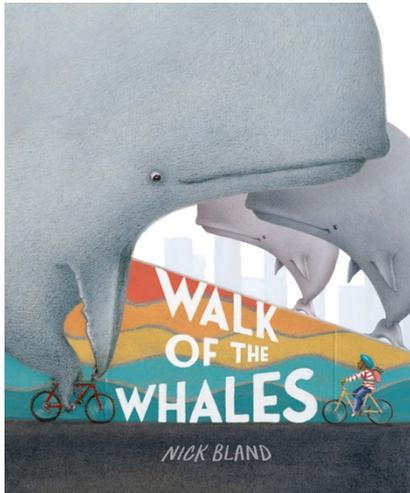


Teacher's Notes



Walk of the Whales

Written and Illustrated by Nick Bland

Teacher's Notes by Bec Kavanagh

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

RECOMMENDED FOR

3+ aged readers (grades 1-2)

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: English, HASS
- General capabilities:
 - ACELA1787
 - ACELA1448
 - ACHASS1026

THEMES

- Caring for our environment
- Understanding each other
- Communication
- Pollution
- Humans and animals

SYNOPSIS

When the whales walked out of the oceans and into the cities and towns, everyone had a different reaction. Some people were happy, and some were angry that the whales took up all the room in the swimming pool, flattened the tyres on all the bicycles, and left rubbish and cracks all over the footpath.

Only one small child, Frida, thinks to *ask* the whales why they left the oceans. When she does the whales tell her that they can't live in the oceans because of all of the rubbish in the water. So the people go into the water and collect their rubbish, and the whales said goodbye to the children and went back to the sea, evermore.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

Nick Bland was born on a farm in Victoria's Yarra Valley, the son of two school teachers. When he moved to the bush at the age of 6, he discovered a wonderful new world and his creativity bloomed. Nick always wanted to be a cartoonist and a writer, but it wasn't until he got a job at a bookshop in his 20's that he finally found a way to bring those two loves together. Untrained, he spent the next couple of years reading every picture book that hit the shelves and began discovering his style as a storyteller and illustrator. He now lives in tropical Darwin where he works full time as an author and illustrator. Nick's books, which include *The Very Cranky Bear*, *The Wrong Book* and *The Runaway Hug*, have been recognised by many different awards, including the Children's Book Council of Australia, the Kids Own Australian Literature Awards and the Australian Book Industry Awards.

THEMES

Walk of the Whales explores themes of cooperation and responsibility, but focuses on pollution and caring for the environment. It might seem like a funny thing to have a town suddenly filled with whales, but Nick Bland uses humour to explore the impact that pollution and a lack of care has on our environment and communities. This delightful story can be used as a stepping stone into conversations about:

- Where our rubbish goes
- The future of the planet
- The relationship between humans and animals
- Care and responsibility

WRITING STYLE

Walk of the Whales is written in a gentle rhyme, despite the hard-hitting themes of the novel. Bland uses contrast to make his point – the different reactions that children and adults have to the whales and the way that whales belong in the ocean in a way that they don't in the towns. Readers might think about the way that we can use contrasting language to think about our choices and reflect on our behaviours.

Invite readers to make a before and after column in their book, and make a note of what life was like before the whales moved in, and what it was like after. Now ask them to use similar columns to imagine life now, and life in the future.

COMPREHENSION

- Why did the whales walk out of the ocean? What would you do if a whale arrived in your town?
- Which lines are repeated in the book?
- Underline the rhyming words on each of the pages.
- How did the cities and towns change when the whales moved in? Were the people happy about the changes? Why/why not?



- What did Frida mean when she said 'you've got the wrong idea'?
- What did the people need to do to get the whales to go back into the ocean?

WRITING EXERCISE

Whales can't talk! Can they?? Write one of the scenes from the book but pretend you're the whale. How do you feel? How do you think whales speak? What kind of whale are you? Draw a picture to accompany your story.

ILLUSTRATION STYLE

Nick Bland's signature illustrations blend realism with cartoon colour and fun – a perfect combination for a story about whales unexpectedly arriving in the town. These illustrations are immediately eye catching, and so will hold the attention of young readers, but with plenty of small, funny details on each page that will reward those readers looking a bit closely.

Readers might like to look at the different kinds of whales represented in the pictures or compare the way they interact with the parts of the town and the people in it. Invite students to comment on the things that make the whales look out of place in the town in each of the illustrations, and to think about the expressions on their faces. Are they happy or unhappy? Why might this be?

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- What happens when you throw something away? Draw a map or write a story that shows where one piece of rubbish goes after you throw it away.
- What can we do to make sure that our rubbish doesn't end up in the oceans and rivers? Make a list of three ways that we can stop pollution getting into our waterways.
- The pictures in the book show a lot of ways that things go wrong when the whales move into the town. What other things could happen? Write a scene about something else that might happen when the whales move in. Try to make it rhyme!
- How would you feel if a whale moved into your house? Write a conversation between you and whale who has just arrived on your doorstep!
- Pollution is just one of the issues facing our oceans and the animals who live there. What are some of the other problems? Which animals might arrive in our cities and towns asking for help next? What can we do now to help them?

RELATED READING

'The Polar Bear of Sydney Town' by Beck Feiner
'Masters of Disguise' by Marc Martin

