

## **This is Banjo Paterson**

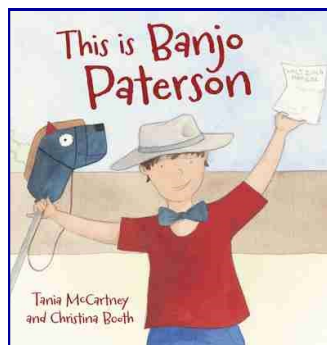
By Tania McCartney & Illustrated by Christina Booth

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Andrew Barton 'Banjo' Paterson was a man of many talents and accomplishments. In his lifetime, he fulfilled the roles of poet, lyricist, journalist, correspondent, speaker, author, clerk, solicitor, ambulance driver, soldier, sportsman, jockey, horse vet, bushman, farmer and radio commentator. He was a fine sportsman and loved hunting and fishing, but his great love was horses and the Australian bush. He travelled the world and lived a life of great creative passion, and his story is something that intrigues both adults and children alike, leaving a cultural legacy that continues to this day through his books, his poetry and, of course, *Waltzing Matilda*. This charming picture book for young children is a celebration of a man who became a world-traveller, hobnobbing with the glittering literati, but who still remained true to his roots, with a lifelong love of the Australian bush—something that called to him throughout his life. Children can join Banjo, his family, dog and neighbourhood friends, as they recount the life of Banjo Paterson with an afternoon of backyard playtime that truly typifies childhood. Illustrations by the award-winning Christina Booth are age-appropriate, active and heart-warming, making this impressive biography accessible to even the youngest of children.



Teacher Notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher. A full version is available on our website.

### **Discussion Questions & Activities:**

- Explore the poetry of Banjo Paterson or excerpts of his works, such as the well-known *Waltzing Matilda*, *The Man from Snowy River*, *Clancy of the Overflow*, or lesser-known works such as *Santa Claus*.
- Read poems, such as *Old Man Platypus*, *Fur and Feathers* and *Frogs in Chorus*, from Banjo's children's book *The Animals That Noah Forgot* (1933).
- Play a recording of *Waltzing Matilda* and discuss how the song came to be written.
- Discuss how Banjo got his nickname. His real name was Andrew Barton Paterson.
- Discuss the concept of nicknames. Nicknames can be a short or familiar. Why are people given nicknames? Do you have a nickname?
- Have children bring in old and new family photos, and identify each person, if possible. Photos from Banjo's time (the 1860s to the 1940s) would be ideal. Create family trees using photocopies of the photos.
- Compare the old photos with the newer ones. Discuss how they are different. How is life for families different now? For example, shopping, washing, communication, transport, housing, schools, playing. What might Banjo's early childhood have been like?
- Look up a building online from Banjo's time (between the 1860s and the 1940s). What does this building tell us about the past? Why was it designed this way? How was this building important in daily life? What happened there? Is it still used? If so, what for?
- Note the speech and thought bubbles used throughout *This Is Banjo Paterson*. They add extra childlike language to the storyline, and also celebrate Banjo's lifelong love of, and dedication to, poetry and rhyme. What other book genre uses speech and thought bubbles? What is the purpose of these bubbles?
- Have children illustrate a short story from history or from their imagination and add character speech bubbles to enhance the meaning of the narrative.