

**RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA
READING GUIDES**

***Wicked Wizards and Leaping Lizards* by Mark Carthew Illustrated by Mike Spoor**

Random House Australia

RRP: \$14.95

ISBN: 9781741661774

Reading Level: Confident Readers (7+)

SYNOPSIS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

WRITING STYLE

ILLUSTRATION STYLE AND METHOD

DISCUSSION POINTS AND ACTIVITIES – LITERACY EXTENSION

SYNOPSIS

This batty book is a fun mix of jokes, rhymes and riddles based around the theme of characters and magical creatures you'd expect to find around wizards. Silly ogres, toads, goblins, cats and bats, lizards cracking jokes, crazy wizards and lots, lots more . . . there's something in this book for everyone who likes a laugh.

Both Mark and Mike wanted to create a humour-filled joke book that readers of all ages can enjoy every time they read it. Mark's love of wordplay motivates him to bring new angles to traditional snippets along with his own distinctively quirky sense of humour. Having worked together for over ten years, Mark and Mike are a perfect match to bring this book to life.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Carthew is an award-winning editor, author and primary teacher. Best known for his books and series exploring poetry, humour, music, movement and drama, he has always loved the joy of wordplay. He is series editor for the internationally acclaimed and award-winning illustrated play script series *VoiceWorks*.

He has worked closely with some of the biggest names in children's publishing including Margaret Mahy, Graeme Base, Pamela Allen, Ann James, Michael Rosen and a host of other Australian and international authors and illustrators

Mark loves the creative and collaborative process and has a passion for creating quality books for children. In 2005 he was Highly Commended in the Dromkeen Librarian's Award for his success in bringing literary experiences to children. He presented his exciting interactive workshops for kids as part of the 2007 Melbourne Writers' Festival Schools Program and Warrnambool fun4kids Festival.

In 2006 Mark was awarded a three-year Australian Postgraduate Award scholarship to pursue his PhD in creative writing with Swinburne University of Technology, Victoria.



Mark has two more books scheduled for release in 2008: *Can You Keep A Secret*, a collection of read-aloud rhymes illustrated by Jobi Murphy (Random House) and *The Gobbling Tree*, a picture book illustrated by Susy Boyer (New Frontier).

Mark is available for school visits and events. For more information please see:

http://www.bookedout.com.au/authors/Mark_Carthew/index.html

http://www.showtell.com.au/authors/mark_carthew.htm

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Mike Spoor has illustrated more than 250 books and is grateful to Australia, which allowed him to start a new career back in 1992 when he lived in Queensland. He continues to illustrate for educational, trade and picture books for publishers in the UK, Australia, New Zealand and the USA.

At the age of fourteen Mike already knew that he wanted to draw, so he applied for a job with the classic UK children's magazine *The Beano*. The staff suggested that he finish school first! At the age of eighteen he chose to do a Foundation Course at Art College, which led him to jobs as a ceramics teacher. He moved to Queensland in 1992 to work with the Australian Flying Arts School and eventually found himself drawn back to illustration. He still teaches occasionally, combining his illustration and ceramics experience to produce 3D computer modelling and animation.

Mike has a family of three daughters who are all artistic, though the eldest is now a biomedical scientist, another is an artist and the third is still at school. He lives in South-East England but his heart remains in the rugged North country where he was born.

He enjoys a range of styles and media from pencil, pen and ink line, and watercolour to computer techniques. He has a range of styles that express his various interests in landscape, geology, history, humour. Mike also enjoys the challenge of using different media which require their own methods for image-making.

His illustration work occupies most of his time but he is a keen photographer and, always keen for a challenge, is now exploring video and animation. He holds a B Ed Hons and an MA in Education, a connection which is continued through offering presentations or school workshops in humorous illustration. Please see the links below for a range of Mike's work samples and workshop offerings.



<http://new.thebrightagency.com/Artist.aspx?SectorID=2&CategoryID=-1&ArtistID=4>

<http://www.portfolios.com/profile.html?MyUrl=MikeSpoor>

<http://www.contactacreative.com/artist.php?b=121>

<http://www.classactagency.co.uk/artists/mspoor.html>

WRITING STYLE

Mark Carthew's eclectic mix of original and themed jokes, cleverly mixed with rhythmic banter, engages readers with a broad range of abilities.

By entwining original material with familiar and widely recognised joke forms, such as *knock knocks* and innovative twists on old themes, Mark Carthew creates a stimulating mix with a freshness and familiarity that instantly engages the reader.

The illustrations for *Wicked Wizards* are black-and-white line drawings, a medium in which Mike Spoor excels. His characteristic blend of zany caricatures mixed with his own trademark 'wicked' humour brings a distinct sense of narrative to the collection.

Look out for the riddles pages. They contain images that match the end sound of the riddle answers – adding an extra dimension for search sleuths.

ILLUSTRATION STYLE AND METHOD

Mike says:

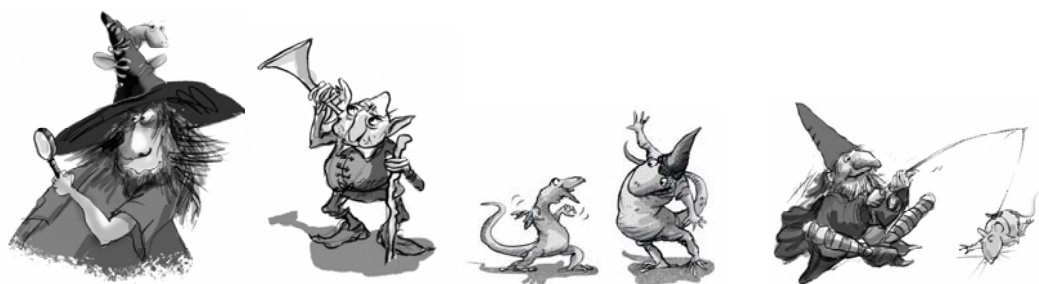
I was really pleased that Random allowed me to use pencil for the final artwork. It's my favourite medium. Pencil is an incredibly versatile tool and conveys a huge range of feeling through the strength or softness, thickness or thinness of line and the energy of the illustrator, which is an expression of the ideas brought about in response to the author's writing. For *Wicked Wizards and Leaping Lizards* I could produce the entire book using pencil and I think the illustrations are as enjoyably daft as the writing.

In addition to the pencil line I decided to add further impact to the illustrations using tone or wash. Normally I use dilute black watercolour or Indian ink, but it's not possible to correct mistakes with this method, so I decided to explore a combination of computer technique and scanned

pencil drawing. What I do is scan the pencil drawing, create a transparent layer in Photoshop and using a Wacom pen and drawing tablet 'paint' the wash onto the subject with either a hard edge brush or airbrush effect. It's very simple and results in an interesting contrast between the rugged pencil qualities and super-smooth grey tones provided by the computer.

The cover art is also pencil work, but in this case I painted over the pencil lines in Photoshop with overlay brushes in various colours. The solid colours were added in layers above that.

In some places I created textured brushes using photographs of tree bark and gravel paths, so that the coloured areas became more varied and had more depth.



DISCUSSION POINTS – LITERACY EXTENSION

There are many text types in this book that provide opportunities for literacy extension with students.

- **Speech bubbles** provide an excellent accessible method for students to model style and text. They love making their own humorous speech bubbles to matching sight gags and jokes.
- The upside down **Q & A** joke answers provide an extra level of interest to students and they will enjoy writing and illustrating their own jokes using a similar design format.
- **Riddles** sprinkled through the text use wordplay based on the **end sounds** of words. **Picture images** on these pages also **match the end sounds**. Students will enjoy the fun word challenge to work them out! This provides a fun and accessible literacy/art activity that will engage more advanced students as well as reluctant readers.
Eg **p63**. eye, pie, cry, butterfly, hi-fi, pig sty, fry etc
- **Silly book titles** and **Doctor! Doctor!** jokes also provide excellent opportunities for modelled text work. Reading and discussing the author's original titles and twists on some old favourites are sure to stimulate student humour and motivate them to make up their own!

Suggested activities

Invent a silly book title and design a matching cover!

Themed variations on **Knock Knock!** jokes will also have students running to share more. Compile a collection of favourite knock knocks!

Art and literacy extension

Students could look at the chapter head pages and design their own, for example in the style of 'Cats, Rats and Bats'.

Clay or Das® Creature Heads

Use a pinch pot base or Das (terracotta) moulded over 50 mm poly balls or scrunched alfoil to create character heads with features similar to those in the book.

Eg. caricatures of ogres, toads, wizards with bulgy eyes, distinctive ears and funny hats.

Note: Prior discussion on caricature will enhance this activity.

Nose Gallery (p 22)

Students will also love creating funny noses based on the ogres' noses section. These could be hung as mobiles!

Hall of Fame (p 105–11)

Students can create their own Hall of Fame character. Draw a character and make up a humorous statement related to their reason for being famous! Students can then mount their pictures in a frame, gallery style, if desired.

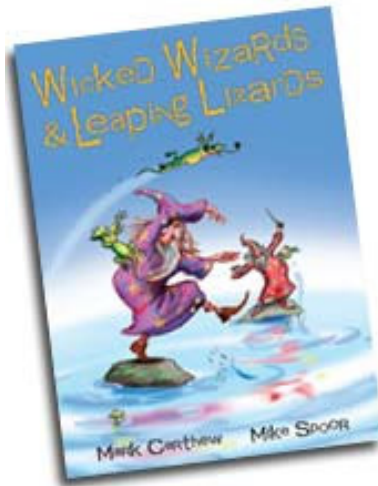
Have fun!



Mark Carthew & Mike Spoor

A colouring sheet for *Wicked Wizards and Leaping Lizards* can be found at <http://www.randomhouse.com.au/Kids/Default.aspx?Page=FunStuff>

Visit <http://www.randomhouse.com.au/readingguides> for information on other Random House Australia books.



Teacher's Notes
Wicked Wizards & Leaping Lizards
Author: Mark Carthew
Illustrator: Mike Spoor

Genre: Mixed jokes, rhymes, riddles, cartoons and humour.

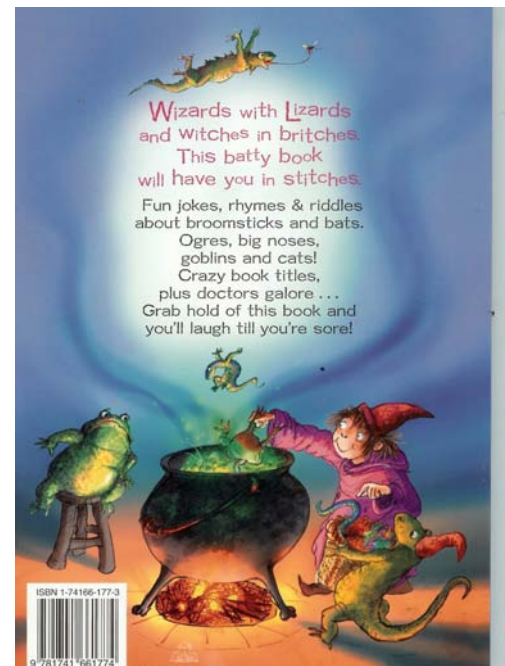
<http://www.randomhouse.com.au/Kids/Default.aspx>

Cover Blurb – About the book

The blurb says it all!

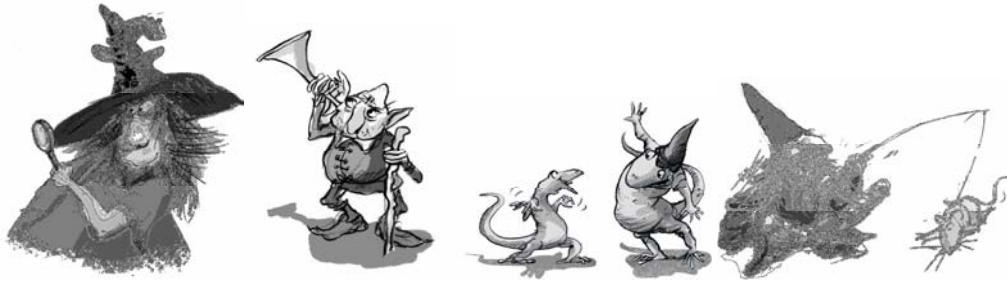
This batty book is a fun mix of jokes, rhymes and Riddles based around the theme of characters and magical creatures that you'd expect to find around wizards.

With silly ogres, toads, goblins, cats and bats, lizards cracking jokes, crazy wizards and lots, lots more... there's something in this book for every one who likes a laugh.



UK caricature artist Mike Spoor's renowned ability to create movement and humour in visual narrative perfectly compliments this wonderfully quirky book.

Background information



Author Mark Carthew's eclectic mix of original and themed Jokes, cleverly mixed with a rhythmic banter, creates an engaging read for readers with a broad range of abilities.

By entwining original material with familiar and universally recognised jokes such Knock! Knocks! and innovative twists on old themes, Carthew creates a stimulating mix with a freshness and familiarity that instantly engages the reader.



The illustrations for *Wicked Wizards* are Black and white line drawings medium which Award winning artist Mike Spoor excels. His characteristic blend of zany caricatures mixed with his own trademark 'wicked' humour creates a distinct sense of narrative to the collection.



Following on from this previous collaboration with *Newts , Lutes and Bandicoots* (Scholastic Press) , the riddles pages also contains images matching the end sound of the riddle answers – adding an extra dimension for search sleuths.

Author/Illustrator Motivation

Both Mark and Mike wanted to create a humour filled joke book that children and readers of all ages will want to enjoy over and over again with lots to enjoy both in the text and visual images.

Mark's love of wordplay also motivates him to bring new angles to traditional snippets along with his own distinctively quirky sense of humour and love of language.

Having worked together for over ten years Mark and Mike's meeting of like minds creates a perfect match to bring this book to life.



Author Background Information

http://www.bookedout.com.au/authors/Mark_Carthew/index.html

http://www.showtell.com.au/authors/mark_carthew.htm

<http://www.newfrontier.com.au/creators/carthew.htm>

Mark Carthew is an award winning editor, author & primary teacher. Best known for his books and series exploring poetry, humour, music, movement and drama, he has always loved the joy of wordplay.

He is series editor for the internationally acclaimed illustrated play script series *VoiceWorks* which has won a number of awards. He has worked closely with some of the biggest names in children's publishing including Margaret Mahy, Graeme Base, Pamela Allen, Ann James, Michael Rosen and a host of other Australian and international authors and illustrators Mark loves the creative and collaborative process and has a passion for creating quality books for children. In 2005 he was Highly Commended in the *Dromkeen*



Librarian's Award for his success in bringing literary experiences to children.

In 2006 he was awarded a three year Australian Postgraduate award scholarship to pursue his PhD in writing with Swinburne University Victoria and he has been invited to present as part of the 2007 Melbourne Writer's Festival School's Program and Warrnambool fun4kids festival.

Mark has two more books scheduled for release in 2008; **Forty Years on an Iceberg**, a compilation of read aloud rhymes **illustrated by Argentinean illustrator Pablo Bernasconi** (Random House) and children's picture book **The Gobbling Tree** Illustrated by Qld illustrator Susy Boyer (New Frontier). He is also working on a sequel to Wicked Wizards with Mike Spoor, **Witches britches, Itches and Twitches... with more to come!**



THE ILLUSTRATOR - Mike Spoor

Mike Spoor has illustrated in whole or in part more than 250 books and is grateful to Australia, which allowed him to start a new career back in 1992 when he lived in Queensland. His first works were commissioned by Barbara Ker-Wilson at The University of Queensland Press, Jackaranda-Wiley as it then was, Mark Macleod at Random House, the Australian Broadcasting Co. and Scholastic. He continues to illustrate for educational, trade and picture books for publishers in the UK where he now lives, Australia – for Scholastic and Random House (Mark Carthew's Wicked Wizards and Leaping Lizards) , New Zealand and the U.S.A. He enjoys a range of styles and mediums from simple pencil, pen & ink line, watercolour and computer techniques.

He has a range of styles which express his various interests in landscape, geology, history, humour and also different media which require their own methods for image-making.



He has known since the age of 14 that he wanted to draw and applied for a job with 'The Beano' but it was suggested that he finish school first. A crucial decision at the age of 18 between a university course in Geography or a Foundation Course at Art College led him eventually to Ceramics, making and teaching in Schools and Colleges. His last job before arriving in Australia was with what is now the 'University College for the Creative Arts' as a lecturer in charge of ceramics. This led him to work with the 'Australian Flying Arts School' throughout 1992, at the start of his illustration change-over. He still teaches occasionally at the UK University, subjects which have evolved out of his ceramics experience to computer 3D modeling and some 3D animation.

Mike has a family of three daughters who are all artistic, though the eldest is now a Biomedical scientist, another is a Fine-Artist and the third is still at school. He lives in South East England but his heart remains in the North country where he was born and where the Land is rugged. His work occupies most of his time but he is a keen photographer and is now exploring video and animation; always looking for a challenge. He graduated initially with a B.Ed Hons and an M.A. in Education, a connection which is continued through offering presentations or school workshops in humorous illustration. The links below show a range of work samples and workshop offerings.

Mike Spoor



Web links:

The Bright Agency:

<http://new.thebrightagency.com/Artist.aspx?SectorID=2&CategoryID=-1&ArtistID=4>

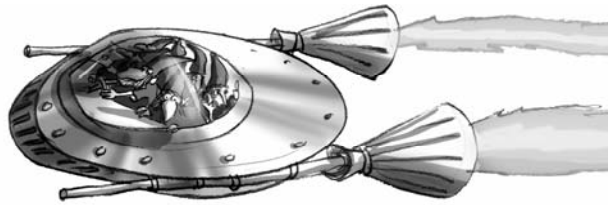
Portfolios: <http://www.portfolios.com/profile.html?MyUrl=MikeSpoor>

Contact Creative: <http://www.contactacreative.com/artist.php?b=121>

ClassAct: <http://www.classactagency.co.uk/artists/mspoor.html>

Wizard's artwork

From Mike Spoor...



I was really pleased that Random allowed me to use pencil for the final artwork, its my favourite medium. Most black & white illustrations requested require strong clear black line so that the image prints properly on cheap paper stock to keep costs down, and to this end I use indian ink with a 'dipping pen'. These are the old fashioned pens with a springy steel nib which is dipped into ink for every few lines, and the pressure applied when drawing varies the thickness of the line according to the way it twists and turns. The method demands that the drawing process is done with lots of energy which is 'captured' in the image and generally successful. However, I often feel sad when the initial pencil sketches have to be erased once the ink dries. The drawings are destroyed and replaced by a completely different kind of image. Pencil is an incredibly versatile tool and conveys a huge range of feeling through the strength or softness, thick or thin-ness of line and the energy of the illustrator which is an expression of the ideas brought about in response to the author's writing.

So, for *Wicked Wizards* and *Leaping Lizards* I could produce the entire book using pencil and my responses to Mark Carthew's whacky ideas in the text were un-muted by any artistic technique and I think the illustrations are as enjoyably daft as the writing . In addition to the pencil line I decided to add further impact to the illustrations using tone or wash. Normally I use dilute black watercolour or indian ink, but its not possible to correct mistakes with this method, so I decided to explore a combination of computer technique and scanned pencil drawing. Its very simple and results in an interesting contrast between the rugged pencil qualities and super-smooth grey tones provided by

the computer, enhancing both as well as giving a solidity to the figures and scenes in the book.

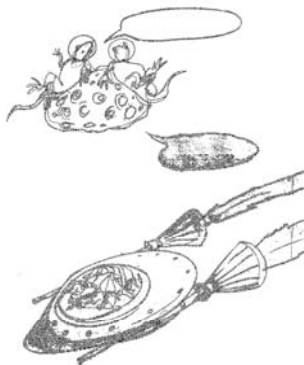
And next...

What I do is simply scan the drawing, create a transparent layer in PhotoShop and using a Wacom pen & drawing tablet 'paint' the wash onto the subject with either a hard edge brush or airbrush effect.

The Cover art is also pencil work, but in this case I painted over the pencil lines in Photoshop with overlay brush in various colours. The solid colours were added in layers above that. In some places I created textured brushes using photographs of tree bark or gravel paths, so that the toned or coloured areas were more varied and interesting.



Educational – Literacy Extension



There are many themes in this book which can be explored further and provide opportunities for literacy extension with students.

Speech bubbles provide an excellent accessible models for student to model style and text. They will love making their own humorous speech bubbles to matching sight gags and jokes.

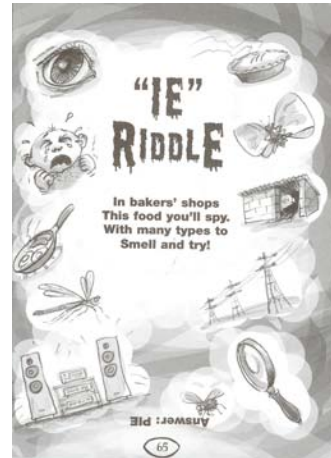
The upside down Q & A joke answers provide an extra level of interest to students and they will enjoy making their own jokes using a similar design format.

Riddles sprinkled through the text use wordplay based on the **end sounds** of words similar to Carthew & Spoor's previous work *Newts, Lutes and Bandicoots*.

Picture images on these pages also **match** the **end sounds**. Students will enjoy the fun word challenge to work them out!

Eg **p63**. *eye, pie, cry, butterfly, hi-fi, pig sty, fry etc*

This provides a fun and accessible literacy /art activity that will engage brighter students as well as reluctant readers.



Silly book titles and **Doctor! Doctor!** jokes also provide excellent opportunities for modelled text work. Carthew's original titles and twists on some old favourites are sure to stimulate student humour and motivate them to make up their own!

➔ **Suggested activity:**

Invent a silly book spine label *and* design a matching cover!

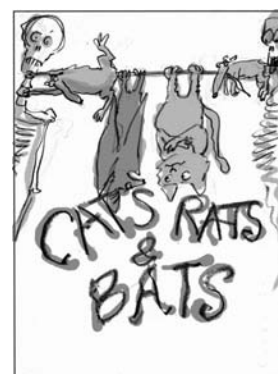


Themed variations on **Knock Knock!** jokes will also have students running to share more.

➔ **Suggested activity:** Compile a collection of favourites!

ART & LITERACY extension.

Students could look at the chapter head pages and **design their own**
Eg Cats, Rats and bats!



Clay or Das® Creature Heads

Use a pinch pot base or Das (terracotta) moulded over 50mm poly balls or scrunched alfoil to create character heads with features similar to those in the book eg **caricatures** of ogres, toads, wizards with bulgy eyes, distinctive ears and funny hats etc.

Note: Prior discussion on caricature will enhance this activity.



Nose Gallery (Page 22)



Children will also love creating funny noses based on the Ogres noses section

These could be hung as mobiles!

Hall of Fame (Page 105-11)

Students can create a picture frame with their own Hall of Fame character. ie Draw a character and make up a humorous statement related to their reason for being famous!



Mount in a frame, gallery style. -

Further information and fun activity sheets can be accessed at :-

<http://www.randomhouse.com.au/Kids/Default.aspx?Page=FunStuff>



Most of all...Have Fun!

Mark Carthew & *Mike Spoor*

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