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Introduction and Sample Lesson Plans

Introduction

This literature unit has been designed to supplement teachers with ideas for use with the novel *Rowan and the Travellers* by Emily Rodda. It is aimed at upper primary school students. The following sample lesson plans suggest ideas for a ten-week whole class study. Photocopying a work package for each student is a good way to study the book.

Sample Lesson Plans

Week 1

- ☼ Introduce the book using some or all of the ideas listed in 'Suggestions for Using the Unit Activities' ('Before the Book').
- ☼ Introduce the package you may have pre-made for each student.
- ☼ Read Section 1 of the book (Chapters One, Two and Three).
- ☼ The students summarise what has been read (orally or in written form).
- ☼ The students complete the quiz for Section 1.
- ☼ The students do some vocabulary work using words from the vocabulary list. The children can either write dictionary meanings, write their own meanings based on what was read, or include each word in a meaningful sentence. (See Extension Activities.)
- ☼ The students complete 'The Day the Travellers Arrived'.
- ☼ The students complete 'Slip-Daisy Medicine Recipe'.

Week 2

- ☼ Read Section 2 of the book (Chapters Four, Five and Six).
- ☼ The students summarise what has been read (orally or in written form).
- ☼ The students complete the quiz for Section 2.
- ☼ The students do some vocabulary work using words from the vocabulary list. (See Extension Activities.)
- ☼ The students complete 'Time For a Poem'.
- ☼ The students complete 'Picture This!'.

Week 3

- ☼ Read Section 3 of the book (Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine).
- ☼ The students summarise what has been read (orally or in written form).
- ☼ The students complete the quiz for Section 3.
- ☼ The students do some vocabulary work using words from the vocabulary list. (See Extension Activities.)
- ☼ The students complete 'News Flash!'
- ☼ The students complete 'What Is Jonn Thinking?'



Getting to Know the Book and the Author

The Book

Rowan and the Travellers is the second book in the *Rowan* series by Emily Rodda. It is the story of a boy called Rowan who lives in a fantasy land called Rin. The story begins when the Travellers, a roaming community of people, come to visit Rin, but much sooner than expected. Rowan then runs into Sheba (who some people believe is a witch) in the forest who is pulling slip-daisy roots for Rowan's medicine. She gives Rowan a riddle which warns of an enemy. The people of Rin think the enemy is the Travellers. Although the peoples share a strong friendship, the people of Rin begin to suspect the Travellers of spying for the dangerous Zebaks, or wanting to share the seeds of their beloved new secret crop of Mountain berries. The Mountain berries were brought down from the forbidden Mountain and the plants are now being cultivated for their sweet scent and luscious berries, which the people of Rin hope to trade at the coast. The Travellers are told not to enter the village. That night the people of Rin begin to fall into deep sleep from which they cannot be woken. Rowan, the only person unaffected by the sleepiness, drags Allun out of the village in search of the Travellers, who mysteriously left in the night. When confronted, the Travellers are bewildered by the sleep trances and explain that they had called on the people of Rin as they felt that something was wrong, but left when they were shown such coldness. The Travellers are on their way to find the legendary Valley of Gold, guarded by the evil Pit of Unrin. The Travellers feel that the answer to Sheba's riddle lies there, so Rowan and Allun go with them. Once there, Rowan and Zeel (a Zebak by birth) are chosen to enter the Pit of Unrin as it is forbidden to Travellers. In the Pit, Rowan and Zeel fight carnivorous Unrin trees and find jewels from the lost Valley of Gold. They realise that the Valley of Gold and the Pit of Unrin are one and the same, and that the Valley of Gold was destroyed by the Unrin trees. Rowan and Zeel witness a Mountain berry bush causing a bird to fall asleep with its scent and then transforming into the adult Unrin tree, which wants to devour the bird. Rowan and Zeel realise the danger that the people of Rin are in and hurry back. They try to burn the bushes but this doesn't work. After solving the riddle and realising that slip-daisies are the land's natural defence against Unrin trees, Rowan and the others drip Sheba's slip-daisy medicine on the plants and kill them. Once the village is safe, the people of Rin awake and rejoice with their friends the Travellers and their heroes, Zeel, Allun and Rowan.

The Author

Emily Rodda's real name is Jennifer Rowe. Emily Rodda is the name of her grandmother. She takes on this name when she writes books for children. Jennifer Rowe was born in Sydney in 1948. She received a Master of Arts in English Literature at the University of Sydney. Her first job was assistant editor at Paul Hamlyn. Jennifer then worked for fourteen years as Editor, Senior Editor, Managing Director, Deputy Publisher and Publisher at Angus and Robertson Publishers. During this time she began writing books for children under her pseudonym (Emily Rodda). Jennifer Rowe is the only person to have won the Australian Children's Book Council Book of the Year for Younger Readers Award five times. Jennifer then had a career in publishing and was Editor of the Australian Women's Weekly for five years. She now devotes her time between consultancies for book publishers and her own writing. She lives in the Blue Mountains with her four children and second husband.



Suggestions for Using the Unit Activities

Use some or all of the following suggestions to supplement your own ideas when studying *Rowan and the Travellers*.

Before the Book

- ⌘ Organise student copies of some or all of the worksheets into a work package.
- ⌘ Set up a display to suit the book. This display can be 3-D using a variety of materials, or painted on a window.
- ⌘ When programming, consider:
 - themes such as friendships, teamwork etc.
 - topics such as survival, heroes, fantasy etc.
 - linking the novel to your spelling and writing activities
- ⌘ Design art activities based on the novel, e.g. making kites, making old maps, making mountains out of sand or plaster.
- ⌘ Discuss friendships, survival, heroism and fantasy with the children.
- ⌘ Read about the author (see 'Getting to Know the Book and the Author').
- ⌘ See Pre-reading Activities (page 8) for further ideas.

During the Book

- ⌘ Use the student work packages.
- ⌘ Include related themes and topics in your teaching.
- ⌘ Have the children write chapter summaries or alternatively, keep a diary from Rowan's point of view.
- ⌘ Have the children map the land and add more detail as they read.
- ⌘ Have the children illustrate different parts of the story.

After the Book

- ⌘ Have the students write a book review or create a book poster for the novel.
- ⌘ Have the students write their own fantasy story. Discuss the elements of fantasy first.



Vocabulary Lists

The following words could be useful for learning to spell or for defining.

Section One: Chapters One, Two and Three

determined	despised	ordinary	bonfire
accept	centuries	cocoon	forbidden
ancestors	spied	journey	invade
refuse	citizen	agile	pollen
miraculous	regret	blossom	precious
honour	idle	plunder	billow
fidget	trudge	drape	bulge
weary	medicine	quest	knowledge
jeer	plait	bundle	thieving

Section Two: Chapters Four, Five and Six

timid	betray	barred	grateful
hesitant	burden	cauldron	hinder
plenty	ancient	hideous	murmur
fable	lantern	anxious	emerald
prying	cluster	suspicious	vision
sneer	obey	radiant	snivel
orchard	fury	abide	roam
guide	glimpse	curtly	chant
irritation	dismay	treachery	secure

Section Three: Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine

interrupt	ember	purpose	courage
witness	thrive	nudge	mock
harvest	plague	beckon	exasperate
infuriated	heave	perish	motionless
huddle	natural	glint	magician
rumour	value	bewildered	accuse
ignorance	ordeal	insist	solemn
furrow	fortunate	boast	stride
source	delay	foretold	dreadful



Pre-reading Activities

Before you begin reading *Rowan and the Travellers* with your students, do some pre-reading activities to stimulate interest and enhance comprehension. Here are some activities that might work for your class, depending on the approach you are taking.

1. What have you heard about this novel? What information do you already know?
2. Predict what the story might be about just by looking at the cover illustration.
3. Discuss other books by the author that students may have heard about or read.
4. Respond to the following:
 - ⌘ Are you interested in...
 - stories about characters who have to be heroic?
 - stories with adventure and life-or-death struggles?
 - stories dealing with a young person having experiences that make him/her grow up?
 - stories that show a young person is capable of making important decisions and taking action?
 - stories that have both funny and sad incidents?
 - ⌘ Why might young boys and girls be forced to live on their own without anyone taking care of them?
 - ⌘ How can unusual occurrences change a young person's life?
 - ⌘ What is it like being in a new and completely different environment?
5. Work in groups to create a factual and/or fictional story about a child who has exciting and strange adventures.
6. Write descriptions or brainstorm ideas about what makes a person strong or courageous.
7. Use a picture to introduce the story to your class. The picture can also be used as a journal cover for reading response journals or as the centrepiece of a bulletin board display of student work. After the story has been completed, the picture may be used to stimulate discussion about the ending of the story.

