

## About the Explore Series:

We know that literacy is the key to a happy future, and it is our responsibility as publishers to use our knowledge of content design to provide curriculum content in an engaging way. Our content design is based on scientific efficacy and not on trends. In this regard, we have heeded advice from expert researchers in the field of literacy to build a series which raises the bar of excellence in both content and method.

Our brief was to create a series that would engage, or re-engage even the most reluctant of readers, with highly readable, interesting topics that take the reader on a journey of learning to read, and reading to learn. This is a notoriously challenging and fickle market to publish for, but an increasingly important and growing market...which makes it all the more critical that we succeed in our brief. Feedback from the market so far has been extremely positive, with teachers asking for more and commenting that students are keen to re-engage in their reading journey after just one story...this speaks volumes and, in our eyes, demonstrates excellence in publishing.

The reference to values-based traits such as goal setting, resilience, patience, and determination allow students to reflect on the importance of these traits in their own life, helping to plant the seed for each student's path to their own unique achievements.

Our innovation, or creative approach is simple...we have avoided common misconceptions regarding paper colouring or font type and emphasised the simple but effective approach of syllable load, sentence length, decodable words and repetitive sight words which are introduced early and practised throughout the story. In addition, addressing the variety of subject areas within the context of literacy ensures more specific content relevance and higher student engagement and understanding, and simultaneously reduces the impact of the crowded curriculum.

The innovative nature of the Explore series also lies in the comprehensive additional support that is provided for every title. The embedded Discussion questions on the Inside Front Cover of every title allow students to think about the text, make connections and comparisons to their own self and experiences and respond through a variety of mediums, including oral, aural, visual and written formats. The additional pre and post reading activities provided in the Teacher Guides provide students with opportunities to further consolidate their learning.

Text accessibility ensures that all students engage with the content and build their fluency and vocab, regardless of their reading level. Whether students are fluent mainstream readers, or in specialised ESL and learning support groups, the Explore series has been designed to help them engage or re-engage in their reading journey, expand their knowledge base and build their reading confidence and competence.

The market for good quality high-interest, low reading level chapter books is patchy and lacks the important feature of engagement required to encourage students to pick up a book in the first place...and then, to keep them reading. Our unique balance of low-level content, mature presentation and visuals and engaging topics brings a fresh originality to the market that has been sadly lacking in recent years.

## National Curriculum Related Content

### **ACARA F-10 REFERENCES:**

Key Learning Areas covered across the series include:

English, Science, Humanities and Social Sciences, Health and Physical Education, Biology, Earth Sciences, Space Science, History, Geography, Maths, Technologies, Design.

### **General Capabilities:**

Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability, Scientific Thinking, Ethical Understanding, Intercultural Understanding.

### **Cross Curriculum Priorities:**

Sustainability, Asia, and Australia's Engagement with Asia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

This series is expanding and will address most Key Learning Areas in time, providing more non-fiction stories based on a low reading age but with rigorous content. The focus will continue to be "learning to read and reading to learn".

## Educational Design

The content was designed with sight words being repetitively used and most other words being decodable. The word load is therefore low and the opportunity for fluency increases. The idea that a student with a higher reading age may not enjoy this content is unfounded. These stories can be read by mainstream classes as well as specialised ESL and learning support groups. We primarily wanted students at any reading age to experience the joy of reading and learning and be successful in their experience.

## Why it Works?

Reading practise is essential for fluency and improved comprehension, and the more reading opportunities that students are exposed to, the better their chances of reading success in the long run. This is the case for all readers, regardless of their literacy levels. Relevance, cohesion, and suitability for the targeted age cohort is achieved by engaging content that presents in a mature format and with interesting age-related content.

The embedded discussion questions within the teacher notes and the additional pre and post reading activities within the Teacher Guides encourage students to become more engaged in the learning process. Combining these oral language techniques with the visual and text features of the stories ensures that students' learning experiences are relevant, cohesive, suitable, authentic, memorable, and translatable to their own life experiences.

## Cross Curriculum Opportunities

This series offers the flexibility of presenting content in a cross-curricular way, thus tapping into not only literacy, but also content related to other subject areas as well. Content is presented in context when presented in this flexible way, further contributing to students' opportunities to "read to learn".

Text accessibility ensures that all students engage with the content and build their fluency and vocab. Whilst Lexile and Reading Recovery levels are suitable for a Reading Age of 6-7 years, the stories are presented in a mature format to assist with maximum engagement of junior secondary students reading at lower levels of literacy. Students with higher reading ages also explore these short, accessible chapter books, simply for reading pleasure. Whether students are fluent mainstream readers, or in specialised ESL and learning support groups, the Explore series has been designed to help them engage or re-engage in their reading journey, expand their knowledge base and build their reading confidence and competence.

Clarity of ideas and purpose were paramount to the success of the Explore series. The clarity lies in the relevance of the topics and how they are embedded within the various subject areas. Each story has been carefully edited to ensure it sits within the educational parameters of the target audience. This includes the allocation of a Reading Recovery level on the inside front cover of every title, along with information regarding word count, text type/s, ACARA F-10 references, Teacher Notes, Discussion points and difficult words that can be introduced prior to reading the text. All of this information has been included to ensure that teachers can quickly and effectively match their students to the most appropriate texts.

Design - each title within Explore is supported by strong visuals and contains comprehensive Inside Front Cover Teacher Notes to help educators engage their student clientele in further learnings from the story. Visual support on adjacent pages allows students to access information about the printed text from the images. The A5 size is suitable for the reading clientele and includes an appropriate font size. Word banks at the back of each story allow students to build their vocabulary further.

## Engagement

Engagement - as previously mentioned, engagement, or re-engagement, was our biggest requirement to the success of this series. In some cases, the biggest hurdle for some of our student clientele is to encourage them to pick up a book in the first place...and the second biggest hurdle is to keep them reading! The Explore series engages, or re-engages even the most reluctant of readers, with highly readable, interesting topics that take the reader on a journey of learning to read and reading to learn. Feedback from the market so far has been extremely positive, with teachers asking for more and commenting that students are keen to re-engage in their reading journey after just one story...this speaks volumes and, in our eyes, demonstrates success and excellence in publishing.

Each story has several QR codes which link to videos, further stories and articles that expand on the story. Feedback about these QR Codes has been very positive and promoted opportunities for blended learning hubs where students can explore the content further through a variety of learning mediums. Images have also been selected to enhance the story and provide foundational knowledge in a visual format to the specific topic.

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