

## The Adventures of William Brambleberry: Aviator Mouse

Written by Genevieve Hopkins, Illustrated by Alexandra Heazlewood

### BOOK SUMMARY

A heartwarming storybook about a small but determined mouse with an extraordinary dream of flying a Spitfire. Through relentless practice and unwavering determination, he transforms into the bravest and most adventurous mouse in the world. Discover the inspiring journey of William Brambleberry, reminding us that size doesn't matter when it comes to pursuing our dreams. Learn about a real Australian WWII Spitfire Squadron and the Australian men who fought for England and France in the skies and on the ground.

### CURRICULUM LINKS

English, HASS, Science, Maths, STEM, Art, Digital Technologies

### KEY CONCEPTS

- Ambition, Goals, Fulfilling Dreams
- Persistence, Determination
- Friendship
- Bravery
- History

### About the Author

Genevieve is a children's book author, with a passion for weaving tales of whimsy and enchantment. She is captivated by and writes about the interplay of history, culture, traditions, folklore, and cycles of the seasons in her publication, Wheel & Cross.

**Suggested Age Range:** 5-9 years.

*Most activities and resources in this guide can be adapted to suit year levels.*

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# TEACHING NOTES

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## About Teaching Notes

*The Adventures of William Brambleberry: Aviator Mouse* was created to teach young children about Australia's military history while inspiring them to dream big and work towards their goals. Its themes include:

- Ambition, Goals, Fulfilling Dreams
- Persistence, Determination
- Friendship
- Bravery
- History

The book is also a useful tool for teaching from Foundation to Year 6, and particularly Years 1 to 4, across several key learning areas including English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and Social Sciences, Health and Physical Education, Technologies and the Arts.

These *Teaching Notes* provide projects and activities that enhance general capabilities for literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, and ethical understanding.

Suggestions for activities before the book reading are provided to prompt curiosity and interest, and after to deepen understanding and comprehension of the text, story and themes. Suggestions for projects and activities are provided according to key learning areas with hyperlinks to relevant sources for further information. Lists of resources and activity sheets are also provided.

## Before Reading

- Looking at the front cover, invite students to express their ideas and predictions, and to share any prior knowledge they may have.
  - ✓ What do they think about this plane?
  - ✓ Have they ever seen one similar? If so, where? E.g. TV, movies, air shows
  - ✓ Is it a modern plane or from another period of time? How do we know this? E.g. open cockpit, propeller/no jets
  - ✓ What do they think about the mouse pilot, and what he's wearing?
  - ✓ Why is the plane coloured the way it is? What do we call that patterning? Why is it used?
  - ✓ What does the word aviator mean?
- Read the blurb on the back cover
- Start a classroom learning wall and add to it throughout the reading including specialised vocabulary that arises e.g. aviation, propeller aerodynamics, characters and their attributes, goals/dreams.
- Seek out related books from the school library both fiction and non-fiction for free reading time (see *Related Books* section).



## After Reading

- Show the picture of 453SQN at the front of the book. Identify the characters from the book and find out more about each character on the final page of the book:
  - Don – Donald George Andrews (Pilot)
  - Clarrie – Clarence Alfred Seeney (Pilot)
  - Rod – Roderick Lyall (Pilot)
  - Roger – Roger Bush (Engineering Officer)
- Use Google Earth (or similar) to explore the setting – Perranporth, Cornwall
  - Where is it in comparison to the rest of England and France?
  - In what ways might it have changed since the photo in the book was taken (1943), then after the war? Is the airfield still there (yes, it is now [Perranporth Airfield](#))?
- What sort of mouse do readers think William is (*he does not look like a house mouse - Mus musculus*)? Use contextual clues and research to predict and support ideas. What types of mice are found in England? Lead students to consider the [harvest](#) mouse and list points that would support this idea.
- Dreams as aspirations - “No matter how small you feel, or how big your dreams are, with determination and practice your dreams can come true!”. Does this refer to the dreams we have when sleeping? Identify that it means goals or aspirations. Use a Hot Potato strategy or similar fast-paced approach to share thoughts on students' goals.

## Projects and Activities

### Personal Development and Ethics

#### *Dreams and Aspirations*

It is important for people to have dreams and aspirations. Help students understand these concepts with the activities below.

#### Activities

- Return to the earlier discussion on dreams and aspirations. Unpack the individual ideas and have students write and/or illustrate what they ‘dream’ of achieving.
- As a class group activity, have students develop a *Learning Plan* for William Brambleberry that will help him achieve his dream (e.g. Spitfire mechanics and engineering, aerodynamics, air combat tactics, flight training, emergency management etc.)
- Have students create a *Learning Plan* to achieve their own dreams and aspirations.

#### *Ethical Issues*

Engage students in an ethical discussion about encouraging or discouraging dreams or aspirations.

- William Brambleberry's family and friends, and even the men from 453SQN laugh at William when he tells them he wants to be “the bravest, most adventurous aviator mouse in all the world.”
- Why do you think they laugh at him?





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- Are they being mean? Do they want to hurt William's feelings?
- Do they think it's impossible for William to fly because of his small size (physical inability)
- Have they ever seen a mouse fly a plane? Is it possible for a mouse to fly a plane?
- Can they imagine a mouse flying a plane?
- Are they worried for William? Do they want to stop him from doing something dangerous or from getting disappointed?
- Have you ever had someone laugh at you and tell you that you can't do something?
  - How did it make you feel? (e.g. sad, angry, disappointed, frustrated)
  - Why do you think they did that? (e.g. to be mean, because they couldn't see a way, to stop you from hurting yourself or being disappointed)
- Is it OK to tell someone they can't do something? What happens if that person wants to do something dangerous or without any training?
- Does being too small stop William from being an aviator mouse and flying Spitfires? Why?
- Can you think of times when humans were told they couldn't do something, but they did it anyway? (e.g. Paralympians, inventors, suffragettes etc.). Was there a time you did something even though others said you couldn't or wouldn't be able to?
- When is it important to listen to people when they say you can't do something? (e.g. when it is dangerous, if you haven't had the right or enough training, when you could hurt others – flying a plane)
- Roger, the 453SQN Engineering Officer made a Spitfire small enough for William to fly.
  - Why do you think Roger decided to make the plane for William? (William showed he was dedicated and worked hard)
  - Do you think he would have made the plane just because William wanted to fly, even if William didn't work hard? Why/Why not?
  - If you have a dream of something you want to do or be, what do you have to do to achieve it? (e.g. know what you want, know what you have to do to get there, be determined, keep trying and practise)
  - What happens if you don't achieve your goal or dream even if you worked hard? Only one person can win the gold medal, what if it isn't you not matter how much or how hard you trained? (e.g. allowed to be disappointed, keep trying or change goalposts to something achievable etc).



## English

### *Goals vs Vision Statements (verb tenses)*

Distinguish between verb tenses, particularly future vs present tense and the difference between goal statements (future) and vision statements (present) including the purpose of visualisation.

#### Activities

- Expand on the writing activity regarding dreams and aspirations – increase the level of details and description (one to two paragraphs), ensuring future tense is used.
- Have the students create a second version of their writing with future tense changed to present tense to create a 'vision statement.'

### *Anthropomorphism*

Discuss anthropomorphism in literature using William Brambleberry and other books from the *Resources – Mouse-Related Books* section.

#### Activities

- Ask students to describe their favourite anthropomorphic characters and what features make them anthropomorphic (group or class discussion or individual reflection journal).
- Each student randomly selects an animal (using a container or blank numbering system) and a corresponding random verb/noun combination (e.g. fly a plane, drive a tractor, bake a cake, etc) and creates a story based on the animal and verb/noun (group or class discussion and/or individual reflection journal).

### *Literary Concepts*

Students can analyse the book to understand key literary concepts such as:

- Genre
- Character
- Plot
- Setting
- Narrative structure or arc
- Point of view
- Use of imagery, metaphor and word choice

#### Activities

- Students analyse the book's literary concepts as an individual exercise for students' reflective journal or project/assessment
- Facilitate a group discussion on the book's literary concepts and create a class mind map display
- Compare the *Aviator Mouse* book genre (historical fiction) to other mouse-themed historical fiction (see *Related Books – About Adventurous Mice* section) and different genres such as fables (e.g. Aesop's fables, *The Lion and the Mouse*, and *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse*)

### *Author Study*

Read the following about the author, Geneviève:







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- [Geneviève Hopkins – Allow me to introduce myself](#) (Author website)
- [William Brambleberry might be an aviator mouse, but he's not pure fiction](#) (RiotACT online magazine)
- [Revealing the Magic of William Brambleberry: An interview with author Geneviève Hopkins](#) (Military Shop Blog)

Use the information from websites and articles to create an [Author Study](#) that:

- Identifies how the author developed the book's literary concepts
- Finds biographical clues about the author in the book
- Prompts self-analysis through exploring students' personal responses to the book

## Activities

- Individual exercise for students' reflective journal or project/assessment
- Group discussion included on class mind map display

## Creative Writing

Use the suggested writing activity prompts below to explore creative writing through the book themes.

## Activities

- Create a 'log entries' page written by either one of the human crew or by William. Find primary document examples [here](#).
- Write a five senses paragraph in the first person as William to describe his first flight.
- Write William's next adventure as a qualified pilot as a comic strip or storyboard. [free-to-download templates readily available]
- Write a letter from William to his family, from another airbase (as the squadron moves on).

## Book Week

Students and teachers can get creative with book week costumes. Here's a fabulous example from a student called William and his *William Brambleberry*-themed costume for Book Week in 2024.



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## HASS

The book is set in England during WWII and features a real Australian RAAF Squadron that flew Spitfires against German Luftwaffe, bombed German V2 ground to air rockets, and was actively involved in D-Day operations. The pilots and engineering officer featured in the book were real Australian servicemen posted to 453SQN when they were based in Cornwall, England.

### Activities

Set a student research project that explores various historical topics related to the book. These research projects can be undertaken at any time of the year, but it might be more impactful to relate them to ANZAC Day or Remembrance Day commemorations and activities.

### Suggested Topics

- Spitfires
  - Who designed the Spitfire?
  - How many models were there?
  - What feature makes them unique (elliptical wings)?
  - What engine did they have?
  - Why were they so important in WWII?
  - Why were they painted in different colours and patterns? (e.g. camouflage vs D-Day stripes)
  - What happened to the Spitfires after the war? (Two are used as display planes for [100SQN](#), the Airforce's heritage aircraft fleet at Temora Air Base. [Supermarine Spitfire Mk XVI](#) with squadron code FU-P was flown by 453SQN pilot Russell 'Rusty' Leith)
- 453 Squadron (453SQN)
  - When, where and why was 453SQN formed?
  - What happened to 453SQN?
  - Where was 453SQN posted?
  - What operations did 453SQN participate in?
  - Who were the men featured in the book? (names, jobs, history)
  - What is the role of the current 453SQN?
- The history of aviation and the Royal Australian Airforce (RAAF) in Australia
  - When did Australia start flying airplanes, what were the types of planes flown?
  - When and why was the RAAF created? How did it evolve?
  - What types of roles are there in the RAAF (i.e. not everyone is a pilot)?
  - In what operations did the RAAF participate?





## STEM

### Biology and Ecology

The humble mouse can be a great entry point to teaching about biology and ecology. Begin by asking students to guess what sort of mouse do readers think William is – does he look like a house mouse (*Mus musculus*)? Use context and clues to research, predict and support ideas. Lead students to consider the harvest mouse and list points that would support this idea.

- What are the differences between harvest mice and house mice?
- What is their ecological niche?
- What type of mice are found in England compared to those in Australia?
- When did mice arrive in Australia?

### Activities

- Create a class mind map that identifies the important and distinguishing features of the house mouse and the harvest mouse (physical differences, behaviours, ecological niche)
- Create a 'Harvest Mouse Fact File' that describes what they are (scientific classification), what they look like, where they live, what they eat, what preys on them etc
- Explore or create a classification key (dichotomous, tabular, circular) for the harvest mouse
- Read or watch Aesop's Fable, *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse* to help younger students understand the different behaviours and environments of the town (house) mouse vs the country (harvest) mouse

### Science and Mathematics

Conduct investigations into aerodynamics with various STEM activities. NASA has various information sheets regarding aerodynamics, including one for [K-4](#) and a more detailed explanation for years [5-8](#).

### Activities

- Aerodynamics – General
  - Watch videos on aerodynamics provided in the *Resources – Tools for Teaching Aerodynamics and Spitfire Design* section
  - Experiment: Spinning button aerodynamics – [Education.com](#)
  - Experiment: Frisbee aerodynamics – [Science Buddies](#)
  - Experiment: How tails help a kite to fly – [Science Buddies](#)
  - Experiment: Make a Whirlybird from paper – [Science Buddies](#)
  - Experiment: More advanced classroom activities – [Civil Air Patrol](#)
- Aerodynamics – Paper Airplanes
  - Watch videos on aerodynamics and paper planes provided in the *Resources – Tools for Teaching Aerodynamics and Spitfire Design* section
  - Experiment: Fold different paper plane models and record the results, ranking them according to the longest flight (time and/or distance)
    - Paper Airplanes: Why flaps and folds matter – [Science Buddies](#)
    - Make it Fly – [UK Science Museum Group](#)
    - Paper Airplane Designs – [Fold N Fly](#)





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- Spitfire Design and Engineering
  - Watch videos on spitfire design and engineering provided in the *Resources – Tools for Teaching Aerodynamics and Spitfire Design* section
  - Draw a spitfire and label the different parts, identifying the spitfire's main features (e.g. elliptical wings, merlin engine, fuselage, propellor, cockpit, aileron, wings, tail etc)
  - For younger students an image of the book's spitfire diagram has been provided at the back of these teaching notes with spaces for labels
  - Make a paper Spitfire model. The free downloads below have varying degrees of difficulty:
    - [4D Paper Airplane](#) – difficult/detailed
    - [Red, White and Blue Day UK](#) – easy/simple
    - [Plan Bee Spitfire](#) – easy/simple





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## Art

The book can be explored artistically in many ways.

### Activities

- Watercolour – the book's illustrator used watercolour and pen to create the illustrations. Watercolour wash can be used to create scene backgrounds. Use the colour-in sheet provided at the back of these *Teachers Notes* and paint with water-colours or use other mediums (coloured pencil or crayon if preferred)
- Younger students (Pre-school to Kindergarten) – create a mouse ear headband or mouse mask
- Younger students (Pre-school to Kindergarten) - draw a mouse by using dot-to-dot drawing, free drawing or colouring-in. Explore the 'How to Draw videos in the *Resources – Tools for Teaching Art* section
- Students from year 2 and up – draw a mouse using different artistic styles such as realist, abstract, pop-art, cartoon etc. Explore the 'How to Draw videos in the *Resources – Tools for Teaching Art* section
- Students from year 2 and up – create individual *Dreamscapes* using mixed media to reflect their dreams and aspirations. Turn it into a class display.
- Students from year 2 and up – draw an animal doing something a human would normally do either free-thought or create a 'picture raffle' (one container with strips of paper that name an animal and a second container with a verb or activity)





## Health and Physical Education

Mice can be incorporated into games for younger students or dance to mouse-themed videos or songs.

### Activities

- 'Cat and Mouse' (the game of tag where one person is the cat who chases the rest of the class who are mice)
- 'Mouse, Mouse, Cat' (the mouse and cat version of 'Duck, Duck, Goose')
- Dance-along and brain break videos (see *Resources – Tools for Teaching Health and Physical Education* section)

Students from years two and up explore the physical requirements and food rations of pilots during WWII and in the present-day military through project work (individual assignments and/or class projects).

### Topic Suggestions

- What were the physical requirements (physical characteristics and fitness) for fighter pilots during WWII and what are they today?
- What food did pilots in WWI and WWII eat? How did it differ from the ration packs of the soldiers and frontline personnel? What did the general public eat in Australia during WWII (rationing)?
  - [Food on the Frontline](#) – Sydney Morning Herald, Good Food
  - [1915 Army Rations in WWI](#) – Australian Food Timeline
  - [Ration Packs from WWII](#) (Rat Packs)– Digger History Blog
  - [Food in the Field: Iron Rations](#) – Sir John Monash Centre, Australian National Memorial, France
  - [Foodish History: A Bomber Command Breakfast](#) – Jen Richards (historical fiction writer)
  - [Rationing of food and clothing during the Second World War](#) – Australian War Memorial
- What do defence force personnel eat these days? (combat rations, mess food)
  - [What are ration packs?](#) – Gaby Mora, Nutrition and Dietetics
  - [Two pieces of toilet paper and a can of cheese: Inside an Aussie soldier's ration pack](#) – News.com.au





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## Resources

### Tools for English Literacy

Literature Types and Devices – [Twinkl](#)

Writing and Literacy – [Reading Rockets](#)

Comic Strip Template – [Picklebums](#)

Storyboard Templates – [Storyboard Art](#)

### Tools for Teaching Spitfire History

Could You Survive as a Spitfire Pilot in World War Two? – [History Hit](#)

Spitfire in Australian Service – [Australian Military Aviation History](#)

Australian Spitfire Ace Pat Hughes – [Australian Military Aviation History](#)

### Tools for Teaching Biology

Classification Keys - [Twinkl](#)

Mouse Fact File - [Twinkl](#)

### Tools for Teaching Aerodynamics and Spitfire Design

How Airplanes Fly (video) – [SciShow Kids](#) (early stage 1 – kindy to year 2)

Aerodynamics Explained by a World Record Paper Aeroplane Designer (video) - [Wired](#) (years 4-6)

How do Airplanes Actually Fly? (video) – [Ted-Ed](#) (years 4-6)

Why the Spitfire was Such a Deadly Fighting Machine? (video) – [Smithsonian Channel](#)

Battle of Britain's Finest: Spitfire and Hurricane fighter aircraft compared (video) – [BFBS Forces News](#)

Spitfire: A Battle of Britain Icon – [RAF Museum and Institute of Mechanical Engineers](#)

Inside the Spitfire Factory: How to Build a Spitfire – [Engine Porn](#)

The Insane Engineering of the Spitfire (video) – [Real Engineering](#)

### Tools for Teaching Art

How to draw a mouse using the letter M for Pre-school/kindergarten (video) – [Art for Kids Hub](#)

How to draw a realistic mouse (video) – [How2DrawAnimals](#)

Mouse ears headband template – [Twinkl](#)

### Tools for Teaching Health and Physical Education

[Three Dancing Mice](#) by– dance-along and brain break video (American)







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[I'm a Mouse](#) by Skoolbo Music (Australian)

[The Worry Song](#) (1945) with Gene Kelly and Jerry Mouse (also introduces students to the music of the WWII era)

## Related Books

### *About Adventurous Mice*

*The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse* – Aesop's Fables

*The Mouse and the Lion* – Aesop's Fables

*Mouseheart* – Lisa Fiedler

*Lindbergh: The Tale of a Flying Mouse* - Torben Kuhlmann

*The Mouse who Wanted to Fly* – Victoria Wickell-Stewart

*Time Stops for No Mouse* – Michael Hoeye

*Time and the Clock Mice, Etcetera* – Peter Dickinson

*The Tale of Desperaux* – Kate diCamillo

*The Redwall series* – Brian Jacques

*Stuart Little* – E. B. White

*The Rescuers* – Margery Sharp

*The Mouse and the Motorcycle* – Beverley Cleary

### *About WWI*

*Charlie's War* by Vicki Bennet, illustrated by Debbie Taylor Worley (early childhood, 0-6yrs)

*Alfred's War* by Rachel Bin Salleh, Illustrated by Samantha Fry (early childhood, 0-6yrs)

*Simpson and his Donkey* by Mark Greenwood, illustrated by Frane Lessac (early childhood, 0-6yrs)

*Finding Winnie: The story of the real bear who inspired 'Winnie-the-Poo'* by Lindsay Mattick, illustrated by Sophie Blackall (early childhood, 0-6 years and younger children, 7-12 years)

*Cher Ami: Based on the WWI legend of the fearless pidgeon* by Melisande Potter, illustrated by Giselle Potter (early childhood, 0-6 years and younger children, 7-12 years)

*ANZAC Girl: The war diaries of Alice Ross-King* by Kate Simpson, Illustrated by Jess Racklyeft (early childhood, 0-6 years and younger children, 7-12 years)

*The Little Stowaway: A True Story* by Vicki Bennett, illustrated by Tull Suwannakit (early childhood, 0-6 years and younger children, 7-12 years)

*Jack's Bugle* by Krista Bell, illustrated by Belinda Elliot (early childhood, 0-6 years and younger children, 7-12 years)





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*Socks, Sandbags and Leeches: Letters to my ANZAC Dad* by Pauline Deeves (younger children, 7-12 years)

*The Red Poppy* by David Hill, Illustrated by Fiji Colston (younger children, 7-12 years)

*A Fortunate Life: A great Australian classic adapted for younger readers* by A.B.Facey (younger children, 7-12 years and older children, 13+ years)

## About WWII

*Anne Frank: A retelling of the iconic story for early childhood* by Josephine Poole and Angela Barrett (early childhood, 0-6yrs)

*A Poppy for Pa* by Rebecca Laing Zammit, illustrated by Annelies Billeter (early childhood, 0-6yrs)

*Meet... Weary Dunlop* by Claire Saxby, Illustrated by Jeremy Lord (early childhood, 0-6 years and younger children, 7-12 years)

*The Happiest Boy on Earth* by Eddie Jaku, illustrated by Nathaniel Eckstrom (younger children, 7-12yrs)

*Rabbit, Soldier, Angel, Thief* by Katrina Nannestad (younger children, 7-12yrs)

*The White Mouse: The Story of Nancy Wake* by Peter Gouldthorpe (younger children, 7-12 years and older children, 13+ years)



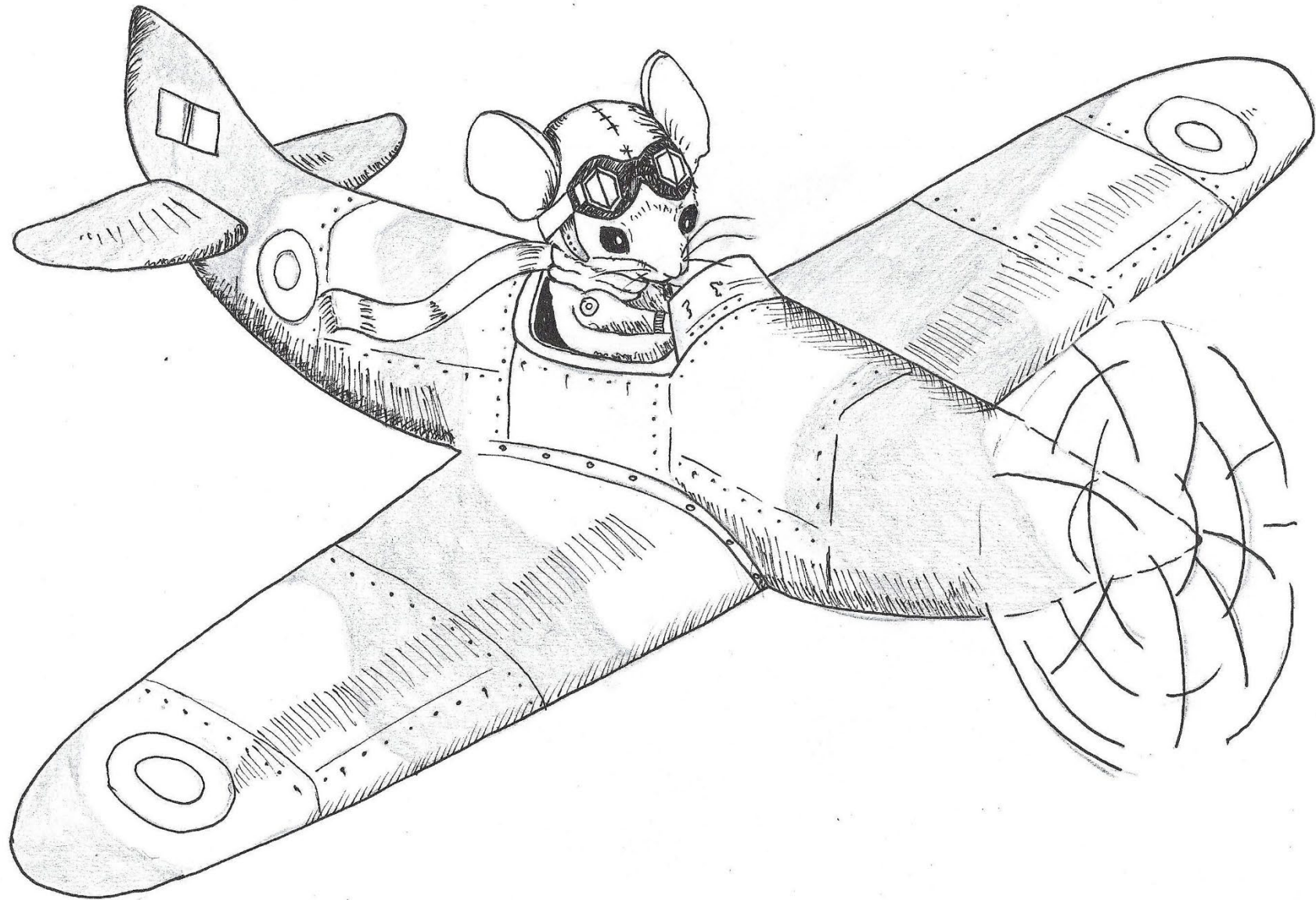


## William Brambleberry Resources

Aviator Mouse: Colour-In Sheet

Aviator Mouse: Spitfire Labels Sheet





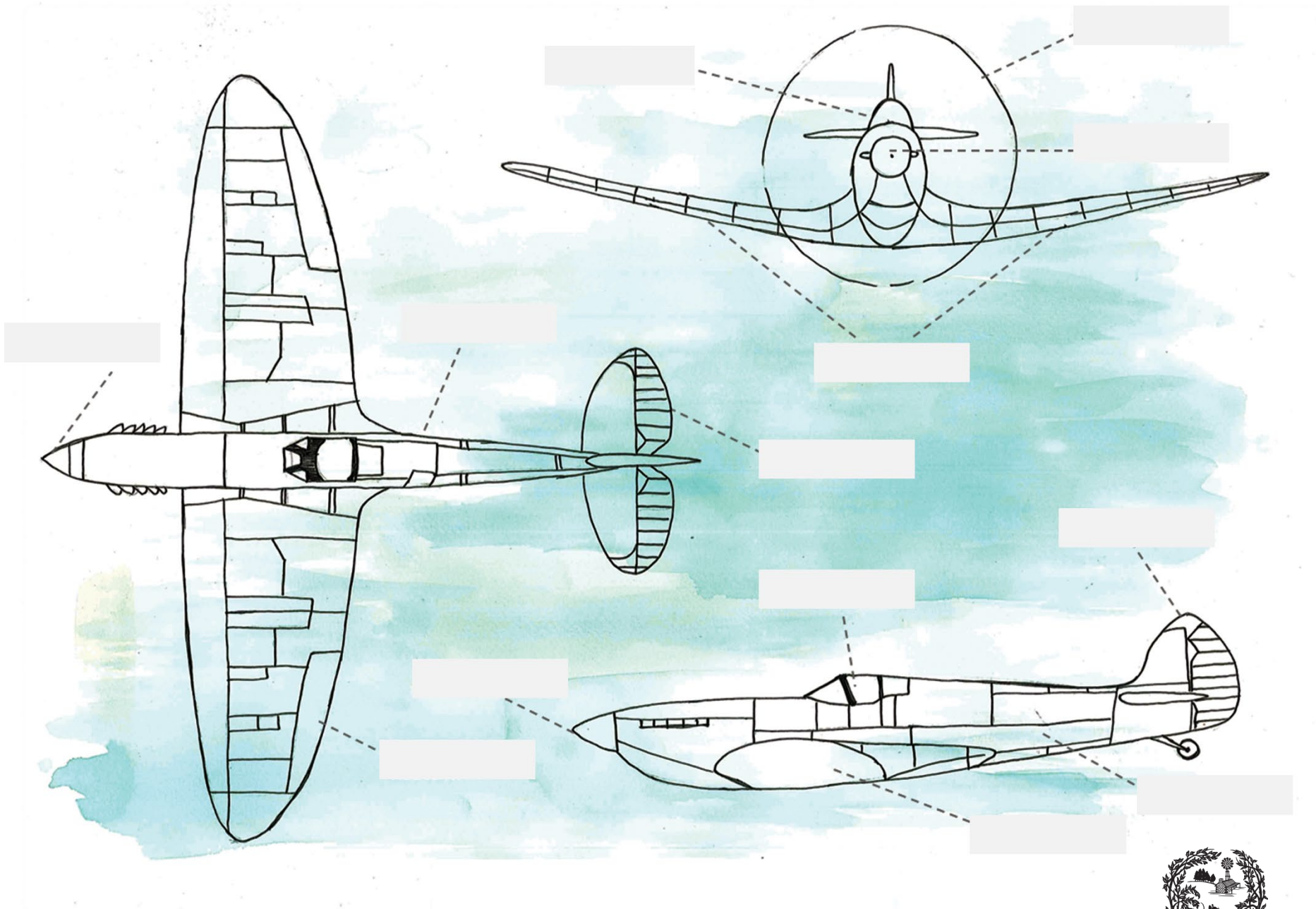
# Aviator Mouse: Colour-In



The Adventures of William Brambleberry:  
Aviator Mouse

[www.verybrambleberry.com](http://www.verybrambleberry.com)





# Aviator Mouse: Spitfire Labels



The Adventures of William Brambleberry:  
Aviator Mouse

[www.verybrambleberry.com](http://www.verybrambleberry.com)