

Graeme Base: Writer and Illustrator

Interviewed by Eleanor Curtain

Photography by Ross Tonkin

Level 23

Getting ready for reading

If possible, read one of Graeme Base's books prior to the guided reading session.

Talk about the sorts of books Graeme Base writes and illustrates. *What do you like best about his books? How do you think he thinks of the ideas for his books? How does he make the pictures? What questions would you ask Graeme Base if you had the chance?* List these questions on the board for later reference.

Talking through the book

Give each student a copy of the book. Ask: *Who is the author of this book? Why does it say 'Interviewed by'...?* Ask the students to remember the questions on the board as they read the book.

Reading the book

Students read the book individually while the teacher observes each student's reading behaviours and prompts students to use cues to read unfamiliar words. The teacher may select an additional teaching focus based on these observations.

Returning to the text

Select the most appropriate teaching focus for the learning needs of the group. Choose one or more of the following.

Being a meaning maker

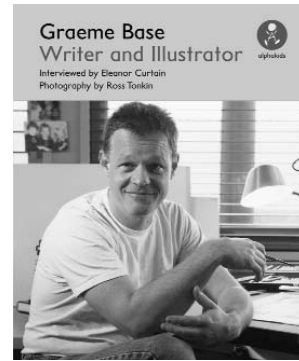
Encourage the students to support their answers with evidence from the book as they discuss these questions.

Which books has Graeme Base written?

Where did he get the idea for The Sign of the Seahorse?

What does Graeme Base like to draw most?

What have you found out about Graeme Base?



TEXT FEATURES

- **This book is an interview with children's book writer and illustrator, Graeme Base.**
- **The text is biographical and is written in the first person.**
- **Colour photographs of Graeme Base at work and illustrations from his books enhance the text.**
- **The text includes a bibliography of Graeme Base's books.**

Being a code breaker

Students could explore the initial letters ‘w’ and ‘wr’ as found in the book: *writer, wife, world, write, wrote, written, wanted, words, work, was*.

Students may also like to consider some of the technical words used throughout the book: *illustrations, fantasy, alliteration, studio, airbrush, latex*.

Discuss how to find out what these words mean, using the information provided in the text.

Being a text user

Discuss:

Does this book help you to learn about Graeme Base? What did you learn?

Which of your questions were answered?

Being a text critic

Discuss:

How did the author get the information to write this book?

What questions would she have asked Graeme Base?

What homework would she have had to do before she interviewed him?

Literacy learning centres – follow-up activities

WRITING CENTRE 1

Students could write a review of one of Graeme Base’s books.

WRITING CENTRE 2

Students could use the book to write a ‘How to be an author or illustrator’ guide.

WRITING CENTRE 3

Students could write their own autobiographies about what they have experienced in their lives.

INTERACTIVE LITERACY CENTRE

Students could work in cooperative pairs to develop and practise a mock interview between the author of the book and Graeme Base.

WORD CENTRE

Students could explore the onset /wr/ using first-letter dictionaries and familiar texts. They could use these words to try to write their own tongue twister.

BOOK BROWSING CENTRE

Students could read and explore Graeme Base’s books. They could also visit his web site: gbase@penguin.com.au

Keeping track

Asking students to support their answers with evidence from the text reveals information about the level of understanding they have of the text. Students who are only able to answer questions directly stated in the text need to work on understanding the text at an inferential and interpretive level.