

Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Our Stories: So You Want To Be Prime Minister?

Author: Nicolas Brasch
Illustrator: David Rowe
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

So you want to be prime minister? It doesn't matter if you're rich or poor, a snappy dresser or a messy eater. Australia's prime ministers have had very different backgrounds – Paul Keating managed a rock band and Chris Watson swept up horse manure. You have a better than average chance if your first name is John and you were born in Victoria. Read this handbook of helpful hints and you could be the next prime minister.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Nicolas Brasch is the author of more than 350 books for children and young adults. His books have been sold in every major English-speaking market including Australia, USA, UK, Canada, South Africa, Zimbabwe and New Zealand, as well as several non-English speaking markets including South Korea, Germany and Turkey.

David Rowe is an award-winning political cartoonist.

How to use these notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:

- Primary years 5 & 6
- Ages 10+

Key Learning Areas:

- English
- History

Example of:

- Non-fiction

Themes/Ideas:

- Australian history
- Australian government

National Curriculum Focus:*

English content descriptions:

English Year 5	Year 6	History Year 5	Year 6
ACELA1504	ACELA1518	ACHHS098	ACHHS104
ACELA1797	ACELA1524	ACHHS100	ACHHK116
ACELA1511	ACELT1613	ACHHS101	ACHHS117
ACELT1608	ACELY1709	ACHHS102	ACHHS118
ACELY1700	ACELY1816	ACHHS104	ACHHS120
ACELY1701	ACELY1710		ACHHS121
ACELY1702	ACELY1711		ACHHS123
ACELY1703	ACELY1712		

*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.

Discussion Questions and Activities

VISUAL LITERACY

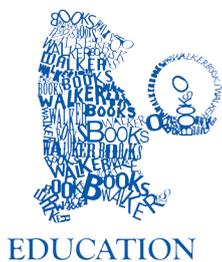
Illustrations

Class to identify the following:

- How does the illustrator indicate on the book cover that the book is about Australian Prime Ministers?
- What does the small black dog on the cover represent?
- Explain why you think the illustrator has included a girl on pages 4-5 saying Vote John. Why do you think she is wearing a man's suit? What attitudes to

the girl can you detect from the expressions on the faces of the emu and kangaroo?

- What point, therefore, might the illustrator be trying to make?
- In many of the illustrations throughout the book, Rowe incorporates photographs into the illustrations, for example, pages 26 and 27. Why do you think he has done that?
- What is your favourite illustration in the book? Explain your choice.



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

• Creative Art

Create a “Vote Me” advertisement for the Leader of the Opposition—the alternative Prime Minister,

OR

- Draw a cartoon with caption about Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd

AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

Students answer the following questions using the information in the book, starting with the index, timeline and glossary:

- Name and explain the event that occurred in 1901 leading to Edmund Barton becoming the first Prime Minister of Australia.
- Just over 50 years ago a national referendum was held.
 - » What is a referendum?
 - » What was this particular referendum about?
 - » What year was it held?
 - » Who was the Prime Minister at the time?
 - » What does “Indigenous” mean?
 - » Name one right Aborigines gained with citizenship (do not confuse with Land Rights – a separate issue)
- On the book’s front cover, former PM Malcolm Fraser is wearing a tie with a crown and GG printed on it.
 - » Who does the crown represent?
 - » What does GG stand for?
 - » What major political event does this refer to?
- In 1983 Australia won the America’s Cup yachting race for the first time in the race’s history which caused huge celebrations in Australia.
 - » Who was the PM at the time?
 - » Can you locate him in the book?

Quiz: Who am I?

Give each student the name of a different PM on a piece of paper and have them prepare a list of questions based on information in the book. Exclude Rudd. Student to give one clue at a time, keeping the most obvious clues until last.

Put example on board:

- I was born in Queensland
- I studied at the Australian National University
- I used to clean houses when I was a student.
- I have never belonged to a union
- I am the leader of the Australian Labor Party
- I live at The Lodge
- I am Kevin ... (Rudd)

3. ENGLISH

Group discussion

- What are the attributes of a good Prime Minister?

‘Polarised’ Debate

- Topic: It’s time Australia had another female Prime Minister.
- In a polarised debate, students sit in a horseshoe position, with those who agree on one side, those who disagree on the other and the undecided in between.
- The debate begins with the first speaker who agrees, followed by one who disagrees, and then by a speaker who is undecided and so on. Students change positions around the horseshoe if they change their mind
- Keep opinion log on board and update when positions change

Letter writing

- Write a letter to the Prime Minister about an important issue that concerns you. Outline what the issue is and why it concerns you; make a suggestion how PM might deal with issue, and outline why you think your suggestion is a good one.

Research essay

Write a short biographical essay about Julia Gillard, the Former Deputy Prime Minister.

4. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- When he was Prime Minister, Paul Keating once compared the then Leader of the Opposition John Howard to a “mangy maggot” (p.22). Do you think such language/behaviour is appropriate for a Prime Minister, indeed any politician? Explain why/why not.
- Imagine you have ambitions to become Prime Minister one day — what aspects of your own personal development would you need to work on. Why?

5. ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- A prolific author, Nicolas Brasch has written over 250 books for the education, trade and library markets both in Australia and overseas.
- He has, moreover, presented workshops and seminars on writing and story-telling and is the founder of Writers in Residence, a company that provides writing services to the corporate sector.

6. ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

- Award winning illustrator David Rowe has been called “one of Australia’s great cartoon geniuses”. His cartoons have been published daily in The Financial Review for the past ten years.