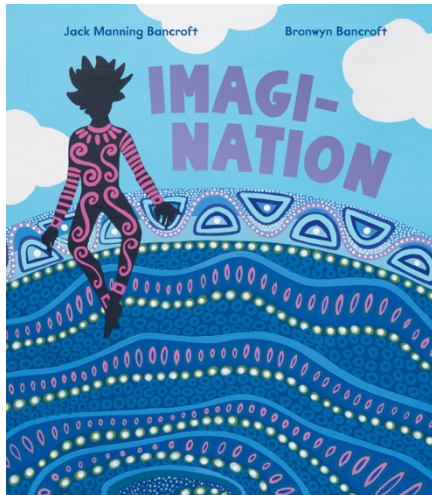


## Teacher's Notes



### *Imagi-Nation*

**Written by Jack Manning Bancroft**

**Illustrated by Bronwyn Bancroft**

**Teacher's Notes by Bec Kavanagh**

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### LEARNING OUTCOMES

#### RECOMMENDED FOR

Primary aged readers (ages 5+, grades prep-1)

#### KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: English
- General capabilities:
  - AC9E1LA07
  - AC9EFLE01
  - AC9E1LE01
  - AC9EFLE02
  - AC9E1LE02

### THEMES

- Creativity
- Imagination
- Dreams
- Meeting your potential

### SYNOPSIS

Welcome to Imagi-Nation, where everyone is welcome to play, to be free, and to connect with the earth. In this bright, playful book, mother-son duo, Bronwyn Bancroft and Jack Manning Bancroft explore a world led by creativity and connection, gently challenging some of the thinking that gets in the way of creating such a place, as well as prioritising the ideas of children. *Imagi-Nation* offers young readers the space to imagine the future they dream of and encourages them to have the confidence to follow their own dreams, no matter what others say.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

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**Jack Manning Bancroft** is the CEO and founder of AIME, an award-winning company that aims to create change and empower children and young people through the simple tool of mentoring. He founded the organisation in 2005 as a 19-year-old and has since grown its reach and impact all around the globe.

Born in Tenterfield, northern New South Wales, **Bronwyn Bancroft** is a descendant of the Djanbun clan of the Bundjalung nation. Bronwyn is a leading Indigenous artist, illustrator and art administrator whose work is held at the National Gallery of Australia, the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the Australian Museum. Bronwyn has illustrated several award-winning books for children and she has a long history of involvement in community activism.

## THEMES

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### Acceptance

One of the key themes of the book is acceptance – at first the people down below encourage the boy to come back, afraid that he might fall. They say things like ‘you belong here’, and don’t understand the kind of world he’s describing, writing him off as ‘just a boy’, only talking about ‘childish things’. But as they listen, the people start to see the potential in the boy’s ideas and accept that his different way of seeing the world doesn’t make him wrong. Invite students to share what acceptance means to them – do we have to agree in order to be accepting?

### Creativity

Another theme the book explores is creativity. How often do you limit your creativity with what you think you ‘can’ do rather than just letting yourself go and seeing what happens? Discuss why creativity is an important skill to practice.

## WRITING STYLE

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There is very little text in the book – ask students to consider why this might be. Think about the underlying message of the story, which is to see where imagination can take us – would a more wordy story have worked against this message? Why/why not?

Discuss inclusive and exclusive language, exploring the way the author uses words like ‘we’ and ‘you’ to explore themes like fitting in, or being seen as strange.

## COMPREHENSION

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- Whose hands do you think are reaching up towards the boy? Why do they want him to come down from where he is?
- What can he see from where he is?
- What is the boy’s dream? What stands in his way?



- Who can take away our freedom to think?
- What three words would you use to describe the illustrations? How do they make you feel?
- What does the boy tell people to listen to instead of the rules?
- How do the people change throughout the story? Describe what you see.
- What would you say to all of the people telling you to fit in if you were the boy?
- Who is welcome in Imagi-Nation?

## WRITING EXERCISE

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Think of a time when you've felt discouraged or been made to think that your ideas aren't possible. Imagine that you're the boy in the book. What do you think he would say to you? Write it down as a letter for yourself to read next time you feel this way.

## ILLUSTRATION STYLE

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Bronwyn Bancroft is a Bundjalung woman and artist whose work has contributed enormously to representation for First Nations storytellers. She is one of the founding members of Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative and has received multiple awards in recognition of her art and advocacy work. Her trademark illustrations bring together distinctive elements of traditional Indigenous Australian art with vibrant colours and a sense of play. Discuss these elements with students. Invite them to compare Bancroft's illustrations in this book with others from her website, or with more traditional paintings. What is similar? What is unique? Encourage students to explore the concept of 'Australian art' and to consider how these illustrations sit with their own ideas about what Australian art is or could be.

## CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

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- Draw a map of the place that you feel most creative. What is it about this place that makes you feel creative. Brainstorm a list of things you need to feel creative. Where do you feel least creative? How could you make this space a more creative space?
- What would your dream world look or feel like? Draw a picture or write a poem, a song, or a story that explores your dream future world.
- Imagine that you have just arrived in Imagi-Nation. Write a short story describing what you find there.
- What do you notice about the illustrations in the book? Discuss the artist's use of shape, colour, shade and texture. What catches your eye? What do you like? Use an element of the illustration to inspire your own painting of the person you might become if you stepped into this story.

## RELATED READING

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*The Art in Country*  
By Bronwyn Bancroft



*Dreamers*

By Ezekiel Kwaymullina and Sally Morgan

*In Your Dreams*

By Sally Morgan and Bronwyn Bancroft

*Beautiful Oops!*

Barney Saltzberg

