

**THE GIANT SCRUB PYTHON ACTIVITY 3 WHAT ARE THE FACTS?**

Ed Smith wants the facts about the python's whereabouts. Once suspicious, the boys give him false leads to protect the snake. And everyone seems to have an opinion on what to do with the python.

**FACT AND OPINION**

Try to sort the facts from the opinions.

Tick the right box.

- |   | FACT                     | OPINION                  |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Neighbour Jimmy Clarke was a lonely man.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. The swamp was a fish breeding ground.      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Crocodiles should be protected.            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. The boys put themselves in extreme danger. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Ed Smith was unable to drive his van away. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. The goat was a nuisance.                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Few people had sighted the giant python.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Davey was wrong to take his father's axe.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**TRUE OR FALSE**

Try to sort the truth from the false information.

Tick the right box.

- |  | FACT                     | OPINION                  |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. A track went through the swamp.                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. It was made by Sam's dad, Keith.                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Tommo had crab-pots in the swamp.                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Sam paid ten dollars for the goat.                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Ed Smith worked for the National Parks.           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. The boys retrieved the goat alive from the snake. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Tommo was the woodchop champion of the show.      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Ed Smith was taken by a crocodile.                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**THE GIANT SCRUB PYTHON ACTIVITY 2 MANGROVE VERBIAGE**

The way the author uses vocabulary enriches the story. She carefully chooses words to create the right images, to describe the action, to build up suspense and to portray character.

Find effective examples of her adjectives, verbs and adverbs.

**ADJECTIVES**

- ... *it (the sun) was blisteringly hot*
- ... *after making a feeble effort building their fort*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**VERBS**

- *They raced down, plunged into the creek...*
- *He strode off down the paddock.*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**ADVERBS**

- *"... I revertacked it," S an said flatly.*
- *He waited impatiently for D avey...*
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**THE GIANT SCRUB PYTHON ACTIVITY 1 PYTHON FACT FILE**

From available information resources, locate interesting basic facts about the python to complete the creature profile below.

If you cannot find specific reference to the Scrub Python, focus on such closely related species or alternative names as Swamp Python, Carpet Python, Water Python.

# PYTHON

**Animal Class :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Scientific Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Common Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Habitat:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Appearance:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Length:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Diet:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Predators:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Movement:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reproduction:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Behaviour:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Special Features:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Extension Activities

- The chapters in *The Giant Scrub Python* are numbered rather than titled. Write suitable inviting titles for each chapter.
- Ed Smith says he is *interested in the flora and fauna*. In clearly depicting the tropical locale of the story, the author mentions many plants and animals in the text. Skim the text to locate and categorise all the flora and fauna Ed Smith could have seen in the area.
- The text is also rich in its description of all the fun and activity at the Show. Either from the text or from personal experience, write a description of a day out at a typical country show.
- Woodchopping is one the more unusual competitive sports in Australia and New Zealand. And it has only featured in one other children's novel: *The Sky Between the Trees* by James Preston. To find out more about this exciting sport the New South Wales Axemen's Association has an *Introduction to Woodchopping* on their excellent website at: [www.nswaxemen.asn.au](http://www.nswaxemen.asn.au)
- The story is written in a very visual way that makes it easy to imagine the layout of the district with all its natural features and farms. On a section of newsprint roll (or similar large paper) produce an aerial view of the story's setting, illustrating and labelling all the various incidents.
- The schoolteacher, Mr. F.H. Watson, published an illustrated article about the boys encountering the giant python in *Wild Life* magazine. Using Microsoft Publisher or similar software, create that magazine page complete with imagined story and pictures.
- Write a character description of Ed Smith. Consider text description of his appearance, his activity, the way he talks.
- Write a letter to a newspaper arguing for the preservation of the swamp and mangroves. Firstly, check Tommo's opinion on page six.
- The novel is illustrated by David Cox, one of Australia's premier children's book illustrators. Do a library catalogue and/or Internet search to compile a list of other books he has illustrated. List the key bibliographic details for each book.

# THE GIANT SCRUB PYTHON

Grace MacDonald Baldwin

Illustrated by David Cox

Teachers' Notes by Kevin Steinberger

*The Giant Scrub Python* belongs to that great tradition of rural adventure stories where wily children follow their suspicions about impending criminal activity, are tenacious in their surveillance and climactically best the villain in exciting circumstances. What distinguishes this novel is its exotic far north Queensland tropical setting and an equally unusual focus on the traditional Agricultural Show and the allied sport of woodchopping.

Down in the mangroves, Davey and Sam stumble across a huge python. News of the sighting arouses unwelcome interest; a strange man in a van soon turns up, asking too many questions.

## Discussion

- Adventure stories such as *The Giant Scrub Python* follow a certain formula. What is that formula?
- As well as the plot following the familiar pattern of the crime adventure genre, there are stock characters. What are the stock characters in this novel?
- The climax is not the conclusion of the novel. Where, in fact, does the plot climax?
- Why is the digression to the district Show important to the development of the plot and the outcome of the novel?
- All villains get their comeuppance. Comment on Ed Smith's fate.
- How different are the boys' and fathers' response to Ed Smith?