



# EK BOOKS TEACHER NOTES & RESOURCES

**Title:** Xander and the Pen

**Author:** David Lawrence

**Illustrator:** Cherie Dignam

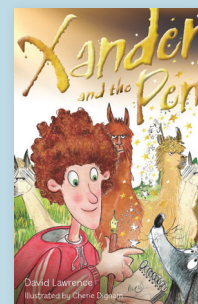
**Price:** ANZ \$18.99 | USA \$12.99 | CA \$14.99 | UK £9.99

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**Audience age:** 8-12 years (Middle Grade Fiction)

**Key Curriculum Areas:** English, Science, The Arts, HASS



## SYNOPSIS:

Xander buys a pen that gives him the power to improve his family's fortunes, only to discover that power comes with its own problems. *Xander and the Pen* is the story of a boy who loves to draw superheroes, and the pen he buys from a mysterious market stall. He soon learns that the pen has a magical power: whatever he draws, happens! At first the pen helps Xander improve his family's fortunes, but there are many unintended consequences and soon everybody is angry at him.

Xander sees that the power of the pen has changed him into somebody his sister and his friends despise. But how else to deal with the bullying Bruise Brothers and solve the mystery of the poisoned llamas? Can Xander win back the respect of his sister and friends without using the pen? Or will he succumb to the temptation of an easy fix? Featuring hilarious illustrations, and with messages about bullying, family dynamics, disability, and the environment, this is fast-paced, entertaining middle grade fiction that will resonate with kids everywhere. After all, who wouldn't want to fix all their problems with the stroke of a pen!

## THEMES:

- Fantasy - Magic Realism
- Bullying/Friendship
- Teamwork
- Environment/Community
- Humour
- Family Relationships
- Disability
- Selfishness vs Selflessness

## SELLING POINTS:

- The second book in this middle grade series that has been written so that it can be enjoyed by boys and girls (the author road-tests his stories on a 50/50 mix of genders). This first book featured a female hero, while the central character of this second book is male.
- Suitable for younger advanced readers and older reluctant ones.
- Perfect for kids who like elements of fantasy woven into a relatable world.
- Includes hilarious yet clever illustrations - Gary Larson style, for kids!

## AUTHOR MOTIVATION:

My motivation for writing *Xander and the Pen* was to give a shout out to those who are brave enough to stick up for others, knowing they might suffer for speaking up. I also wanted to explore what makes kids, their families and their friends happy. And on the flipside, what can derail that happiness! The setting (Dukescliff) largely resembles the town where I live. That made the writing process easier (and quicker) as I could visualise where the action was taking place.

## AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND:

**David Lawrence** was once a financial analyst. But that wasn't much fun so he quit and started performing stand-up comedy and TV writing, before penning his first book in 2007. Since then he has written another 12 fun-filled children's books, and has never, ever missed being a financial analyst. David is passionate about children's literacy and is a proud Ambassador of the Indigenous Literacy Foundation.

**Cherie Dignam** has always loved drawing and works in a variety of mediums. Like Ruby she is always happiest with pen and ink, sketching new worlds for her characters.



## TEACHER NOTES: Xander and the Pen

### AUTHOR INTERVIEW:

#### What is the inspiration for this story?

The saying, “The Pen is mightier than the Sword” started the ball rolling.

My thoughts often fly off in tangents and I imagined a 10 year old kid in the school yard holding a pen, up against the biggest bully in the school wielding a samurai sword! In that instance the saying doesn’t really make much sense!

Then I thought, “What would even things up? Mmm, what if the pen was ... magic?”

#### What was the most rewarding part of this project?

I’d had the idea to write a book about a magic pen for years, however work and other writing projects always got in the way. When Covid hit, all my work commitments disappeared over night. On the plus side, this gave me time to sit down and start writing *Ruby and the Pen*. So the most rewarding part of the project was that it gave me a purpose to get out of bed every day during lockdown.

#### What was the most challenging part of this project?

I’m used to working to deadlines. Whether it’s for a client or for a Publisher. And don’t tell anyone, but I often wait until pretty late (and I’m under pressure) before exploding into action to make sure the deadline is met. But with the magic pen series there were initially no deadlines. No one knew how long the Covid restrictions would last (anywhere between two weeks and forever) and who knew if a Publisher would even like the idea.

So staying motivated without a deadline was the most challenging part of writing the first book.

In summary, the most rewarding part of the project was overcoming the most challenging part of the project!

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### TEACHER ACTIVITIES/NOTES:

N.B. These questions and activities can be adapted to suit the experience and ability of students. Activities are linked to the Australian Curriculum.

### DISCUSSION:

#### Before Reading

- Look at the cover of *Xander and the Pen*. What do you notice? What does it make you wonder? How do you think the character is feeling? What do you think this story is about?
- Read the blurb. Discuss.
- What ideas about Xander come to mind with a nickname like ‘The Beast’?
- Considering what you know about Xander from the blurb, what do you think he is aiming to achieve in this story?
- If you could make a drawing become reality with a magic pen, what would you draw? Why?
- If you’ve read *Ruby and the Pen* (Book 1), use prior knowledge to predict some of the themes in this story.

**CHAPTER 1:****Plot tension:**

Years 3 & 4 English: (ACELT1605) | Years 5 & 6 English: (ACELA1505) (ACELA1512)

**Opening line** – “The sound of the creaky classroom door being opened made Xander spin around.” (p.2)

**Closing line** – “Tony Clagg’s menacing voice was a dead giveaway. ‘There he is. Let’s get him!’” (p.10)

- How does the opening line hook you in? What question/s does it leave you wondering about this character and the setting he is in? How does it implore you to find out more?
- What impression does the closing paragraph leave the reader? In what ways does it encourage the reader to keep reading?

**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: (ACELA1493) (ACELA1498) | Years 5 & 6 English: (ACELA1508) (ACELA1512)

‘rivulets’, ‘meekly’, ‘hydroponic’, ‘menacing’

- Discuss and write down the meanings of the vocabulary terms. Write them in your own sentences.

**Literary Technique - Visual literacy:**

Years 3 & 4 English: (ACELT1594) (ACELT1603) (ACELT1599) | Years 5 & 6 English: (ACELA1508) (ACELA1525) (ACELT1611) (ACELT1617)

“The bald-headed teacher with a heavily waxed moustache narrowed his eyes and folded his arms.” (p.2)

“The cartoon drawing was of a musclebound Timmy wearing a fluttering superhero cape.” (p.6)

- Consider and discuss the language used to create a visual image and impression in the reader’s mind. What impression do you get of each of the characters? Circle the adjectives in each of the sentences.

**Literary Technique - Alliteration**

Years 3 & 4 English: (ACELT1599) (ACELT1600) (ACELT1605) (ACELT1606) (ACELT1791) | Years 5 & 6 English: (ACELA1512) (ACELA1518) (ACELA1829) (ACELA1830)

“Was it the Bruise Brothers?, he asked Timmy.” (p.4).

**Bruise Brothers**

Xander ‘The **B**east’ **B**eeston

- Discuss the literary technique of alliteration and how the author has used this as a form of humour and for a memorable impact. Refer to the illustrations to identify the reference to the names. Students can brainstorm some other possible funny alliterated names for these characters and draw pictures to match.

**Discussion Questions and Comprehension:**

- What do you think happened to Timmy?
- What kind of personality does Mr Steele have? In what ways does he treat his students? Give evidence.
- Who are the ‘Bruise Brothers’? What impression of them do you get from their title?
- Without looking at Xander’s cartoon drawing, listen to the description and draw the picture using your own imagination. Compare yours with the one in the book.
- Why does Xander say, ‘They don’t call me “The Beast” for nothing?’ What do his friends think about this label for Xander?
- How does Xander see himself? Do you think he is happy with the way he is? Why or why not?
- What do you think will happen next?

**CHAPTER 2:****Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELA1498](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1512](#))

*'plunged', 'enveloping', 'loomed', 'luminous', 'permeated'*

- Write down the definitions of these terms. How do these words describe the setting?

**Literary Technique - Simile/Metaphor:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELT1791](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1692](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1617](#)) ([ACELA1518](#))

*"Well, if we're toast, then you're, um, you're..."* (p.21)

*"You're the toast and I'm... 'The Toaster'!"* (p.22)

- What is a simile? What is a metaphor? Explain the difference.
- What is the literal meaning and metaphorical meaning? Write your own similes and metaphors to describe the bullies being 'toast' (or, in trouble), or other 'toast'-related sayings. For example, a simile could include, "You're as charred as a piece of burnt toast!", or "You're like a slice of soggy toast!"  
A metaphor for 'you're in trouble' could include, "You're the grass and I'm 'The Lawnmower'!"

**Discussion Questions and Comprehension:**

- What do you infer from when Xander describes his sister having speed... before her accident?
- What happened when Xander and the bullies reached the market?
- Discuss the magical realism that is happening in this chapter. In which part do you realise the reality is becoming skewed?
- Discuss the extent of bullying in this chapter. List the behaviours of the Bruise Brothers that make them bullies. Could Xander have done anything differently?
- Jeff confused the word 'coast' to think it meant *'the beach coast'* (p.22). What did Tony actually mean? Here, 'coast' is a homonym. Can you find more in the text?
- What is the meaning of *'manibus futuri'*? Why do you think the mysterious market man wants Xander to have the pen?
- How does the illustration make you feel? What techniques has the illustrator used to show different emotions and mood?
- What do you think will become of the pen and ink after it was flushed in the toilet?

**CHAPTER 3:****Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELA1498](#)) ([ACELT1599](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))

*'humiliating', 'mangiest', 'distressed', 'withering'*

- Write down the definitions of the above terms. Use each one in a sentence to describe a particular appearance or emotion of a character or object.

**Literary Technique -Humour/Puns:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELT1605](#)) ([ACELT1606](#)) ([ACELT1791](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1692](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELA1518](#)) ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))

*"Stop Squid-dling Around."* (p.31)

*"Your crime spree has come to a sticky end!"* (p.33)

The author has used puns for comedic effect. 'Stop Squid-dling Around' refers to the action and the noun / name of the creature (squid). 'Your crime spree has come to a sticky end!' refers to both the describing action and the physical object (the stick) in the scene.

- Brainstorm more words relative to 'squids' or 'sticks' and write an alternative phrase. (eg. For squid – squidgy, inky, kraken/cracking, refers to someone inexperienced, etc)

### Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- How does Xander feel about his interactions with the Bruise Brothers at the start of the chapter and then at the end of the chapter? What words can you use to describe these feelings? Eg. Humiliated, embarrassed, hopeless, doubtful / hopeful, optimistic, determined, etc.
- In your own words, how would you describe Xander's drawing of "Lighthouse Girl"?
- Why do you think Xander likes to draw these imagined 'superhero' characters?
- What do you think is the significance of Shiver? How do you think he might be important in this story?

### Character Analysis: Mr Beeston, Dad

*"Right, I'm going around to the Claggs' place to sort this out."* (p.36)

- What does this line tell you about Mr Beeston's role and commitment as a father? What is his relationship with Mr Clagg?

### Character Analysis: Tristan / Mr Clagg

*"The hulking frame of Mr Clagg emerged, and he did not look happy. "What do you want? he demanded."* (p.38)

- What kind of physical and personality traits does Mr Clagg possess?

### Family relationships

- What can you infer about the family dynamics of the Beestons? How might the loss of their jobs affect their lifestyle?

## CHAPTER 4:

### Vocabulary:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1482](#)) ([ACELA1493](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELA1512](#))

*'barrelling', 'recoiled', 'polluted'*

- Write the definitions for the vocabulary terms. Discuss that these are verbs to describe a specific action. Brainstorm and list synonyms for these verbs.

### Literary Technique - Show, Don't Tell:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1482](#)) ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELT1594](#)) ([ACELT1596](#)) ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELT1605](#)) ([ACELT1791](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELA1525](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))

*"Argh!" he cried. Xander quickly threw the water bottle into his pack and raced through the scrub. Eventually he burst out of the bush and saw Cat and Tee-Jay standing next to the dam."* (p.56)

- How does the language used 'show' the reader how the character is feeling or his response to seeing a deadly snake? How is this more effective than writing, 'Xander was scared of the snake'?
- Write another sentence 'showing' a scared character.

### Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- What did you find out about Phoebe?
- What did you find out about Xander's feelings about his sister?
- What patterns have you noticed with regards to Phoebe and snakes in this chapter?
- What happened to the alpacas on the Cruzes' farm? Can you predict several possibilities for what might have caused this?
- Magical realism – how do you think the pen and ink returned? What affect has the pen's return had on Xander?

**CHAPTER 5:****Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1482](#)) ([ACELA1484](#)) ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELA1495](#)) ([ACELA1498](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELA1523](#))

*'obligingly', 'instinctively', 'triumphantly'*

- These terms are adverbs (describing an action). Use these in your own sentences. Make a list of more adverbs or find some in the text.

**Discussion Questions and Comprehension:**

- Why doesn't Xander want Phoebe to know about his 'superhero' sketch of her?
- What is your opinion on how Xander handled the bullies?
- How do the author and illustrator use humour when it comes to the bullies?
- What consequences do you think might occur for Xander using the pen in this way?
- Why do you think Shiver doesn't like the pen?

**CHAPTER 6:****Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1485](#)) ([ACELA1826](#)) ([ACELA1779](#)) ([ACELA1828](#)) ([ACELT1791](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1513](#)) ([ACELA1829](#)) ([ACELA1830](#))

*'lasso', 'raucous'*

- Pronounce these terms out loud. Identify the spelling patterns and particular phonemes in the words. Break down the words into sounds or syllables. List other words with similar phoneme patterns.

**Literary Technique - Visual literacy:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELT1594](#)) ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELT1605](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1692](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1617](#)) ([ACELY1699](#))

*"Unfortunately his trousers fell down straight away, revealing a pair of silky Scooby Doo boxer shorts."*  
(p.83)

- Imagine the 'David versus Goliath' scene between Mr Beeston and Mr Clagg in your mind. Highlight the specific parts of the language that show the reader the intent (or unintended consequence) of each character.
- What do you think Xander's picture of this scene would have looked like? Draw it with a clever caption or heading.
- Write another scene using visual literacy techniques for a partner to illustrate.

**Discussion Questions and Comprehension:**

- Humour – What kind of humour did the author use in this chapter? What were some of the 'one-liners' that the neighbours used? Do you think it was fair or right of them to tease Mr Clagg?
- Are you familiar with the 'Harry Potter' references? How does the author use allusion to connect this story with other familiar texts? Is this an effective strategy for hooking in the reader?
- What is the unintended consequence of Xander's actions with the pen? Why is he not sure if it is still a lucky pen?

**CHAPTER 7:****Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1482](#)) ([ACELA1493](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELA1525](#))

*'emanating', 'jolt', 'high-pitched'*



- Discuss the definitions of the vocabulary words. Find these in the chapter to explain the feelings of the pen and the characters.

### Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- What did Xander do for his sister, Phoebe? Were Xander's intentions for his sister good or bad? Was the result of his actions good or bad? How do you think things will turn out for his sister after this race?
- Some of the newspaper headlines include, 'Miracle Girl Smashes World Record', 'The Queen of Dukescliff', 'Flying Phoebe on Top of the World', 'Chairway to Heaven' (p.99 – 100). Discuss the literary and engagement techniques used to create these headlines. For example, allusion (to well-known figures and songs), alliteration (phonemic sounds), sensational wording ('Miracle Girl', 'Queen').
- Write your own sensational and clever headlines to describe Phoebe's record win in the race.
- Write your own feature article about Phoebe's race. What kind of 'tone' and language is used in a newspaper article compared to the narrative text? Compare the similarities and differences between formal and informal writing in a Venn Diagram.
- Why do you think Xander's pen energy felt different when he heard the news about the animals at the farm?
- What is Xander planning next?

## CHAPTER 8:

### Vocabulary:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELA1498](#)) ([ACELT1599](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))

'burly', 'lethal', 'invisible'

- Write down the definitions of the above adjectives (describing words). Use each one in a sentence to describe a particular appearance or trait of a character or object.

### Literary Technique - Similes:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELT1605](#)) ([ACELT1791](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1692](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1518](#)) ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))

*"Parts of him disappeared immediately – it was just like using an eraser on a pencil drawing!"* (p.112)

- A simile is a figure of speech comparing one thing with another of a different kind, using words such as 'like', 'so', 'as' than'.
- Considering the feeling of 'becoming invisible' or 'being erased', create your own simile by finishing the sentence, 'It was like ...', 'It was as ... as ...'
- Illustrate your sentence.

### Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- Do you think Xander carefully thought through his plan to become invisible and enter Clagg's Cannery? What are some important factors he should have considered? (For example, how long would the invisibility last? Equipment and resources needed, etc)
- What do you think is behind the trapdoor?

## CHAPTER 9:

### Vocabulary:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1482](#)) ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELA1498](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELA1525](#))

'clowning', 'sighed', 'gushed', 'slumped'

- Discuss the meanings of these emotive verbs. Write these in a sentence and illustrate.

**Literary Technique - Show, Don't Tell:**Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1482](#)) ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELT1594](#)) ([ACELT1596](#)) ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELT1605](#)) ([ACELT1791](#))Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELA1525](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))*"His shoulders were slumped, his head was down and Cat was giving him a supportive hug." (p.130)*

- How does the language used 'show' the reader how the character is feeling? How is this more effective than writing, 'Tee-Jay was sad.'? Write another sentence 'showing' a sad or disappointed character.

**Discussion Questions and Comprehension:**

- What was the action – consequence relationship of the pen in this chapter?
- Do you think Xander should have told / will tell Tee-Jay and Cat about the pen?
- How is Xander taking advantage of his power? Do you think Professor Steele deserves what's coming to him?

**CHAPTER 10:****Vocabulary:**Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1486](#)) ([ACELA1780](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELA1523](#))*'stumped', as in "... the bonus question that would have stumped most university professors" (p.143)**'swamped', as in "swamped with enrolments." (p.144)*

- These terms are both homonyms (words that share the same spelling and pronunciation but have different meanings). Write both definitions for each word. Can you find more homonyms in the text, or add your own to a list?
- Create a graphic showing the differences between homonyms, homophones and homographs, and students provide examples of each.

**Literary Technique - Hyperbole / Idiom:**Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELT1605](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1692](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1518](#)) ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))*"Xander's eyes nearly popped out of his head." (p.144)*

An idiom is a statement with figurative, non-literal meanings. Hyperbole is an exaggerated statement, not meant to be literal, and used in emotive / emphasised situations or dialogue.

- In the example above, the saying 'eyes pop out of your head' is a way of describing how someone looks when they are extremely surprised or astonished. Explain how this statement is not meant to be taken literally.
- How does this language create a greater impact on the reader? Re-write this sentence using more literal terms and compare the 'emotive' effectiveness. For example, 'Xander had a look of surprise on his face.'

**Discussion Questions and Comprehension:**

- What unexpected event happened at the school assembly?
- What was the reaction from the students and from Mr Steele?
- Would you say that Xander cheated in the National Mathematics Accelerator Competition? How do you feel about this?
- What's the most important thing for Mr Whisker, and what is it for Mr Steele? Do you think they are concerned about the 'fairness' of the competition? Give evidence for your reasons.
- What feelings is Xander feeling towards the end of the chapter? (guilt, lonely, confused)



**CHAPTER 11:****Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1484](#)) ([ACELA1498](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1512](#))

*'instinctively', 'melodramatically', 'boisterous', 'jostling', 'frantic' / 'frantically', 'milestone'*

- Write the meanings and some synonyms for these words. Use these words all in one sentence or short story paragraph to summarise the chapter.

**Literary Technique - Dialogue:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1494](#)) ([ACELT1596](#)) ([ACELT1603](#)) ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELT1605](#)) ([ACELT1791](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1501](#)) ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELA1525](#)) ([ACELY1699](#))

- Through the dialogue between Mr and Mrs Beeston on page 164 -165, identify the parts of their speech that show the reader how each character feels, thinks, their interests, dislikes, sense of humour, way of speaking, impact on the other, and so on. Does the dialogue sound casual or formal? Is the tone light and friendly, or heavy and serious?
- Write a short script with dialogue between two characters from the book, experimenting with tone, expression and feeling. Share.

**Discussion Questions and Comprehension:**

- What adjectives come to mind to describe how Xander felt about the Bruise Brothers having the cool quad bikes? Do you think his next actions were justified? Did he think this through? How do you know?
- What do you know about the Japanese sea bass? Complete a KWL chart (What I Know, What I want to learn, How I will find out, what I have Learned).
- How responsibly / sensibly / morally do you think Xander's parents have acted in accordance with their \$10 million win? Justify your thoughts. Write down 10 things you would do for yourself and 10 things you would do for others with that sum of money.
- What words come to mind to describe Mr and Mrs Beeston's behaviour towards each other on their anniversary?
- How do you think their win fall has become problematic for their family?

**CHAPTER 12:****Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELA1495](#)) ([ACELA1498](#)) ([ACELA1482](#)) ([ACELA1484](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELA1525](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))

*'disastrous', 'designer', 'awkward', 'magnified', 'expensive', 'quarry', 'somersault', 'cockily', 'expertly', 'revving', 'scorching'*

- With a partner, sort the vocabulary terms into the following categories: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs. Add more interesting words to these lists from this chapter.

**Discussion Questions and Comprehension:**

- What can you infer about the pen's impact on the characters? In particular, how has the power of the pen changed Xander? In what ways?
- Discuss the themes and Xander's attitude in relation to:
  - Bullying vs Friendship
  - Greed - Selflessness vs Selfishness
  - Arrogance / Power vs Humility
- Can you identify some of the above themes / emotions as portrayed in the illustrations? What do you like/dislike about these drawings?
- How does Xander 'egg on' the brothers, and then Timmy, in this chapter? One is figurative and the other is literal. Discuss.

**CHAPTER 13:****Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1485](#)) ([ACELA1826](#)) ([ACELA1779](#)) ([ACELA1828](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELA1513](#)) ([ACELA1829](#)) ([ACELA1830](#))

*'conversation', 'scowled', 'sketches', 'scholarship'*

- Write the words and their definitions. Break the words into syllables and sounds. What digraphs and trigraphs can you find? Can you find more words in the text with the same spelling patterns?

**Literary Technique - Metaphors:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELT1594](#)) ([ACELT1596](#)) ([ACELT1603](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1692](#)) |

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELT1609](#)) ([ACELT1795](#)) ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1615](#)) ([ACELT1617](#)) ([ACELY1699](#))

*"Mr and Mrs Beeston looked up as if they had been zapped with an electric shock."* (p.191).

- A metaphor is a figure of speech to represent an object or action symbolic of something else. How does this metaphorical line symbolise how Mr and Mrs Beeston are feeling in that moment?
- What kind of expression might be on their faces? Think about a time you may have felt this way. Turn to a partner and replicate the expression, or draw it!

**Discussion Questions and Comprehension:**

- Family relationships - What makes the scenario of Mr and Mrs Beeston 'conversing' with Phoebe humorous? Does their behaviour remind you of the adult-child relationship, and how is this different? How is the author portraying the 'adults' in the book?
- What kinds of things has Phoebe noticed that has changed with each of her family members and their dynamic? How do you think she feels about it upon her return? How do you know? How would you feel if you were in Phoebe's position?
- Why do you think Phoebe ripped up Xander's sketches? Do you think she did the right thing? Justify your answer.
- What do you think Xander will do next? Might he re-consider his use of the pen and what's most important (his friends, the Cruzes' farm, family, etc)?

**CHAPTER 14:****Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELA1498](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1512](#))

*'huddled', 'hesitated', 'muster', 'sobbing', 'perspire'*

- Discuss the definitions of these terms. How do they all express an emotive quality or feeling? Draw and label an emotive picture for each word.

**Literary Technique - Show, Don't Tell:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1482](#)) ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELT1594](#)) ([ACELT1596](#)) ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELT1605](#)) ([ACELT1791](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELA1525](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))

*"He sat in the back chewing his fingernails as the talkative old driver shared his views on education."* (p.206)

- How does the language used 'show' the reader how the character is feeling? How is this more effective than writing, 'Xander was worried.'? Write another sentence 'showing' a nervous or anxious character.

**Discussion Questions and Comprehension:**

- What does the phrase, 'Finders, Keepers' mean? Why did Xander write this?
- What did Xander use The Seeker for? What was in Finito's treasure?
- What has Xander struggled with emotionally in this chapter?

**CHAPTER 15:****Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1498](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1512](#))

*'involuntarily', 'veered', 'trembling', 'remorse'*

- Write the definitions of the words. How do they relate to the control the pen has over Xander? Write a sentence or short paragraph about the power of the pen using all of these terms.

**Literary Technique - Similes:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELT1605](#)) ([ACELT1791](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1692](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1518](#)) ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))

*"Xander's eyes sparkled as brightly as Finito's treasure." (p.232)*

- A simile is a figure of speech comparing one thing with another of a different kind, using words such as 'like', 'so', 'as' than'. Write your own set of similes to reference Xander's sparkling eyes. 'Xander's eyes sparkled as ... as ...'
- Illustrate your sentence.

**Discussion Questions and Comprehension:**

- How has Xander's sister's words, 'Harder than being told you'll never walk again?' affected him? Why does he keep replaying these words in his head?
- How did Xander show 'nobility' in this chapter? What has he learnt about himself? How has he begun to turn around the mistakes he has made?
- How is Xander thinking of other people and the community? Why is this more important than the choices he made earlier in the book?
- Brainstorm a plan for Cat, Tee-Jay and Xander to sneak into the cannery.

**CHAPTER 16:****Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1484](#)) ([ACELA1498](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1512](#))

*'risky', 'peckish', 'fierce', 'decontaminate'*

- Write the definitions of these terms. Now, find some possible antonyms and write these down.

**Discussion Questions and Comprehension:**

- How are the friends all working together to achieve a common goal?
- In small groups, brainstorm some ideas for how Xander and his friends can stop Mr Clagg from continuing to contaminate the water in the bushland.

**CHAPTER 17:****Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1498](#)) ([ACELT1606](#)) ([ACELT1791](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))

*'fawning', 'bounding', 'impersonating', 'loping'*

- Discuss the meanings of the terms. Include these words in a poem about Shiver, the dog.

**Literary Technique - Onomatopoeia:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1600](#)) ([ACELT1606](#)) ([ACELT1791](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))

*"Click. Swoosh." (p.254).*

Onomatopoeia are words that represent and imitate a sound.

- What is the 'Click, Swoosh' sounds representing in the story? What other things could be represented by a 'click' or a 'swoosh'?
- List other onomatopoeia words that could represent the sound of Xander's pen in the crushing machine.

### Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- Do you think Shiver will be good for the Beeston family? List some benefits of owning a pet.
- Consider Xander's email to Senior Sergeant Dawson (p.253-254). Do you think it is an effective piece? How could he have made it even better? Re-write this persuasive piece using Xander's evidence.
- What is 'crowd-funding'? What did Xander use it for? Do you think his goal (and the outcome) was realistic? Research a crowd-funding site and make a list of causes the platform is used for. Do you have a cause that you or your school or community would like to raise money for? Discuss.
- What is the new name of Clagg's Cannery? What is meant by the term 'Co-op'? How will this work for Xander's parents and the factory workers?
- How is Xander a superhero?
- How does the ending make you feel?

### EPILOGUE:

### Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- What does the epilogue make you wonder about?
- What predictions can you make for the next instalment in the series?

### Further Discussion Questions:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELT1596](#)) ([ACELT1603](#)) ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELT1605](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1692](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELT1608](#)) ([ACELT1613](#)) ([ACELT1609](#)) ([ACELT1610](#)) ([ACELY1699](#)) ([ACELY1703](#)) ([ACELY1713](#)) ([ACELY1801](#))

- What are the main themes of the story? What important messages does the author intend to portray?
- The author repeats the message given from the pen, 'Nothing can harm me.' Do you believe this to be true? Discuss.
- Why was the pen brought to Xander in the first place? What were his 'needs'? (eg. being a brave superhero, improve his family's fortunes)
- What did you learn about Xander? How did his behaviours and feelings change throughout the story? What did you learn about some of the other characters? What did you discover about Xander's relationships with each of the characters? What happened to the bullies by the end of the story? Did they change or learn a lesson?
- The magic pen could be considered as a motif; a recurring element that has a symbolic significance to the story. Discuss what the magic pen represents for Xander.
- In what ways do you think the following helped Xander to gain control of his use of the pen – the consequences of the pen, Phoebe, Shiver, Cat and Tee-Jay, Xander himself.
- How was Phoebe's disability and her positive attitude about it important to the story?
- How did Shiver bring the family together?
- List the positive and negative consequences that came from Xander's sketches. Represent this with a Venn Diagram or other chart.
- What do you like about the illustrations? How do they convey humour? What medium is used? (pencil, watercolour and dip pen). How does the style or artistic technique suit the nature of the story?
- Which of Xander's drawings and titles did you like or relate to the most? Why?
- Do you have a favourite scene or writing technique? Why did you choose this?
- What did you learn about the responsibility of 'power'?

- What did you learn about your own power to make a difference in the world? Does this require magic?
- How does teamwork, creative thinking and persistence help build friendships and achieve a common goal?
- If you could solve any problem in the world with magic, what would it be, and why?

### **CHARACTERS:**

Xander 'The Beast' Beeston

Phoebe, Xander's sister

Mrs Beeston, mother

Mr Cam Beeston, father

Cat, friend

Tee-Jay, friend

Timmy Fontaine, friend

Jeff and Tony Clagg, the Bruise Brothers

Mr Tristan Clagg, Clagg's Cannery owner

Shiver, the dog

Mrs Faletta, school sports coach

Mr Steele, teacher

Principal Whisker

Mr Simmonds

Mrs McNamara, neighbour

- Who is your favourite character? Why?
- Who is your least favourite character? Why?

### **Character Analysis:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELA1498](#)) ([ACELT1594](#)) ([ACELT1604](#)) ([ACELT1605](#)) ([ACELT1791](#)) ([ACELT1794](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1692](#)) |

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1524](#)) ([ACELA1525](#)) ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1612](#)) ([ACELT1800](#)) ([ACELY1703](#)) ([ACELY1713](#)) ([ACELY1704](#)) ([ACELY1714](#))

Use the following acronym (STEAL) to identify features of Ruby or another chosen character from Ruby and the Pen. Find parts of the text to show the way they **S**peak, **T**hink, **E**ffect on others, **A**ct and **L**ook.

**Speech** – what does the character say? How do they speak?

**Thought** – what are the character's thoughts and feelings?

**Effect on others** – how do people react to the character?

**Actions** – what does the character do?

**Looks** – what does the character look like?

- Choose a character to create a character profile page, including a name, picture, adjectives / descriptive language to describe their appearance, personality traits, interests, dislikes, and so on.
- Use the STEAL method to develop your own character when writing a narrative.

### **Structure Format / Writing Style:**

#### **Writing style: Fantasy genre**

The fantasy genre is revealed in the first chapter, where the 'Second Hand Treasures' stall mysteriously appeared, along with the elderly man and the pen.

*"Zap! A warm surge of power flowed from the pen into Xander's fingers, then up his arm before spreading throughout his entire body. In an instant he felt safe, like he was wearing a protective layer of armour."* (p.18-19).

- What were the magical properties and capabilities of the pen? Which 'drawing' did you find most impressive?

## Structure Format

The beginning and ending of each chapter keep the reader engaged throughout, with rising action and emotive language. For example:

**Beginning:** “Xander froze. Beads of sweat appeared on his forehead, and felt like a hyperactive rubber ball was trying to escape from inside his chest.” (Ch.2, p.14).

**Ending:** “But apart from a small pool of water, it was completely empty.” (Ch.2, p.27).

- How does the ‘hook’ of the opening and closing lines of a chapter assist in structuring a narrative?

## THEMES:

### Family relationships:

- What did you learn about Xander’s family and their dynamics? How did it change throughout the story, and why?
- What language, tone or mood do the family use with each other at different parts of the story?
- What external and internal factors contributed to the ways the family behaved?
- What are the most important things for every family to realise?
- Create a family weekly schedule to plan your favourite traditions or events with your own family.

### Humour:

- Discuss how the author uses different kinds of humour to show the characters’ personalities, and to keep the reader engaged.
- Create a poster / meme of your most ideal superhero moment and write a funny caption to match.

### Bullying / Resilience:

- What are the typical behaviours of a bully? How do the Claggs show some of these?
- Do you think Xander was right in the way he tried to stand up to the bullies? Why or why not?
- What, would you say, was the best kind of revenge in the end? Is it important to own up to your responsibilities and actions?
- Create a newspaper article about the wrong-doings of Mr Clagg. Include a catchy title, a picture of Mr Clagg, and a newsworthy article about the fraudulent / irresponsible ways he contaminated the soil and how it impacted on the Cruzes’ farm.

### Friendship:

- What kinds of things are important in a friendship? What did Xander forget about when it came to being a good friend?
- How did Xander demonstrate that he reflected on his actions and the impact it had on his friendships? What does it mean to have open communication? How important is forgiveness?

### Environment / Community:

Years 3 & 4 Science: ([ACSSU044](#)) ([ACSSU072](#)) ([ACSSU073](#)) ([ACSHE050](#)) ([ACSHE062](#)) ([ACSI053](#)) ([ACSI054](#)) ([ACSI065](#)) ([ACSI057](#)) ([ACSI0215](#)) ([ACSI068](#)) ([ACSI069](#)) ([ACSI060](#)) ([ACSI071](#)) | Years 5 & 6 Science: ([ACSSU043](#)) ([ACSSU094](#)) ([ACSHE081](#)) ([ACSHE100](#)) ([ACSI0231](#)) ([ACSI090](#)) ([ACSI0221](#)) ([ACSI093](#)) ([ACSI110](#))

Years 3 & 4 HASS: ([ACHASSI052](#)) ([ACHASSI073](#)) ([ACHASSI053](#)) ([ACHASSI054](#)) ([ACHASSI075](#)) ([ACHASSI056](#)) ([ACHASSI078](#)) ([ACHASSI059](#)) ([ACHASSI081](#)) ([ACHASSI061](#)) ([ACHASSK088](#)) ([ACHASSK090](#)) ([ACHASSK091](#)) ([ACHASSK092](#))

Years 5 & 6 HASS: ([ACHASSI094](#)) ([ACHASSI122](#)) ([ACHASSI095](#)) ([ACHASSI096](#)) ([ACHASSI125](#)) ([ACHASSI098](#)) ([ACHASSI099](#)) ([ACHASSI128](#)) ([ACHASSI101](#)) ([ACHASSI130](#)) ([ACHASSI131](#)) ([ACHASSI132](#)) ([ACHASSI105](#)) ([ACHASSK113](#)) ([ACHASSK118](#)) ([ACHASSK144](#)) ([ACHASSK145](#))

- Have you been to visit a farm or local wildlife area? How can we find out more about caring for the environment and the animals that inhabit those areas? Do they offer programs, education sessions or fundraising events to support their work? How can you get involved?
- Research alpacas or another favourite species and complete an infographic including habitat, statistical facts, images and calls to action, with references.



- What is the role of local factories and business that might impact on the environment? How can you find out about their management of environmental sustainability and protecting the land in the area? Why is it important to follow the rules and laws set by government organisations, such as local council?
- What would be the impacts on the environment with leaking petrol fuel into the waterways and soil? Research the reasons for and effects of 'contamination' in bushland areas. How does this kind of pollution cause harm to the wildlife? Are there ways to protect the natural environment?
- Xander and his friends were able to reach the attention of their local police regarding the issue at Clagg's Cannery. What specific actions did they take to do this? Consider an important topic / issue to you and your local area – what can you do to make a change?
- Xander's anonymous donation of the jewels to The Bungalow by the Beach children's charity meant that they could continue to run holiday and leadership programs. Find out about a children's or animal welfare charity you could donate to, join or volunteer your time to in your local area.
- Xander helped to get his sister into the Kanista 99 clinical trials to help her walk again. Find out about community fundraisers and events to help important causes for medical research and development. Interview a family member to find out which medical issue is most important to them.

## Fantasy / Magic:

- Imagine you could use a magic pen to solve an important issue. What would it be and how would you go about it? Consider and discuss the possibilities and implications of your plan.

## Teamwork:

- When Xander went alone to sneak into the Mr Clagg's factory, he was careless and almost got caught. Eventually, Xander and his friends work together to discover what is behind the trapdoor in Clagg's Cannery. What are the benefits to working in a team?
- Xander's parents decide to rename the factory, 'Dukescliff Cannery Co-op'. What does 'co-op' mean? Do you think this will be a successful business model? Why? Write down the benefits you can think of.

## Greed / Selfishness vs Selflessness:

- How did Xander's intentions change throughout the story? In what instances was he acting selfishly, and selflessly?
- Was Xander's crowd-funding efforts a selfless initiative? Discuss.
- How did the money won by Mr Beeston impact on the family?
- In a table, list the positive consequences of the win, and list the negative consequences. Think about how the money affected the Beestons physically and emotionally.
- How much is too much? Debate with a friend about needs versus wants when it comes to money. Can money buy happiness?
- What did Xander realise is more important than money and owning expensive things?

## **WRITING ACTIVITIES**

### Narrative writing:

Years 3 & 4 English: (ACELA1491) (ACELA1492) (ACELA1498) (ACELT1601) (ACELT1791) (ACELT1607) (ACELT1794) (ACELY1682) (ACELY1683) (ACELY1694) (ACELY1695)

Years 5 & 6 English: (ACELA1505) (ACELA1522) (ACELA1523) (ACELA1525) (ACELT1611) (ACELT1612) (ACELT1798) (ACELT1618) (ACELT1800) (ACELY1701) (ACELY1704) (ACELY1705) (ACELY1714) (ACELY1715)

Use the building blocks of writing to create great pieces of writing.

Reference: [www.sevenstepswriting.com/what-are-the-seven-steps](http://www.sevenstepswriting.com/what-are-the-seven-steps)

**Step 1: Plan for Success** – brainstorm ideas, concepts, themes and plotlines.

**Step 2: Sizzling Starts** – start at an exciting moment to grab the reader's attention.

**Step 3: Tightening Tension** – create tension and drama with a problem, build up momentum so the strongest challenge comes last, then the character can triumph in the end.

**Step 4: Dynamic Dialogue** – get to know your characters as they talk, walk and even stalk. Quotes from experts or celebrities can be powerful.

**Step 5: Show, Don't Tell** – use the characters actions to show the reader their personality and feelings.

**Step 6: Ban the Boring** – ban boring events like bed, breakfast, bus trips. Make sure each sentence is engaging and important to the story.

**Step 7: Exciting Endings** – the end should have a punchline, like a joke. It could be a call to action, plot twist or leave the reader with a question and a lasting impression.

- **Idea 1:** Write a narrative with yourself in Xander's situation, where you have come across a magic pen. How would you use your 'super' power? Who and what challenges would you face? How would you tighten the plot tension? What exciting ending occurs? Make sure to include a range of literary devices, humour and figurative / descriptive language. Re-read, edit and share.
- **Idea 2:** Write the next story (as an innovation on the Epilogue), where the pen is re-discovered by someone new (Ricky, who is trying to track down his real parents). What happens in this adventure?
- **Idea 3:** Write a 'magic pen' story from the perspective of someone or something else. For example, from the view of the bullies, Shiver the dog, the old man at the 'Second-Hand Treasures' stall, or the pen itself, etc.

### Article writing – Morning Herald:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1478](#)) ([ACELA1479](#)) ([ACELA1490](#)) ([ACELA1491](#)) ([ACELA1492](#)) ([ACELA1793](#)) ([ACELA1494](#)) ([ACELA1496](#)) ([ACELA1498](#)) ([ACELT1596](#)) ([ACELT1603](#)) ([ACELT1604](#)) ([ACELT1601](#)) ([ACELT1791](#)) ([ACELT1607](#)) ([ACELY1675](#)) ([ACELY1676](#)) ([ACELY1688](#)) ([ACELY1678](#)) ([ACELY1690](#)) ([ACELY1691](#)) ([ACELY1682](#)) ([ACELY1694](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1504](#)) ([ACELA1505](#)) ([ACELA1518](#)) ([ACELA1522](#)) ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELA1524](#)) ([ACELA1525](#)) ([ACELT1608](#)) ([ACELT1613](#)) ([ACELT1609](#)) ([ACELT1610](#)) ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1612](#)) ([ACELT1798](#)) ([ACELT1618](#)) ([ACELT1800](#)) ([ACELY1699](#)) ([ACELY1709](#)) ([ACELY1704](#)) ([ACELY1707](#)) ([ACELY1714](#)) ([ACELY1717](#))

- Students can brainstorm different segments that could be included in the Morning Herald newspaper. For example, reports on amazing athletes (like Phoebe), other world records being smashed, crimes at the cannery, saving The Bungalow by the Beach, or other fun news reports or adverts (for products like quad bikes, or special prices to visit the alpacas on the farm, etc). Students work in groups and each pick a section to write about. The language of the piece should be suited for publication in a newspaper.
- Be sure to include the 5W+H (who, what, when, where, why, how), engaging titles and introductions, events and conclusion, interesting language (maybe even some jokes), and photos / drawings to support the text.

### Persuasive Text:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1478](#)) ([ACELA1490](#)) ([ACELA1793](#)) ([ACELT1596](#)) ([ACELT1603](#)) ([ACELT1791](#)) ([ACELT1607](#)) ([ACELY1675](#)) ([ACELY1678](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1690](#)) ([ACELY1692](#)) ([ACELY1685](#)) ([ACELY1694](#)) ([ACELY1697](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1504](#)) ([ACELA1518](#)) ([ACELA1522](#)) ([ACELA1524](#)) ([ACELA1525](#)) ([ACELT1613](#)) ([ACELT1609](#)) ([ACELT1795](#)) ([ACELT1615](#)) ([ACELT1610](#)) ([ACELT1612](#)) ([ACELT1798](#)) ([ACELT1618](#)) ([ACELT1800](#)) ([ACELY1698](#)) ([ACELY1701](#)) ([ACELY1703](#)) ([ACELY1711](#)) ([ACELY1713](#)) ([ACELY1801](#)) ([ACELY1704](#)) ([ACELY1714](#))

- Choose a topic, or your own: *Phoebe should walk again* / *Mr Clagg should be arrested* / *The Bungalow by the Beach should stay open* / *The Beestons should keep Shiver*
- Students write a persuasive article, create a poster or digital presentation, for or against, one of the above statements or your own. They need to include an introductory paragraph with their opinion, supporting arguments and a conclusion to sum up their reasoning.
- Alternatively, students can advocate for environmental care by researching what can be done to preserve protected areas, including giving attention to consumer products and spreading awareness amongst family and friends. Create a persuasive poster / digital graphic with a catchy / attention-grabbing title, an impactful cartoon illustration and a call to action or social media hashtag to raise awareness to a wide audience.

- Students could consider sending their argument as a letter / email / social media post to their local council, police or wider organisations.

## DRAMA

### Exploring Tone in Dialogues / Script Writing:

Years 3 & 4 Drama: ([ACADRM031](#)) ([ACADRM032](#)) ([ACADRM033](#)) | Years 5 & 6 Drama: ([ACADRM035](#)) ([ACADRM036](#)) ([ACADRM037](#)) ([ACADRR038](#))

- Choose a scene of dialogue between two or more characters from *Xander and the Pen*.
  - Read the speech with a partner, making sure to use an expressive tone of voice.
  - Read the speech again, this time change the tone in your voice (eg. from upbeat to dramatic). How does this change the 'feel' of the story?
  - Re-write the dialogue with a different tone. How will you re-phrase their words?

### Stick Puppet Role Play:

Years 3 & 4 Drama: ([ACADRM031](#)) ([ACADRM032](#)) ([ACADRM033](#)) | Years 5 & 6 Drama: ([ACADRM035](#)) ([ACADRM036](#)) ([ACADRM037](#))

Years 3 & 4 Visual Arts: ([ACAVAM111](#)) ([ACAVAM112](#)) | Years 5 & 6 Visual Arts: ([ACAVAM115](#)) ([ACAVAM116](#))

- Draw your chosen characters onto paper, cut out and attach with a pop stick. Now watch your drawings magically come to life! Role play your favourite scenes and share as a presentation. Students might like to work in groups.

### Xander and the Pen Theatre Show:

Years 3 & 4 Drama: ([ACADRM031](#)) ([ACADRM032](#)) ([ACADRM033](#)) ([ACADRR034](#)) | Years 5 & 6 Drama: ([ACADRM035](#)) ([ACADRM036](#)) ([ACADRM037](#)) ([ACADRR038](#))

- In groups, students create a 5 – 10 minute 're-telling' or theatre show of their favourite / most significant parts of the book. They can wear or produce their own props and costumes. Focus on demonstrating emotion. Will they use any special effects, music, imagery, etc to accompany their performance?

### Magic Show:

Years 3 & 4 Drama: ([ACADRM031](#)) ([ACADRM032](#)) ([ACADRM033](#)) ([ACADRR034](#)) | Years 5 & 6 Drama: ([ACADRM035](#)) ([ACADRM036](#)) ([ACADRM037](#)) ([ACADRR038](#))

- Students might like to perform a magic show, using a pen or other props and equipment. Watch the video to learn how to perform pen tricks: 12 VISUAL Pen Tricks Anyone Can Do | Revealed - YouTube

## VISUAL ARTS ACTIVITY

### Dip Pen Sketching:

Years 3 & 4 Art: ([ACAVAM110](#)) ([ACAVAM111](#)) ([ACAVAM112](#)) ([ACAVAR113](#)) | Years 5 & 6 Art: ([ACAVAM114](#)) ([ACAVAM115](#)) ([ACAVAM116](#)) ([ACAVAR117](#))

- Experiment with dip pen or fine liners, watercolour paint and pencil, like the illustrator, Cherie Dignam, uses in the book, *Xander and the Pen*, to create a black and white picture of your favourite scene. Explore how to create light and shade, humour and expression with your media.
- What art techniques and small details will add interest and variety to your image? Compare to other artworks and artists that use a similar style.

## SCIENCE

### Invisible Ink Experiment:

Years 3 & 4 Science: ([ACSSU046](#)) ([ACSSU074](#)) ([ACSHE050](#)) ([ACSHE061](#)) ([ACSHE062](#)) ([ACSI053](#)) ([ACSI065](#)) ([ACSI066](#)) ([ACSI0215](#)) ([ACSI069](#)) ([ACSI071](#))

Years 5 & 6 Science: ([ACSSU077](#)) ([ACSSU095](#)) ([ACSHE081](#)) ([ACSHE098](#)) ([ACSI0231](#)) ([ACSI086](#)) ([ACSI04](#)) ([ACSI090](#)) ([ACSI0221](#)) ([ACSI091](#)) ([ACSI093](#)) ([ACSI110](#))

Watch the video to learn how to make your own magic invisible ink and write a secret message or drawing:

[Write Secret Messages With Invisible Ink! - YouTube](#)

- Predict, observe, evaluate and record results. Compare variations using two methods.
- Materials needed include water, lemon juice and an iron, or baking soda, water, rubbing alcohol and turmeric, plus a cotton tip and paper.

**Science involved:** “Acid-base reactions occur when an acidic or alkaline component of the ink can be made visible by a special chemical (indicator) that changes colour depending on if it is in an acidic or alkaline environment. Similarly, oxidation-reduction reactions can be used, in which a chemical compound changes colour depending on its redox state. You can also make use of the fact that some chemical compounds are sensitive to heat or light and change colour once they are exposed to these conditions.” Reference and full instructions: [Secret Messages With Invisible Ink! | STEM Activity \(sciencebuddies.org\)](https://www.sciencebuddies.org/STEM-Activities/Secret-Messages-With-Invisible-Ink/)

### **COMPARISON TEXTS**

*Ruby and the Pen* (Book 1).

*Frankie Fish* series – in that it’s humorous stories about kids set in a real world, except that they have access to a time machine.

## MORE MIDDLE-GRADE FICTION



### Ruby and the Pen

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