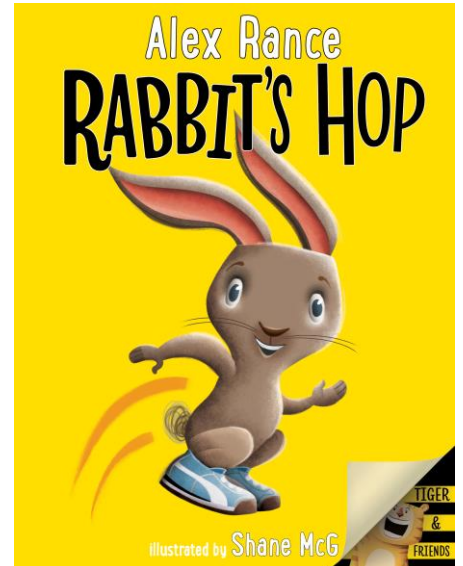


# Rabbit's Hop

By Alex Rance,  
illustrated by Shane McG

June 2019 ISBN 9781760524449  
Hardback picture book  
Recommended for 5-8-year-olds



## Summary

*Jack Rabbit loved Rabbit Island. He loved his friends and family and all the little rabbits. He loved being the best at hopping and chomping and (nearly the best) at zigzagging.*

But Jack Rabbit was restless. So, when his cousin Roo invites him to Big Island, he's very excited—and a little bit scared. Can he overcome all the challenges and get to Big Island and become the best Rabbit he can be?



A wonderfully entertaining picture book about self-belief, determination, being kind and having fun.

Featuring one of the key characters from the bestselling *Tiger's Roar*, *Rabbit's Hop* is Rabbit's 'origin story' - a celebration of recognising your strengths, being kind, encouraging others and enjoying friendships and sport.

## In the classroom

Teachers and students who follow AFL will recognise the author, Alex Rance, who is an AFL premiership player with the Richmond Tigers. The main character, Jack Rabbit, represents Alex's teammate Jack Riewoldt and the story is about Jack's journey from playing local footy in Tasmania (Rabbit Island) to coming across to the mainland (Big Island) and playing AFL football for the Richmond Tigers.

In addition to the English-based activities in these Teachers Tips, the book is obviously also relevant to the sport curriculum of schools.

<https://studiesinaustralia.com/Blog/about-australia/afl-for-beginners-a-guide-for-new-arrivals-to-australia> - contains some useful vocab items and a brief description and history of the game.

<https://play.afl/auskick>

## Themes

- AFL
- Richmond Tigers
- sport
- persistence and practice
- self-belief
- kindness

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## Message from Alex Rance

'Being a big kid at heart, I have always loved picture books and cartoons, hoping that one day I would be able to come up with my own story. I have an inventive and crazy mind that is often flying from idea to idea—trying to come up with a way to make the world an easier, more fun place to be.

'When we won the grand final in 2017, I had an amazing opportunity to tell a great story about why we became the best team in the competition. So, I thought the best way I could tell a story of triumph was through a child's eyes. Hoping that some core messages could help anyone travelling along the bumpy road of our lives.

'That story became *Tiger's Roar*. The Tiger symbolised the history of the Richmond football club. We once were a strong, bold and proud football club with a strong history of success. But we fell from our lofty place and couldn't find our way back ... until 2017.

'Rabbit was also in that book and now he has his own book! Rabbit symbolises Jack Riewoldt, one of the connectors of our team, who has amazing energy and care. The super springy shoes go without saying. Jack has a spectacular leap and it is his greatest strength on field.'

## Discussion questions and activities

1. Before opening *Rabbit's Hop*, look at the title and cover design. Discuss what students think the story might be about and the clues in the picture that make them think that. Ask questions such as:
  - Do you think this is going to be a funny or sad story? What makes you think that?
  - What do you think the rabbit on the cover is doing? Does the title help you guess?
  - Is he going to be friendly or scary in the story? Why do you think that?
  - What do you think the story is going to be about?
2. Read the story through once and after finishing close the book and ask students the following questions to help them explore the story's main themes:
  - In which skills was Jack Rabbit rated 'the best on Rabbit Island'?
  - What was he 'almost the best' at?
  - Why do you think Jack Rabbit was a bit scared of leaving Rabbit Island?
  - Who helped him leave the island?
  - How did he finally get to Big Island? [*zigzagged, did big hops, swam, rode a whale*]
  - Can you remember the advice that Jack Rabbit always gave the little rabbits?
  - Can you think of examples in the book where Jack Rabbit had to work hard, was kind and enjoyed himself?
3. Visual literacy:
  - a) Look at the picture of Jack Rabbit on the title page. How do we know that Jack is hopping? [*Two curved blue lines.*]  
  
Now look at the following pages and see how hopping is shown in the pictures. What do those different curved-line shapes tell us about each hop? Which is the craziest hopping in the story? Which is the best hop in the story?

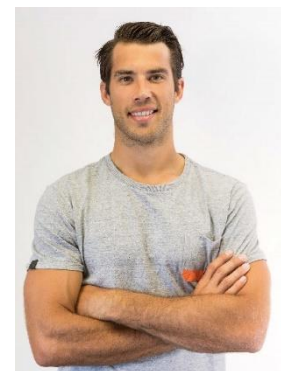
- b) Look at the picture on the page showing Jack at the Chomping Contest. What in the picture shows how *fast* he is chomping? On the next page, what in the picture shows how *hard* Jack tried to zigzag? [*Hands on knees to catch his breath, tongue out, sweat drops coming off him.*]
- c) Look at the double-page spread where Zigga encourages Jack to go to Big Island. What does their 'body language' say about how they are feeling? [*Zigga is smiling with her hand on Jack's shoulder in a supportive way; Jack's eye and mouth show doubtfulness and he is not standing as straight as he could be.*]
4. For AFL-loving students, point out that Alex Rance plays for the Richmond Tigers and that he says that this story is about his teammate, Jack Riewoldt. Does this make the story even more interesting when they know this? Why?
5. If the rabbit is a symbol for Jack Riewoldt and the tiger is a symbol for the Richmond AFL team, what do you think Rabbit Island and Big Island represent? [*Hint: Jack Riewoldt comes from Tasmania.*]
6. Read the letters to Jack on the last page. Elicit from students what words in the letters would make Jack feel good about himself.
7. Ask students to come up with ideas about what might happen next in Jack's story if it continued.
8. Based on how they think the story might continue, students can write letters from Jack replying to his friends on Rabbit Island and to his cousin Roo (representing Nick Riewoldt), who first suggested he come to Big Island. How will Jack describe what he's doing now? How will Jack's letters make his friends and cousin feel good about themselves?

*NB: the note from Tiger on the last page, about falling out of his tree, is a reference to the earlier picture book, *Tiger's Roar*, in which all the members of the team worked together to get Tiger back to the top of his tree. [i.e. win the 2017 AFL Grand Final.]*

## The author

A five-time All-Australian, Alex Rance was a key player in Richmond's drought-breaking 2017 AFL Premiership win.

Off-field, Rance looks to inspire the next generation to realise their dreams. He and two business partners started The Academy, a school for Year 11 and 12 students that is based on teaching real world skills and keeping students engaged in their schooling by following their passions.



## The illustrator



Shane McG is a Melbourne-based illustrator who writes and illustrates his own picture books as well as illustrating a wide range of books for other authors.

Shane has been drawing ever since he can remember. At school, he created his own comic strips and now he makes picture books and illustrations for people all around the world.