

'Fantastic Mr Fox and The Law'



G.A.T.E.WAYS is an independent organisation offering challenging and enriching activities and experiences to develop and extend highly able children. This *JOURNEY* for both girls and boys will run over four sessions.

*Boggis, Bunce and Bean
One fat, one short, one lean
These horrible crooks...*

But these three farmers are not the *only* ones breaking the law in *Fantastic Mr Fox*. Digging underground tunnels without a permit, taking goods without permission, establishing a whole new society! Oh my! Mr Fox has some questions to answer as we dig into this classic story by Roald Dahl. We'll look at the motivations of the characters in the context of Australian law (which of their actions are justifiable and which are law breaking) and gain an understanding of how the legal system works, where it comes from and who makes the decisions.

This will be an engaging, quick-fire Journey which will captivate highly-able participants as their thinking is challenged. They will practise their public speaking as well as their acting skills as they take on diverse roles as characters from *Fantastic Mr Fox* and the legal system.

Session One: Boggis's Chicken House Number One

A fox's family has to eat, that much is clear. What is less clear is how that food should be obtained. Mr Fox decides that whatever he can get his paws on is fair game, but he certainly had alternatives to taking chickens from Boggis's Farm. What does it even mean to own property? In this first session we will be examining where laws come from and why they are important in our society. We'll take on the roles of the characters to argue our points. A case study of the recent changes to laws regarding "puppy farms" in Victoria will aid our understanding of the importance of community values.

Session Two: Doesn't this worry you just a tiny bit, Foxy?

Badger has second thoughts as Mr Fox enlists his help in stealing from all the farms. Who decides when a law is broken? What are the consequences? We will take statements today from suspects and witnesses to this underground theivery and write up reports for our legal case against the animals. Are you a "fit and proper person"? Do you act with deliberate intention in your mind? These are important phrases to understand and we'll put Farmer Bean in particular under the microscope.

Session Three: Dig for your lives! Dig! Dig! Dig!

The case of underground tunnelling will be heard in court today. Filling the roles of legal clerks, lawyers, jury, judge and other officials will keep us busy as we debate the issues. Do you have the right to dig under someone's land? What if you found a treasure there? Hopefully we won't dig ourselves deeper into this hole as we explore the *ad coelum* doctrine (that's Latin and is connected to the Outer Space Treaty of all things!)

Session Four: A Little Underground Village

At the end of the book Mr Fox establishes a new way of life for all the animals displaced by the farmers' attacks. He promises peace, safety and feasting to the Badger, Rabbit, Mole and Weasel families living together in their network of tunnels. This new community will require guidelines, legislation and rules for enforcement. We will form small committees to address issues such as sanitation, maintenance, health care and safety, drawing on the work from the last three weeks to bring law and order to a whole new world.

Requirements:

Bring an exercise book and a well-stocked pencil case. Also bring a stamped, self-addressed DL envelope for your report and a small, labelled photograph of yourself to Session 1. Each week bring a snack (no nut products please)

Students must read *Fantastic Mr Fox* by Roald Dahl before the start of this Journey

About the Presenter:

Rachel Holkner is a writer, an arguer and loves dreaming up new laws for when she rules the world. Drawing on her passion for children's literature she has designed many workshops which engage the critical and creative thinking skills of students. By use of a wild imagination, Rachel is keen to encourage others to look at the world in new ways.

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