



Teachers' Notes

Buzz off!

Mates series

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Illustrated by Dan McGuinness

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OMNIBUS BOOKS

Category	Mates series
Title	Buzz off!
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Introduction

According to his Uncle Yusuf, Noor is the best fly-killer around. That is until one night when two flies make it their business to annoy him by somersaulting off his forehead! Desperate to rid the family home of the pests in ready for a celebration feast, Noor corners a fly in the laundry and learns that there is only one thing that will stop them; garlic and toothpaste spiced bananas. This remedy is more successful than he could have hoped for and the family's Eid feast is ruined by dead flies raining from the sky and into the food.

Noor alerts the media to his wonderful discovery and soon, everyone is using it. This has unforeseen consequences – flies are an essential part of our ecosystem and should not be wiped out! Religious leaders the world over plead for people to stop killing flies.

Buzz off! is an amusing tale with a serious point; that every single species has a role in keeping the world turning. The story also provides an opportunity to investigate Islamic traditions and celebrations.

About the Author

Randa Abdel-Fattah is the award-winning author of the young adult novels *Does my Head Look Big in This?*, *Ten Things I Hate About Me* and *Where the Streets Had A Name*. Her books are published around the world and she regularly gives talks and workshops at schools and writers' festivals across Australia and overseas.

Randa lives in Sydney with her husband, Ibrahim, and their two children. She works as a litigation lawyer and is also a human rights activist, appearing on television programs such as the ABC's *First Tuesday Book Club*, the ABC's *Q&A*, *Insight* on SBS, and Channel Seven's *Sunrise*.

About the Illustrator

Adelaide comic artist/author Dan McGuinness started out by selling his hand-stapled booklets at comic conventions. These days he leaves the stapling to the experts, and has had three graphic novels published by Omnibus Books. Rumour has it that Dan grew up in a top- secret military facility. His latest book is *Pilot & Huxley vs Planet Arpros*, the third instalment in the Pilot & Huxley series, preceded by *Pilot & Huxley* and *Pilot & Huxley and the Holiday Portal*.

Activities

NB: Please check all websites for suitability on the date of proposed use.

Remember streaming time for linked videos before playing. If certain sites are blocked in your school, see your IT administrator to have them unblocked, or to get the address of a proxy server.

English

1. What is making Noor really uncomfortable at the beginning of the story?
2. In pairs, tell your partner about a time when you couldn't sleep – explain why.
3. What does Noor make for his mother to keep away the flies and what does his sister say about it?
4. What is the young fly trying to do and who is helping him?
5. Explain why the flies in the story are strange – what can they do that most flies can't?
6. Why does Noor feel insulted by the flies?
7. Why is the fly in the laundry not afraid of fly spray?
8. What useful secret does Noor find out?
9. How does he tell the rest of Australia?
10. Why shouldn't we kill all the flies?

Art

1. Have you ever looked closely at a fly? Look at a dead one with a magnifying glass and draw what it looks like from the top, bottom and side.
2. Make a papier-mâché model of a fly: use a balloon to make the basis of the body, craft card for wings and clear yoghurt-pots for eyes.
3. Discuss how the illustrations are used to help give readers an impression of Noor's culture.
4. Design an extra illustration for the story that would teach readers more about flies' bodies.
5. Look at the banner at the top of each page and consider what the illustrator has included and why. Design an alternative banner for the story.
6. Write a story about your favourite Australian insect and add at least four illustrations. The following websites have many images:

<http://australianmuseum.net.au/Australian-insects>

<http://www.ozanimals.com/australian-insects.html> (click on each name for comprehensive information and photographs)

Creative activities

1. Create an imaginary Australian insect using recycled materials. Take a photograph of it and write a short report about what type of insect it is, where it can be found, its habitat and feeding habits. Be as inventive as possible and make a display of the resulting models.
2. Write a newspaper report about Noor Ibrahim's discovery and the CSIRO's response. If possible, add a photograph. The following website is useful:

http://www.galaxy.bedfordshire.gov.uk/webingres/bedfordshire/vlib/0.childr en_teenagers/vhc_how_newspaper.htm (contains a useful formatted template for a finished article)

3. Create your own anti-fly recipe – make it as imaginative as possible!

Society & Environment

1. Noor's family is Muslim and is celebrating 'Eid'. Find out what Eid (ul-fitr) is here:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/holydays/eidulfitr.shtml>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_4180000/newsid_4188200/4188287.stm (Easily read overview of Islam with lots of links to further

information – from a well-respected UK children's new program)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar/faith.shtml?muslim> (a calendar of Muslim religious celebrations)

2. The CSIRO intervenes in the mass killing of flies. What is the CSIRO and what does it do? Find out here: <http://www.csiro.au/science/Environment.html> (a comprehensive site that needs lots of guidance/paraphrasing from the teacher)
3. The CSIRO suggests that people need to stop killing flies! Find out why here: <http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/content/animals/kidscorner/foodchain/foodchain.htm> (wonderful website with a fun food-chain game and a 'producer, consumer and decomposer' game that clearly and simply show why even tiny insects are necessary to maintain an ecological balance)

Science

1. The fly that Noor tries to kill in the laundry has been immunised against fly spray. How does immunisation actually work? Find out here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cL2SQEKyuTU> (A SoccerMom's Guide to immunisation, using a girls' soccer match to illustrate the interplay of germs and antibodies).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwFAiBV1OS0&feature=related> ('Disease Scene Investigation': short 'CSI' type text for upper-primary and middle-school students. Part of an advertising campaign for immunisation).