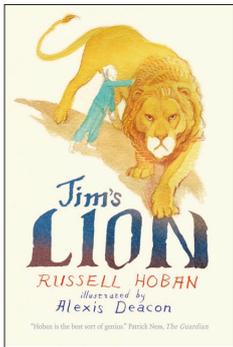


Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Jim's Lion

Author: Russell Hoban
 Illustrator: Alexis Deacon
 ISBN: 9781406346022
 ARRP: \$19.95
 NZRRP: \$24.99
 June 2014

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

Walker Books Australia
 Locked Bag 22
 Newtown, N.S.W., 2042
 Ph +61 2 9517 9577
 Fax +61 2 9517 9997

These notes were created by Steve Spargo.
 For enquiries please contact:
 educationwba@walkerbooks.com.au

Notes © 2014 Walker Books Australia Pty. Ltd.
 All Rights Reserved

Outline:

A touching story about a boy in hospital, who dreams wild and extraordinary dreams as he faces a life-saving operation.

Jim is in hospital. He's frightened. What if the doctors send him somewhere that he can't find his way back from? Nurse Bami tells Jim that he must go to his "good place" and there, his "finder" will come looking for him. Everyone has a finder. And so, deep in Jim's dreams, he finds his: a lion. In *Soonchild*, Russell Hoban's final piece of fiction before he died, Alexis Deacon met the spirit and wit of Hoban's vision head-on – brilliantly capturing the dark magic that lay at the heart of this fable. Since then, it feels almost impossible to imagine a better match for Hoban's words than Alexis' art.

Author/Illustrator Information:

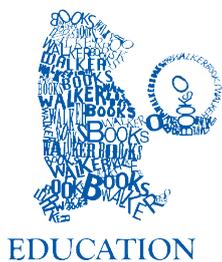
Russell Hoban was the renowned author of many famous novels, including *Turtle Diary* (which was made into a film starring Ben Kingsley and Glenda Jackson) and *Riddley Walker*, which won the John W. Campbell Award for science fiction.

Alexis Deacon's first picture book *Slow Loris* was shortlisted for the Blue Peter Book Award. His second, *Beegu*, was shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Award and selected by the *New York Times* as one of the year's best illustrated children's books. In 2008, he was chosen as one of the Booktrust's Ten Best New Illustrators.

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary years 5-6 • Secondary years 7-9 • Ages 10+ 	Key Learning Areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English 	Example of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graphic novel 	Themes/ Ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illness • Bravery/ Inner strength • Emotional journey 		
National Curriculum Focus:* English content descriptions include:					
Year 5 ACELT1609 ACELT1795 ACELT1610 ACELT1612 ACELT1798 ACELY1704	Year 6 ACELT1613 ACELT1614 ACELT1615 ACELT1616 ACELT1618 ACELT1800 ACELY1708 ACELY1711 ACELY1801	Year 7 ACELA1782 ACELA1531 ACELA1764 ACELT1619 ACELT1620 ACELT1621 ACELT1803 ACELT1625 ACELT1805 ACELT1721 ACELY1724	Year 8 ACELA1542 ACELA1543 ACELA1548 ACELT1627 ACELT1628 ACELT1807 ACELT1629 ACELT1632 ACELT1768 ACELY1732 ACELY1735	Year 9 ACELA1553 ACELA1560 ACELT1771 ACELT1634 ACELT1635 ACELT1636 ACELT1637 ACELT1772 ACELT1773 ACELY1746	*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

Before reading, view the cover and title. Identify the following:

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

Discuss the following: What is the role of the author/illustrator? What is the role of the publisher? Who else is involved in the making of a book? What age do you think the intended audience for this book is? What is the purpose of this book (i.e. to entertain, to inform, etc.)?

From the front and back cover what information can you learn about the book? What do you think this book is about? How do you think the book will begin/end?

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 most graphic novels (and comics), there is usually a white space between the panels called the gutter. According to comic expert Scott McCloud, 'the gutter plays host to much of the magic and mystery' of comics. He continues: 'Here in the limbo of the gutter, human imagination takes two separate images and transforms them into a single idea. What effect does the size and spacing of the panels have on the reader? Consider the difference between large and small panels and illustrations that are not bound by a panel. What effect do panels where the illustration is overlapping the boundary have on the reader (see page 6)? Copy a page of the text, cut out the frames and arrange them on a piece of paper with a smaller gutter between each frame and then with a larger gutter. What difference does this make to our reading?

Why do you think the author has chosen a lion as Jim's finder? What do lions traditionally represent? Discuss the different ways the illustrator has depicted the lion on pages 5, 24-25, 60-61 and 76-77. What is he trying to represent with these illustrations? How does he achieve this?

Choose a section of prose from this novel and recreate it as a wordless or almost-wordless graphic novel in a similar fashion to Alexis Deacon's illustrations. Also, take a section of graphic novel and recreate it as prose in Russel Hoban's style. Was it easy or difficult to translate text to graphic novel and vice versa? What limitations does each style have?

Traditionally books will have a dedication page and a title page before the story starts, however in *Jim's Lion* the story starts on the dedication page (page 1). What effect does this have on the reader? Compare it to a film or television show with a sequence before the title sequence.

Choose one of the dream sequences from pages 1-13, 40-44, 55-80 (this sequence can be broken down further as it is quite long) and describe the symbolism that Alexis Deacon uses to convey the struggle that is happening within Jim.

The graphic novel format is an effective way of presenting a dream/nightmare sequence. Keep a dream diary for a few nights and present one of your dreams as a graphic novel sequence. You can choose to either share your creation with the class and explain how well you think you captured the essence of your dream in graphic novel format, or choose to keep your work private.

In *Jim's Lion* the real world is presented as prose and the dream world is presented as graphic novel. Why do you think the book was created this way? Do you think it is an effective way to tell this story? Why or why not?

Study the spread on pages 32-33. What is Deacon drawing the reader's focus to on this page? Why? What is the significance of the toys on Jim's bed that are in colour? What is Deacon saying about the effect of the real world on the dream world?

Study the illustration on page 44. What changes are happening to Jim at this point in the story? How has he changed since the beginning of the novel? How does this act as a precursor to what happens to Jim by the end of the novel?

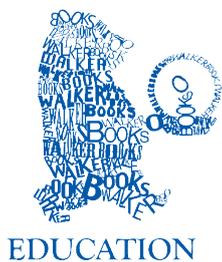
How does the lion help Jim through his illness? Pay particular attention to the change in Jim when he and the lion make contact on page 49 and then when the lion is injured on page 71.

What does the beach pebble on page 82 symbolise? Describe the relationship between Jim and Bami through the novel and the effect it has on Jim's health and recovery.

Discuss how Hoban and Deacon use extended metaphor to represent Jim's illness and his journey through a risky operation into recovery.

Write a diary from Nurse Bami's perspective about her interaction with Jim. Why does she tell him about the finder and good places? How does she feel about Jim and his health? Why does she send him the Christmas present?

Write a review of *Jim's Lion*. Did this match your original expectations of the book?



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

Did you find the story of *Jim's Lion* confronting? Were you able to relate to Jim? Has reading this story changed how you feel about illness and operations? Do you think this was a powerful story?

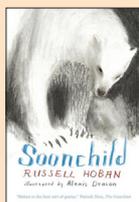
If you were to create a movie of *Jim's Lion* what music would you choose to accompany it?

Visual Analysis Worksheet for *Jim's Lion*

Use this retrieval chart to compare the use of visual features across various scenes in the graphic novel

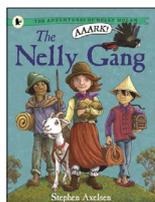
Visual Elements	Scene: _____ Page #: _____	Scene: _____ Page #: _____
Objects What objects and people can you see?		
Size What size are the objects in relation to each other		
Setting Is a setting obvious? What is it?		
Colours What are the predominant colours used?		
Position Where are objects in relation to each other? Are they in the fore-, middle- or background?		
'Camera' angle From what angle do the pictures appear to be drawn: high eye level, low, bird's eye view?		
'Shot' type What type of 'shot' has been used: close-up, medium, long, very long, etc.?		
Depth of Field What is and isn't in focus?		
Light Is the picture light or dark? Is it the same all over?		
Lines and vectors In what direction do lines in the picture lead the eye?		
Body language and clothing What facial expressions, gestures, use of space can you see? What is being worn?		

Also by Russell Hoban and Alexis Deacon



Soonchild
9781406329919
AU\$27.95/NZ\$29.99

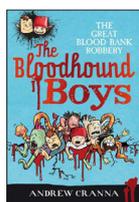
More great graphic novels from Walker Books



The Adventures of Nelly Nolan: The Nelly Gang
Stephen Axelsen

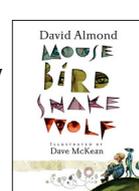
9781921977916
AU\$19.95/NZ\$24.99

Classroom ideas available



The Bloodhound Boys: The Great Blood Bank Robbery
Andrew Cranna

9781922179302
AU\$19.95/NZ\$24.99



Mouse Bird Snake Wolf
David Almond
Dave McKean

HB 9781406322897
AU\$19.95/NZ\$24.99
PB 9781406345995
AU\$16.95/NZ\$18.99

See Walker Books' full range of graphic novels at classroom.walkerbooks.com.au