

TEACHERS' NOTES  
WE LIVE ON A BOAT

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## Synopsis

Ship ahoy! Get ready for the experience of a lifetime when an adventure-loving family sets sail on *Lucky Sea Legs*, a boat with a resident iguana. From deep dives in the spawning coral to surfing with dolphins and visiting exotic islands, the next destination is only a wind-gust away.

From the creator of *We Live in a Bus* comes this colourful, uplifting and warm story of a family who live for joy and wonder. It is a celebration of quality family time spent together in nature.

# Themes



FAMILY



SEA VOYAGES



OCEAN LIFE



ADVENTURE



NATURE



HOLIDAYS

## Writing style

Whimsical and playful, *We Live on a Boat* is a fun story about a family that decides to travel the ocean aboard their boat, *Lucky Sea Legs*. The standout illustrations do much of the storytelling, with rich colours and exquisite details providing a sensory smorgasbord. Complemented by a written text that is engaging and lyrical, this book will be read repeatedly, with the inclusion of onomatopoeia and alliteration mimicking the unique sounds of the voyage. Indeed, this glimpse into daily life at sea will give every young reader their sea legs. It is suitable for audiences aged 5+.



## Author motivation

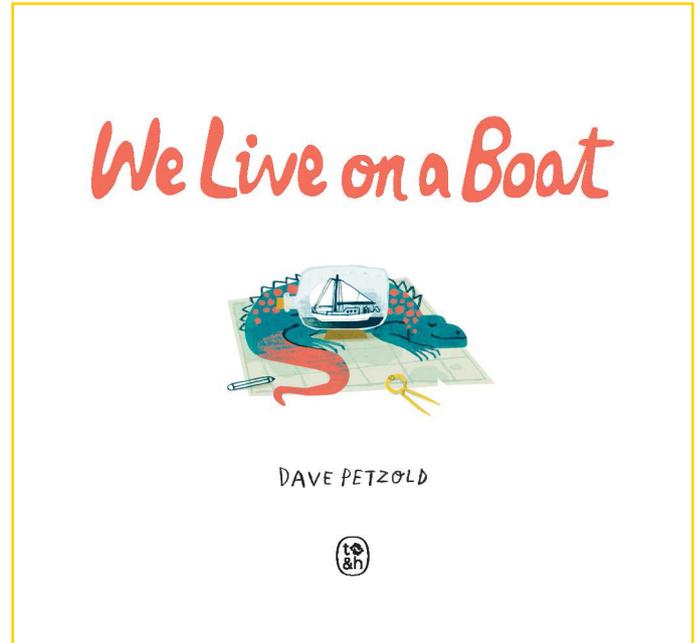
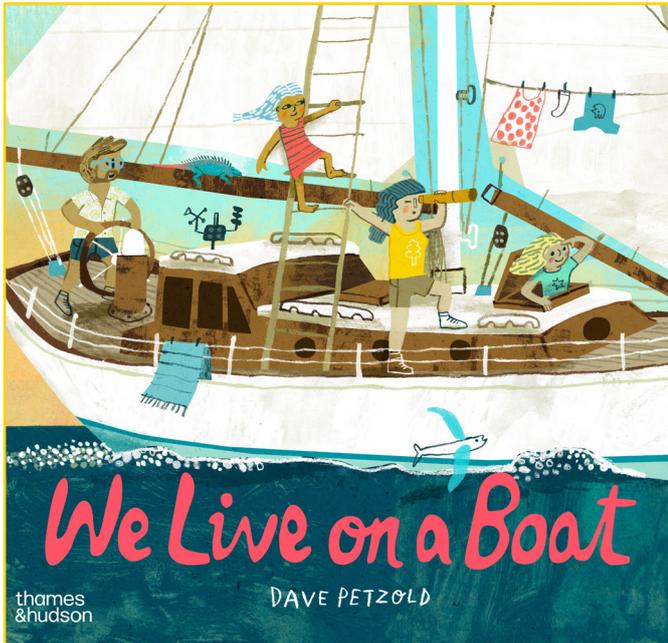
*We Live on a Boat* is the companion to my previous book, *We Live in a Bus*. As *We Live in a Bus* is a celebration of the land, *We Live on a Boat* explores the same themes of curiosity, adventure and connection and is, at its heart, a celebration of the ocean and all the creatures that live in and on it.

Most of the pages in the book take inspiration from a few occasions when I lived on boats and, although short, those times were overflowing with curiosity and wonder. I shared cramped galleys with fellow sailors and snorkelled with dwarf minke whales. On the Gulf of California I watched a fever of stingrays fly from the water, and I will never forget waking to the sound of whale song echoing through the boat while I was anchored in a crowded bay off the Mexican coast.

I use a mixture of traditional and digital techniques to create my illustrations. I work initially with graphite pencil, ink or oil paint to create the line work and textures, then I scan everything and assemble and colour it in Photoshop.

## Study notes

- Before reading, examine the cover, blurb and title page of *We Live on a Boat*. Have you been on a boat before? What might it be like to live on one? Make predictions about the text.



- Why has the family called their boat *Lucky Sea Legs*? What are 'sea legs'? What 'good things' have the family tumbled into thanks to their boat?
- In the page below, describe what is happening above and below the waterline. How does this illustration invite readers to explore 'all the way up' and 'all the way down'?



- As you read, take note of the onomatopoeia and alliteration used to help engage readers. What does each sound represent? Using these sounds, create a song or poem to retell the main storyline of *We Live on a Boat*:
  - *Kank-kank-kank-kank!*
  - *Crackle! Hissss!*
  - *Scratch! Scratch!*
  - *Shakaaaa!*
  - *Twang! Twang!*
  - *Click-click-click! Whoosh!*
  - *Flip-flap! Flip-flap!*
  - *Pip! Pop! Chirp!*
  - *Swoosh!*
  - *Bup-bom-bup-bom!*
  - *Ooowraaaaaeeeeeeeii!*
- See how many pages Salad the iguana is in. Choose some of these illustrations on which to base a series of recounts told from Salad's perspective.



- What have you learned about boats from reading *We Live on a Boat*? As you read, keep a list of boat-related vocabulary such as tender, anchor, jib and hatch. How does the family adapt their everyday pastimes, routines and chores to work within the space of the boat? Take the time to observe the intricate details in the illustrations.



- What new things do the family learn while living on their boat? In the role of the little girl, write a recount about learning to surf.



- Like the children in the family, learn some words in a new language. Alternatively, teach your friends some words in a language other than English that you know.
- In the page below, the little girl buys a ukulele while her family buys other supplies. Why do you think she chooses a ukulele? What would you buy? Why?



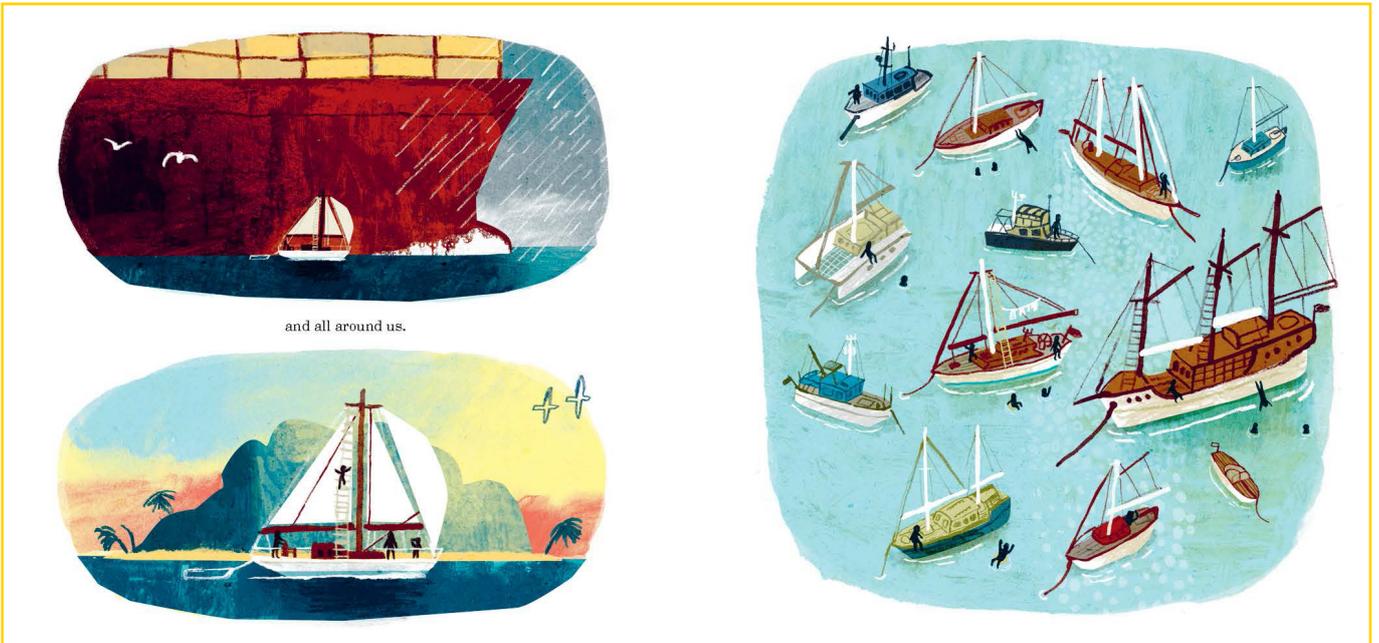
- When the family prepares to set sail, everyone helps with a range of jobs . What do you do to help your family at home or when going away on adventures?
- In the page below, baby turtles are hatching. Find out more about this process by watching the following clips:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-F6r10o6cpA>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPloBhwMXTU>



- With reference to the pages below, write a recount of what it might be like to snorkel with the seals and dive amongst the coral.



- Compare the three illustrations below. What would you see, hear and feel while looking up, down and all around? Complete a Y-Chart for each to share your ideas. As an extension, complete this task by visiting a suitable nature reserve in or near your school grounds.



- What is happening in the page below? How does meeting like-minded friends enrich the experience for all? Have you ever made new friends while away on holidays? Share in a reflection.



- In the role of one of the children, write a recount about lying in your bed aboard the boat as the whale song drifts in from the ocean.



- Create a diorama of one of the scenes from *We Live on a Boat* using repurposed materials. Alternatively, create a 'ship in a bottle' using dissected milk or soft drink bottles and hand-made miniature boats.
- Using the map outline below, create a story map to share the main events in *We Live on a Boat*.



- Choose some favourite pages and write a series of diary entries in the role of the main character of *We Live on a Boat*.
- Create a make-believe boat for the classroom from spare chairs, desks and repurposed materials. Use this boat for role play and freeze frames.
- Retell this story from the point of view of one of the other family members.
- Which is your favourite illustration in *We Live on a Boat*? Why is this your favourite? Share with a friend.
- Read *We Live in a Bus* as a companion text to *We Live on a Boat*. As an extension, brainstorm ideas for a picture book entitled *We Live on a Train*.
- Read *We Live in a Bus* and see if you can spot some details that the author has also included on *We Live on a Boat*. Do you have special objects you take with you when you are away from home? Draw a picture of one of your special objects and share with a partner.
  - [Answer: found mostly in the kids' bedroom and the galley – drawings, the pug picture, shells and the miniature bus itself.]
  - Bonus question: did you find out the names of both children?
- Choose one of the sea creatures featured in *We Live on a Boat* to research. Present your findings on an infographic or poster.
- Using *We Live on a Boat* as inspiration, create a water colour and crayon resist painting of a seascape. Make a display of the class's paintings. Visit Dave Petzold's website to explore his work for more inspiration:  
<https://davepetzold.com.au/work>

