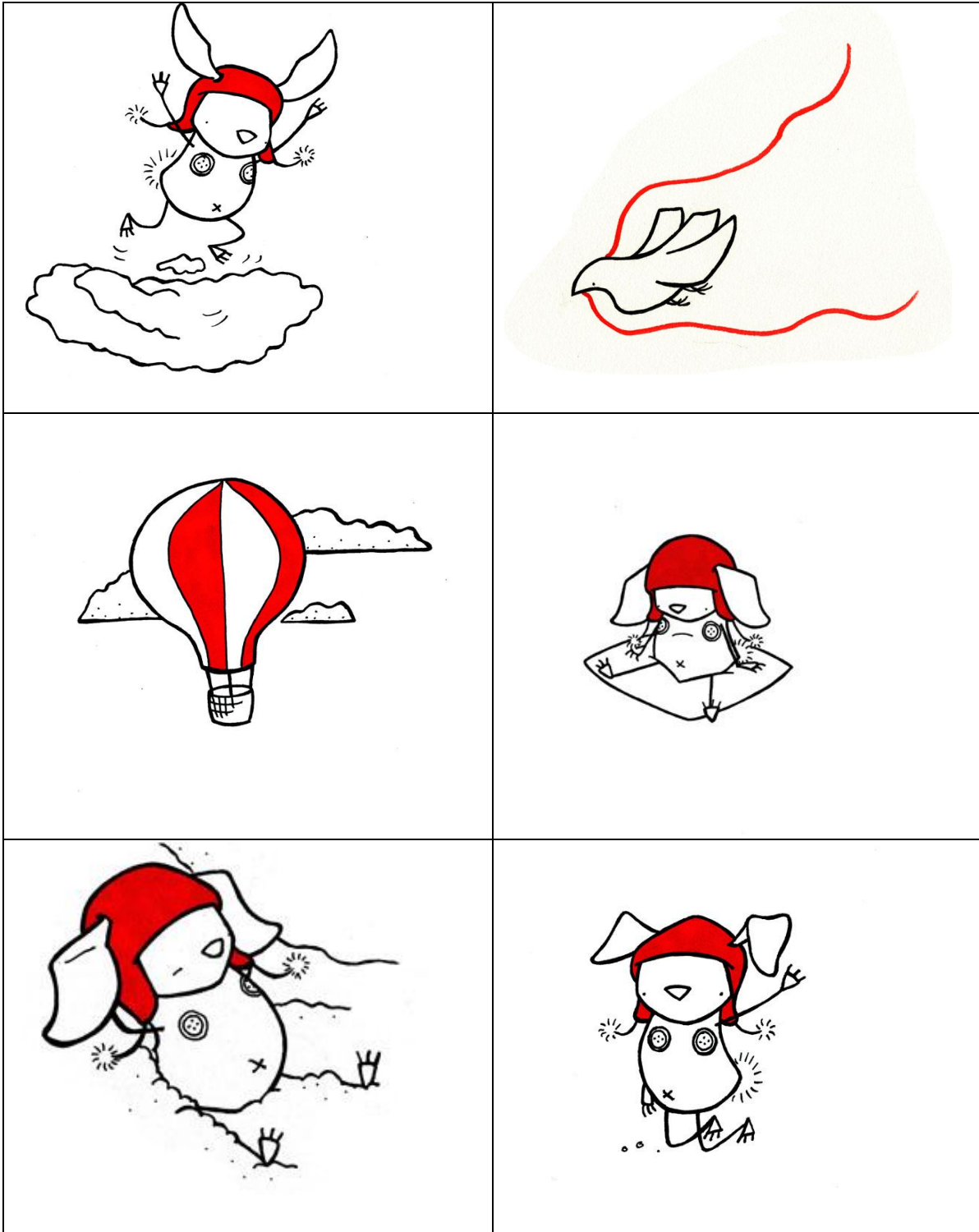
**BLACKLINE MASTER 1: WRITE A 'WEATHER WORD' UNDER EACH CLOUD**



**Answers: Rain, Sunshine, Lightning, Snow, Rainbow, Cyclone.**

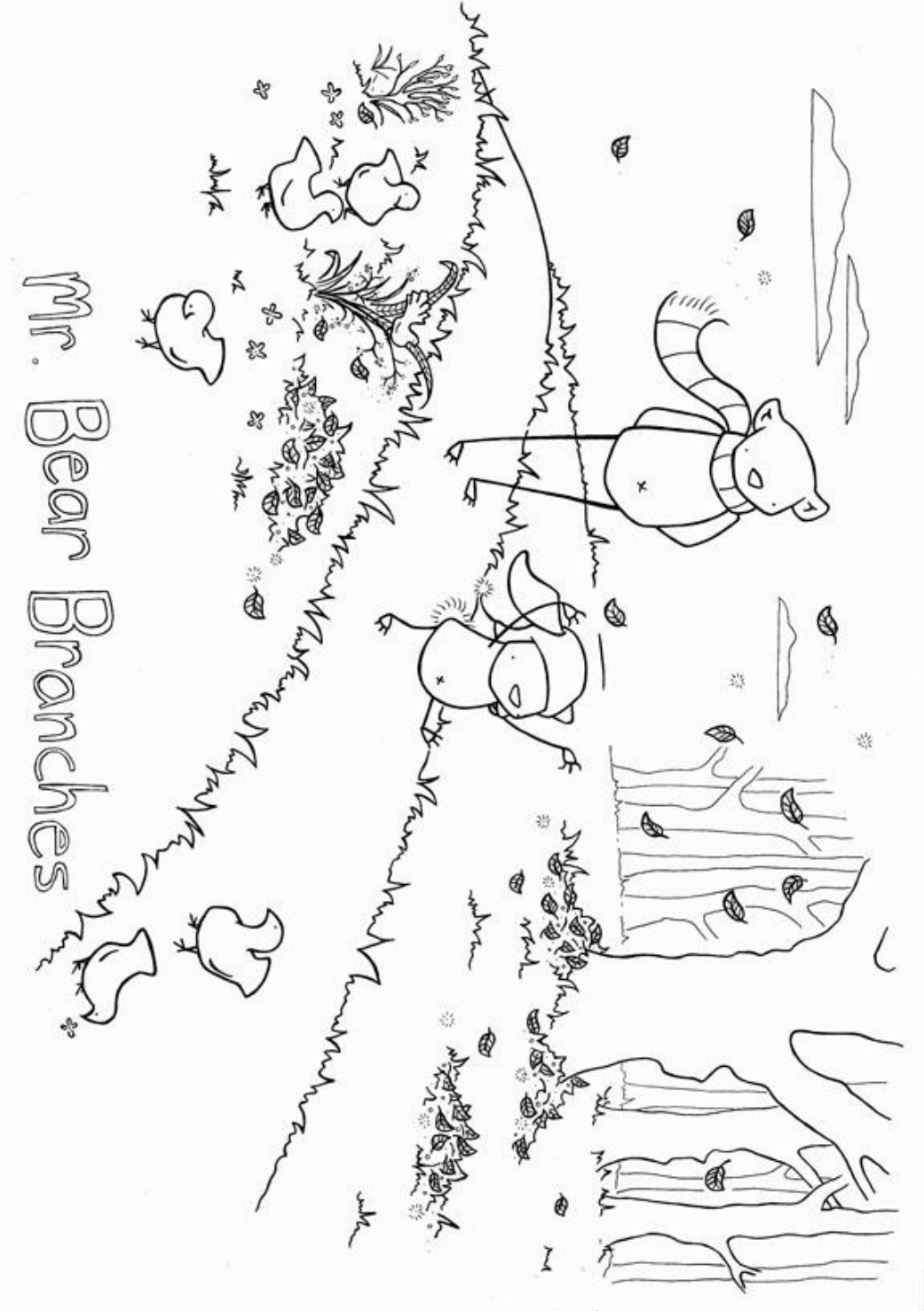
**BLACKLINE MASTER 2: UP, UP AND AWAY!**

**A. Match these 'doing' words to the pictures: Sleeping/ Sitting/ Flying/ Kneeling/ Ballooning/ Bouncing. B. Then make four colour copies of this sheet of images on a heavier stock of paper and cut them out to make a simple pack of 24 playing cards to play games such as 'Snap' or 'Fish' with.**



**BLACKLINE MASTER 3: COLOURING IN**

**Colour in this picture of Mr Bear Branches and Lintfrey Longfellow walking.**







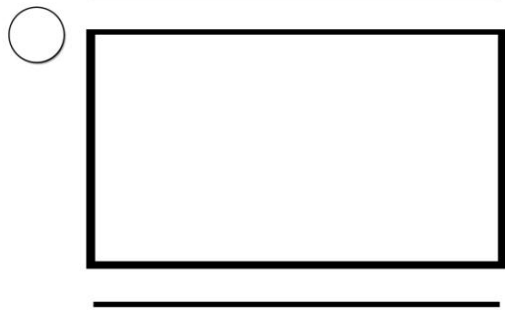
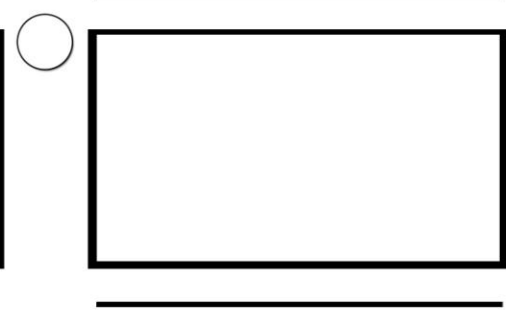
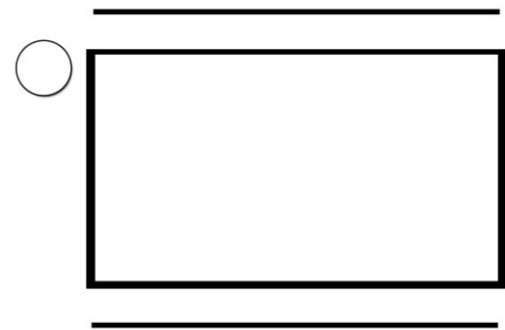
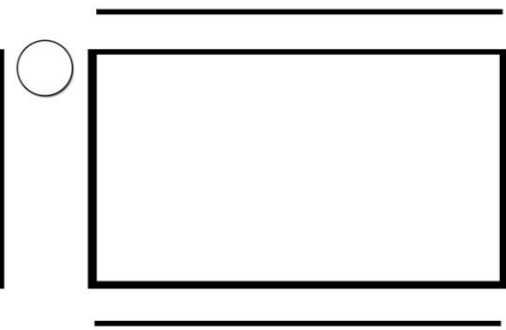
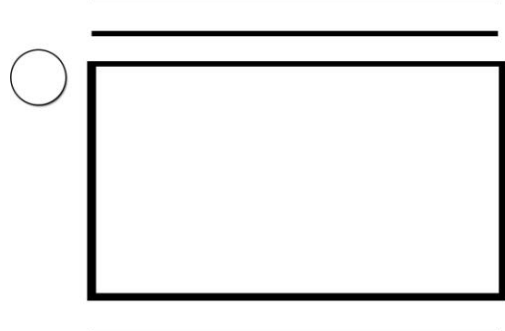
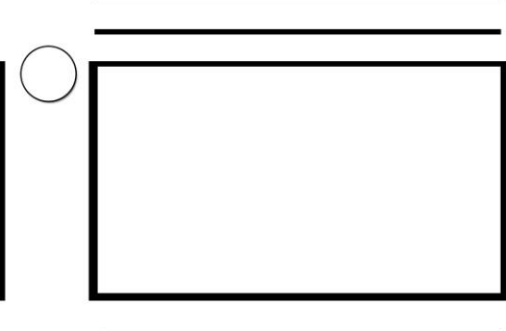
**BLACKLINE MASTER 4: COLOURING IN**

Colour in this picture of Mr Bear Branches and Lintfrey Longfellow on the mountain.



**BLACKLINE MASTER 5: CREATE A STORYBOARD**

Print this out and give your students a copy on which to draw thumbnail sketches, and to write the text below the images. (You could also enlarge it to an A3 size to give them more room to work on.) Invite students to use the simple story about Mr Bear Branches which they wrote for Language Literacy, and then draw each scene in the boxes with the text below.

UTOPIAN PRODUCTIONS STORYBOARD TEMPLATE

Image from: <[http:// utopian.flipbrothers.com](http://utopian.flipbrothers.com)>

**BLACKLINE MASTER 6: WHICH BEAR IS THIS?**

A. Write the word which describes the type of bear it is, beside each of these pictures. Then make up a sentence including this type of bear, which gives some indication of what or where it is from.

	1.			4.
	2.			5.
	3.			6.

Answers: 1. Teddy. 2. Polar. 3. Grizzly. 4. Panda. 5. Sun. 6. American Black Bear.

B. Unscramble these anagrams of the letters in the names of famous story book or television bears:

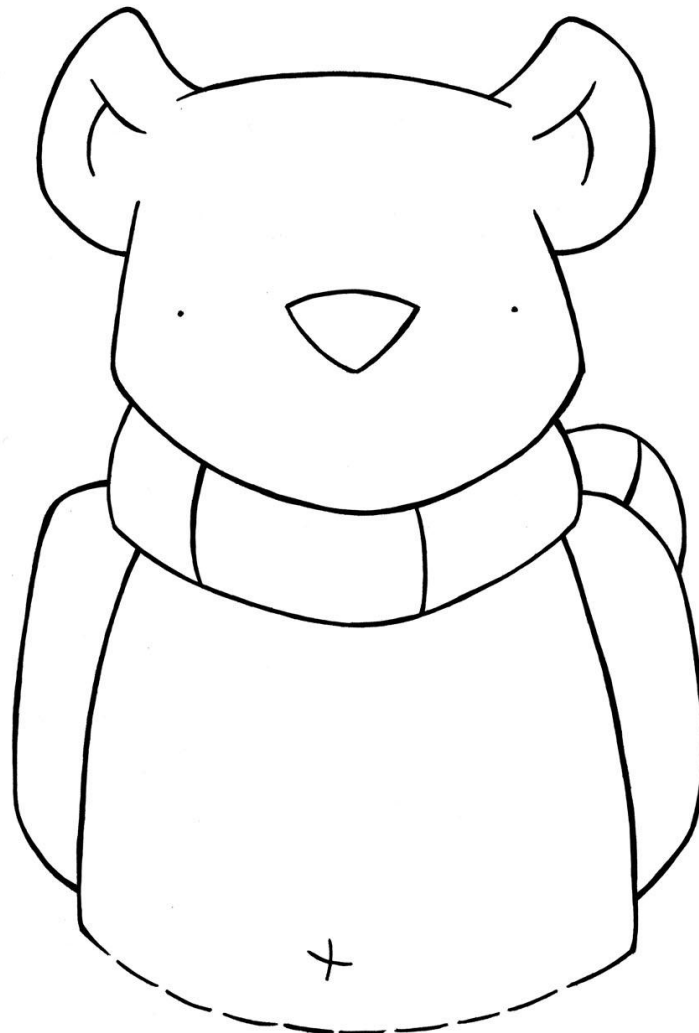
piwhneteonoh	lbeogary	earebnsatinbrse	upeybmrheahrb	aintopngdbedar
3 words	2 words	2 words	3 words	2 words

Answers: Winnie the Pooh/ Yogi Bear/ Berenstain Bears/ Humphrey B. Bear/ Paddington Bear.

## **BLACKLINE MASTER 7: MAKE A MR BEAR BRANCHES HAND PUPPET**

Enlarge this image on a photocopier and then draw around it leaving about 3cm as a border. Cut it out and lie it on a piece of plain fabric which has been doubled over. Carefully cut out the two pieces of fabric. Then pin them together and sew a loose hemline all around it before turning it inside out. (Cut ear shapes out of felt and pin them into the hem before you begin.) Then decorate the face, by stitching features onto it, add a scarf, attach a small stick to his hand as a walking stick, and you have a puppet!

Mr. Bear Branches



**BLACKLINE MASTER 8: TEST STUDENTS' OBSERVATIONS & COMPREHENSION**

**QUIZ**

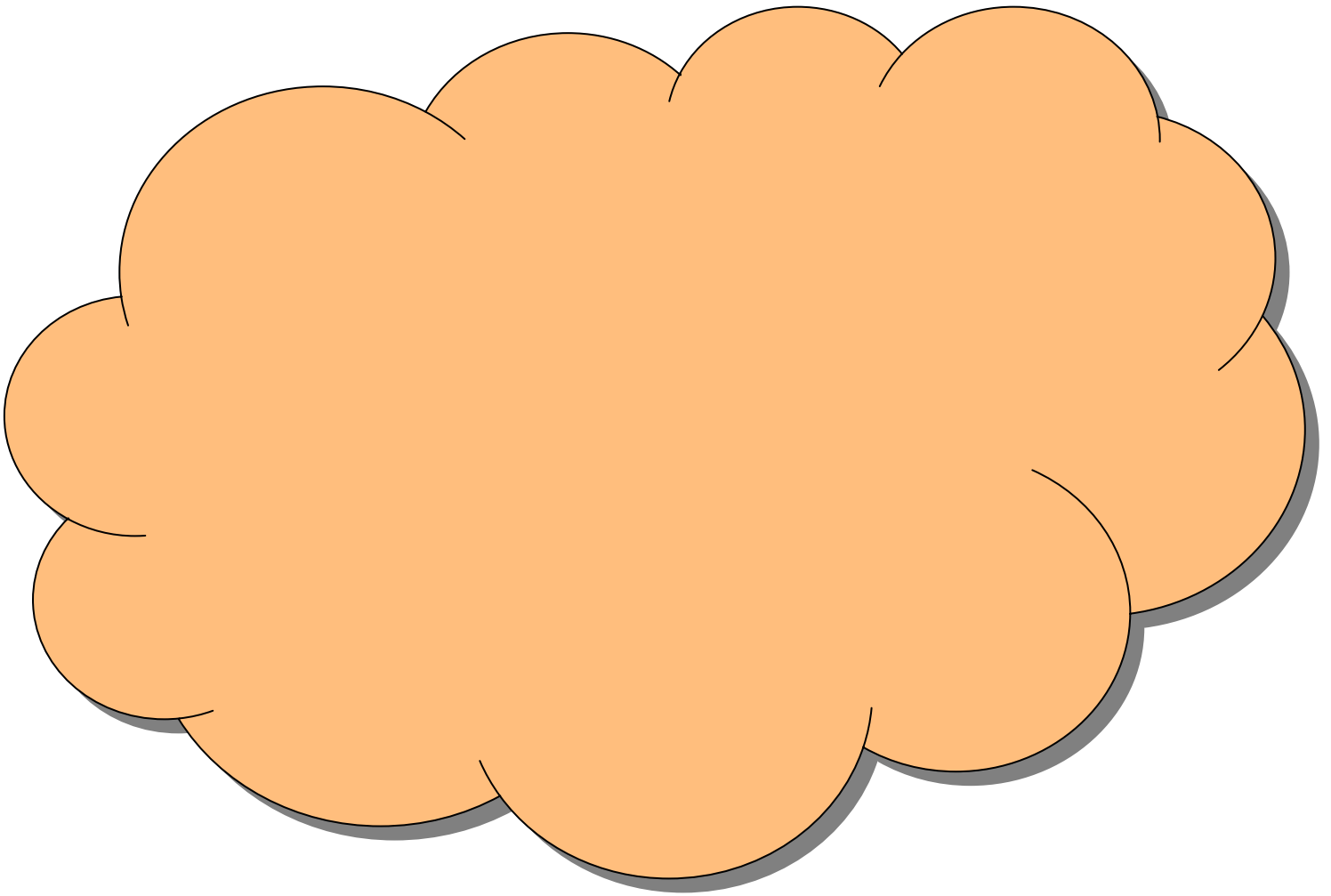
1. What sort of prehistoric flying reptile is depicted on the inside endpaper?
2. How many pigeons are walking behind the two friends on the title page?
3. What does Mr Bear Branches pack for their journey to the mountain?
4. What does Mr Bear Branches carry in his right arm as he marches to the mountain?
5. What are the things depicted on the front endpapers and the back endpapers?
6. What are the two main colours used in this book?
7. Mr Bear wears a scarf; what does Lintfrey Longfellow wear?
8. What is a conundrum?
9. What tall building can you see in the town as the two friends walk away from it?
10. On the right hand page after the title page how many butterflies can you see?

**Answers: 1. Pterodactyl. 2. Three. 3. A bag containing a blanket, two pillows and a flask of peppermint tea. 4. A walking stick. 5. Buttons, leaves. 6. Red and brown. 7. A red hat. 8. A difficult problem. 9. A clock tower. 10. Six.**



**BLACKLINE MASTER 9: CLOUD THOUGHTS!**

Discuss dreams and hopes with your students. Then ask each of them to write a short wish or dream on the cloud below. Cut them out and paste them onto chart paper to display in the classroom.



## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **Non-Fiction**

Gleeson, Libby *Making Picture Books III* by Armin Greder, Scholastic, 2003.

Watts, Frances David *Parsley Rabbit's Book about Books III* by David Legge, ABC Books, 2007.

### **Picture Books**

Allen, Pamela *Bertie and the Bear*, Puffin, 1989.

Gleeson, Libby *The Great Bear III* by Armin Greder, Scholastic, 1999.

Krauss, Ruth *Bears III* by Maurice Sendak, HarperCollins, 2005.

Martin, Bill Jr *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? III* by Eric Carle, Henry Holt & Co., 1996.

Shanahan, Lisa Emma *Bear and Chook by the Sea. III* by Emma Quay, Hachette, 2009.

Rosen, Michael *We're Going on a Bear Hunt III* by Helen Oxenbury, Simon & Schuster, 1989.

Waddell, Martin *Can't You Sleep Little Bear? III* by Barbara Firth, Candlewick, 2002.

### **Websites for Activities**

'Bear Activities' *Kids Zone* <<http://www.kidzone.ws/lw/bears/activities.htm>>

'Book Trailers' *The Learning Place Ipswich District Teacher Librarian Network* <<http://learningplace.com.au/deliver/content.asp?pid=41987>>

'Clouds' *Enchanted Learning* <<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/astronomy/planets/earth/clouds/>>

'Clouds' *Kid Cyber* <<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/astronomy/planets/earth/clouds/>>

'Clouds' *Web Weather for Kids* <<http://eo.ucar.edu/webweather/cloud3.html>>

'Story Pyramid' *CanTeach*. <<http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/novel10.html>>

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES**

**Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright** operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services and has been widely published on writing for young people, Australian fiction, and publishing history. She is a member of the IBBY Australia committee and the Board of the Australian Society of Authors, and chairs a number of literary judging panels including the Prime Minister's Literary Awards (Children and Young Adults). She was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld) Branch's biennial Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland in 2011.