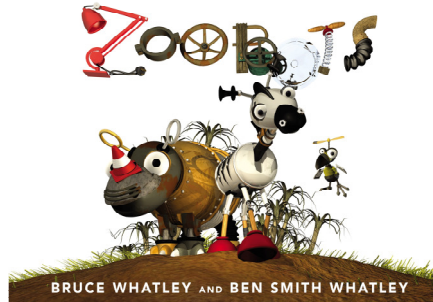


# **ZOOBOTS**

**Bruce Whatley and Ben Smith Whatley**



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**Teaching Notes by Christine Sarandis**

## **About the book**

Zebo lives in Junk Jungle with her two best friends, Hyde and TC. But she longs for another best friend — one not too big, not too small, one just right! But where in Junk Jungle will she find this special friend?

Making new friends can sometimes be hard to do - unless you live in Junk Jungle, which is filled with things that can be turned into other useful things - like a new friend!

Award-winning illustrator Bruce Whatley has collaborated with Ben Whatley Smith and created a wonderful picture book that celebrates the joy of friendship and the imaginative fun of recycled art.

## **About the authors**

**Bruce Whatley** is one of Australia's best-loved and most-respected author-illustrators. His books include the enormously successful and award-winning *Diary of a Wombat*, written by Jackie French, and its companion volume, *The Secret World of Wombats*, also illustrated by Bruce. The best selling team have also collaborated on

*Pete the Sheep*, and most recently, *Josephine Wants to Dance*. Two of Bruce's previous books, *The Ugliest Dog in the World* and *Tails from Grandad's Attic*, were named as Notable Books by the Children's Book Council of Australia in 1993 and 1996 respectively. *Looking for Crabs* was shortlisted by the Children's Book Council in 1993 and *Detective Donut and the Wild Goose Chase* was named an Honour Book by the Children's Book Council in 1998. Bruce has illustrated forty books to date, including a number that he has co-written with Rosie Smith. Their latest collaboration was *Little White Dogs Can't Jump*.

### **Ben Smith Whatley**

Ben Smith Whatley has been writing short stories for many years, but in recent times has focused on animation. He has worked with Bruce Whatley on a few occasions now, including both books in the *Danny Da Vinci* series. He lives in Canberra.

### **Note to teachers:**

The ideas in these Teaching Notes are suitable for a range of ages including children from K-6. As such, teachers are invited to pick and choose or adapt questions and activities that best match the children in their class.

### **Before Reading**

Discuss the book cover together before reading to generate discussion. Accept the suggestions about what the story might be about. Then read the story aloud before exploring the themes, questions and activities listed below.

### **After Reading**

Some discussion starters prior to commencing activities may help to engage the children more deeply in the story and prepare them for the activities to follow.

- Why is the setting called Junk Jungle and what can you see there?
- Zebo can see her reflection in the car hubcap – which animals do her body parts suggest?
- Describe Zebo's two best friends and their likeness to specific animals.

- Why do you think Zebo wanted a new best friend – one that was ‘just right’?
- How did Zebo, TC & Hyde decide to solve the problem of finding a new best friend?
- What did the best friends discuss while they were collecting the parts for their new best friend? (This is important for when the children make their own Zoobots.)
- What made Zebo suggest a brain for their new best friend and why was TC worried about giving their new best friend a brain?
- Talk about all the things the friends tried adding to their new best friend – what worked, what didn’t and why?
- Why do you think TC thought a tail wasn’t such a good idea?
- What happened when the friends tried to make their new best friend move and what did they say to one another?
- When Zebo, TC and Hyde walked away from their new best friend, what happened?
- How would you describe Ruby?

**The book explores:**

- the joy of friendship
- a timely recycling theme
- the evolution of junk to art
- important themes relevant to children and our world presented with humour and warmth
- fresh and intricate computer-generated artwork using Cinema 4D.

**Themes**

1. Friendship and Social Inclusion
2. Recycling, Reusing, Reducing
3. Zoobots, Robots and Personality

**1. Friendship and Social inclusion**

Accepting difference, accepting people as they are, making friends, looking for the good in others, helping people to fit in, being part of the group, being kind to others.

### Questions for discussion

- What qualities are important in a friend? Make a list of all the things that might be important in a friend and also the things that might help you to make new friends.
- What makes a good or not so good friend?
- How do we make friends?
- Sometimes our friendships change – why does this happen?
- Making new friends can be hard – why is this and how can it be made easier?
- Sometimes we become friends with a person we hadn't previously liked or known – what can cause the change in the situation?
- Talk about tolerance – Do we have to like everything about our friends? What is the best way to handle characteristics we don't like?
- Text to focus on in discussions and activities:

*You can never have too many best friends*

*Best friends are hard to come by*

*It can be hard making new friends*

*Or keeping the ones you've got*

*All you can do is try*

### Activities

- 'I Am Special' - Discuss differences in people using the story *Fish is Fish* by Leo Lionni, the tale of two friends, a minnow and tadpole, who believe they are the same until they grow up and minnow becomes a large fish and tadpole becomes a big frog. Fish quickly discovers that there is a reason 'frog is frog' and 'fish is fish.'
- Friendship Pizza - Identifying ways to promote acceptance and friendship. This lesson revolves around building a 'friendship pizza.' Cut different ingredients out of coloured paper such as peppers, onions, sausage, and cheese. Large round

pieces of cardboard or cardboard triangles can serve as the pizza crust. Perhaps get a cardboard pizza box from a local pizzeria and enter the class with this – it's sure to generate plenty of discussion. Begin by asking, 'Who likes pizza?' Then tell the children that you're going to build a 'friendship pizza' full of tasty ingredients that will fill everyone with good feelings. Talk about how building friendships is much like building a pizza and its important to add the right ingredients. Discuss what would make a 'friendship pizza' taste the best to them. E.g. speaking kindly, asking someone to join in a game etc. Write the suggested words on the food shapes you have previously cut. Cover the crust with accepting and friendly thoughts, written in black pen using the children's ideas from the discussion. The *sauce* can be made up of words representing accepting and friendly actions. E.g. 'Play with me at recess.' 'Share lunch with me.' 'Let's walk home together.' Then add a layer of shredded cheese strips (yellow paper), labelled with simple saying such as 'You're smart'. Leave blank toppings so that the children could add other ingredients as they think of them. This way, the class could continue making the pizza as they think of new ideas even after the lesson is over. You could follow up the session with a snack for the day such as pizza-flavoured biscuits or if you're feeling particularly adventurous, you could actually make pizzas!

- 'Getting To Know Each Other' Game - The game centres on a question: 'Could you be friends with someone who . . . ?' such as 'Could you be friends with someone who is older than you?' 'Could you be friends with someone who lies?' 'Could you be friends with someone who has different coloured hair?' 'Could you be friends with a bully?' Ask the children to create their own questions and responses and then place the questions and answers on strips of paper and play a matching game – match an appropriate answer to a question.

## **2. Recycling reusing and reducing**

### **Questions for discussion**

Brainstorming Questions - Lots of exploration around all of these:

- Why is recycling important?
- What ways do we recycle in our everyday lives?

- What else could we be doing?
- What is waste and when does trash become another person's treasure?
- What do you think would happen if people didn't reuse and recycle?
- How are objects reused?
- What can be used to make art? Ask for examples of recycled objects being used to make art both by children and adult artists. Making things from other people's discarded goods. E.g. plastic bottles, old jeans, newspapers, odds and ends, coat hangers, Styrofoam containers, plastic containers, string/yarn, pie tins, old jewelry, aluminum foil, hardware, cardboard cartons, cans, bottle caps, wood scraps, scrap paper.

### **Activities**

- Research project: When you take out the garbage, do you wonder where it goes after it's picked up and what happens to it? Work together with a partner to find out about one item that is recycled and then create a poster to share with your friends.
- Start with the question: What can a can be besides a can? Then make a list of all the things that can be recycled and discuss both the process and what can be created as a result.
- There are many good teaching resources for primary school students on the Environment Protection (EPA) website:  
<http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/students/resources/default.asp>
- And on the KESAB website - a not-for-profit organization that was founded in 1966 to address litter issues with community education programs, including the WOW – Wipe Out Waste program.  
<http://www.kesab.asn.au/index.php?page=teaching-resources>
- Discuss the phrase 'winning the war on waste'
- Take the '100 ways challenge' – make a list of all the way waste can be recycled or reused.
- Make a list of words used to describe waste such as litter, junk, and rubbish. Make lists of words that rhyme with all three.

- Find out about National Recycling week and the work of Planet Ark.  
<http://planetark.org/> and <http://recyclingnearyou.com.au/>
- Hold a Trash and Treasure swap market and teach the children about bartering. Send a note home to parents describing the activity and encourage the children to bring along any toys or games they no longer use but are still in good condition.
- Look at artists who make art works from recycled objects – some fantastic examples of recycled art here:
- [http://images.google.com.au/images?hl=en&q=recycled+art+sculptures&um=1&ie=UTF-8&ei=X-H1SpeBFI2-sgPfmqXwCQ&sa=X&oi=image\\_result\\_group&ct=title&resnum=4&ved=0CB8QsAQwAw](http://images.google.com.au/images?hl=en&q=recycled+art+sculptures&um=1&ie=UTF-8&ei=X-H1SpeBFI2-sgPfmqXwCQ&sa=X&oi=image_result_group&ct=title&resnum=4&ved=0CB8QsAQwAw)  
<http://www.junkyardart.com.au/>
- Gather interesting facts about recycling e.g. Buying a pre-loved cotton dress saves 22,000 litres of water and swapping one suitcase of clothes (20kg) saves enough energy to run a TV for 1.7 years!
- Found Objects - Working with found objects to make art is a very old and widespread practice. Folk artists express themselves by making art with whatever materials they can find. Making art from found objects is fun and a great way to help save landfill space, energy, and natural resources. See:  
<http://www.internationalfolkart.org/exhibitions/past/recycledreseen/rindex.html>
- Can or Jar Art - You can find some interesting materials to use around your neighbourhood or around the house. Aluminium and glass are good materials to recycle and can be made into many new products. With a little imagination, you can use smashed or empty cans or glass bottles or jars as art materials. E.g. Decorate pencil tins or plant alfalfa people with a decorated jar as the base. (Use stockings, soil and alfalfa seeds.)
- Big Book - Working together children can each produce a page for a BIG BOOK with a recycling theme – each page could contain a sentence written by each

student (or sentences written during a class brainstorm) on the themes – reduce, reuse, recycle.

### **3. Zoobots, Robots and Personality**

#### **Questions for discussion**

- How are the characters in Zoobots different to robots?
- How could we make a Zoobot and what could we use?
- What features could we apply?
- How would we give our Zoobot a unique character or personality?
- What personality or character does a particular piece of junk such as a can suggest; or with a particular character in mind, what junk would be best to make it?

#### **Activities**

- Have children work in groups of three with one A4 piece of paper. Fold the paper in three evenly and ask the children to take turns drawing on a third of the page (without the others watching). One child draws the head of a Zoobot, and then folds the paper so that the image can't be seen. The second child draws the body of a Zoobot and the third the legs. Open up the page and share the Zoobot that has been created. This could then be photocopied and children could choose one of the creations of any of the groups to colour and decorate with collage materials or cut paper.
- Making Zoobots – Consider the following ...
  1. What can we use from our recycled good list and what features do we want to include on our zoobot friends? Think about a couple of different zoo animals that might feature in your zoobot.
  2. What could we use to give our zoobot character, expression and a distinct personality? E.g. buttons, fabric, cans, boxes, and corks. Spend a session choosing things to use, discussing which objects work and why, the emotions or characteristics each object conveys (this is important as it allows students to



experiment and discern the characteristics that are achieved by the use of different materials and their placement). Then experiment with putting objects together, without glueing. In the next couple of sessions, make the Zoobots. Lastly, children give their zoobot a name.

- Have a zoobot exhibition and invite family along. Ask children to bring a plate of something to share such as homemade biscuits and other food following the themes covered in the book. Alternatively, make the food with the class. When guests arrive, add to the party theme by playing techno-style music.
- Move like a zoobot and make zoobot sounds.
- Make zoobot masks using papier mache, recycled construction materials, cut paper or even food.
- Talk about kits that enable us to build creatures - Mr Potato Head etc. in which pieces are exchanged to make something unique.
- Watch the movie WALL-E
- Play 'Zoobot Says!' Using a torch, when the light is on, the children are Zoobots and must do whatever the leader says. E.g. 'Move your arms like a zoobot.' 'Dance like an elephant/baboon zoobot.' When the torch is off, the children must remain still and ignore zoobot instructions. If someone moves when the light is off, s/he is out.

## **Worksheets**

**Worksheets are at the end of these notes:**

- Sheet 1:** Unscramble the words and use them in the sentences provided.
- Sheet 2:** Make as many words as you can from the two words provided.
- Sheet 3:** Make a class big book with the children's retelling of the story or use the sentences provided and have the children illustrate a class big book.

## **Books written or illustrated by Bruce Whatley**

- *The Ugliest Dog in the World*
- *Looking for Crabs*
- *Wait! No Paint!*

- *I Wanna to be Famous*
- *That Magnetic Dog*
- *Whatley's Quest*
- *Detective Donut*
- *Little White Dogs Can't Jump*
- *Diary of a Wombat*
- *Too Many Pears!*
- *The Secret World of Wombats*
- *Emily and the Big Bad Bunyip*
- *Pete the Sheep*
- *Josephine Wants to Dance*
- *The Shaggy Gully Times*
- *Baby Wombat's Week*

### **Other thematic books**

#### **Friendship**

- *Milli, Jack and the Dancing Cat* by Stephen Michael King
- *Fox* by Margaret Wild
- *Do You Want to Be My Friend* by Eric Carle
- *We are Best Friends* by Alike
- *Little Blue and Little Yellow* by Leo Lionni
- *Friends for Keeps* series including *Jump Over the Puddle*, *Let's Play House* and *Yummy Ice-cream* by Emma Quay and Anna Walker
- *Pearl Barley And Charlie Parsley* by Aaron Blabey

#### **Jungle and animals**

- *The Jungle House* by Julia Donaldson
- *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling
- *Animalia* by Graeme Base
- *A Nice Walk in the Jungle* by Nan Bodsworth
- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Eric Carle
- *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* by Eric Carle
- *Rumble in the Jungle* and *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andrea
- *Crocodile Beat* by Gail Jorgenson
- *Walking through the Jungle* by Julie Lacome
- *Jungle Song* by Miriam Moss

#### **Recycling**

- *Recycling*, by Margaret Metz
- *What if? A book about recycling* by Mick Manning and Brita Granstrom
- *Environmental Publications*  
[http://www.impactenviro.com.au/publications\\_story-books.asp](http://www.impactenviro.com.au/publications_story-books.asp)

- *10 things I can do to help my world* by Melanie Walsh, Walker Books
- *Me and My Community series* by Jane Pearson (*Rubbish and Recycling*)
- *Dougal the Garbage Dump Bear* by Matt Dray
- *Recycling Things to Make and Do*, Usborne Publishing Ltd, ISBN: 9781409506508  
(This is a collection of twenty earth-friendly projects including cardboard tube people, plastic bag beads and paper gift-bags, made from recycled materials found at home. It contains tips on safely recycling materials including how to strip a plastic wire, paint over patterned cardboard and cut a cardboard tube. It is illustrated with clear, easy-to-follow step-by-step instructions.

### Websites with useful information or activities

**Zoos Victoria** has a fantastic section on animal profiles and fact sheets about the different animal types at the zoos.

<http://www.zoo.org.au/>

[http://www.zoo.org.au/Learning/Animal\\_Profiles](http://www.zoo.org.au/Learning/Animal_Profiles)

<http://www.zoo.org.au/Learning/Resources/Other/Factsheets>

<http://www.australiazoo.com.au/education/teachers/>

**Reverse Garbage** runs practical and creative workshops in schools for any year level. (Please note, this organization is in QLD and NSW, Australia.) There are also lots of ideas on the website for teaching about recycling.

<http://www.reversegarbage.com.au/education.htm>

There's a whole lot of recycling activities here too:

<http://recyclingweek.planetark.org/councils/kids-activities.cfm>

<http://www.kid-at-art.com/htdoc/matchtmp.html>

[http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/kids\\_crafts.htm](http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/kids_crafts.htm)

<http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/recycle.htm>

[http://www.carearts.org/lessons/recycled\\_sculpture.html](http://www.carearts.org/lessons/recycled_sculpture.html)

# ***Zoobots***

by Bruce Whatley and Ben Smith Whatley

## **Worksheet 1**

Unscramble the following letter groups to make words from the book.

Example: ujk n      junk

<b>glenju</b>	
<b>bzoe</b>	
<b>pyprcsa</b>	
<b>sfinedr</b>	
<b>sebt</b>	
<b>sepcei</b>	
<b>bacudenlea</b>	
<b>dbyo</b>	
<b>gngenihrta</b>	
<b>mbejlu</b>	

2. Now fill in the spaces with the word from above.

1. Zebo, Hyde and TC lived in the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Their new friend looked a bit \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Junk Jungle is a \_\_\_\_\_ kind of place.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ friends usually move when they play together.
5. The three best friends set about \_\_\_\_\_ the things they needed.

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## **Worksheet 2**

Make as many words as you can from the following two words from  
the book

### **GATHERING**


### **UNBALANCED**


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### **Worksheet 3**

Print the page and give each child a sentence. (Teachers could enlarge the sheet on a photocopier, making A3 pages for a big book. Sentences can be evenly distributed amongst the class,) Have children cut up their sentence, place the words in order and then glue onto a page of the class big book. They then illustrate their page with torn or cut paper or collage.

As an alternative, children could retell the story in their own words and make a class book based on their retelling.

1	Junk jungle is a scrappy kind of place full of things that look like other things.
2	Zebo looked like something else – but wasn't sure exactly what.
3	Zebo had two best friends.
4	Her biggest best friend was Hyde and her smallest best friend was TC.
5	But Zebo longed for another best friend. One not too big. One not too small. One just right.
6	'We need a new best friend,' said Zebo.
7	'You can never have too many best friends.
8	'But where are we going to find a new best friend?' asked Hyde.
9	'Yes, best friends are hard to come by,' admitted Zebo.
10	'We could make one!' said TC. 'Good idea!'
11	The three best friends set about gathering the bits and pieces they needed to make their new best friend.
12	Bits for the head and bits for the body.
13	Hyde found an old stove they could use for the belly.
14	'He's going to get hungry.' said Hyde, who was always thinking about food. 'Not that hungry.'

16	<b>'Anyway, he might be a she,' said Zebo. 'We'll need to add a brain.'</b>
17	<b>So they set out to find their new friend a brain.</b>
18	<b>'Brain's aren't everything said TC,' thinking that he didn't want their best friend to be smarter than him.</b>
19	<b>'What about eyes to see with and ears to hear with?' Hyde said, thinking they might make the head look less big. They didn't.</b>
20	<b>'Hmmm... Maybe a nose would help?' suggested TC. 'Do you think?'</b>
21	<b>Zebo thought it helped ... but maybe legs would help a bit more.</b>
22	<b>'Short legs are best,' said Hyde.</b>
23	<b>'Long legs are better,' said Zebo.</b>
24	<b>'Who needs legs?' said TC.</b>
25	<b>Their new friend looked a bit unbalanced.</b>
26	<b>Zebo thought a tail would fix that. 'Short tail?' 'Long tail?'</b>
27	<b>TC wasn't sure a tail was such a good idea.</b>
28	<b>'Doesn't move much!' said TC. 'Best friends usually move when they play together.'</b>
29	<b>Hyde gave her a push. She moved a bit, so he nudged her again...</b>
30	<b>'It can be hard making new friends,' said Zebo. 'Or keeping the ones you've got,' said TC.</b>
31	<b>'All you can do is try,' said Hyde as they walked away from the jumble of junk.</b>
32	<b>'You never know what might happen if you don't try,' said TC.</b>
33	<b>An eye. Two eyes. Ears. A nose. A hand. And Zebo had another new best friend! One not too big. One not too small.</b>
34	<b>Ruby was just right.</b>

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**Answer Sheet**

**Worksheet 1**

1.  
jungle  
Zebo  
scrappy  
friends  
best  
pieces  
unbalanced  
body

gathering  
jumble

2.  
jungle  
unbalanced  
scrappy  
best  
gathering

**Worksheet 2**

(These lists are not exhaustive)

**Gathering**

gather  
ring  
grate  
great  
gate  
the  
grain  
gain  
rig  
grin

**Unbalanced**

dance  
lance  
lead  
led  
lad  
band  
candle  
deal  
bed  
bead