

RESOURCE KIT

Colin Goes Bush

by Sandy McKay

197 x 130mm, 158pp, paperback,
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Here we revisit the appealing Colin Kennedy (eco-warrior) and his zany family. (Colin first appeared in *Recycled* – winner of the 2002 NZ Post Award for junior fiction.)

There's Dad the lawn mowing business owner, Mum the real estate agent and Allie the beauty-conscious teenager. In this story Colin has a new involvement in the local 'Green Group' while he grapples with mounting anxieties about his Mum and Dad – are they heading for disaster?

Colin Goes Bush has brilliant flashes of McKay's trademark humour, quick character sketches and astute observations of family dynamics. The story clips along at a rapid rate with a deceptive casual ease. We're immediately drawn in to the realm of Green protests and Colin's bewilderment at how the world works.

A funny, laugh-aloud story.

Each chapter is introduced with a 'tree fact'.



RESOURCE KIT for use in schools

Contains:

Reading Comprehension

Creative Responses

- Writing • Visual

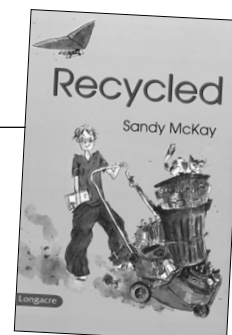
Research

Vocabulary

- Definitions • Words out of Words

Discussion Topics

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Sequel to the award-winning title *Recycled*

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Reading Comprehension

Chapter One:

1. What is Miss Dippy's theory about exercise?
2. What does Colin think is more important than a daily jog?
3. What is the answer Colin's mother seems to give for every problem he has?

Chapter Two:

4. What is "the white miracle" that Colin is referring to on page 14?
5. What is Colin's father's reaction to the latest purchase?

Chapter Three:

6. Why does Fern join Green Group?
7. What is the connection between Fern's father's job and her name?

Chapter Four:

8. Why won't Mum help Dad mend his jacket collar?
9. What does Colin end up planning to do for Work Day at school?

Chapter Five:

10. What 'trick of the trade' does Colin's mum try to use to sell the house Colin visits with her?
11. What surprises Colin about the Open Home?
12. Why doesn't Mrs Sheldon want to leave her house? So why is it on the market?
13. What does an eco-warrior do, according to Colin's explanation to Mrs Sheldon?

Chapter Six:

14. How does Colin help Mrs Sheldon to put off the potential buyers?
15. What does Colin forget to do?

Chapter Seven:

16. Why are the burnt muffins partly Mum's fault, too?
17. Colin discovers Dad's latest project when he gets home – what is it, and what former parts of the garden have disappeared?

Chapter Eight:

18. What arguments does Colin's dad give for having carrots instead of a front garden?
19. What does Mum do when she sees what has happened to the front lawn?
20. What does Mum win in this chapter, and what for?

Chapter Nine:

21. What is the Maori legend about the importance of rata flowers?
22. What can you tell about Ernie from the outside of Mrs Sheldon's house?
23. What is the newspaper story all about? Why is Mrs Sheldon concerned about the story?

Chapter Ten:

24. What scares Colin when he comes home to his father at the start of this chapter? What does Colin think has happened to him?
25. Why is dinner horrible that night?

Chapter Eleven:

26. Why is Colin in a bad mood even though Mrs Sheldon likes the look of her freshly mown lawns?
27. What protest action does Green Group decide on at the end of this chapter?

Chapter Twelve:

28. Why does Colin talk loudly on the bus when he is with Fern?
29. What makes Colin panic and run into the shop without looking?
30. What is Fern's first response to all of the anxiety that Colin has about his mum and his dad? Then what is her suggestion for a plan when Colin is still worried?

Chapter Thirteen:

31. What are all the steps Colin takes to make a romantic dinner for his mum and dad?
32. What is the first thing that goes wrong with the dinner? How do Colin's mum and dad make it even worse?

Chapter Fourteen:

33. Fern sees a good side to Colin's parents fighting. What is it?
34. What were the changes or the early warning signs that Fern noticed before her own parents divorced?
35. Colin thinks that he has spotted an early warning sign of his own at the end of this chapter. What is it?

Chapter Fifteen:

36. What qualities does Claire say Colin's star sign gives away about his personality?
37. What does Colin's mum think about Colin's personality?
38. What shock does Colin get at the end of this chapter? Why does he react so strongly?

Chapter Sixteen:

39. What do the members of Green Group use for their kiwi costumes?
40. Colin gets another shock in this chapter – this time about his dad and Claire. What is it?

Chapter Seventeen:

41. What happens when Col tries to tell his mother about the shock he had in the last chapter?
42. Mrs Sheldon thinks marriage is different now when she compares it to marriages when she was young. What are these differences?

Chapter Eighteen:

43. Why is Colin glad to be woken up at 4:30 in the morning?
44. What does Colin think his mother's motivation is for telling him and his father to take care of each other?
45. What is a skid site?

Chapter Nineteen:

46. Why does Colin's dad agree to be the one who is tied to a tree?
47. How does the man in the yellow hard hat react to the protestors?

Chapter Twenty:

48. What argument does the man with bony knees give for cutting down the trees?
49. What do the trees make Colin think about when he lies down and looks up into the sky with Mrs Sheldon, Fern, and Byron?
50. What is the debate that Byron, Fern and Colin have about the old versus the new?

Chapter Twenty One:

51. What do the forestry workers do when they come back from lunch?

Chapter Twenty Two:

52. What sound seems worse than Claire's screams and the noise of the chainsaw?
53. Why does Colin's dad rattle on to the pilot, chatting non-stop about nothing in particular?
54. Why have the protestors been seized from the skid site?

Chapter Twenty Three:

55. What stops Colin from worrying about his current situation?
56. What happens to all the protestors at the station?
57. What runs through Colin's mind when he sees his mother?

Chapter Twenty Four:

58. What does Colin have to thank Miss Dippy for after all?
59. What is the surprise Colin gets when he goes back to the group of family and friends?

Chapter Twenty Five:

60. Who finally tells Colin what his mum's news is?
61. What *is* her news?
62. Who does Suitman turn out to be, and what is his connection to Colin's mum?

Postcard section:

63. What news can we pick up from the postcards about Mrs Sheldon's house and tree?

Creative Responses

Writing:

Re-read pages 16–17, where Colin describes the animal qualities he thinks everyone in his family has. Write one or two paragraphs describing your own family in the same way, but using your own words and ideas. What animals are your mother, father, siblings and/or grandparents like? Or your aunts, uncles, cousins?

Imagine you are a police officer who has to write a profile on two of the people arrested for the protest on the West Coast. Write 200–500 words.

Imagine you are a newspaper reporter who has to interview Mrs Sheldon and Colin about why they got involved in the protest. Write up your article for your local newspaper.

Write your own protest song for a cause you feel strongly about.

Write a poem about some aspect of nature that you find inspiring – e.g. a favourite beach, bush walk, river, lake, mountain, range of hills, birds, animals, etc.

Plan a course of protest action for a conservation cause. Things you might want to think about are: leaflets to hand out to the public during your protest; what the protestors would wear; what ‘widly witty slogans’ you might put on the protest placards; where the protestors will stand; small street theatre pieces the protestors might perform; the speech that the spokesperson might give.

Imagine you are on your dream holiday. Write a postcard to your classmates about all the things you’ve been doing on your vacation.

Imagine that Sandy McKay is going to write another book about Colin. She will need a note about *Colin Goes Bush* to go at the start of the new novel. Help her write a summary of *Colin Goes Bush* to place as the first page of the sequel.

Visual:

Design a conservation poster encouraging people to protect a particular native species (e.g. rata, kiwi, frogs, skinks, albatross, penguins, etc.)

Design your own version of a cover for the book.

Imagine the novel is going to be turned into a stage play. Design the costumes and one or two stage sets for the theatre version.

Imagine the novel is going to be turned into a film. Design a movie poster to advertise it.

Design a flier for Green Group.

Research

Find out about the native ecology in your area. What animals or plants have their homes in your region?

Are there any conservation projects in your region or town? What particular aims do they have?

If you have a garden at home, spend some time looking around in it so that you can record as many different sorts of living forms as you can find it. Give brief descriptions of what they are doing, how they are behaving, or what they look like.

Using your library or the Internet, find out about one or two more Maori myths and legends. Summarise these in 300–500 words, and if you like, illustrate your report.

Vocabulary

Definitions:

- redundant
- boil (give more than one meaning for this word)
- commission
- wittering
- indigenous
- sarcastically
- initiative
- fiasco

- mitigating
- ignoramus
- infidelity
- mesmerised
- misconception

WOW!!! Words out of Words:

Use a stop watch, a clock alarm, or a five minute hour glass as a timer in the following game. Choose one of the words below. Set the timer, and before the time runs out, see how many new words you can make out of the letters in the word you have chosen. Use only the same number of letters in the original word: e.g. if there are only two “e”s in the original word, you can’t make a new word that needs more than two “e”s. Use the following point system:

- 2 letters: 0.5 point
- 3 letters: 1 point
- 4 letters: 2 points
- 5 letters: 3 points
- 6 letters: 4 points
- 7 letters and above: 5 points

Try playing this game for about twenty minutes.

- | | |
|-------------|------------------|
| internet | enthusiastic |
| poisoning | education |
| predicament | contemporary |
| rehydrate | environmentalist |
| verge | extracurricular |
| disturbed | mayonnaise |
| effective | radioactive |
| functioning | endangered |

Discussion Topics

1. Do you believe we all have a duty to do something about pollution and the destruction of native species? What might be some of the best things we could all do to help?
2. Is it up to kids to help out when their parents seem to be having a difficult time in their relationship?
3. Colin’s dad gets depressed when he loses his job. What might be some of the reasons he feels so sad?
4. Do your parents enjoy their jobs? What things do they like, what things do they dislike? When they have a bad day at work, how do you feel about it?
5. Do you think it is okay for parents to have separate friends from each other? Or should they always share all their friends?
6. On page 80, Fern gives Colin her ‘essential ingredients’ for a romantic dinner. If you were making a romantic dinner what ingredients would you use?
7. Miss Dippy makes the class go running. Do you think physical education should be compulsory in schools? Why/Why not?
8. What do you think is more important – taking care of planet earth or making lots of money? Is it possible to do both?
9. How many species of native trees can you name?
10. Do you think native trees should be protected? Why/Why not?
11. Do you think it was okay for Colin to ruin his mother’s ‘open home’?
12. Mrs Sheldon’s daughter wanted her to move into a pensioner flat. Do you think old people should ever have to move out of their houses?
13. The Green Group at Colin’s school was having trouble attracting new members. If you were the person in charge, how would you go about attracting new members?
14. Many environmental activists are willing to put themselves in danger for what they believe in. Is there an issue or a cause that you feel strongly about?
15. Do you think it’s okay to break a law or a rule that you think is wrong?
16. When Colin’s dad got made redundant from his job Colin’s mum became the breadwinner. Why do you think this caused tension in the family?