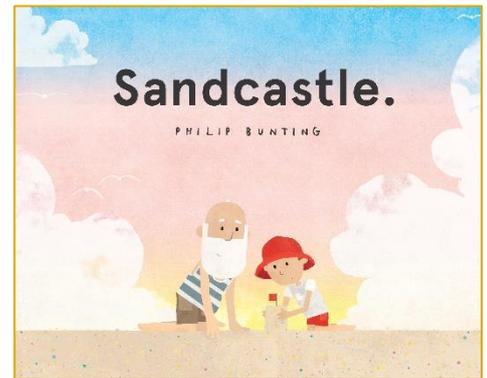


Sandcastle

By Philip Bunting

March 2018 ISBN 9781760295387 hardback
Recommended for 3- to 6-year-old readers



The story

Rae and Grandad set out to build a sandcastle at the beach.

They make a tall tower. They raise great ramparts. They dig a deep moat. They even find a dragon. But will it be enough to hold the tide?

Sandcastle is a beautiful exploration of the ebb and flow of life and is for anyone who has ever pondered the big questions about our place in the universe.

Use in the curriculum

Though it can be read as a tale about a boy and his grandfather at the beach, *Sandcastle* also gently explores important philosophical themes about existence and perseverance.

In this respect, it addresses the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities of Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability, and Ethical Understanding. It can also be used to address Foundation Year content in English and Health and Physical Education (Personal, Social and Community Health).

Themes

The key theme of the book sees the sandcastle used as an analogy for the ephemeral nature of all things – relationships, life, time.

In this analogy, the sand itself represents the atoms that make everything in the universe. The sandcastle represents Grandad, and – more broadly – all things.

Other themes in the book include:

- The passing of time
- Change as a constant
- Finding spirituality in truth/science
- Existence
- Perseverance
- Family / grandparents
- Life
- The beach

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Discussion questions and activities

1. Before reading. Show the cover of *Sandcastle* to your students and ask them:

- Where do you think this story might be set? What is it about the cover that makes you think that?
- Who might the people be and what are they doing?
- Make a list of things you need to make a really good sandcastle.
- What is your favourite thing to do when you go to the beach?
- Do you think this is going to be a happy or sad story? What makes you think that?

2. After reading. Now read the story to your class and when finished, start a discussion with the following questions:

- Explain in your own words what you think Grandpa meant when he said, 'The sandcastle may be gone, but everything that made it is still here, and always will be.'
- Why do you think that Rae decided to build another, even better sandcastle after Grandpa said that?
- What are the thousands of dots on the endpapers of the book (the very first and last pages of the book)? The author mentions 'particles from the enormous universe' at the end of the story. Imagine these dots were on a darker background. What might they be now? Hint: we see them at night, in the sky.
- Did you feel happy that Rae got to build a bigger and better sandcastle or sad that the first one was washed away?
- What did you like about the story? What didn't you like about it? How would you describe the book to your best friend (who hadn't read it yet)?

3. Visual literacy:

- Follow the crab through the pages of the book. Where is it? What is it doing?
- What time of day is it on the last two double-page spreads of the story? How can you tell?
- Students cut random shapes out of coloured paper. They then assemble the shapes into pictures that tell a story, using interconnecting drawing if necessary.

4. Numeracy:

- How many doors and windows does Rae's first castle have? How many does his second one have?
- How many particles of sand are on a beach? How could you count them?
- Count up in denominations: ten, one hundred, one thousand etc. How far can you go?
- Introduce the concept of infinity?

5. Literacy:

- What did Rae do FIRST, NEXT, THEN, AT LAST? Tell a story about something you did using these words.
- In the book, how do we know when someone is speaking? [quotation marks / gaps between paragraphs]
- Let's change the second-last sentence in the book: *As the tide went out, Rae began to build another sandcastle.* Now make a sentence like that about something that happened to you today. Start your sentence with AS, WHILE, DURING, AFTER.

Philip Bunting

I'm an author, illustrator, and youngish father of two, based in Queensland, Australia. I'm at the very beginning of a journey to get more parents – especially dads – reading with their children.

I believe that the act of regularly reading with children has the potential to infinitely enrich the lives of both parent and child, and indefinitely deepen their connection.

My picture books intentionally ask the reader to bring their own personal interpretation and expression to the book reading. The deliberate sparsity of words and pictures in my work requires the reader to increase intonation, read the pictures, play with pauses, and all of those other good things that ultimately enhance the book reading experience, for both reader and child.



Through this method, I hope to encourage more playful interaction between the reader and child, thereby allowing my books to become a platform for deep engagement, and fun! I believe that the more fun the child has during their early reading experiences, the more likely they will be to return to books; love reading; improve emergent literacy skills; and later find comfort in reading and learning.

The act of reading to young children improves their early literacy skills and language development. But I'm equally interested in the incidental by-products of reading with young children, and how the dynamic of reading with a child from an early age can create a platform that allows for other – equally important – things to happen.

Through a regular pattern of reading, supported by a collaborative reading style, I believe that parents, carers and educators can encourage the development of so much good stuff in their child, including: positive associations with education; creative thinking skills; improved self-esteem; and heaps more. Better still, the focused, interactive, playful time spent with a child during book reading has the potential to create magic.

The picture books I create are a direct product of this philosophy. I create books to encourage more parents to read with their children.

Style

Philip Bunting's illustrations are first made from papercut shapes, which are scanned and pieced together digitally. The basic shapes are then collaged with found textures to finish the artwork.

He describes his style in this picture book as 'aesthetically modernist, but warm and engaging, at the same time.'

The author's inspiration

'The book was partly inspired by one of my heroes, Stephen Hawking, who said, "What's true is that we are only the temporary custodians of the particles which we're made of. They will go on to lead a future existence in the enormous universe that made them."

'In a post-religious society, I feel we increasingly need exposure to spiritual concepts and ideas to help us make sense of our place in the universe (without having to rely on concepts imagined thousands of years ago).

'Personally, I find the idea that we're made out of stuff that has been a part of stars, the Earth, and other life forms, pretty awe-inspiring. Then add to that the idea that these same particles will go on to lead future existences when we're gone... wow! We're all a part of a continuum that has been going on for longer than we will ever know, and will continue for longer than we can ever predict. There is true spiritual solace to be found in this idea.'

Other books by Philip Bunting

Mopoke (Feb 2017) – Author/Illustrator: Philip Bunting

Koalas Eat Gum Leaves (Oct 2017) – Author: Laura Bunting; Illustrator: Philip Bunting

Excuse Me (Nov 2017) – Author: Dave Hughes & Holly Ife; Illustrator: Philip Bunting

Mighty Mitch [Jnr fiction series] (Nov 2018, Feb 2018, ...) – Author: Mitchell Starc; Illustrator: Philip Bunting

Kookaburras Love to Laugh (TBC 2018) – Author: Laura Bunting; Illustrator: Philip Bunting.