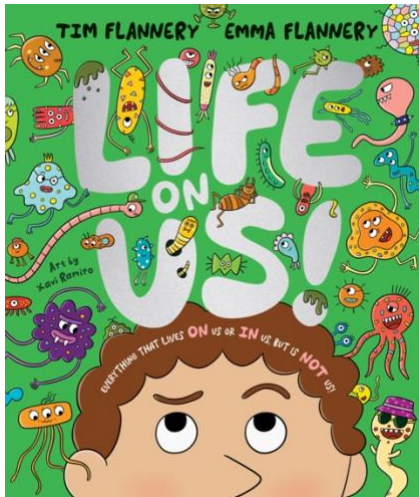


## Teacher's Notes



### LIFE ON US!

Written by Tim Flannery & Emma Flannery

Illustrated by Xavi Ramiro

Teacher's Notes by Bec Kavanagh

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### LEARNING OUTCOMES

#### RECOMMENDED FOR

Middle-grade readers (ages 8-13, grades 5-6)

#### KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: Science
- General capabilities:
  - AC9S5U01
  - AC9S6U01
  - AC9S5I06
  - AC9S6I06

### THEMES

- Bodies
- Systems
- Germs
- Health
- Hygiene
- Symptoms

### SYNOPSIS

In *Life On Us!*, dynamite father-daughter duo, Tim and Emma Flannery, turn their scientific brilliance to a complex habitat, home to all kinds of weird and disgusting life – us!

Using their trademark humour and individual anecdotes, the writers take us on a tour of all the things that call our bodies home. *Life On Us!* is informative and frank, exploring the signs and symptoms of good and bad microbes, and pesky parasites. Which ones should we welcome? Which ones should we watch out for? And how do we make sure everything stays in balance?

This book looks at all the different habitats our bodies provide to the organisms that live on (and in!) us. From the skin to the guts, and all parts in between (eek!), you'll be amazed to discover how busy our bodies really are. Delivered in bite-sized chunks and supported by quirky illustrations, this is an accessible introduction to bodies.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

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**Professor Tim Flannery** is one of the world's leading scientists, explorers and conservationists. He is the author of more than thirty books, including the bestselling *Explore Your World* series for children, and the award-winning *Here on Earth* (2010), *The Weather Makers* (2005) and *Atmosphere of Hope* (2015). He has held positions in renowned institutions across Australia and internationally, including Director of the South Australian Museum, Visiting Chair in Australian Studies at Harvard University and Distinguished Research Fellow at the Australian Museum. He was named Australian of the Year in 2007. He is a frequent presenter on ABC Radio, NPR and the BBC, and has also written and presented several series on the Documentary Channel.

**Emma Flannery** is a science communicator who has explored caves, forests and oceans across most of the globe's continents in search of the elusive fossils, animals and plants that help us understand our planet and who we are in it. With postgraduate experience in geology, chemistry and palaeontology, Emma's research and writing has been published in scientific journals, children's books and a number of museum-based adult education tours. She is the co-founder of Museophiliac, an independent curatorial service aimed at bringing science to life for a range of audiences, and has produced programs for the City of Sydney and the Australian Museum,.

**Illustrator Xavi Ramiro** is passionate about communicating through drawing. He creates digital art that appears on screens, paper, canvases, walls, and in exhibition halls. He lives in Girona (Catalonia), Spain, and works worldwide.

## THEMES

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The book is broken into three main parts (supported by shorter context sections). These are:

- Friendly Fellows
- Gross Germs
- Pesky Parasites

Discuss the similarities and differences between these three broader categories, as well as the more specific sub-categories within them. Which are good and bad? How can we fight off organisms that will make us sick and protect those that make us healthy?

### Understanding our body

The underlying theme of the book is the human body and health. Understanding the various systems of our body allows us to make healthy choices. What do you currently know about the way your body works? Reflect on what you've learned once you finish the book.

## WRITING STYLE

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Science writing is a necessary skill for all scientists to develop, because it allows them to note down their observations, keep a record of changes, and communicate their findings and ideas to other people. Science writing can be done in a notebook, or posters, charts and diagrams.



(You can find more information about science writing here

<https://www.exploratorium.edu/education/ifi/inquiry-and-eld/educators-guide/science-writing#:~:text=Science%20writing%20is%20a%20particular,classroom%20posters%2C%20charts%20and%20diagrams>)

Find an example of each of these types of writing in the book:

- Information from a notebook (this might be personal anecdotes, or observations)
- Posters
- Charts
- Diagrams

What is the difference between each style of writing? How does each contribute to communicating the key ideas in the book?

Science writing also involves a technical vocabulary – using and understanding the technical terms for things (in this case, the human body). We can help others to understand these technical terms by using simple, easy-to-understand language and real-world examples or images. Underline any technical terms that are specific to each category, and ensure you know what they mean.

## COMPREHENSION

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- What are the main organ systems that make up the human body? What does each one do?
- Where does our microbiome come from? What are three ways that we can look after our microbiome?
- In your own words, describe the gut-brain connection. Why is it so important?
- How many microbes live on your skin? What do they survive on?
- What kind of scents are evidence that microbes are living in or on our body? What other kinds of evidence are listed in the book?
- What is the main role of our immune system? When was the last time you felt your immune system in action?
- Why don't all germs make us sick? What is a contagious disease? Make a list of the contagious diseases you're familiar with.
- What are five ways that we can fight off germs?
- What is a pandemic?
- What are some of the ways that germs are spread?
- What are some of the scarier germs mentioned in the book? How can we avoid them?
- What should you do to get a leech off your body? What other kinds of visible parasites can live on our body?
- 'Even the deadliest bacteria can be helpful in the right circumstance' (p53). What are the 'right circumstances'?
- Why is it so important to wash our hands? How do you wash your hands properly?
- Can some parasites really control our minds?
- How do you feel now you know your body better?



## WRITING EXERCISE

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Choose one of the types of organisms listed in the book and look for signs of them over the course of a week. Make a note of all your findings and observations in a science diary (remembering to use the correct terminology, and to support your observations with diagrams or charts where necessary). Share and compare your notebook with your classmates at the end of the week.

## ILLUSTRATION STYLE

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The images in this book are designed to inform and to entertain, so while they're not as accurate as technical science diagrams (*Veillonella*, p15, doesn't really wear running shorts!), they do still offer a visual representation of the way each organism operates within the body. For example, you might discuss how the expressions indicate to students whether the organism is good or bad for the body, or what its shape or size tells us about how it moves.

## CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

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1. Identify one way that we can look after the (good!) bugs on our bodies and draw a poster that shares this information with others.
2. Microbes are described as 'sidekicks' in the book. Draw a picture of a sidekick microbe – give it a name and a costume.
3. You are what you eat! Create a menu for one day made up of foods to help support your gut microbiome. Can you follow this diet for a week? Write down how you feel at the beginning and at the end of the week.
4. Think about the last time you got sick. Which germ do you think made you sick? Use the information from the book to describe (or draw) what it was doing to your body. Which systems did it attack? Was there any evidence of your immune system fighting off these germs? What was the evidence?
5. Imagine that you are one of the organisms from the book, and draw an eight-panel comic that shows a day in your life.
6. Reflect on your life during Covid-19. How did it change? Write a short reflection on some of the things we did as a community to stop the spread of the virus, and how your own life was different.

## RELATED READING

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*A Really Short Journey Through the Body*

By Bill Bryson

*Your Brilliant Brain*

By Philip Bunting

*Foldout Anatomy*

By Jana Albrechtová

*Argh! There's a Skeleton Inside You!*

By Idan Ben-Barak

