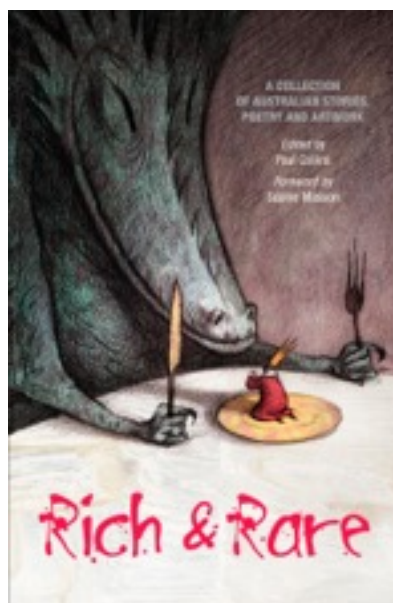


Rich and Rare – a collection of Australian stories, poetry, and artwork: edited by Paul Collins



Synopsis

An anthology can be compared to a patchwork quilt, sewn by many hands. Each piece in the patchwork is different: distinctive in texture, shape, pattern, and colour. Each piece, separately created, has its own individuality, is self-contained, and could exist on its own. This exceptional collection showcases work from many of Australia’s favourite writers and illustrators. It spans every genre from contemporary to historical, crime to fantasy, science fiction to romance, and everywhere in between. Contributors include: Shaun Tan, Justin D’Ath, Sofie Laguna, Kerry Greenwood, Bill Condon, and many others.

Stories can be used individually, to introduce particular themes or issues, or the anthology can be used as a whole to achieve the aims of the strands and sub-strands of the English curriculum. *Rich and Rare* also provides content for many cross-curriculum priorities.

About the editor

Paul Collins is the author of over 140 books, including fantasy series *The Jelindel Chronicles*, *The Quentaris Chronicles*, and most recently, in collaboration with Sean McMullen, an exciting new series called *The Warlock’s Child*. Paul has also edited many anthologies which include *Trust Me!*, *Trust Me Too*, *Metaworlds*, and Australia’s first fantasy anthology — *Dream Weavers*. He also edited *The MUP Encyclopaedia of Australian SF&F*.

Presenting *Rich and Rare*

What’s in a name?

- Have a class discussion about the cover of *Rich and Rare*.
What things stand out about it? How does it link to the title of the book? Why do you think this title was chosen?

Genre

The Australian Curriculum: English describes genre as ‘The categories into which texts are grouped. The term has a complex history within literary theory and is often used to distinguish texts on the basis of their subject matter (for example, detective fiction, romance, science fiction, fantasy fiction), form and structure (for example, poetry, novels, biography, short stories)’.

Knowledge of a range of different genres and their conventions allows for an understanding of how and why each genre appeals to its readers. It also provides a foundation for students to create and experiment with their own writing.

- Before reading *Rich and Rare*: What are some of the different genres? What are the conventions associated with these genres? How is grouping stories by genre (as is seen in *Rich and Rare*) helpful?
- What is meant by the terms realism and fantasy? Contemporary and historical? What other ‘pairs’ of genres or categories are there?

Genre is only one way of grouping stories together. What are some other ways that stories can be categorised?

- After reading *Rich and Rare*: What else do some of these stories have in common? Think about: location, time period, characters, point of view.

In the beginning

- Examine the various pages at the beginning of the book: imprint, title page, contents page. What information do we get from these pages? What is an ISBN? What does the copyright information mean? Who is the publisher? Why is this information important?
- What is a foreword? What is its purpose?
- In her foreword, what does Sophie Masson compare an anthology to? What literary devices does she use? Based on Sophie’s analogy what other things might an anthology be compared to?
- Identify parts of speech in this passage from the foreword:
‘A patchwork quilt sewn by many hands is a beautiful thing not despite but because it is made of distinctive pieces, created by different people. Together, those patchwork pieces don’t become homogenous or clash wildly. The smooth and the rough; the colourful and the quiet; the diamond and the square: they are not assimilated into each

other but form a harmonious whole of many different elements, fitting around each other to create a strikingly unusual and complex yet satisfying and simple thing.’

- What other words might have been used here to convey a similar meaning? Or to convey the opposite meaning?

Forms of texts

- What is an anthology? How is it different from a novel?
- What are the conventions of a short story? How are these conventions illustrated by the texts in *Rich and Rare*?
- Look closely at ‘A Writer’s Morning’ by Leigh Hobbs. How does this engage the audience? If this were just words on a page would it be effective? Why/why not? Investigate the conventions of graphic stories. What other types of stories rely on pictures more so, or to the same degree as, words? What are some examples of these?
- This anthology includes artwork as well as text. What elements from the text are presented in the artwork? How do they line up with the images that formed in your mind as you read? What do the illustrations contribute to the stories?
- What are the conventions of poetry? What is the difference between poetry and prose? What different types of poetry are there? Choose one of the three poems. Write a poem of your own using the same style.
- What different types of non-fiction writing are there (e.g. essay, article, report etc)? Are any of these included in *Rich and Rare*?

Language and structure

To aid in the creation of visual imagery the authors have used a variety of language techniques.

- Find examples of similes and metaphors in a ‘Darkness Visible’ by Ian Irvine. Rewrite them to create the same effect using different imagery.
- Choose passages from one or more stories, identifying different literary and grammatical devices used e.g. nouns, adjectives, verbs, hyperbole, personification, onomatopoeia. What is the effect created by each device?

Colour features significantly in many stories.

- How have different authors described colours? What literary or grammatical techniques have they used to ‘paint’ the colours in their stories?
- Create a table with the name of different stories in one column and the colours described or used in the text in another column. Using this table make a visual representation of colours in *Rich and Rare*. It might be a graph or chart or some other kind of graphic or even a representational illustration.

Focus: Language for interaction

Age, status, expertise, and familiarity influence the ways in which we interact with people, and these interactions influence the way people engage with ideas and respond to others.

One way of showing this in a text is through dialogue.

- Identify dialogue in three or more different stories. Who is speaking? Who are they speaking to? How is the language different in each of these conversations? Why do you think that is? What different ways do you speak to people in your life?
- What other ways have the different authors constructed interactions and exchanges between characters?

Focus: Narration

There are three types of narrative technique:

1. First person, where the point of view character (the voice telling the story) uses the word 'I'.
 2. Second person, where the point of view character addresses the audience directly and uses the word 'You'.
 3. Third person, where the author uses the words 'he', 'she', and 'it' to refer to the characters, including the point of view character. This type of narrator can be omniscient (all knowing like 'the eye of God') or can report events as they take place.
- Identify stories that use different types of narration. How do you know? Why do you think that the authors have chosen this method? Is it effective? Why?

Focus: Tense

Stories are usually written in past or present tense.

- What does this mean? How can the tense in a particular story be identified?
- Find an example of a story written in the past tense. Pick out some words that indicate this. How would you change these words to make the story present tense?

Context/setting

The Australian Curriculum: English defines context as 'The environment in which a text is responded to or created. Context can include the general social, historical, and cultural conditions in which a text is responded to and created (the context of culture) or the specific features of its immediate environment (context of situation). The term is also used to refer to the wording surrounding an unfamiliar word that a reader or listener uses to understand its meaning'.

- Consider the social, historical, and cultural context created or presented in one or more stories.
- What is the difference between context and setting?

- Find stories that are set in different time periods. How do you know?
- Identify stories that are set outside of Australia. What cultural differences are explored? How are these presented? What similarities or differences do you notice about different cultures? What values seem to be universal?

Creativity/imagination

- The lives and characters in books exist only on the page but authors often hint about what might have happened to them before. Choose one of the characters you have met, take what you have learnt about them and use it as a basis to write about something that happened to them before the events of the story.
- Choose a story or character that you had strong feelings about (either positive or negative), or that left you with unanswered questions. Use the end point of that story as the starting point for a story of your own. You may choose to introduce new characters to the same setting, follow the path of someone who was only mentioned briefly, or follow the journey of the story's central character.
- In 'Thingless' by Scot Gardner, the narrator says, 'Don't go to school today: come with me and learn the world' and then suggests ways that this can be done. What do you think is meant by this? If you had a day off school to 'learn the world' and could do anything, what would you do?
- Imagine that, like Garry in 'The Time Machine' by Sean McMullen, when you go to sleep you are transported to a different period in history. Research what it was like and write a report from the point of view of a time-travelling explorer. What do you observe? What do people wear? What do they do for work? In their spare time? What does the place look like? Is anything similar to what you know from your own time?
- In 'Hope Cannot Be Photographed', Sofie Laguna talks about hope and courage. What other things can you think of that fit into the category of something that you can see the results of but cannot be photographed? Write a poem or story about this.

Comprehension

Choose one story for close reading.

- What is the: genre; tense; narrative style; setting?
- Who are the characters?
- How does the opening draw you in?
- How does it develop?
- What is the climax?
- How is it resolved?
- Present the events of the story to the class in your own words.

- Write a review of it for an online book review site. Remember that an online review site can be accessed anywhere in the world, how can you make this story appeal to students outside of Australia?

Discussion

Use the stories in Rich and Rare as a starting point for a discussion on:

- death and loss
- suicide
- illness
- cyber safety
- gaming and technology
- social media
- bullying
- punishment
- body-shaming
- reality television
- revenge
- sibling rivalry
- authority
- relationships
- family
- materialism
- courage
- friendship
- class differences
- racism
- love
- imagination
- memory
- war
- genealogy
- recycling/conservation
- Ecology.

Research

Use a theme, idea, issue, or character from a story as the basis for starting a research project. Good stories for this task could be:

- ‘The Frog Diaries’ by Lorraine Marwood — predatory animals; amphibians, birds; ecology, conservation.
- ‘Lion Heart’ by Sandy Fussell — Africa; tribal traditions; hunting.
- ‘Angelito’ by Lucy Sussex — Mexico; the Day of the Dead.
- ‘The Soldier Who Fell From the Sky’ by Deborah Abela — World War II; Nazism; prisoners of war; military aircraft; air warfare.
- ‘The Boy to Beat Them All’ by Sue Bursztynski — Bushrangers; goldfields; Outback Australia.
- ‘Tomodachi – The Silkworm and the Leaf’ by Simon Higgins – Japan; samurai.

Further activities

- Choose one of the authors of a story that impacted you for any reason. What else are you able to find out about them? Have they written any other stories for anthologies? Any novels?
- All of the contributors to *Rich and Rare* are Australian. If you could choose one to come and visit your class, who would it be and why? Compose a letter to convince this person to make a visit to your school—who knows, it might happen!
NB: For more information on a contributor visit, or to make a booking, visit Creative Net at: <http://www.fordstreetpublishing.com/cnet/>
- In ‘The Greatest Cat That Ever Lived’ by Shaun Tan, Eva notices ‘lost’ posters for cats everywhere. If your pet was lost what other ways, apart from posters on lamp posts, can you think of to use to find them? Design a campaign for locating a lost pet. This could include posters, social media, door knocking, delivering flyers, spots on radio or TV. How would you do it? What would you say?
- In ‘You’re Dead, Jason Delaney!’ by Bill Condon, Jason mentions an idea he had to invent an app to make him disappear so that he can escape a bully. The science for that hasn’t been discovered yet but there are other ways that apps can be useful. In groups design an app to educate people about bullying.
- Find some passages from stories that you found funny. What techniques did the author use to convey humour? Is there a place for humour in stories that broach serious issues or themes?
- ‘Why use crappy little words, when you can use big, important words.’ (p73) What is your opinion on this statement made in ‘The Stray Dogs Café’ by Catherine Bateson?
- Sue Bursztynski tells us that ‘The Boy to Beat Them All’ is based on a true story. Can you find out anything about the real George? Which other stories in this book do you think could be based on facts? Do some research about something from Australia’s history. Use it as the basis for writing a short story about one of the people involved.
- Write an article for the local paper based on the details learnt from one of the stories. Good stories for this task could be:

- ‘Search’ by David Miller
- ‘Trapped’ by Jenny Mounfield
- ‘I Can’t Sleep’ by Tracey Hawkins.

Curriculum Links

The Australian Curriculum: English asserts in its Rationale that it ‘helps students to engage imaginatively and critically with literature to expand the scope of their experience.’ One of its Aims is to ensure that students ‘develop interest and skills in inquiring into the aesthetic aspects of texts, and develop an informed appreciation of literature.’ To facilitate this the Content Structure of English is built around the three interrelated strands being: Language — knowing about the English language; Literature — understanding, appreciating, responding to, analysing and creating literature; and Literacy — expanding the repertoire of English usage.

Rich and Rare is useful in exploring all of these elements in the curriculum. The broad range and depth of texts use many features of language, and can be used to explore vocabulary, parts of speech, and sentence structure as outlined in the ‘Language’ strand. The above activities focus especially on the ‘Language for interaction’ and ‘Expressing and developing ideas’ sub-strands. The content exposes students to variety of literary forms, and ways of expression, which inspires creativity and experimentation in their own writing.

Rich and Rare also encourages critical engagement with texts. It encourages discussion of literary experiences, sharing responses, and expressing a point of view. In addition, it invites debate on a variety of topics and issues. These issues create links to many other areas of the curriculum such as History, Geography, Sustainability, and Civics and Citizenship, amongst others.

Rich and Rare is aimed at readers aged 11+ so can be effectively used with Year 5 and above.