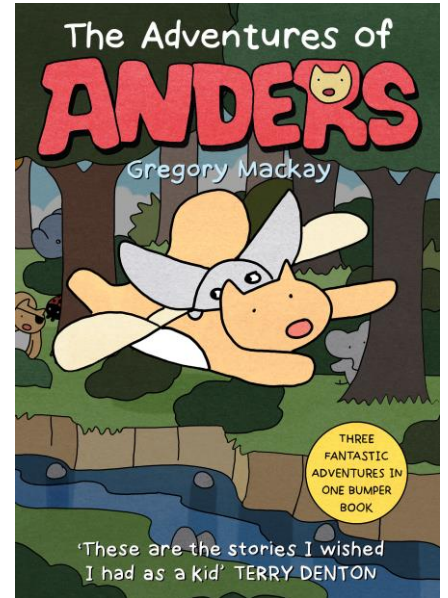


The Adventures of Anders

By Gregory Mackay

September 2019 ISBN 9781760632076
Paperback
Recommended for 6-11-year-olds



Summary

Anders, Bernie and Eden are best friends and are always on the lookout for new adventures. In these three exciting stories, discover an unknown comet, explore an extinct volcano and find your way through a castle maze.



'Each of [Gregory Mackay's] characters has their own story and represents a range of family types and backgrounds. The style of the images is uncluttered and gentle and would be accessible to a wide range of readers and reading abilities. Younger competent readers will enjoy the adventures told in the comic style, and older readers not ready for full novels will appreciate the different character journeys and the clarity of the text. Recommended for newly competent and mid-primary readers.'

— Claire Saxby, *Aussie Reviews*

Use in the curriculum

The Adventures of Anders contains three separate stories about Anders and his friends. They are notable for their gentle, sweet tone, achieved through both words and illustrations. The young characters are instantly engaging and reflect the concerns and behaviours of young readers. Their adventures are imaginative and satisfying, rather than frightening or action-packed.

The Adventures of Anders provides an excellent opportunity for students to discover and explore the graphic novel genre, and visual literacy, specifically the expression through pictures of themes, character, plot development, movement and sound. The discussion points and activities below introduce basic terminology of graphic novel and comic design.

From the Allen & Unwin website, the class can visit a video on how to draw Anders and then go to the Anders website maintained by the author. Find the links at the bottom of this page: <https://www.allenandunwin.com/browse/books/childrens/childrens-fiction/Anders-and-the-Comet-Anders-1-Gregory-Mackay-9781760111151>

Visit <https://www.allenandunwin.com/resources/for-teachers> for free downloadable teachers notes, reviews by teachers, extracts and more. And sign up to the Allen & Unwin e-newsletter to receive monthly updates on new resources!

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Themes

- friendship
- family
- school
- holidays
- imaginative play
- acceptance
- social inclusion

Discussion questions

1. Before reading *The Adventures of Anders* look at the cover and consider the book's title and illustrations.
 - What sort of story do you expect to read based on what you see here? Will it be real-life, funny or serious, a story with lots of exciting or dull things happening? What element or elements on the cover made you think that?
2. Turn to the page headed with the word *Contents* and explain why this page is here and how it is useful when looking for a particular story in the book.
3. Read page 5 of the book and with your finger trace the direction that you read the story. Did your finger trace a letter Z?
 - If it did that's good because that is how many graphic novels are meant to be read.
 - If it didn't, go back and see if you can re-read page 5 using the Z-shape. Did the story make more sense this time?
 - **For older students:** not all graphic novels are read left-to-right. Research the term *Manga* and explain how those books are meant to be read.
4. Sometimes sounds can be shown using visual techniques. One example of this is on page 21 where straight lines are radiating to the edge of the frame to show how loud the crack is when Anders breaks Eden's bow. Another example is the musical note coming out of the ice cream van on page 37.
 - See if you can find even more visual ways sounds are presented in *The Adventures of Anders*.
5. Artists can use lines and shapes to communicate other ideas in a story, too. Turn to page 262 and look at the lines that trail behind Anders and Veronica as they are flying on their beetles.
 - What do these lines tell us about the way they are flying?
 - Now look at the panel featuring the word BOUNCE. What do the lines and shapes here tell us about how fast Veronica is travelling?
 - Can you find other examples like this in the three stories?
6. *Onomatopoeia* is when words sound like their meanings – for example *boom*, *crash* or *bounce*. Graphic novels often feature lots of onomatopoeic words – and these are often handwritten in special lettering, so the word also *looks* like its meaning! There are lots of examples of this in *The Adventures of Anders*, so make a list of as many as you can find.



7. The term *panel* is used in graphic novels to describe each sequential image and its accompanying words. Panels are often similar in size but can be bigger or smaller at points as a special way to tell the story.
 - a. Turn to page 117-118 to see an example. Explain why you think the book's creator decided to follow the small panels on page 117 with one very large panel of Skip on page 118?
 - b. Can you find other examples of changing the size or shape of panels to help tell the story anywhere else in *The Adventures of Anders*?
8. Panels in comics are often, but not always, framed with a thin, black line. So, *frames* are the borders around panels. Frames can tell us quite a lot in graphic novels too. Most of the frames in this story are straight lines forming squares or rectangles, with rounded corners.
 - a. Turn to pages 106-110 and describe how the shape of the frames changes when Anders and Bernie imagine themselves on a comet looking back at the Earth. Why do you think Gregory Mackay decided to change the frames here?
 - b. Can you find other examples in the book where the frames change shape, and come up for reasons for this change?
9. A *gutter* is the blank space between panels in a graphic novel. This space is often, but not always, thin. Gutters may look simple but they do a very important job because they help us understand when time has passed and things have changed.
 - a. Turn to page 55 and look at the two images of Anders in the middle of the page. In one Anders is standing without his swimming gear and in the next panel he is fully kitted-out in snorkel, fins and floaties. What happened in the gutter between these two panels? In your imagination you pictured Anders unpacking the swimming gear and getting changed. The gutter made you, the reader, create some of the story that the book's creator left blank.
 - b. Can you find other examples of this occurring in *The Adventures of Anders*?
10. Have you heard of the saying 'an image is worth a thousand words'? Can you explain what you think this saying might mean?
 - a. Now turn to the panel on page 44 and explain in your own words everything that Anders, Bernie and Eden see when they climb to the top of the stairs.
11. **For older students:** Now that you know about panels, frames and gutters, try creating your own short story in a comic format. The story can be about anything you like but it should include simple text and feature at least six panels

Author's inspiration and work methods

'I wanted to write a book featuring some experiences I had as a boy. As well as having amazing adventures, Anders is an ordinary boy who is kind and good. The book borrows from my memories as well as allowing me to wonder what I would have done in certain scenarios. I'm motivated by trying to make good comics for kids, ones that have ordinariness, depth and adventure but also examples of positivity in challenging times.

'Making comics is a long process. First, I draw out the story in the form of little drawings of every page and all of the words. This becomes the thumbnail script. Then, after I have worked out how the story will go, I will start to draw the pages in pencil. I then take a lightbox and put some nice paper over the pencilled pages, I then trace over the pencil,

I have always been drawing comics. I drew my first comic in primary school and have been drawing ever since. I draw every day and feel a bit funny if I don't get to draw something. Growing up, I moved around a lot, so I saw many different schools and met lots of people. I went to university to study drawing. I carry my sketchbook wherever I go. I have a studio near my house which I ride my bicycle to every day. Most of the time I draw comics there, but I also paint and make scale models, too.

I love drawing mechanical things, making up cars and aeroplanes. I collect books, art, manuals for machines and comics books, of course! I also like painting, reading and playing computer games.

The author

Gregory Mackay has been making comics since school. He enjoys drawing and watercolour painting. He likes drawing aeroplanes and machines, as well as building models and painting pictures. Both *Anders and the Comet* and *Anders and the Volcano*, his first books for children, have also been published in France, and have been shortlisted for the Angouleme Festival, the most prestigious comics awards in Europe, acknowledging the best comics published across the world. *Anders and the Comet* was also the winner of Australia's Silver Ledger Award, and in 2018 Gregory undertook a six-month Australia Council for the Arts residency at the Keesing Studio at the Cite Internationale des Arts in Paris.

