



Havoc

JANE HIGGINS

ISBN 9781922147295

RRP AU\$19.99

Fiction, B paperback











RECOMMENDED SCHOOL YEAR LEVEL: 7-9

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Text's Teaching Notes for the Australian Curriculum

- ▶ Text's teaching notes are designed for teachers to explore the novel in line with the *Australian Curriculum: English*.
- ▶ Questions are divided into stages: from pre-reading to post-reading and include suggested tasks for assessment.
- ▶ An ACARA coding system connects each task to the *Australian Curriculum: English*. It includes links to strands, modes, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.
- ▶ Refer to the legend below and the accompanying [Australian Curriculum: English Scope and Sequence reference chart](#) to decipher these codes.
- ▶ Students can record their responses in writing through reading journals, online discussions or verbally in classroom discussions.

Strands	LA – Language LT – Literature LY – Literacy
Modes	W – Writing L – Listening R – Reading
General capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Literacy  Ethical behaviour  Intercultural understanding  Personal and social capability  Critical and creative thinking  Numeracy  Information and communication technology
Cross-curriculum priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Sustainability  Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

SYNOPSIS

In the sequel to Higgins first novel, *The Bridge*, *Havoc* reunites readers with Nik Stais, an outsider who is haunted by the death of mother he barely remembers and struggled to build a relationship with a father with whom he has only recently been reunited. Set in a future dystopia, *Havoc* tackles contemporary issues of conflict, identity and environmental threat. As their home remains in conflict, divided by the river that acts as a border and living under the control of the Security and Intelligence Service, Nik and Pathmaker Lanya find themselves barricaded out of Moldam. A chance rescue of a young Dry-dweller girl, exposes a secret that is certain to wreak Havoc on innocent people. Nik must find his father and the truth to save the people of Moldam, but first he needs to decide where his loyalty lies and whom he can trust.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

New Zealander, Jane Higgins lives in Christchurch. She has a degree in astronomy and mathematics but was drawn to social welfare and pursued an academic career in the social sciences. Her love of science fiction and fantasy novel led to a writing course from where her first novel, *The Bridge* evolved. *The Bridge* was the winner of the Text Prize in 2010. Its sequel, *Havoc*, is her second novel.



BEFORE READING

1. Research the terms ‘biosecurity’ and ‘bioterrorism’. As you read, keep track of how these concepts are used throughout the novel. (ACELT1635) W LT
2. Find examples in history where towns or countries have been divided due to conflict? What divided them and how were they divided? For example, Berlin. (ACELT1635) W LT
3. If you have not already done so, read the prequel to *Havoc*, *The Bridge*. Once you have read it, predict what you think might happen in *Havoc* and justify your ideas. (ACELT1614) LT R

WHILE READING

1. How does the title ‘Havoc’ foreshadow the events? . (ACELT1771) LT R
2. Draw a map of the setting including key locations, where events occurred and add quotations that depict those locations. You could do this by hand or digitally. (ACELY1618) LY LT R
3. What role does the prologue play in establishing the narrative? What do we learn from it? What questions does it raise? (ACELA1640) LT R
4. For each chapter, note the following on the table below:

Chapter	Key moment in the chapter
Examples of language devices such as metaphors, similes...	Reoccurring motifs/symbols

(ACELY1637) R LT

5. What strengthens the relationship between Nik and Lanya throughout their journey? (ACELA1642) R LT
6. Nik is torn between different groups. Explain why he sometimes feels unable to make a clear choice. (ACELT1642) R LT
7. Explain the following extracts from the novel, identifying any literary devices (such as metaphors) in the extract. (ACELA1557, 1560, 1561, 1562) R LA
 - a) ‘There was nothing to see—Cityside was blacked out—but you could feel it lying there, like some huge wild beast from an old fairy tale, half asleep, tail twitching, eyes slow-blinking, watching across the water.’ P.6

b) ‘What secret?’
 ‘That the city was hungry. It’s like a kid that wants. It wants and wants and wants and it won’t stop until it’s got everything. It’s shit=hot to have everything, but to have it, you have to take it.’ P.77
 c) ‘It was, without doubt, the loudest thing I’d ever done.’ P.79

8. How does the shift between the narrative voice and the media commentary enhance the way we read the events from Chapter 36 onwards? (ACELT1643) R LT
9. What references to past events are made in the novel and why are they important to our understanding of the main characters? Consider events that do not occur in the period of time in which the novel takes place. (ACELT1627) R LT
10. People do not always do what we expect. Find examples in the novel where a character acts unpredictably. For example, consider Dash’s actions throughout the novel. (ACELT1802) R LT
11. On page 54, Nik describes the way he used to escape from school and ‘finds some space to think’. What has changed? Consider your own ‘place to think’. Where do you go and why? (ACELA1627) R LT
12. On page 98, the author refers to the term ‘down the rabbit hole’. What does this mean and what text is the expression deprived from? How is it relevant to this part of the novel? (ACELT1627) R LT
13. How is family redefined in the novel? Who does Nik consider to be part of his family? Why? (ACELA1627) R LT
14. ‘Pills for everything. Pills for being worried, pills for being fat, pills for getting old.’ pp.136-7. What does this tell us about society? (ACELA1627) R LT
15. What does the Security and Intelligence Service do to display its power in the novel? (ACELA1627) R LT
16. Why are memories important in the novel? (ACELT1774) R LT

AFTER READING

Character

1. Which characters symbolise innocence in the novel and how? Consider how the description or names of characters can reflect meaning. (ACELT1642) R LT
2. Create a character chart including the different groups represented in the novel. You could add illustrations to reflect each character or add a quote that best depicts each character. Think about the different ways that characters can be grouped (behaviour traits, outcome, trustworthy or not). (ACELT1642) R LT



- Nik often puts others ahead of himself. Why do you think he does this? What past experiences might influence this? (ACELT1642) ⚙️ 👤 LY
- What techniques are used by the author to create characters that we like and characters that we dislike? Does our response to any of the characters change during the novel? Why? (ACELT1771) (ACELT1627) ⚙️ 👤 R LT LY
- How has Nik been transformed his experiences by the end of the novel? (ACELT1642) 📖 ⚙️ LY
- Lanya is a 'Pathmaker', what does this mean in the novel? What other meaning does that title gain as we learn more about her character? (ACELT1774) ⚙️ R LT
- The characters are forced to grow up fast in the novel but every now and then we are reminded of their age. What evidence can you find to illustrate this? (ACELT1774) ⚙️ R LT
- There are some characters who seek peace and others who seek conflict. Make a list of each. Who doesn't fit neatly into either list? Why? (ACELT1635) ⚙️ R LT
- The most difficult conflicts often involve those we care about the most. Find evidence of characters in conflict with those they care about. Consider Nik's moral dilemma on whether to save or Lanya or fight for peace. What leads to such conflicts and how does the character in question resolve it? (ACELT1635) ⚙️

Identity

- Consider how each character's identity is connected to their location? What does this mean for someone like Nik who doesn't have a physical home? What does it mean for Rafael and Nomu whose home is under threat? (ACELT1635) ⚙️ R LT
- Nik's understanding of his own identity evolves throughout the novel. What leads to this and what does he discover about himself? (ACELT1627) ⚙️ 👤 R LT
- The Security and Intelligence Service aims to define people's identity by controlling them. Which characters appear most influenced by this power? What happens to them? (ACELT1635) ⚙️ LT R
- Who does Nik identify with most? Why? Does this change throughout the novel? (ACELT1635) ⚙️ 👤 R LT
- In order to understand who you really are, sometimes you need to go against what you have known most of your life. Find examples of this in the novel and explain the outcome. (ACELT1627) ⚙️ 👤 R LT

Revenge and Forgiveness

- Which characters seek forgiveness through their actions? Which are only in search of revenge? What causes this response? (ACELT1620) ⚙️ R LT
- What could possibly keep you going? Revenge might. Hope for revenge. But that's not what I've seen in my father. What does Nik learn about revenge from his father's actions? (ACELT1635) ⚙️ 👤 R LT
- Nik struggles with a moral dilemma regarding revenge. Put yourself in his shoes and write arguments for both sides. Write it as an internal monologue where Nik attempts to convince himself of the right thing to do. (ACELT1620) ⚙️ R LT

Loss

- What losses occur in the novel? How do these losses alter the behaviour of the character? (ACELT1635) ⚙️ 👤 R LT
- Sometimes it is necessary to experience loss in order to gain? What sacrifices do characters make in *Havoc* in order to gain what they want? (ACELT1635) 👤 ⚙️ R LY
- The loss of his mother haunts Nik. Does the discovery of the truth about her death help him to come

Style and structure

- Explore the ways that Higgins brings the city to life through her use of literary devices. For example, 'hunger nags at you the whole time, it's a voice you can't ignore'. P.91. The personification of hunger highlights the persistence of the pain and likens it to a person verbally nagging you. (ACELT1641) 📖 ⚙️ R LT
- What does the author's choice of words such as 'pest' P.135 imply the tone of the message given to Freida? (ACELT1642) 📖 ⚙️ R LT
- The Bridge* and *Havoc* are both set in a future dystopia. What does this mean? What other novels or films can you think of that are also set in a dystopian world. Write a comparison between *Havoc* and one of these other texts. (ACELT1772) 📖 ⚙️ R LT
- Use the style of *Havoc* and its dystopian landscape to create your own story. (ACELT1632) 📖 ⚙️ W LT

Themes

Conflict

- 'People had that hunted, hurried look – like they thought there was more to come.' P.45. How does ongoing conflict alter peoples' behaviour? (ACELT1635) ⚙️ 👤 R LT
- It is not only physical conflict that we see in the novel. Explore the different types of conflict (for example, moral conflict). (ACELT1806) ⚙️ 👤 R LT
- How is conflict inherited in the novel? (ACELT1642) ⚙️ R LT
- 'It hadn't occurred to me until then that people on Cityside might be as hungry as the rest of us.' P.93. There is no winner in conflict. Everyone suffers. Draw up a list of the price each side pays in the conflict. (ACELT1635) 👤 ⚙️ R LT
- While Nik fights for what he believes to be morally right, he is also confronted by personal desires. Find examples of moment when Nik is torn between the two.



to terms with this loss or add to his confusion?

(ACELT1627) R LT

4. Consider how goals can be lost in extreme situations. Which characters are at greatest risk of this and why? Consider Nomu and Raphael. (ACELT1635) R LT
5. Not all losses are about individuals. Think about what has been lost by whole communities in the novel. What have the people in Cityside, Moldam and the Dry lost? What has caused this loss? Is a resolution found in the novel? (ACELT1635) R LT

RESPONDING

1. *Havoc* illustrates that when people without individual power band together they are far stronger. Discuss. (ACELT1771) R LT
2. At the end of the novel Lanya and Nik have plans to rebuild both sides of the river as a unified city. Imagine what their lives would be like 5 years on. You could choose to write this from either character's perspective. (ACELT1644) R LT
3. Sometimes our losses make us stronger. Is this evident in the novel *Havoc*? (ACELT1635) R W LT
4. Change requires someone who is willing to take a risk. Who are the characters in *Havoc* who take risks and why are they willing to do this? (ACELT1627) R LT
5. Create the front pages of newspapers from each side of the river. Consider how each might present the same event differently. For example, the blowing up of the bridge or the gathering at the church near the end. (ACELT1625) R LT
6. Peace and unity sometimes comes at a cost. Does the outcome outweigh the cost in the novel? (ACELT1627) R LT
7. Create a game around the events in the novel. It could be a board game or a computer game. Include players and events depicted in the novel. Consider the challenges faced by each character in the novel to help structure your game. (ACELT1774) R LT
8. It is important to be true to yourself, no matter what the cost. Is this evident in the novel *Havoc*? (ACELT1627) R LT
9. While *Havoc* is fiction, there are a great deal of similarity between Nik's world and the one we live in. Explore the real world links with Jane Higgins' fictitious world. Consider the research you completed before reading. (ACELT1627) R LT