



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Middle and upper primary
(ages 8-11 years; Years 3 to 5)

CONTENTS

1. Plot summary	1
2. About the author & illustrator	2
3. Author & illustrator's inspiration	2
4. Worksheets	5
5. Further reading	14
6. Order form	15

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English, Humanities and Social Sciences
- **General capabilities:** Literacy, Critical & Creative Thinking, Personal & Social Capability.

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- A fun and exciting way to learn about story-making and the role of cartoon illustration
- A stepping off point to talk about history, social class, and the vital role of shipping in discovery and transport of goods in a time long before air travel.
- A vehicle for learning about geography and maps.

THEMES

- Pirates!
- Adventure and risk-taking
- History
- Geography/maps

PREPARED BY

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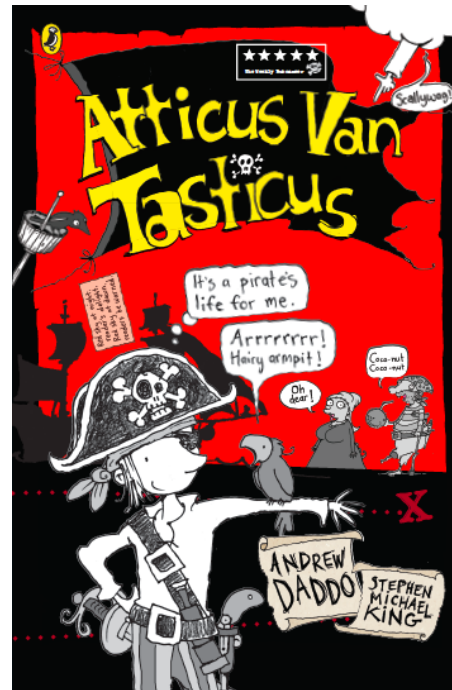
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Atticus Van Tasticus

Andrew Daddo &
Stephen Michael King

PLOT SUMMARY

A ten-year-old pirate captain? Absurd? Not in the world of *Atticus Van Tasticus*, the first in a fabulously funny illustrated junior fiction series from the brilliant and whacky creative minds of Andrew Daddo and Stephen Michael King.

It's 1750, when times were tough and teeth were rotten... As part of an ancient family tradition, young Atticus Van Tasticus narrowly escapes a life down the coal mines – or worse, going to school – when he gets to choose the gift of a pirate ship from his Grandnan's treasure pile.

It's a choice that will change the course of history – well, OK, *his* story, at least. Atticus pulls together a rag-tag bunch misfits – AHM – a tough, brilliant crew, and sets out to wreak havoc – I mean – live a piratin' life.

With little else to his name, Atticus has a taste for adventure, beauty and danger – where any minute might be your last, and your next minute could be your best (...if only they could get off the dock).

'Evoking Roald Dahl mixed with the 13-Storey Treehouse, Atticus Van Tasticus is a zany romp for confident and reluctant readers alike.'
Books+Publishing



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

When Andrew Daddo lost his head hair and replaced it with face hair, he looked in the mirror and realised with a shock that he was a pirate. As in, he's spent his whole life searching for treasure. And he's looked in some weird spots – on TV shows, in podcasts, and as an author of books - almost 30 of them. Treasure, treasure, treasure . . . and now, working with Stephen Michael King, he feels like he's found it.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Stephen Michael King doesn't care if you know he's a real pirate. Or that he lives on an island with scurvy dogs and his clothes have holes. He doesn't even care if you know he's now got real treasure – stacks of it. Chests of shiny awards and medallions for the books he's sold all over the world. But he DOES care if you call him Treasure. Do that, and he'll blacken your teeth with a textaaaaarrrrrr!

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Andrew Daddo says:

First, the idea. I heard this true story on the radio about a gentleman pirate - a rich man in the 18th Century who was bored and loaded with money, and he thought being a pirate might be fun. He went to the docks, bought a ship, hired a crew and went pirating. Weird, I know. But a fun idea.

So I thought, what if a boy did that? And that was the idea behind Atticus – get a boy, a boat and send him out to sea for adventures.

The reality of making that happen was a little harder. It's one thing to have an idea, it's another to actually give it some life. The most important step in the process was telling Stephen Michael King the idea. He said he kind of liked it, but wasn't certain. So I said, how about I write you a few chapters. Now I've gone from an idea to having to actually do something about it - and really, that's the kicker when it comes to writing. My hand was forced, and not only did SMK like what he read, I loved writing it.

So why the 18th Century? Why not now? Well, setting Atticus in the past gave me the luxury of not having to include technology of any kind. No phones, no computers, no snapchat or video games or anything complicated that might date, because the whole scene is dated already. It also gave the characters the chance to invent current technologies without realising it, which can be fun and funny. Through the story, Atticus and his crew create the winged keel, a hydrofoil, the rocket, the pirate ship swing and even the coaster roller. The idea is for readers to think, 'I know that thing,' and later, 'I know those people' (Captain Trumpet, Hulk and Hogan especially).

And there's the fun of telling an old fashioned adventure story.

I did try to write for the pictures SMK would do, but he didn't necessarily draw to my ideas. I definitely left holes in the story that I assumed he would fill with pictures – and sometimes he would, other times, definitely not. And that's the cool thing about working with an illustrator like SMK.

As for the editing of the story, of course there are things that happen in my mind's eye no one else can see. The editor goes through the story and tells me what she doesn't understand so I can either fix them, or get rid of them. They talk about 'the village raising a child,' well this is a 'team raising a book.'

As for the story process, that was fairly straight forward, and went something like this:

- Meet Atticus
- Get him a ship.
- Get the ship to the water.
- Get him a crew.
- Get the ship sailing.
- Hit the ocean seas...

And once on the ocean, it was a matter of doing ocean things, with the key objective to do what pirates do, and that of course meant finding treasure!



ILLUSTRATOR'S INSPIRATION

Stephen Michael King says:

My dad loved all things swashbuckling, whether it was *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Robin Hood* or watching Errol Flynn in *Captain Blood* and *The Sea Hawkes*. When we read *Peter Pan* together, it was a joy to discover how Peter would fly down and quickly kill a pirate, then fly up and casually continue his conversation with Wendy and the gang. *Atticus Van Tasticus* took me back to that place. I dedicated the book to my dad. At times, I felt I'd time warped into my ten-year-old self.

I loved working with Andrew. There's creative energy that we both share. We understand a deadline and having to create something from nothing within a moment. Trusting your intuition and believing in your skills is vital.

Andrew can take a humorous moment and swing it into tenderness/pathos with only a word or two. His humour has the timing of Steve Martin, and he can similarly extend a joke beyond where you think it can go.

When we first started working on the book it didn't have a title. I think I came up with the dumb name of calling it *Pirate Pirate*, and at one time Atticus was going to be Pirate Mary. The process has been a fun and beautiful balancing act, with me filling the book with drawings, while allowing Andrew's words to sing. He's a brilliant writer. We had plenty of phone conversations, shared hundreds of emails and even more laughs.

Andrew and I are a bit of an odd couple. He likes to golf; I've never played. He loves to travel; I prefer to stay at home. But what's familiar is a shared respect for each other's work. Our collaboration isn't one based on debate, it's based on fun and adventure. We both never know what's going to happen until it does, and that's just how we like it.

The Illustration Process

I worked on this book everywhere: in my house, by the fire; on a couch; on our veranda; in my studio; in a Library; and while travelling by plane, to and from a book tour of Brazil. Andrew and I even shared emails while he was working in Antarctica! The drawings were created as fast as I could scribble – about 500 made it into the book, about 2000 didn't.

My drawing process began with an initial loose sketch. I used a light coloured pencil, then overlaid the drawing with a darker 2B-6B graphite pencil. The final art was

traced on a lightbox using a 0.4 felt tip pen. It was then scanned and tinted in Photoshop.

Why not try out your pirate drawing skills?

See *Worksheets 2 & 3*

CLASS ACTIVITIES

Getting into the pirate mood

Get your kids to think like a pirate and develop their own pirate character. Things like:

- A name (see *Worksheet 1* below) – maybe even get them to write their own crazy one paragraph biography, like those of the author and illustrator on *page 2*.
- A bit of a costume – even a scarf tied around their head or a hat cut from black cardboard can do the trick. (Enlarge Atticus's hat on *Worksheet 1 or 2* and trace the shape to use as a template.)
- A job: are they going to be the captain, or First Mate or the one in the crow's nest? (see the crew sheet in *Worksheet 5*)
- If they're the captain, they're in charge, so they control the show.
- If they're First Mate, maybe they like the captain and help out. Or maybe they want to mutiny.
- And if you're up the crow's nest, how does everything look from up there? Is the captain an idiot, or a legend? And maybe it's really you who controls the show, because you see what's coming before anyone else.

Make up an adventure

- Maybe you find a map and head for treasure.
- See another ship and chase them down - or maybe your run away.
- Sail through a storm - where they lose their way and end up somewhere else - anywhere is good.
- End up in a fog and have no idea where they are.

See *Worksheet 5* for some more inspiration.



Tips for historical settings

Look, I'll be honest, the author cheated and said at the beginning of *Atticus Van Tasticus* that it is a made up story. So, the reader knows it's not trying to be a true story. *But...* some things are correct, to create the mood of the times. So if you want to place your story a long time ago try:

- getting rid of all technology – no phones or computers. No video games.
- Giving almost everyone rotten teeth and stinky breath.
- Making all the bad stuff black and white or brown.
- Using some old-fashioned words to describe things – not 'cool', or 'awesome' or 'funky'. Think of words your grandparents might use.

Draw your own alien!

Get your kids to interpret their own alien creature from the Atticus dream sequence.

- Read the storm chapter from pages 100 – 116
- Then have kids look at Stephen Michael King's dream sequence drawing on p116.
- Now get them try to create their own alien, either on a plain sheet of paper or by using one of the pages in Worksheet 3 as a guide (see 4 Alien images below). Have them scribble fast and free with a pencil for no more than 2-5 minutes - then using a pen on top they can take their time to define and change their ideas (similar to the How to Draw Atticus scribbly instructions).
-
- Alternatively, they could use the last image to draw over, redrawing/redesigning the whole scene - creating their own alien and choosing/drawing their favourite characters from the Grandnan crew.



WORKSHEET 1 – Create Your Pirate Name!



Hoist the Jolly Roger, sharpen
yer cutlass and load the cannons –
'tis time fer ye to embrace
yer inner pirate!

Place one o' the options below
between yer first and last names and
ye'll be an official pirate. Aaaaa!



Ivory Bones
Fishface
Slapfoot
Sly Dog
Ugly Mug
Hogbreath
Scallywag
Blue Mane
Silverbeard
Stinkey

Scurvy Sailor
Mad Dog
McGhostface
Magic Harry
Van Tasticus
Coconut
Crazy
One-Legged
Knee Biter
Scoundrel

Did he
call me
Fish Face?



WORKSHEET 2 – Draw Atticus – or yourself as a pirate!

How to draw

Atticus Van Tasticus

WHAT YOU NEED

- 2b (or similar) pencil.
- Black (felt tip) pen.
- A scribbly mind.

Use your pencil to begin.
Think of Atticus as being made from a bunch of shapes: circles, ovals, triangle and lines.
As you improve, be more scribbly and free.
He's an action character, so the faster you draw the more energy he'll have.



Details like hands can also be easy if thought of as simple shapes: a circle for a fist or the palm. If you need fingers, draw sausages. Feet are triangles with scribbly circles for toes. Inside toes are bigger than outside toes.

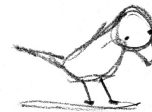
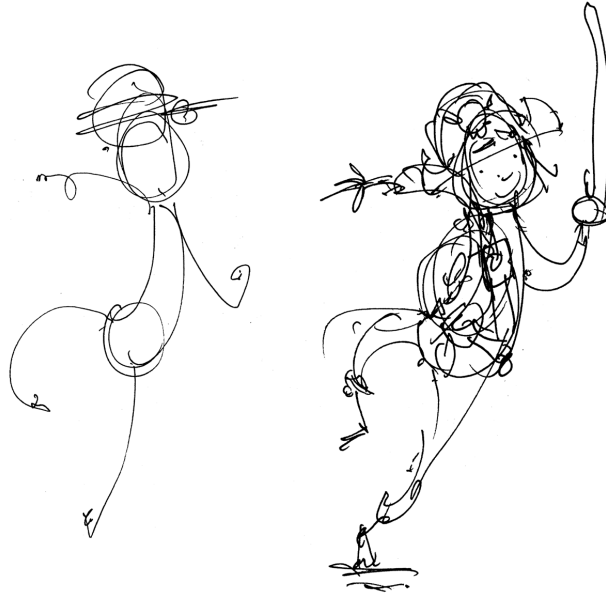


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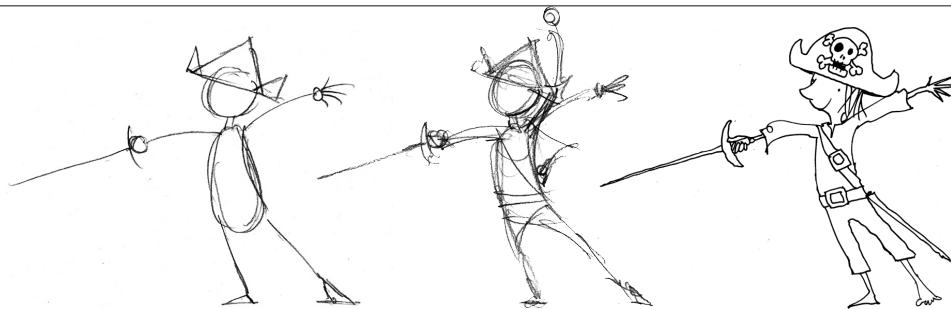


This is a quick two stage, scribbly rough.

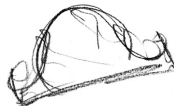
Copy your favourite pictures from your Atticus Van Tasticus book. Use pencil and scribble freely. Then define your drawing with a black pen. Add what you want and be adventurous.



A pirate parrot is the letter "B" tilted with a curved triangle shape, plus added details.



Think of Atticus's hat like it's made from folded paper. Simply add some curves later. The skull and crossed bones is an oval with two rectangles. Draw a scribbly "X" over the top to make sure the bones line up on the opposite side.





Aaaaaarr!

Whichever way Atticus is looking, his hat always faces forward.



TO FINISH

 Place a new piece of paper over your scribbly drawing.

 Trace through using your black pen for a clean, finished and ready for action ...

Atticus Van Tasticus



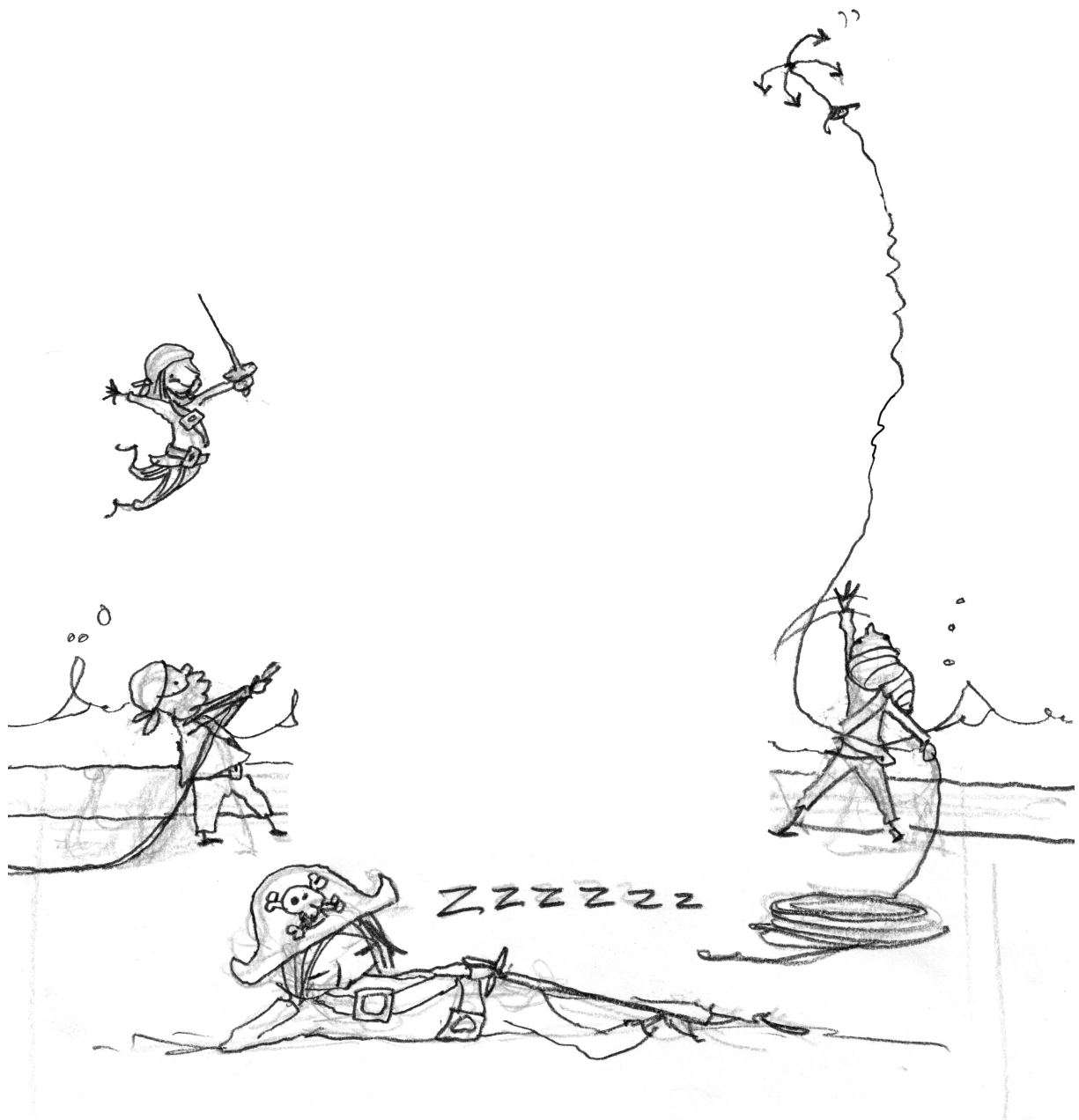
WORKSHEET 3 – Draw Your Own Alien!

b) Trace, colour, change or add to this faded version of the alien



WORKSHEET 3 – Draw Your Own Alien!

a) Create your own alien in the space below. Let your imagination go wild!



WORKSHEET 4 – Pirate Find-a-Word

Atticus Van Tasticus Word Search

Arrrrr, me hearties!

Find all these fantasticus words below in this jumble of letters - especially treasure!
(Beware: they may be up or down, and may even be backwards!)

G J D V E U L W F M J K S R W
N Y U B M R O T S Y E O T Y H
I B X W A D B S K W T R R R A
R C J I D R O W S T A T T O O
R X X P I R A T E E M E Y A W
A D V T L D K P K Y Q J W T H
E M G P Y P I E R A X V Y T M
S T R E A S U R E E G B A I Y
G G D A N G E R Z L E E O C C
L R G R K J W M B W D B E U A
M W X C H S Q U I B B E R S N
R R C R E W V Y X J A Q N X N
C A P T A I N S I S A G E P O
Y P T S A M U D O U B L O O N
M V V X G D G R A N D N A N A

ARRR	ATTICUS	AYE
CANNON	CAPTAIN	CREW
DANGER	DOUBLOON	EARRING
GRANDNAN	MAST	MATE
PEGASIS	PIER	PIRATE
SQUIBBERS	STORM	SWORD
TATTOO	TREASURE	



WORKSHEET 5: Write your own Atticus Adventure...

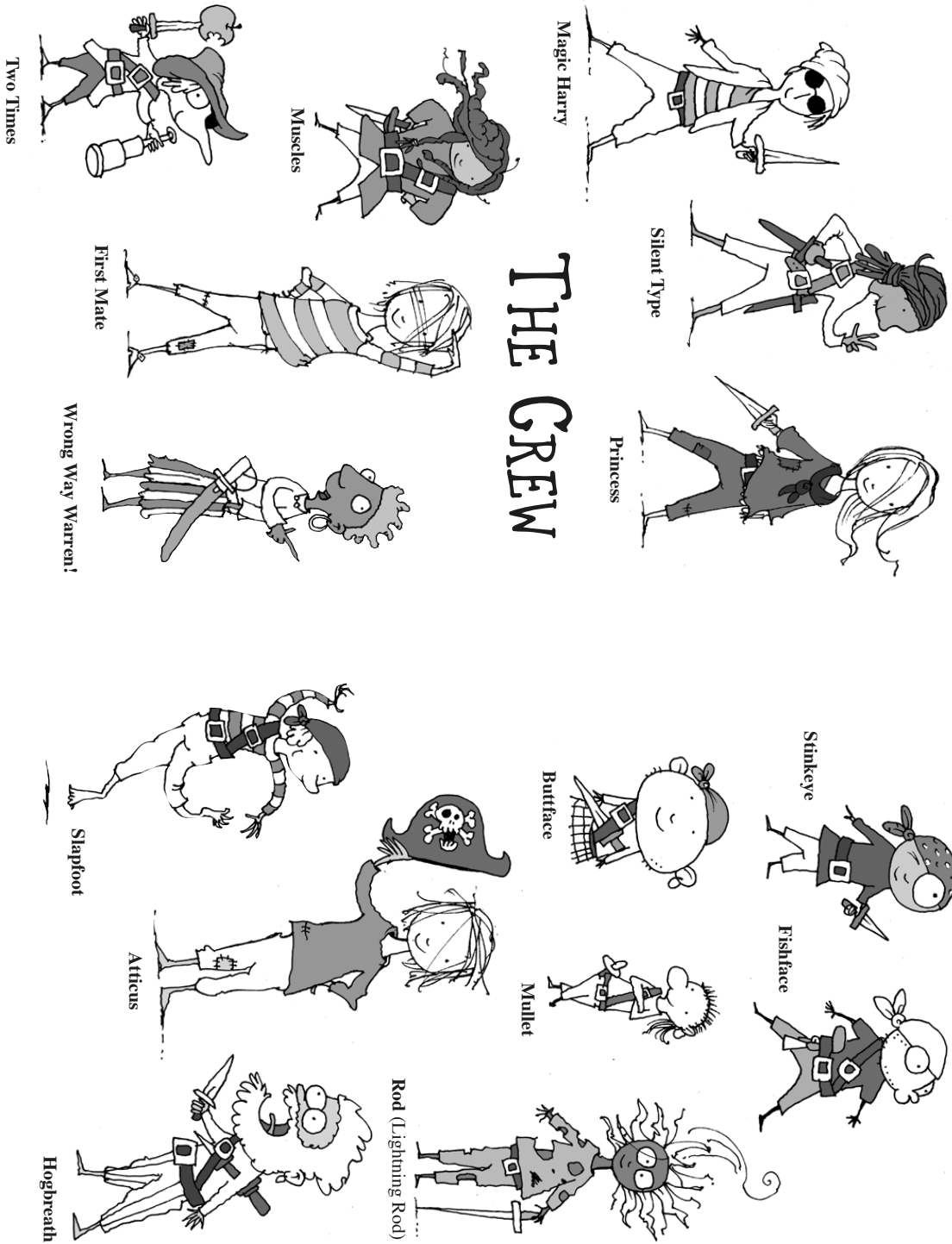
Here's a little taste of Atticus's next adventure. Use these ideas to write a short adventure with Atticus and his crew (and perhaps even create some new characters) – the crazier the better!

Use the crew illustration on the next page to remind you of Atticus's brave crew on *The Grandnan*.

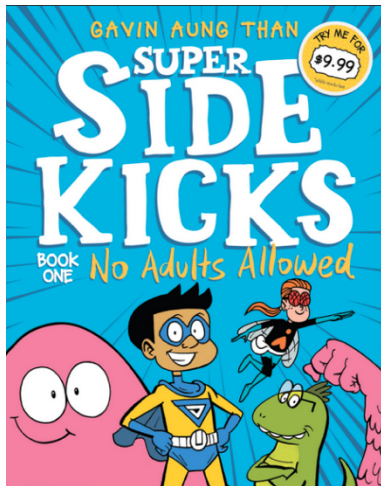


WORKSHEET 5: Write your own Atticus Adventure... (continued)

Here's some characters to include in your story or to inspire you to create your own!



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



Super Sidekicks 1 & 2
by Gavin Aung Than

If you loved the crazy cartoons in Atticus Van Tasticus, then this series is for you...

Being a superhero sidekick isn't as fun as you think. You do all the work, beat the bad guys and save the planet, only for your grown-up partner to get all the credit. Junior Justice is sick of it, so he and his sidekick pals, Flygirl, Dinomite and Goo, have decided to form their own super team

Teachers' resources available.



Other Worlds Series
by George Ivanoff

Find the Key! Open the Doorway! Enter the Other World! An exciting new series from the author of You Choose.

OTHER WORLDS 1: Perfect World Keagan finds a key . . . It opens a doorway . . . He steps through . . . Into a weird world of clones who are obsessed with perfection. But this world isn't as perfect as it seems. Keagan is determined to return home – all he has to do is find a way out of the city, survive the Dumping Ground and outsmart a bunch of rogue clones! Will Keagan escape Perfect World?

Teachers' resources available.



Billy is a Dragon Series
by Nick Falk & Tony Flowers

When nine-year-old Billy Fincher gets bitten by a lizard at his local pet shop, strange things start to happen . . .

His fingernails turn into claws, his skin becomes green and he starts breathing fire. Billy can't hide it any longer – he's turning into a dragon. And being a dragon is more complicated than it sounds! Even though Billy can now fly and protect himself from bullies, he soon has a whole new set of problems; Shifters are everywhere, werewolves are out to get him, and how will he know which of his friends and family he can trust?

Teachers' resources available.



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
Atticus Van Tasticus	Andrew Daddo & Stephen Michael King	9780143796541	3-5	\$14.99		
Super Sidekicks 1: No Adults Allowed	Gavin Aung Than	9780143795865	3-5	\$9.99 (special Bk 1 price)		
Billy is a Dragon 1: First Bite	Nick Falk & Tony Flowers	9780857983053	1-4	\$12.99		
Mr Bambuckles Remarkables	Tim Harris	9780143789024	3-5	\$14.99		
Lingtang and the Pirate Queen	Tamara Moss	9780143783435	4-7	\$16.99		
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