

from the CBCA award-winning author

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JAMES ROY

Town by James Roy

Year 9 or 10

Background

Roy tells a few discreet stories; then you start to experience the added delight of making the required connections to recognise characters from previous stories, often allowing a surprising glimpse of how it feels to see the world through the eyes of someone previously only spoken 'about'.

Bill Wootton Review of *Town* in *Viewpoint: On Books for Young Adults*, 16, 1, Autumn 2008, p. 26-27.

Twelve months in the life of this country town, perhaps any country town, marked by the first day of school and the last day of the summer holidays frames James Roy's captivating linked stories, with each episode told by a particular inhabitant. Readers will find those characters and events that resonate most personally or experientially: perhaps it will be Marty's pleasure in the first day of school – and its surprises; or Robbie's moment of glory on the cricket field; or Janine's unfair job dismissal; or experimental subterfuge in the chemistry lab; or being super smart like Ronnie to get herself out of a nasty situation; or just hanging around in town with Lee and Waldo.

Objectives

At Level 6 students write sustained and cohesive narratives that experiment with different techniques and show attention to chronology, characterisation, consistent point of view and development of resolution.

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2005) *VELS English Domain Level 6 Learning Focus* p 26.

[Students] explain how texts are shaped by the time, place and cultural setting in which they are created.

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2005) *VELS English Domain Level 6 Reading* p27

everyone has a story

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Focus: The Town

- Why is this book called *Town*? What is it about the place that connects those who live there?

Consider the particular locales that Roy chooses – the school, a sporting oval, the shopping strip in the town centre, people's houses, an elderly people's home, the hill overlooking the town, a funeral chapel, a hospital.

- What do these choices tell us about Roy's values and ideology?

Create another character that lives in *this* town, and write a month in their life. Have them meet at least one character from the book.

Inspired by the first chapter in the book, write a first day of school set in your school, or the last day of the holidays.

Focus: Character

Consider the different ways that James Roy reveals character to us; from the inside in a first person voice, through dialogue, from the outside using a third person narrative, through the eyes of others.

Create another character that lives in *this* town, and write a day/week/month in their life. Have them meet at least one character from the book and think carefully about how you are going to reveal the character – eg first person, third person, description, dialogue etc.

Assessment

Use the program Inspiration or similar to create a mind map of the characters showing all of the connections between them in this graphic format.

Further Reading

Country Towns

Bateson, Catherine	<i>His Name in Fire</i>
Burke, J. C.	<i>The Story of Tom Brennan</i>
Crowley, Cath	<i>Chasing Charlie Duskin</i>
Gardner, Scot	<i>Gravity</i>
Gwynne, Phillip	<i>Jetty Rats</i>
Hartnett, Sonya	<i>Surrender</i>
Lawrinson, Julia	<i>Bye, Beautiful</i>

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Metzthen, David
Moloney, James
Pegler, Tim

Stony Heart Country
A Bridge to Wiseman's Cove
Game as Ned

Short Stories

Turner Hospital, Janet

Isobars
Dislocations

Wheatley, Nadia

Looking for Mondrian

Discontinuous Narratives

Bone, Ian
Carver, Raymond
Winton, Tim

Love Cuts
Short Cuts
The Turning

Film

Robert Altman

Short Cuts (based on the Carver short stories)

Town

everyone has a story