



Iris and the Tiger

LEANNE HALL

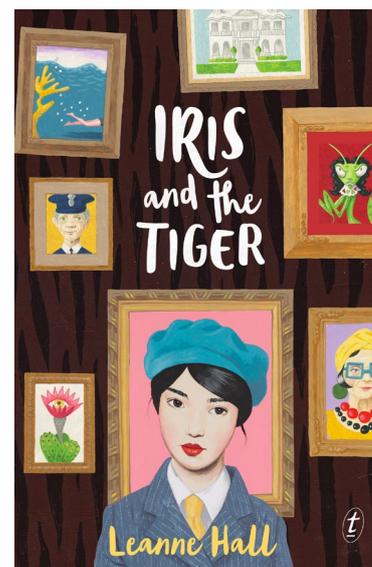
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RECOMMENDED AGE: 5–8

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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 S – Speaking
General capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literacy Intercultural understanding Personal and social capability Information and communication technology Critical and creative thinking Numeracy Ethical behaviour
Cross-curriculum priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia

SYNOPSIS

Iris Chen has been recruited by her parents as a spy. Her mission is to go to Spain to discover who is attempting to ‘steal’ her great aunt’s estate and to position herself as heir. Iris has already been briefed by her parents on Aunt Ursula’s unusual behaviour, but she doesn’t expect *Bosque de Nubes* to be so strange, or so magical. As the art work of her late Uncle James comes to life, she is distracted from her goal of saving the estate from developers by the mystery of one of his more famous works, *Iris and the Tiger*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Melbourne writer Leanne Hall and has worked in the arts and publishing. ‘Iris and the Tiger’ is her third novel, the first for younger readers. Her work has appeared in numerous publications, including a contribution to *Growing up Asian in Australia*. Her writing centres on fantasy and reality.



BEFORE READING

1. What is surrealism? Make a list of well-known artists who followed this style and look up some of their art work. A good place to start is Spanish artist, Salvador Dali. (ACELT1635) 🎨 ⚙️ LT W
2. Imagine what it would be like if your dreams came true? Which dreams would you like to come true and which would you rather did not come true? What might be some of the difficulties of dreams becoming real? (ACELT1635) 🎨 ⚙️ LT W

WHILE READING

1. What is the purpose of Iris's visit to Spain? How do we know that she is both excited and nervous about her trip? (ACELY1754) 🎧 📖 LY R
2. What is Iris's first impression of *Bosque de Nubes*? Select some words from Pages 3 and 4. Add some of your own words to describe *Bosque de Nubes*. (ACELT1774) 🎨 ⚙️ LT R
3. 'They were the woods you read about in fairytales.' (Page 4.) Make a list of fairytales that feature woods (such as Hansel and Gretel). What do they have in common? What might this suggest about the woods around *Bosque de Nubes*? (ACELY1743) 🎧 ⚙️ LY R
4. After reading the first few chapters, or after your first reading, write down your initial impressions of the novel. What is this novel really about? What message do you think it sets out to convey? What do you find engaging, interesting, confusing? Compare your views with two others in your class. (ACELT1640) 🎧 ⚙️ LT R
5. Iris states 'The most important tool of a good spy is very simple – it's the eyes.' (Page 15.) Is this true? How does her experience at *Bosque de Nubes* challenge this view? (ACELT1774) 🎨 ⚙️ LT R
6. What evidence is there that Aunt Ursula is not used to visitors, especially little girls? (Consider Pages 10, 11 and 87) (ACELT1774) 🎨 ⚙️ LT R
7. On her visit to the gallery in Barcelona, what does Iris learn about people's attitude to art? (ACELT1774) 🎨 ⚙️ LT R
8. How does the prank that a younger Aunt Ursula played on the art world reflect her view of people? How does she explain her actions? (ACELT1774) 🎨 ⚙️ LT R
9. Aunt Ursula refers to 'secrets' on Page 108. What secrets are being kept and by whom? (ACELT1774) 🎨 ⚙️ LT R
10. What did the local people think about Aunt Ursula? Why did they think this? (ACELT1774) 🎨 ⚙️ LT R
11. Do you think the artist created the world within *Bosque de Nubes* or did the world create the art? What evidence can you find in the novel to explain your choice? (ACELT1774) 🎨 ⚙️ LT R
12. 'The Dancercroft mansion was a cartoon palace. A Frankenstein's monster of several different

historical periods, with extra cherubs, flagpoles and turrets.' (Page 152).

What does the Frankenstein reference mean?

What does this tell us about the house and its occupants? (ACELT1774) 🎨 ⚙️ LT R

AFTER READING

CHARACTER

Iris

1. Why is Iris so interested in the painting *Iris and the Tiger*? (ACELY1745) 🎨 LY R
2. What indications are there that Iris is growing up? Consider what she says about her friendship with Violet. (ACELT1774) 🎨 ⚙️ LT R
3. Iris sees things at *Bosque de Nubes* that her mother could not see. How are they different? (ACELA1561) 🎨 LA R
4. When they first meet, Aunt Ursula recites a poem to Iris about her name (Page 7). To what extent do you think the poem is a true reflection of Iris? (ACELT1774) 🎨 ⚙️ LT R

Aunt Ursula

1. What makes Aunt Ursula mysterious? Make a list of some of the unusual things about her. (ACELT1774) 🎨 LT R
2. Aunt Ursula has a way of keeping herself young. What is it and why do you think she does it? (ACELT1774) 🎨 ⚙️ LT R
3. During the trip to Barcelona, what do we learn about Aunt Ursula from observing her interaction with others? (ACELT1774) 🎨 LT R
4. Aunt Ursula explains that the art world was challenging for women. What challenges did she face and how did she try to overcome them? (ACELT1774) 🎨 LT R

Jordi

1. Jordi is very protective of *Bosque de Nubes*, yet he is not a family member. Why do you think he wants to protect it? (ACELT1642) 🎧 ⚙️ ⚖️ LT R
2. What is Jordi and Iris's friendship based on? What do they have in common and what do they learn from each other? (ACELT1812) 🎧 ⚙️ ⚖️ LT W L
3. Jordi's father seems very stern. What are his expectations of Jordi and why? (ACELT1812) 🎧 ⚙️ ⚖️ LT W L

STYLE AND STRUCTURE

1. The novel follows Iris's story. How might the story differ if the main character was Jordi, Ursula or even Elna? (ACELT1641) 🎨 ⚙️ LT R
2. What is the purpose of the writing in italic? (For example, Pages 3, 4, 11) (ACELT1641) 🎨 ⚙️ LT R



3. What does the writer do in an attempt to maintain mystery in the novel? How does she attempt to mislead the reader? (ACELY1745) (ACELY1754)



THEMES

Trust and loyalty

- Which characters appear the most trustworthy at the start of the novel? How does this change by the end of the novel? (ACELT1639) LT R
- Who is Iris loyal to and why? (ACELT1812) LT R L
- What indications are there that Ursula trusts Iris by the end of the novel? How do you think Iris has earned that trust? (ACELT1812) LT R

Reality and illusion

- It takes a while for Iris to determine whether what she is seeing is really happening or if it is part of her jet lag. Make a list of all the strange things that happen to Iris. (ACELA1565) LA R
- James Freer painted things as he imagined them. How are Ursula's insect paintings and Iris's Exquisite Corpse drawing different? (ACELT1642) LT R

The artist's world

- Choose one of the unusual scenes that Iris sees at *Bosque de Nubes* and create your own version of the painting it comes from. (ACELT1774) LT R
- How is colour used by the author to convey her ideas about people and places? For example, purple is used frequently. Find the symbolism of purple. Consider the multiple references to shades of purple. For example, irises are purple flowers, Iris's friends name is Violet, the trees are purple. (ACELT1642) LT R

RESPONDING

- Aunt Ursula refers to Iris's 'moral compass' (Page 160). Which characters moral compass is the most balanced? (ACELT1812) LT R W

- To what extent do you think Aunt Ursula is testing Iris's suitability to inherit *Bosque de Nubes*? (ACELT1812) R W LT
- We do not fear what we can explain. Is this true in *Iris and the Tiger*? (ACELT1812) LT R W
- Aunt Ursula believes that 'Children understand art. It's grown-ups who know nothing about it.' (Page 84). Does this novel prove this to be true? (ACELT1812) LT R W
- Reality is not always what we think it should be. In what way is reality disguised in the novel? (ACELT1812) R W LT
- Recall a dream you have had that was difficult to explain. Imagine if it came to life. Write a story where your dream becomes real. (ACELT1814) (ACELT1644) (ACELY1757) W LT LY
- Jordi vows to start a petition to prevent *Bosque de Nubes* being turned into a tourist attraction. Present his arguments through a letter to accompany his petition or a speech to get signatures. (ACELT1774) (ACELT1644) (ACELY1756) W LT LY
- Iris 'found her own version of what the painting [*Iris and the Tiger*] meant' (Page 205). Art is open to different interpretations. Choose a selection of art work (it might be the ones you researched by surrealist artists, look at the collections on the National Gallery of Australia web site or visit a local gallery) and record your interpretation. It might help to use the following questions as a guide – 'What do you see? What do you think? What do you wonder?' Compare your interpretation with a friend. What do you think influences the different ways we see art? (ACELT1812) R W LT
- Create your own adventure in the 'feet-boots' or create a creature that you can imagine seeing at *Bosque de Nubes*. (ACELT1812) R W LT
- Iris suggests Willow could create a comic of the strange events at *Bosque de Nubes*. Choose a scene and recreate it as a comic strip. (ACELT1812) R W LT