

## These notes are for:

- Primary years 3-6
- Ages 8+

## Key Learning Areas:

- English
- Art

## Example of:

- Novel
- Fantasy genre
- Illustrated fiction

## National Curriculum Focus:\*

English content descriptions include:

| Year 3    | Year 4    | Year 5    | Year 6    |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| ACELA1476 | ACELA1498 | ACELA1502 | ACELA1525 |
| ACELT1601 | ACELT1605 | ACELT1610 | ACELT1614 |
| ACELT1594 | ACELT1794 | ACELT1798 | ACELT1800 |
| ACELT1791 | ACELT1607 | ACELT1609 | ACELT1613 |
| ACELT1599 | ACELY1694 | ACELT1608 | ACELT1617 |
| ACELT1600 | ACELY1687 | ACELT1612 | ACELY1709 |
| ACELY1675 | ACELY1690 | ACELY1704 | ACELT1801 |
| ACELY1682 |           |           |           |
| ACELY1676 |           |           |           |

\*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.

## Themes/Ideas:

- Fantasy
- Quests
- Courage
- Leadership
- Language

\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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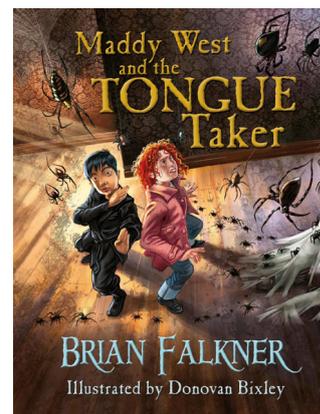
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## Maddy West and the Tongue Taker

### Maddy West and the Tongue Taker

Author: Brian Falkner  
Illustrator: Donovan Bixley  
ISBN: 9781921977671  
ARRP: \$19.95  
NZRRP: \$22.99  
October 2012



## Outline:

Maddy West can speak every language in the world. When she is asked to translate some ancient scrolls, Maddy is excited. But the scrolls hide many secrets. Secrets that send Maddy on a wild adventure with a stowaway ninja, a mysterious monkey, a Bulgarian wrestler and a fiendish witch. And soon Maddy finds herself in deadly peril. Does Maddy have what it takes to save herself and her new friends?

Combining whimsical humour with a fast-paced plot full of twists and turns, *Maddy West and the Tongue Taker* is an absorbing fantasy adventure certain to appeal to both male and female readers.

## Author/Illustrator Information:

### Brian Falkner

Brian Falkner was born and raised in Auckland. He is the award-winning, best-selling author of several novels for children and young adults including *The Flea Thing*, *The Real Thing* and *The Super Freak*. His action adventure sci-fi novels *The Tomorrow Code* and *Brainjack* were both short-listed for the New Zealand Post Book Awards for Children & Young Adults and the Esther Glen Award at the LIANZA Awards, with *Brainjack* winning the New Zealand Post Book Awards, Children's Choice Award (Young Adult Fiction category). *Brainjack* also won the 2010 Sir Julius Vogel Award, Best Young Adult Novel. Both these novels have also been published in the USA and Germany.

### Donovan Bixley

Born in Australia, Donovan Bixley moved to New Zealand with his family as a young boy. He studied at AUT school of Art and Design in Auckland and has become a highly successful illustrator. He has also written several books of his own. He lives in Taupo with his wife and three daughters.

## 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.



## Discussion Questions and Activities

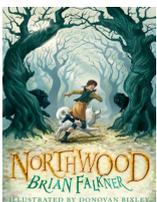
- Before reading *Maddy West and the Tongue Taker*, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:
  - » The title of the book
  - » The author
  - » The illustrator
  - » The publisher
  - » The blurb.
- Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end?
- 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.
- Fill out the below grid by identifying the orientation, complication and resolution of the story. Ask students to try to identify this structure in other books or movies. As a class, discuss how these narrative features give meaning to stories.

| Orientation | Complication | Resolution |
|-------------|--------------|------------|
|             |              |            |

- In small groups, make a mind map of some of the characteristics of the fantasy genre. Consider settings, characters, events and themes. In what ways does *Maddy West and the Tongue Taker* resemble a typical fantasy novel? How is it different?
- Keep a “Vocab Journal” while reading the novel. Make a note of any words you come across that are unfamiliar and look up their meaning. Also keep track of any words or phrases that you particularly like and write a note next to each explaining why you like that word/phrase.
- In small groups, explain how Maddy demonstrates the following character traits in the novel:
  - » resourcefulness
  - » courage
  - » persistence
  - » compassion
  - » independence.
- Create a comic strip of a key scene from the novel.

- “When Kazuki grew up, he wanted to be a ninja warrior.” page 17
- Research ninjas and write a report on where they come from and what they do. Ask students if they have read any books or seen any movies about ninjas. As a class discuss what everyone knows about ninjas.
  - Imagine the witch cast a spell on you and you couldn’t talk to your friends and family. In small groups, brainstorm other ways you could communicate. Ask a member from each group to write their ideas on the board then compare each group’s ideas.
  - Play a game of charades with the class. Ask students to take turns pretending the witch has taken their tongue. That student has to act out a scene from the book and the class has to guess the word or phrase. For example, a student could act out ‘monkey in the bag’ or ‘flying on a plane’ or ‘going on TV’ etc.
  - As a class, make a poster with facts about Bulgaria. Make sure the poster contains information such as where Bulgaria is on a world map, what language they speak there, famous landmarks, facts about its history and culture etc.
  - List the places that Maddy visits in the book. (Hint: Maddy tells Kazuki about her travel plans in chapter eight) Use an online world map (such as Google Maps <https://www.google.com/maps> or Google Earth <http://www.google.com/earth/>) to track Maddy’s journey.
  - Examine the language used to describe the witch’s house in chapter fourteen. Why has the author used this language? What mood is he creating? What are some other words that the author could have used to describe the house?
  - Choose a scene in the novel and rewrite it from the perspective of another character. For example, the scene where Maddy first meets the Chocolate Witch, from the witch’s perspective. Focus particularly on the character’s attitudes and feelings, rather than simply recounting events.
  - Write your own fantasy story then publish it on Brian Falkner’s website ([http://www.brianfalkner.co.nz/Story\\_write.asp](http://www.brianfalkner.co.nz/Story_write.asp)) If you’re stuck, you may like to look at the “Story Starters” on the site for inspiration ([http://www.brianfalkner.co.nz/story\\_starters.asp](http://www.brianfalkner.co.nz/story_starters.asp)).

## Other great fantasy titles from Walker Books



### Northwood

Author: Brian Falkner  
 Illustrator: Donovan Bixley  
 9781921529801  
 AU\$19.95/NZ\$22.99  
 Teachers' notes available



### The Not-So Goblin Boy

Ezekiel Kwaymillina  
 9781921720154  
 AU\$16.95/NZ\$18.99



### Dragonkeeper

Carole Wilkinson  
 9781742032450  
 AU\$19.95/NZ\$21.99  
 Teachers' notes available