

These notes are for:

- Years 4, 5, 6 & 7
- 9+ year olds
- Middle Years

Key Learning Areas:

- English
- Science / Nature

Example of:

- Junior Fiction
- First Person Narrative
- Reading & Writing
- Listening & Speaking

Experience of:

- Coming-of-age novel
- Use of Metaphors
- Symbolism
- Effective Conflict Resolution

Values addressed:

- Doing Your Best
- Care & Compassion
- Understanding & Tolerance
- Friendship & Loyalty

Themes:

- Family Support
- Bullying
- Coping with Grief
- Birds
- Identity / Self Confidence

*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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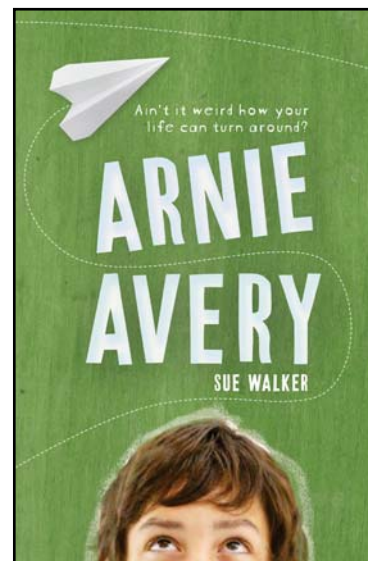
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Arnie Avery - Overview

Arnie Avery

By: Sue Walker
 ISBN: 9781921529726
 ARRP: \$14.95
 NZRRP: \$16.99
 No. of Pages: 144
 June 2010



Outline:

Ain't it weird how your life can turn around?

What could be worse than fighting Jacko? Being in trouble at school? Your friends deserting you? Your family acting like a bunch of aliens? Lately, nothing's going right for Arnie. Then one day everything changes ...

Arnie Avery is a junior novel, ideal for readers in years 5 & 6. The story is told with a strong, young male voice and deals with issues that young readers will easily relate to in the years to becoming a teenager. Issues such as coping with grief, family support and bullying are dealt with, and values of 'care & compassion', 'respect' and 'doing your best' are touched upon. Importantly, this story offers readers a situation where problem solving is used rather than resorting to violence. An excellent read that offers many opportunities for class discussion.

Author Information:

Sue Walker is the author of numerous books for children. Her title *Best Friends* was selected as a Notable Book by the Children's Book Council of Australia, and many of her poems, articles and short stories have appeared in magazines.

Sue was inspired to write *Arnie Avery* after spotting four teenagers and one elderly lady at the local pool. All of them found their way into this book. Sue wishes she knew their names so she could thank them for the role they played in bringing Arnie's story to life.

In the past Sue has worked in a bank, several schools, a bookshop and a cemetery. She now works from a studio in her backyard in Sydney, where she lives with her husband, three children and a scruffy white dog.

Further information about Sue Walker can be found at:
www.suewalkerauthor.com

How to use these notes:

These notes were prepared by Walker Books Australia. This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

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**Classroom Ideas for *Arnie Avery*:****BEFORE READING *ARNIE AVERY*:**

- View the front cover of *Arnie Avery*? What do you think this story is about? Where do you think it is set? In groups discuss these questions.
- Read the blurb on the back cover of *Arnie Avery*. Discuss in groups what a blurb is. Does the blurb give the story away? Does the blurb make you want to read the book? Discuss in groups who you think Jacko and Arnie might be.

SYMBOLISM - BIRDS

- Many different birds are listed throughout the book *Arnie Avery*. As students read the book ask them to write down all the different birds that are mentioned. Have students create a PowerPoint presentation on five of these birds, including information such as: where they live, different breeds, characteristics. Ask each student to also include a paragraph about each bird and how these characteristics could be applied to a human e.g. if you were describing a human as a swan, what would they be like – graceful, slender, kind etc
- Discuss the symbolism of birds and what they can signify e.g. the owl, the dove, the sparrow. How have these animals been used as symbols throughout time? Ask students to research using the library and internet and then have a class discussion.
- Chapter 1, page 7. Arnie refers to the 'kings of the bird world'. What type of birds would these be? Ask students to research and then create a class list.
- After reading *Arnie Avery* ask students to view the last page in the book and the meanings of the names Arnold and Callum. Write a description of the characters Arnie and Callum. How are their names suited to their characters? Discuss. Afterwards, ask students to research the meaning of their own name. Does it relate to their personality?

FRIENDSHIP & LOYALTY

- How is Belly a loyal and caring friend to Arnie throughout the book? What are the characteristics of Belly that make him a good friend? Ask students to list the different points in the book where Belly does something to help Arnie. What do you think are important characteristics for a friend to have? Ask students to create their own list.
- Discuss the characters Franco and Sam. Would you say they are loyal friends or are they giving in to peer pressure? Ask students to think about whether they have ever felt pressured to do something or to agree with someone. Then in groups ask them to discuss the problems associated with peer pressure – how can these be avoided?

FAMILY SUPPORT

- Ask students to read Chapter 3. Then in groups discuss 'Family Night' and answer the following questions:
Why do you think the family comes together on Saturday nights?
Is Arnie being supportive?
Do you think family time is important for the Averys?
Yes or no? Why?
Ask students to think about the following:
Have they ever had to do something for their family that they didn't want to do?
In what ways do they provide support for their family?
Make a list.
- Ask students to compare and contrast Family Night (Chapter 3) to Belly's family dinner (Chapter 6). Then, create a list of words that convey the emotions and feelings of both these events.
- In Chapter 5 Arnie describes Jacko's Dad. Do you think that Jacko has a supportive family? Ask students to discuss this question and how Jacko's family might affect him.

TREATING PEOPLE FAIRLY

- Does Jacko treat Arnie fairly? Make a list of the events in the book when Jacko treats Arnie unfairly. Ask students, in groups, to discuss Jacko's character and why he is a bully. As a class discuss bullying and what you should do if someone is bullying you.
- Create a class list of effective ways to deal with bullying and what you should do if you are being bullied. Display this list as a poster in the classroom.

Classroom Ideas for *Arnie Avery* cont... :

IDENTITY / SELF-CONFIDENCE

- Ask students to read Chapter 3. Does Arnie cheat on the maths test? If he hadn't been caught do you think he would have written the answers down? Ask students, in groups, to discuss cheating and list the disadvantages associated with cheating.
- Arnie describes his room as his cave (Chapter 5, page 43). How is this an appropriate description for a bedroom? What does your bedroom mean to you? Ask students to draw a picture of a cave and then draw the most important items from their bedroom in it. Is it their bed, posters, clothes etc? How does their cave reflect their identity and who they are?
- Chapter 5, page 47 – Arnie describes his family as a 'house full of aliens'. What does this mean? Discuss this in class. Have students ever felt like their friends or family were aliens? What does it mean to alienate someone? Discuss.
- After reading the book, have students discuss the character of Arnie. Can he be described as a hero? What heroic acts does he do throughout the book?

EFFECTIVE CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- Read Chapter 11. What question does Arnie's Dad leave him with? Have a class discussion about two different scenarios.
What would happen if Arnie fought Jacko?
What would happen if Arnie didn't fight Jacko?
Ask students to discuss what they feel is the best solution to the problem.
- The story of *Arnie Avery* shows a peaceful resolution to a problem. Rather than using violence or aggression Arnie stands up for himself and avoids fighting. How might the following topics help to resolve problems peacefully: sharing, rules, talking, teamwork? Ask students, in groups, to discuss each of these and the situations in which they think they would be effective. Then select other books from the school library to read (you may like to choose a selection of picture books and read these aloud in class). Try to choose books that have a problem or conflict that is resolved. Has the problem been resolved effectively in these books? Why/ why not?

COPING WITH GRIEF

- While reading *Arnie Avery*, ask students to list the different ways that the Avery family members react to grief and what steps they take to deal with their grief e.g. taking up yoga, making Saturday night family night. Discuss how the reactions of the characters differ. Ask students, in groups, to discuss what they think effective mechanisms for coping with grief are.
- Read Chapter 9. How does this chapter give you insight into Arnie and his family? How does this chapter make you feel? Ask students to write a paragraph with their responses to these questions.
- In Chapter 10 the principal suggests that maybe Arnie should see the school counsellor? Discuss in class what the role of a school counsellor is and the services they provide. Under what circumstances might a student need to speak to the school counsellor?
- Read Chapter 13. Discuss the symbolism of Arnie flying the paper plane. What does this signify for his character?
- After reading *Arnie Avery* discuss the character of Arnie's mother in the story. How is she affected by her grief? In class discuss depression and how it can affect people. Ask students to research organisations that help people with depression and then create a pamphlet/flyer for one of these.

LANGUAGE

- Chapter 2, page 18, "I swam more like a punctured air mattress". This is a simile. Can students find any other similes in the book? Ask students to make a list of their own similes to describe actions.
- List the different nicknames that occur in *Arnie Avery*. How are they used to describe the characters. Do you or your friends have a nickname? Is it a shortening of your name or does it describe a characteristic about you? Discuss in class how nicknames can be used differently.
- Discuss the phrase "Ain't it weird how your life can turn around" (Chapter 2, Page 23). What are the events in *Arnie Avery* that dramatically change Arnie's life? Can students think of any events in their own life that have changed them? Ask students to write a short story about an event that has turned their life around.
- What does the word Avery sound like? Avery can be seen as a play on the word 'aviary'. What is the significance of using this word as the surname for the family in this book? Discuss.

AFTER READING *ARNIE AVERY*

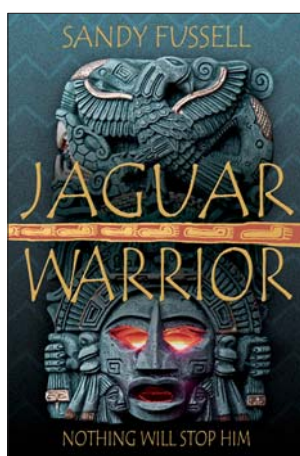
- Ask students to give a three minute presentation on *Arnie Avery*. They should include a synopsis and their thoughts and feelings about the story.
- Ask students to go to the library and collect books about birds. Display these in the library or in the classroom with your copies of *Arnie Avery*.
- Ask students to research the author of *Arnie Avery* and prepare a newspaper article on her and the book. They should include a cover image and review of the book. You can find more information about Sue Walker at: www.suewalkerauthor.com
- Make *Arnie Avery* paper planes. A worksheet is provided for you with these notes. Write messages of hope and kindness on your planes and then let them fly.

Sue Walker on writing *Arnie Avery*:



“One day when I was at the local pool with my children, I spotted four teenagers chasing each other in the water. I was intrigued because I could see that they all had very distinctive personalities. I began to wonder how those teenagers came to be at the pool. What were their names? What did they think of each other? Then an elderly lady caught my attention. She waded up and down the pool past the teenagers and it amused me that they never once noticed her. I knew right then that I wanted to write a story about all of them. When I started writing *Arnie Avery* I had no idea where the story would lead. It grew gradually, much like a plant growing in the garden. I started with the seed of a story – then it grew shoots, and eventually branches. Every new branch was a surprise to me, especially the one about Arnie’s brother, Callum.”

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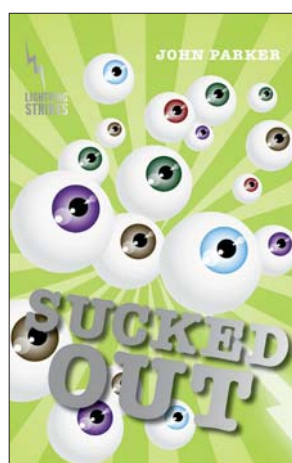


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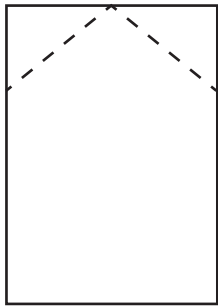
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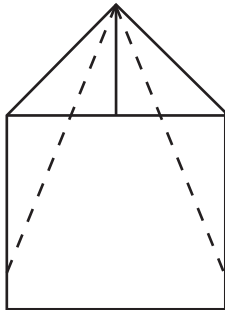
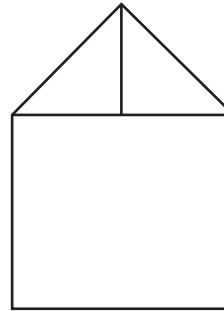
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Paper Plane Worksheet: Make your own *Arnie Avery* paper plane.
Write a message of kindness and hope on your plane, then let it fly!



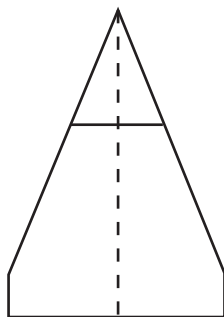
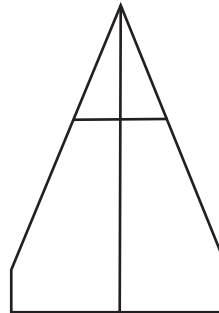
Step 1

Fold along the dotted line.
Turn the corners down to meet the centre of the page.



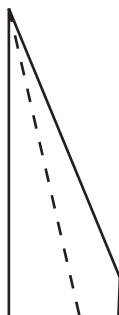
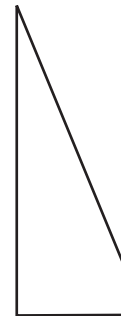
Step 2

Fold along the dotted line so that the edges meet in the centre of the page.



Step 3

Fold along the dotted line i.e. fold the paper in half.



Step 4

Fold along the dotted line.
Fold the right hand edge of the plane so that it meets with the left hand edge.
Repeat on both sides.

