



## TEACHERS' NOTES

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This resource is suitable  
for years 3 - 6

OCEAN WARRIORS:  
The Rise of Robo-Shark  
is suitable reading  
for years 3 - 6

### OCEAN WARRIORS: THE RISE OF ROBO-SHARK

**By Candice Lemon-  
Scott**

***Middle Grade Fiction***

***Storytorch Press  
March 2022***

Being sent to a submarine to help restore extinct sea creatures for summer camp is not exactly Kai's idea of fun.

Then he discovers a cyborg great white shark in the ocean, but no one believes it could be real. After all, the last shark vanished years ago. Now he must prove the shark exists and save the species. Except not everyone likes the idea of bringing the great white back from the brink.

Join the Ocean Warriors on this environmental adventure.

**WARNING:** contains sea cucumbers, slime eels and a bum-breathing turtle.



## USEFUL LINKS

There are a range of resources online for you to explore the topics and issues raised in the novel.

These include information on sharks, shark conservation, shark knowledge, awareness and safety, as well as environmental topics on ocean conservation and overfishing. Here are just a few to explore prior to teaching with the novel, or for further research by your students:

[Sea Shepherd Australia](http://www.seashepherd.org.au)

[www.seashepherd.org.au](http://www.seashepherd.org.au)

[Australian Marine Conservation Society](http://www.marineconservation.org.au)

[www.marineconservation.org.au](http://www.marineconservation.org.au)

[Shark Conservation Australia](http://www.sharkconservation.org.au)

[www.sharkconservation.org.au](http://www.sharkconservation.org.au)

[World Wildlife Fund Australia](http://www.wwf.org.au)

[www.wwf.org.au](http://www.wwf.org.au)

[Save Our Sharks](http://www.saveoursharks.com.au)

[www.saveoursharks.com.au](http://www.saveoursharks.com.au)

[Shark Champions](http://www.sharkchampions.org.au)

[www.sharkchampions.org.au](http://www.sharkchampions.org.au)

[Sharks and Rays Australia Research Organisation \(SARA\)](http://www.sharksandraysaustralia.com)

[www.sharksandraysaustralia.com](http://www.sharksandraysaustralia.com)

[SharkSmart](http://www.sharksmart.com.au)

[www.sharksmart.com.au](http://www.sharksmart.com.au)

[The Nature Conservancy Australia](http://www.natureaustralia.org.au)

[www.natureaustralia.org.au](http://www.natureaustralia.org.au)

[Australian Geographic Guide to Sharks](http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/wildlife/2013/07/ultimate-guide-to-australian-sharks/)

[www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/wildlife/2013/07/ultimate-guide-to-australian-sharks/](http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/wildlife/2013/07/ultimate-guide-to-australian-sharks/)

## THEMES

Conservation  
Apex Predators  
Sharks and sharkfinning  
Ocean ecosystems  
Environmental awareness  
Anthropomorphisation  
Adventure  
Bravery  
Good vs Evil  
Human greed vs. environment

## BEFORE READING THE BOOK

### *Cover Analysis*

- Examine the cover of the novel.
- Discuss what students think the cover and the title suggest the book will be about.
- Read the back cover of the novel. Does what is written change the students' ideas?

## AFTER READING THE BOOK

### *Cover Design*

- Ask students to design their own cover for the novel.
- Discuss why they chose their design?
- Discuss how a book cover helps to predict what a book is about.

## INTRODUCTION

### *Witness experiences*

Consider inviting a guest speaker to your classroom, such as a marine biologist, a professional diver or researcher to talk about their experiences in and around the ocean.

You will be surprised to hear that many of our defence personnel in the Navy have incredible experiences at sea.

Shark attack victims often later rally to ensure sharks are protected and this first hand experience can be a valuable voice in conservation - particularly, when sadly, there has been a fatal shark attack.

Research the life and experiences of Valerie Taylor. Consider finding episodes of her documentaries, or those produced by David Attenborough on sharks and ocean life.

## INTRODUCTION

### *Film study*

Watch the documentary "My Octopus Teacher" and discuss the sentience of octopi.



## SCIENCE

### **Food Webs**

*Ocean Warriors: The Rise of Robo-Shark* is a speculative fiction that proposes a future world where humans have eradicated all sharks in the ocean, and therefore disrupted the fine balance of the ocean's ecosystem. This ecosystem is supported by a food chain, that allows all species to thrive. All sea creatures play an important role in ocean health and sustainability.

Have students investigate and share their findings of the following terms:

- ecosystem
- food chain
- apex predator
- phyto-plankton
- SCUBA
- submarine
- nutrients
- producers
- consumers
- bacteria
- algae
- trophic levels
- autotrophs
- carnivore
- omnivore

Create a poster of the food chain for Australian oceans. This could be extended to discussion on producers, consumers or decomposers.

Observe and describe predator-prey relationships.

#### **Apex Predators: Sharks**

- Investigate the important role of sharks in the ocean and the impact their extinction would have on the health of the sea.
- Predict the effects when living things in feeding relationships are removed or die out in an area.
- How does overfishing impact sharks (both in real life and in the novel)?

## POINT OF VIEW

### *Third Person Narrative*

*Ocean Warriors: The Rise of Robo-Shark* is written in third person point of view.

- Ask students to rewrite one scene from the novel in the perspective of one of the characters, unable to see what others are thinking (such as Kevin from the Association of Sea Fishing)
- How does looking at the same event seen through the eyes of different characters privilege some aspect of the story over others?
- Discuss how this changes the scene.
- Discuss the characters in the novel. How are they each important to the story? What does each character contribute to the story?

## ENGLISH

### *Understanding Language Choice*

As an author writes a story or novel, they make decisions every step of the way to shape the reader response. They choose language, a narrative point of view, they choose and describe a setting and they develop themes to make readers feel a certain way towards an issue, the characters and the ideas in the novel.

- What nouns and adjectives are used to describe the great white shark at the beginning of the story, compared to when we get to know Melvin?
- How do these words change our opinion of the shark? Discuss why the author chose this language to describe the traits of characters and how that impacts on his actions and motivations.
- Identify and discuss the use of descriptive adjectives to establish setting and atmosphere and to draw readers into events that follow. What kind of mood does it create and how does it create empathy for the character?
- How does the author's description of Melvin's appearance, behaviour and speech show the character's development and changing relationships? How does it affect the reactions of other characters he comes into contact with?
- How do the chapter headings in the book create a sense of playfulness through the use of puns, spoonerisms and other plays on words? How do they relate to what happens in the chapters?
- How does changing the pronoun for the great white shark from 'it' to 'him' and giving him the name 'Melvin' impact on our feelings towards the robo-shark?
- What is the author's point of view on commercial fishing? What key words and images seem intended to persuade readers to agree with the view presented?



## ENGLISH

**Genre:**

***Speculative Fiction***

- Why do you think the author chose to set the story in the future?
- How does this relate to present day overfishing of oceans?
- What other novels can you find that are considered speculative fiction? (You might like to consider the author Bren MacDibble, and compare and contrast this novel with her own).

## ENGLISH

**Literary**

**Techniques:**

***Anthropomorphisation***

What are our beliefs about sharks? Explore the students' personal viewpoints before and after reading the novel.

- Predict how the characters in the story will react when they first come across a great white shark.
- How does writing from the point of view of the animals impact our thoughts and feelings towards the characters?
- Why do you think the author chose to introduce the shark in the way that she did? What is the effect?
- What happens when Kai tries to prove Melvin's existence and save the shark from extinction?
- How does our perception of sharks change through the story as we get to know the robo-shark?
- Did your opinion of sharks change?
- Wendy faces a moral dilemma on whether to help save the great white shark from extinction. What do you think of her decisions? What makes her change her mind?
- How does the use of anthropomorphisation of Fitzroy the bum-breathing turtle and Melvin the cyborg Great White Shark connect the feelings and behaviours of animals with human emotions and relationships?

## ENGLISH

***Creative Writing***

Write a narrative from the point of view of an animal facing extinction. Alternatively, it could be a letter to humanity.

At the end of the story Fitzroy the bum-breathing turtle is returned to his river home. Write a scene from his point of view about what happens when he returns to his family. Include speech, dialogue or behaviour by imagining what comes next for Fitzroy after his life as a spy.

## HASS/SCIENCE

### *Cause and Effect*

Taking personal responsibility for the effects of our actions, however small is empowering as a class! Lemon-Scott has written a novel that assumes that some of our current consumption behaviours continue in to the future unabated and the result is catastrophic. Thankfully, this is a fiction novel! However, authors write speculative fiction, because sadly, these scenarios could happen.

- What are the current impacts of personal behaviours and attitudes that affect ocean health?
- What does the future of oceans look like in the story?
- Do you think this is a likely scenario and how could this be prevented? What other future impacts could you foresee?

Make an action plan for steps you could take at home, or that your school could take, to help preserve ocean health and protect sea creatures into the future.

## INQUIRY

### *HASS - Australia's Environmental History*

There have been many protest movements in Australia's history initiated to prevent ecological disasters such as the one proposed in the book.

Have students research any of the following:

- Sea Shepherd Organisation
- Halting of logging in old growth forests
- Damming of the Franklin river
- Uranium mining

Have them investigate current ecological disasters such as:

- Water management of the Murray River
- The Great Barrier Reef
- Oil spills after earthquakes or human-induced accidents

Research protest posters from previous and current environmental and ecological concerns:

- What do they have in common?
- What sorts of words do they use to communicate the issue?
- How do they achieve their intended purpose?

## VISUAL ARTS

Have students design a poster for a current concern for display around the classroom. Have them focus on using persuasive language and image placement to achieve affect.



## VISUAL ARTS

Create your own cyborg sea creature. Think about what body parts could be altered or changed and given special features to enhance the animal's abilities and physical characteristics.

## EXPLORING ISSUES

### *Debating*

Stem cells are used in the story to bring extinct sea creatures back to life.

What goes right in the story and what goes wrong?

- What are some of the consequences of restoring the great white shark?
- Do you think it's morally and socially right or wrong to regenerate extinct species?
- What are the implications of using science to restore animals?
- Conduct a debate in class about this, using the traditional 3 vs 3 method of for and against.

## EXPLORING ISSUES

### *Inquiry: Oral Presentation*

Overfishing and shark finning are examples of how the impact of human activity can change the ocean environment. Consider the practice of shark-finning and why this happens.

Discuss then brainstorm other issues as well such as climate change and pollution. Choose a topic to write or present an informative piece on.