

AZARIA: A TRUE HISTORY MAREE COOTE



F	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Writing	
Ideas	✓
Organisation	✓
Voice	✓
Word Choice	✓
Sentence Fluency	✓
Conventions	✓
Presentation	✓



Reading	
Determining Importance	✓
Inferring	✓
Making Connections	✓
Predicting	✓
Questioning	✓
Summarising & Synthesising	✓
Visualising	✓

AZARIA: A True History, written and illustrated by Maree Coote is a visually (and textually) stunning book that highlights the miscarriage of justice that took place with the Azaria Chamberlain case. It looks at the role of the media and explores the dangers of mob thinking and unheard voices.

Writing

How a book on such a tough and sensitive topic can be written in such a beautiful and poetic way is a wonder that Maree Coote has managed to pull off. IDEAS: How might the author have selected the topic for this book? Which details in the book help you to think the author is an authority on the topic? VOICE: What does the author do to help the reader feel connected to the story? (It almost feels as though Coote is telling us this as a campfire story- this feeling is created by her use of informal language e.g., ‘Now, every dingo knows’ ‘And so...’ ‘Now, this is all very sad, you will agree’) WORD CHOICE and SENTENCE FLUENCY are the standouts of this book. Every sentence is carefully crafted to be smooth and rhythmic on the ear. Detail-packed complex sentences have contributed to this (e.g., ‘At the bottom of the world in a wide, brown land, there’s a place where a giant rock rises high above the horizon.’) as well as plenty of well used repetition (‘People come from far... People just like...’). The illustrations in this text also get a special mention as they are stunning and tell more of the story.

Reading

Some teachers worry that students won’t have enough background knowledge to engage with this story- I’ve read it to students in years 4-6 and they were enthralled with the injustice of it all (and they had no knowledge of the actual event). QUESTIONING is likely to be the main comprehension strategy being employed as this is read. Readers of all ages will have many questions come up as they read- some that can be answered in the text (e.g., is this really going to be about Azaria Chamberlain?) and others that will prompt further research after reading. There is an additional resources section at the back of the book. MAKING CONNECTIONS: Where else has the mob thinking occurred in texts or in society? How is this similar or different? What is your learning from this story? This book is sure to spark some deep thinking and responses that would be suitable for a reader’s notebook.