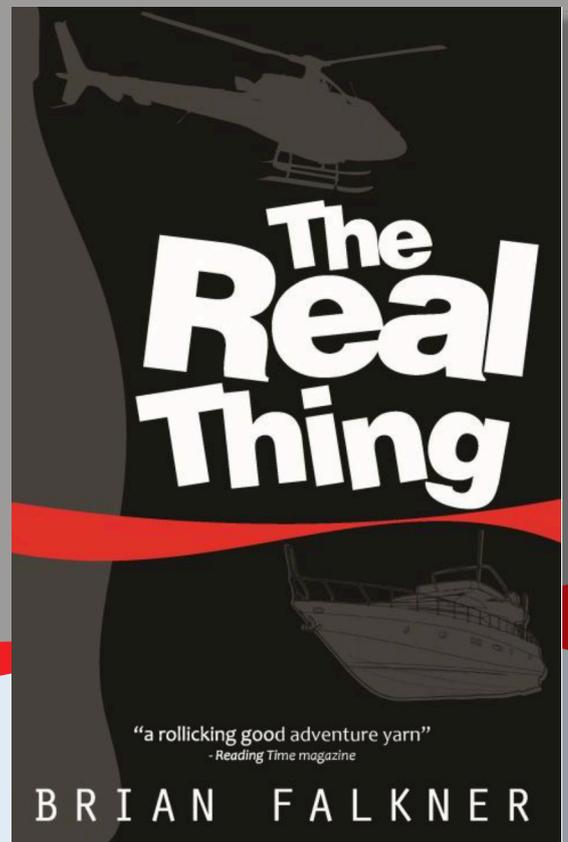




The Real Thing

By Brian Falkner

- Primary School Ages 8+
- Adventure Fiction



Synopsis

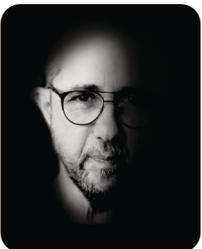
In “The Real Thing,” Brian Falkner spins a thrilling tale that blends fact with fiction surrounding one of the world’s most famous and closely guarded secrets: the formula for Coca-Cola. The story follows Fraser “Fizzer” Boyd, a teenager with an extraordinary sense of taste, and his friend Tupai White as they become embroiled in a high-stakes adventure involving corporate espionage and kidnapping.

Fizzer’s ability to distinguish subtle differences in flavours sets the stage for their involvement in a mystery when he identifies something wrong with a can of Coke at a school fair. This leads them to Coca-Cola’s headquarters, where they uncover a plot to steal the secret formula. Concurrently, key executives of Coca-Cola, who are among the few people in the world who know the formula, are kidnapped.

As Fizzer and Tupai delve deeper into the conspiracy, they face numerous challenges and dangers. Their journey takes them from their small town to the bustling corporate world of Coca-Cola, culminating in a daring attempt to rescue the kidnapped executives and recover the secret formula.

With a mix of humour, suspense, and fast-paced action, “The Real Thing” explores themes of friendship, loyalty, and the lengths to which people and corporations will go to protect their most valuable secrets.

About the Author



Brian wanted to be an author ever since he was a child. It only took him thirty years to realise that dream. Along the way he worked as a reporter, advertising copywriter, radio announcer and internet developer. Now an award-winning author, with twenty-one books published internationally, he is also an internationally acclaimed writing coach, running workshops and writing camps around Australia, the USA and New Zealand. He lives in Queensland.





Key Learning Areas

- Science and Sensory Perception
- Friendship and Teamwork
- Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving
- Cultural and Corporate Awareness
- Language and Communication



Themes

- Friendship and Loyalty
- Secrecy and Trust
- Corporate Espionage
- Ethics and Integrity



Characters

- **Fizzer Boyd:** A boy with extraordinary sensory perception
- **Tupai White:** Fizzer's friend, who assists him in their adventure
- **Ricardo Pansier:** Vice President of Production at Coca-Cola
- **Clara Fogsworth, Bingham Statham, and Ralph Winkler:** Known as the "Coca-Cola Three," they are key holders of the secret formula
- **Anastasia Borkin:** Vice President of Security at Coca-Cola
- **Dennis Cray:** Karate expert
- **Candy Statham:** Ex-wife of Bingham Statham
- **Joseph Sturdee:** Faded TV star



Genres

- Adventure
- Mystery
- Junior Fiction
- Thriller
- Humor
- Contemporary Fiction

Writing Style

Brian Falkner's writing style in "The Real Thing" is engaging and accessible, characterized by a conversational tone and infused with humour and wit. He employs vivid descriptive details to bring the settings and characters to life, while maintaining a fast-paced, action-packed narrative that keeps readers hooked. The dialogue is natural and character-driven, revealing much about the personalities and relationships of the characters. Falkner skilfully blends factual elements with fictional storytelling, exploring themes such as friendship, loyalty, and corporate ethics in a way that prompts readers to think critically while enjoying the story. His youthful perspective and dynamic writing style make the novel both relatable and captivating for a young audience.

Activities

1. **Creative Writing:** Imagine you are a reporter covering the mysterious disappearance of the Coca-Cola executives. Write an article about the events as they unfold.
2. **Debate:** Hold a classroom debate on the ethics of corporate espionage. One side argues in favour of protecting corporate secrets at all costs, while the other argues for transparency and openness.
3. **Role-Playing:** Assign roles to students (e.g., Fizzer, Tupai, Ricardo) and have them act out key scenes from the book. Discuss how the characters' actions drive the plot forward.
4. **Research Project:** Investigate the real history of Coca-Cola and its secret formula. Compare and contrast the factual elements with the fictional ones presented in the book.
5. **Taste Test:** Set up a real taste test. Buy a range of cola drinks. Use colour coded plastic cups and select a number of volunteers (with parental permission) to see how many flavours they can identify in a blind taste test.





Exercises and Questions

Chapter 1: The Taste Test

1. Comprehension Question: What makes a school fair exciting for Fizzer and his friends?
2. Activity: Draw a poster advertising a school fair, including all the fun activities mentioned in the chapter.
3. Creative Writing: Write a journal entry from Fizzer's perspective about his favourite part of the school fair.

Chapter 2: The Executives

1. Comprehension Question: Describe the kidnapping of the executives. How does each executive react?
2. Creative Writing: Write a short story about being kidnapped for a secret you hold.
3. Discussion Question: What measures does Coca-Cola take to protect its secret formula?
4. Research Activity: Find out more about the real-life Coca-Cola Company and its headquarters. Present your findings to the class.
5. Critical Thinking: Why do you think only three people are allowed to know the secret formula at any time?

Chapter 3: Bojutsu

1. Character Analysis: How does Fizzer's interest in Eastern Mysticism help him in the story?
2. Activity: Research the basics of Bojutsu and present a simple demonstration to the class.
3. Creative Writing: Write a scene where Fizzer uses his Bojutsu skills in a different scenario.

Chapter 6: Head Office

1. Character Analysis: Describe Ricardo Pansier's reaction to the crisis. What does this tell you about his character?
2. Role-Playing: Act out the boardroom scene and discuss how each character contributes to the meeting.
3. Debate: Is Ricardo's reaction appropriate given the situation? Why or why not?

Chapter 9: CCHQ

1. Comprehension Question: Describe the headquarters of Coca-Cola as mentioned in the chapter.
2. Activity: Create a model or a detailed drawing of what you think Coca-Cola headquarters looks like based on the descriptions.
3. Discussion: How does the environment at Coca-Cola headquarters reflect the company's values and priorities?

Chapter 10: The Secret Recipe

1. Discussion Question: Why is the formula not written down anywhere? Do you think this is a good strategy?
2. Debate: Hold a debate on whether it's better to keep secrets written down or memorized.
3. Research: Find out about another famous secret recipe and how it is protected.

Chapter 14: Storm Rising

1. Comprehension Question: What two things worry Fizzer the most while they are handcuffed?
2. Debate: Discuss the ethics of corporate espionage. Is it ever justified?
3. Creative Writing: Imagine you are handcuffed in a similar situation. Write about your escape plan.

Chapter 16: Anastasia Borkin

1. Comprehension Question: What is Borkin's role at Coca-Cola, and why is she so furious?
2. Role-Playing: Act out a scene where Borkin interrogates her staff about the missing executives.
3. Discussion: Discuss the pressures and responsibilities of someone in Borkin's position.

Chapter 28: The Spy Who Came in from The Coca-Cola Company

1. Discussion Question: What is the reason for the title of this chapter?
2. Activity: Write a news report on the kidnapping of the executives and the efforts to rescue them.
3. Discussion: How does Borkin's approach to solving the crisis differ from Ricardo's?

Chapter 31: The Turn of the Screw

1. Comprehension Question: How does Tupai manage to survive after falling off the boat?
2. Creative Writing: Write a journal entry from Tupai's perspective, describing his thoughts and feelings during the incident.
3. Discussion: What would you have done in Tupai's situation?

Chapter 32: Epilogue

1. Comprehension Question: How does the story resolve for Fizzer and Tupai?
2. Discussion: Do you think the ending was satisfying? Why or why not?
3. Creative Writing: Write an alternative ending to the story.



Discussion Questions

- Why is the book called 'The Real Thing'? How does this relate to Coca Cola.
- Why is the Coca-Cola formula such a closely guarded secret? How does the company ensure its secrecy?
- Describe Fizzer's unique abilities and how they contribute to the story. How does Tupai support Fizzer throughout the novel?
- Discuss the ethical implications of corporate espionage as depicted in the novel. Do you think the actions of the characters are justified?
- How do Fizzer and Tupai demonstrate loyalty and friendship? Provide examples from the text.



Essay Topics

- **Trust and Betrayal:** Analyse the theme of trust and betrayal in the novel. How do these elements affect the relationships between characters?
- **The Role of Technology in Secrecy:** Discuss how technology is used to maintain and breach secrecy in the novel. How realistic are these portrayals?
- **The Impact of Corporate Secrets:** Write an essay on how corporate secrets like the Coca-Cola formula impact society. Are they beneficial or harmful?



Word Search Puzzle

Here are some more Brian Falkner books. How many of them can you find? Words can go in any direction.

- Blitzkrieg
- Brainjack
- IceWar
- KatipoJoe
- MaddyWest
- Northwood
- ShootingStars
- Spycraft
- TaskForce
- The Assault
- The Flea Thing
- The Real Thing
- The Super Freak
- The Tomorrow Code
- Vengeance

