



OMNIBUS BOOKS

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| Category | Picture Book |
| Title | Silly Squid! |
| Author | Janeen Brian |
| Illustrator | Cheryll Johns |
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Previous publications

Janeen Brian

Columbia Sneezes! (Omnibus Books, 2008)
Silly Galah! (Omnibus Books, 2001)
What's in the River? (Omnibus Solos, 2001)
What's Wrong, Aram?
(Omnibus Solos, 2001)
Duck Down (Omnibus Solos, 1997)
Dog Star (Omnibus Solos, 1997)
Rocky (Omnibus Rippers, 1997)

Cheryll Johns

Meet the Monsters (Omnibus Books, 2004)
Silly Galah! (Omnibus Books, 2001)

Teachers' Notes

Silly Squid!

Poems about the Sea

Written by Janeen Brian
Illustrated by Cheryll Johns

Teachers' Notes by Rae Carlyle

Contents

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Introduction..... | 2 |
| About the Author | 2 |
| About the Illustrator..... | 2 |
| Activities | 3 |

Introduction

Filled with rhymes exploring aspects of a wide variety of sea creatures, *Silly Squid!* takes the reader on a tour of the ocean and its denizens in a light-hearted fashion that both intrigues and informs the young reader. The vibrant illustrations showcase the featured creature on every page, while the background images bring to life the different marine environments in which they dwell, from coastal shallows and coral reefs to oceanic depths. Bordering every page is a snippet of information about the creature that is the main character of the poem, making this book not just an enjoyment of verse and colour, but a factual resource for young readers as well.

About the Author

Janeen Brian is an award-winning author of picture books, short stories, poetry, non-fiction, short fiction and novels for young people and the educational market. She grew up in Brighton, South Australia, graduated as a primary teacher and taught for over twenty years before becoming a full-time writer. Janeen has written over 80 books both in trade and educational, and in genres ranging from picture books to poetry, short fiction, non-fiction and novels. Many of her books have been translated and published overseas. She also writes for national and overseas children's magazines and has over 200 poems, plays, stories or articles published. For more information about the author, please visit her website: www.janeenbrian.com

Janeen Brian has a Facebook author page.

About the Illustrator

From a very early age Cheryll Johns has loved drawing. With her twin sister she spent many hours with pencils, textas and paper, 'avoiding anything to do with sport'. Born in Stirling, in the Adelaide Hills, Cheryll describes her school days as being 'a blur of continual moving around (being an RAAF brat)'. She credits the ABC's pencil-nosed puppet Mr Squiggle as being a major influence in her life at that time.

Since graduating with Bachelor of Design (Illustration) in 1994, Cheryll Johns has concentrated on advertising work, although more recently she was involved in designing, laying out and illustrating popular children's magazines. Her first picture book, *Silly Galah!*, is a perennial favourite. She lives in Adelaide with her family.

Activities

English

As a class, discuss your experience of the book and the poems.

- 1) Which is your favourite poem, and why?
- 2) Which is your favourite sea creature mentioned in the book, and why?
- 3) Which is your favourite fact from the page borders?
- 4) Why do you think that the author included the facts as well as the poems?
- 5) What facts are there in the poems? Choose one of the poems and in your own words share a fact about the creature that you have learnt from the verse.

While all of the poems in *Silly Squid!* use rhyme, there are a range of different rhyming patterns in the poems, and Janeen Brian has used a variety of different formats and techniques in her verses. As a class, explore some of the aspects of rhyme and rhythm in these poems and how they affect our understanding and enjoyment of verse.

- 6) In the **Leafy Sea Dragon** poem, identify which words rhyme.
 - What is the pattern in the rhyming words?
 - Do you know of any other poems that you have heard or read with a similar pattern?
 - How do the **Leafy Sea Dragon** verses differ in pattern from a limerick?
- 7) The **Stingray** poem uses repetition as well as rhyme.
 - Why do you think the author chose to do this?
 - What impression does it give to the reader?
 - Look at the words that repeat – what do they have in common with each other?
 - What other words could the author have chosen that would have the same effect?
 - What sort of repeating words would you choose if the poem was about you? Why?
- 8) The **Mudskipper**, **Whale**, and **Squid** poems are all two verses long, with four lines in each verse. Compare the rhyme patterns used in these three poems. Some points to discuss are:
 - How are these three poems similar?
 - How are these three poems different?
 - Is one of these poems an 'odd one out'? Why/why not?
 - Which of these poems has a rhyme in the middle of a line?
 - How do the different rhyme schemes change the feel of the poem?
 - Which is your favourite of these poems?

- 9) As a class discuss the **Shark** poem.
- What is the rhyme scheme used?
 - What is the rhythm?
 - How has the poet given it this rhythm?
 - Why do you think this rhythm was chosen for the shark?
 - Would this rhythm have been appropriate for another animal?
 - If you set this poem to music, what sort do you think would work?
- 10) As a class write a poem about the ocean. Vote on the students' favourite poem in the book and use a similar format. Write the poem in large letters on a big piece of cardboard. Have students draw pictures of ocean creatures and plants and place the pictures around the edge of the poem to make a classroom wall display.

Creative Activities

- 11) Make an ocean scene collage. Glue real sand to your paper or cardboard for the sea-floor, and use shredded crepe paper for the water. Cut out weeds, coral, and animal shapes from stiffer coloured cardboard and glue them on top of your ocean background.
- 12) Find a recording of dolphin or whale song on the internet and listen to it. Can you make your own whale song or dolphin sounds? As a class use percussion instruments, whistles, and your voices to make dolphin, whale song, and watery ocean sounds as background music, while a class member or the teacher reads or recites the dolphin and whale poems. Perform your act for another class or at assembly.
- 13) Look at the shells in the illustrations. What different patterns can you see in the different shells? Use thick finger paints to create an artwork with shell-pattern designs in it.
- 14) In the illustration for the archerfish the sky is pink. Have you ever seen a pink sky? When would you be likely to see it? Use chalk pastels to create an artwork where the sky is shades of pink.
- 15) Draw and colour pictures of crabs, fish, squid, dolphins and other sea creatures on stiff cards. Cut out the pictures and attach to long sticks to make puppets. As a class paint or draw an ocean scene backdrop for a puppet theatre. Use the puppets to act out some of the poems in *Silly Squid!* You can perform your puppet show for another class, at assembly, or for a group of parents.
- 16) Write a poem of your own featuring a sea plant or animal. Try to choose one that isn't already in the book.

- 17) In small groups play a game of sea-creature charades. One at a time, students take turns choosing a creature from the book, and act out the poem/move like the creature. The rest of the group guesses which creature is being shown.
- 18) Make an octopus. You will need a circle of cloth about the size of a large dinner plate, tissues or cotton wool for stuffing, fabric glue, and scraps of wool or cloth for legs. Place the tissue or cotton wool in the center of the cloth circle, and paint a thin line of fabric glue in a circle about 2 cm in from the edge of the cloth, but well outside the stuffing. Gather the edges of the cloth together around the stuffing and wrap wool or string firmly around the gathered cloth to keep it closed. Use scraps of cloth or short sections of plaited wool to make legs, and glue, sew, or staple them to the fringe of cloth above the gather in the body. Draw or paint eyes on the octopus, or glue on googly eyes. The finished toys can be displayed on a table, or pegged to lines strung across the classroom ceiling to give an ocean atmosphere to the room.
- 19) Make an ocean mobile. Draw pictures of shells and sea plants on stiff cardboard, paint and decorate them and cut them out. Punch a hole in each picture and thread string through it. Hang the pictures from two crossed sticks, pieces of stiff card, or straws to make a mobile. Use lots of bright colours and glitter to make your mobile sparkle and shine.

Science

- 20) Visit a local beach or waterway. Some things to discuss are:
- How many creatures can you see?
 - What are some of the creatures, plants and animals you see – can you identify them?
 - Which part of the beach/waterway environment are the different creatures living in – e.g. do they live in the shallows, in vegetation near the water, in rock pools, or in deeper water?
 - What do the different creatures eat?
 - Are there any creatures that you think might live there but you can't see?
 - Draw a picture of one of the creatures or plants that you see. When you return to school, research your creature and present your findings to the class.
- 21) In the illustrations of the poems, several of the creatures are shown looking for food or eating other animals for dinner.
- As a class discuss the concept of a food chain – look at which animals in the poems are predators, and which are prey. Remember, some will be both!
 - Where do people fit into this food chain? How many of the different creatures can or do people eat?
 - What is your favourite seafood?
 - Draw a diagram of an ocean food chain.

- 22) The creatures in the book all live in the sea, but all also live in some very different environments, from coastal shallows and mangrove swamps, to rock pools, coral reefs, and the deepest ocean.
- As a class, look at each page of the book and see if you can identify from the illustrations and poem which part of the ocean the featured animal lives in.
 - Make a table or graph showing how many of the creatures from the book live in each of the different environments you have identified. You may need to do some more research for some of them – and some creatures may be found in more than one place!