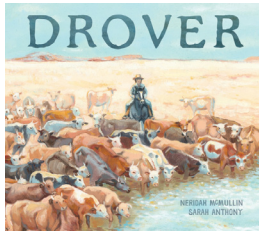




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Drover

Neridah McMullin
Sarah Anthony
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

Walker Books Australia
Locked Bag 22
Newtown, N.S.W., 2042

Ph +61 2 9517 9577
Fax +61 2 9517 9997

These notes were created by Finn Davis and Bethany Nevile.
For enquiries please contact:
educationwba@walkerbooks.com.au

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Outline:

The true story of an important pioneering woman in Australian history.

Courageous, clever and daring, Drover is one of a kind. Travelling through the heart of the outback, Drover delivers a mob of cattle. Searing heat, dust and flies, hardship and danger: these are just part of the job. But there's no place Drover would rather be. The truly remarkable story of legendary drover Edna Jessop is celebrated through stunning oil illustrations and evocative text.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Neridah McMullin grew up surrounded by animals, with a thousand acres to run around in. Her grandfather was a stockman and he bred, trained and raced his own racehorses. As a farm child, she studied science at university and worked as a scientist in Research and Development in the Dairy and Confectionery industry for 16 years. Her dream job took her all over the world. Neridah is the author of seven books for children and loves history and true stories. Her picture book *Fabish: the horse that braved a Bushfire* was shortlisted for the CBCA Eve Pownall Information 'Book of the Year' in 2017. She loves reading until late, sleeping in, walking her dog and meeting other people's dogs.

Sarah Anthony is a painter and metalsmith. She completed six years of art study in the UK, culminating in a BA Joint Honours in Fine Arts and Metalsmithing from Camberwell College of the Arts in London, in 1994. In 2009 she graduated from La Trobe University with a Masters in Art Therapy. Her early artworks were small metal sculptural pieces and contemporary jewellery; these were exhibited in Dublin, London, Auckland, Melbourne and Sydney. After a substantial break from art-making due to raising her young family, she has recently returned to artmaking and exploring the medium of oil painting. *Drover* is her first picture book.

How to Use These Notes:

These notes are for:

- Ages 4-8
- Years F-3

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Picture Book

Themes/Ideas:

- Adventure
- Achievement
- Nature
- Australian History



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before Reading

View the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title
- The author/illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb.

What do you think the story might be about from looking at the title only? Do your ideas change after seeing the cover? Write your own story using the title *Drover*.

Exploring the Book

Who do you think the audience for this book is? Why?

Is *Drover* an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? Can it be more than one type of text? How can you tell?

Write a book review on *Drover*. Include what you liked about the book, who you think would enjoy it the most and mention any other books you think are similar.

On the whiteboard or on a large sheet of paper, place an image of the cover of *Drover* and surround it with words that describe the book. Include words that describe what you liked and what you disliked about the book.

When and where is this story set? How can you tell? Look at the clothes worn by characters and the work they are doing, plus examine the town that Edna passes through. Discuss what is similar and what is different to today.

What is a drover? Does this job still exist? How has it changed over time?

Do you think a drover is uniquely Australian, or might other places in the world have similar roles? As a class, make a list of other countries or cultures where a drover could be useful.

Using what you've learnt from *Drover*, make a timeline of activities you think could happen in a typical day in the life of a drover.

We only find out Drover's real name, Edna, at the very end of the book. Why do you think that Neridah McMullin has chosen to keep Edna's name a secret until the very end? How does this change how you read the story?

Why is it significant that Edna is female? What kind of work was expected of women at this time in history? Think about gender roles in modern occupations by writing a list on the whiteboard starting with the list below. Discuss whether you would expect a man or woman to do each job, then discuss why you think other can or cannot do the same job. The aim of this activity to show that gender should not be prerequisite or obstacle to any activity.

- o Builder
- o Baker
- o Truck Driver
- o Teacher
- o Dancer
- o Business Person

There are several words or phrases used in *Drover* that may not be commonly used today, or might mean something different in the book to what you're used to. Find the words below in the book, and write what you think they mean using the context of what's happening in the story or the illustrations for clues. Check your definitions using the glossary and/or dictionary if you're unsure, and be sure to add other words to your list that you find interesting!

- o Bullock
- o Yarn
- o Flank
- o Hobble
- o Bore



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Exploring the Illustrations

Analyse one of the double-page spreads from the book. Questions to ask could include:

- What do you look at first? Why? Then how does your eye travel around the page? (This is called the “reading path”.)
- What techniques and materials has Sarah Anthony used? (For example, pencil, watercolour, ink.)
- What perspective has she used? Is the picture shown close-up or from a distance?
- What objects are big and small? Why are they shown this way?
- What objects are in the foreground (front) of the picture? The background? Midground?
- What are the dominant colours? What mood (feeling) do these colours create?
- Where are the people in the picture looking?
- Why are they looking there? What effect does this have?
- How do the illustrations add to the story? How would the story be different if there were no illustrations?

How do the illustrations show time passing? You could consider how the sun and moon rise over the desert, or how Sarah Anthony has depicted the change in light between sunrise, day, and night.

Examine the colour palettes Sarah Anthony uses throughout the book. Why do you think these colours were chosen? How do they make you feel? How do the colours help represent the distinctly Australian landscape?

Study the spreads set at night time. How does Sarah Anthony depict action and urgency in these spreads? Do you think that it looks difficult to catch the stampeding herd? What things about the illustrations make you think this?

What research might Sarah Anthony have done in preparation for illustrating this book? Imagine you were an illustrator given the job of illustrating this book. Make a list of all the things you think you’d do to complete your task.

Further Activities

Read the fact sheet about Edna Jessop at the end of the book. What do you think it would have been like for Edna Jessop to take over for her father on such a long journey? Write your own story about Edna and her droving adventures, explaining how she feels.

If you were travelling through the desert with a herd of cattle for six months, what do you think you would need to take with you? Write a list, then do some research on drovers and what they travelled with: how similar is your list? Is there anything you forgot to add?

The “Bagman’s Gazette” was a tradition of writing messages for other drovers to read later on water tanks. Make your own “Bagman’s Gazette” for your classroom with a big sheet of paper. Each person in the class should write their own message on it for people to look at later. Put it up on the wall at the end of the day so that the messages can be read the next morning.

Write a newspaper report as if you live in one of the towns Edna and the herd pass through. Use informative, unbiased language in your report.

Edna travelled over 2240 kilometres! Using a map, find a location that’s over 2000 kilometres away from you. What are some different ways you could travel there (for example, by car, by plane, by train, by horse)? How long would each method take for you to get there? Remember to include plenty of breaks in your fictional trip!