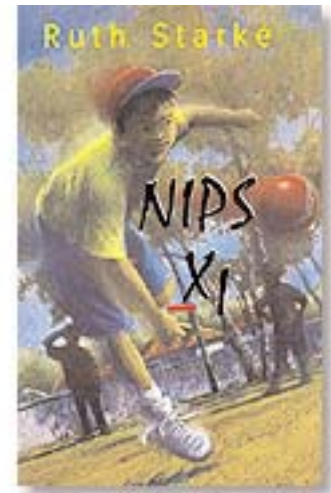




Overview

This very clever and amusing novel tells the story of Lan, a Vietnamese boy who longs to belong and be an Australian. His desire is not to be different. He hits on the idea of forming a team and playing cricket - that Australian of games - made up of boys who are ethnically diverse. The team is formed and they call themselves the 'Nips'. They get an elderly ex-Test cricketer to coach them. The keenness of the boys to do well and belong, and what they achieve for themselves and their families by being involved in cricket makes a heart-warming and humorous story that is fun to read but contains a great deal more. The novel will appeal to upper primary students who will enjoy reading it and find it funny. Older students at secondary level will appreciate the irony and humour on a different level.



Activities

- Write what multicultural week means for Mr Drummond. Write what it means for Lan.
- What is the BIG IDEA Lan comes up with? Explain Lan's BIG IDEA for multicultural week. How did it form and why?
- Where does the humour in the story come from? What makes the story amusing?
- Make a list of what everyone involved in the novel learns and how they grow from being involved in cricket.
- Comment on where the name of the team comes from. Is it appropriate?
- List the special customs of the different nationalities in this novel.
- Describe in detail the scene and what happened at the Illaba Cricket Club when the boys went to the try-outs.
- Do a character study of: each of the boys in the team and Grace, Mr Burridge, Mr Drummond, Mr Hussein, Spinner, Mr Ho, Lan's Ma and Dad.
- Discuss: images, appearances, expectations, misconceptions, prejudices, tolerance, change, growth.
- What is the reason each boy has for being involved in the Nips?
- Clarence McGinty is more of a mentor than a coach for the boys. What does Spinner teach the boys? What does Spinner get from the experience of being involved with the team?
- What has playing cricket done for the families and the community? Write about what everyone has gained.

- Cricket is no longer an Englishman's game. Discuss.
- You are the reporter sent to cover the cricket match between North Illaba Primary School and King's College. Write an article for your paper.
- Is King's College 'white and elitist'? Is cricket?
- Pretend you are a commentator sent to cover the match between North Illaba Primary School and King's College. In your lead up to the game give a background to the two schools and their students and then describe the game.
- Who won?
- Explain the significance of Spinner's comment, 'They played the game I taught them'.
- Mr Drummond would have said in his speech after the game: 'But it was a magnificent game. Both teams have upheld the highest traditions of Australian sportsmanship...'. Comment.