

TEACHERS' NOTES

All Aboard! True Train Tales

by Pauline Deeves



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Recommended Year Levels: 4–6

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Pauline Deeves has been a teacher for more than 30 years with experience from kindergarten to college, including 15 years as a teacher librarian. She has contributed to many educational and children's publications and reviewed manuscripts for educational publishers. Pauline is a regular visitor to schools, presenting writing workshops for both students and teachers. Her book *Midnight Burial* won an ACT Writing and Publishing Award and *Socks, Sandbags and Leeches: Letters to My Anzac Dad* was a 2017 Children's Book Council of Australia Notable Book.

About the Book

I come from a railway family. My dad drives trains, my grandpa was an engine driver and so was his father ...

Jack loves visiting Grandpa in his old train carriage. He loves helping him in the train museum. And he loves hearing his stories about trains and railways.

From runaway engines to people-powered carriages, train-robbing bushrangers and lifesaving pointsmen, Grandpa always has a tale to pass the time. Best of all, every one of them is true. Join Jack and his grandpa as they journey through Australian railway history—and try to save the town’s precious train museum.

CURRICULUM LINKS

English

In Years 5 and 6, students communicate with peers and teachers from other classes and schools, community members, and individuals and groups, in a range of face-to-face and online/virtual environments.

Students engage with a variety of texts for enjoyment. They listen to, read, view, interpret and evaluate spoken, written and multimodal texts in which the primary purpose is aesthetic, as well as texts designed to inform and persuade. These include various types of media texts including newspapers, film and digital texts, junior and early adolescent novels, poetry, non-fiction and dramatic performances.

HASS

Inquiry Questions

- Who lived here first and how do we know?
- How has our community changed? What features have been lost and what features have been retained?
- What is the nature of the contribution made by different groups and individuals in the community?
- How and why do people choose to remember significant events of the past?

Science

Nature and Development of Science

Science involves making predictions and describing patterns and relationships ([ACSH061—Scootle](#))

Introductory Activities

These are activities to do before reading to prepare students for the concepts/themes explored in the book. They are not necessarily curriculum based.

- Look at the cover of the book with the class. What do you think this book will be about? What do you see that makes you say that?
- Discuss broad themes of the book.

Discussion Questions and Activities

Federation and the Development of Railways in Australia

Discuss the meaning of Federation and the history of Federation in Australia.

- What problems resulted when each state made its own individual decisions?
- Why was the linking by rail of Western Australia to the Australian east coast seen as an important part of Federation?
- Make a map of the Australian railway system in 1918. When were all Australian capital cities finally joined?
- Using the internet and other library resources, research: Albury Station, *The Ghan*, the Trans-Australian Railway and the Hawkesbury Bridge. What part did each play in joining Australia's capital cities?
- What were roads like in Australia before 1900?

Working on the Railways

- Look at the job descriptions scattered throughout *All Aboard!*. Choose your favourite and write a letter applying for the job.
- Using the internet and other library resources, research John Whitton. Who was he? Why was he called the father of Australian railways?
- What was the Tea and Sugar Train? What kinds of food would you expect the train to carry? Write a shopping list for a family in 1908.
- Railway signals play a vital role in keeping people safe. Research the various signals used on railways and their meanings.

Communities and Trains

- Using the internet and other library resources, research how the coming of railways to Australian country towns affected or changed:
 - the way goods were transported
 - the delivery of mail
 - jobs
 - family gatherings
 - holidays
 - the spread of news.

A Speedy Trip: Creative Response

In the nineteenth century, a person's first train journey would have been the fastest trip of his or her life. Write an interview with a passenger who has just got off the train after their first ever journey. How did they feel? Were they afraid? Thrilled? Did they faint? (People did!)

Further Resources

[The Buckland Collection](#) of railway transport photographs—a major collection of pictures in the National Library of Australia relating to all aspects of Australian railway history

Search the [National Library of Australia catalogue](#) for ‘railway poster’ (limit your search to ‘Picture’) for a selection of historic railway advertisements.

[History of trains in Australia](#)