

WHODUNNIT, EDDIE WOO?

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TEAM TROUBLE!

EDDIE WOO & DAVE HARTLEY

ILLUSTRATED BY MITCH VANE

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TIME OUT!

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Teachers' Notes



TIME OUT!

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TEAM TROUBLE!

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Notes by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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Introduction

Whodunnit, Eddie Woo? is a series which celebrates both sleuthing and maths! Young readers and teachers will enjoy the adventure and also relish the learning.

Eddie Woo Super Sleuth is ready for action and mystery. With a mind for maths and a nose for adventure, he is about to skateboard into ... danger.

Titles include:

1. Time Out!

A treasure hunt, a piano key, ciphers, a puzzle from the past ...

Eddie Woo and his best friends Rusty and DT must find clues, crack a musical mystery, scale a lighthouse, discover a secret cave and find long-forgotten gold. But they are not the only ones searching for it ...

2. Team Trouble!

A cryptic message, a coded menu, ciphers, skateboard spills ...

Eddie Woo and his best friends Rusty and DT are on a mission to save a friend's home, thwart the plans of evil smugglers and come first in the Triple Threat Quest.

This series has relevance to a number of Australian Curriculum areas:

Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/>>

Themes

Teamwork & Friendship

This series promotes the theme of teamwork and working with friends to achieve a result. It celebrates problem solving. Eddie the Super Sleuth and his trusty sidekicks, Rusty and DT, solve a mystery in each of these novels, and use their individual skills to achieve a result.

Discussion Point: How important is teamwork?

Each novel also canvasses a different theme:

Time Out!

Local & Community History

Key Quote: 'Eddie thought about how much he had learned about Red Hill since discovering the key at school. It was because of HJ they had a school, a National Park, a cathedral and a lighthouse.' (pp 134–5)

Discussion Point: This novel reveals the influence one generous citizen can have on a locality, and his legacy is also central to the mystery plot being explored. Discuss the influence of Henry James in the community of Red Hill.

Discussion Point: Invite students to explore their own local history and to uncover interesting characters in that history.

Discussion point: Research Australia in the mid-late 1800s, the era in which HJ would have lived, and discuss what interesting things you learned. How does this era compare to your own?

Discussion point: Research and compare other underground and hidden parts of a town or city like Red Hill's hidden mining tunnels. For example, in New York, London or Paris. What similarities and differences did you find?

Activity: Draw a map of Red Hill highlighting all the major landmarks that Eddie and his friends visit: the school, HJ's estate, museum, lighthouse, cathedral, waterfall, tunnels, etc. In addition, research the use of a map legend and include this in your drawing.

Team Trouble!

Environmental Issues

Key Quote: 'Bird lovers have made formal complaints to the Minister for Environment, saying that the planned coal seam site is the habitat of a critically endangered parrot. The complaints also accuse Blade Industries, owners of the proposed gas plant, of removing swift parrot nests and the birds themselves. Blade Industries have denied any knowledge of swift parrot sightings in the area and the removal of birds and nests.' (p 68)

Discussion Point: This novel juxtaposes community and environmental concerns and highlights how corporate entities can manipulate communities. Discuss this theme with students.

Discussion Point: Research critically endangered birds and animals and different ways people can help delay or prevent environmental destruction that puts them at risk.

English

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>>

Plot & Structure

1. The novels are structured chronologically.

Discussion Point: How might the novels have been structured differently?

2. The plot of a novel is generally in five parts: *Exposition* (introduction of the main characters and setting); *Rising Action* (one or more characters in crisis); *Climax* (turning point); *Falling Action* (resolution of characters' crisis); *Denouement* (resolution). These novels work as a series of narrative arcs, with small climaxes and then a major turning point.

Discussion Point and Activity: What were the key turning points in each story? Draw a narrative map or chart showing the key points at which the narratives rise, fall, and then rise again to this final turning point.

3. Narrative structure can consist of a range of internal devices, such as foreshadowing and backstory.

Discussion Point: What other structural elements of these novels did you observe when reading them?

4. Pacing, Tension and Suspense are integral to a novel's structure.

Each chapter begins with a tempting statement, or 'hook', for example, "I said hurry up," Matthew repeated, growing more impatient.' (*Time Out!* Ch 17, p 161)

'Eddie and Mr Woo had some explaining to do.' (*Team Trouble!* Ch 8, p 87)

Each chapter also ends with a cliffhanger, for example, 'This was definitely NOT a good sign.' (*Time Out!* Ch 2, p 15)

"Eddie, I'm about to send something through," she said, her voice uneasy. "You really need to see this.'" (*Team Trouble!* Ch 6, p 65)

Eddie makes a list of likely scenarios (*Team Trouble!* Ch 8, p 82) which also contributes to suspense

Activity: Consider the ways in which the pacing is determined by these structural exclamation points.

5. The events which make up the **plot** of a novel are designed by the writer to flesh out characters and themes.

Discussion Point: Which were the key events in terms of the themes of each novel? What were the key events which revealed the nature of each major character?

Characters

Action in this series revolves around several central characters and several minor ones.

Major Characters: *Time Out!* and *Team Trouble!* Eddie Woo; Rusty, Eddie's best friend and Super Sleuth sidekick; Daniel Travers (DT) another Super Sleuth and friend.

Activity: Discuss any of the three major characters and write a short description of them.

Minor Characters: *Time Out!* Eddie's mother; Mr Jasper, the Year 6 teacher; the new kid Arlo Smythe; Kyle (KC) Crabbe; Ned; Principal Huggett; Stan Whittaker, the clock repairer; Miss Hazel, the admin officer; Jasmine, DT's mother; Matthew Baird, manager of Henry James's estate; Ms Lynch, the music teacher; Richard, from the museum; Abigail Rose, who runs the B&B cottages at the lighthouse.

Minor Characters: *Team Trouble!* Mr Cranston, the cranky neighbour; Mr and Mrs Woo, Eddie's parents; Mr Norman Appleby, family friend; Steve, security guard at Sunny Side Aged Care Home; Teddy Singh, Ruby Tuesday and Kyle Crabb (KC), school competitors to Eddie and his sidekicks; Channel 5 helicopter pilot; Simon Selway, the Channel 5 reporter; Frankie Talford, the camerawoman; Frank Brozzo, the host of the Channel 5 dating show 'Kiss or Flick'; Jordan, an IT manager at Channel 5; Mick, a cameraman; Wayne Blade, the CEO of Blade Industries.

Activity: Select a quotation which describes any of the characters above, and identify the literary devices employed in it, for example:

Time Out! 'She always reminded Eddie of a drawing compass because she was thin and rakish, all straight lines and sharp edges. If she ever did live up to her name and hug him, he might cut himself.' (p 17)

Team Trouble! ‘Exploding from his place under the tree, he ran like an Olympic sprinter through the bush, the cool night of the air billowing from his mouth as steam. “HEY!” yelled a voice in the distance. The beam from a flashlight tried to lock on to Eddie, but he zipped in and out of trees like a bilby being chased by a wild dog.’ (p 84)

Discussion Point: Were there any ‘minor’ characters you would like to have seen feature more in the action? Might one character figure more prominently in a sequel?

Dialogue can also add to the characterisation established by a description.

Discussion Point: Time Out! Discuss the dialogue between Eddie, Rusty and DT (p 41). What does it reveal about each of them?

Discussion Point: Team Trouble! Discuss the dialogue conducted via text messaging (p 94). What does it reveal about each of them?

Genre

This series falls into the genre of **mystery, crime solving or sleuthing**. There are several common tropes of this genre employed in the plots:

Sidekick(s) to the main character Super Sleuth, for example:

Time Out! ‘It’s a well-known fact that every Super Sleuth needs a sidekick. Like Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson. Or Batman and Robin. Percy Jackson went one further by having two sidekicks: Annabeth Chase and Grover Underwood.’ (pp 3–4)

Team Trouble! ‘His two Super Sleuth sidekicks, Rusty Thompson and Daniel ‘DT’ Travers, were ahead of him. (Eddie loved even numbers so he reckoned two was a good number of sidekicks to have. And he was in legendary company: Harry Potter had Ron and Hermione, and Percy Jackson had Annabeth and Grover.)’ (p 3)

Clues are another trope of this genre, for example:

Time Out! Eddie discovers that the hand on the clock is a key which may relate to the inscription ‘Education opens doors’ (pp 25–6).

Team Trouble! Mr Appleby sends a paper plane to Eddie containing a cryptic clue written on a menu from Moon Sun’s Korean Restaurant (pp 22–3). Later he sends another mathematical clue or cipher on a handkerchief (p 92).

Further tropes include:

Time Out! *Invisible ink* (p 47); *Cryptography* (pp 48–9); *Crisis* (p 94); *Warning* (p 125); *List of Suspects* (p 126); *List of problems to overcome* (p 155); *Twist in the plot:* ‘Arlo had been trying to help them all along.’ (p 163)

Team Trouble! *Challenges*, e.g. The Triple Threat Quest (p 6); *Cryptic Codes* (Ch 4, and p 92); *Secret Missions* (Ch 6); *Testing Theories and Problem Solving* (p 82); *Dreams and Premonitions* (p 120); *Kidnapping* (p 163); *Capture of Culprit* (p 175).

Time Out! Suspects (p 126) *Discussion point:* Explore the suspects Eddie thinks might have sent him the warning note. At this point in the story, discuss reasons for and against each suspect. Why do you think Eddie did not consider Arlo a suspect?

Activity: What other tropes of the mystery, crime solving or sleuthing genre can you observe in these titles? [Study **Relevant Website Resources** on writing mysteries to prepare for this discussion.]

Discussion Point: **Time Out!** and **Team Trouble!** are also school stories since they are set in Red Hill Public School. Research the tropes of the school story and discuss the links with those used in this series.

Discussion Point: How would either of these novels translate as a movie or TV show?

Style & Use of Language

1. The **narrative voice** is third person subjective from Eddie Woo's point of view.

Activity: Choose a section in each of the two narratives and re-write it in first person. How does this change the narrative?

2. **Voice** is created by a range of devices including syntax, choice of words, literary devices such as metaphor and simile.

Activity: Choose and discuss some quotes from each of the novels which employ such devices.

3. **Literary devices and word play** are employed throughout the series, for example, alliteration in chapter titles such as:

Time Out! Ch 1 'Sidekicks and Skateboards' and Ch 2 'Sardine Sandwich'.

Team Trouble! Ch 10 'Ready to Rumble'.

Discussion Point: What other examples of word play did you notice in this series?

4. **Humour** is a device used in each novel.

Discussion Point: What examples of humour did you notice in this series?

5. **A vivid and convincing setting** depends on description which makes it visually come alive for the reader. This series is set in the suburbs but the super sleuth also ventures to other places, e.g. in **Time Out!** to the lighthouse and in **Team Trouble!** to Dubbo Zoo.

Activity: Choose a passage which really makes any of these places seem real to you and discuss why it works well.

Writing Exercises

1. **Write a short mystery story** employing tropes discussed above and using maths as a plot feature.
2. **Write an Acrostic Poem** using the letters in either title in this series.
3. Examine the **Blurb and Cover** of these novels. What insight into the contents do they offer? After reading the novels, design your own cover for one of them, and then write your own blurb.
4. **Write an argument for the affirmative or negative regarding one of the below statements** and then conduct a debate on the subject:

Time Out! ‘Eavesdropping was a very important part of super sleuthing.’ (pp 83–4) Is this a legitimate way to solve crimes?

Team Trouble! Eddie Woo and his sidekicks break the rules in order to follow the rules. Is this strategy acceptable?

5. **Write a synopsis for a third book** in this series.

Quotes for Discussion after Reading the Novels

Time Out!

1. “Books are lame,” said Kyle (KC) Crabbe. “They’re for old people who can’t use iPhones.” (p 10)
2. *‘Education opens doors – HCJ.* “HCJ,” said Eddie. “That must stand for Henry Cedric James. He was the founder of our school.” (p 22)
3. ‘Henry James funded or helped to fund lots of the buildings in Red Hill in the 1800s. He even set aside private land of his own to be used as protected land for plants and endangered species, like an early national park.’ (p 82)

Team Trouble!

1. ‘Maths is everywhere! You just have to know where to find it and how to use it!’ (p 9)
2. ‘They had always had a strong view on right and wrong, fair and unfair, just and unjust. And what Blade Industries were about to do to their friend’s home was wrong and unjust.’ (p 72)
3. ‘Okay. So you can’t be great at everything.’ (p 128)

Further Reading Ideas for Class Discussion

1. Re-read the novels and see if there were things you had not noticed in the first reading which become more significant having re-read them.
2. Read other junior fictions about mystery solving and compare to this series. [See **Further Reading.**]
3. Read mystery short stories to prepare students for the writing exercise above. [See **Further Reading.**]

Visual Arts

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>

Each of these books is illustrated in cartoon style. These images enhance and complement the humorous and lively text.

1. **Study the style** of Mitch Vane's illustrations. Discuss how the artwork is able to communicate different information to the text.
2. Design a new **cover** for one of the titles.
3. **Illustrate a scene** described in one of the novels.
4. **Create a comic panel** based on another incident in this series.
5. **Paint a portrait** of a character in the series.

Maths & STEM Activities

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/mathematics/>

Several Maths & STEM concepts are suggested in these novels. Eddie Woo, the writer of this series, is a renowned teacher and this series is full of such concepts.

See: Eddie Woo's Wootube where teachers can find a wide range of video lessons teaching mathematical concepts: <https://misterwootube.com/2020/03/18/lesson-videos/>

Maths activities are available here: <https://bit.ly/3yFCbF7>

Teachers can also download worksheets from Eddie's site here: <https://misterwootube.com/learning/worksheets/>

Research and conduct exercises based on any of the concepts suggested in these texts, for example:

Time Out!

Cracking Number Codes: "Maths can be pretty cool," said DT. "I mean, ciphers and codes are fun." (p 50) Explore the use of ciphers and conduct some simple code cracking exercises. See: 'What is Code Breaking and How Is It Used in Maths?' *Twinkl* February 10, 2022 <https://www.twinkl.com.au/blog/what-is-code-breaking-and-how-is-it-used-in-maths>

Team Trouble!

Traffic-Flow Theory. "It's traffic-flow theory, Dad," said Eddie. "Traffic jams are a result of speed, flow and the build-up of vehicles." (p 15) See: 'Fundamentals of Transportation/Traffic Flow' *Wikipedia* https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Fundamentals_of_Transportation/Traffic_Flow

Coordinates on a map (pp 40–2). See: 'Maps and Mapping' *Australian Government Geoscience Australia* <https://www.ga.gov.au/education/classroom-resources/spatial-geographic>

Pythagoras' Theorem. 'This time, it was KC who solved the $c = \sqrt{a^2 + b^2}$ problem based on Pythagoras' Theorem.' (p 114) See: 'Pythagoras Theorem' *Cuemaths* <https://www.cuemath.com/geometry/pythagoras-theorem/>

Further Ideas Using Technology

1. Research the authors and their other books.
2. Research the illustrator of this series.
3. Research online any of the topics or themes explored in this series.
4. Create a book trailer about this series.
5. Design a poster advertising this series.

Conclusion

The *Whodunnit, Eddie Woo?* series is a middle-grade reader's delight. It will introduce readers to the genre of solving mysteries. It will also encourage young readers to appreciate maths and its relevance to everyday situations. And the humour in the series makes it just as entertaining as it is informative.

Authors' Notes

EDDIE WOO is Australia's favourite maths teacher. His 'Wootube' channel on YouTube has amassed a following of more than 1 million subscribers and his videos have been viewed more than 100 million times. In 2018, Eddie was named Australia's Local Hero of the Year and shortlisted as one of the top ten teachers in the world. He is the presenter of the ABC series *Teenage Boss*, and the author of *Woo's Wonderful World of Maths*, and *Eddie Woo's Magical Maths 1 and 2*.

See Eddie Woo here: <<https://misterwootube.com/>> and on *YouTube*: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCq0EGvLTyy-LLT1oUSO_0FQ>

JESS BLACK is an award-winning author of more than 45 children's books, such as the *Tales of Mr Walker* series, the *Pepper Creek Ponies* series and the *Keeper of the Crystals* series. She is also the co-author of the hugely successful *Bindi Wildlife Adventure* series, the *Kaboom Kid* series and the *Animal Tales* series. Jess loves using humour and action in her stories.

See Jess Black here: <<https://www.jessblack.com.au/>>

DAVE HARTLEY lives on Kombumerri Country (the Gold Coast) with his wife and two adult daughters. A rugby league tragic, Dave enjoys writing about sport, rollicking outdoor adventures and loves reading ghost stories. His grown-up job is a primary school principal and Dave is passionate about lifting expectations for all kids regardless of ethnicity, disability or socio-economic background. Dave is a proud Barunggam man and paints Aboriginal art and plays didgeridoo in his down time.

Illustrator Notes

MITCH VANE has had a long career working as an illustrator and artist. She is interested in all forms of visual storytelling using a variety of mediums but is at her happiest drawing with a good old-fashioned dip pen and Indian ink. Mitch often collaborates with her partner Danny Katz – her cartoons appeared with his weekly humour column in *The Age* – and they have created many children's books together. Mitch illustrated a series of 12 Zodiac themed stamps for Australia Post and has created many children's books with publishers both in Australia and the U.S. She works from her studio at home in Melbourne, and does illustration workshops and appearances at libraries and schools throughout the year.

See Mitch Vane here: <<https://www.mitchvane.com/>>

Further Reading

Junior Fiction

- Grabenstein, Chris *Super Puzzletastic Mysteries: Short Stories for Young Sleuths from Mystery Writers of America* HarperCollins, 2021.
- Greenberg, Nicki *The Detective's Guide to Ocean Travel* Affirm Press, 2021.
- Griffith, Elly *A Girl Called Justice* (The Smuggler's Secret, Book 2) Hachette, 2020.
- Harvey, Jacqueline *Kensy & Max: Breaking News* (Kensy & Max, Book 1) Random House Australia, 2018.
- King, Jonathan *The Inkberg Enigma* Gecko Press, 2020.
- McDonald, Andrew and Wood, Ben *Real Pigeons Flex Feathers* (Real Pigeons, Book 7) Hardie Grant Children's Publishing, 2021.
- Rippin, Sally *The Complete Mystery Collection* Hardie Grant Children's Publishing, 2016.
- Siberry, Lisa *The Puzzling Pearls* (Plum & Woo Series, Book 1) Hardie Grant Children's Publishing, 2021.
- Spratt, R.A. *Shockingly Good Stories* Penguin Australia, 2021.
- Spratt, R.A. *The Pesky Kids 5: the Final Mission* Penguin Australia, 2020.
- Treml, Renee *Sherlock Bones and the Sea-Creature Feature* (Sherlock Bones, Book 2) Allen & Unwin, 2020.

Junior Non-Fiction

- De Klerk, Judith *Australian Maths Dictionary* Dorling Kindersley, 2016.
- How to Be Good at Math: The simplest-ever visual guide* Dorling Kindersley, 2016.
- Huggins-Cooper, Lynn and Baker, Laura, ill. Foster, Alex *Maths and Science for Curious Kids: a world of knowledge – from atoms to zoology!* Acturus Publishing Ltd, 2022.
- Lim, Rebecca *Eddie Woo: Superstar Maths Teacher* (Aussie STEM Stars) Wild Dingo Press, 2021.
- Macaulay, David *Mammoth Maths: The Big Ideas from the World of Numbers Worked Out by Mammoths* Dorling Kindersley, 2022.
- Reys, Robert and Anna Rogers, Leicha Bragg, Audrey Cooke, Melissa Fanshawe *Helping Children Learn Mathematics* 4th Edition. John Wiley & Sons, 2021.
- Spencer, Adam *Maths 101 The Curly Questions Your Primary School Kids Will Ask You (With the Answers!)* Hardie Grant Children's Publishing, 2021.
- Spencer, Adam *The Number Detective* Brio Books, 2018.
- Spencer, Adam *The Number Games: Numbers. Trivia., Puzzles. Fun!* Brio Books, 2018.
- Spencer, Adam *Adam Spencer's Mini-book of Numbers* Brio Books, 2019.
- Woo, Eddie *Eddie Woo's Wonderful World of Maths* Pan Macmillan Australia, 2018.
- Woo, Eddie *Eddie Woo's Magical Maths* Pan Macmillan Australia, 2019.
- Woo, Eddie *Eddie Woo's Magical Maths 2* Pan Macmillan Australia, 2020.

Relevant Website Resources

'English' *ABC Education*

<<https://www.abc.net.au/education/subjects-and-topics/english/>>

'Fundamentals of Transportation/Traffic Flow' *Wikipedia*

<https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Fundamentals_of_Transportation/Traffic_Flow>

'Maps and Mapping' *Australian Government Geoscience Australia*

<<https://www.ga.gov.au/education/classroom-resources/spatial-geographic>>

'Mystery Writing for Kids: a Case for Reading First' *Enjoy Teaching*

<<https://enjoy-teaching.com/mystery-writing-kids/>>

'Pythagoras Theorem' *Cuemath*

<<https://www.cuemath.com/geometry/pythagoras-theorem/>>

Spratt, R.A. 'Five tips for writing mystery stories for kids' *Australian Writers' Centre* September 26, 2020

<<https://www.writerscentre.com.au/blog/five-tips-for-writing-mystery-stories-for-kids/>>

'Story starters' *The Literacy Shed*

<<https://www.literacyshed.com/the-story-starter-shed.html>>

'25 Plot Twist Ideas and Prompts for Writers' *Writers' Digest*

<<https://www.writersdigest.com/be-inspired/plot-twist-ideas-and-prompts-for-writers>>

'What is Code Breaking and How Is It Used in Maths?' *Twinkl* February 10, 2022

<<https://www.twinkl.com.au/blog/what-is-code-breaking-and-how-is-it-used-in-maths>>

Whodunnit? 10-Week Unit Resource *Year 4 English*

<<https://whodunnitunit.weebly.com/>>