

PETER CARNAVAS: MY BROTHER BEN

PRIMARY YEARS 3–6

About the event

The relationship you have with your siblings can be fun, challenging, rewarding or infuriating—or sometimes all those things at once! Award-winning children's author and illustrator **Peter Carnavas** explores these powerful family bonds in his latest book, *My Brother Ben*.

In this event, Carnavas opens up about writing resilient characters, exploring family dynamics, and what it takes to be a writer; plus, see him create an illustration before your eyes!

Read and discuss

There's nothing quite like the bond between brothers, the parallels of love and anger that mark every game of backyard cricket, every bike race along the bitumen. My Brother Ben is my chance to explore the humour, joy and tension of these relationships, along with a love of birds. – Peter Carnavas

Do you have brothers or sisters? If yes, are you close or do you fight sometimes? If no, what do you imagine it would be like?

Writing activity

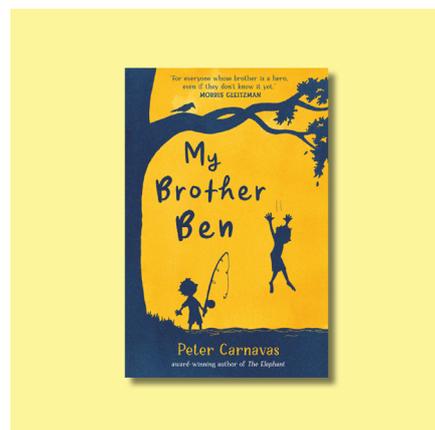
I closed my eyes and saw it all. Snoozing in the boat, pulling a fat whiting out of the water for dinner. It was Ben's dream—not mine—but I'd follow him anywhere.
P. 9, *My Brother Ben*

Can you remember a really great time or a difficult time with a brother or sister? Set a timer and write about it for fifteen minutes. You might like to start with: I remember when...

If you don't have a sibling, have you ever wanted one? Why? Or why not? Write about it for fifteen minutes.



Peter Carnavas



KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Learning areas: English, science, visual arts

Capabilities: critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding, personal and social

Writing prompt: show don't tell

I reached the school gate and parked my bike in the racks. Kids streamed past me. The uniform stuck to my skin as I slipped off the backpack. I breathed hard and looked back down the street, counting the blocks all the way to the shops. Someone was there, sitting on a bike. Ben. He'd watched me all the way. It was too far for our eyes to meet, but the moment I saw him, he spun his bike around and rode off towards the high school. P. 29, My Brother Ben

Show don't tell is a way of writing that allows the reader to see and feel the story rather than hearing it told.

Imagine you suddenly see a snake on the footpath in front of you. Where do you feel the fear in your body and what do you do in that moment? Describe.

Imagine you have not slept for two whole nights. You have to go to school, and you have a maths test. How do you feel in your body? What might you do?

(E.g. Lie down on your bed, rub your eyes.)

Read and respond

In Peter Carnavas's book, Luke's dad has left. When families go through big changes, kids can feel sad, angry, lonely or confused. They need to be resilient to adjust to the change. One dictionary defines 'resilient' as meaning: *the ability of a person to adjust to or recover readily from illness, adversity, major life changes.*

Can you think of a time when you went through a big change in your life and needed to be resilient? Set the timer for fifteen minutes and write about it. (Choose an event you feel safe and comfortable to write about.)

About the author

Peter Carnavas is an author and illustrator from the Sunshine Coast. He has written and illustrated many picture books, including the award-winning story, *The Elephant*. His new book, *My Brother Ben*, is a story about brothers and birds, two of his favourite things.