

Teachers Notes (Primary)

by Janet Anderson

Remote Man

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Recommended for ages 10 up

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INTRODUCTION

This gripping novel is suitable for Upper Primary to Lower Secondary students, as a serial or class set. It has exciting action and explores characters and relevant issues which appeal equally to both boys and girls in this age group.

The book has enormous potential for response by students. The first three activities below are not designed to be completed at one time but need to be revisited throughout the book (Reading Journal, Hot Seat, and Story Map). The wide range of options included allows for choice according to class focus and student interest.

Chapter	Activities	Chapter	Activities
1 onwards	Hot Seat	28	Debate
2 onwards	Reading Journal	29	Exposition Writing
4 onwards	Story Map	30	Design a Home Page
7	Character Profile	35 and 36	Time Difference
11 and 13	Cartoon Strip	40	Information Report Writing
18	Car Advertisement	47	Literary Sociogram
20 and 21	Mask	50	Response Writing
22 and 23	Wanted Poster		

HOT SEAT (CHAPTER 1 ONWARDS)

Hot seat is an activity in which a student takes on the role of a character in the story and is interviewed by other students. The teacher takes a mediating role between the character and the class. The interview questions focus on why the character has carried out certain actions. The activity gives students opportunities to do the following:

- discuss and hypothesise about issues
- present a point of view
- recount succinctly events and incidents which have been read
- develop and innovate on stories and characters
- use visual elements such as gesture and facial expressions to communicate meaning
- use questions effectively to interview
- clarify thinking through asking questions, rephrasing and restating ideas and issues

This activity can be used throughout the book to explore the characters and issues as they develop. Choose from the possibilities below according to class focus and student interest.

Chapters	Characters to Interview in the 'Hot Seat'
1 – 3	Ned, Janet
4 – 6	Kate, Ned, The Cowboy
7 – 10	Ned, Janet, Martha
11 – 16	Rocky, Abigail, Ned, Janet, Martha, Kate
17 - 23	Ned, Rocky, Abigail, Hunter, Axeman, Frank Laana
24 - 25	Kate, Cleverton
26 – 28	Nancy, Janet, Ned, Rocky, Miss Bones
29	Ned, Rocky, Janet, Martha
32 - 39	Yvette, Kate, Ned, Rocky, Cleverton
40	Frank Laana, Ned, Martha, Kate, Rocky,
41-44	Ned, Rocky, Cleverton, Kate, Yvette
45	Helena, Ray, Martha, Janet, Kate, Ned, Rocky, Officer Dekker
46 - 47	Frank Laana, Janet, Ned, Rocky, Kate, Officer Dekker, Officer O'Reilly
48	Cleverton, Yvette, Ned, Rocky, Kate
49 - 50	Janet, Martha, Ned, Kate, Rocky, Abigail, Dave, Viv

Reading Journal (Chapter 2 onwards)

A reading response journal is a record of personal responses to the book.

Start a reading response journal in which students will record their responses to events and issues in the text. Make regular entries as the class progresses through the book. Use the focus questions suggested to stimulate whole class or group discussion before students record their personal responses to the text. Students can be directed to vary the form of their responses: writing, drawing, poetry or an email modelled on one in the story. Again, choose from the possibilities below according to class focus and student interest.

FOCUS QUESTIONS	
Chapter 2	Why does Ned change his email name to 'Remote Man'? What would you choose as an email name?
Chapter 3	Who is your holdfast? Why does Ned try so hard not to cry?
Chapter 6	What was it about the "Cowboy's" behaviour that made Ned feel squashed like a cockroach?
Chapter 7	Does Ned cope well with the unexpected events when they arrive in America? How do you cope with the unexpected?
Chapter 9	Describe the emotions that would give Ned a 'tight burning feeling in his chest' (p. 63) when he learns that the Oenpelli Python is gone? How do you think Philemon and Moses, traditional owners of the land, would feel?
Chapter 10	Ned reflects that 'This place feels more like home than home" (p. 67). Why? Write an acrostic poem on the word 'home'.
Chapter 11	The author uses bold type to record Ned's thought life. What do you think 'Everything's beating its wings at me!' (p. 69) means?
Chapter 12	Ned loses a tooth in this chapter. What other signs are there that he is leaving childhood behind. What is changing in your life as you mature?
Chapter 16	Why does Ned feel so protective of the bears? Is the name 'Remote Man' still as appropriate for Ned?
Chapter 17	The tone of this chapter changes dramatically with the tragic shooting of the bear. Are Ned and Rocky responsible for this event? Ned feels angry, miserable and powerless over this event. How does it make you feel?
Chapter 20	Predict what Rocky and Ned are going to do this afternoon.
Chapter 22	Has your attitude to the type of reality TV Ned was watching at the beginning of the book changed now that you know more about the stunt in which Jay Laana was killed?
Chapter 25	Ned is distressed in this chapter by the two chameleons kept in harnesses wearing clown hats and rainbow ruffs. How do you feel about this type of exploitation of wild animals?
Chapter 26	Rocky refers to the 'power of the clean shirt' (p.150). What does he mean? Do you judge people by appearance?
Chapter 28	Ned and Rocky enter Miss Bones' apartment illegally because they think she may have smuggled animals from Frank Laana. Do you think they are right in their approach? Does the end justify the means?
Chapter 29	As Ned reflects upon his mother's speech he feels 'as if she was talking straight to me' (p. 164). Why were her words the exact words that Ned needed to hear?
Chapter 30	Kate is being stalked in chat rooms by 'Toxic' so Ned finds their own private chat room. Have you ever been bullied or harassed by someone. How did you cope? Have you ever bullied or harassed anyone else?
Chapter 34	How do you respond to the news that Dante Mercer's daughter is getting a

	bear cub for her third birthday? Does knowing the history of the bear make a difference?
Chapter 40	Frank Laana bashes Ned's head into a tree and runs over his bag in an effort to convince him to keep his nose out of other people's business. How does this make you feel about Frank? We see a lot of violence on TV and in movies, often from the hero/heroine. Does being violent make people cool? Why do we have so much violence in our entertainment?
Chapter 41	Kate, Ned, Rocky and Yvette have a real sense of excitement over the website they worked together to create. What sort of experiences have you had working together with a group of people?
Chapter 43	When Ned had his 'Big Fat Good Idea', the kids in the other countries thought that they might be left of the action. Would it have been possible to bring the plan together with fewer people involved?
Chapter 45	Did Kate do the right thing going to the USA?
Chapter 46	How do you respond to the fatal consequence of 'Iguana Day'?
Chapter 47	Kate asks Offer Dekker and Officer O'Reilly 'Do you think the good things balance out the bad things?' What do you think?
Chapter 48	Ja asks the question, 'Did we kill a man?' and Ned answers, 'I don't know, Ja'. What do you think?
Chapter 50	Sal questions Ned about his email name, 'Remote Man. Why that name? You are not cold stand-off person?' He replies, 'Not now. I was.' How has Ned changed throughout the book?

STORY MAP (CHAPTER 4 ONWARDS)

A story map is a visual representation of the basic outline of a story. It includes labels to indicate events that have occurred at particular locations. This draws attention to the sequence of events in the story, the relationship between these events and the structure of the text.

The inside cover of the book is like a skeleton of a story map (see also page 86 'Manhattan'). It lets us know that the action happens in a number of different countries: Australia, USA, Jamaica and France. Construct story maps inside the outlines of these four different countries. Conclude by putting the four different maps together and showing how the action in the different countries is related.

This activity could be done individually or in groups. Begin by brainstorming the main features that have been introduced to that point in the story. You may have to return to the different maps periodically as more action unfolds. The following features should be included:

Australia Chapters 4-6	Ned's house in Melbourne Wakwak (across the East Alligator River from Kakadu) Kate's house Dolobbo Aboriginal Art Centre where Ned meets 'The Cowboy' The escarpment and rock platform where Ned sees the Oenpelli Python
The USA Chapter 7 onwards	Chris in Tucson Arizona Martha's house in Concord Massachusetts The Motel The Prison on Route 2 The woods (first and second stream) Rocky's house The trees where the bears escaped from the dogs The bear's grave The Haunted House Starbucks

	Nancy's house in NY Miss Bones' apartment (40w72#2 NYNY)
Jamaica Chapter 25 onwards	Kingston The Library where Cleverton uses the computer to email The Kingston Museum with the nanka The Blue Lagoon where Cleverton gets Frank Laana's email address The rooms near Half Way Tree where Cleverton lives Cleverton's School The bus route Cleverton travels from school to the Library Omnet Computer Boutique
France Chapter 33 onwards	The Abbey School Uncle Jerome's house on the Loire river Loire Valley Chateau Thenay Fabric shop in Tours

CHARACTER PROFILE (CHAPTER 7)

On pages 47 to 49 we see a fax of Ned's visa application and passport. Use these as a basis for a character profile. Encourage the students to consider the tone created on these pages and the type of writing and layout used.

CHARACTER PROFILE	
Name: Age: Address: Description: Feelings about where I am: Feelings about who I am with: Habits: Hobbies: Major goal in life:	

CARTOON STRIP (CHAPTERS 11 AND 13)

Ned observes that Rocky is just like a cartoon character: '**Bet a light bulb pings on over his head when he gets a good idea**' (p. 77). Draw a cartoon strip of Ned and Rocky's adventures looking for the bear. Begin with the line from Rocky 'I know where he is this time.' (p. 78).

CAR ADVERTISEMENT (CHAPTER 18)

Write a 'For Sale' advertisement for the Hunk'o'junk. Illustrate.

MASK (CHAPTER 20 AND 21)

Ned and Rocky visit the Hunter and the Axeman in Halloween costume and video them. Create a Halloween mask based on one of these characters. Identify the most important physical characteristics to include.

WANTED POSTER (CHAPTER 22 AND 23)

Ned learns a lot about Frank Laana in these two chapters. In chapter 23 he discovers that he is 'The Cowboy' from Dolobbo. Design a Wanted Poster for Frank Laana.

DEBATE (CHAPTER 28)

A parliamentary debate involves two teams of speakers (usually three) who take turns to argue for and against a particular viewpoint on an issue. A speaker for the Affirmative Team begins, introduces the topic and outlines the issues. The first speaker for the Negative Team then does the same. The debate proceeds with alternate speakers from each team developing their case and rebutting the opposition's arguments. The final speakers on each team sum up their case at the end of the debate.

The issue of the method of preserving animal wildlife for future generations is raised during Rocky and Ned's visit to Miss Bones' apartment where they discover her collection of skeletons. She claims that the skeletons will be all that will survive to show coming generations the richness of animal species we had because 'Mankind is greedy...And nobody cares'. Ned on the other hand believes that there are people who care, 'Lots of people care!' (p. 153).

The following is a list of suggested topics for the students to debate:

- Mankind is too greedy to make the changes necessary to preserve animal wildlife for future generations.
- People ignore the experts because they don't care about the rapid decline of animal species in our world.
- Corporations would rather give money to museums than make the changes to business practices necessary to protect the environment.
- Wildlife will become so rare that in the future only little bits will remain on show as freaks.

EXPOSITION WRITING (CHAPTER 29)

An exposition argues a case for or against a particular point of view. It is structured in the following way:

- Statement of position - states the position of the writer and previews arguments
- Arguments – points to support the position taken supported by evidence
- Reinforcement of Position Statement – restates position more forcefully in the light of arguments presented

Ned's mum's impassioned speech at Harvard is reported in the newspaper: 'Watch, listen, learn, but let the wild things be, in the wild places.' (p. 163). Have students write an exposition for or against her position. They will need to do research to find evidence to support their arguments.

DESIGN A HOME PAGE (CHAPTER 30)

Ned finds a private chat room on the Macroalgae Harvesters' Association website called the Kelp Room. Design a home page for the Kelp Room.

TIME DIFFERENCE (CHAPTERS 35 AND 36)

Kate makes a time reckoner to keep track of the time difference between the Northern Territory, Massachusetts, Jamaica and France. Investigate the time differences within Australia and between the countries in the book. Make a ready reckoner like Kate did in the book.

INFORMATION REPORT WRITING (CHAPTER 40)

An information report is a way of documenting, organising and storing factual information on a topic. Information Reports are structured in the following way:

- General classification which identifies the subject of the information report, defines it, locates it and previews the rest of the description to follow.
- Descriptions which are clusters of facts organised in paragraphs around topic sentences. Descriptions may include subheadings to introduce different areas of the topic and visual elements accompanied by captions which link to the text.

Ned receives an email about Frank Laana which spurs him on to finish creating the website despite the difficulties involved. The email details the sometimes disastrous results of illegal trafficking of birds from Australia. Write an information report on one of the following Australian birds that are at risk from illegal trapping and trafficking:

- Golden Shouldered Parrot
- Palm Cockatoo
- Scarlet Breasted Parrot
- Major Mitchell Cockatoo
- Black Cockatoo

The following headings can be used to structure note taking activities and then form the basis of the topic sentences for paragraphs in the Descriptions stage:

- Habitat
- Distribution
- Food Source
- Threats
- Description
- Degree of threat to the species.

LITERARY SOCIOGRAM (CHAPTER 47)

A literary sociogram is a diagrammatic representation of the relationships between characters in the text.

Constructing a literary sociogram gives students opportunities do the following:

1. establish the role and nature of each character
2. identify the relationships between characters
3. construct a diagram to represent this information

Ned, Rocky and Kate chip in to give Officer Dekker an explanation of the events that led to their fateful meeting with Frank Laana. There are many people involved in the story. Construct a literary sociogram to represent the role and relationships of the characters in the story:

- Ned (Janet, Martha, Chris)
- Kate (Helena, Ray)
- Rocky (Abigail, Dave, Viv)
- Frank Laana (Hunter, Axeman, Miss Bones, Maria)
- Cleverton (Grandma)
- Yvette (Uncle Jerome)
- Officer Dekker (Officer Reilly)

PERSONAL RESPONSE WRITING (CHAPTER 50)

Personal responses are used to summarise, analyse and respond to literary texts. They are structured in the following way:

- Context – background information on the text
- Opinion/Reaction – expression of personal feelings through the exploration of the qualities and effectiveness of the text

The Rockys have a fridge magnet which makes the following statement: 'Man belongs to Earth. Earth does not belong to man'... Use this statement as a stimulus for students to write personal responses to the book.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ENDANGERED SPECIES

Ned's mother is passionate about conservation of the environment and Ned and his friends about preservation of endangered species. Explore these issues through the following activities.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Have students find definitions for the following terms.

Extinct	Species not found in the wild in the past 50 years.
Endangered	Species whose numbers have been reduced to a critical level or whose habitats have been reduced so drastically that they are in immediate danger of extinction.
Feral	A domestic animal that now lives in the wild.
Habitat	The environment that provides the requirements for a species to live.
Poacher	People who take native plants and animals illegally, often for sale overseas.
Predator	Animals or humans that kill other animals for food/sport/smuggling . . .
Prey	An animal hunted by another animal for food.
Rare	Species with small world populations, not at present endangered or vulnerable but at risk.
Species	A group of plants or animals that have common characteristics can interbreed.
Threatened	Species in any one of the endangered, vulnerable or rare categories.
Trafficking	Illegal smuggling of wildlife from one country to another.
Vulnerable	Species likely to move into the endangered category in the near future.

ROLE PLAY - EXPLORE LOSS OF HABITAT

Involve students in a role play to explore the implications of loss of habitat (Allen 1999). Turn the class into a local community. Each student's desk is their home. Choose four people to be developers. Over a recess or lunch break have the developers cordon off half of the classroom and display a sign: Development site – this site is reserved for a high-rise office block. When the rest of the class return they have to sit in the remaining half of the classroom. Discuss the following issues:

- Where does land for development come from?
- How does it feel to be displaced by new development?
- How does crowding affect the individual?

Following the discussion, have the developers cordon off a further quarter of the classroom – cutting off the food supply. Display another sign: Development site - this site is reserved for a car park for the new office block. All the students are now crowded into one quarter of the room. Discuss the following issues:

- Loss of home
- Loss of food
- Crowding
- Feelings of powerlessness
- What could you do if this happened to you in real life?
- What happens to plant and animal communities when this happens to them? How does this differ from the classroom role play?

AUSTRALIA AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Australia is second only to the United States in the number of threatened animal species and fifth in the world in the number of extinctions. Since European settlement thirty species of mammals and birds and about one hundred plants have become extinct. It is estimated that around fifty-seven animal species and over two hundred plants are threatened and could become extinct within twenty years.

Have students research one or more of the endangered species listed below and write an information report (see above for the structure of an information report). Use the following headings to structure note taking activities.

- Habitat
- Distribution
- Food Source
- Threats
- Description
- Degree of threat to the species

Show distribution of endangered species in Australia on a map. Where are the most endangered species located? Share information as a class. Compile a chart which records the type of human activity which poses a threat to endangered species (Planet Earth Corporation 1997).

Animal	Type of Threat to Species							
	Feral Animals	Cattle Grazing	Land Clearing	Logging	Mining	Farming	Trapping	Whaling
Bilby	✓	✓						
Major Mitchell Cockatoo						✓	✓	
Merrin	✓	✓						
Leadbeater's Possum				✓				
Cassowary				✓				
Honey Possum	✓							
Yellow Bellied Glider				✓				
Ghost Bat					✓			
Numbat	✓			✓				
Brush-Tailed Bettong	✓							
Western Quoll	✓					✓		
Golden Shouldered Parrot			✓				✓	
Palm Cockatoo			✓				✓	
Scarlet Breasted Parrot			✓				✓	
Humpback Whale								✓
Night Parrot			✓					
Long Footed Potoroo	✓			✓				
Mallee Fowl	✓	✓	✓					
Western Swamp Tortoise	✓					✓		
Yellow Footed Rock Wallaby	✓							
Southern Right Whale								✓

THINK GLOBALLY ACT LOCALLY

Rather than being overwhelmed by the threat to the world's plants and animals, we must accept an obligation to care for our planet and for its plants and animals. Have students work in small groups to brainstorm a list of things that can be done to help conserve resources and protect plants and animals in the following categories.

- Saving energy
- Fighting pollution of air, rivers and oceans
- When shopping
- In the kitchen
- In the laundry
- In the bathroom
- In the garden
- At school
- Travelling to school or to see friends
- On holidays

Have students work individually to prepare an individual plan to change the way they do at least three things in everyday life that relate to these categories. Implement for a week and then evaluate how hard/easy it was to make the changes and whether they can be maintained.

As a class develop a group action plan which addresses an issue at school:

- Eradicating weeds
- Removing rubbish
- A recycling program (and compost)
- Revegetation of an area.

Implement for a month and then evaluate in terms of what has been achieved. Can the plan be maintained? Does it need to be expanded or scaled down?

FROG WATCH

Australia has the largest number of threatened frog species in the world – 37 species from a total of 204. The Frog Watch program is available for interested people to collect information about the location and numbers of local frogs. Developed in Victoria, there are now programmes in other states. Visit the following sites of the internet for more information:

- Landcare Tasmania www.discover.tased.edu.au/landcare/leapfrog/item.asp
- Western Australian Museum <http://heini.museum.wa.gov.au/frogwatch/>

INTERNET RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH

Environmental Education on the Internet www.nceet.snre.umich.edu/ee-linkintroduction.html

E Patrol www.sprint.com/epatrol

US Fish and Wildlife Service Kid's Corner <http://endangered.fws.gov/kids/index.html>

National Wildlife Federation www.nwf.org/education

Endangered Species Theme Unit North Canton City School Page

<http://www.northcanton.sparcc.org/~greentown/endspec.htm>

REFERENCES

Allen, A., 1999 Australian Issues Collection Endangered Species. McGraw-Hill: Sydney

Planet Earth Corporation, 1997 Australia's Endangered Species (Video and Resource Notes)

MEET THE PEOPLE

ELIZABETH HONEY

Elizabeth Honey is the hugely popular, award-winning author of poetry, picture books and junior novels. Her playful humour, originality and irrepressible energy strike a chord with kids everywhere. Her books are published in the USA, Italy and Germany.

JANET ANDERSON

Janet's career in education grew out of her time with a repertory theatre company that worked with groups as diverse as preschoolers in India to Marines in the United States. A love of drama and communication from the stage has communicated to a love of literacy development in the classroom. Janet has had a career in Independent Schooling in NSW as both a classroom teacher and member of school executive. She holds a Masters Degree in Education specialising in teaching and learning.