

**Teachers' Notes**  
**by Lindsay Williams**

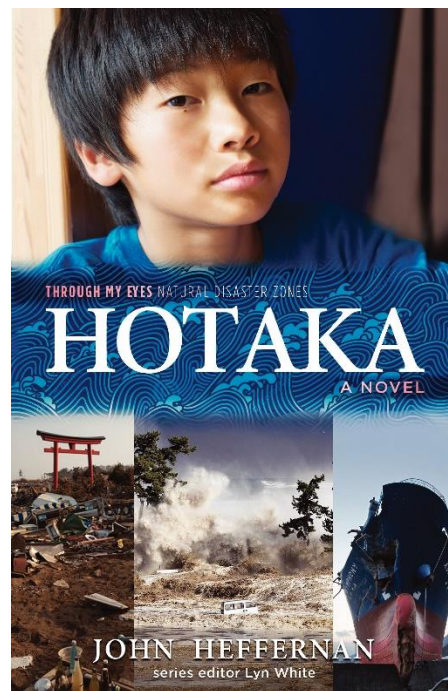
**Hotaka: Through My Eyes**  
**- Natural Disaster Zones**

by  
**John Heffernan**  
Series editor: Lyn White

ISBN 9781760113766  
Recommended for ages 11-14 yrs

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## INTRODUCTION

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*Hotaka* is the first book in the Through My Eyes-Natural Disaster Zones series. The realistic historical fiction series aims to pay tribute to the inspiring courage and resilience of children, who are often the most vulnerable in post-disaster periods. Four inspirational stories give insight into environment, culture and identity through one child's eyes.

### Advisory Note

There are students in our schools for whom the themes and events depicted in *Hotaka* will be all too real. Part one of the novel where the tsunami strikes may be disturbing for younger students. It is important that teachers read the text before sharing it with their class, monitor student reactions and respond appropriately.

### SYNOPSIS

*Hotaka* by John Heffernan is based on the true story of the 2011 earthquake and disaster that wreaked havoc in the Tohoku region of Japan.

Part One opens in 2011, moments before the earthquake strikes. A school group are watching the performance of a *bunraku* (puppet) performance. The hundred or so students are evacuated, and eventually climb Monk Head Hill in order to avoid a possible tsunami. Hotaka and his best friend, Takeshi, offer to find the students somewhere to shelter, but about halfway around the hill, they see the tsunami burst through the headlands and destroy the town like a monster. While trying to save some of the drowning people, Takeshi is washed away and Hotaka is knocked unconscious. When he awakes, he is in a bed in his home (which escaped the devastating wave), confused and desperate to find Takeshi alive. Meanwhile, realising how lucky they have been, Hotaka's mother takes in survivors, including Osamu who Hotaka finds alone, both his parents having been swept away by the tsunami. By the end of Part 1, the fate of Takeshi, and Hotaka's grandfather and uncle are unknown.

Part Two is set three years later in 2014. Recovery is slow, many survivors are in temporary accommodation and a huge sea-wall has been proposed to hold back another catastrophic tsunami. While life has returned to normal to some extent, the community is still fractured and grieving. On the back of a prize-winning essay that Hotaka has written about the tsunami, his teacher Miss Abe proposes that they organise a memorial ceremony for an upcoming 3/11 anniversary. The rest of the novel follows Hotaka, Osamu and their new friend, orphaned Sakura, a Fukushima refugee, as they deal with the various emotional burdens they carry from the past and try to help organise community support for the memorial concert. Running parallel to this is Sakura's campaign to oppose the building of the seawall. This campaign helps Osamu find a new purpose in life and brings the community together in unexpected ways, while also revealing large-scale corporate and government corruption. While intense at times, the novel finishes on a hopeful note for both the community and, individually, for the characters.

*Hotaka* is an excellent text for exploring relevant contemporary themes, including:

- The overwhelming power of nature
- Our need to live *with* nature and not against it
- The after-effects of natural disaster
- Courage in the face of danger and adversity
- Resilience and coping strategies
- Importance of friendship and community, including caring for each other
- The interplay of dark and light in our lives
- Ethics in government and business
- Civic action, methods for bringing about change

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## LINKS TO THE CURRICULUM

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*Hotaka* is especially suitable for studying in middle years English (Yrs 6 to 9), depending on the nature of the students in a class. It supports Australian Curriculum Content Descriptions for Year 7 and Year 8 English.

There is also an opportunity to include the novel as part of other Australian Curriculum areas such as HASS, Geography, Health and Physical Education, and Languages (Japanese).

*Hotaka* can be studied as a class text and is perfect for a tuning-in resource for Inquiry Units across a range of learning areas. It is also extremely suitable for use in literature circles and guided reading in the upper primary setting and for inclusion on suggested reading lists for lower secondary classes.

More specifically, the activities in these teachers notes provide the opportunity to address the following content descriptions for Years 6, 7 and 8.

**Note:** a sample only is provided. Cross-curriculum Priorities and General Capabilities are listed below the following tables.

### Year 6 English

Language	Literature	Literacy
Understand that strategies for interaction become more complex and demanding as levels of formality and social distance increase (ACELA1516)	Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1613)	Participate in and contribute to discussions, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions (ACELY1709)
Investigate how vocabulary choices, including evaluative language can express shades of meaning, feeling and opinion (ACELA1525)	Identify and explain how choices in language, for example modality, emphasis, repetition and metaphor, influence personal response to different texts (ACELT1615)	Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content and multimodal elements for defined audiences and purposes, making appropriate choices for modality and emphasis (ACELY1710)
	Create literary texts that adapt or combine aspects of texts students have experienced in innovative ways (ACELT1618)	Analyse how text structures and language features work together to meet the purpose of a text (ACELY1711)
	Experiment with text structures and language features and their effects in creating literary texts, for example, using imagery, sentence variation, metaphor and word choice (ACELT1800)	Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, choosing and experimenting with text structures, language features, images and digital resources appropriate to purpose and audience (ACELY1714)

## Year 6 History and Social Studies (HASS)

Inquiry and Skills
<p>Locate and collect relevant information and data from primary sources and secondary sources (ACHASSI123)</p> <p>Sequence information about people’s lives, events, developments and phenomena using a variety of methods including timelines (ACHASSI125)</p> <p>Examine different viewpoints on actions, events, issues and phenomena in the past and present (ACHASSI127)</p>
History – Level Description
<p>Students investigate the importance of rights and responsibilities and informed decision-making, at the personal level of consumption and civic participation, and at the national level through studies of economic, ecological and government processes and systems. <b>In particular</b>, students examine Asia’s natural, demographic and cultural diversity, with opportunities to understand their connections to Asian environments. These studies enable students to understand how they are interconnected with diverse people and places across the globe.</p>
Geography – Knowledge and Understanding
<p>The content in the geography sub-strand provides opportunities to develop students’ understanding of <b>place, space, environment, interconnection</b> and <b>change</b>. Students explore the diverse environments, peoples and cultures within the Asia region and at a global level (space, place, environment) and expand their mental map of the world. (<a href="#">ACHASSK138</a>) (<a href="#">ACHASSK139</a>)</p>

## Year 7 English

Language	Literature	Literacy
<p>Understand how accents, styles of speech and idioms express and create personal and social identities (ACELA1529)</p>	<p>Identify and explore ideas and viewpoints about events, issues and characters represented in texts drawn from different...cultural contexts (ACELT1619)</p>	<p>Analyse and explain the ways text structures and language features shape meaning and vary according to audience and purpose (ACELY1721)</p>
<p>Analyse how point of view is generated in visual texts by means of choices, for example gaze, angle and social distance (ACELA1764)</p>	<p>Compare the ways that language and images are used to create character, and to influence emotions and opinions in different types of texts (ACELT1621)</p>	<p>Use prior knowledge and text processing strategies to interpret a range of types of texts (ACELY1722)</p>
	<p>Recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches (ACELT1622)</p>	<p>Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, selecting aspects of subject matter and particular language... features to convey information and ideas (ACELY1725)</p>

## Year 7 HASS

<b>HASS – Inquiry and Skills</b>
Analyse primary sources and secondary sources to identify values and perspectives on people, actions, events, issues and phenomena, past and present (ACHASSI157)
<b>HASS Geography – Knowledge and Understanding</b>
Water in the world (ACHASSK186) (ACHASSK187) Place and liveability (ACHASSK188) (ACHASSK189) (ACHASSK190) (ACHASSK191)

## Year 7 Geography

<b>Geographical Knowledge and Understanding</b>
Water in the world: (ACHGK042) Place and liveability (ACHGK045) (ACHGK046)

## Year 8 English

Literature	Literacy
Explore the ways that ideas and viewpoints in literary texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts may reflect or challenge the values of individuals and groups (ACELT1626)	Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content, including multimodal elements, to reflect a diversity of viewpoints (ACELY1731)
Share, reflect on, clarify and evaluate opinions and arguments about aspects of literary texts (ACELT1627)	Analyse and evaluate the ways that text structures and language features vary according to the purpose of the text [...] (ACELY1732)
Recognise and explain differing viewpoints about the world, cultures, individual people and concerns represented in texts (ACELT1807)	Use comprehension strategies to interpret and evaluate texts by reflecting on the validity of content and the credibility of sources, including finding evidence in the text for the author's point of view (ACELY1734)
Create literary texts that draw upon text structures and language features of other texts for particular purposes and effects (ACELT1632)	

## Year 8 Geography

<b>Geography – Level Description</b>
'Landforms and landscapes' focuses on investigating geomorphology through a study of landscapes and their landforms. This unit examines the processes that shape individual landforms, the values and meanings placed on landforms and landscapes by diverse cultures, hazards associated with landscapes, and management of landscapes. 'Landforms and landscapes' develops students' understanding of the concept of environment and enables them to explore the significance of landscapes to people... These distinctive aspects of landforms and landscapes are investigated using studies drawn from Australia and throughout the world. /cont next page

The key inquiry questions for Year 8 are:

- How do environmental and human processes affect the characteristics of places and environment?
- How do the interconnections between places, people and environments affect the lives of people?

What are the consequences of changes to places and environments and how can these changes be managed?

### Geography – Knowledge and Understanding

Causes, impacts and responses to geomorphological hazard (ACHGK053)

## Cross-curriculum Priorities and General Capabilities

*Hotaka* would also be useful for implementing the **Cross-curriculum Priorities** of:

- **Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia** (see <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/crosscurriculumpriorities/asia-and-australia-s-engagement-with-asia/overview>). The novel is set in Japan and provides some insight to various aspects of the culture including traditional domestic architecture, art forms such as the bunraku (puppets), the role of the Geisha, and a critical reflection on traditional Japanese principles such as respect and honour.
- **Sustainability** (see <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/crosscurriculumpriorities/sustainability/overview>). An important theme of the novel is a critical examination of the conflicting challenges of living in a volatile natural environment with the threat of earthquakes and tsunamis. Within this context, *Hotaka* also explores the actions taken by townspeople opposed to the building of a huge seawall that threatens to destroy the natural beauty of their town.

In addition, the novel can be used to target the following **General Capabilities**:

- **Intercultural understanding** as students explore the distinctive life of a Japanese town devastated by a tsunami and the resilience shown by characters whose lives have been torn apart. This is grounded in a story about a group of resilient teenagers with whom many students will empathise and by whom they can be inspired. (see <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/generalcapabilities/intercultural-understanding/introduction/introduction>)
- **Ethical understanding** as students consider the different perspectives on a complex social issue, i.e. rebuilding a town destroyed in a natural disaster. The novel also provides students with the opportunity to debate the role and nature of protest in a democracy. (see <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/generalcapabilities/ethical-understanding/introduction/introduction>)
- **Personal and social capability** as students explore the ways characters regulate their emotions in trying circumstances, establishing and building positive relationships (both in friendship groups and within a wider community), make responsible decisions, work effectively in teams and develop leadership skills to handle the challenging situation of rebuilding their devastated town. Importantly, the novel also explores the traumatised characters' struggles to find reason for hope and optimism. (see <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/generalcapabilities/personal-and-social-capability/introduction/introduction>)

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## BEFORE READING

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### ACTIVITY ONE: Predicting (Analysis of Cover)

Using the framework for analysing visual images ([Blackline Master 1](#)), students work collaboratively to analyse the cover of *Hotaka*. Then, they interpret the cover, considering:

- What are the clues that the novel is disaster fiction?
- What specifically do you think will happen in the novel?
- Who is the author? What do you know about him, if anything?
- What characters are you likely to encounter? How are you encouraged to feel about them, e.g. close or distant, equal or unequal, like you or different from you?
- How is the natural disaster represented, e.g. as something exotic and strange, mysterious and perplexing, frightening, powerful and overwhelming, joyous...?
- What are your expectations about the type of language that will be used? List some words you expect to see.
- Does this seem like a book you will enjoy? Why or why not?

Answers should be shared with others in the class and predictions can be revisited as students begin reading the novel.

### ACTIVITY 2: Developing Background Knowledge

Many students may not be familiar with various aspects of the tsunami that struck Japan in 2011. Start by asking them to complete the first two columns of a KWL (what we **K**now, **W**ant to know, and have **L**earnt): <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/printouts/chart-a-30226.html>. As students complete research, including web searches, they can complete the final column.

To develop students' background knowledge, the novel includes useful background information that could be accessed before (or during) reading. These include:

- a timeline of the real events on pages 207-210
- a glossary of Japanese words used in the book on pages 211-213. Google Translate is useful if you want to hear the words pronounced.
- Links to various websites and videos about the earthquake, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster and seawall construction post-tsunami – see page 214.

In addition, the following videos show examples of *bunraku* (Japanese puppetry):

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEUQNvn8EJQ> [This is quite a good introduction to Bunraku and includes narration that provides background and history.]
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-fhUne-KnA>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qcBSAwQVpw>

These might be particularly useful if you intend to undertake some of the freeze-frame activities below.

### ACTIVITY THREE: Earthquakes and Tsunamis

Many Australian students may not have experienced an earthquake or tsunami. Especially if it is planned to use the novel as part of a Geography unit, students could be asked to imagine they are the presenter for a segment on a science program or podcast. In this role, they should prepare a concise explanation of these two forms of natural disaster,



considering causes and impacts. This could be presented as a PowerPoint with narration, a live lecture (TED-talk style) or a short, animated video.

In addition (or instead), students could be shown one of the following:

- <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/101-videos/earthquake-101> [this includes reference to tsunamis]
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBkMLYUyUZg> [this is specifically about tsunamis].

#### **ACTIVITY FOUR: LOCATING THE SETTING**

To assist students in visualising the novel, ask students to complete a web search for the Tohoku region of Japan. The following is a useful starting point:

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tōhoku\\_region](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tōhoku_region).

Draw students' attention to the map in the text.

Using Google maps (or Google Earth on a tablet device) have students locate Japan and the Tohoku region. Use terrain and satellite views to gain a sense of the geography of the region.

In addition, consider asking students to do an image search on the region to create a mural, collage, travel brochure or Pinterest board.

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### **DURING READING**

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#### **ACTIVITY FIVE: Reading the Story (Reading Aloud, Silently and Readers Theatre)**

Some students are likely to find the context for the story unfamiliar and may find difficulty getting into the story. It is recommended that teachers read at least the first chapter to the students.

Quickly scanning the whole book provides an opportunity to preview features such as:

- the overall, two-part structure of the novel (events in 2011 on the day of and immediately following the earthquake, and events in 2014 as reconstruction and recovery continues)
- the epigraph on page 2 and possible connections with the *bunraku* performance here and later in the book, and various references to Japanese mythology (e.g. The god Kashima must be angry – p. 29).
- the pronunciation of names
- the use of Japanese words, usually followed by an English equivalent, e.g. 'Ji shin, earthquake!' (page 5).

When students are confident, they should have no trouble reading silently.

However, from time to time it might be worth focussing on key scenes using Readers' Theatre (e.g. <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/readers-theatre-172.html>).

#### **ACTIVITY SIX: Freeze Frame (Visualising the Story, Empathising with the Characters)**

The author, John Heffernan, recounts that: *I spent a month in the Tohoku region, seeing and feeling the effects of the disaster, talking to people who had lived through the horror, hearing stories of fear, terror, pain, grief, courage, determination and the power of togetherness* (page 205). To help students both visualise events and empathise with the characters (i.e. feel what they are feeling), stop reading from time to time and have students work in groups to create freeze frames of key scenes (see



<http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Teacher-needs/Pedagogy/ESOL-teaching-strategies/Oral-language/Teaching-approaches-and-strategies/Thinking/Freeze-frame>). As well as representing action, students should be encouraged to capture mood and feelings.

The following are some key scenes on which students might focus:

- the moment of the earthquake, page 5
- Takeshi disappears, pages 16-17
- The assembly after the graffiti is found, page 139
- Hotaka and Sakura on the secluded beach, page 147
- Sakura's address to the crowd, p166-169
- The fight page 182-184 [consider whether fighting was right or not - debate]
- Sakura and Hotaka jumping off the cliff, page 198
- Reaction to Miss Kosaki's singing at the memorial concert, page 200-202.

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## AFTER READING

### EXAMINING, ANALYSING AND RESPONDING TO THE TEXT

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#### ACTIVITY SEVEN: Summarising the Plot

After reading the entire novel, different groups of students could take one key scene to recreate in one or more freeze frames above and then stand in line with other groups to create a human timeline of the story. This could be photographed or videoed and then discussed later, for example:

- Why is this a key scene? How is it important to the events and emotional arc of characters?
- What has the freeze frame captured about that scene?
- Is there anything else you would have included in the freeze frame?

**Extension:** To explore mood and atmosphere further, students could be asked to imagine the book will be made into a movie and they will be the musical directors. Their job is to choose and justify music to accompany a scene. Different options could be played and their relevance and suitability debated.

#### ACTIVITY EIGHT: Characters (Creating Empathy)

The 2011 tsunami was a huge disaster that affected hundreds of thousands of people; in 2015, for example, it is estimated that 230 000 Japanese were still in temporary housing. Heffernan himself felt overwhelmed when he visited the area, but decided that 'Hotaka had to be a real *people* story' (page 206). Moreover, research tells us that empathy is most easily directed at specific people whom we know well. Consequently, the story focusses on a small group of teenagers.

To explore these characters, students could be asked to:

- create character profiles (see, for example <http://www.creative-writing-now.com/writing-character-profiles.html>). Alternatively, imagine that one of the characters from the novel is to be nominated for a Literary Hall of Fame. Working in small groups (on different characters), students can complete a nomination form (see [Blackline Master Two](#)).
- Once students are familiar with various characters, they can participate in a hot seat roleplay (<http://dramaresource.com/hot-seating/>). In particular, students could re-enact a press conference or use this to explore emerging, possible contested views about various characters, e.g. Can Tarou's behaviour towards

Hotaka be excused? Were Sakura and Hotaka irresponsible to jump off the cliff? Is the Shaman Lady just a crazy old woman? (see pages 29 and pages 59-60.

- Create a double bubble map to compare and contrast various characters (see this entertaining, short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwcaXFaBjZ0>). This can focus on: what they say; what others say about them; what they do; what the author says about them. This could also be used to compare different perspectives on one character, e.g. Tarou on pages 107-108 and then pages 111-113.

### ACTIVITY NINE: Literary Style – Language

John Heffernan employs a range of literary techniques that add colour and emotion to the text, creating a compelling narrative. *Hotaka* provides many opportunities to explore the use of various techniques, including the following.

- Use of extended metaphor. For example, compare the use of the bunraku (puppet) show on pages 3-4 and pages 94-95.
- Use of evaluative language across the novel to depict emotional arcs, e.g. when Osamu reveals to Hotaka that his parents are dead (pages 35-36) compared to his transformation on pages 152-157. Alternatively, compare the language when Hotaka is feeling scared and terrified (pages 70-75) to when he releases his burden by jumping off the cliff (pages 194-198).
- Language of persuasion and inspiration, e.g. Sakura's speech on page 202-203.
- Language use to depict traumatic scenes with sensitivity. Focus on the scenes during and immediately after the earthquake and tsunami, for example pages 13-14 (beginning of the chapter to victims writhing with the beast itself) and pages 28-30 (from He eventually found an opening to the end of the chapter).

Students can use some of these techniques when creating their own spoken, written and multimodal texts later in the study.

### ACTIVITY TEN: Responding to the Text

Re-read the 'Author's note' on pages 205-206, focussing particularly on the final paragraph where Heffernan says the novel is 'about identity, friendship, togetherness and community, our need to care for others, as well as our need to live with nature and not against it'. Added to that, we could add the importance of resilience and how situations can be made worse by self-interest (see for example pages 94-95 and page 145).

Focussing on one or two of these, identify the patterns (i.e. unfolding of events, evolution of characters, recurring ensembles of vocabulary choices) that occur in the novel. Then discuss how these patterns support specific readings of the story (i.e. what the story means). These patterns could be visualised in the form of a concept web such as the example in [Blackline Master Three](#).

To synthesise these understandings, students could

- write a haiku reflecting on one aspect of the novel. See <http://writeshop.com/writing-haiku-poem/>.
- imagine they are one of the main characters (Hotaka, Sakura, Tarou) addressing a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary event commemorating the tsunami (i.e. it is 2061). They should prepare a speech (perhaps in groups) reflecting on what happened, what they are doing now and what they learnt from the time of the tsunami and in the years afterwards.

### **ACTIVITY ELEVEN: Panel Discussion (What can people in other countries learn from the events depicted in *Hotaka*?)**

*Hotaka* highlights some aspects of Japanese culture, including the tendency of Japanese people to obey authorities even when it is not in their own best interests to do so. Students can participate in a panel discussion, considering what aspects of the students' own culture (and the communities in which they live) might prove to be positive and negative when responding and reacting to a natural disaster. For example, in Australia generally, there is an anti-authoritarian streak which might lead people to ignore emergency service directions; on the other hand, many Australians pitch in and help those in desperate need.

### **ACTIVITY TWELVE: Creating a Short Story**

Have students brainstorm what other natural disasters they know about, for example:

- Nepal Earthquake on April 25 2015
- Floods in Chennai, India, in 2015
- Black Friday bushfires in Victoria in 1939
- Tsunami in Sumatra, December 26 2004
- Hurricane Katrina in 2005
- Afghan mudslides, May 2 2004
- Jammu and Kashmir floods, September 5 2014
- Eruption of Laki volcanic system, Iceland, 1784
- 2014 polar vortex
- Cyclone Mahina, Cape York, 1899.

After sufficient research and planning, students should write a short story focussing on the impact of that disaster. Using some of the techniques from *Hotaka*, create empathy by focussing on a life-changing or crisis moment for one or two teenage characters.

### **ACTIVITY THIRTEEN: Disaster Risk Preparedness and Risk Reduction**

Find out what sort of natural disaster is most likely in your own area. Research the possible causes, probable consequences for your local area and factors that can either worsen or alleviate these impacts on communities. Then, produce a brochure, website or short video advising people of the dangers, offering survival tips, and letting people know where they can obtain help.

Here is an example for earthquakes produced by the USA's department of Homeland Security: <https://www.ready.gov/earthquakes>.

And similar advice to authorities from the Australian Government:

<http://www.ga.gov.au/earthquakes/staticPageController.do?page=/emergency-management/preparedness> (Also see related pages in left hand column of this web page.)

### **ACTIVITY FOURTEEN: The Psychological Impact of Disaster**

In the aftermath of a disaster, there is not just the physical destruction to clean up. Often the psychological effects on victims can be serious, as the reader is shown through the various adolescent characters in the book. For example, re-read the short paragraph on page 61 about Osamu's depression ('It's not that simple...Osamu's hidden self').

Depending on the age and circumstance of the students, secondary teachers may like to explore the psychological impacts of disasters.

Students could identify the characters traumatised by the disaster, citing evidence in the text that explains the events that have left their mark on the young personalities. Then use

evidence from the text to look for ways in which the characters were able to overcome their feelings and show resilience and courage.

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## **FURTHER READING**

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### **Information about John Heffernan**

- <http://www.spudplus.com/wp/>
- <http://biography.jrank.org/pages/2131/Heffernan-John-1949.html>

### **Other books to be published in the series, 'Through My Eyes: Natural Disaster Zones'**

- Shaozhen (Drought in Henan, China) by Wai Chi, August 2017
- Lyla (2011 Christchurch earthquake in New Zealand) by Fleur Beale, March, 2018
- Angel (Cyclone Haiyan in the Philippines) by Zoe Daniel August, 2018

### **Other YA books about natural disasters**

- *Meltdown: The Nuclear Disaster in Japan and our Energy Future* by Dr Fred Bortz [This is an information book about the meltdown of the Fukushima reactor after the tsunami.]
- *Drowned City* by Don Brown [A story based on the true events of Hurricane Katrina in the United States.]
- *Ash Road* by Ivan Southall [The classic Australian story of a bushfire accidentally set by three teenage boys.]

### **The 'Through My Eyes: Children Living in Conflict Zones' series**

- <http://throughmyeyesbooks.com.au/>

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## ABOUT THE WRITERS AND SERIES EDITOR

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### JOHN HEFFERNAN

John Heffernan lives in the New England Tablelands of New South Wales. He has written more than fifty books for young readers, over a wide range of genres and age groups. His books have won numerous awards. A journey through Afghanistan led to an ongoing interest in that country, and inspired the writing of *Naveed*. John writes with integrity and honesty, and his experience as a teacher has been invaluable in his writing and in his relationship with his readers.

### LYN WHITE

Lyn White has been a primary school teacher-librarian and EAL teacher for more than twenty years and recently completed postgraduate studies in Editing and Communications at the University of Melbourne. She is passionate about children's literature, committed to developing life-long reading habits in children and has great expertise in engaging students with quality texts and teachers with quality resources. Lyn is a part-time teacher at Blackburn English Language School and a pre-service supervisor with Deakin University.

### LINDSAY WILLIAMS

Lindsay has taught English for over thirty years and was a Head of English for many of those. Currently, he is undertaking his PhD through the University of New England, coordinates the English curriculum courses for Years 7 through to 12 at the University of Queensland, and runs Wordsmart Consulting. Recently, he produced a unit on Tim Flannery's *Here on Earth* for the Reading Australia website and has written a chapter on collaborative learning for the 2017 AATE publication, *The Artful English Teacher*. In addition, he has produced teachers notes for many new Allen and Unwin novels, including the *Worldshaker* and *Darius Bell* series, the picture book of *And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda*, Louis Nowra's YA novel, *Prince of Afghanistan*, and *Freedom Swimmer* by Wai Chim. Finally, he was the content writer for the Australian Children's Television Foundation CD to accompany the *Lockie Leonard* television series. Follow him on twitter: @Lindsayguru.

### Acknowledgement

The *Framework for Analysing Book Covers* and the *Literary Hall of Fame Nomination Form* are used by permission of the author, Lindsay Williams.

## BLM 1: Framework for Analysing Book Covers

Look carefully at the cover of *Hotaka*. Using the table below and over the page, record what you can see. Then, interpret the cover, considering:

- What are the clues that the novel is disaster fiction?
- What specifically do you think will happen in the novel?
- Who is the author? What do you know about him, if anything?
- What characters are you likely to encounter? How are you encouraged to feel about them, e.g. close or distant, equal or unequal, like you or different from you?
- How is the natural disaster represented, e.g. as something exotic and strange, mysterious and perplexing, frightening, powerful and overwhelming, joyous...?
- What are your expectations about the type of language that will be used? List some words you expect to see.
- Does this seem like books you will enjoy? Why or why not?

Feature: What I'm looking for	Observations: What I see on the cover of <i>Hotaka</i>
<b><i>Depicting the world of the book</i></b>	
What can you see on the cover? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• people and/or animals</li><li>• objects</li><li>• words?</li></ul>	
What are the people and animals doing?	

*(Table continues over page)*

## BLM 1: Framework for Analysing Book Covers

Feature: What I'm looking for	Observations: What I see on the cover of <i>Hotaka</i>
<b><i>Conveying relationships &amp; emotions</i></b>	
Based on shot types, how close are the main people shown, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• close (close up &amp; filling the cover)</li> <li>• short distance away (mid shot)</li> <li>• far away (long shot)?</li> </ul>	
Are the main people, objects etc. shown front on or from an angle?	
Are the main people, objects etc. shown as if the viewer is looking up or down at them?	
Are people or animals looking directly at or away from the viewer?	
Do facial expressions on people and animals depict them as: happy, sad, surprised, angry, scared...something else?	
What are the predominant colours, i.e. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• warm (red, orange, yellow)</li> <li>• cool (blue, green aqua)?</li> </ul>	
Do the images contain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lots of colour, fairly intense (suggesting familiarity with the time, place, characters etc.)</li> <li>• little or no colour (suggesting the viewer is more removed)?</li> </ul>	
<b><i>Organising the image</i></b>	
How is the cover organised overall? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a main central image (or words) surrounded by other images (or words)</li> <li>• mainly vertically – something in the top and bottom halves</li> <li>• mainly horizontally – something on the left &amp; right hand sides of the cover</li> <li>• a combination of the above? something else?</li> </ul>	



## BLM 2: Literary Hall of Fame Nomination Form

Choose a character from the novel that you believe to be nominated for the (fictional) Literary Hall of Fame. Consider the criteria which you will use for making this nomination, e.g. is the character particularly brave, kind, memorable, admirable and so forth.

**Name of character:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Title of Novel:** \_\_\_\_\_

Basic Facts	
<b>Gender:</b>	<b>Place of Birth:</b>
<b>Date of birth:</b>	<b>Current Age:</b>
<b>Weight:</b>	<b>Height:</b>
<b>Hair colour:</b>	<b>Other:</b>

Brief Personal History (e.g. family details and history, problems)

Distinguishing Characteristics (What makes this character so special?)

Personality					Conclusions
To what extent does the character display the characteristics listed below? Tick a column for each characteristic and provide evidence from the novel.					
Characteristics	High	Med.	Low	Evidence	<p><b>Main Achievements</b></p>          <p><b>Reasons for admitting the character to the Hall of Fame</b></p>
Courageous					
Fearful					
Intelligent					
Motivated					
Caring					
Community-minded					
Depressed & grief-stricken					
Resilient & hopeful					

### BLM 3: Sample Concept Web for Key Messages

The following is a partial concept web for a possible message about the importance of resilience. In the final row, more boxes and more detail from the novel could be added.

