

### Focus on cricket

- Imagine you are Mr Gillespie, the manager of the Stone Valley Saints. List 6 tasks you will have to undertake to ensure a smooth start to the cricket season.
- Now imagine you are Mr Dev, the coach of the Stone Valley Saints. List 6 tasks you will have to undertake to ensure a smooth start to the cricket season.

### Focus on language

- Cricket is a game with its own terminology. In your own words, explain what the following passages mean:

I bowled 4 overs and took 5 for 17 (p. 2)

He batted all through the innings (p. 3)

He was bowling leg-spin (p. 11)

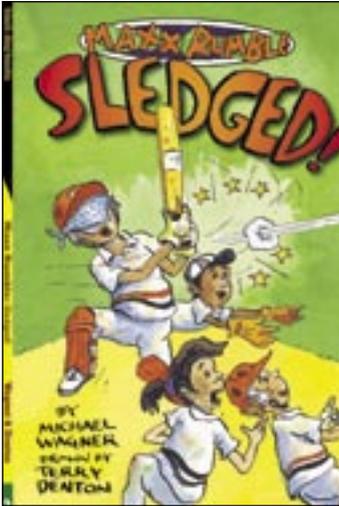
We only had 1 wicket left (p. 12)

Happy's bowling right arm over the wicket (p. 15)

I tried to sweep it (p. 17)

### Focus on life

- Maxx was RATTLED by the good bowling of Happy.
- Can you think of a time when you were RATTLED? What happened? How were you able to deal with the problem?
- Discuss the incident, and how you felt at the time, with a small group of friends. Listen to their stories too.
- As a group, select one of these incidents to perform for the rest of your class. Role play the incident and the way the problem was resolved.
- Seek feedback from your classmates about how effective your response was when you felt RATTLED.



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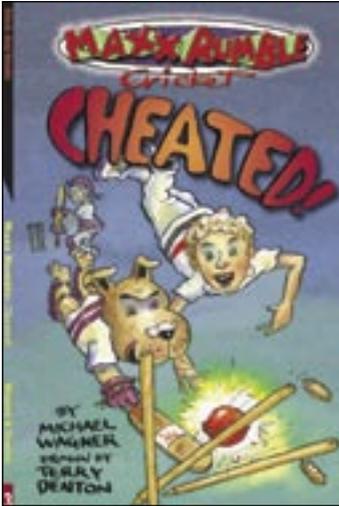
- Thelma 'Thrasher' Thatcher employed lots of tactics to put her opponents off.
- Imagine you are Mr Gillespie, the manager of the Stone Valley Saints. Write a letter of complaint to the President of the Cricket Association explaining some of Thrasher's antics and requesting that a decision should be made as to whether or not she should be allowed to play like that in future.

### Focus on language

- Read the description on page 23, where Thrasher behaves like first a seagull, then a pigeon as she bowls.
- Imagine Thrasher bowled an entire 6-ball over by imitating a different animal's actions and noises every delivery.
- In a similar humorous style to that of the author, write a ball-by-ball description of the over.

### Focus on life

- Maxx had to use a blindfold to avoid distraction and allow him to concentrate on the job he had to do.
- Imagine you have got a very important task to perform, such as make a speech or memorise a shopping list.
- List six different tips for improving your concentration.



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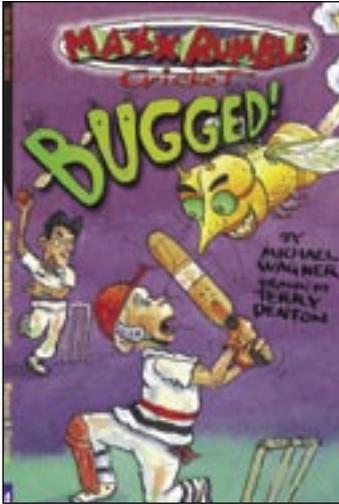
- Maxx thinks he is being CHEATED by the Outhouse Rodents. He thinks the umpire, Mr Nuffin, should have been stricter with his opponents.
- Write a brief explanation of an umpire's role in a game of cricket. Then list six different ways which a cricket umpire might prevent a player or team from cheating.

### Focus on language

- In Chapter 1, Mr Nuffin tosses the coin with the two captains. The conversation that takes place between Mr Nuffin, Boofa and Maxx is highlighted by quotation marks. Bold text, capital letters and exclamation marks are also used to help the reader imagine the ways in which the characters spoke.
- Draw a series of cartoons to illustrate what happened when the coin was tossed (or another part of the story, if you prefer). Use speech bubbles, quotation marks, bold text, capitals and exclamation marks, just as the author has.

### Focus on life

- Maxx was asked to help out his opponents when they were one player short.
- Is this a reasonable request?
- Think of the advantages and disadvantages of helping out someone else when it might have an adverse effect on you. Then prepare and deliver a short speech to your class explaining how you feel about this.



### Focus on cricket

- Maxx and his team had to overcome some difficult problems to win the match against the Kreepy Crawlies. In sport, it is not uncommon for one player or team to fight back and overcome adversity before winning a match.
- Scan the sports pages of a newspaper to find a report of a similar courageous comeback. Read the relevant passages out to other members of your group and explain to them the similarities with what happened in this story.

### Focus on language

- Imagine you are a journalist with the local newspaper. Write a match report for one of the following sections of the newspaper:

Sport News

Science & Nature News

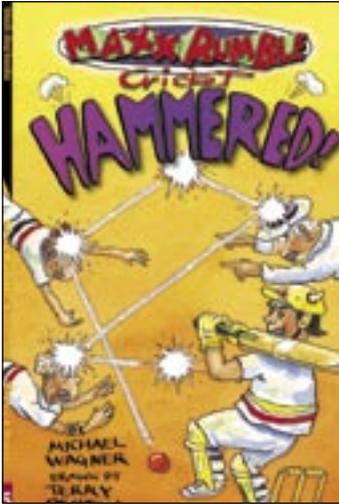
Health News

Crime News

You must tell the story of the same events in a different way depending upon which section of the newspaper you are writing. For example, the crime reporter would focus on how Martin deliberately tried to sabotage the game.

### Focus on life

- Cricket is a team sport. Every member of the Stone Valley Saints has different skills and abilities and each makes a contribution to the team effort.
- Gather a group of your friends together and discuss what some of your different skills and abilities are. Consider physical attributes such as height and strength and also academic interests and talents such as the ability to solve maths problems or draw pictures. Discuss how a group of people with differing abilities, such as yourselves, might benefit from the different contributions each could make. Explain your conclusions to your classmates, using an example.



### Focus on cricket

- When Maxx's team is being HAMMERED, the players resort to using protective equipment to withstand the opposition's fast bowling attack. Find out what you can about the use of protective equipment in cricket by the following players:

Batsman  
Wicketkeeper  
Close-in fieldsmen

- Choose another ball bat and sport, such as baseball or hockey, and investigate the protective gear used in that sport. Use a Venn Diagram to highlight the similarities and differences of the protective clothing used in the two sports.

### Focus on language

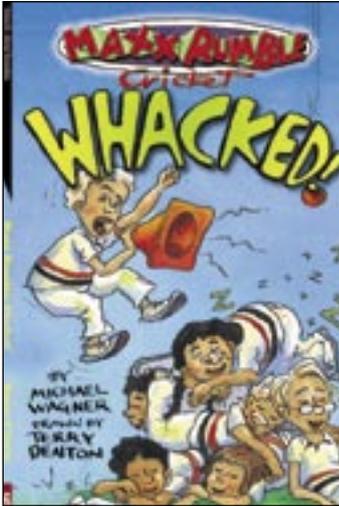
- On page 2, the author describes a single cricket delivery in detail. He describes how the ball was bowled, what Maxx thought was going to happen, the shot played by the batsman and the reaction of the umpire. It is detail like this which helps us to form a picture of the action in our minds when we read this book.
- Choose one incident from the story which is not described in as much detail, such as:

A bouncer bowled by Wedgie  
The dismissal of Brodie  
The catch that dismissed Lynn

- Your task is to write a detailed snapshot of that part of the story in a method similar to that used by the author on page 2.

### Focus on life

- When Maxx's team is being HAMMERED, rather than give up, Maxx thinks of an idea which might bring about a change of luck. Think of a time when things weren't going right for you until you used your brains and found a solution to the problem. Share your story with a small group of friends. Ask them if they could think of an alternative solution.



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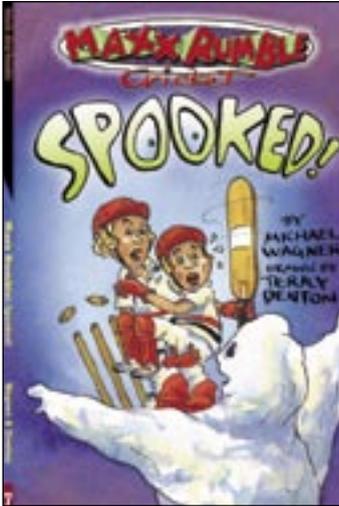
- Some of the players were finding this game of cricket boring. This was because there was little or no action happening in the game. When some people expressed their view that traditional 5-day Test cricket could also be boring, cricket administrators introduced a new form of the game to liven it up. The one day international format is now very popular with cricket fans all around the world. Use a Venn Diagram to highlight the similarities and differences between the two forms of the game. Write a few sentences explaining which form of the game you prefer and why.

### Focus on language

- The author has used vocabulary to emphasise the slow nature of the players on the Dodgy Duffers' team. There are players with 'slow-sounding' names like Dave Dullard, Ita 'Incha' Long, Peter Plodder and Gary Grafter. Use your imagination and name the remaining seven players in the Duffers' team in a similar fashion to the author of the book, Michael Wagner. Every player's name should include vocabulary normally associated with being slow.

### Focus on life

- Can you list eight different quick and easy strategies a captain could use for keeping members of his or her team alert during a game. Place asterisks next to the strategies which could be equally useful for remaining focused in non-game situations which also require concentration.



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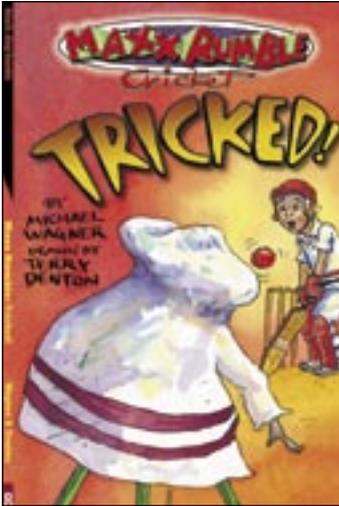
- Sometimes when cricketers play tricks on their opponents, even if they have not infringed the rules, their antics are considered to be not in the spirit of the game.
- Define what is meant when someone says an action was 'not in the spirit of the game'.
- Explain why cricketers do not enjoy playing against an opponent whose antics are not within the spirit of the game.
- Give your opinion, with reasons, as to whether or not the Rocky Crocks have played within the spirit of the game.

### Focus on language

- The players on Maxx's team were SPOOKED by their opponents. Sometimes when you play sport against bigger or more skilful opponents, you may be quite scared. Recall an instance from your own sporting past where you were genuinely scared for your safety. Retell the story of that incident. Be sure to use some colourful vocabulary to describe your emotions in detail, in order that the person reading it also gains a sense of how frightening it really was.

### Focus on life

- Consider the following questions:  
  
What are you scared of?  
Is it okay to feel scared sometimes?  
Can you think of times when you have been really scared.  
How do you cope with frightening situations?  
Do you have any strategies for dealing with fear?
- Now that you have considered your answers to these questions, join with a group of friends and plan a role play scenario which will demonstrate an occasion when someone is really afraid. In your role play, present at least one strategy for coping with and overcoming your fear.



### Focus on cricket

- The Outhouse Rodents used a strange piece of technology to try to outwit the Stone Valley Saints. It was a bowling machine. Perhaps the most controversial piece of technology used in cricket these days is the 'third umpire' – the name given to the slow motion camera and the person who uses it to judge close decisions which the umpires on the field are unsure of. Many people prefer to let the umpires on the field make all the decisions unassisted by technology. List the advantages and disadvantages of using slow motion replays to decide whether batters are out or not. Then write a statement explaining your opinion and giving reasons for your decision.

### Focus on language

- Maxx and his teammates were TRICKED by their opponents. One trick which is completely acceptable in cricket is a 'hat trick'. A hat trick occurs when a team takes three wickets in consecutive deliveries. Hat tricks are very rare and therefore very special when they happen.
- 'Hat trick' is a curious term for three wickets in three deliveries, isn't it. Write an imaginative story which explains why cricketers call this special event a hat trick.

### Focus on life

- Maxx's team enjoyed a successful season. Along the way they had to overcome many challenges. At different times each player in the team made a valuable contribution. Above all, they enjoyed being part of a team and enjoyed playing sport together.

List six reasons why team sports are enjoyable.

List six things, other than sport, which also require team participation.