

## Teacher Notes for *A Man Called Possum*

**Create a mysterious character using real or imagined sources such as:**

- Interviews, newspaper reports, photos or other illustrations, maps, official documents, and letters.

**Make a time line of your own life:**

- Highlight the most important events.
- Select one of those times and tell or write it as fiction or non-fiction.
- Use dialogue, either remembered or invented.

**Explore the following themes:**

**Secrets.**

Write the dramatic story of the discovery and revealing of a secret.

Act the story in mime, then with words.

**Homes.**

- What did Possum's camps reveal about his character?
- What does your bedroom reveal about you and your past?
- Write what a detective might deduce by an examination of your room.
- Tell the real stories about some of your special possessions.

**Friendships.**

Consider this. Possum and Max were such opposites. Possum had no house, no family, no paid job, almost no belongings, no money, no TV or radio, and for many years no friend. Max had a job, family, home, money, friends.

Possum was a vagrant, Max was a detective. Possum was slightly built but strong. Max was big and tough. Possum was shy, Max loved lots of company.

- What are some of the opposite characteristics between you and your friends?
- Create the story of a new kid at school, and the beginning of an unlikely friendship of opposites.

**The environment.**

- Possum became famous for caring for animals, birds, and plants. He gave a little speech to Max about his love for the bush and its creatures.
- Imagine you are giving a speech on the environment to world leaders. Your speech is telecast live around the world. You have two minutes to speak. Write and give your speech.

**Narrow escapes.**

- Possum and Max had narrow escapes from death. Tell the story of one of your narrow escapes from injury or death.

**Survival.**

- Make a list of the things you would carry in a rucksack if you had to survive alone for a week in the outback.
- Describe the shelter you would build or use.

**Solitude.**

- You are a hermit, like Possum. An emergency forces you to spend a night with a family in their home. Tell the story of your feelings and what happens that night.

**Freedom and independence.**

- List the ten kinds of freedom you need. Number them in importance from 1-10.
- Tell the story of the events in your life that illustrate your need for one of those freedoms.
- In what ways was Possum a free person?
- Possum often refused help from others. He would rather go to jail than deny his belief about independence. Are there any beliefs you would defend, even if it meant punishment or prison?