

I am a teacher in an Australian state government primary school; I teach in a grade 5/6 classroom, as well as teaching Japanese and being responsible for extension groups of gifted & talented children. I also run a LOTE Literacy project in both schools & have applied to be a marker for the NAPLAN writing tests for the second consecutive year this year. As such I have a significant interest in literacy; on a private level I have written (though not yet published) a number of children's books.

As a teacher (and parent) I believe that Australian children should learn about our culture, through a variety of means, as an Australian culture. We already have significant influence from other cultures, especially American, via the media, and we see American spellings creeping into our children's writing, American terminology, pronunciations and even gestures into their spoken language. If American versions of our literature are sold in our bookshops, are our children to start talking about 'ranches' and 'sidewalks'?

As an Australian citizen, I firmly believe that our children need to be brought up to be Australians; to know what that means and be proud of the things that are unique to us. Yes, of course we need to be global citizens too, but without losing our Australian-ness. Children are already saying 'zee' rather than 'zed' when they recite the alphabet, thanks to Sesame Street. How much Americanisation do we want?

We should not believe that children will be able to differentiate, & say to themselves that the vocabulary and spelling that they see in the books they read are American, and that they won't copy these. Of course they will; they will see it (especially in a book written by an Australian) as being a sign that these are acceptable words and spellings for them to use. They learn from the examples around them.

I also believe, as an avid reader as well as hopeful author, that we need to support our country's authors, especially the new ones just starting out, as well as our publishing industry. Our authors need to receive the full royalties from their work, regularly and on time, if their chosen profession is to be viable.

It would be an outrage if multi-national publishers and booksellers are allowed to feed their shareholders' greed at the expense of Australia's readers, which is the only outcome of this proposal. Books are bought because people love to read and they want their children to share the pleasure too - not because of a price tag.

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