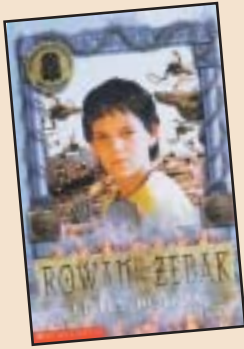


ROWAN OF RIN

by Emily Rodda



A LITERATURE UNIT
BASED ON THE FANTASY
ROWAN AND THE ZEBAK
TEACHING NOTES BY KIM BANFFY

INTRODUCTION

This unit of work is suitable for Upper Primary classes but could be adapted for use with Lower Secondary students. Whilst it is designed to be implemented after the units on *Rowan of Rin*, *Rowan and the Travellers* and *Rowan and the Keeper of the Crystal*, it can also be used as a stand-alone unit of work. The projects students are asked to complete in this unit could contribute to the completion of the contract set out for the year in Unit One: *Rowan of Rin*.

The activities presented in these Rowan of Rin units start out as being English-based, however the advantage of the units is that each one is inherently cross-curricular and focuses on a particular Key Learning Area. As such, they are a perfect way to cover large areas of the Stage 2—3 curriculum. This unit has a very strong Personal Development focus, and is designed to make children examine the qualities that enable people to achieve wonderful things against all odds. There is also an opportunity to examine the geography of deserts, and Language and PE/PD/PH curriculum Outcomes are included.

Bloom's taxonomy is used as a basis for the activities, and students are encouraged to use Edward de Bono's 'Six Thinking Hats' (1992) as a tool for encouraging higher-order thinking and using problematic knowledge when contemplating questions that arise.

OUTCOMES

Values and Attitudes

Students will:

- Create a range of spoken and written texts.
- Experience and respond to a range of spoken and written texts.
- Experiment with different aspects of spoken and written language.
- Show confidence in using language in a variety of contexts.
- Use language to respond to, support and encourage others.
- Choose to use language to communicate, to express ideas and feelings, to explore and to enquire.
- Show independence in using and learning language.
- Choose to reflect on and share experiences of text.
- Explore the fact that people from different ethnic backgrounds offer equally acceptable cultural strengths and weaknesses that enrich a multicultural community.



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Talking and Listening

Students will:

- Communicate effectively for a range of purposes, and with a variety of audiences, to express well-organised ideas dealing with challenging topics.
- Interact productively and with autonomy in pairs and groups of various sizes and composition.
- Use effective oral presentation skills and strategies, and listen attentively.
- Discuss ways in which spoken language differs from written language, and how spoken language varies according to different contexts.

Reading

Students will:

- Read independently an extensive range of texts with increasing content demands, and respond to themes and issues.
- Use a comprehensive range of skills and strategies appropriate to the type of text being read.
- Critically analyse techniques used by writers to create certain effects, to use language creatively, to position the reader in various ways and to construct different interpretations of experience.
- Identify the text structures of a wider range of more complex text types and discuss how the characteristic grammatical features work to influence readers' and viewers' understanding of texts.

Writing

Students will:

- Produce a wide range of well-structured and well-presented literary and factual texts for a variety of purposes and audiences, using increasingly challenging topics, ideas, issues and written language features.
- Use knowledge of sentence structure, grammar and punctuation to edit own writing.
- Spell most common words accurately and use a range of strategies to spell unfamiliar words.
- Produce texts in fluent and legible styles, and use computer technology to present these effectively in a variety of ways.
- Critically analyse own texts in terms of how well they have been written, how effectively they present the subject matter and how they influence the reader.
- Critically evaluate how own texts have been structured to achieve their purposes, and discuss ways of using related grammatical features and conventions of written language to shape readers' and viewers' understandings of texts.

Personal Development—

Interpersonal Relationships Outcomes and Indicators

This unit naturally encourages the core values of integrity, excellence, respect, responsibility, co-operation, participation, care, fairness and democracy. Although students may not discuss real-life situations, by exploring issues in *Rowan and the Zebak* they are encouraged to think about the qualities that make a trustworthy and morally well-developed person by addressing issues that confront Rowan.



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As such, students will:

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- Describe how relationships with a range of people enhance wellbeing.
- Identify people from whom they can seek advice and support.
- Recognise that families and groups have both common and different customs, values and behaviours.
- Explain how positive relationships are developed.
- Discuss how trust is developed in relationships.
- Participate in group situations, showing consideration for the needs, rights and feelings of others.
- Demonstrate communication skills that enhance relationships, eg listening, showing care, negotiating, refusing, assertiveness.
- Discuss the benefits of friendships.
- Recognise behaviours that are threatening, such as bullying and being bribed, and identify people who can help.
- Discuss ways that peers and others can influence decisions about safety and risk.

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY ACTIVITIES

Knowledge

- Create a story map of *Rowan and the Zebak*.
- Questions you might ask include:
 - What is a grach?
 - For what occasion were the people of Rin gathered to celebrate?
 - Who were the people who made the journey to find Annad?
 - What was valuable about each member of the party?
 - What did Sheba ask for in return for her advice?
 - What were the wastelands?
 - What is an Ishkin?
 - What fear did Rowan have regarding Zeel?
 - What surprise did Shaaron have for Rowan?
 - What were the 'Painted Shadows'?
 - Why was Rowan's experience with the bukshah invaluable?
 - How did Rowan manage to get them all home?
- Possible vocabulary/spelling list:
 - Hampered
 - Vivid
 - Astounded
 - Coaxing
 - Irritation
 - Writhe
 - Spiteful
 - Fury
 - Occupied
 - Broadened
 - Mocking



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Motionless
Intently
Abandoned
Curiosity
Wavered
Prophecies
Surging
Hovering
Oddities
Hesitation
Companions
Overwhelmed
Accursed
Sniggering
Discontent
Lurched
Sprawled
Beyond
Barren
Grate
Reluctantly
Impulse
Plunge
Squinting
Buffeting
Mottled
Rouse
Perilous
Numerous
Squabbled
Dumbfounded
Bewildered
Glimpse
Guffawed

From the above list, have students select the verbs and make a class list. If there are any words that students are unsure of, have them look up their meanings in their dictionaries. Having done this, ask students to work with partners to develop quick dramatic exercises that illustrate the words. Students are to guess which verbs are being dramatised.

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Comprehension/Analysis

- Read the description of the desert on page 67. Ask students to draw their interpretations of what the desert looked like. When they are happy with their drawings, have them apply colour to their artworks, using whatever media they think suit their work. For example, they might like to use soft pastels, watercolour paint or acrylic paints. Ask them to think about what colour schemes they will use—‘What colours occur in most deserts?’
- Ask each student to draw a lumpy (see page 73, 5th paragraph) or to draw an Ishkin (see pages 73–76) or to draw a grach (see pages 1, 2 and 12). You might ask: ‘How will you colour it?’ If a student has chosen a lumpy, you might ask them what ‘mottled’ means.
- Under their artworks, students should record facts about their creatures, answering the following questions: ‘What habitat does your creature live in?’ ‘Does it have legs and, if so, how many?’ ‘What colour is it?’ ‘How large does it grow?’ ‘Does it live for a long time?’ ‘Does it have fur, scales, a certain kind of skin?’
- Make a T-chart with two descriptions on it. On one side, write a description of the kind of person that generally inhabits the new Rin. On the other side, write a description of the qualities of the people who were left in the old Rin. Then ask:
‘Which kind of person is Rowan most like?’
‘How did Perlain manage to save the search party?’
‘How did Zeel manage to save the search party?’
‘How did Rowan manage to save the search party?’

Application

An HSIE project: *Deserts of the World*

- As a class, discuss what qualities are common to all deserts. Identify deserts from different continents around the world and ask each student to choose one to research, eg Death Valley, Simpson Desert, Kalahari, Sahara.
- Students are to answer the following questions within their research:
 - In which country is the desert of your choice situated?
 - At what height above sea level is the desert of your choice?
 - What is the average annual rainfall in the desert of your choice?
 - How does this compare to where you live?
 - Does the desert landscape change when it rains? If so, how?
 - What plant species grow in your selected desert? Do they have similar features, eg similar shaped leaves, similar trunks?
 - What animal species inhabit the desert of your choice?
 - What race/s of people live in the desert of your choice?
 - What means of transport do they use?



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- Students are to complete the following tasks as part of their projects:
 - Draw a map showing where the desert of their choice is situated.
 - Provide detailed drawings of two plant species that inhabit the desert of their choice, depicting features that make them well-adapted to desert life.
 - Provide detailed drawings of two animal species that inhabit the desert of their choice, pointing out features that make them well-adapted to desert life.
 - Draw an example of the typical housing lived in by people inhabiting the desert of their choice.
 - Describe a typical meal enjoyed by the people inhabiting the desert of their choice.

Synthesis

A PE/PD/PH project

- Read the following quotes from the book and discuss as a class: 'If you were given such advice, what would you have done? What does the tone of the quotes indicate about the people saying the words?'
 - Page 14: *The child is gone. Gone. There is nothing to be done.*
 - Page 19: *You cannot do it, my friend. Such a journey would be filled with peril. And at its end you would only join your sister in her fate without hope of escape.*
- Draw students' attention to the following quotes: *We must stop assuming that a thing which has never been done before probably cannot be done at all* (Donald M Nelson) and *A thousand mile journey begins with one step* (Lao Tse). Ask students to interview three wise adults about what they think the above proverbs mean. Students should tape or film their interviews.
- Ask students to think of examples of well-known people who have achieved against the odds, eg a Paralympic athlete, a politician, an author, a musician or an artist. Have them complete mini-projects on their subjects. Their projects should answer the following questions within their prose as opposed to answering them in question-and-answer format:
 - What is the person's name, age and country of birth?
 - In what country did they achieve fame?
 - What is the person's field of endeavour?
 - What were the obstacles other people thought they couldn't overcome?
 - Who told them to forget it and give up?
 - Were there many people who gave them this advice?
 - Why didn't they give up?
 - Who has benefited because they didn't give up?
 - Is there more than one group of people who have benefited?



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An HSIE project disguised as an Art project!

This project enables students to use their prior knowledge of animals and habitats and their imaginations to create mythical creatures. It also encourages them to use problematic knowledge to build their creations.

Students will:

- Design and make sculptures of imaginary creatures. They can use anything available to them to achieve this, eg broom handles, bicycle seats, straw broom heads, pieces of wood.
- Write factual texts explaining their creatures. You might suggest they pretend they are David Attenborough doing the commentary for a documentary film. Their texts should answer the following questions:
 - What is the name of your creature?
 - What is its habitat? For example, does it inhabit desert, rainforest, Arctic wastelands, dense jungle or some other type of landscape?
 - How long does it generally live?
 - Is it diurnal or nocturnal?
 - How does it reproduce? For example, does it lay eggs, give birth to live young, carry its young in a pouch?
 - Does it have fur, feathers, scales, leathery skin or something else?
 - Does it have wings?
 - Does it have specially adapted features to protect against predators? For example, does it have particularly large ears so that it can hear predators approaching?
 - What are its predators, if any?

Evaluation

Preceding the following activity, conduct a class discussion about the qualities in Rowan that he believed to be his weaknesses but which proved to be invaluable. Students will:

- Use de Bono's Six Thinking Hats to evaluate the qualities in Rowan that he believed to be his weaknesses.
- Discuss the differences between people and how our various qualities can complement those of others.
- Take part in a class debate: Our strengths are often also our weaknesses.

OR

'Imagine space is limited on the search party and one person cannot come. Of the following three people, who would you leave behind: Rowan, Zeel or Perlain?' Students are to work in groups to decide who cannot come by discussing the issue and using De Bono's Six Thinking Hats to examine the problem. When a group has come to a decision, the group should elect a leader to report to the rest of the class as to why they chose that person.

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Resources

- *The Best Beak in Boonaroo Bay* by Narelle Oliver explores well the concept that we all have valuable things to contribute, and that one is not necessarily better than the other.
- Visit waste recyclers in your area for bits and pieces for sculptures.



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