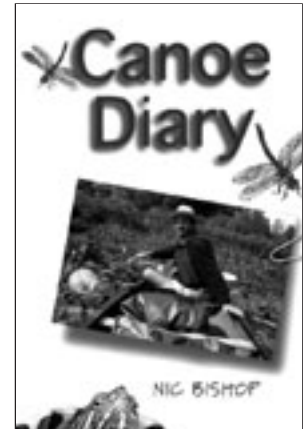


Canoe Diary

by Nic Bishop



Book Summary

This recount of a canoe journey in the wild is presented in the form of a diary or notebook of the author's observations. The author has used several ways of presenting facts and impressions about the plant and animal life he encounters along the way.

Features of the Book

- Information presented in a variety of ways – text, captions, photographs, sketches
- The index of animals and plants
- The diary format
- Design features such as clipped-on photographs, ruled lines, spiral binding
- Natural history vocabulary
- The use of descriptive language – *curious, protective, peaceful, magical*
- The combination of fact and opinion in the text
- Bold type for links to the index

Purpose

Canoe Diary can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** clarifying the features and uses of the diary format;
- S** making predictions using prior knowledge and clues from the cover of a book;
- S** identifying the author's purpose for writing;
- S** distinguishing between fact and opinion;
- S** using a diary to record information, feelings, and ideas.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Clarifying the features and uses of the diary format
- S** Making predictions using prior knowledge and clues from the cover of a book
- S** Identifying the author's purpose for writing

Introducing the text

Brainstorm ideas, using a web or mind map, to find out what the students know about hiking or "being in the wild". Some of the secondary headings they arrive at may include safety, food, equipment, or animals.



Look at the cover of the book together and discuss the title. Clarify the concept of a diary.

- What is a diary used for? Do you have a diary?
- What do you think a "canoe diary" might be?
- Why do you think the author has written this diary?

Ask the students to use the illustrations on the cover and the information in the blurb on the back cover to predict what the setting might be and the kinds of things the author might write in his diary. Some predictions might be:

- The canoe journey is on a river.
- The author is interested in plants and animals so he might write about them.
- The author has also taken the photographs.

Reading and discussing the text

This story has a range of vocabulary that the students may be unfamiliar with, for example:

- descriptive language – curious, protective, peaceful, magical, lazily;
- names – salamander, nymph.

Depending on the ability of your group, you may wish to introduce some of these terms before the reading.

Ask the students to read the first entry in the diary, July 21.

- *As you read, think about why it's important to be well prepared when you go hiking or on a journey in the wild.*

After the students have read the entry, discuss their answers and ask how Nic and Vivien made sure they hadn't forgotten anything important.

- *Show me the part that tells you this.*
- *Is there anything you would add to this list?*

Now ask the students to read to the end of the entry for July 26.

- *As you read, think about the different ways the author has introduced each new animal. When you finish, look back and find the sentences or photographs that you found most interesting.*

They could use sticky notes to tag relevant places in the text.

Allow the students to share the piece of text or photograph that they found fascinating, beginning with the less able readers in the group. Ask them to qualify their choices.

- *What did you like about this photograph?*
- *Why did you find that part of the diary interesting?*
- *What are some of the ways that the author tells you about the animals and plants he sees? (photographs, captions, sketches, descriptions) Show me one of these.*

Discuss these devices and how each one has been used in the book. Ask the students to discuss which they feel is most effective and why.

The students can now read the rest of the book independently.

- *As you read, think about how the author describes what he sees and what he feels.*

Revisiting the Text

The suggested activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson if appropriate or could be taken as a mini-lesson at a later time.

S Distinguishing between fact and opinion

Discuss how the index in the book is set out and the use of alphabetical listing. Ask the students to use the index to locate an animal in the text.


- *Can you find out three things about this animal?*

Record the students' findings as a star diagram.

Discuss the way the author has written his diary. (It is a mixture of facts and statements about the way he thinks and feels.)

- *How can you tell when something is a fact?*
- *How is a fact different from what someone thinks or feels?*

Look at the star diagram and discuss which of the statements are facts and which are opinions. For example, "Toads have sticky tongues" is a fact, but "Toads are beautiful creatures" is an opinion.


 Ask the students to scan the book for other examples of facts and opinions. They could use the blackline master on page 68 to record them for discussion. Ask them to justify their responses.

S Using a diary to record information, feelings, and ideas

Discuss the features of the diary format. Have other examples of diaries to look at.

- *What kinds of things do you record in a diary?*

Emphasise that this depends on what the diary is for – notes from meetings during the day, the things you did in your holidays, your private thoughts and feelings, or, as in *Canoe Diary*, facts, feelings, and images to remind the author of an exciting experience.

 Model writing a class diary entry with the help of the students. An example might be:

What: The visit to the school of a sporting celebrity

When: Tuesday, August 10

Why: So that we can remember it and others can read about it later on

How: By recording the most important things that were said and including some of the photographs that were taken.