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# Teachers' Notes

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## THE MAN WHO STOOD UP TO NED KELLY

Katrina Roe / Krista Brennan

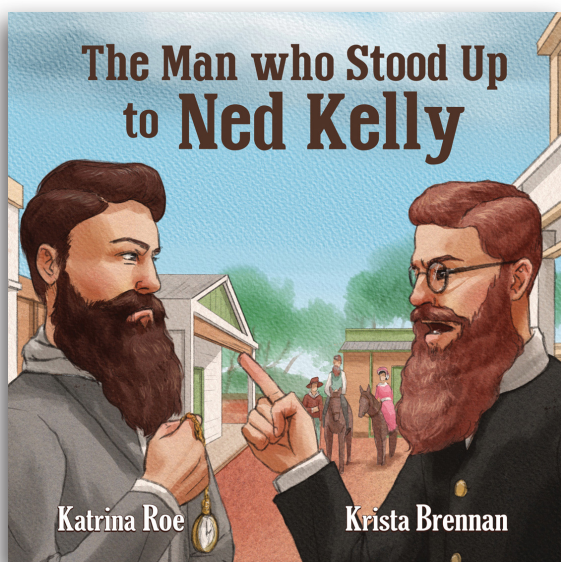
**ISBN:** 9781761112423

**Recommended retail:** \$24.99

**Reading level:** 9 - 12

### BOOK SUMMARY

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You know about Ned Kelly. Now meet the brave man who stood up to him.

In 1879, Australia's most notorious bushranger, Ned Kelly, and his gang took over the town of Jerilderie for three days.

They locked up the police, robbed the bank, took more than thirty people hostage and stole thousands of pounds.

But one man, John Gribble, insisted that Ned return what he'd stolen.

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## THEMES

Courage & Leadership • Moral Integrity • Community • Australian History

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**Katrina Roe is available for author talks and workshops.  
Contact Wombat Books for more information.**

*The Man Who Stood Up To Ned Kelly Teachers' Notes can be used in schools (independent learning, small groups, and whole classes); at home with caregivers; and as part of mental health support programs facilitated by counsellors, psychologists, children's charities, etc.*

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Katrina Roe is a children's author, book reviewer and media professional. Katrina writes inclusive stories that inspire kids to face real-life challenges with courage and kindness. Katrina worked in media for more than 25 years, was the long-term host of a morning radio show in Sydney and was the creator of two podcasts, *The Hope Book Club* and *Australia's Invisible History*. Her first picture book, *Marty's Nut-Free Party* was Shortlisted for the Speech Pathology Book of the Year while *Emily Eases Her Wheezes* was a CBCA Notable. In 2023, she won the Forevability Award for *Same*, and her middle grade manuscript, *The Stolen Bairn*, won the published author section of the CYA competition. It is being published by Riveted Press in 2026. In her day job, Katrina works in marketing for a large regional library service and occasionally fills in on ABC Saturday Breakfast. She writes on Wiradjuri Country in Wagga Wagga where she lives with her family, two chickens and a sock-stealing dog called Toby Trouble.

### AUTHOR NOTES

I grew up in a little town called Darlington Point on the Murrumbidgee River, not far from Jerilderie, where this story is set. When I was young, the town had a population of 650 people. We were a church-going family, and at the end of our pew there was a little plaque that read: 'In memory of John Gribble, founder of the mission and the Blackfellow's Friend'. I thought it was an odd inscription and wondered what it meant. Surely a friend is a good thing to be? But why did it use a word that we had been taught was 'bad'? In the 38 years my family lived in Darlington Point, I never heard much about John Gribble or found out why he was 'the black fellows' friend'. More than thirty years later, while working in Sydney media, I hosted and produced a podcast with my father-in-law, The Outback Historian, Dr Paul Roe. In the podcast, *Australia's Invisible History*, Paul told short ten-minute stories of people of faith who had made significant contributions to Australian society, but had been largely forgotten by modern Australia. Rev John Gribble was one of these people. Paul told me how he set up the Warangesda Mission in my home town of Darlington Point to create a safe place for Aboriginal people who were being driven off their land and exploited by white settlers. Paul told me about Gribble's lifelong effort to raise awareness about the mistreatment and marginalisation of Aboriginal people. He also told me about John Gribble's extraordinary encounter with Ned Kelly at the famous siege of Jerilderie. I wondered why I had never heard this story before and thought it would make a great picture book. My friend Shannon Smith is an Anglican minister and a direct descendant of those first Wiradjuri people who chose to come to Darlington Point from Jerilderie with John Gribble in 1880. The story of Gribble's encounter with Ned Kelly and of the watch that was stolen and returned has been passed down through their family for generations.

One of the reasons I like this story so much is Gribble shows us exactly how to stand up to a bully. He is polite and reasonable, he doesn't get mad, or use threats or force. He is firm and respectful to Kelly and Kelly is respectful in return. But most of all, I think he was incredibly brave, don't you? When Gribble asked for Minnie's horse to be returned, he wasn't asking for himself, but to help a young lady who was distressed. He was acting out of compassion for another person. To me, that makes him a hero.

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## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

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Krista is a freelance illustrator, fine artist and art teacher who lives in Sydney, Australia, with her partner and mischievous cat. She primarily uses traditional methods for her art, including watercolour, ink and oils. Krista's art has been featured in books, card games, exhibitions and competitions, but she enjoys using her pictures to tell stories most of all.

Krista's other books with Wombat include *Amira's Magpie*, *Once*, *Archie Appleby: The Terrible Case of the Creeps* and *Boots*.

If you would like to visit Krista online you can find her here:

<https://kristabrennan.com.au/>

### AUTHOR NOTES

When I first read the story, I was interested in this unknown character who had stood up to one of our most famous figures in Australian history. But what really caught my attention was reading about the work that John Gribble had done in the rest of his life, particularly advocating for and supporting the indigenous community at a time when a lot of other people didn't.

Before I started working on the illustrations properly, I had a few conversations with the editors at Wombat Books and the author, Katrina, about how we wanted things to look (realistic, cartoonish, playful etc) and decided on a style. Then I did a lot of research to find images of the main characters, as well as photos and illustrations of things from that time period - how people dressed, what police uniforms looked like, what buildings looked like, and so on.

When I'm illustrating books, I do a combination of traditional watercolour painting and digital inking/linework. It can take quite a long time to get things just right, because I do everything by hand and don't use any shortcuts like AI-generated images or templates. Sometimes the editors or the author ask for changes as well, which helps ensure that the images really enhance and reflect the story.

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## REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

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*The Man Who Stood Up To Ned Kelly* offers a fresh perspective on a well-known moment in Australian history, inviting students to explore stories beyond dominant narratives. By shifting the focus from Ned Kelly to the lesser-known figure of John Gribble, the text encourages students to consider how history is shaped by whose stories are told and whose are left out.

Through a simple but powerful encounter, the book explores themes of courage, moral integrity, and standing up for others. It provides a clear entry point for students to discuss what bravery can look like in everyday actions, particularly in moments that require calmness, empathy, and conviction rather than conflict.

As a picture book *The Man Who Stood Up To Ned Kelly* also supports visual literacy, prompting students to interpret how illustrations contribute to mood, characterisation, and meaning. The artwork draws on imagery and influences from the historical period, offering students a tangible connection to the past. The concise narrative makes it suitable for exploring how language choices convey tone and tension, and how historical events can be adapted for younger audiences.

Importantly, the story opens space for discussion rather than offering fixed answers. Students can consider different perspectives on historical figures and events, reflect on how reputations are formed, and explore the complexities of leadership and heroism in age-appropriate ways.

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## KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

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### YEAR FOUR

#### English

**AC9E4LA02** - identify the subjective language of opinion and feeling, and the objective language of factual reporting

**AC9E4LE02** - describe the effects of text structures and language features in literary texts when responding to and sharing opinions

**AC9E4LY02** -listen for key points and information to carry out tasks and contribute to discussions, acknowledging another opinion, linking a response to the topic, and sharing and extending ideas and information

**AC9E4LY05** - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning, to expand topic knowledge and ideas, and evaluate texts

#### HASS

**AC9HS4K02** - the causes of the establishment of the first British colony in Australia in 1788

### YEAR FIVE

#### English

**AC9E5LA02** - understand how to move beyond making bare assertions by taking account of differing ideas or opinions and authoritative sources

**AC9E5LA03** - describe how spoken, written and multimodal texts use language features and are typically organised

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into characteristic stages and phases, depending on purposes in texts

**AC9E5LE02** - present an opinion on a literary text using specific terms about literary devices, text structures and language features, and reflect on the viewpoints of others

**AC9E5LE03** - recognise that the point of view in a literary text influences how readers interpret and respond to events and characters

**AC9E5LY02** - use appropriate interaction skills including paraphrasing and questioning to clarify meaning, make connections to own experience, and present and justify an opinion or idea

**AC9E5LY05** - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning to evaluate information and ideas

**AC9E5LY06** - plan, create, edit and publish written and multimodal texts whose purposes may be imaginative, informative and persuasive, developing ideas using visual features, text structure appropriate to the topic and purpose, text connectives, expanded noun groups, specialist and technical vocabulary, and punctuation including dialogue punctuation

### HASS

**AC9HS5K03** - the role of a significant individual or group, including First Nations Australians and those who migrated to Australia, in the development of events in an Australian colony

**AC9HS5S03** - evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships

## YEAR SIX

### English

**AC9E6LA02** - understand the uses of objective and subjective language, and identify bias

**AC9E6LE05** - create and edit literary texts that adapt plot structure, characters, settings and/or ideas from texts students have experienced, and experiment with literary devices

**AC9E6LY02** - use interaction skills and awareness of formality when paraphrasing, questioning, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, and sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions

**AC9E6LY05** - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning, and to connect and compare content from a variety of sources

**AC9E6LY03** - analyse how text structures and language features work together to meet the purpose of a text, and engage and influence audiences

### HASS

**AC9HS6K02** - changes in Australia's political system and to Australian citizenship after Federation and throughout the 20th century that impacted First Nations Australians, migrants, women and children

**AC9HS6S03** - evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships

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## TEACHING POINTS AND ACTIVITIES

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This book may be used in whole class, small group or independent learning activities in schools.

Please note, the following suggestions and activities are suited to a variety of year levels spanning Foundation to Year 6 primary aged children. Some activities may be applicable to early secondary school students, as well.

## KNOWLEDGE AND LITERAL UNDERSTANDING

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### PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Based on the title *The Man Who Stood Up to Ned Kelly*, what do you think this story might be about?
2. Can you make any predictions about the story based on the cover art?
3. What do you already know about bushrangers or Ned Kelly?
4. The title focuses on “the man who stood up to” Ned Kelly. What does this suggest about the kind of person he might be?
5. Why do you think an author might choose to tell a story about a lesser-known person instead of a famous one?

### AFTER-READING QUESTIONS

1. What happened when John Gribble confronted Ned Kelly?
2. Why did Ned Kelly agree to return the horse and the watch?
3. What do these events show us about both men’s character?
4. How do you think things might have been different if one or more of the events hadn’t occurred as they did in the story?
5. At the time, why were a horse and a watch such valuable possessions?
6. What questions do you have about the timeline at the back of the book?

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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### GENERAL

1. Why do you think most people know about Ned Kelly but not John Gribble?
2. What does this tell us about whose stories are remembered in history?
3. Why do you think the author chose to focus on John Gribble's story?
4. Who is the hero of this story? Can there be more than one?
5. Some people consider Ned Kelly a hero. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
6. What message do you think the author is trying to convey?
7. How do the illustrations help show the difference between Gribble and Ned Kelly?
8. What colours, expressions, or details help create mood or tension?
9. What can you learn from the pictures that isn't said in the text?

### COURAGE & LEADERSHIP

1. Both John Gribble and Ned Kelly show bravery. How are their actions similar or different?
2. What kind of courage does Gribble show—physical, moral, or both?
3. Why might it have been dangerous for Gribble to stand up to Ned Kelly?
4. How is Gribble's courage different from Ned Kelly's courage?
5. What can we learn from Gribble about standing up for others?
6. Gribble was not a soldier, police officer, or judge; he was a minister. What does this suggest about who can have power?
7. How does Gribble challenge typical ideas about leadership and influence?
8. Do you think it is harder to stay calm or to act boldly in a dangerous situation? Why?
9. Can someone be brave without fighting? What does this story suggest?
10. What might Gribble have been feeling inside, even though he appeared calm?

### MORAL INTEGRITY

1. Gribble remains calm and respectful when speaking to Ned Kelly. Why is this important?
2. How might the situation have changed if he had acted with anger or fear?
3. What does this story teach us about doing what is right, even when it is difficult?
4. How does John Gribble show moral integrity in this story?
5. If Gribble had used threats or force, how would events have changed? Consider things like escalation and respect.
6. Do you think Ned Kelly shows any sense of right and wrong? What evidence supports your thinking?

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7. Can someone do both good and bad things? How does this apply to Ned Kelly?
  8. Why is it sometimes hard to stand up for what is right?
  9. What would you have done if you were in Gribble's position? Why?

## COMMUNITY

1. What does it mean to be part of a community?
2. How did John Gribble's actions help the people of Jerilderie?
3. Why was it important that someone spoke up for others during the siege?
4. Why did Gribble ask for the return of items that did not belong to him?
5. In what ways can communities be different from one another? Consider differences between Indigenous communities and settler communities at the time.
6. What might have happened to the townspeople if no one had spoken up?
7. How can one person's actions make a difference in a community?
8. Consider the statement: We have a responsibility to look out for others. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
9. How can we support our own communities in small but meaningful ways?

## AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

1. In what ways did Gribble stand up for Aboriginal people?
2. Why was this significant at the time?
3. How does this story challenge what you thought you knew about Australian history?
4. Before reading this book, what did you know about Ned Kelly? Did this story change your thinking?
5. Why do you think some historical figures become famous while others are forgotten?
6. Why has the author included a timeline of Gribble's life but not Ned Kelly's?
7. What does this suggest about the purpose of the book?
8. What does the timeline add to your understanding of Gribble's life?
9. How does this story show that history can be told from different perspectives?
10. What clues in the illustrations and text help you understand what life was like in the 1870s?
11. Why were items like a horse and a watch so important at the time?
12. Was there anything in the story that surprised you or made you want to learn more? What was it?
13. How do stories shape our interpretation of the past?
14. Whose voices might still be missing from history? Why is it important to find them?

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## ACTIVITIES

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### MAIN CHARACTER PROFILE

Write a description of a main character. What do their actions reveal about their personalities, values, and emotions? Use examples from the book.

### LETTER FROM GRIBBLE

During the Jerilderie siege, Ned Kelly attempted to publish his famous 'Jerilderie Letter' but was unable. Imagine John Gribble writing to his wife, family member, or a friend afterwards. Describe the events and reflect on his thoughts, feelings, and actions.

### JOURNALIST FOR A DAY

Newspaper reports are an important historical source for understanding the Jerilderie siege. Imagine you are a journalist arriving after the event. Who would you interview? What questions would you ask? Write a short interview transcript.

### JOURNALIST FOR A DAY

Rewrite part of the story from another point of view. You might choose a policeman locked in the cell, Mrs Devine, the horse Minnie, or a member of the Kelly gang. What might they be thinking and feeling? Does this change the way the story's told?

### EXPLORING GRIBBLE'S CHARACTER

How does John Gribble support and help others? Use examples to explain his actions and values. Why might Ned Kelly have agreed to return the horse and the watch? Consider his character and the situation.

### REWRITE THE ENDING

Imagine the story ended differently. What might have happened if Gribble had not intervened? Consider the possible outcomes for the townspeople, Minnie's owner, and others involved.

### ROLEPLAY ACTIVITY

In pairs, roleplay the moment when Gribble confronts Ned Kelly. You may follow the story or imagine what else could have been said. Focus on tone, language, and how each character responds.

### SOUND POEM

Create a sound poem inspired by a scene in the book. Think about the noises you might hear: horse hooves, footsteps, doors opening, wind, or voices. Use rhythm, repetition, and onomatopoeia to bring the scene to life through sound rather than description.

### TIMELINE COMPARISON

After researching and taking account of significant events in the lives of John Gribble and Ned Kelly consider what these moments reveal about them. How are their actions and choices similar or different?

### LIVING IN THE 1870S

Life was very different in the past. *The Man Who Stood Up to Ned Kelly* is set in the 1870s.

- i. Compare daily life then to life today. Think about homes, transport, communication, and technology. What has changed over time, and what has stayed the same?
- ii. A horse and a watch were essential items for everyday life back then. Think about what modern items serve a similar purpose today. What would happen if your family suddenly lost access to these items? How would daily life change?

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# WANTED: A TRUE HERO

WORKSHEET FOR  
YEAR 4 & 5

**Name:**

## THE CHALLENGE

Not all heroes wear armour... Design a WANTED poster for a true hero!

## YOUR TASK

Create a poster that shows what makes someone a real hero.

## HERO NAME

(It can be John Gribble, or create your own hero!)

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## HERO QUALITIES

List at least 4 qualities (e.g. brave, calm, fair, kind):

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## EVIDENCE FROM THE STORY

What did the hero do to show these qualities?

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## CATCHPHRASE OR MOTTO

What does your hero stand for?

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## ILLUSTRATION

Draw your hero in action! You can get a new piece of paper or draw it on the back of this one!

# GROUP CHAT FROM THE SIEGE

WORKSHEET FOR  
YEAR 5 & 6

Name:

## THE SITUATION

During the Jerilderie siege, Ned Kelly cut the telegraph wires so no one could send messages.

But imagine this...

You are inside the bank and you still have your phone!

## YOUR TASK

Create a **group chat conversation** between people involved in the siege.

Your chat should show what is happening, how people are feeling, and how they respond to the situation.

## STEP 1: CHOOSE YOUR CHARACTERS

Pick at least **3 people** to be in your group chat:

- A hostage
- A family member outside
- John Gribble
- A police officer
- A member of the Kelly gang
- Someone else: \_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 2: WRITE YOUR CHAT

Write at least **8-10 messages**.

Think about:

- What is happening in the moment
- How each person feels (scared, calm, angry, brave)
- How different characters might speak

## STEP 3: THINK ABOUT IT

How did your characters react differently to the situation?

Who showed the most courage? Why?

Did anyone try to stay calm like John Gribble? How?

## EXAMPLE STARTER

**HOSTAGE**

They've locked us in the bank

**JOHN GRIBBLE**

What?! Are you okay??

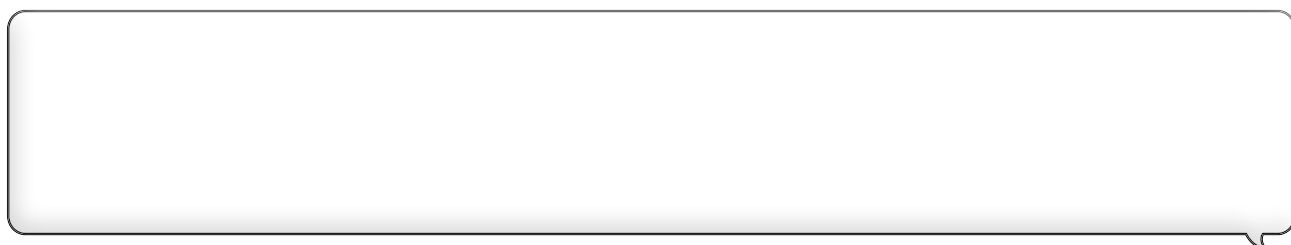
**HOSTAGE**

It's Ned Kelly... everyone's scared

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## THE SIEGE CHAT

You can choose to use this page as is or cut the bubbles out to change the order. You can use elements from the resource page to add some pizzazz if you like.



## FURTHER RESOURCES

