



READ FOR AUSTRALIA

Part of National Literacy and Numeracy Week

29 July – 4 August 2013

RATIONALE

These teaching and learning activities have been written for the *Read for Australia* program, which is a part of National Literacy and Numeracy Week 2013. They are aimed at students of English in Years 7 and 8. They are appropriate for coeducational settings and for mixed ability students, but can be adapted accordingly to different student age groups, needs and abilities. The activities are structured in pre, during and post reading suggestions, all with the intention of engaging students with the text *Herman and Rosie* by Gus Gordon.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning objectives and outcomes for these activities are grounded in both pastoral and academic foundations. The *Draft National Curriculum: English (2012)* document with a focus on Stage 4 Outcomes has been used as a guide for these activities, with four outcomes selected below.

A student:

- **EN4-1A** responds to and composes texts for understanding, interpretation, critical analysis, imaginative expression and pleasure
- **EN4-2A** effectively uses a widening range of processes, skills, strategies and knowledge for responding to and composing texts in different media and technologies
- **EN4-3B** uses and describes language forms, features and structures of texts appropriate to a range of purposes, audiences and contexts.
- **EN4-9E** uses, reflects on and assesses their individual and collaborative skills for learning

PRE READING ACTIVITIES

These activities introduce students to the themes of the text (friendship, overcoming adversity, difference) and stimulate anticipation of reading Herman and Rosie. Students are encouraged to revisit their initial thoughts in these activities throughout reading the text.

ACTIVITY	RESOURCE
<p>Think, pair, share</p> <p><i>Students consider questions relating to the ideas that will be explored in the text, jotting down initial thoughts individually. They then share their thoughts with a partner, which then feeds into whole class discussion and reflection. These dot points could also be used as debating hot topics.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the things that make you really happy? • How do you react when a series of unfortunate events are thrown your way? • When was a time that you felt lonely? • How can friends be made? • Think of a friendship. What things in common do you share with that person? • You can live your whole life in a place and never know your neighbours. • What do you know about New York City or if you have been there, what was your experience of it?
<p>Front and back cover, endpapers</p> <p><i>Students consider aspects of the front and back cover of the text and how endpapers are used to create meaning.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The front and back cover is in the format of a vinyl record cover. What might this reveal about the content of the text? • The endpaper is a map of New York City. Why might this be significant? • Based on the information presented, predict what this story will be about.
<p>Paradoxes</p> <p><i>Students consider the notion of a paradox (self-contradictory statement).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the quote from Mark Twain (1867) on the inside cover. • How can a “splendid desert” exist or how can a “stranger feel lonely in the midst of a million of his race”? • Students are to compose five other examples of paradoxes and visually represent one of them in the form of a poster.

DURING READING ACTIVITIES

These activities enhance students understanding of the content in the text Herman and Rosie.

ACTIVITY	RESOURCE
<p>Personal reflection</p> <p><i>Students reflect via personal writing on which character from the text they identify with and why.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a reflection statement of which character you like most and why. Is it Herman or Rosie? Be as specific and detailed in your reflection statement as possible.
<p>Mixed media</p> <p><i>Students identify different pieces of text that have been collaged in mixed media to help tell the story of Herman and Rosie.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gordon has used collages of mixed media textual forms to bring together the sensory overload and buzz of New York City. Identify where neon lights and loud exclamations are splattered in the background of some pages, and how a contrast is then created with the characters. Identify and locate some of the other mixed media forms (maps, postcards, newspaper, photographs, graph paper, wage sheets, musical transcripts). What do they contribute to the feel of New York and how do they work with the written text to tell the story?
<p>Characterisation</p> <p><i>Students consider the various ways characters have been presented as a way of developing their understanding of characterisation and its significance in the text.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What could be the significance of the character names of Herman Schubert and Rosie Bloom? Draw a Venn diagram – noting the qualities and interests of Herman on one side and Rosie on the other. In the overlapping section, make notes on what makes their friendship work. Consider the use of visual metaphor to represent characters as animals (anthropomorphism). In what ways is symbolism used to represent personalities and traits in the text? How does this contribute to our understanding of them as characters and what are some potential reasons behind this method?
<p>Visual and critical literacy</p> <p><i>As a way of developing and enhancing visual and critical literacy knowledge, students critique the text for how meaning is created via the use of techniques and analysis.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate a page from the text to each pair. Google images has many stills of the text, as does Gordon's Facebook page. https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.293457217341385.70974.293438540676586&type=3 In your pair, make notes and then present back to the class your observations regarding the ideas reflected in the page and how this has been done. You may wish to consider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Layout (background, mid ground, foreground) and framing Vector lines to guide eyes

- Colour , size and positioning
- Overall structure and reading path
- Other visual literacy and postmodern techniques

POST READING ACTIVITIES

These activities are designed to draw connections between the students understanding of the text and themselves as individuals. Some activities are extension in their nature to move students beyond the text and use it for a springboard for further exploring the author and his work.

ACTIVITY	RESOURCE
<p>Mixed media illustrations</p> <p><i>Students create a mixed media illustration themselves, experimenting with form and medium of production.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gordon’s mixed media illustrations feature a pastiche of different textual forms including maps, newspapers and graph paper. • Select a ‘New York’ page from the text that employs mixed media, and replicate it creating a mixed media page but pertaining to a city of your own choice. • For example, the graph paper may have your name on it, the newspaper may be from your capital city etc.
<p>Extended writing</p> <p><i>Students complete an extended writing task based on a question designed to consolidate their understanding.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective is Gus Gordon at communicating the key themes (friendship, difference and overcoming adversity) in <i>Herman and Rosie</i>?
<p>Vinyl record cover</p> <p><i>Students are able to reflect on aspects of the text and apply these aspects to their own world.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The front and back cover of the picture book was a vinyl record. Create your own vinyl record cover based on a friendship that you have. • What animals will you choose to represent yourself and your friend? • What is the common thing that unites your friendship?
<p>Book review</p> <p><i>Students synthesize their understanding of the text to produce a new text in the form of a book review.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read some book reviews of <i>Herman and Rosie</i> http://www.tonybones.com.au/school_shows/hermanandrosie.html • Do you agree with the opinions presented? • Write your own review that considers the inclusion of <i>Herman and Rosie</i> as a ‘must read’ for any traveller to New York.

Notes by Alexander Wharton

Alexander is an English Teacher of students in Years 5-12 at William Clarke College, Kellyville. He is passionate about engaging students in narratives that help them better understand themselves and the world in which they live.