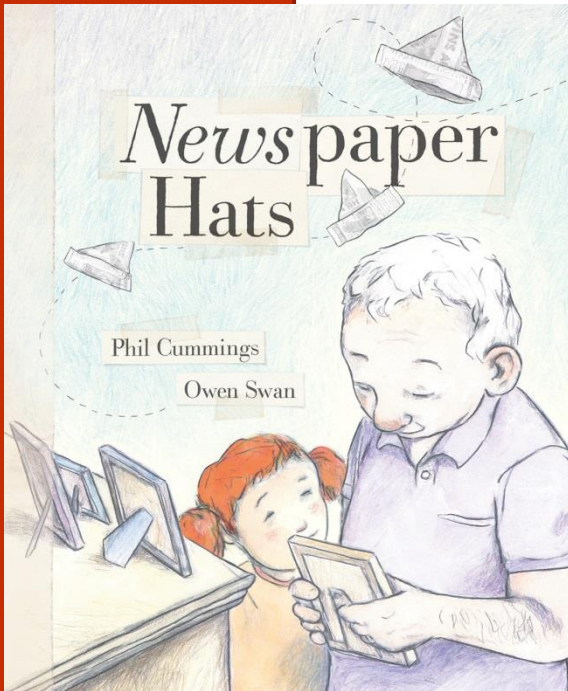


# NEWSPAPER HATS

PHIL CUMMINGS | OWEN SWAN (Illustrator)



Grandpa has a world of memories he likes to share – they include tadpoles, summer rain and his mum making warm, crusty bread. But he has trouble remembering his granddaughter Georgie. Georgie's efforts to trigger Grandpa's memory of her lead them to the remembered joy of making newspaper hats.

**Newspaper Hats** is a moving tale that will have you thinking about how we make, record and recall memories and ultimately live amongst the rich details of each passing moment.

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**NOTE:** **Newspaper Hats** provides an excellent springboard into class discussions about aging, mental illness and degenerative brain diseases such as dementia. Teachers are advised to approach this unit of study with sensitivity to students' personal circumstances.

## TEACHER NOTES

- Some of Georgie's words look like they are cut out of newspaper. What is their effect? Why do you think more of Georgie's words gradually appear in the newspaper cut-outs? What is the significance of Grandpa's words being in the newspaper cut-outs at the book's end?
- 'His collection of old newspapers were stacked around him like tall city buildings.' Why do you think Grandpa collects these old newspapers? What do you think is the effect of the 'tall city buildings' in his room?
- Reread **Newspaper Hats**, paying close attention to how the author describes the events in the first few pages before Georgie greets Grandpa. What do you notice about the language and the images? Do you think they have a

memory-like and photographic quality? Think about the language and images used to describe the present time in this story. Can you see how such details may form themselves into memories?

- Ask students to bring in an old newspaper from home or a day-old edition from their newsagent. With the newspapers, make your own paper hats: refer to a video for reference (eg [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0\\_tDKdXhv0g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_tDKdXhv0g)). You could also decorate the paper hats with pencils, texta, stickers etc to make party hats and have a hat parade.
- As a class, take a look at the endpapers, which illustrate a collage of newspaper articles. Do students recognise any of the world events reported? Discuss some of the events with children. Students can also ask parents or grandparents about their memories of these events and/or what they remember doing when they occurred, or of any other significant world or national events their parents can recall.
- Why do you think we use newspaper articles to record events? Discuss the relationship between memory and history. Ask students to select and clip a newspaper article that interests them (it could be because of an engaging headline, image or story angle). Each student should take turns sharing why they chose their article with the rest of the class. Create a class collage of all the students' selected articles to pin up on the wall.
- Consider the illustrator's use of watercolours and coloured pencils to create a washed and sketchy style. Do you think this is a suitable choice for a story about memories, the past and the present? Explain your answer. Discuss the significance of colours – such as the blue, purple and orange hues – and how they are used to emphasise some of the themes in **Newspaper Hats**.
- In **Newspaper Hats**, we see many photographs of Grandpa's life. Discuss the significance of photos as a means to capture a moment, record events and trigger memory. Consider the differences between older photograph technology and the camera devices available today. What are the advantages and disadvantages of old and new camera technology? Consider bringing in a Polaroid camera to take photos. More photos can be taken with a digital camera/phone to see some differences firsthand.

- Look at the spread with Grandpa's friends and then look back to the spread with the 'sky-blue door'. Do you think these two spreads reflect different moods? What in the illustrations and text makes you think this? Consider how the space is used: colour, framing, characters' actions, text arrangement etc.
- Ask students to write an 'I Remember' poem (an excerpt from poet Joe Brainard's writing can be shown as an example). They can collect many memories in their poems or focus on a single memory, as if detailing a snapshot moment like a photograph does.
- What might be the reason that Grandpa cannot remember some things? As a class, discuss the degenerative brain diseases that affect the aging population. What is Alzheimer's disease? How does it affect those who suffer from it? What challenges does it raise for sufferers as well as their families? What can be done to help and support for those who suffer from it?