

# TEACHER'S NOTES

# THE PATCHWORK BIKE



MAXINE BENEBA CLARKE

Van T Rudd

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## BY MAXINE BENEBA CLARKE

### TEACHERS' NOTES BY MURRAY NANCE

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# INTRODUCTION

The central theme for *The Patchwork Bike* is that of resourcefulness, recycling and imagination. The kids in *The Patchwork Bike* live in a 'mud-for-walls home' in an unnamed village, near a 'no-go desert' and under a 'stretching-out sky'. They don't have much to work with, yet they manage to fashion themselves a bike from things that lay around the place - and the bike becomes their pride and joy, the centre of their world.

*The Patchwork Bike* also raises interesting discussion points around how a child might be able to use their imagination to create and play. The family of children in the story successfully recreate a bike using everyday objects - and in doing so are required to use teamwork. Even if it does frustrate their 'fed-up' mum.

Maxine Beneba Clarke is an award-winning author who uses the recurring theme of inhabiting other cultures and experiences in her work. This is apparent also in *The Patchwork Bike*. Using visual cues, children will be able to investigate a different experience and culture to their own - referencing the landscape pictured with the text and also the home of the family, and the mother's clothing. Each provides an opportunity to discuss a different culture while highlighting that fun and imagination is universal. This highlights another theme in the book, which also comes through because of illustrator Van Rudd's inspired paintings, is that of 'universality' - helping kids understand what a wide, big and interesting world we live in, and using something as familiar as a bike to make difference seem less confronting.

Uniquely illustrated on found cardboard, *The Patchwork Bike* is a visual delight, sure to open up great discussion for all children who will have the pleasure of enjoying it.

## AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

A children's bike made out of junk features in my short story collection for adults, *Foreign Soil*. I always wanted to elaborate on this playful and fun aspect of the story, and explore bike riding as a universal joy. At the same time, I'm interested in creating diverse children's books that normalise kid's exposure to other cultures, customs and ways of life. In *The Patchwork Bike*, I saw the opportunity to write a fun, bouncy, read-aloud text about something most kids around the world would be able to relate to, to show them that as different as they might be to other children around the world, in many ways, we are all the same.

## THEMES

Several themes are covered in this book that might relate to various curriculum areas.

### **Resourcefulness & Recycling:**

**DISCUSSION:** What does the word 'resourceful' mean? Think about the kids in the book. In what ways could they be considered to be 'resourceful'?

**DISCUSSION:** What does 'recycling' mean? Can all materials be recycled? Why/why not?

**ACTIVITY:** Research the process for recycling items such as: aluminium cans, plastic containers, paper & cardboard products, etc.

**DISCUSSION:** Is it important to recycle? What items do you recycle at home? Make a list of all the things your family recycles.

**ACTIVITY:** Design and make a model of a bike (or other vehicle or object) using only recyclable items in your classroom, school or house.

**ACTIVITY:** Recycle your own paper from old newspaper.

- <https://youtu.be/18VLIKA5QVO>
- Google "homemade paper instructions"

## **Imagination:**

**DISCUSSION:** Why do you think the bike is so important to the kids? Is the bike a normal bike? What is special about the bike? What is a patchwork? What is the bike made out of?

**ACTIVITY:** Imagine you live next door to the family in the book. What thing would you and the kids from the book create using your imagination and found items? Draw what it would look like.

**ACTIVITY:** Think of your favourite play thing at home. Imagine you made a patchwork version of it out of found objects. Draw what it would look like and label what things it would be made from.

## **Universality & Family:**

**DISCUSSION:** Why do you think mum is fed-up? What do you think the kids in the book do to annoy their mum?

**DISCUSSION:** Have you ever been fed-up with someone? Do you think anyone gets fed-up with something you do?

**ACTIVITY:** Research and draw your family tree (immediate or extended). Write a list of things that each member of your family enjoy doing. Compare your family with other students'. What is the same? What is different?

**DISCUSSION:** Why is the mother in the book dressed the way she is?

**ACTIVITY:** Research what it would be like to live near a desert. Research deserts and their locations around the world. Which is the closest desert to where you live?

**ACTIVITY:** Research how mud-huts are built and what they look like inside. What materials are used in your house?



# CURRICULUM TOPICS

## English Language & Literacy:

DISCUSSION: Where do you think this book is set? What clues did you find in the text and images? How are different locations described in the book? (mud-for-walls home, no-go desert, stretching-out sky).

ACTIVITY: Write up a list of locations near where you live. Circle the places you regularly visit.

ACTIVITY: Draw a map of your local area for someone who has never been there. Imagine they're a student. Include the important places the student might like to go on the map.

ACTIVITY: Research onomatopoeia. Make a list of words that sound like their action or object. For example, crash, sizzle, cuckoo.

ACTIVITY: Nonsense words appear throughout the book to help imagine the sound the bike makes. Go back through the book and ask students to try to spot examples of alliteration with these nonsense words (shicketty shake, winketty wonk). Make a list of action verbs related to the movement of a bike. Ask students to make up their own words to match the movement of the patchwork bike to form alliteration.

ACTIVITY: What is the best thing you own? Why is it the best thing you own? Draw a picture of it or write a detailed description of it. Explain why your object is so important to you.

ACTIVITY: What does the phrase “one man’s junk is another man’s treasure” mean?

DISCUSSION: What other picture books use the idea of found objects?

## Creative Arts:

DISCUSSION: Why do you think the illustrator, Van T. Rudd, painted on cardboard boxes?

DISCUSSION: Can you create art with rubbish? (What is rubbish?)

ACTIVITY: Research what the symbols on the boxes mean. What symbols can you find throughout the book? Make a list of all the symbols you can see. Guess what kinds of things the boxes illustrator Van T. Rudd used to paint on once housed.

ACTIVITY: Design and paint your own patchwork bike.

- Brainstorm the different parts of a bike
- Find an old piece of cardboard
- Look around your classroom or house for objects that you would use to turn into parts of your patchwork bike
- Sketch your bike in pencil before painting the different parts of your bike

ACTIVITY: Research how artists give the sense of motion or movement in their artwork.

ACTIVITY: Painting movement.

- Think of an animal, person or object that moves really quickly.
- Paint a figure or vehicle on one side of a piece of A4 paper landscape.
- Add small drops of paint to one side of the figure or vehicle.
- Using a piece of cardboard with a straight edge, slowly and carefully drag the paint across the page to create the sense of movement behind the figure or object.

ACTIVITY: Drawing movement:

- Use charcoal to draw a figure or object.
- Use your fingers to smudge some of the lines away from the figure or object to create the illusion of movement.

## FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

• Video - Rubbish by Marionette Theatre of Australia (1982)

[http://lostmedia.wikia.com/wiki/Rubbish\\_\(Early\\_1980s\\_Marionette\\_Film\)?file=Rubbish](http://lostmedia.wikia.com/wiki/Rubbish_(Early_1980s_Marionette_Film)?file=Rubbish)

## CONCLUSION

*The Patchwork Bike* should provide a classroom with many rich discussions about how to make your own fun using objects that are 'common place'. A beautifully rendered insight into a more diverse cast of characters and place, allowing for an open conversation about different cultures and race. It truly is a work of art.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

**MAXINE BENEBA CLARKE** is a widely published Australian writer of Afro-Caribbean descent and the author of the poetry collections *Gil Scott Heron Is on Parole* and *Nothing Here Needs Fixing*. Maxine's short fiction, non-fiction and poetry have been published in numerous publications including *Overland*, *The Age*, *Meanjin*, *The Saturday Paper* and *The Big Issue*. Her critically acclaimed short fiction collection *Foreign Soil* (2014) won the ABIA for Literary Fiction Book of the Year 2015, the 2015 Indie Book Award for Debut Fiction, and Maxine was also named as one of the *Sydney Morning Herald's* Best Young Novelists for 2015, as well as being shortlisted for the Matt Richell Award for New Writing at the 2015 ABIA's and the 2015 Stella Prize. A collection of Maxine's poetry *Carrying The World*, her memoir *The Hate Race* and her first children's picture book *The Patchwork Bike* will be published in 2016.

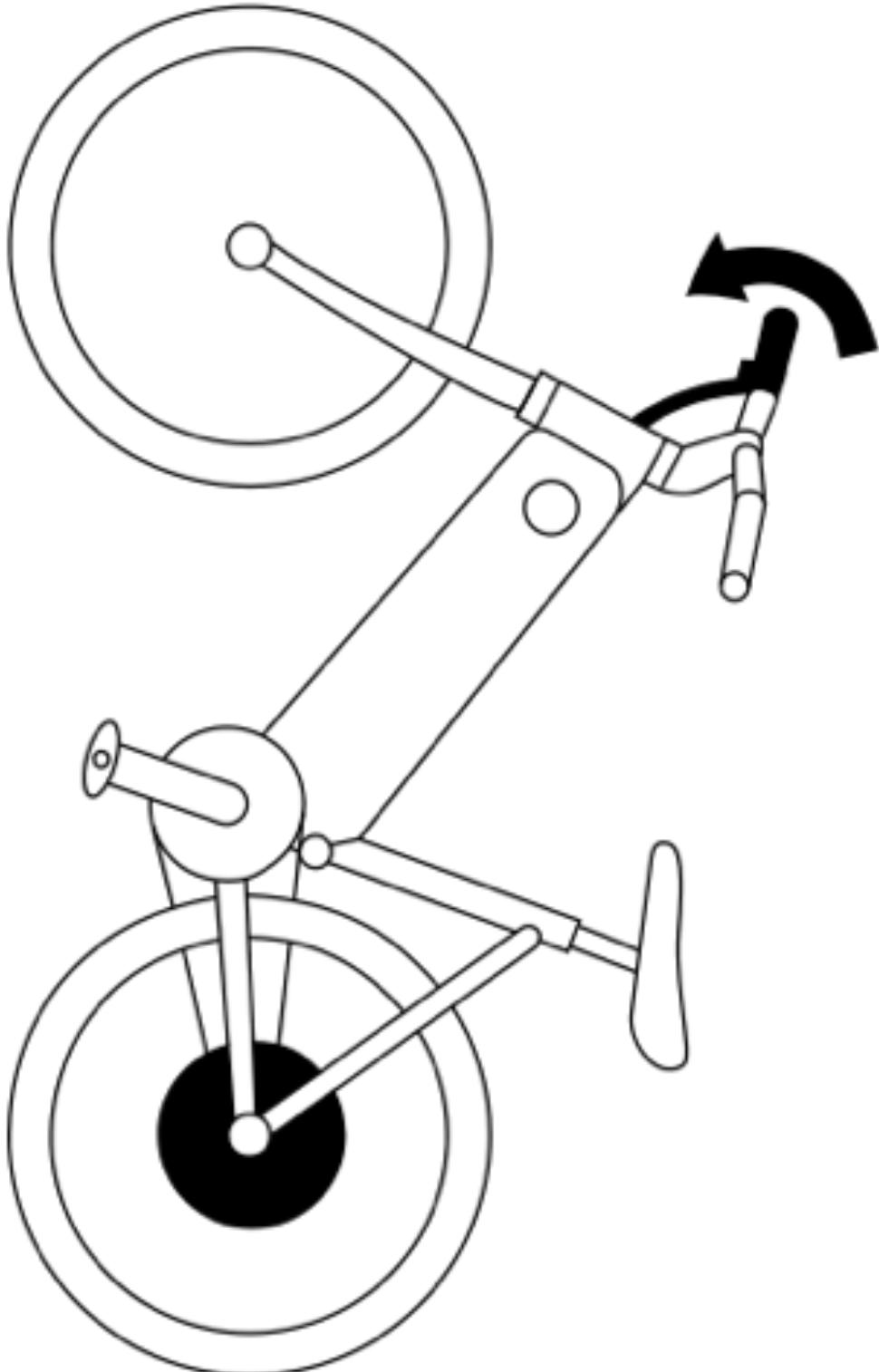
**VAN THANH RUDD** is an Australian artist and activist who studied at the Victorian College of the Arts, RMIT University and Griffith University. *The Patchwork Bike* is his first picture book. He lives in Melbourne with his family.

# BLACKLINE MASTERS

## BLM 1 - PATCHWORK BIKE DESIGN

Design your own patchwork bike using different textures and materials (e.g. foil, corrugated cardboard, fabric, etc). Paste these materials on to the bike outline below or draw your own bike and glue them on.

Alternatively, use the outline of the bike to add different textures in by placing the piece of paper over different surfaces (bricks, leaves, asphalt, etc) and shading gently with the side of your pencil.



Bike image by Norbert Haller - persönlich, CCO, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=40219849>

## BLM 2 - SAME VS DIFFERENT ACTIVITY

Fill out the form below about your favourite things and compare it with your classmates.

What do you have in **common** with your classmates?

What do you like that's **different** from your classmates?

Favourite food	Favourite desert	Favourite book
Favourite musician or band	Favourite subject at school	Favourite movie
Favourite colour	Favourite sport	Favourite TV show
Favourite fruit	Favourite vegetable	Favourite season
Favourite holiday destination	Favourite pastime or hobby	Hero or someone you look up to

## BLM 3 - ONOMATOPOEIA & ALLITERATION ACTIVITY

- Onomatopoeia are words that mimic sounds, such as crash or pop.
- Alliteration is when you use words that start with the same letter or sound, such as horrible histories or Peppa Pig.

Use the onomatopoeic words below to make up your own words that might go with them.

Start your words with the same letter or sound. For example: splishety splash

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Squeak

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Zoom

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Crackle

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Whisper

5. \_\_\_\_\_ Clang

6. \_\_\_\_\_ Puff

7. \_\_\_\_\_ Thump

8. \_\_\_\_\_ Crunch

9. \_\_\_\_\_ Squelch

10. \_\_\_\_\_ Buzz

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- [http://china.embassy.gov.au/files/bjng/Beneba%20Clarke\\_extract.pdf](http://china.embassy.gov.au/files/bjng/Beneba%20Clarke_extract.pdf)  
(the story the patchwork bike is based on)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Murray Nance is a primary school teacher in Sydney, Australia. He has completed a Bachelor of Arts (Music), Bachelor of Music (Honours) and a Bachelor of Education from the University of Western Sydney. He is passionate about literacy, the creative arts, technology, and is a fan of Doctor Who.

