

# The World's Greatest Tackle

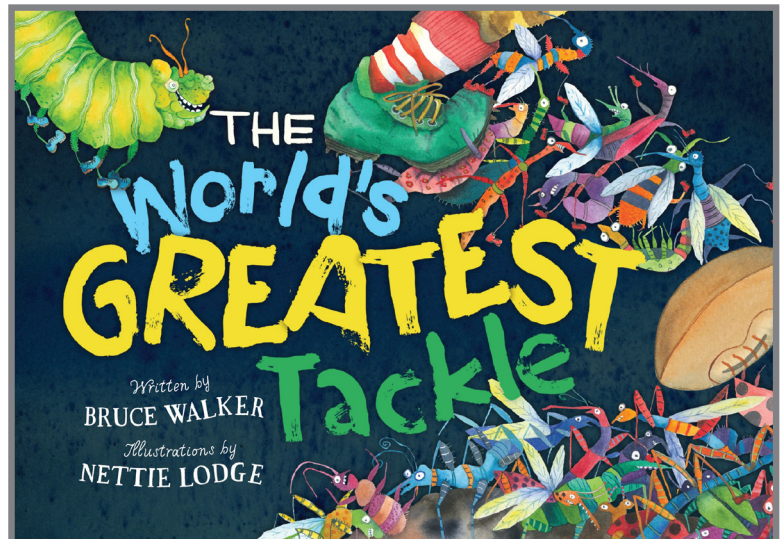
AUTHOR  
**BRUCE WALKER**

ILLUSTRATOR  
**NETTIE LODGE**

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



## SYNOPSIS

Every year the Insects challenge the Animals from all over Earth to a game of footy. And every year the insects are trampled and left in a mess!

This riotous, hilarious book and its exuberant illustrations tell the tale of the year in which the Insects threw off their shackles in a game now referred to as THE WORLD'S GREATEST TACKLE. Find out how the Insects gave the Animals their comeuppance in this irreverent rhyming story. Follow the game in full as the mighty lion flattens the cricket, the sand mites give the dingo a wedgy, a precarious tower of ants tries to catch the ball and, finally, the elephant is brought crashing down by The One! But who is The One? You'll be as surprised as everyone else when you find out!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Author Bruce Walker was born at 'Kirawin', a merino property near Yass, NSW. He has a love of the rhyming word (be it Dr Seuss or Banjo Paterson) and has written several bush poems. Bruce also has a great love of sports, having played most.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Illustrator Nettie Lodge is an Australian contemporary painter, author and illustrator of children's books. She works in Sydney as a freelance artist and illustrator. Nettie's inherent love of animals has steered her work and she sees her children's picture books as a kind of love letter to the animals of the world, which she hopes will inspire kids.

## STUDY NOTES

### BEFORE READING

- Before reading, display the cover and ask students to use the illustrations, title and back cover blurb to predict what the story will be about.

### WHILE READING

- While reading, ask students to predict who will win the game, and to give reasons for their answers. If anyone suggests that the Insects will win, ask them to predict how they might do that against the sheer strength of the Animals.
- What does the term 'footy' refer to?
- What does the author mean when he says the following:

- the game is 'played with spirit and mirth'
- 'each insect threw off their shackle'?
- Rugby union has some specific terms. Read the list below and research any terms you are unfamiliar with:
  - ruck
  - maul
  - lineout
- How have the illustrator, author and book designer worked together to make readers feel they are at the actual game? Why are the illustrations so effective? How has the book designer made the author's text come alive?

## AFTER READING

### Language

- Explore the text in the context of this story being a literary Australian bush ballad. Encourage students to research the origins of Australian bush ballads and share with them the following elements of an Australian bush ballad:
  - Tells a story, with a beginning, middle and ending
  - Has a subject or theme, eg. the outback, mates or sport
  - Is written in stanzas, usually of four, six or eight lines
  - Often uses distinctly Australian language
  - May contain dialogue
  - Has a clear pattern of rhyming. For example, the first and third, second and fourth lines may rhyme, and sometimes the first and second, and third and fourth lines may rhyme. Other combinations are also possible.
  - Has a clear rhythm, particularly evident when read aloud.
- Share other traditional bush ballads, such as *The Man from Snowy River* and *The Wild Colonial Boy*, then reread *The World's Greatest Tackle*. Ask students to compare the traditional ballads with *The World's Greatest Tackle*, identifying some or all the elements above.
  - Have students write out the first stanza from each ballad to help them identify the rhythm and rhyming pattern used in each.

Ask students to explain, in their own words, the story each ballad is telling. You might ask:

- What types of people are mentioned in each ballad?
- What events take place in each ballad?
- Challenge students to write a serious, sad, funny or ridiculous Australian bush ballad of their own, based on one of the following themes:
  - Sport
  - Family
  - Farming
  - School
  - City life
  - Country life
  - Environment
  - A current event
  - A famous Australian.

### Physical Education

- Team up students who know little about footy with those who know a lot. Ask them to create a glossary of terms and write out the rules for a football code of their choice. Alternatively, have students each choose any sport that interests them and to create a glossary of terms and a set of rules for that sport.

### Geography

- *The World's Greatest Tackle* incorporates animals from all over Earth. As a class, create a large world map for classroom display. Ask students to then each choose one animal from the book to research, illustrate and add to the class world map.
- World Cup football matches are a great introduction to studying cultures around the world while also tapping into

student and community enthusiasm around football. In 2023, the Rugby World Cup is scheduled to take place in France from Friday, 8 September to Saturday, 28 October. Research past World Cups and the countries that have participated. Find them on the class world map.