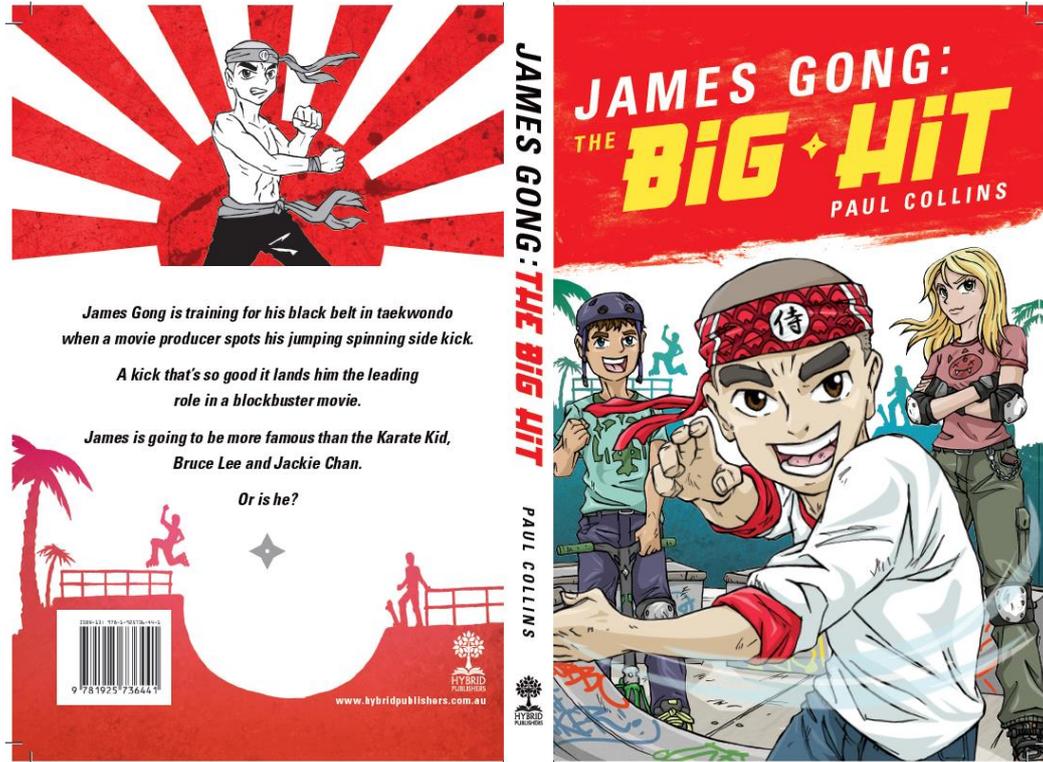


Teachers' Notes for *James Gong: The Big Hit* by Paul Collins



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Collins has written many books for younger readers. He is best known for his fantasy and science fiction titles: *The Jelindel Chronicles* and *The Quentaris Chronicles* – co-edited with Michael Pryor. He has also written *The World of Grrym* trilogy with Danny Willis. His trilogy *The Earthborn Wars* was published in the US by Tor. His last books was *Harry Kruise – Born to Lose*.

Paul has been short-listed for many awards and has won the Inaugural Peter McNamara, A Bertram Chandler, Aurealis and William Atheling awards.

Paul is also the publisher at Ford Street Publishing, a children's specialist publishing everything from picture books to young adult literature.

Paul has a black belt in both Ju Jitsu and Taekwondo and was a kick boxer trained by then Australian Heavyweight Champion, Dana Goodson. You will find much of Paul's martial arts experiences in this book.

Paul's websites are: www.paulcollins.com.au; www.fordstreetpublishing.com and www.quentaris.com

QUOTE

GOOD READING: *James Gong: The Big Hit* is an exciting book about martial arts and the shortcomings of fame. I definitely recommend (it) to all young readers – Emily Klein

SYNOPSIS

James Gong is a 14-year-old taekwondo enthusiast who is discovered by a movie producer in class one day. James' sister Caitlin is sceptical about his movie offer, but his friends are super impressed. James tries to use his new-found stardom to impress Caitlin's gorgeous best friend, Amber. After bragging about how he can skate as well as his character, James tries to learn to do all sorts of tricks so he can impress everyone at the skate park, called the vert. He is determined that the movie will be a big hit after being disappointed that he failed his black belt grading. A search for a leading lady for James to share his first screen kiss brings a surprise result. It's his good friend Jay, who he has never noticed before because of his infatuation with Amber.

In an effort to be helpful, James takes on the role of marketing unbeknownst to the producers. When the big day arrives, the movie turns out to be a low-budget production designed to be a tax write-off for the producers, Marcie and Win. The crowd loves the humour of the low-tech stunts, and the movie is a surprise hit with friends and critics alike.

In the final chapter it is revealed that Caitlin has been receiving treatment for leukaemia throughout, and we realise that some of James' behaviour has been a reaction to this. They finish up closer than ever.

ACTIVITIES

Questions to Ask

Before Reading:

- What do you think this book will be about? What makes you think that?
- Who are the characters on the front cover? Track your thinking about who they are as you read.
- Why do you think the book is called 'James Gong: The Big Hit'?
- Read the blurb and then predict the ending.

During Reading:

- Picture the main characters in your mind. What do they look like? Draw them and give evidence from the text to support your drawing.
- If anything happens to change your picture, discuss what made you think differently.
- What kind of a person is James? What makes him make the decisions he does?
- How does James feel about the movie? How do you know?
- Are you like any of the characters in the book? Do you know anyone who is like any of them? In what ways are they similar?

After Reading:

- What did you find that you did not expect when you started reading this book?
- How did your thinking about James, Jay, and Caitlin change over the course of the book? What made your thinking change?
- Did the last chapter surprise you? Was there anything in the text which hinted at this ending?
- Why do you think Marcie and Win acted like they did? What do you think happened to them after the book ended?
- How does script writing differ from novel writing? Writing a narrative scene using both script writing and novel writing techniques
- How would that look on a story board?

Discussion Points

- Chapter 1: Why has Paul Collins chosen to start the story this way? What have you learned about James Gong and his friends? What are you curious about? What do you predict?
- Chapter 2: What do we know about Caitlin now? What are we wondering? Can you relate to James and Caitlin's relationship?
- Chapter 3: What do Caitlin, Amber, and Jay think of James? Can you give evidence of their thoughts? What do you think of him?

- Chapter 4: Why do you think Paul Collins decided to make this chapter so short? What is its purpose?
- Chapter 5: Picture the scene in this chapter. What does it look like? What can you see? How does it feel? Would you want to go there?
- Chapter 6: Describe the obstacles which James faces in this chapter to becoming a movie star. What is helping him? What is blocking him? How can he overcome the blockers?
- Chapter 7: Picture this chapter in your head. Is this how you imagine Hollywood movies are made? What is the same? What is different? What are you wondering?
- Chapter 8: According to Alfred Hitchcock, to make a great movie, you need just three things: a great script, a great script and a great script. Have a 'reading' of the script part of this chapter. Do you think it's a great script? Why or why not?
- Chapter 9: If you were James, how would your feelings change as Marcie and Win didn't arrive, then rescheduled? What would you be thinking? Would you have any doubts?
- Chapter 10: James has been courageous through many scenes up to now: Why do you think he's so nervous about the love story?
- Chapter 11: What do James' coping strategies say about his character? How do you deal with disappointment? What are your coping strategies?
- Chapter 12: Marcie is acting 'super weird' and says James' movie posters look ... great. What do you think this means? What is Marcie thinking? What does James think Marcie is thinking?
- Chapter 13: What does James think that everyone is thinking about the movie? What do we *know* about how everyone else is thinking? What evidence is there?
- Chapter 14: At what point did you realise who the girl from the kiss was? How does this change what has happened previously for you? Were there hints?
- Chapter 15: What have we realised about Marcie and Win? Looking back through the book, what hints were there?
- Chapter 16: Did Caitlin's revelation about herself make you think differently about her? What has Caitlin and the rest of the family been going through while James has been becoming a movie star? Has this made you change your thinking on the courage shown in this movie?

Characters

- Choose a character from the book and sketch them. What evidence did you have to inform your sketch?
- The main characters all display courage in their own way. Discuss how they have shown this courage differently. What are their super powers that helped them to cope when things got tough?
- Draw a diagram explaining how the characters relationships connect them, for example, Jay has a friend relationship with James, an almost-foster-daughter relationship with James' mum, and a client relationship with Marcie and Win, among others. Add all of the characters to your web and describe their relationships.
- Choose a character and describe how their personality develops over the book. What does Paul Collins do to show that they are growing and learning?

Research

You may choose to research further on one of the following:

Taekwondo ♦ Inline skating ♦ Vert ramps ♦ Movie making ♦ Stunts in movies ♦ Special effects ♦ Types of leukaemia ♦ Casting in movies ♦ Korean language.

The Craft of Writing

Paul Collins used many writing traits throughout the book. How do these impact the way it is read? Explore and be inspired!



Curriculum Links

There are many links to be made to the Australian Curriculum (AC), especially the English Learning Area. The table below demonstrates some of the possible connections between the above learning activities and the curriculum from Years 4-8, allowing for both extension and literacy support groups using the same text. Differentiation is achieved by level of detail and evidence which is required by the students, allowing all students to work within their zone of proximal development.

Learning Activity	Year 4 AC Links	Year 5 AC Links	Year 6 AC Links	Year 7 AC Links	Year 8 AC Links
Questions to Ask	ACELT1603 ACELT1605 ACELY1692	ACELT1609 ACELY1702 ACELY1703	ACELT1613 ACELY1709 ACELY1713	ACELT1620 ACELY1722 ACELY1723	ACELT1627 ACELT1630 ACELT1807 ACELY1734
Discussion Points	ACELT1603 ACELT1605 ACELY1692	ACELT1609 ACELT1610 ACELY1702 ACELY1703	ACELT1613 ACELY1709 ACELY1713 ACELY1801	ACELA1763 ACELT1620 ACELT1621 ACELY1723	ACELT1627 ACELT1630 ACELT1807 ACELY1734
The Craft of Writing	ACELT1604 ACELT1605 ACELY1692 ACELY1694	ACELT1609 ACELT1610 ACELY1698 ACELY1701 ACELY1702 ACELY1703 ACELY1704	ACELT1613 ACELT1615 ACELY1713 ACELY1714 ACELY1801	ACELA1763 ACELA1764 ACELT1620 ACELT1621 ACELY1722 ACELY1723 ACELY1725	ACELA1543 ACELA1548 ACELT1630 ACELT1807 ACELY1734 ACELY1736
Characters	ACELT1604 ACELY1692 ACELY1694	ACELT1609 ACELT1610 ACELY1698 ACELY1702 ACELY1703 ACELY1704	ACELT1613 ACELY1713 ACELY1714 ACELY1801	ACELA1763 ACELT1620 ACELT1621 ACELY1722 ACELY1723 ACELY1725	ACELT1630 ACELY1734 ACELY1736
Research	ACELY1692 ACELY1694	ACELY1702 ACELY1703 ACELY1704	ACELY1713 ACELY1714	ACELY1722 ACELY1723 ACELY1725	ACELY1734 ACELY1736

Full descriptions of Australian Curriculum Links

Year Level	AC Link	Description
4	ACELT1603	Discuss literary experiences with others, sharing responses and expressing a point of view
4	ACELT1604	Use metalanguage to describe the effects of ideas, text structures and language features of literary texts
4	ACELT1605	Discuss how authors and illustrators make stories exciting, moving and absorbing and hold readers' interest by using various techniques, for example character development and plot tension
4	ACELY1692	Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning to expand content knowledge, integrating and linking ideas and analysing and evaluating texts
4	ACELY1694	Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts containing key information and supporting details for a widening range of audiences, demonstrating increasing control over text structures and language features
5	ACELT1609	Present a point of view about particular literary texts using appropriate metalanguage, and reflecting on the viewpoints of others
5	ACELT1610	Recognise that ideas in literary texts can be conveyed from different viewpoints, which can lead to different kinds of interpretations and responses
5	ACELY1698	Show how ideas and points of view in texts are conveyed through the use of vocabulary, including idiomatic expressions, objective and subjective language, and that these can change according to context

Year Level	AC Link	Description
5	ACELY1701	Identify and explain characteristic text structures and language features used in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to meet the purpose of the text
5	ACELY1702	Navigate and read texts for specific purposes applying appropriate text processing strategies, for example predicting and confirming, monitoring meaning, skimming and scanning
5	ACELY1703	Use comprehension strategies to analyse information, integrating and linking ideas from a variety of print and digital sources
5	ACELY1704	Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive print and multimodal texts, choosing text structures, language features, images and sound appropriate to purpose and audience
6	ACELT1613	Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts
6	ACELT1615	Identify and explain how choices in language, for example modality, emphasis, repetition and metaphor, influence personal response to different texts
6	ACELY1709	Participate in and contribute to discussions, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions
6	ACELY1713	Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse information and ideas, comparing content from a variety of textual sources including media and digital texts
6	ACELY1714	Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, choosing and experimenting with text structures, language features, images and digital resources appropriate to purpose and audience
6	ACELY1801	Analyse strategies authors use to influence readers
7	ACELA1763	Understand that the coherence of more complex texts relies on devices that signal text structure and guide readers, for example overviews, initial and concluding paragraphs and topic sentences, indexes or site maps or breadcrumb trails for online texts
7	ACELA1764	Analyse how point of view is generated in visual texts by means of choices, for example gaze, angle and social distance
7	ACELT1620	Reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others and justifying a point of view
7	ACELT1621	Compare the ways that language and images are used to create character, and to influence emotions and opinions in different types of texts
7	ACELY1722	Use prior knowledge and text processing strategies to interpret a range of types of texts
7	ACELY1723	Use comprehension strategies to interpret, analyse and synthesise ideas and information, critiquing ideas and issues from a variety of textual sources
7	ACELY1725	Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, selecting aspects of subject matter and particular language, visual, and audio features to convey information and ideas
8	ACELA1543	Analyse how the text structures and language features of persuasive texts, including media texts, vary according to the medium and mode of communication
8	ACELA1548	Investigate how visual and multimodal texts allude to or draw on other texts or images to enhance and layer meaning
8	ACELT1627	Share, reflect on, clarify and evaluate opinions and arguments about aspects of literary texts
8	ACELT1630	Identify and evaluate devices that create tone, for example humour, wordplay, innuendo and parody in poetry, humorous prose, drama or visual texts
8	ACELT1807	Recognise and explain differing viewpoints about the world, cultures, individual people and concerns represented in texts
8	ACELY1734	Use comprehension strategies to interpret and evaluate texts by reflecting on the validity of content and the credibility of sources, including finding evidence in the text for the author's point of view
8	ACELY1736	Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that raise issues, report events and advance opinions, using deliberate language and textual choices, and including digital elements as appropriate