

Let's Build a Backyard

AUTHOR

MIKE LUCAS

ILLUSTRATOR

DARON PARTON

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SYNOPSIS

Slip on your overalls, pop on your hard hat and jump in the digger—let's build a backyard!

We dig, we build, we plant, we sow.

We make a place to play and grow.

You and me – one, two, three ... GO!

Work! Work! Work!

A fun look at creating a backyard from scratch; from moving the mud and building the fence through to planting a vegetable patch and adding in the compost (Poo! Poo! Poo!). *Let's Build a Backyard* is a high-energy, brightly illustrated picture book by a real-life engineer, and is the perfect companion to *Let's Build a House*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Originally from the UK, Mike Lucas moved with his family to Adelaide in 2010. He started his writing career writing funny poetry anthologies and visiting schools and libraries to encourage children to create their own silly rhymes. He has had work published in various magazines and anthologies. Mike's first picture book, *Olivia's Voice*, was a 2018 CBCA Awards Notable book, followed by *Vanishing* and *Let's Build a House*. As well as being a writer, Mike also owns a bookshop in Adelaide, Shakespeare's Bookshop in Blackwood. In 2017, he was the lead organiser of the first ever Adelaide Festival of Children's Books. For five days a week Mike works as an engineer and has very little time for sleep. Visit his website for further information: <http://www.mikelucas.com.au/>.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Award-winning New Zealand illustrator Daron Parton was born in Aden, in Yemen, and later lived in Singapore, Germany and the UK. 'I went to my first art school at Canterbury in England then to do a degree at Central St Martins School of Art where I graduated with a BA (Hons). I worked as an illustrator from then on. I moved to New Zealand in 1995 with my beautiful Kiwi wife; we have two boys Ollie and Rhys.' He has been working as an illustrator since 1990 and is also an illustration tutor at Auckland University of Technology. Daron's books include *The Ultimate Survival Guide to Monsters Under Your Bed*, *A Crocodile in the Family* and *Let's Build a House*.

STUDY NOTES

- What is in your backyard? (Note: Some students might live in apartments or units so encourage them to identify an area near their home which could be discussed in this way, for example, a roof top terrace, a balcony garden, or a local park.)
- What animals (including birds) might you find in your backyard?
- What lessons did you learn about planting from this text?
- There are several sound or action words in this text repeated three times. For example, Work, Chug, Squirm, Bang, Sing, Buzz, Drip, Yum, Croak, Poo, Hooray! What other sound or action words might be appropriate to this written and visual text?
- In his Author's Notes, Mike Lucas says that: 'There are examples of alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia throughout the book—three very important tools used in writing poetry.' Locate examples of these literary devices and discuss with the class. For example, 'muddy mound' (alliteration).
- Write a story about how they might create their own 'dream' backyard and what might be included in it. Be as imaginative and creative as possible.
 - Draw, paint, or collage an image of the dream backyard you imagined in the story you wrote above using the bright colour palette from the book. Create a classroom mural using all the images.
- The cover of a book is an important part of its message. This cover contains a series of images relating to building a backyard. Identify the things you see there (for example, scarecrow, pavers, watering can). Then create your own cover for this book, including images of other things which one might find in a backyard.
- The endpapers depict a garden fork, a watering can and a plant in a pot in a decorative repeated grid. Choose three other objects and create your own endpapers for this title.
- The illustrator, Daron Parton, used mixed media for the illustrations in this text. Encourage students to experiment with their art in a similar way.
- Make a list of all the birds you identified.