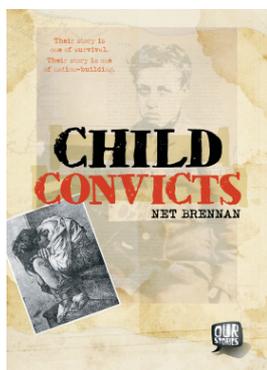




# Walker Books Classroom Ideas



## Our Stories: Child Convicts

Author: Net Brennan  
ISBN: 9781742032238  
ARRP: \$17.95  
NZRRP: \$19.99  
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\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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## Outline:

At the age of seven, children in eighteenth century Britain were tried in court like adults. Some, as young as nine, were transported to the colonies. Their names may not be familiar, but one of these child convicts would become the first person hanged in Australia, another would be celebrated on our twenty-dollar note and a third would count a future prime minister as a descendant. Their story is one of survival. Their story is one of nation-building. Their story is the story of Australia.

## Author/Illustrator Information:

Net Brennan lives in Hobart with her husband, three children and a fluffy dog. She likes seeing snow on Mt Wellington – but not in summer! Net has twenty years experience as a feature writer, magazine editor and sports journalist, and is also a qualified English/History teacher. *Our Stories: Child Convicts* is her first book with Walker.

## 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 4 & 5
- Ages 9+

### Key Learning Areas:

- English
- History

### Example of:

- Non-fiction

### Themes/ Ideas:

- Exploration
- Australian history
- Australian life
- Aboriginals
- Convicts

### National Curriculum Focus:\*

English content descriptions:

English Year 4	Year 5	History Year 4	Year 5
ACELA1490	ACELA1502	ACHHK077	ACHHK093
ACELA1496	ACELA1504	ACHHK078	ACHHK094
ACELT1602	ACELT1608	ACHHK079	ACHHK096
ACELT1607	ACELT1609	ACHHK080	ACHHK097
ACELT1794	ACELT1612	ACHHS081	ACHHS098
ACELY1686	ACELY1698	ACHHS083	ACHHS100
ACELY1690	ACELY1701	ACHHS216	ACHHS101
ACELY1691	ACELY1702	ACHHS084	ACHHS102
ACELY1694		ACHHS085	ACHHS103
		ACHHS086	ACHHS104
			ACHHS105

\*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.



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas

## Discussion Questions and Activities

View the cover and title. Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author
- The publisher

Discuss the following: What is the role of the author?  
What is the role of the publisher?

From the front and back cover what information can you learn about the book? What do you think this book is about? What information do you think will be covered in this book? What type of book is this and where would you expect to find it in your library?

How does the layout of this book affect the readability of the text? Consider the large illustrations and photos, small blocks of text, and bold and coloured sections of text.

Find the following sections in *Child Convicts* and explain their purpose. In what kind of books might you find these sections?

- Glossary
- References
- Index

In what order is a glossary set out? How does this help when using it?

What is the purpose of an index? In what sort of books would you find one?

Who is the audience for this book? What makes you think that? Who do you think might enjoy this book other than the intended audience?

Using the timeline that runs from pages 20 – 29 as a base, create your own version of the timeline including extra information and pictures found in your school library or online. Use an online interactive timeline creator such as Time Toast ([www.timetoast.com](http://www.timetoast.com)) or Tiki-Toki ([www.tiki-toki.com](http://www.tiki-toki.com)).

As a class, have a discussion on the reliability of information found online. Are all websites reliable? Discuss how addresses ending in .gov or .edu are generally reliable, but other addresses ending in .com need to be used with caution. Why can some websites feature unreliable information?

Conditions for children in England in the late 1700s were very poor, with limited education, health care and entering the workforce at a very young age. Compare this with conditions for children in Australia today. How

does mandatory education and accessible health care change a person's prospects in life?

Write a journal from the perspective of one of the child convicts mentioned in the book. Discuss what caused them to commit the crime they were transported for, their trial, transportation and living conditions in Australia.

Read "My Name is 5418" on page 7. By stripping prisoners of all their belongings, riveting irons to their feet and replacing their name with a number, what message was the British authorities giving to the prisoners entering the hulks and potential offenders?

Imagine you were organising the First Fleet before it left England. Make a list of all the items you would need to place on board to ensure the passengers would survive the journey and the colonisation of the new world? Also list other items that the new colony would want, but not necessarily need.

How do we commemorate the date of the arrival of the first fleet? Why is it important that we recognise this date each year? What activities happen in your local area on this date each year?

Research the first penal colony in your state. List any landmarks, streets, suburbs or buildings that have been named after key people involved in the colony.

Why did the British explorers think that Australia was *Terra Nullis*, when the Indigenous Australians had been the custodians of the land for thousands of years? Once the British explorers discovered the existence of the Indigenous Australians, why do you think the British continued to settle on the land?

What would Indigenous Australians have thought about the British when seeing them for the first time?

Research Pemulwuy in your school library or online to find out more about his place in history.

Write a short story based on one of the photos or drawings in *Child Convicts*. Look for visual clues in the image for an idea of who these people were, what they were doing and whether they were successful or not. Your story can be from the perspective of any of the people in the image.

Divide the class into groups to make a podcast based on a section of the book. This podcast should have students explaining their understanding of the subject, not just reading from the book.