

A Educator's Guide for

A FAIR FIGHT

written by Chris Bell
illustrated by Soda Design



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About the book:

“Outsmart the enemy” advises Gramps. Easy for him to say. Every day Andrew has to face the bully Pryke and his gang, and they always call the shots. But Gramps is right, there is no way he can out-muscle them. There must be a way of changing the ground rules to make a fair fight... but what is it?

About the author:

Chris Bell has written 35 published books for children, including picture story, chapter and YA short fiction. These days she can most often be found writing historical fiction and visiting old worlds to see where her characters are going. Her first YA historical novel *Prison Boy* was awarded a 2014 Varuna Retreat Fellowship. More recently, her junior novel *Strange Creatures* was highly commended in the 2016 CYA Writing for Children Published Author Prize. Her contemporary road novel *Jumping Through Hoops* won the same prize in 2011. Chris is passionate about kid’s literature and serves as Assistant Coordinator for SCBWI Vic (Society of Children Book Writers & Illustrators Victoria).



Pre-Reading Discussion Questions:

- Analyze the cover art. Identify the sketches dispersed throughout the title. Predict what these sketches might have to do with the story.
- Explain why the lettering is hand-drawn rather than being printed in a standard font. Explore the purpose of this type of graphic art design.
- Define the word *fair*. Determine how a fight between two individuals could be engaged in fairly. List the rules that would be necessary to establish a fair fighting field.
- Read the blurb printed on the back cover. Explain what the phrase “they always call the shots” means. How does *calling the shots* relate to being bullied?
- Discuss what the term “out-muscle” means. If Andrew isn’t able to beat Pryke in a physical fight, what other options might he have to beat him? Explain your answer.

Post-Reading Discussion Questions:

He heard footsteps pounding after him. He knew he'd made a big mistake. His shirt ripped as Pryke grabbed him by the back of his collar. A blurry fist plunged towards Andrew's nose and connected hard (pg. 4).

- Identify the 'mistake' Andrew made. Do you think the joke he played on Pryke warranted such a violent reaction? Explain your answer.
- The word *unjust* means one-sided and wrong. Discuss why Pryke's treatment of Andrew is unjust.

Gramps scratched the bald patch n his head. "There's only one secret to getting the better of bullies, Andrew. Use your brain, outsmart the enemy. Then they'll leave you alone" (pg. 9).

- Foreshadowing is a literary technique authors use to give a hint of what is going to happen later in the story. Identify how the author foreshadowed events to follow in the quote above.
- Is Gramps' theory of 'outsmarting' bullies correct? Is 'getting the better' of them in this way the best strategy? How so?

In a loud voice, Andrew shouted, "You think you're so tough, Pryke, just because you're bigger than me. We're the same age, same class. Let's have a fair fight" (pg. 22).

- It is clear that the differences in size and strength stack against Andrew's favor. Determine how being the same age and in the same grade evens the playing field for Andrew and Pryke.
- Consider Andrew's change in character at this stage of the story. Identify the source of his developing confidence.

On the way back to his seat, he couldn't help himself. He stopped beside Pryke and said, "Let me know if you want to fight any more. I'm even better at maths quizzes" (pg. 27).

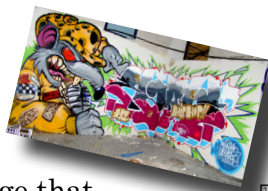
- Reconsider Gramps' advise. Explain how Andrew used his 'brain to outsmart the enemy'.
- Identify the line suggesting that Andrew is safe from further bullying by Pryke. Tell how Andrew plans to keep fights with Pryke fair.

Review the Pre-Reading Discussion questions. Discuss your story line predictions based on the cover art, title, and blurb. Were you correct?

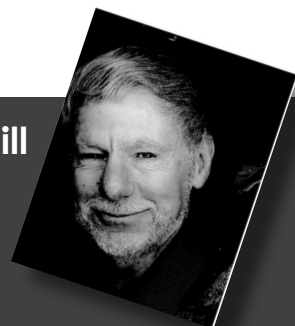
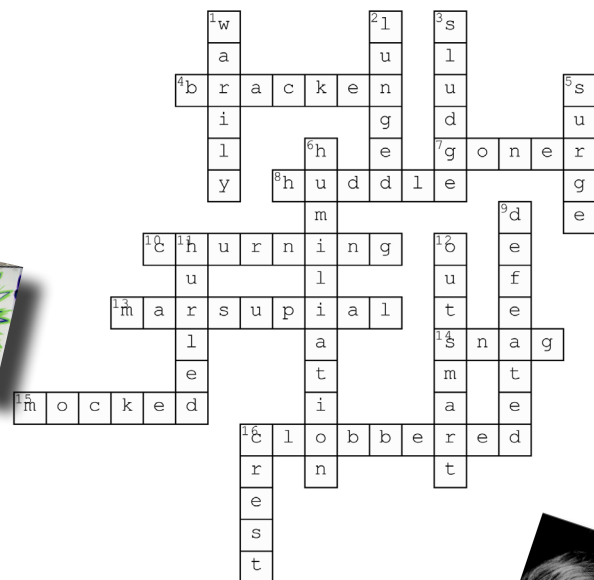
Extension Activities:

~ Study the front cover. Identify how the sketched images and words represent key plot points in the story. Determine how the graphics depicted on the front cover foreshadowed events in the story. Write a short informative essay about using the technique of foreshadowing in A FAIR FIGHT.

~ The *theme* of a story its overall lesson or message. The *premise* is what the story is about. Reread each chapter, considering the theme and premise for each. Decide upon one image that would best represent the theme and/or premise of each chapter. Draw an illustration for each chapter based upon theme and premise. Give each illustration a title. Share your work with the class.



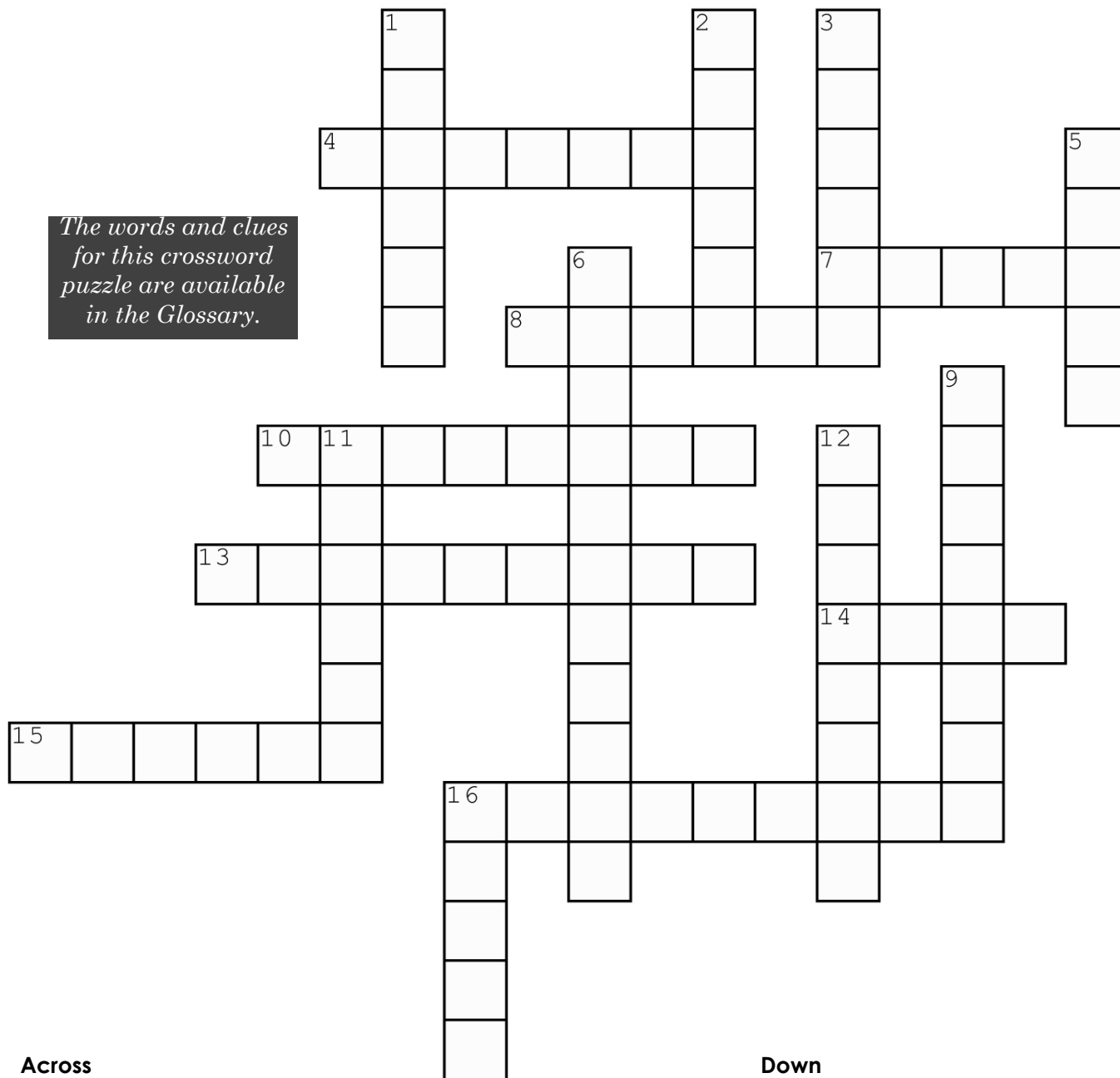
Vocabulary Crossword Answers:



Vocabulary Crossword Puzzle

"I think that means we have a winner," said Miss Wu (pg. 27).

The words and clues for this crossword puzzle are available in the Glossary.



Across

- 4. Type of fern
- 7. Person in big trouble
- 8. Group of people standing close together
- 10. Swirling; moving roughly and violently
- 13. Animal that has a pouch to incubate and care for their young
- 14. Sharp part of tree extending over water
- 15. Teased
- 16. Hit; punched

Down

- 1. In a watchful, careful way
- 2. Move forward suddenly
- 3. Thick, gooey muck
- 5. Rush
- 6. Shame
- 9. Beaten
- 11. Threw
- 12. Outwitted
- 16. Top

