



## Step 2: Sizzling Starts

# Michelle Scott Tucker – Biographer

Before watching Michelle Scott Tucker's interview, discuss what you know about using Step 2: Sizzling Starts in informative writing.

Now watch the interview and use the following questions to prompt discussion as a whole class or in groups.

### Discussion Questions

1. Michelle Scott Tucker has written a biography. How does she say biographies usually start?
2. What makes the beginning to Michelle's biography of Elizabeth Macarthur different?
3. Which Sizzling Start technique/s does Michelle use? (e.g. Start with a sound, start with action, ask a question, paint a word picture, tell an anecdote.)
4. Why does Michelle say that building sympathy (for the main character) is important in her Sizzling Start?
5. Why does Michelle say the start was important when she approached a publisher?
6. How do the first few lines of the book establish that Michelle's biography is fact, not fiction?
7. Does Michelle refer to the Sizzling Start again in the biography? Where, and when?
8. How does Michelle say the Writers Victoria competition helped her get started as a writer?
9. Was Michelle inspired by other authors and their Sizzling Starts? How did her favourite book affect her writing practice?
10. Does Michelle believe that you can use all your skills of storytelling in informative writing?

### FOLLOW-ON ACTIVITY

Provide students with biographical facts about the life of a person of study, such as an explorer, sportsperson, scientist or famous figure from history. Ask them to look at the facts, then choose one of these Sizzling Starts techniques: start with a sound, start with action, ask a question, paint a word picture, tell an anecdote (story). In groups or pairs, students suggest unusual and creative ways to start their biography. They can use the facts as inspiration, but they can also make imaginative suggestions, e.g. 'I will start with the sound of bullets pinging off Ned Kelly's armour'.