

# Magabala Books • Teacher Notes

## The Snake and the Boy

Written and illustrated by Azmen Sebastian

Teacher Notes prepared by Christina Wheeler

### OVERVIEW

*The Snake and the Boy* is a tale of the school playground with an intriguing twist. As children play football beneath a sea-blue sky, one boy takes to the bars in the playground, only to have a cunning green tree snake sneak in and steal his apple.

The author's vibrant illustrations using acrylic paints capture the wide-open spaces of a country schoolyard, such as those in and around his home in the remote Kimberley region, where you never know when a wild creature might pay a visit. Children everywhere will relate to this endearing story.

- A simple yet compelling storyline that will encourage reluctant readers
- An inspiration for young people to write and illustrate their own stories
- Youthful illustrations reflecting the Australian outback and its wildlife

### THEMES

- Friendship
- Loneliness
- Green Tree Snakes

### AUDIENCE AND WRITING STYLE

*The Snake and the Boy* was written and illustrated by Azmen Sebastian when he was twelve years old. It tells of a boy whose apple is eaten by a pesky tree snake during lunch time. Simple in its structure and accompanied by brilliantly painted illustrations, this book is suitable for an early childhood audience, although could also be used with children in the middle grades. It provides a gateway into issues such as friendship and loneliness, and is a useful tool in helping students write and illustrate their own stories.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

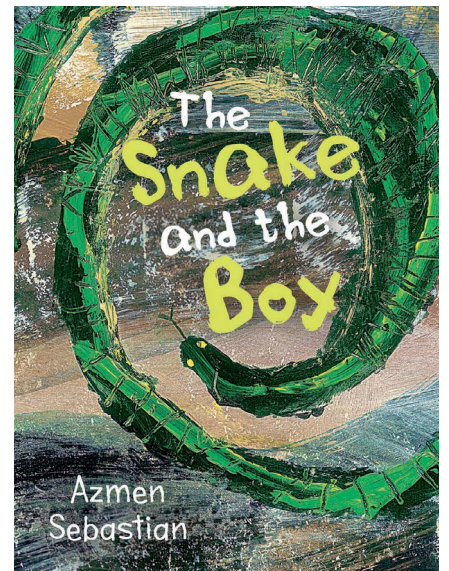
Azmen Sebastian is a young man who lives Broome in the far north-west of Western Australia. He first began work on *The Snake and the Boy* as an eight-year-old. Azmen's first love is football, with art and storytelling coming a close second. A keen observer of everyday life, he enjoys spending time in the outdoors and is intrigued by wildlife.

### LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

This book and the classroom activities provided are primarily relevant to the following areas of the Australian Curriculum:

Learning area	Year level
English	Years F-4
Science	Years 1; 4
The Arts	Years F-4

The appendix highlights relevant content descriptions, cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities that relate to the text and classroom ideas provided.



## CLASSROOM IDEAS

### English

- The author uses descriptive language to help set the scene for this story. Examine his use of such description, such as his references to the weather, the school oval and the tree. How do these language choices help embellish the storytelling? Examples include:
  - The big old paperbark tree spread its branches up into the sky
  - His smooth belly curled through the leaves that lay in the ground
  - The green tree snake whipped his head up
  - Cutting through the dirt, the green tree snake slithered quickly back across the schoolyard
  - The green tree snake wound his way back up the trunk of the old paperbark tree and curled up into its branches
- Graph the plot of *The Snake and the Boy* on a story graph. Label the main components of the narrative such as setting, characters, complication and resolution.
- With a friend, devise your own story about lunch times at school. Plan, write and illustrate this story together.
- The boy in this story seems to spend his lunch times alone. Why has the author chosen to write about a boy who is lonely?
- How would this story be different if the boy was with a friend on the play equipment? Write this story.
- Rewrite this story with a twist – the boy and the snake become friends.
- Write and illustrate another page opening suitable for inclusion in *The Snake and the Boy*, using a style similar to Azmen Sebastian's.
- Re-write this story from the green tree snake's point of view.
- What advice would you give the boy about making friends? What would you say to the boys playing football on the oval about this boy? How could they help him?
- What can you tell about the importance of friendship from *The Snake and the Boy*?
- How do the illustrations help tell the story of *The Snake and the Boy*? Which is your favourite illustration? Why?
- In pairs, retell *The Snake and the Boy* in a silent performance.

### The Arts

- Examine the artistic style of Azmen Sebastian's artwork in *The Snake and the Boy*. How would you describe his style? Why is it so effective?
- Paint a self-portrait similar to the one of the boy when he realises that 'Someone has eaten my apple'.
- Paint a scene of your school at lunch time.
- After writing your own story about lunch time at your school (see above), illustrate your story by painting in a style similar to Azmen Sebastian.

### Science

- Research and take notes on green tree snakes. Use this information to present a poster or report on these reptiles. Include information about their appearance, diet, behaviour and life cycle.



## APPENDIX - LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

Year	Curriculum Area
<b>F</b>	<p><b>English</b></p> <p>Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts (<a href="#">ACELT1783</a>)</li> <li>• Retell familiar literary texts through performance, use of illustrations and images (<a href="#">ACELT1580</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>English</b></p> <p>Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss features of plot, character and setting in different types of literature and explore some features of characters in different texts (<a href="#">ACELT1584</a>)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Science</b></p> <p>Biological Sciences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living things have a variety of external features (<a href="#">ACSSU017</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>English</b></p> <p>Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss how depictions of characters in print, sound and images reflect the contexts in which they were created (<a href="#">ACELT1587</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>English</b></p> <p>Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create imaginative texts based on characters, settings and events from students' own and other cultures using visual features, for example perspective, distance and angle (<a href="#">ACELT1601</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>English</b></p> <p>Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss how authors and illustrators make stories exciting, moving and absorbing and hold readers' interest by using various techniques, for example character development and plot tension (<a href="#">ACELT1605</a>)</li> <li>• Make connections between the ways different authors may represent similar storylines, ideas and relationships (<a href="#">ACELT1602</a>)</li> <li>• Create literary texts that explore students' own experiences and imagining (<a href="#">ACELT1607</a>)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Science</b></p> <p>Biological Sciences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living things have life cycles (<a href="#">ACSSU072</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>F-2</b>	<p><b>The Arts</b></p> <p>Visual Art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use and experiment with different materials, techniques, technologies and processes to make artworks (<a href="#">ACAVAM107</a>)</li> <li>• Create and display artworks to communicate ideas to an audience (<a href="#">ACAVAM108</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>3-4</b>	<p><b>The Arts</b></p> <p>Visual Art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore ideas and artworks from different cultures and times, including artwork by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to use as inspiration for their own representations (<a href="#">ACAVAM110</a>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cross-Curriculum Priorities</b></p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Culture</p>	

