

CLAWS AND JAWS 30 NEW ZEALAND ANIMAL STORIES

Teaching Notes by Raymond Huber

CREATIVE WRITING

Point of View (Years 4-6)

Some of the stories are written from the animal's point of view. The animals are telling their own story in a world of huge humans. Read stories 3, 9, 15, 17, and 27.

- * Write a description of the world seen through the eyes of a very small creature. Your adventure could be an ant crossing a footpath, or a head louse exploring new territory!
- * Draw a picture from a small creature's viewpoint, looking up at the giant world above.
- * Retell Story 16 from the kea's point of view.

Superstitions: (Years 7/8)

Certain animals evoke fear and superstition. Read stories 4, 17, 21, and 26.

- * List some creatures that people are usually afraid of. Is there always a good reason for these fears?
 - *There are many superstitions associated with walking on pavements: 'Step on a crack, marry a rat, 'Stand on a line, marry a swine,' 'Tread in a square, marry a bear.' Make up some more rhyming animal superstitions.
- * A fable is a short animal story with a message. Story 21 has a message about trust. What is the moral? Rats are usually portrayed

as evil. Write a short fable in which rats are kind and ducks are sneaky.

Tall Tales (Years 7-8)

Tall tales are an exaggerated or fantasy story based on a real event. Read stories 28, 18 and 6.

- * What parts of these stories are exaggeration? What parts are pure fantasy?
- * Write your own tall tale based on an animal you know well. Illustrate with exaggerated pictures.
- * Read other tall tales such as Jack Lasenby's *Uncle Trev* and *Harry Wakatipu* books.

Realism (Years 7/8)

Read stories 2, 10, 16 which deal with dramatic real life problems.

- * What role do the animals have in solving the problem for the main character in each story? Could the person solve the problem alone? Is the problem always fixed?
- * Write a short story in which a wild animal rescues a lost child.

Endings (Years 4-6)

Many of the stories leave unanswered questions. Read stories 22, 23, 28,

- * Write an ending for Story 22 that explains what Tania does next.
- * In Story 23, describe what happens next.
- * Write a sequel to Story 28, about possum's holiday.

Anthropomorphic Animals (Years 6-8)

Read stories 6, 7, 15 and 29. Many of the stories have anthropomorphic characters. This means that the animals are given human behaviours. They might talk like humans, dress like humans, have jobs and even have pets!

* Story 7 is a detective mystery. Choose a story type from the list below and write a short story using animals as the main characters: Story Types: Science Fiction, Murder Mystery, Fairy Tale, Spy Story, Famous Explorers.

Poetry (years 7/8)

Read stories 5 and 23 which have vivid descriptive language that engages the senses: sight, sound, touch and smell.

* Write a poem about the bush or the old dinosaur. Imagine the colours, smells, sounds and feel of each.

RESEARCH

Conservation: Endangered Species (Years 7/8)

Read stories 12 and 14 about the threatened tuatara and dotterel.

* Find out why the populations are decreasing and research the breeding programmes for these animals. (Reference: The Tuatara by Brian Parkinson).

* Summarize your findings including a map of the locations of the programmes.

Conservation: Caring for Creatures (Years 4/5)

Read stories 1, 5, 20, 24, which include instructions on how to care for birds, koura, and butterflies.

* Draw one of these creatures in the centre of a page. To the left of the animal, list the kind of foods it needs to be healthy. On the right side, list the plants it likes and the places it likes to live.

Vets (Years 5/6)

Read stories 3, 8, 27 which feature veterinarians.

* List the tasks that vets and vet nurses have to do in these stories. Find out some of the other jobs that vets do to care for pets and farm animals.

Working Animals (Years 4/5)

Read stories 25 and 30 about animals working for people.

* List as many animals as you can that work for humans, or provide us with useful products.

ILLUSTRATION AND DESIGN

Weta (Years 4/5)

Read the weta stories, 7, 17, and 29. Giant weta's may be scary to look at, but they need protection or they will become extinct.

* Find out why wetas are special and what dangers they face in real life.

* Design an imaginary house for one of the wetas from the stories. Draw a plan of the house including safety features that will protect it from dangers (including humans).

* Write a letter to the weta in the letterbox (Story 17) to make him feel loved. Explain why wetas are special.

Animal Sayings (Years 6-8)

Some stories use animal expressions such as ‘a real bird’s nest’.

Read stories 1 and 4.

* Find out what these animal sayings mean: to monkey around, a dog’s life, take the bull by the horns, something is fishy, smelling a rat, card shark, curiosity killed the cat, butterflies in the stomach. Can you think of any other sayings?

* Draw an animal cartoon character to illustrate one of these sayings. For example, you might draw a shark playing cards. (Look at Philip Webb’s cartoons for inspiration).

Animal Olympics (Years 4-6)

Read story 21 about animals racing each other.

* Here is a list of gold-medal creatures. Find out what their special abilities are. Match them with an event they might win at an animal olympics.

<u>Animal</u>	<u>Event</u>
Cheetah	Freestyle swimming
Frog	Basketball
Gibbon	Weightlifting (lightweight)
Rhinoceros Beetle	100m Sprint
Gazelle	Water polo
Sailfish	Long jump
Giraffe	Weightlifting (heavyweight)

Seal

Gymnastics

Elephant

Hurdles

* Illustrate one of these events.

* Use each animal's outline shape to create a new olympic symbol for each event.

Perfect Pets (Years 4-6)

Read stories 11 , 26 and 22.

* What would the perfect pet be like? List the best qualities.

* If you could have any animal as a pet, what would you chose?

Why?

* Suggest some very strange pets for these people: a movie star, an astronaut, a spy, the Prime Minister, a wizard, a dentist, a teacher.

Draw a cartoon of the pet and owner.

Humour (years 6-8)

Read stories 13, 9, 22. David Hill uses a lot of word play to make his stories funny.

* Story 13 has numerous puns about sheep. Make up some puns for Andrew's cow. Use words such as moo, milk, calf, and bull.

* Create a comic strip version of Story 9. Use speech bubbles and cartoon sounds such as ZIPP!, WHOOSH!, and KERTHUMMPP!.

* Record the story and add sound effects.

Imagine (year 4/5)

* If you could be one animal in the book, which would you be? What is it about the animal that you like? What would life be like for you as that animal?

* Create a 'chimera' (fantasy animal) by combining parts of animals in the book. For example, you might take the wings of the kea, the body of an eel and the song of bellbird to make a 'Kellbell' Draw your creature and give it a name.

Recipes (Years 4-6).

Story 26 has some delicious ideas for animal meals.

* Research and list all the animals that can be safely eaten. Are there any insects that can be eaten?

* Design a menu for a meal of insects and other creepy creatures.