

Ask Jackie French

Teaching Notes

Objectives:

- for children to learn how authors work and reflect on their own writing process
- to be inspired to see themselves as authors
- To be inspired to read more – especially by the award-winning Jackie French
- to read a selected text by Jackie French closely, if chosen, and form an attachment to it through relating to the author

ABOUT JACKIE FRENCH

Jackie describes herself as an author, ecologist, historian and ‘honorary wombat (part-time)’. She was not always considered a ‘good’ student by her teachers and has dyslexia. She is a passionate advocate for literacy, libraries and conservation. She’s also very funny, and an excellent speaker.

She has written over 200 books, some of which have sold millions (‘others were eaten by wombats’), been named Australian Children’s Laureate, Australian Senior of the Year, and won over 60 awards.

She writes both non-fiction and fiction for young children, teens and adults.

USEFUL LINKS

More information about Jackie French
A complete list of titles
Teaching notes for specific titles

jackiefrench.com/
jackiefrench.com/copy-of-award-winners
jackiefrench.com/for-teachers

TEACHING IDEAS

PREPARATION

Select a book by Jackie French to read aloud

After reading, ask students, if they could ask one question to her about this book, what would it be? Other questions include, what do they imagine the person that wrote this book looks like, lives, grew up and if they think they were a 'good student'. Depending on the book it could be integrated with other subjects such as art, science and history.

Create a display of all your library's books by Jackie French

Collect questions to be asked to Jackie French through the display.

Do a 'book tasting' and include a selection of Jackie French's books

Talk about genres of books and ask students what can we learn about the book from the cover using the pictures, typefaces, size, colours? How do we choose books – which ways work better than others? (Judging a book by its cover is a great way to choose a book as they're professionally designed to appeal to the most likely audience of the book.) Which book that they 'tasted' might they like? Which might they recommend to a younger or older brother/sister/someone else in the class? Have they read any already?

All students are authors

Ask students to reflect on the role of authors. What do they look like? What types of things students and authors write and how do they get ideas? Where can they be and how are they published? How do they spend their days? What is the writing process? Do they have a genre they prefer writing? What makes an author good? They can also reflect on their ideas after listening to Jackie French's responses.

WRITING A QUESTION

Writing good questions

Revise question types and prompts. Which type of questions are better for interviews – ie. open-ended or closed questions? If you wanted to, after having the class write questions, your class could select one or a few to submit on behalf of the whole class.

In pairs, have students practice interviewing a classmate (perhaps, in character) about their life

What questions would they ask? Which work better? What would they want to know?

AFTER WATCHING JACKIE FRENCH'S RESPONSES

Reflection

Was their question answered, even if it wasn't chosen? Do they have any more questions? What was most/least interesting? What did they learn about Jackie French that was surprising? Did they learn anything new about any of her books? Would they be more/less likely to read a book by Jackie French?