

**These notes are for:**

- Years 3, 4, 5 & 6
- All ages

**Key Learning Areas:**

- English
- HSIE/SOSE
- Art
- Science
- ICT

**Example of:**

- Picture Book
- Framing & gutters (graphic novel techniques)
- Third person narrative

**Experience of:**

- Visual literacy
- Cultural diversity

**Values addressed:**

- Care & compassion
- Doing your best
- Respect
- Understanding, tolerance & inclusion
- Responsibility

**Themes:**

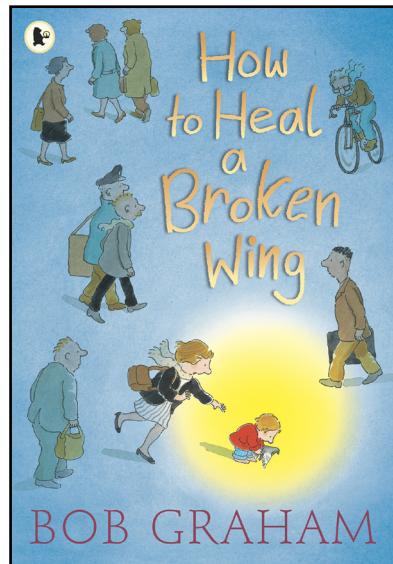
- War
- Nature/Conservation
- Empathy/Apathy
- Hope

\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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**How to Heal a Broken Wing - Overview****How to Heal a Broken Wing**

By: Bob Graham  
ISBN: 9781406325492  
ARRP: \$15.95  
NZRRP: \$17.99  
No. of Pages: 40  
Paperback, February 2010

**Outline:**

No one in the busy city sees the bird lying on the pavement, its wing broken. No one but a small boy called Will. He and his mum carry it home and, with time, rest, and a little bit of hope, the wing mends and the bird is free once more to soar over the city. This is a poetic picture book full of hope and tenderness. The language is deceptively simple; however, this story is enhanced through illustrations that are laden with symbolism, adding a strong visual literacy component. The message of hope for the future will resonate amongst all age groups and will inspire discussion in the classroom.

Winner of the *CBCA, Book of the Year Award: Early Childhood*, 2009.

Winner of the *Charlotte Zolotow Award*, 2009.

Short-listed for the *NSW Premier's Literary Patricia Wrightson Award*, 2009.

Short-listed for the *Kate Greenaway Award*, 2009

**Author/Illustrator Information:**

Author and illustrator **Bob Graham** goes to the heart of children's experiences, creating gentle dramas from familiar situations. He creates an instantly recognisable world within which children immediately feel secure. Bob Graham has written and illustrated many children's picture books including, *Oscar's Half Birthday*, *Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten*, *Let's Get a Pup!* and "The Trouble with Dogs!". He won the 2000 Smarties Gold Medal for *Max*, the 2003 Kate Greenaway Medal for *Jethro Byrde, Fairy Child* and has been awarded the Australian Children's Book of the Year Award five times. His recent books include the early reader in the Walker Stories series, *Jack's Little Party* and the novelty picture book *My Dog, My Cat, My Mum and Me!* with Nigel Grey.

**How to use these notes:**

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

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## Bob Graham on writing *How to Heal a Broken Wing*:

"I have long wanted to write a story about a pigeon, a story that connects with the times we live in where we seem to be losing touch with the natural world."

I wanted to write a story of hope, putting empathy in the hands of a child – because children are our future and our hope for a more caring world to come. When all of the world's horror and inhumanity appear daily on the televisions in our living rooms, I wanted to show a human counterbalance to these things enacted in ordinary, everyday and seemingly insignificant events.

In doing this, I tried to tell the story using a minimum of words and to let the pictures do the talking.

A very strange thing happened as I was drawing the final picture of the small boy jumping in the air to catch floating feathers. The telephone rang, and as I answered it I watched what appeared to be a fine ash floating down outside my window. As I finished my conversation it dawned on me that it was not ash but very small downy feathers, floating down from a clear blue sky. I picked up six or so and stuck them in my notebook to remind myself I had not imagined it, before finishing the book soon after."

## Before reading the text activities:

- View the cover and title. What do you think the story is about? What clues are there?
- Most stories start after the title page. Where do you think this story begins? Look at the pages before the title page.

- Look at the blurb on the back of the book. Write half a page starting with this sentence:

"When Will sees a fallen bird on the crowded city pavement, he stops and looks – and reaches down to help ..."

Why do you think the blurb finishes with the word "help" – what does this tell you about the story.

## Listening and speaking activities:

- As a class, discuss the setting for *How to Heal a Broken Wing*.

Where do you think Will is?

Is this a real place or a fictional place?

Does this remind you of a city/place that you know?

- Look at the main characters in this story.

The pigeon

Will

The mother

The father

In groups talk about how you would tell the story from the different perspective of each of these characters. Create a new story then present it to the class.

- This book is a sequence of events. Bob Graham uses several symbols to convey time. What are these? How do we know how much time has passed? What other symbols of time could have been used?

- Look for symbols throughout the book that may convey messages of war.

### Falling Bird:

What do you think the bird represents? Why?

Why has Bob Graham chosen a pigeon to convey this message?

Compare the first drawing of the bird with the last.

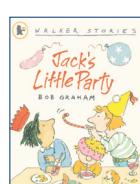
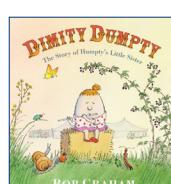
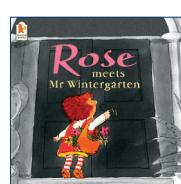
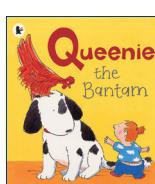
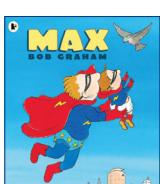
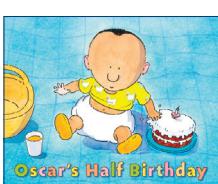
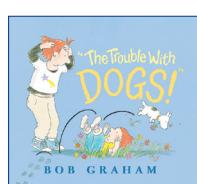
### The feather:

What do you think this represents?

### Media:

View the page that depicts the bird being placed in a box lined with newspaper. What does the newspaper show?

View the page with the image of the television. What does the screen show? What do these images tell you about the outside world?



## Reading activities:

- Bob Graham uses images and text to tell his story. Does the story change if:  
You only read the text?  
You only view the pictures?  
How do the text and the pictures help to tell the story together?
- Different ideas and themes are contrasted in this book. Explore the following idea:

### Apathy vs Empathy

Find the definition of these words.  
Which characters are apathetic?  
Which characters are empathetic?  
How has Bob Graham shown the apathetic characters?  
What do you feel empathy for in your own life?



## Writing activities:

- On some pages Bob Graham uses frames and gutters around his pictures.  
What would happen if there was no frame and no gutter?  
Research other types of texts that use this technique.  
Write a short poem or description about your day and illustrate it using a similar technique. Can you understand what you have written just from the pictures?
- Split the class into groups. Each group chooses one type of bird to research (real or mythological).  
Research how birds are used as symbols, their historical significance and their cultural significance e.g. owls, ravens, eagles, pigeons, phoenix, doves, ibis, brolgas. Prepare a poster on the bird you have researched.

- There are different types of birds represented throughout this book. Find these different types. What might they symbolise?
- Pigeons are often called 'the rats of the sky'. What does this mean? How are pigeons viewed by society? Explore the idea of 'social outcasts'.

## Cross-curricular Activities

### HSIE/SOSE:

- Natural world vs built environment  
How do each of these environments intrude on one another?  
Look at:
  - The clouds reflected in the buildings.
  - Images of war and nature in the home.
  - The birds (and bird droppings) on the statue and the buildings.

Can you think of any other environments that contrast? Use the table provided (Table 1.) to list natural and built environments.

### Art:

- How is colour used in this book to convey:
  - Mood
  - Setting
  - Character
  - Time
- Look at different types of colours. How is colour used to convey meaning? Find a colour ad in a magazine or newspaper. Discuss how colour is used. Re-create the ad using a different colour scheme.

### ICT:

- Research Bob Graham online. Look for his other titles, collect cover images, photos and reviews. Create a PowerPoint slideshow on Bob Graham and his works.

Table 1.

<b>What different and contrasting environments can you think of?</b>	
<b>Natural Environment</b>	<b>Built Environment</b>
e.g. beach	e.g. car park

***April Underhill, Tooth Fairy***  
by Bob Graham – coming June 2010!

High in the sky above Parkville, toothfairies April and Esme Underhill are on their way to collect their very first tooth. April and Esme Underhill have never collected a tooth before. Mum and Dad always do it. But tonight it's their turn. So, equipped with a bag, a coin and a mobile phone, the sisters head for Daniel Dangerfield's house, and a very unusual first tooth visit!

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