

Teachers' notes: *A Walk in the Bush*, by Gwyn Perkins

Little Iggy doesn't want to leave the house, but Grandad insists – they always have fun together. What follows is a wonderful journey in the great Australian outdoors with singing birds, wallaby surprises, secret caterpillar messages and oodles of grandad humour.

Here is a story about the wonders of nature, the funny side of life and spending time with the ones we love.

STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the story, ask the students to look at the front and back covers and discuss what might happen in the story.
- Grandad and Iggy go on an adventure in the bush and meet many animals. Ask the students to identify their favourite animal from the story and write down everything they know about that animal.
- Ask the students to write their own story about a time they explored nature. Have them study the illustrations in *A Walk in the Bush*, and use them as inspiration for their own illustrations, to accompany their own story.
- As a group, discuss with the students what is special about grandparents. Ask them to write a letter to their own grandad (or other carer), outlining the things the student likes to do with them.
- Discuss the feelings that Iggy displays throughout the book. On pages 4–7, what might tell the students that Iggy does not want to go out? How do they think Iggy is feeling by the end of the book? Turn to page 8. Ask the students to look at Iggy's face and describe how they think Iggy might be feeling, while looking at the goanna. How can they tell? Is there anything else about Iggy's body that might tell them Iggy is feeling scared? Ask the students to find another page in the book where Iggy seems to be scared.
- Look at the illustrations together and ask the students to identify animals that appear on more than one page.
- Discuss whether the animals featured in the book are found anywhere else in the world. Talk about the habitat of the animals in the book.
- On page 14, Grandad points out new shoots growing after a bushfire. Discuss bushfires with the students, talking about what might make a bushfire more severe (i.e. dry vegetation, hot weather). Discuss what trees might look like when they've been burnt by bushfires, and how they can regenerate afterwards.
- Talk about the language used in the story. Have the students identify the nouns. Have them to identify the adjectives, and discuss what adjectives do. Ask them what they think Grandad means when he says, 'That's called a wallaby surprise'.
- On page 16 we see a bird feeding on nectar. Have the students list each of the animals featured in the book, and discuss what each of them might eat.

- As a group, discuss what other animals live in the bush that would not be seen during the day (nocturnal animals). Discuss where they might be during the day, when Grandad and Iggy are walking through the bush.
- Look at pages 17–18 and ask the students how crushing eucalyptus leaves might make them smell. Put the students in pairs and have them list the other smells they might come across in the bush.
- Grandad and Iggy find a secret caterpillar message made in the bark of a tree. Have the students write their own secret message with their own secret code. Put them in pairs, have them swap messages and try to decipher their partner’s message.
- Discuss what kinds of things birds might communicate about. Put the students in small groups and ask them to write a short play about a conversation between some birds in the bush. Have each student draw one of the birds featured in the book, cut it out and paste it onto an ice-cream stick, to use as characters in the play.
- On pages 26–27, Grandad and Iggy are sitting quietly, listening to the sounds of the bush. Ask the students why it might be that this spread does not contain any text. Have the students identify what things they can see in the illustration that might make sounds (for example, the water, the birds, the wind rustling the leaves in the trees).
- Use the story as a springboard to a discussion about the importance of our natural environment, what conservation means, and what we can do to look after our environment.

THEMES

A Walk in the Bush highlights the beauty of the Australian bush. Grandad and Iggy meet many interesting animals, and Iggy learns about some of the amazing aspects of the environment.

It’s also a story about family. Grandad and Iggy enjoy exploring the bush, spotting various animals, talking about what they see and simply spending time together.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born in Melbourne in 1942, Gwyn Perkins began his artistic career when he won a newspaper drawing prize of one guinea and a box of paints (mistakenly awarded to Miss Gwyn Perkins). He spent many years as a successful animator in the advertising industry before moving to an island north of Sydney to enjoy a slower pace. He spends his days drawing, sailing and doing odd jobs for his friends and family. Gwyn has two adult sons and lives with his wife and teenage daughter.