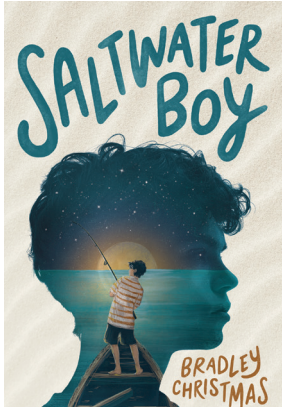




# Walker Books Classroom Ideas



## Saltwater Boy

Author: Bradley Christmas  
ISBN: 9781760656393  
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\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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## Outline:

Heartfelt and poignant, this coming-of-age story explores father-son relationships and buried truths, set against a backdrop of small-town rivalries. With themes of sustainability, preserving the past, and environmental care.

When Dad goes to jail, Matthew and his mum move to the coast, so mum – an artist – can renovate her late father's old place to sell it to get them back on their feet. Matthew strikes up a friendship with Old Bill, an Indigenous man who becomes a father figure to him, and teaches him how to find and eat pippis and fish (and make a few dollars from it). But when Dad gets out on parole and moves back in with the family, his anger fractures the newfound peace and everything is once again at stake, and in peril.

## Author/Illustrator Information:

Bradley Christmas is a full-time writer – and moonlighting musician – who splits his time between Sydney and his beloved beach shack on the NSW South Coast. While building his writing career he worked as a social worker, English language teacher and children's entertainer. These days as a freelance copywriter he helps charities like Greenpeace, The Royal Flying Doctor Service and The Sydney Children's Hospital Network share their stories. His short fiction has appeared in a number of magazines and publications including The Big Issue and received several award nominations. He can also regularly be found performing around Australia with his country band Copperline. *Saltwater Boy* is his first YA novel.

## 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:

- Years 5-8
- Ages 10-14

### Key Learning Areas:

- English

### Example of:

- Fiction

### Themes/Ideas:

- Sustainability
- Preserving the past
- Indigenous culture
- Environmental care
- Masculinity



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas

## Before Reading

Based on the cover and title, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Revisit your answer when you've completed the book. Was your answer correct?

## Exploring The Text:

What are the themes in this novel? As a class or in small groups identify and list the themes. Individually write a statement of belief about each theme.

Identify the orientation, complication and resolution of the story. Ask students to identify this structure in other books or movies. As a class, discuss how these narrative features give further meaning to stories.

We learn, live and dream on Indigenous land. As a class or in small groups, discuss the Indigenous land on which you are learning. What is the history of the land?

Matthew develops a close relationship with Old Bill who steps in as a father figure. Ask students to individually identify inspirational figures in their life, apart from their parents and/or caregivers. What have they taught you? What are some of their admirable characteristics?

In small groups, explain how Matthew demonstrates the following character traits in the novel:

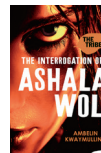
- Courage
- Persistence
- Compassion
- Resilience

## Creative Responses to The Text:

Design your own cover for the book with new imagery and a new tagline that will persuade people to read the book.

A novel will describe the setting and action in words, allowing the reader to visualise using their imagination. A comic strip or graphic novel uses illustrations to show the reader the setting, action and character's emotions. Create a comic strip of a key scene from *Saltwater Boy*.

### Other Great Titles From Walker Books



#### **The Tribe: The Interrogation of Ashla Wolf**

Ambelin Kwaymullina  
9781921720086 PB



#### **First Thing About You**

Chaz Hayden  
9781529510942 PB  
Classroom ideas available



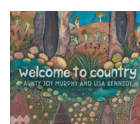
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Neil Schusterman  
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