

A Educator's Guide for

# DOWN UNDER



written by David Hill  
illustrated by Soda Design

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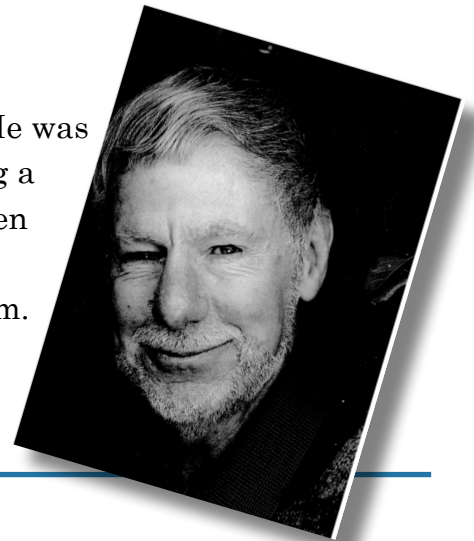
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## About the book:

Roger is a big, beefy bully. Most of all, he likes to bully his shrimp of a cousin. The two boys seem worlds apart. Even in the water they are different: one has the muscles to swim strongly on the surface and the other can swim underwater further than anyone else. Then there is an accident on the bridge that neither of them can deal with on their own...

## About the author:

**David Hill** lives and writes fulltime in Taranaki, New Zealand. He was a soldier, a truck driver and a high-school teacher before becoming a fulltime writer. His novels, play and stories for teenagers have been published in twelve countries. In his spare time, he likes reading, astronomy, archery, and cheering for the NZ All Blacks rugby team.



## Pre-Reading Discussion Questions:

- Observe the graphics on the front cover. Discuss the effect of the title, DOWN UNDER, printed in big, bold font. Identify what the two color tones suggest about the story.
- Look closely at the image found in the lower left corner. What do you see?
- The word *intrigue* is defined as to arouse curiosity, to fascinate, and to generate interest. Explain how the formatting of the book cover establishes a sense of intrigue.
- Read the blurb on the back cover. Identify the story conflict. Predict how the conflict will be resolved. Explain the connection between the front and back covers.
- Consider the title—DOWN UNDER. Based on your impression of the cover art the title, and blurb make a prediction. What do you think this story is going to be about?

## Post-Reading Discussion Questions:

***Roger heard about that, too, and he put me in a wrestling hold I thought was going to break my elbow (pg. 3).***

- The word *intimidation* means to threaten, frighten, and bully. Determine ways that both cousins are intimidating each other—one using words and the other using physical strength.
- The word *provoke* means to insult, incite, and offend. Discuss how, in this case, Roger's wrongful bullying is a reaction to being provoked.
- Examine how the cousins' relationship improved. Identify which cousin made the initial attempt to respond differently. Discuss the affect a change in perspective had on the situation.

***Bits of splintered timber rained through the air around it. Eyes staring, bodies unable to move, we watched it drop 18 metres into the river below (pg. 9).***

- Explore the response 'unable to move'. Why were the onlookers frozen?
- Identify which character was the first to assume a leadership role in the dangerous

situation. Explain why this plot twist is a surprise.

***I came spluttering to the surface 10 metres downstream. Roger stood in the river where he'd led me. He held a big stone in one hand (pg. 12).***

- Explain Roger's logic regarding using water flow to discover the location of the submerged truck.
- Discuss how his actions demonstrate a different kind of strength in his character.

***Somehow I knew that I'd never have to worry about Roger bullying me again (pg. 17).***

- Explore reasons for this new-found awareness. Would Roger stop his tormenting because of the traumatic experience they shared or because the two had developed a sincere appreciation for each other?
- Explain your answer.

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

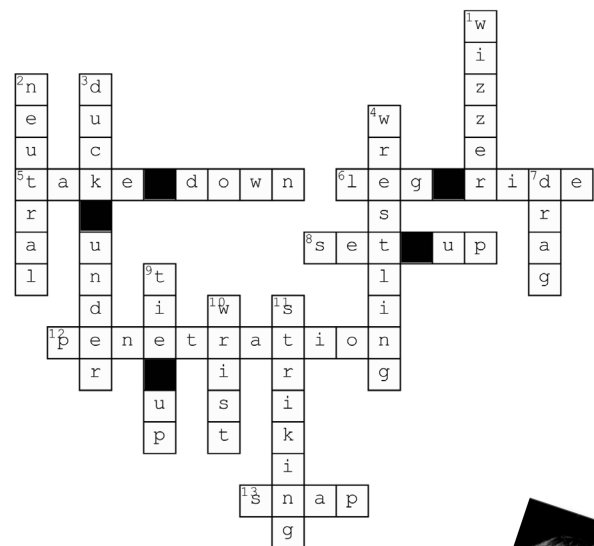
## Extension Activities:

~ Research the construction of a suspension bridge. Identify the parts of the bridge in the sequence of deconstruction under the weight of the truck in the story. Write a short narrative from the truck driver's point of view describing what his experience might have been like.



~ Observe several sanctioned competitive wrestling videos. Consider the physicality and finesse of the sport. Write a short informative essay expressing how the sport of wrestling helped to define Roger's character and add dimension to his role in the story. Explore how Roger's athletic skill establishes a stark contrast with his weaker cousin's physical strength.

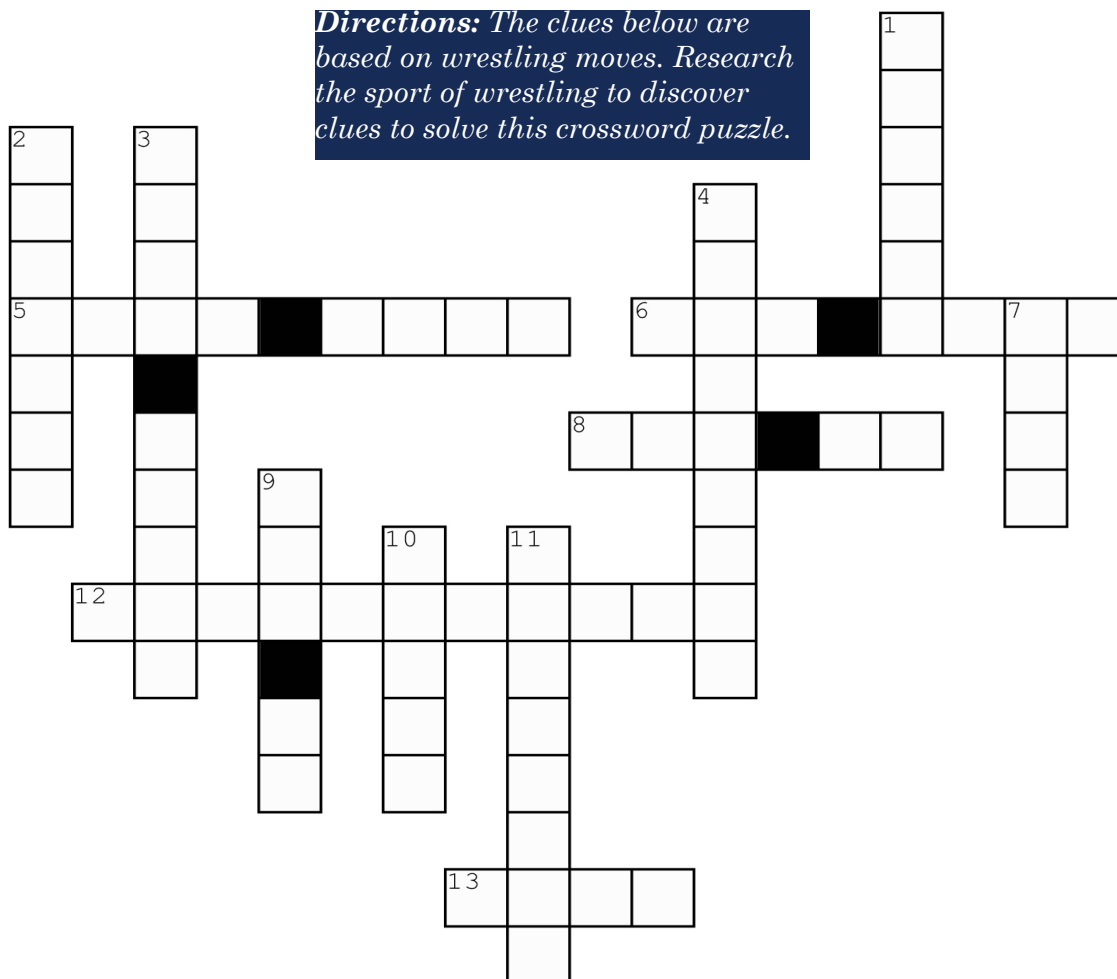
## Vocabulary Crossword Answers:



## Vocabulary Crossword Puzzle

One time, a kid was going. "He's in a class of his own at wrestling" (pg. 3).

**Directions:** The clues below are based on wrestling moves. Research the sport of wrestling to discover clues to solve this crossword puzzle.



### Across:

5. Wrestling moves designed to push opponent on to mat
6. Wrestler on top position has moved his center of gravity from his planted knee to the center of his opponent's back
8. Wrestling moves intended to clear opponent's defense in order to execute a successful take down
12. \_\_\_\_\_ step is taken by moving from the standing position to low, striking position
13. To push an opponent off-balance then quickly pull his arm down towards the mat

### Down:

1. Defensive move used to counter a lower body take down
2. Position in which both wrestlers stand, face-to-face, without touching
3. Wrap arm around opponent's waist and pull down, pushing opponents down on mat
4. Sport involving grappling with an opponent and trying to hold them down on the ground
7. Pulling an opponent in a tug-of-war fashion
9. Constant battle for control
10. A tie up in which a wrestler grabs an opponent's wrist, palm down
11. Position in which one wrestler has dropped lower than their opponent in preparation to grab a single or double leg