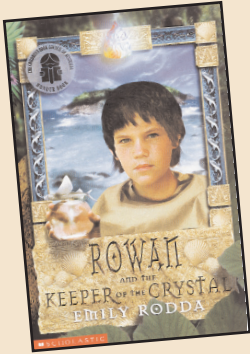


# ROWAN OF RIN

by Emily Rodda



A LITERATURE UNIT  
BASED ON THE FANTASY  
**ROWAN AND THE KEEPER OF  
THE CRYSTAL**

TEACHING NOTES BY KIM BANFFY

## INTRODUCTION

Each of the Rowan of Rin literature units is inherently cross-curricular and focuses on a particular Key Learning Area. As such, the units are a perfect way to cover large parts of the Stage 2-3 curriculum. This particular unit has a strong Personal Development focus, encouraging children to examine qualities shared by inspirational leaders and morally developed human beings (refer to Parsons 1987, Kohlberg's theory of moral development). Therefore, both English and PE/PH/PD curriculum outcomes have been included for this unit.

Whilst the units were designed to be cumulative, they can also be used as stand-alone units of work. If you have completed the units on *Rowan of Rin and Rowan and the Travellers*, this unit is best implemented in Term 3 of a school year. Whilst the unit is suitable for a Year 5 class, it could easily be extended to accommodate Stage 3 children.

As with the preceding units, Bloom's taxonomy is used as a guide to the activities, and children are encouraged to use Edward de Bono's (1992) *'Six Thinking Hats'* when giving thought to questions that arise.

## OUTCOMES

### Values and Attitudes

Students will:

- Create a range of spoken and written texts.
- Experience and respond to a range of spoken and written texts.
- Experiment with different aspects of spoken and written language.
- Show confidence in using language in a variety of contexts.
- Use language to respond to, support and encourage others.
- Choose to use language to communicate, to express ideas and feelings, to explore and to enquire.
- Show independence in using and learning language.
- Choose to reflect on and to share experiences of text.
- Explore the fact that people from different ethnic backgrounds offer equally valid cultural strengths that enrich a multicultural community.

 SCHOLASTIC

Teacher Notes for Rowan of Rin Series

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## Talking and Listening

Students will:

- Communicate effectively for a range of purposes and with a variety of audiences to express well-organised ideas dealing with challenging topics.
- Interact productively and with autonomy, in pairs and groups of various sizes and composition.
- Use effective oral presentation skills and strategies, and listen attentively.
- Discuss ways in which spoken language differs from written language, and how spoken language varies according to different contexts.

## Reading

Students will:

- Read independently an extensive range of texts with increasing content demands, and respond to the themes and issues in those texts.
- Use a comprehensive range of skills and strategies appropriate to the type of text being read.
- Critically analyse techniques used by writers to create certain effects, to use language creatively, to position the reader in various ways, and to construct different interpretations of experience.
- Identify the text structures of a wide range of complex text types and discuss how characteristic grammatical features work to influence readers' and viewers' understanding of texts.

## Writing

Students will:

- Produce a wide range of well-structured and well-presented literary and factual texts for a variety of purposes and audiences, using increasingly challenging topics, ideas, issues and written language features.
- Use knowledge of sentence structure, grammar and punctuation to edit own writing.
- Spell most common words accurately and use a range of strategies to spell unfamiliar words.
- Produce texts in a fluent and legible style and use computer technology to present these effectively in a variety of ways.
- Critically analyse own texts in terms of how well they have been written, how effectively they present the subject matter, and how they influence the reader.
- Critically evaluate how own texts have been structured to achieve their purpose and discuss ways of using related grammatical features and conventions of written language to shape readers' and viewers' understanding of texts.

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## Personal Development

### —Interpersonal Relationships Outcomes and Indicators

Although students are not directly discussing possible real-life situations for themselves, by addressing the issues confronted by *Rowan in Rowan and the Travellers*, they are encouraged to consider the special qualities of a trustworthy and morally developed person. As such, they will (IRS2.11):

- Describe how relationships with a range of people enhance wellbeing.
- Identify people from whom they can seek advice and support.
- Recognise that families and groups have common and differing customs, values and behaviours.
- Explain how positive relationships are developed.
- Discuss how trust is developed in relationships.
- Participate in group situations, demonstrating consideration for the needs, rights and feelings of others.
- Display communication skills that enhance relationships, eg listening, caring, negotiating, refusing, asserting.
- Discuss the benefits of friendships.
- Identify behaviours that are threatening (*eg, bullying and bribery*) and people who can help.
- Discuss ways that peers and others can influence decisions about safety and risk.

## BLOOM'S TAXONOMY ACTIVITIES

### Knowledge

- Draw a class mind map (or have students do individual mind maps) showing the three peoples who feature in the book—the people of Rin, the Zeebak and the Maris). Divide the Maris into their clans—the Umbray, Fisk, Pandellis and Mirril clans. On your mind map, write as much detail as you are able to brainstorm about the nature of each race. Record their history, their values and their beliefs (you might decide to do this on computer). Inspiration program: Use your six thinking hats ( De Bono, 1992) to remember all the things you know about these people.
- Ask students to each draw three portraits of how they imagine someone from each of the Maris clans would appear. Encourage them to use various media to complete their portraits. Ask them to remember to use the whole space, and to pay attention to the details that make these people distinct from each other. If this is too time-consuming, certain children could be assigned to complete one portrait each.

### Comprehension

Ask:

- Why was Jiller afraid when she heard about her task?
- Why did Rowan also have to accompany her?
- Why is the Keeper of the Crystal so important?
- Is the Keeper important only to the Maris folk? Why?

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- Each student to complete the following recount activity: Write a newspaper article for the Rin Bugle, explaining what Rowan's task was and why it was he who had to do it.
- Do you think the Keeper wanted Rowan to be the Chooser? What makes you think this?
- How did Rowan test the candidates? What were the tasks they had to perform?
- What was the great sacrifice that the Keeper had to make?

## Application

Read aloud the passage containing the description of the cavern before starting this activity, and re-read it a few times as students execute their drawings. You might also like to play some reflective music, such as *'Rainforest Magic'* by Tony Connor, to set the mood.

Each student could:

- Complete an artwork depicting the cavern where the crystal is kept. Have them begin by using lead pencil, then have them add different media when they have included all the details they feel are necessary to gain the effects they desire. Encourage them to think about using felt-tipped pens, coloured pencils, watercolour pencils and oil pastels for the base, and then to build layers using watercolour paints and collage materials. They could add fine details with ink after everything else has dried. They may like to put finishing touches to their artwork using glitter, and gold and silver pens. Challenge them to consider how they will frame their work. You might ask: 'Will your paper have to be rectangular, or could you make it more interesting by having it elliptical?' 'Could you use collage materials to frame your work in order to give it a feeling of depth?'

OR

- Make a 3D model of the cavern where the crystal is kept. They could use an old shoebox or they might choose to make their cavern from plaster. Encourage them to pay attention to details, such as the surface of the cave and the fact that they might need to build up layers on the surface to create the desired effect. You might ask: 'How could you make a good texture?'

OR

- Work with a partner to make a 3D sculpture of the great serpent. They should draw a pencil sketch first, to determine what they are aiming for, and then decide what materials they will use for their sculpture. Suggestions might include wire and plaster bandage, or waxed paper, craft glue and cane.

They might also consider decorating their finished model with 'scales' made from Easter egg or chocolate foil wrappers.



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## Analysis

Rowan had the daunting task of choosing a leader. Read together the following extracts and then make a class list of the qualities Rowan despised. For example, page 62-sincerity (you might ask students how this is different to lying); page 45-being willing to sacrifice one for the sake of others; page 47-not looking someone in the eye; page 65-lying. Now make a class list of qualities that are the opposite of these.

Ask students to name the qualities Rowan displayed by keeping his mind on his task. Encourage them to look at the following extracts for clues: page 67, second last paragraph (courage); page 73, first sentence of chapter 12 (trustworthiness); page 74, paragraph 2 (determination, commitment); pages 85-86 (compassion); page 103 (strength); and page 110.

## Synthesis—two major tasks

### Task 1

Each student's task is to complete a research project on one of the following well-known leaders:

- Nelson Mandela,
- Aung San Suu Kyi
- The Queen of Jordan
- Mahatma Gandhi

In the course of the presentation of their research, they are to include an illustration of the person and a map of where they are/were located. They must also answer the following questions about their chosen subject:

In what country do/did they live?

What group/country do/did they lead?

What group do/did they oppose?

Why are they considered to be remarkable?

Do/did they have a spouse or children?

What hardships do/did they endure for their cause?

Do/did they ever give up?

Do you consider that this person has/had personal power? Explain your opinion.

What personal gain did they receive as a result of their leadership?

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## Task 2

Each student should be part of a group of no more than four people who have researched the same leader. The aim of each group is to produce an i-movie short play of their project findings. Remember to ask students to use their White Hat thinking to include all the important facts, their Yellow Hat thinking to present them in a logical order, their Green Hat thinking to make their presentations something really special, and their Black Hat thinking to edit out elements that may spoil their presentations.

When students are just about finished, ask them to use their Blue Hat thinking to make sure they have not forgotten anything!

## Related Resources

*Six Thinking Hats for Schools* by Edward de Bono, 1992  
Macintosh computers and i-movie software.

## Related Songs/Music

- Lean on Me
- You've Got a Friend
- Wind Beneath My Wings
- Rainforest Magic