

These notes are for:

- Years 4, 5 & 6

Key Learning Areas:

- English
- Art
- ICT

Example of:

- Junior Fiction
- Narrative
- Informal text types:
 - Facts
 - Instructions
 - Merit Certificates
 - Diagrams

Experience of:

- Popular culture

Values addressed:

- Understanding, tolerance & inclusion
- Respect
- Doing Your Best

Themes:

- Friendship
- Teamwork
- Courage
- Danger/Safety

*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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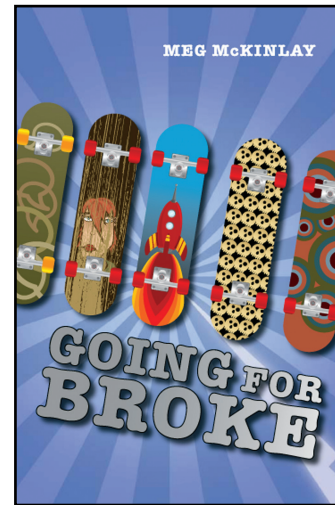
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Going for Broke - Overview

Lightning Strikes: Going for Broke

By: Meg McKinlay
 ISBN: 9781921150616
 ARRP: \$12.95
 NZRRP: \$14.99
 No. of Pages: 96



Outline:

Nathan is tired of watching other kids receive awards at assembly so he hatches a plan to do something 'amazingly amazing' by breaking a record in the Amazing World Records book. With little planning but lots of daring, Nathan and his mates, Weasel and Ronnie, make numerous attempts at a variety of World Record feats: longest airborne jump by bicycle; holding one's breath underwater; cockroach eating; fastest furniture; and even fastest onion-eating. Each attempt is unsuccessful and quite frequently painful. Just as the boys are about to admit defeat, they discover that they indeed have broken a record – the most world record attempts in 48 hours! Part of the new Lightning Strikes series of books: short, fast-paced, humorous novels aimed at 9 to 14-year-olds who haven't yet been "struck" by the reading bug.

Author Information:

Meg McKinlay grew up in Bendigo, Victoria, in a book-loving, TV and car-free household. A poet as well as a children's writer, Meg developed an affinity with the Japanese language after going on an exchange year in high school, and went on to complete a PhD in Japanese Literature. Along the way, she has worked in a variety of jobs including, swim instructor, tour guide, translator and teacher. These days she lives with her family near the ocean in Fremantle, Western Australia, and is an Honorary Research Associate at the University of Western Australia where she has taught Australian Literature, Japanese, and Creative Writing. Meg divides her time between teaching and writing, a balance that swings wildly between chaos and calm. Her first children's novel, *Annabel, again*, was published in 2007 by Walker Books.

Notes prepared by:

Sue Whiting was a primary school teacher for 25 years before leaving teaching to pursue a career in publishing. Passionate about literacy education, she completed a Graduate Diploma in Reading Language Education (1988), trained as a Reading Recovery Teacher (1997) and taught as a Reading Recovery and STLA for several years. She is also a successful children's book author who has written over 30 books including picture books, non-fiction, chapter books and novels.

How to use these notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

Meg McKinlay's inspiration for writing *Going for Broke*:

"Growing up, I had a brother on each side of me; one older, one younger, and both crazy-daring in their own way. I spent a lot of time 'hooning around' the bush on my bike, trying to do jumps and tricks with them, and a lot of time eating dirt as a result. My older brother, in particular, was always interested in becoming famous for something, and I remember him poring over the *Guinness Book of Records*, trying to think of ways he could make it in there. He had grand plans to roll to Melbourne at one point, and used to practice on the road in front of our house, but my father stopped him before he was able to get very far. I still love watching kids crowd around *Guinness World Records* in the school library and listening to their grand plans for world domination. I was thinking about this during a school assembly one morning as I watched kids going up to receive merit awards for various worthy but generally unspectacular activities. I found myself wondering what my brothers would have made of all this. I pulled out my little notebook to start jotting down ideas and soon the story was on its way."

Talking and Listening Activities:

- What does the expression "going for broke" mean? How does this relate to the story? Why do you think the author chose this title? What other titles would be appropriate?
- Why did Nathan want to do something "amazingly amazing"? What was his motivation? Have you ever felt like this? Why/when?
- Why do you think that Nathan and his mates were unsuccessful in their world record attempts? What could they have done to improve their chances?
- In *Going for Broke*, the author has the boys reading *Amazing World Records*. Why didn't she just call it *Guinness World Records*? In what ways would this have made writing the book more difficult?
- What is the official process for attempting a *Guinness World Record*? Would Nathan really have been awarded a world record for doing what he did in *Going for Broke*? Does knowing this affect the way you read the story?
- When *Going for Broke* was being edited, the author changed some elements at the request of her publisher, to make the book 'less dangerous'. These days, there is often concern that young people will try and copy what they see in the media – in books or video games or on TV/film. What do you think about this? Have you ever been, or would you be, inspired to try something risky that you saw in a book or a movie? Who does the responsibility lie with – the writer or the reader, or both?
- Have a look at the *Guinness World Records* book. Are some of these activities risky? Is there a difference between reading about dangerous activities here and reading about them in a novel? What do you think is different, and why?
- There was a case recently where a children's writer was told she could not have a dragon who was breathing fire in her picture book because it was a risk to health and safety. What would the effect be if all potentially dangerous activities were removed from books? Think about some of your own recent reading and imagine how these stories would have to be rewritten or edited to make them perfectly safe.

Reading Activities

- Make a list of all the records mentioned in *Going for Broke*. Read through your list. Would you attempt any of those records yourself? Why or why not?
- Have a look at the *Guinness World Records* book and see if you can find any of the *Going for Broke* records in there. Are they all there? Which ones are missing? Of those which are there, are the details the same? What do you think the reasons are for any differences?
- Who are the main characters in *Going for Broke*? Make a list of the characters and then choose one word that best describes each character.
- As a class, discuss the plans and choose which records seem the most likely to succeed. Then choose the most likely to end in spectacular failure.
- If you were setting out to break a world record, what would your own criteria be for choosing (e.g. involves a bike, spectacular, no risk of injury etc.)? What are some issues that might limit the sort of records you could attempt – e.g. climate, location, access to resources etc? With these criteria in mind, look through *Guinness World Records* and write down a few records that appeal to you. In groups, choose one record and plan and design your attempt to break it. Consider what conditions and equipment you would need, who you would choose for your support crew and what their jobs would be. Draw a diagram and write a plan of action. Present your plan to the rest of the class.

**Writing Activities:**

- In chapter 3, the kids build a bike ramp. Read the description of how they make it and view the diagram. What are the main steps? Write a procedure on how Nathan and his mates made the ramp.
- The boys' record-breaking adventures make it into the local newspaper. The headline states: *Amazing Boys take on the World*. View other headlines and a variety of real newspaper reports. What makes a good newspaper report? Based on your knowledge of the story, write a newspaper report that would match the headline on page 91.
- Choose a record from the *Guinness World Records*. Imagine how Nathan and his mates would go about attempting this record. What would they need? Where would they get it? Where would they attempt the record? What jobs would each of the characters have? What could go wrong? Would they succeed? Why/why not? Write a narrative about Nathan and his mates attempting this record.

Cross-curricular Activities**Art Activities:**

- Look at the cover of *Going for Broke*. Using the template provided create your own skateboard design. Use the phrase "lightning strikes" as your inspiration.

**ICT Activities:**

- Visit Meg McKinlay's author website:
www.megmckinlay.com
www.walkerbooks.com.au
- Research Meg McKinlay and her other titles. Create a powerpoint presentation, including:
 - a biography
 - information on her previously published books
 - your own written review of *Going for Broke*
- Guinness World Records website:
www.guinnessworldrecords.com

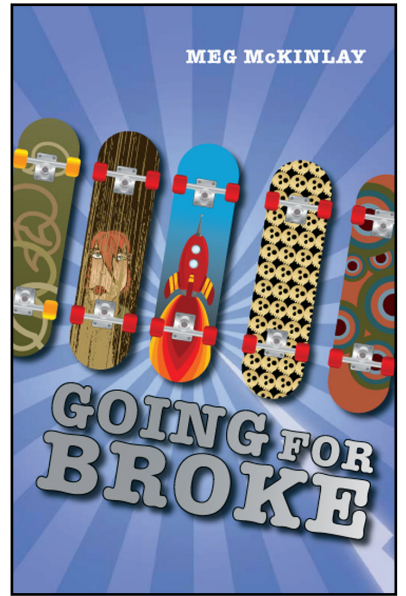
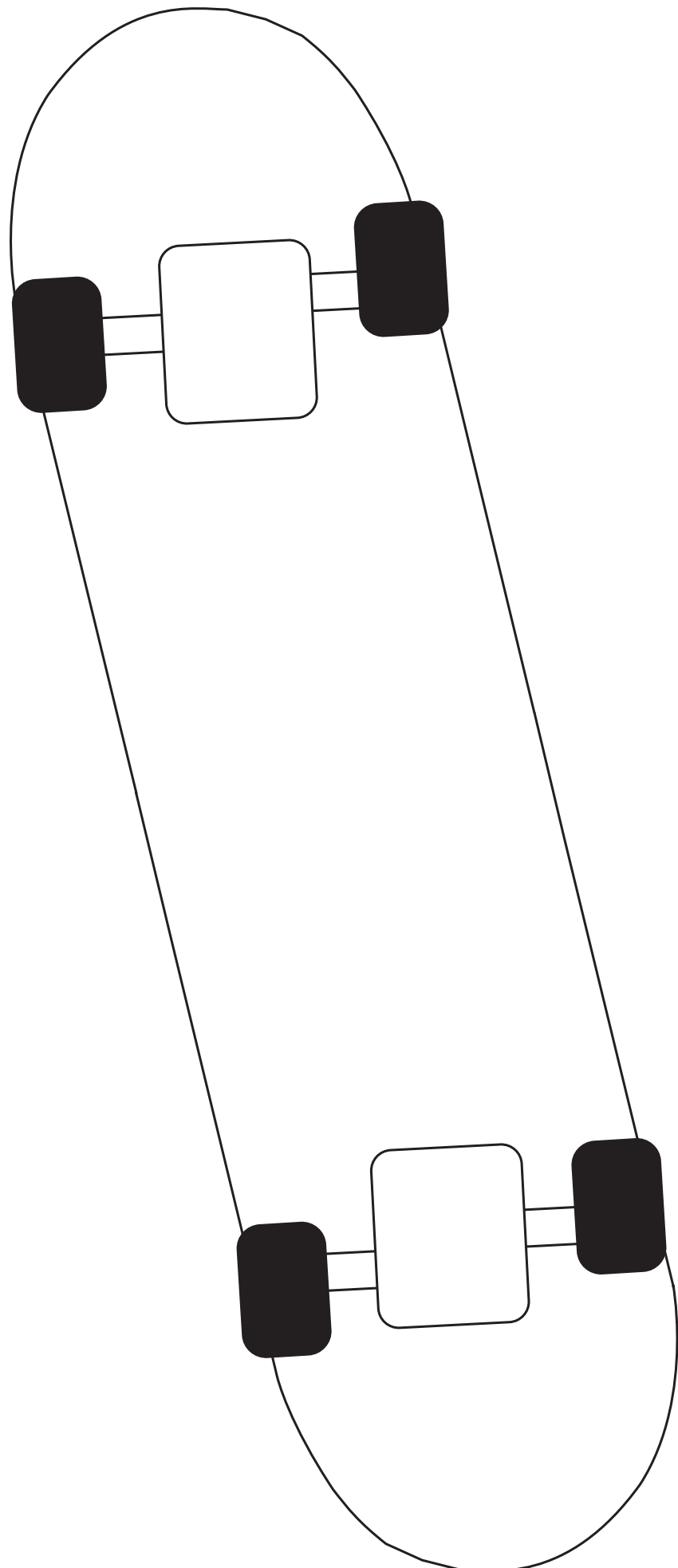
Other titles in the *Lightning Strikes* series

- Action-packed, plot driven reads
- Written by some of Australia & New Zealand's best known authors
- *Black Baron* by Robyn Opie
- *The Great Shave* by Clare Scott
- *Jinxed* by Jill McDougall
- *Queasy Rider* by James Roy
- *Sucked In* by John Parker



COMING JUNE 2008

- *Heart of Magic* by Penny Matthews
- *Oddball* by Janeen Brian



Create your own skateboard design using the phrase "lightning strikes" as your inspiration.