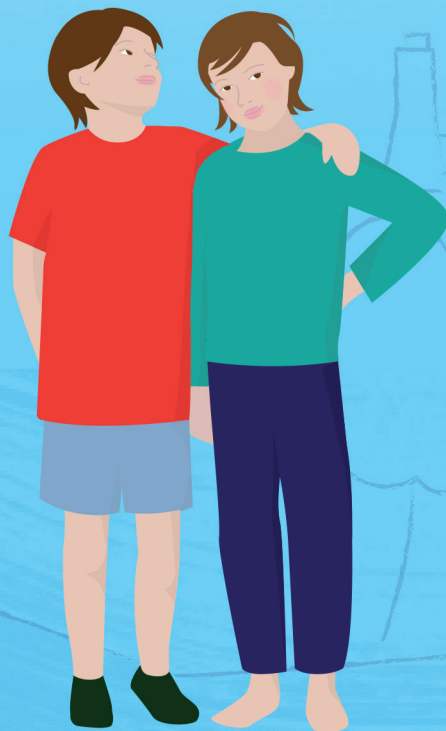


August & Jones

PIP HARRY



TEACHERS RESOURCES

August & Jones

PIP HARRY

Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

Introduction	3
Before & After Reading the Novel	3
Themes & Curriculum Topics	3
<i>Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)</i>	
<i>English Language & Literacy</i>	
<i>Narrative Person & Tense</i>	
<i>Symbolism</i>	
<i>Literary Devices</i>	
<i>Humour</i>	
<i>Structure</i>	
<i>Setting</i>	
<i>Characters</i>	
<i>Writing Tasks</i>	
<i>Visual Literacy</i>	
Further Quotes for Discussion	8
Further Activities	8
Conclusion	9
About the Author	10
Bibliography	11
About the Author of the Notes	13

INTRODUCTION

Eleven-year-old Jones Kirby has just moved to Sydney from her farm in country New South Wales. She's missing her alpacas and wide-open paddocks and can't get used to her family's tiny city apartment. She's also worried that her vision is blurry – she lost her eye to cancer as a toddler. Could it be another tumour?

Enrolling at her new school, Jones meets shy, awkward August Genting. He loves fun facts, the library and knitting as much as Jones loves rock climbing and being outdoors. Who would have thought they'd become fast friends?

At home, August's parents are fighting. And for Jones, the news from the doctor is not good. To cheer themselves up, the pair hatch a brilliant plan: the *August and Jones Must-See Bucket List*. Together, this brave duo will set out to meet a rare monkey, run across the Harbour Bridge and even climb Australia's highest mountain.

After all, with your best friend beside you, anything is possible!

From the CBCA Award-winning author of *The Little Wave*, winner of the 2020 Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year Award for Younger Readers, comes the story of two extraordinary kids who discover the life-changing power of friendship and teamwork.

BEFORE & AFTER READING THE NOVEL

- Examine the cover of the novel. What does it suggest about the novel's themes?
- After you have read the novel, examine the cover again: what does it suggest to you now?
- After you have read the novel, read about Pip Harry in reviews and articles and use the notes below to examine the text more closely.

THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes relevant to curriculum topics (Humanities and Social Sciences, English Language and Literacy and Visual Literacy) might be identified in this novel:

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

Several themes are relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/>> Investigate the following sub-topics using skills developed in this Curriculum Area relating to **INQUIRY AND SKILLS** and **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING**:

1. *Develop Methodology and Research Using Primary and Secondary Sources;*
2. *Synthesise and Evaluate Evidence;*
3. *Present Evidence;*
4. *Develop Alternatives.*

CHILDHOOD CANCER AND DISABILITY

Key Quote: 'You'll always be an adventurer, Jones. That's how you were made; fast and strong and fearless. Even if you do lose your sight, nothing will change that.' (p 112)

Discussion Point: Jones lost an eye to cancer as a baby and is therefore vision impaired and needs regular check-ups. But when the cancer returns she has to make a difficult decision. What gives young cancer patients the resilience they need to survive their illness? What services are available to assist them? [See **Bibliography**.]

Discussion Point: Research retinoblastoma, the rare cancer Jones has which caused the tumour in her eye to grow. [See **Bibliography**.]

Discussion Point: Jones researches other people with disabilities (p 111). Encourage students to do the same. For example, select a Paralympian who has become an elite athlete.

Discussion Point: Discuss the changes Jones faces in losing her sight. What adjustments would have to be made at home, school and elsewhere?

LEAVING A HOME

Key Quote: 'I don't want to give this place time and love. I want to go home.' (p 23)

Discussion Point: Jones and her parents hate leaving their farm but have been left with no option, since the drought has destroyed their livelihood. 'I wanted to hold on to our belongings, so something would be familiar in the city.' (p 5) Apart from her friends, what are the things which Jones regrets leaving the most?

Discussion Point: Invite students to discuss their experiences of leaving a home. (Some may have moved rarely and others frequently; some may have been forced to leave due to natural disaster, or may have chosen to leave for work or family reasons.) Compare differing experiences of leaving a home.

Discussion Point: Compare this novel to Lorraine Marwood's *Leave Taking* (UQP, 2018) which involves a similar situation of leaving a home.

DEPRESSION

Key Quote: 'Mum hasn't been going to the courts lately. She's always at home on the couch.' (p 15)

Discussion Point: August's mum has lost a business she loved and her marriage is failing so she retreats into depression. How does she recover from that? What helps her to do so?

Discussion Point: How does August's dad deal with his wife's depression? Is his apparent insensitivity understandable?

Discussion Point: 'Mum, we learnt about mental health at school, and it's not your fault,' I say. 'It can happen to anyone. It means your brain chemicals are out of balance.' (p 118) Does this sort of knowledge help August to deal with his mother's illness?

FRIENDSHIP

Key Quote: 'I wouldn't have thought Raff and I would have so many things in common, but we do.' (p 193)

Discussion Point: August and Jones are unlikely friends, as are August and Rafferty. Do friends have to be alike? Why do we sometimes gravitate towards people with entirely different

personalities to our own?

Discussion Point: What interests do Jones and August share, despite their differences?

SPORT

Key Quote: 'I'm the weakest link. The only thing I'm good at is running fast. But what good is running if you can't catch or kick? Dad takes me off and calls Oliver.' (p 12)

Discussion Point: Parents often force their kids to participate in sports which they have enjoyed themselves. How difficult is it to resist such pressure, as August eventually does in this novel?

Discussion Point: 'One more season, Gus. You'll come good. You've just got to find your passion for the game. Boys need sport. It moulds them into men. You'll thank me one day.' (pp 15–16) August's dad equates playing sport with being manly. Is this a correct assumption?

DIVORCE

Key Quote: 'Things haven't been great between us for a long time, but should we have stayed together, for the kids?' (p 138)

Discussion Point: August's parents live very unhappily together until they decide to separate. They appear to be much happier apart. Is this a positive outcome of divorce?

Discussion Point: Their kids have mixed feelings. They hated the fighting, but now their lives are split between two households. Discuss the adjustment necessary in such a situation. [Teachers need to be sensitive to students who may be going through similar experiences.]

VALUES

Key Quote: 'Come on, we've got a mountain to climb.' (p 276)

Discussion Point: Values which are celebrated in this novel include resilience, teamwork and empathy. Identify sections in the novel which evince these values.

Discussion Point: Which character in the novel develops empathy most obviously, in your opinion?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>

Study the writing style employed in this narrative, and examine the following sub-topics:

NARRATIVE PERSON, NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE & TENSE

Discussion Point: Jones and August tell this story in first person, present tense, in alternate chapters. How might the story have changed had it been told in third person from an omniscient narrator point of view, for example?

SYMBOLISM

Discussion Point: What examples of symbolism did you notice in this novel?

LITERARY DEVICES

Activity: The language used in this novel is inventive, for example: 'I watch a dirty, undercooked sunset ooze over the rooftops. Two butcherbirds perch on an electrical wire, singing to each other.' (pp 21–2) Find other examples of the use of literary devices in this novel, using the table below:

Simile	
Metaphors	'Our car is a giant blue tortoise, inching its way to the zoo.' (p 180)
Personification	
Other	

Discussion Point: Listmaking is another featured device in this text. (See for example, pp 47, 73, 127, 142–3.) [See **Writing Tasks** below.]

Discussion Point: Texting (pp 91–2, 108, 115) is another device used in this text to convey character and to advance the plot. What did you learn from these text exchanges?

HUMOUR

Activity: Identify techniques by which humour is provoked in this novel. Add quotes to the following table:

Sarcasm	
Irony	
Exaggeration	
Black Humour	
Other	

STRUCTURE

The structure of the story can be analysed in terms of key narrative features used to engage the reader's attention and to shape the work. For example, this novel is told in alternate

chapters from each of the two main characters.

a) Each of these sections contain strong *beginnings and endings* as a way of structuring a narrative, for example:

Beginning: 'Dad is gone.' (Ch 16, p 134)

Endings: 'I don't want to give this place time and love. I want to go home.' (Ch 3, p 23)

Which other opening or closing sentence was particularly gripping, in your opinion?

b) *Suspense* is the key to any narrative's structure. What aspects of this novel were suspenseful?

SETTING

Discussion Point: Description in setting can be evoked via sound, taste, hearing and smell as well as via a visual description. Select and discuss a passage where a number of senses are employed to describe a particular scene.

Discussion Point: 'Contrast in setting is also a powerful tool: 'Kitchen. Living room. Two bedrooms. One cramped bathroom and a communal laundry on the second floor. At our farm, it took fifteen minutes to walk to the back paddock. We had a chook shed, a small orchard with peaches, apples and nectarines, and a dam with yabbies in it.' (p 20) Find other sections in the novel where contrast is used to describe a scene.

CHARACTERS

Major Characters: Jones Kirby; August Genting; Jones' parents, Steve and Helen; August's parents, Heath and Nicole; Rafferty Brown the Captain of August's football team, the Lane Cove Cats Under 12s team; Archer, August's older brother; Lexi, August's older sister.

Minor Characters: August's teammates, Joe Ng, Ravi, Oliver, George, Theo, Naveen, Finlay; Ms Finnegan, August and Jones's teacher; August's and Jones' classmates, Layla, Amal, Miller, Theo, George, Aria, Li Ping; Jones' doctors, Dr Wu and Dr Habib.

Activity: Draw up a character chart and find key quotes which give a clear picture of any of these characters, and isolate events that demonstrate their natures. Then write a brief character study of the person using the quotes and events to illustrate the points made in your summary.

Question: Which character was most intriguing and why? Which character would you like to have heard more about?

WRITING TASKS

Activity: Read Jones' list of all the things she and August 'can do together so we don't get bored' (p 72) which appears on p 73. Then write your own list like this.

Activity: Make your own 'Bucket List'.

Activity: Write a diary entry as if written by Lexi or Archer about their feelings for their brother August.

VISUAL LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>>

Activity: Create a graphic novel interpretation of an incident in the novel. [See **Bibliography.**]

Activity: Design a new cover for this book.

Activity: Create a book trailer for this novel. [See **Bibliography.**]

FURTHER QUOTES FOR DISCUSSION

1. 'What I want doesn't always count. I guess that's the problem with being a kid.' (p 5)
2. 'Parents are not supposed to yell from the sidelines, there's a sign that says so, but my dad is the coach, so it's his job.' (p 10)
3. 'Climate change!' shouts Layla. 'Yes, that's right. The town is under water stress, which means they don't have enough to go around.' (p 35)
4. 'Why is everyone so *busy, busy, busy* here?' she mutters.' (p 74)
5. 'We don't fight, like other brothers. We never wrestle over the remote, or battle over the controller. We don't steal each other's stuff or dispute the score in backyard cricket. So, sure, we don't fight but also we hardly ever talk. I see him every day, but he feels like a stranger most of the time.' (pp 86–7)
6. 'So what? Just because I'm related to him doesn't mean I have to like him.' (p 117)
7. 'Mum says he's gone from being a big fish in a small pond to a small fish in a big pond. I think that means Arch isn't the best player on the field for the first time in his life.' (p 194)
8. "The way to know life is to love many things", I say, reading it aloud. Jones squeezes my hand. 'Like our list! Van Gogh was right.' (p 224)
9. 'I'm proud of you *because* you quit footy. It took guts to walk away when your heart wasn't in it. You'd think I would've understood that sooner, but I'm a slow learner.' (p 270)
10. 'In the end, it isn't standing on top of Australia that I want to remember forever. It's August's hand in mine and the feeling of pride and happiness blooming in my chest like an anemone buttercup.' (p 279)

FURTHER ACTIVITIES

1. **Draw a portrait** of Jones and August based on the descriptions contained in this novel.
2. **Design a poster to promote** August's GoFundMe Campaign for Jones.
3. What other **title** might the book have had? eg The Bucket List.

4. **Debate any of the topics** covered in these notes, or suggested by the novel.
5. Locate and study any **poetry** which deals with surviving cancer. Then write a poem in response to this novel.
6. Read other YA fictions dealing with cancer, and compare and discuss. [See **Bibliography**.]

CONCLUSION

August and Jones help each other deal with their problems – her disability and fitting in at a new school and in a new home; his anxiety and timidity, and being the butt of other boys' jokes and his father's intractability. They discover they have a lot in common and develop their own activities together. But when Jones' cancer returns they decide to meet the challenge and to draw up a Bucket List of wishes they can embark on together. Their friendship changes their lives forever.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pip Harry is an Australian author, copywriter and journalist. Her young adult novels include *I'll Tell You Mine*, *Head of the River* and *Because of You*, and have been shortlisted for the CBCA Children's Book of the Year Awards, Victorian Premier's Literary Award and Queensland Literary Awards. Her first middle grade novel, *The Little Wave*, won the 2020 Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year Award for Younger Readers. *Are You There, Buddha?* was released in 2021, included in the CBCA Notables 2022 and shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Literary Awards 2022 Ethel Turner Prize for Young People's Literature. Visit her website for further information: <<https://www.pipharry.com/>>

See also: 'Writer Talks – Pip Harry' *Nadia L King* <<https://nadialking.wordpress.com/2020/08/09/writer-talks-pip-harry/>>

Ep 301 Meet middle-grade author Pip Harry, author of 'The Little Wave' *Australian Writers' Centre*

<<https://www.writerscentre.com.au/blog/ep-301/>>

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NON-FICTION:

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- 'Cancer in Children' *Better Health Channel*
<<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/cancer-in-children>>
- 'Childhood Cancer' *World Health Organisation*
<<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cancer-in-children>>
- 'Children, teens and young adult cancers' *Cancer Council Australia*
<<https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/types-of-cancer/childhood-cancers>>
- Redkite; a lifeline for families facing childhood cancer*
<<https://www.redkite.org.au/>>
- 'Retinoblastoma' *The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne*
<<https://www.rch.org.au/cccdiagnoses/Retinoblastoma/>>
- The Kids' Cancer Project*
<<https://www.thekidscancerproject.org.au/about-us/who-are-we>>

OTHER NON-FICTION AND WEBSITE TEACHING RESOURCES:

'Book Trailers' *Creating Multimodal Texts*

<<https://creatingmultimodaltexts.com/book-trailers/book-trailers/>>

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright AM operates *justified text* writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. Her publications include *Paper Empires: A History of the Book in Australia 1946–2005* (co-edited with Craig Munro) (UQP, 2006). In 2011 she was recipient of the CBCA (Qld) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award, in 2012, of the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Outstanding Services to Children's Literature, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021, she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.