



OMNIBUS BOOKS

Category	Mates series
Title	The Ugg Boot War
Author	Kylie Fornasier
Illustrator	Tom Jellett
Extent	64 pp
ISBN	978 1 96291 999 0

Teachers' Notes

The Ugg Boot War

Kylie Fornasier
 Illustrated by Tom Jellett

Teachers' Notes by Rae Carlyle

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Introduction

Jake's father is an embarrassment to Jake. He wears his old, stained, and (in Jake's opinion) ugly ugg boots everywhere. Winter or summer, home or out in public, they are on his feet. Jake is determined that this needs to stop: he cannot handle the embarrassment of having a father in ugg boots any longer. Despite his best friend's misgivings, and his mother's warnings about trying to change people, Jake embarks on a daring plan to remove the ugg boots from his father's life. Jake's father, however, is unaware of the problem his beloved boots are causing, and the final outcome of Jake's ugg boot war surprises even Jake.

About the Author

Kylie Fornasier is a librarian in a primary school library by day and a children's author in her 'spare' time. She also contributes reviews of children's books to *Reading Time*, the journal of the CBCA. *The Ugg Boot War* is her first book for younger readers. She is also the author of a young adult book, *Masquerade*.

<http://www.kyliefornasier.com/books.html>

About the Illustrator

Tom Jellett is a freelance illustrator based in Sydney. He has illustrated many children's books including *My Dad Thinks He's Funny*. His early reader books include *Barnesy* for the Mates series, *Hot Stuff* and *Fuzz, the Famous Fly* for the Solo series, and picture books *Something about Water*, *Australia at the Beach* and *Harry Highpants*. Tom has been included in the Editorial and Book category for *Illustrators 53*, exhibited at the Society of Illustrators, New York in 2011 and 2013. He was also included in *Communication Arts* Illustration Annual 2012, 3x3 Children's Show No. 9, and Highly Commended in the 2013 Illustrators Australia Awards.

<http://tomjellett.com/>

Activities

English

The Ugg Boot War is written in the present tense, and the first person – Jake is telling the reader about the events in his life as they happen. An author’s choice of tense and person affects how the reader perceives both the characters within the story, as well as the events that unfold. Choosing the present tense gives the story a sense of immediacy, whereas past tense conveys the impression of events being related that have already been concluded. With a present-tense narrative there is an illusion that the results have yet to be determined, and that the outcome is still uncertain. Telling the story in the first person creates an intimacy between reader and character that third person is lacking. Third-person narratives happen at a greater emotional distance from the narrator, while in a first-person perspective it is as if the protagonist is telling the reader their thoughts and feelings about the events just as someone would tell a good friend the details of their life.

- 1) Discuss as a class the fact that the author has chosen to write *The Ugg Boot War* in the first person.
 - What is the effect on you, the reader, of the author using the first person to tell Jake’s story?
 - If the author had chosen to tell the story in the third person, what would have been different about the way you reacted to the story?
 - Why do you think that the author made this choice?

- 2) Discuss as a class the fact that the author has chosen to use the present tense throughout.
 - What is the effect on the reader of using the present tense to tell the story?
 - What are some of the reasons that the author might have made this choice?
 - How does use of the present tense as opposed to the past tense influence the reader’s response?

- 3) Do the choices of present tense and first person make you feel closer to the main character, or more distant? Why?

- 4) Write a short story using the first person and present tense. Rewrite the same story using third person and past tense.
 - As a class, share the versions of the stories that you have written.
 - Discuss the differences in how you feel about each pair of stories.
 - Is one version better overall – or does it depend on the type of story?
 - What are some of the reasons that you, as an author, might choose to use a different tense or person for a story?

- Does where and when a story is set influence an author's choice? Give reasons for your opinion.

When Jake is describing his feelings and the events that led to them, he is prone to using hyperbole. Hyperbole is the overstating of a situation for dramatic effect. In this instance, it is used to make clear the depth of Jake's feelings about events that might otherwise seem fairly innocuous.

- 5) Jake says that he has 'the most embarrassing dad in the world!', that he is 'doomed' and tells his friend Max that 'these ugg boots are ruining my life'.
 - What other examples of Jake using hyperbole can you find in the text?
 - Why does the author have Jake state things so dramatically?
 - Think of an example of hyperbole that you would use in your regular life, or have heard someone else use. ('You're the meanest _____ in the world!' is a common one.)
- 6) What are some of the reasons for people to use hyperbole, in both writing and speech?
- 7) As a class, write a short paragraph describing a recent event, recounting the bare facts as simply as possible. Rewrite the paragraph using hyperbole and dramatic language. Discuss the difference between the two paragraphs.
 - When might you choose to use one style rather than the other?
 - What factors would influence your decision? (audience, intended purpose of the text, desired emotional impact, etc.)

Creative Activities

- 8) In *The Ugg Boot War* some of the words are written in different fonts for added emphasis. Choose two words from the story that are not written in a different font, and invent fonts for them that you think reflect their meaning, and would add emphasis to them in the story.
- 9) Design the perfect ugg boot for wearing on all occasions. Label the features clearly on your design. Make a poster advertising your ugg boot.
- 10) In small groups, write and perform a skit that advertises ugg boots. Aim the advertisement at reluctant children such as Jake.
- 11) Write a song or poem about your favourite pair of footwear.
- 12) Jake is embarrassed at being seen with his father in public. Create an artwork that conveys the emotion of embarrassment.

Maths & Science

13) Ugg boots have been worn in Australia for a long time. Traditionally made of sheepskin, they can be found in cheaper versions made of synthetic materials in almost any shoe shop – or even the supermarket!

Research the types of materials that can be used to make ugg-style boots.

- Why would you choose a synthetic material rather than sheepskin?
- What are the differences between the two? (price, construction, durability, warmth etc.)
- Can you find out what percentage of ugg-style boots sold are made of genuine sheepskin?
- How many countries now sell ugg boots?

14) Different types of footwear are suitable for different activities. Running shoes, thongs, ugg boots, school shoes – all are worn in different places for different reasons.

- As a class investigate the type of shoes that class members wear on a regular basis, and their reasons for choosing different footwear.
- Make a series of graphs showing your results – e.g. ‘Favourite shoes’, ‘Shoes we wear at home’, ‘Shoes we wear to the beach/swimming pool’, ‘Shoes we wear to birthday parties’ etc.
- Write brief paragraphs detailing some of the reasons why people choose one type of footwear rather than another, and include them with the graphs.

Health

In *The Ugg Boot War*, Jake is embarrassed by his father. He is embarrassed by the way he dresses, the shoes he wears, and the way he acts. Most people are embarrassed by the way their families behave sometimes, but it is important to realise that while being embarrassed is normal, most of the time no one else is even noticing the things that our families are doing. Jake is desperate to get rid of his father’s ugg boots, but his friend Max doesn’t seem to think that it really matters all that much, and only helps Jake with his plans because he wants to make Jake happy.

15) Discuss as a class some of the things that you have been embarrassed by in the past.

- Why was this embarrassing?
- Are there things that you were really embarrassed by, but then you found out that no one else seemed to care?

- Think of a time when someone you know was really embarrassed by something – but you thought that there was no reason to be embarrassed at all.
- 16) When we are embarrassed by someone we love, it can be confusing and upsetting, and sometimes we can behave badly about it, just like Jake did when he threw out his father’s ugg boots. It is important to remember that *everyone* gets embarrassed by their families sometimes, and that often other people don’t see anything wrong with how our families are behaving.
- What are some of the things that we can say to ourselves, or do, to make ourselves feel better when we are feeling embarrassed?
 - What are some of the ways people behave badly when they are embarrassed?
 - Discuss ways we can help a friend who is feeling embarrassed feel better about themselves.
 - Think about times when you have seen someone acting angrily, or behaving badly, and how their behaviour might have been affected by embarrassment. What could you have said or done to help them feel less embarrassed?
 - Sometimes, when people share embarrassing stories with each other about things that they have said or done, everyone ends up feeling better – why do you think this is?

Social Sciences

Thongs and ugg boots are two types of footwear that are considered to be very Australian. Other countries have different types of footwear that they consider to be part of their national culture.

- 17) Research the types of footwear commonly worn in a foreign country. Make a poster to display your findings. Include pictures of the footwear, when it is worn, and why it is so popular in that country. Present your poster to the class.
- 18) Some countries have national costumes, where everything from shoes, to headgear, are traditional and have an important meaning to the people of that country.
- As a class talk about some of the countries your ancestors come from, and what the national costumes are.
 - Make a classroom display of pictures of national costumes/traditional clothing from around the world.
 - Research some of the reasons behind the development of some of the costumes (climate, available materials etc.). Include this information in the display.