



THE LIEUTENANT

KATE GRENVILLE



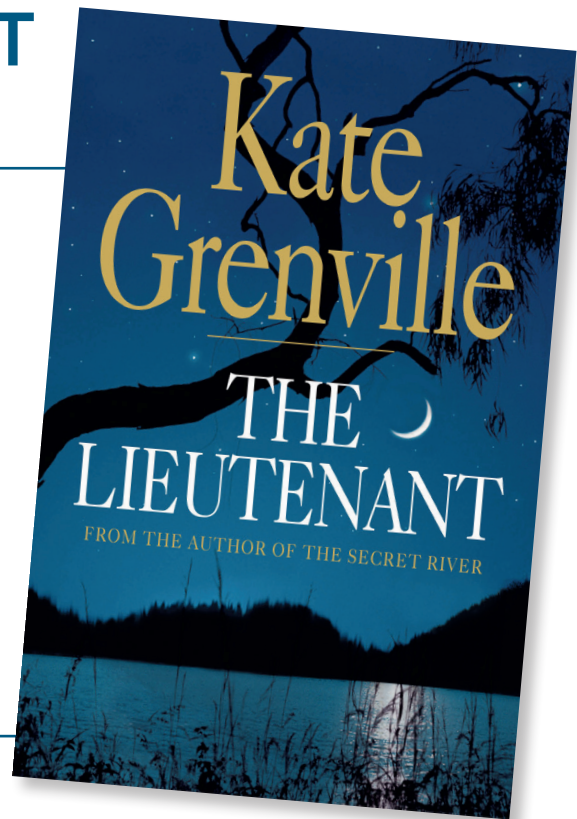
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Area of Study 2, Creating and Presenting
List 2, Context: Encountering Conflict



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Encountering Conflict

TEXT VCE ENGLISH TEACHING NOTES

- ▶ designed to meet the criteria of the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority's *VCE English Study Design*
- ▶ scaffolded to help teachers and students gradually develop their knowledge and understanding of the set text
- ▶ cater to a range of student abilities and learning styles
- ▶ contain a variety of activities to enable individual and group work
- ▶ encourage oral and written responses to the text
- ▶ guide students to develop critical and supported responses to the text
- ▶ feature ICT-related tasks
- ▶ include suggested assessment tasks as well as supplementary resources

ABOUT THE AUTHOR / HONOURS / ADAPTATIONS

Kate Grenville (1950 -) is one of Australia's best known authors. She was born in Sydney, and the landscape around that area is central to her novels *The Secret River* (2005) and *The Lieutenant* (2008). These novels are linked by a common focus on the lives of early white settlers in colonial Australia, and the clashes with the indigenous Australians that resulted. Grenville has strong views about the wrongs done to Australian aborigines by these later settlers, and it is this which is at the heart of both these novels. Her most recent novel, *Sarah Thornhill*, is a sequel to *The Secret River*, told through the voice of the youngest daughter of William Thornhill, the central character of the earlier novel. These two novels, together with *The Lieutenant*, form a trilogy about the first three generations of colonial Australia.

Grenville has published eight books of fiction. Apart from *The Secret River* and *The Lieutenant*, the best known of these are the novels *The Idea of Perfection* and *Lillian's Story*. She has also published four books about the writing process and the nature of creativity. In 1980 she went to the USA and completed an MA in creative writing at the University of Colorado. Her books about writing, and her memoir about the writing of *The Secret River*, *Searching for the Secret River*, are set texts for many English courses in schools and universities.

She has won many prizes for her work. Among those awarded for *The Secret River* were the Commonwealth Prize for Literature and the Christina Stead Prize. It was also shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize and the Miles Franklin Literary Award. Since it was first published, it has sold widely overseas and has been translated into many languages.

Honours

- Winner, The Orange Prize, *The Idea of Perfection* (2000)
- Winner, The Australian / Vogel's Literary Award, *Lillian's Story* (1985)
- Winner, Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Fiction, *Dark Places* (1995)

Film / Theatre / TV adaptations

- *The Secret River* (2015) ABC miniseries is in pre-production
- *The Secret River* (2013) play by the Sydney Theatre Company

- *Lillian's Story* (1996) starring Ruth Cracknell, Toni Collette and Barry Otto.
- *Dreamhouse* (1994) filmed under the title *Traps*

Grenville's writing is imbued with a deep psychological acuteness. She gives concentrated attention to the emotional, psychological and spiritual dimensions of her characters. Her humanity is one of the chief virtues of her writing. While she is aware of the ugliness and cruelty of human behaviour, she also shows us the potential fineness of people, and in so doing affirms the best qualities of our humanity.

INTRODUCTION

The origins of *The Lieutenant* lie in the story of William Dawes, a young Lieutenant of Marines who was on board the *Sirius*, one of the ships of the First Fleet which brought convicts from England to New South Wales in 1788. The details of Dawes' life closely parallel those of the novel's hero, Daniel Rooke. As Grenville comments in her *Author's note* printed at the end of *The Lieutenant* (pp. 305 – 307), 'Although nominally a soldier, [Dawes] was a considerable scholar in astronomy, mathematics and languages.' Daniel Rooke is also an expert in all of these areas. The notebooks that Dawes left, recording the language of the indigenous people of the Sydney area, inspired Grenville and provided the substance for much of the material in her novel. She has explained how: rather than inventing dialogue for the novel, she took conversations directly from the notebooks and then created contexts in which these conversations could have taken place. She saw her challenge as a writer of fiction to keep the raw material of the notebooks 'but embed it in a matrix where it could shine'. (The Book Show, 1 Oct 2008, Radio National)

Students and teachers could discuss how the material from Dawes' notebooks was used in *The Lieutenant* by looking at conversations between Rooke and the aborigines to see how Grenville has built context around them. Students could take on the persona of Grenville finding Dawes' notebooks or write a diary entry from Dawes' perspective expressing his opinion of the conflict he encounters such as the guilt (internal conflict) he feels when he captures the six indigenous men.

The central relationship of the novel, the friendship between Daniel Rooke and the aboriginal girl Tagaran, had its genesis in the actual friendship between William Dawes and a young aboriginal girl, Patyegarang. Grenville describes being 'absolutely electrified' at the idea of this young soldier having that relationship. An interesting feature of Grenville's character is that she made Tagaran a girl of only about eleven years of age, rather than fourteen, Patyegarang's actual age at the time of her friendship with Dawes. Grenville explained that she did this because she wanted to remove any possible suggestion that there could have been a sexual element in this relationship.

Dawes, like Rooke in *The Lieutenant*, was one of a party of soldiers sent out to capture six indigenous men and bring them back to the settlement, or if that were not possible, to kill six and cut off their heads. Like Rooke, he stated that he regretted complying with this order and would not do so again. Students and teachers could discuss the moral dilemmas faced by Rooke, and by Dawes, the historical figure who inspired the character. They could also discuss the issue of moral choice raised by the last section of the novel. This could encourage students to think about the internal conflict we all face when making decisions. Later in his life, Rooke, like Dawes, devoted his time to the abolitionist movement and the welfare of slaves. These raise the question: is self-interest the only criterion by which one makes decisions? Can decisions also be based upon the grounds of altruism and morality?

Another historical character whose life-story Grenville used in the novel was Watkin Tench (1758–1833). Like Dawes, Tench was a lieutenant in the Royal Marines and also made the voyage to New South Wales, on the transport ship *Charlotte*. Grenville made use of his *Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay* (1788). This suave, sophisticated, attractive man was the model for the character Talbot Silk in *The Lieutenant*. Teachers and students could discuss possible reasons for the inclusion of this character in the novel. The novel thus invites a discussion about the differences between history and fiction. As readers, we need to keep in mind Grenville's comments: 'Although I made use of historical sources, I departed from them in various ways. 'This is a novel; it should not be mistaken for history.' (p.307) Teachers could encourage students to explore how history can be adapted for fictional purposes, about the problems inherent in choosing historical events as basis for fiction. Students

ought, though, to be encouraged to focus on the ideas in the novel, especially those related to the Context Study: Encountering Conflict.

BACKGROUND

The Lieutenant is set against the background of the origins of early colonial Australia, starting with the voyage of the First Fleet of eleven ships, which brought the first British convicts to New South Wales, arriving there in January 1788. Previously, prisoners had been transported to the Thirteen Colonies of North America, but after the American Revolutionary War ended in 1783, the newly formed United States refused to accept further convicts. The first section of the novel includes an episode from this war, the battle in Chesapeake Bay in which Rooke is wounded by a falling spar. *The Lieutenant* prompts the reflection that the same British 'Redcoats' who oversaw the lives of the prisoners in New South Wales were also those who had shortly before sought to suppress the dissidents and revolutionaries of colonial America. In New South Wales, the Redcoats found themselves increasingly in conflict with Australia's indigenous people. The drama of the clash between occupier and occupied was thus played out in two continents on opposite sides of the world. Students could explore the stages of conflict (causes, responses, resolution and outcomes) by looking at other examples in history or literature and produce a creative piece, such as diary entries recounted differently by opposing parties in a particular conflict.

The British society into which Daniel Rooke was born was highly stratified, rigidly hierarchical. The novel frequently puts before us the harsh realities of that society as embodied in His Majesty's Marines, of which Rooke becomes a member. Students need to understand how dire the punishments for flouting authority were to fully understand the bravery shown by Rooke and Gardiner when they refuse to obey orders.

GENRE

That *The Lieutenant* is a novel, not a work of history, means that it is also a highly constructed work, shaped by its writer to give a particular emphasis to her story. To explore the constructed nature of the novel, teachers and students could discuss the following questions, while emphasising the conflict-related themes and ideas embedded within them:

- In what ways might a non-fictional history of the events in the novel differ from Grenville's fictionalised account?
- What did Grenville want to show about human behaviour through the story of Daniel Rooke?
- What characteristics of William Dawes does Grenville emphasise through her characterisation of Rooke?
- What have you learned about Australia and its history from reading this novel?

As well as being a historical novel, *The Lieutenant* could be construed as exemplifying the 'quest' narrative, in which circumstances provide the hero with the opportunity to seek and attain a specific goal. Rooke's quest is to find his own place in the world: 'He had no evidence, but doggedly believed that there would one day be a place, somewhere in the world, for the person he was.' (p.15) In New South Wales, he finds that place. He also expands his sense of himself and his own possibilities. In New South Wales 'with his thoughts his only company, he could become nothing more or less than the person he was. *Himself*. It was as unexplored a land as this one.' (p.78)

ACTIVITIES ON THE THEME OF CONFLICT

The Lieutenant is a set text for Area of Study 2: Creating and Presenting (Context: Encountering Conflict). The activities in the following sections are designed for teachers presenting this Context to their students.

There are different types of conflict: **internal, external, inter-personal** and **extra-personal** within a **social, cultural** or **religious** context. There are also levels or stages of conflict, such as **causes, responses, resolutions** and **outcomes**.

In pairs or groups of three, investigate the following topics in light of your study of *The Lieutenant*. Make notes of your findings and be prepared to share them with the class via email, oral presentation, blog, or by publishing on a class wiki.

- Conflict between English colonists and Aborigines – **extra-personal conflict**
- Conflict between the English colonists – **interpersonal conflict**
- Conflict within individuals – **internal conflict**
- The conflict between duty and conscience – **internal conflict**
- Ways of preventing conflict when encountering it – **the antidote to conflict (think about the fight or flight dichotomy)**
- The outcomes of conflict – **a stage of conflict**
- Verbal and physical conflict – **external conflict**

Note for teachers: Reading extracts from *The Secret River* will prove helpful. Students could compare the presentation of the theme of conflict in *The Secret River* and in *The Lieutenant*

THEMES, IDEAS AND VALUES

The Lieutenant raises the following ideas. Discuss each one in relation to the Context: Encountering Conflict, for example the different types and stages of conflict, referencing the following extracts from the novel.

Theme, idea or value	Evidence	Discussion
Conflict between people	<p>'War was a species of conversation' (p.108)</p> <p>'He watched her face, tightened against him, half hidden by her hair, her chin obstinate.' (p.225)</p> <p>'They none of them can be trusted,' Willstead said. 'They have never been known to attack in fair fight.' (pp. 241 -242)</p> <p>'It was a wicked plan, sir, I am sorry to have been persuaded to comply with the order. I would not for any reason ever again obey a similar order.'</p> <p>'The governor's face was slack with astonishment. Rooke watched him, saw all his prospects wither like a leaf in the fire.' (p.285)</p>	
Antidotes to conflict; conciliation	<p>'It was like being taken by the hand and helped step by step in the dark.' (p.149)</p> <p>'It was like a dance between the two of them, or the voices of a fugue.' (pp.163-164)</p>	

	<p>'He would not miss a third chance. He rehearsed it: the laying down of the musket, the stepping towards them with empty hands outstretched. He would not wait for the governor, he would take the initiative.' (p.98)</p>	
Fear	<p>'Do you understand, man? There are too few of us, and God knows how many of them.' (p.102)</p> <p>'I wish to God I had not done it! He should not have given the order, but I wish to God I had not obeyed!'</p> <p>'Gardiner was shouting, the words filling the hut and sailing out the window. 'For God's sake, man! Have a care what you say!' (p.113)</p>	
The power of one's conscience	<p>'It was not thought, not logic, not calculation. It was just an impulse of the body, like breathing or blinking: a reflex that was beyond reason. 'I cannot be part of this,' he said aloud.' (p.282)</p> <p>'It was a wicked plan, sir. I am sorry to have been persuaded to comply with the order. I would not for any reason ever</p>	

	again obey a similar order.’ (p.285)	
Positive, life-enhancing relationships	<p>‘Worogan forgot to be shy, so entertaining was Rooke’s performance. By the time he was creeping on all fours they were staggering with laughter, their dark cheeks slick with tears...’ (p.162)</p> <p>‘When she saw his face clear with relief, she left off pouting and laughed with pleasure at what they had made together. He laughed too, astonished at it, so rich and layered.’ (p.183)</p>	
The importance of words, language and names	<p>‘By God, Rooke, they are as loath to part with any speech as a miser with his gold!’ Silk said.’ (p.136)</p> <p>‘He was pleased to have been named: it was a gift.’ (p.143)</p> <p>‘He was not simply learning another language. He was remaking his own.’ (p.177)</p>	
Self-understanding and personal growth	<p>‘Perhaps he was not, after all, such a solitary soul. That was something about himself that he had not known before. Had it always been there, but never</p>	

	<p>brought to life by the right circumstance?’ (p.187)</p> <p>‘Now he saw how far he had travelled from the world he once shared with Silk. Tagaran seemed to have led the way down some other road altogether.’ (p.204)</p>	
Violence and cruelty	<p>‘Now there was nothing, only this pain in his head and his heart, which had seen into the vile entrails of life and smelled the evil there.’ (p.34)</p> <p>‘You know the governor is wanting to speak to the natives and they will not come near. He came up with a way to settle the thing. Decided in his wisdom to seize one or two by force.’ (p.110)</p> <p>‘Rooke heard the shocking wet slap of the cat landing on split flesh, twenty times, thirty times, fifty times.’ (p.197)</p> <p>‘Tagaran was energetically acting out an angry face, a hand rising and falling.’ (p.213)</p>	
The interconnectedness of all life	<p>‘They may be savages, we call them savages. But their feelings are no different from ours.’</p>	

	<p>(p.111) 'Newton had snared it in words. Every particle of matter in the universe attracts every other particle.' (p.195) 'In company with Tagaran he had glimpsed how everything found its place with everything else.' (p.234)</p>	
The crossing of boundaries	<p>'A boundary had been crossed and erased.' (p.178) 'He knew only that he was prepared to welcome the stranger.' (p.282) 'He was watching one universe in the act of encountering another.' (p.137)</p>	
The uniqueness and importance of all people	<p>'A face like this one in front of him now, laughing with an expression half sly, half amused, and the human soul behind it, with all its exquisite nuances of feeling.' (p.275) 'The exquisite instruments of astronomy could add new stars to the sum of the world's knowledge, but it took a soul to wonder at the beauty of those already discovered.' (p.291)</p>	

CLASSROOM AND HOMEWORK ACTIVITIES

Resources for teachers and students

The following electronic resources are useful additional information on *The Lieutenant*:

- An interview with Kate Grenville where she discusses and compares *The Secret River* and *The Lieutenant*:
[http://kategrenville.com/The Lieutenant interview](http://kategrenville.com/The_Lieutenant_interview)
- Ramona Koval (The Book Show, Radio National) discusses *The Lieutenant* with Kate Grenville. This contains a detailed commentary on the novel as well as Grenville's reading of extracts from the novel:
<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bookshow/kate-grenville-the-lieutenant/3159822#transcript>
- Pages from the William Dawes notebooks have been photographed, catalogued and transcribed. They are available on the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) website: <http://www.williamdawes.org/>
- A brief YouTube video of Grenville discussing *The Lieutenant*.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=kH9-LexkRz4 :
- An ABC miniseries of *The Secret River* will be screened in 2015

Close study of sections of the novel

Divide the class into groups to complete the following tasks:

1. Examine the titles of each of the five main sections of the novel. How do the titles reflect the content of these sections? Can you think of any alternative titles? Justify your choices.
2. The chapters of the novel do not have titles. Choose three or four key chapters and give them titles. Explain why you chose these chapters and why you chose the titles you did.
3. Choose one of the five main sections of the novel. Explain what it contributes to the novel as a whole, and how it is connected to the other sections.

Developing knowledge and understanding of characters

In pairs or individually, create a table using cardboard and textas or mind-map software such as Inspiration or Prezi (free cloud based software: www.prezi.com) to provide a visual map of the main characters that appear in *The Lieutenant*.

Developing knowledge and understanding of setting and considering how a setting can be used to convey a particular idea or value

There are a variety of different settings in *The Lieutenant*:

- Portsmouth
 - Greenwich
 - At sea, during the American Revolutionary War
 - The settlement at New South Wales
 - Daniel Rooke's observatory
 - Antigua
1. List three adjectives to describe each of the settings.
 2. How do the characters feel in these settings? Discuss a range of characters, if appropriate.
 3. Do these settings symbolise or reflect anything about the characters?
 4. Explain in a paragraph how Grenville uses one particular setting to help her readers understand a particular character or idea or value.

Examining Grenville's use of characterisation in *The Lieutenant*

Use the following table to develop notes on the following characters. Support each of your observations with an illustrative quote:

- Daniel Rooke
- Tagaran
- Talbot Silk
- Governor Gilbert
- Lt Gardiner
- Brugden
- Warungin

Name of character (does his/her actual name seem significant?)	
Does Grenville's description influence the reader to endorse or condemn this character?	
Personality	
Values (as revealed by behaviour/ actions, responses or dialogue	
Views/ attitudes (as revealed by behaviour/actions, responses or dialogue	
Traits	
Interests	
Outlook, ie. worldview (How might the character describe the world they live in? What words would you use to describe their worldview/ outlook on life?)	
Personal history – what events from the past seem to have influenced the development of this character?	
Who is this character in relationship with / connected to? What is the nature of this relationship?	
Are any of these close relationships?	
How would you describe the quality of the relationship this character has with other (specific characters?)	
Which of these relationships change?	
Which key moments cause this change? (Turning points)	
Do any of his/ her values change over the course of the narrative? In what ways?	
Do any of his/ her views change over the course of the narrative? In what ways?	
Which values seem to be important to Grenville?	

ESSAY PROMPTS FOR THE CONTEXT: ENCOUNTERING CONFLICT

The following prompts could be used for writing and discussion in relation to *The Lieutenant*.

1. Good will and co-operation can be antidotes to conflict.
2. Conflict can be resolved when people are able to put aside their fears and embrace the unfamiliar.
3. Fear is the major cause of conflict.
4. Conflict results when individuals stand alone against the groups to which they belong.
5. Understanding of differences can be necessary to resolve conflict.
6. The internal conflicts that people experience can be as distressing as conflict with other people.
7. When we encounter conflict, we learn about ourselves.
8. Conflict results when individuals are asked to compromise their own integrity.
9. In order to resolve conflict, people must accept the challenge to cross new boundaries.
10. When people have differing goals and outlooks, conflict is inevitable.