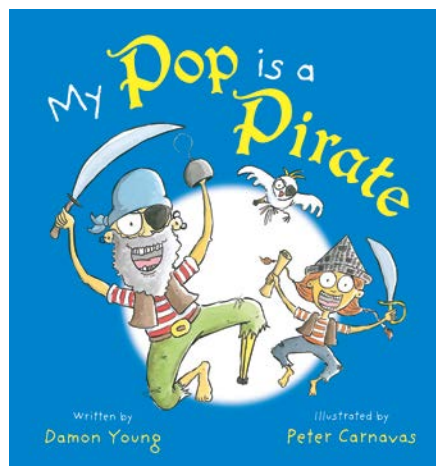


MY POP IS A PIRATE

Damon Young & Peter Carnavas



Teachers' Notes

Written by a practising Teacher Librarian in context with the
Australian Curriculum

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SYNOPSIS

All grandfathers are unique, but this is one daring pop! Rollicking on the seas and burying treasure, *My Pop is a Pirate*, the companion to *My Nanna is a Ninja* (UQP, 2014), is a gorgeous book about the shared adventures between children and their grandparents.

THEMES

Grandfathers:

- The grandfathers in this text break grandfather stereotypes.

Relationships:

- Grandfathers share special relationships with their grandchildren.

Poetry:

- The text is written using poetic devices such as rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, imagery and onomatopoeia.

Pirates:

- The topic of pirates features in the text.

Visual Literacy

- The illustrations add meaning to the written text.

WRITING STYLE

My Pop is a Pirate is written in a whimsical and rhythmic style. The illustrations embellish the poetic narrative that traces the lives of four individual grandfathers, in particular Pirate Pop.

STUDY NOTES

- Read the text aloud, allowing students to enjoy the illustrations and poetic flow of the narrative. Discuss the use of rhyme, rhythm, alliteration and other poetic devices. How do these add to the mood and pace of the story?
- *My Pop is a Pirate* allows for excellent visual literacy. Examine the illustrations carefully. How do they add to the written text?
- In *My Pop is a Pirate*, we meet very different pops. Create a Character Profile of each pop, including:
 - How they dress
 - What mode of transport they use
 - Their favourite expressions
 - What they eat
 - What their pastimes are
 - How they say goodnight to their grandchildren
- Create a Character Profile of your own grandfather or an elderly person who is special to you.
- Discuss how *My Pop is a Pirate* breaks the stereotype of the typical grandfather. How do the illustrations and text work together to break this stereotype?
- How has humour been used in the text and the illustrations to represent each grandfather?

- Choose one of the pops from *My Pop is a Pirate*. Write a story that includes this pop as the main character.
- Imagine you are one of the pops. Write a blog about your adventures.
- On each page about Pirate Pop, sepia-coloured vignettes tell us more about him. Discuss these illustrations. What are we being told via these vignettes? How do these help us to gain a better understanding of Pirate Pop?
- Each pop has a 'sidekick' in the form of an animal. Look carefully at the illustrations of these sidekicks, in particular, the end papers featuring Pirate Pop and his parrot. What role do these sidekicks play? Discuss heroes and their sidekicks (e.g. Batman and Robin; Harry Potter and Ron Weasley).
- Each grandchild shares a special relationship with their grandfather. Examine and discuss the illustrations of the pops as they say goodnight to their grandchildren. What do these parts of the story tell us about the bond between these characters?
- Write a reflection of a relationship that you share with a grandparent or elderly person.
- Write a poem about one of your grandparents or elderly person.
- Research the lives of pirates, both fictional and real-life. Create an infographic, webpage or Prezi about pirates. Below are some useful websites:
 - www.the-pirate-ship.com/index.html
 - www.history-for-kids.com/pirate-facts.html
 - www.piratesinfo.com/
- Participate in 'Talk Like a Pirate Day' www.talklikeapirate.com/piratehome.html
- Hold a pirate-themed party, creating an invitation and menu to suit your theme.
- Using a suitable graphic organiser, compare *My Pop is a Pirate* with *My Nanna is a Ninja*. How are they similar and different from one another?
- Make your own newspaper pirate hats just like the one worn in *My Pop is a Pirate*. Use an app such as *Explain Everything* to give instructions on how to make this hat. www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUKnKGLeorA
- Create your own illustrated verse to add to this text, including all four grandfathers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Damon Young is an award-winning philosopher and writer, whose books have been published internationally in English and translation, including the critically acclaimed *Philosophy in the Garden*. Damon writes regularly for newspapers, and he has published poetry and short fiction. He is also the author of two picture books: the popular *My Nanna is a Ninja*, and the new *My Pop is a Pirate*. Damon lives with his wife, sociologist/writer Ruth Quibell, and two children in Melbourne, Australia.

AUTHOR MOTIVATION

I wrote this book while writing *How to Think About Exercise*, which is a philosophical study of fitness and sport. Again, it was a joy to break from serious nonfiction writing to play with rhymes and rhythm; to invent absurd stories and celebrate the fun of grandfathers. But there was some to and fro: note how physical many of the pops are.

I was also influenced (believe it or not) by Norse poetry. Many children's books rhyme, and there's a long history of rhyming poetry in English. But the Viking stories used alliteration to add punch to their poems: 'When Ymir lived long ago / Was no sand or sea, no surging waves. / Nowhere was there earth nor heaven above. / But a grinning gap and grass nowhere.' So if you read *My Pop is a Pirate*, you'll notice these alliterative beats in the text: 'his limping leg is gleaming gold.'

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Peter Carnavas writes and illustrates picture books for children and grown-ups to enjoy. His books include *Jessica's Box*, *The Children Who Loved Books*, *Oliver and George* and *My Totally Awesome Story*, a collaboration with Pat Flynn. He has presented at many schools and festivals across Australia and his books have been translated into many languages, including German, Portuguese, Italian and Dutch. His most recent book is the follow-up to *My Nanna is a Ninja*, another laugh-aloud picture book, *My Pop is a Pirate* (both written by Damon Young).

ILLUSTRATOR MOTIVATION

Upon reading the fun, rhyming text, I immediately had a pirate pop character in mind – straggly beard, earrings, ripped pants, hook, peg leg, eye-patch ... there was so much fun to be had!

The narrator of the book is the little girl and I thought it appropriate to dress her up a little, too. She therefore has her own homemade pirate hat (newspaper) and toy sword, as well as ripped jeans and a missing tooth.

In order to illustrate the props and setting for the story, I looked at lots of images of pirate ships and treasure chests and jewels and such things. We all have ideas of what these things look like but as loose and cartoony as the pictures may be, it was important to make sure I drew things correctly.

The illustrations were completed with watercolour and ink, keeping in style with *My Nanna is a Ninja*.