

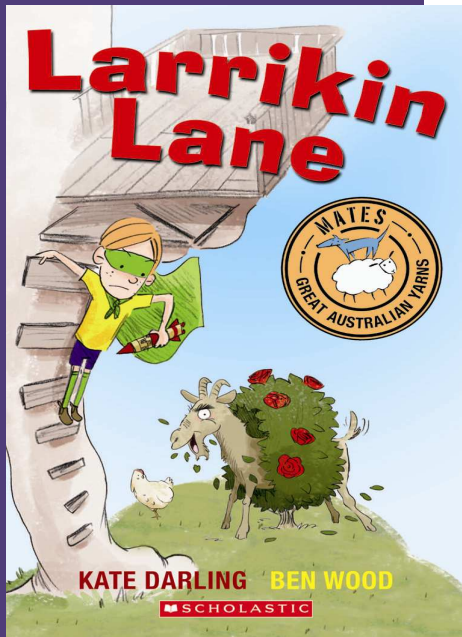
Teachers' Notes

Larrikin Lane

Kate Darling

Illustrated by Ben Wood

Teachers' Notes Written by Madeline Holmes



OMNIBUS BOOKS

Category	Junior Fiction: Mates series
Title	Larrikin Lane
Author	Kate Darling
Illustrator	Ben Wood
Extent	64 pp
Age	Primary school
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Introduction

On Larrikin Lane, there's a crazy-eyed goat who is considered one of the family. But when Delilah eats Mr Myer's best roses, the neighbour calls it a menace and declares it must go! Then Mr Meyer winds up in hospital and only Delilah and Lola the sheep can stop his perfect garden from growing wild. Perhaps being neighbours with a goat isn't such a bad thing after all.

About the Author

Kate Darling spent her earliest years living in a hand-built house outside a tiny country town in northern New South Wales. These days she pedals her bike through big-city traffic to work in a big-city office tower, but still dreams of moving her family to the country some day.

About the Illustrator

Ben Wood is a freelance illustrator who lives in Sydney. For many years Ben has illustrated for design companies and publishing firms, creating enjoyable characters and stories. When not drawing in his studio, he also visits schools to teach students about the world of publishing and the joys of creating stories. Ben enjoys creating unusual and quirky characters and environments. In his illustrations he uses both traditional media and digital tools.

Activities

English

1. What do you think the story is about? What is the message/moral of the story?

2. How are Arkie and her family good neighbours to Mr Meyer? Why do you think Mr Meyer changes his mind about the goat?
3. Create a character profile for Mr Meyer by gathering all the information you learn about him in the text.
4. A saying is a phrase that we use regularly to express something or convey an idea. There are a few examples in the story: gentle as a lamb (p.4), good enough to eat (p. 7) and rules are rules (p. 50). Can you find the origins of these sayings (that is, when they were first recorded in use)? What other sayings are you familiar with? Using the examples in the book, create a phrase that you think could become popular.
5. Find out what the reference to a black sheep means.
6. 'G'day' is part of the Australian lexicon. If someone said g'day to you, they would very likely be from Australia. Can you think of any other words that are unique to Australia?
7. A simile is when you use 'as' or 'like' to compare two different things. You will find an example on p. 2: 'The farm shrank like wool in the wash'. You should be able to find two more similes in the story, one that uses 'as' and one that uses 'like'. Come up with ten of your own.
8. What does 'hooligan' mean?

Art

1. Look closely at the illustrations. What do illustrations bring to a story? Do you like stories with illustrations? Do the illustrations in *Larrikin Lane* tell you anything the words don't?

2. Choose a page of *Larrikin Lane* and create your own illustrations. Think about how you can create extra meaning through your design. Remember to design your own border.
3. Can you tell a story with just illustrations? Look over *Larrikin Lane* and pay attention to the pictures only – try to ignore the words. Do the illustrations tell the story without words?
4. Which medium do you think is more powerful – words or illustrations? Can you give examples for when illustrations are more powerful than words and vice versa?
5. Record the events of your day just using illustrations.
6. Design an alternative cover for the book or draw a set of character portraits.

Creative

1. In small groups, adapt a chapter of the book for the stage. You can add new scenes and extra characters if you think they will add to the story.
2. Hold a come-as-your-favourite-larrikin day and dress up in costume.
3. Design an advertising campaign for a lawn-mowing goat company.
4. Compose a speech about the importance of neighbours.

Society and Environment

1. Where do you think the story might be set? Can you tell from the words and illustrations? Can you find out if Cooper's Creek is a real place?
2. There is a big gum tree in the backyard that tells us that this is an Australian setting. What other flora would indicate an Australian landscape?

3. The 'All About Us' section points out that even though Australia is known for the bush and outback most Australians live in big cities. How would you define Australia? Create your own definition of an Australian. What are the advantages and disadvantages to living in a city?
4. The narrator describes all the local kids playing at his place and if you look at the illustrations on pp. 2–3 you can see big trees in the yard that the other houses don't have. How important is it to have a green space in your living environment? Do you have a large backyard? Do you have a park nearby? Is your street lined with trees?
5. In the story Mr Meyer complains about his neighbours to the council, who are in charge of livestock permits. What else do councils do? Are livestock permits important? As a class imagine you have moved to a new settlement. What would a council need to oversee? Make a list of all the issues you think would need rules and laws.
6. How would you define the word 'neighbour'? Is it just the person who lives next door? How well do you know your neighbours?
7. Hold a mock-debate where you argue the pros and cons of having farm animals in the city.
8. Establish a class veggie garden, like the family's garden in the story. As a class devise a schedule for tending the patch. For advice on getting started visit:
<<http://nrmeducation.net.au/uploads/Sustainability%20Themes/Food/School%20food%20gardens%20fact%20sheet.pdf>>

9. The author dedicates this story to Vu Ho and his pet sheep, Baa. Vu Ho is a real person who is involved in a dispute with his local council over his pet sheep. A Google search will find information about this.

History

1. The family live in an old farmhouse that was once part of a big farming property. As the story describes, over the years the land was sold and now there are houses where farmland used to be. This happened in just three generations, which isn't that long if you think about it. Investigate your grandparents' history. Where did they grow up? Is it still the same? Do you have access to photographs to compare what might have changed? If you can, interview your grandparents to find out the most significant changes they have witnessed in their lifetime.
2. Investigate the history of farming in Australia. Is farming important? What crops do we grow?
3. Research the origin of 'larrikin'. When was it coined? Write your own definition once you understand the meaning of the word.
4. In the 'All About Us' section, Ned Kelly and Bob Hawke are listed as famous larrikins. What other famous larrikins could inspire a story? See if you can find one that you might like to write about.
5. Mr Meyer is fastidious about his garden. Find out what you can about the history of rose gardens. Where did they originate?
6. Discover how long humans have kept livestock. Why do we keep animals? What do they offer us?