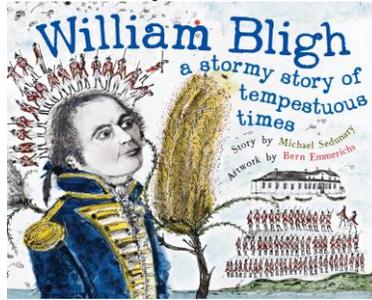


TEACHER NOTES FOR *William Bligh: a stormy story of tempestuous times*
Written by Michael Sedunary and artwork by Bern Emmerichs



Synopsis:

William Bligh: a stormy story of tempestuous times written by Michael Sedunary and artwork by Bern Emmerichs is the second book in a series of books from Berbay Publishing exploring first settlement history in Australia.

William Bligh: a stormy story of tempestuous times peels back the layers of some of the most incredible circumstances in Australia's colonial history. Some people may have heard of the famous Mutiny on the *Bounty*; others may have heard of the Rum Rebellion coup; but the details in and around these events are largely unknown and truly extraordinary. This is precisely what the latest book reveals. Beautifully written by Michael Sedunary and complemented by the stunning artwork of Australia's most prominent ceramic artist, Bern Emmerichs, this is an exceptional book.

THEMES

Evolving attitudes to authority and punishment.

The complexity of history and politics v Hollywood-style simplifications.

The complex motivations and behaviors of people.

Developments in travel, communications and technology over the centuries.

Evolving attitudes to social issues, e.g. childhood employment, slavery.

Factions, conspiracy, mutiny, rebellion...

AUTHOR MOTIVATION

The author was inspired by an interest in the first settlement of Australia and the desire to explore this in a historical narrative for children. He is particularly interested in having young people think about the nature of history and the connections they see between past events and life as they experience it in present-day Australia.

AUTHOR /ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND

Michael Sedunary - author

Michael is an experienced and successful author who shares his time between Melbourne and country Victoria. Over the past 30 years, Michael has written extensively for children on subjects ranging from Languages Other Than English to AFL football. While his overarching motivation has been educational, storytelling has always been central to whatever he writes.

Bern Emmerichs – Australian Artist

Bern Emmerichs is a highly celebrated artist in Australia. Her works are in the Australian National Gallery, the National Gallery of Victoria and collections all around the world.

Bern Emmerichs' stunning illustrations in *William Bligh: a stormy story of tempestuous times* have been created by using large hand-painted ceramic tiles, which remarkably involved each colour on each tile being individually fired, which have then been photographed and overlaid with the author's text.

Bern Emmerichs is renowned for her work, which explores historical narratives of Australia's First Settlement.

STUDY NOTES AND ACTIVITIES

The following are offered as discussion points and suggestions for further research to help young students deepen their involvement in this story and to form their own views about various aspects of it.

1

Let's imagine that Bennelong was there to watch the soldiers marching to Government House on 26 January 1808. What would he have been thinking about the first twenty years of white settlement in his country?

2

Did Mary Bligh do the right thing in standing up to the soldiers? What would you have done? What about her father – should he have stood up to them too?

3

Find out more about sugar plantations and slavery in the West Indies. Does slavery still exist today? In your country?

4

Find out more about Captain Cook's voyages in HMS Resolution. Did he ever go to Tahiti?

5

Find out some more detail about the size of HMS Bounty. How would it compare with the yachts that take part in the Sydney to Hobart race? How many crew do the racing yachts carry?

6

Find out more about boys like young Heywood and young Bligh joining the Royal Navy. Do you think it would be good for boys and girls to have those opportunities these days?

7

Why was the sailors' food salted or pickled and kept in barrels?

8

Get onto YouTube and see if you can find any sailors dancing a hornpipe. Would dancing have been good exercise on board?

9

What do you think was 'modern' about Bligh's attitude to onboard hygiene in 1787?

10

Which aspect of shipboard life would you have found the hardest to put up with: the dangerous seas; the cramped, unhygienic conditions; the poor rations; being out of touch with friends and family for so long...or something else?

11

Was Bligh entitled to order floggings with the cat-o'-nine-tails or is that cruel and unusual punishment in any period of history? Does corporal punishment still exist in your world?

12

See if you can find a DVD copy of one of the Bounty films and watch it with some friends. Do Hollywood movies still shape our attitudes to things?

13

Find and/or draw up a map and plot the Bounty's voyage from Portsmouth to Tahiti. That voyage took eleven months; how long would it take today to fly there from the UK?

14

Imagine you are one of the Bounty sailors 'trapped' on Tahiti for five months. Write a letter to your family back home describing your life in this tropical paradise. (Make sure they understand how different it is from life back home!)

15

If you had a member of the Bounty crew, would you have been one of the mutineers crying 'Huzzah for Tahiti' or one of the loyalists being lowered with Bligh into the launch. Why?

16

Imagine you are a witness for the prosecution or the defence at Bligh's court martial in 1790. What evidence will you give?

17

Find out more about what happened to Fletcher Christian and the other mutineers after they sailed the Bounty to Pitcairn Island.

18

Use your web browser to find a map plotting Bligh's voyage to Timor in the Bounty launch.

19

Find out more about John Macarthur and his pioneering of the sheep industry in Australia. Were members of Sydney society right to support Macarthur against Bligh?

20

What is a tyrant? Was Bligh a tyrannical governor?