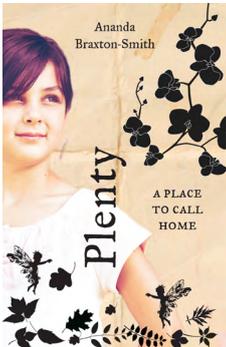


Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Plenty

Ananda Braxton-Smith
 ISBN: 9781742032429
 ARRP: \$14.95
 NZRRP: \$16.99
 August 2014

*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

Walker Books Australia
 Locked Bag 22
 Newtown, N.S.W., 2042

Ph +61 2 9517 9577
 Fax +61 2 9517 9997

These notes were created by Ben Gilholme.
 For enquiries please contact:
 educationwba@walkerbooks.com.au

Notes © 2014 Walker Books Australia Pty. Ltd.
 All Rights Reserved

Outline:

Maddy Frank has always lived in Jermyn Street. Always. But now her mum and dad are making her move from the city, far away to some place called Plenty. How will Maddy survive without everything and everyone she knows? Nobody understands. But what about her mysterious new classmate, Grace Wek, who was born in a refugee camp? Could Grace actually understand how Maddy feels?

Author/Illustrator Information:

Ananda Braxton-Smith is a journalist and children's author. She has written several titles for Black Dog Books, including a series for older readers, the Secrets of Carrick. The first two books in the series, *Merrow* and *Tantony*, were Children's Book Council of Australia Notable Books in 2011 and 2012, in addition to being finalists in the Young Adult Fiction category of the 2010 and 2011 Aurealis Awards.

How to use these notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:

- Primary years 5-6
- Secondary year 7
- Ages 10+

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Novel

Themes/ Ideas:

- Fitting in
- Coming of age
- Friendship
- Difference
- Acceptance
 - Nature
 - Refugees

National Curriculum Focus:*

Content descriptions include:

English

Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ACELA1496	ACELA1512	ACELA1518
ACELA1491	ACELA1500	ACELA1523
ACELA1492	ACELA1502	ACELT1616
ACELA1489	ACELT1610	ACELT1615
ACELT1604	ACELT1798	ACELT1618
ACELT1794	ACELT1609	ACELT1613
ACELT1607	ACELT1608	ACELY1711
ACELT1603	ACELT1612	ACELY1801
ACELY1694	ACELT1795	ACELY1714
ACELY1695	ACELY1701	ACELY1709
ACELY1688	ACELY1702	ACELY1713
ACELY1692	ACELY1699	ACELY1717
ACELY1697	ACELY1703	ACELA1516
	ACELA1501	ACELA1517
	ACELY1796	ACELY1816

Geography

Year 4	Year 6
ACHGK020	ACHGK033
ACHGS027	ACHGK034
	ACHGK035
Year 5	ACHGS041
ACHGK026	ACHGS042
ACHGK027	ACHGK036
ACHGK028	ACHGS044
ACHGS034	ACHGS045
ACHGS035	
ACHGS037	
ACHGS038	

History

Year 4	Year 6
ACHHK077	ACHHK115
ACHHS084	ACHHK116
ACHHS086	ACHHS119
	ACHHS120
	ACHHS121
Year 5	
ACHHK096	
ACHHK097	
ACHHS101	
ACHHS102	
ACHHS103	

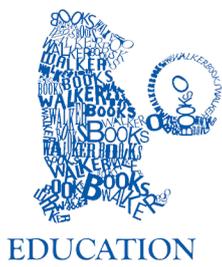
Drama

Year 3/4
ACADRM031
ACADRM032
Year 5/6
ACADRM035
ACADRM036

Visual Arts

Year 3/4
ACAVAM111
Year 5/6
ACAVAM114

*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

Discussion Questions and Activities

The Cover

Book covers not only grab our attention, they also activate our imagination, encouraging us to make predictions about the story inside. Use the cover image of *Plenty* to make predictions about the following narrative features. (You should be able to support your ideas with evidence from the image.)

- Character - Who is involved? Whose story is it?
- Setting - Where and when does the story take place?
- Theme - What ideas are explored?
- Plot - What happens in the story? What is the main complication?
- Genre - What type of story is it?

Use your predictions to write a blurb or a summary of the story you have imagined from your response to the cover image. Compare your story with others' stories. Were there any things that you had in common? What were the biggest differences? Did you focus on the same elements of the cover image?

Reading Journal

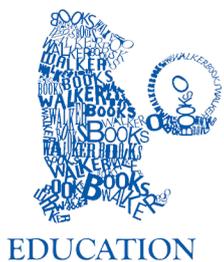
A reading journal is a good way to keep track of your thoughts as you read a novel. You can use an exercise book, type it into a computer document or create posts for a blog that you can share with your classmates. To get you started, after each chapter, answer the following questions:

- What was the important event?
- How is Maddy feeling?
- What do you think will happen next?
- How do you feel at the end of the chapter?

Vocabulary

For each word, find and copy the definition into your workbook. Make sure you include which part of speech the word is (noun, verb, adjective). Using the table provided, transform the word into other parts of speech (some words can't be transformed into all of the parts of speech). Use an ngram viewer (<https://books.google.com/ngrams>) to look at the history of each word's usage and find out what important historical events coincide with the time when it was most popular. You could also use an online translator to translate the words into different languages and create a word wall of synonyms and the translations.

	noun	verb	adjective	adverb
indigenous				
sanctuary				
constellation				
dementia				
orchid				
refuge				
deviation				
habitat				
disappointment				



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

Narrative Voice

Plenty is written in third person, mostly from Maddy's point of view. What evidence can you find for this on the first page? It is also an example of an intrusive narrator, meaning that the narrator knows what the character is thinking. Which characters' thoughts are we told? Find evidence to show that we only learn what Maddy is thinking directly. Why would the writer choose to focus on one character's thoughts?

Grace and Eleni's stories are examples of embedded narratives – stories within stories. While Chapter Nine, Ex-Kakuma, is Grace's story, it is retold by Maddy. How do we know this? Chapter Fourteen, Ex-Kakopetria, is a little bit different again. What is different? Why do you think the two embedded narratives are written differently?

Write a short story about something that happened to you recently. Make sure you include thoughts and feelings. Rewrite your story in third person. How does changing the type of narrator change the story? Compare pronouns used in the two versions of the story and fill in the table below. Teachers might also introduce the concept of second person narration and add it to the table. When and why is second person used?

First-person pronouns	Third-person pronouns

Like speech, thoughts can be reported or quoted. Quoted thoughts are put inside quote marks (or sometimes in italics) while reported thoughts are not. Are Maddy's thoughts quoted or reported? Find examples of both in other books you have read. Why would a writer choose one or the other?

Maddy's feelings change over the course of the story, which we can notice by looking at what she is thinking. As a class, break into groups and assign each group one or two chapters. Each group should then find as many examples of her thoughts as you can. Each group receives an A3 sheet of paper (more if they have been assigned multiple chapters). They write their chapter number somewhere along the top then draw a circle in the middle about 10 cm in diameter. In the space around the circle the group copies their examples. They then write one sentence inside the circle describing Maddy's thoughts. Put all of the pages in order on a wall in the classroom. Use this wall as the starting point for a discussion about the way Maddy's attitudes change or as the basis for a short exposition.

Perspectives

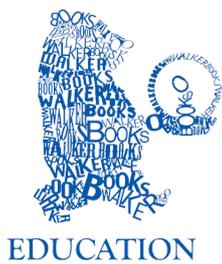
We learn very little about the feelings of Maddy's friends or her parents. We have to infer this information from their actions, the things they say and what Maddy shares about them. Maddy's best friend Sophie-Rose seems very upset about Maddy leaving. What things does Sophie-Rose do or say to show that she is upset?

Write three journal entries from Sophie-Rose's perspective: one when Maddy leaves, one when she first goes to visit Maddy at her new home and one after their camp out on the river on their eleventh birthdays.

Orchids

There are many types of orchids and for thousands of years orchids have captured the imagination of humans. Their stunning, often peculiar, flowers are in many ancient myths and folk tales, often having magical or medicinal properties. Like humans, orchids are species indigenous to an enormous variety of environments. "Orchids can live in the soil, on rocks, up trees and even under ground. There is an orchid for every place on Earth." (Page 122.) Orchids are also an important symbol in *Plenty*. Through orchids, Maddy learns to appreciate her new home and builds a relationship with Grace and Nana Mad.

Research the types of orchids in the novel and put together a short presentation or poster. You might also like to find out what particular orchids are indigenous to your local area.



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

On page 71 Maddy recognises that she has a lot in common with orchids. How do we know this? What other similarities between orchids and Maddy can you think of? Are there any other characters who have something in common with orchids?

“...it’s necessary – *necessary* – for every living creature – to have a *sanctuary*.” (Page 22.)

Sanctuary is another important idea in *Plenty* and at one point Maddy suggests that “... refuge might be something like seeking sanctuary.” (Page 73.) Orchids are also used as a metaphor for refugees. Maddy learns that “... without the exact right stuff, the exact right soil or air or even fungus, the orchids would not grow. In fact they didn’t even have to fly over the sea to have trouble.” (Page 77.) In learning to care for the orchids, Maddy also learns that it is possible for refugees to put down roots, that sometimes they just need a sanctuary. “...it’s really hard for them when they land. They have to fall in the *exact* right place to grow. They have to fall in the *exact* right stuff.” (Page 77.) What is the “exact right stuff” for a person to grow in a new place? In what ways is Maddy a refugee? Where does Maddy find refuge or sanctuary? What are the things or people that eventually help Maddy feel at home in *Plenty*?

Nana Mad’s orchids grow and develop throughout the story, just as Maddy does, until they are ready to be planted in the wild. Create a chart that compares the stages of the orchids’ growth and Maddy’s emotional growth. You can use the quotes provided as a starting point.

“Inside, the greenhouse was lined with benches on which sat rows of black pots. Most of the pots held nothing but dirt and a stick.” (Page 61.)

“That first day, the plants she watered were only clusters of leaves lying flat on the dirt. ...one had a stem rising, slim as a thread.” (Page 61.)

“Among the sprouting orchids, wrapped in the calm quiet and the smell of earth, Maddy felt a bit better.” (Page 76.)

“They noted and measured the parts of the greenhoods and drew pages of diagrams of their stems, leaves, buds and hoods.” (Page 76.)

“Nana’s greenhoods crowded the benches, shivering whenever the door was opened. Maddy knew their tongues had started to form inside their bright hoods.” Page (77-78.)

“Maddy opened one of the bigger greenhoods and peered inside.” (Page 81.)

“We plant these soon” [Nana Mad] (Page 82.)

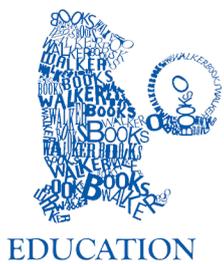
“Every pot held a new orchid. Every new stem shivered in the fresh air. Every new leaf and bud trembled ... They looked so soft. So breakable.” (Page 122.)

“Grace took an orchid pot out of a box and tapped the base. She turned it upside down and shook it. A tiny bundle of stem and bark, trailing pea-size tubers and hair-like roots, dropped into her fingers.” (Page 127.)

“Maddy took the orchid in open hands. It occurred to her that Nana had forgotten the labels – and now the whole planting party was out of sight. She didn’t know what sort of orchid this was.” (Page 127.)

“She took Maddy’s hands in her own and pointed to a soft, dark place among the manna roots. Into this Maddy planted the orchid. She laid the new rootball down, patting it into the planting mix.” (Page 128.)

“Maddy’s prayer said, *Please. Whatever sort you are, this is your new home. Please. Grow here: under these trees, by this river, in this place.*” (Page 128.)



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

Fairies

Maddy is a “Know-it-All” on the subject of fairies and they play an important part in the story. Fairies are a type of spirit that have a special connection to nature. This is something that is common to many cultures and their stories. Maddy also points out that “There are as many sorts of fairies as there are people” (page 64) and “... fairies were not necessarily slim girls with butterfly wings. Some were boys. Some were grown-ups. Some were short and fat with bee fur and stubby wings. “And they are not all beautiful” (page 63.) Research fairies in folk stories (hint: it’s sometimes spelled “faerie”) and compare your findings with Maddy’s explanation of the different types of personalities.

Fairies are magical creatures, but as we grow up we are taught that magic and fairies don’t exist. This troubles Maddy when Nana Mad asks her if she still likes fairies. “The question of fairies was not simple any more though. She didn’t know what to tell Nana. It was true she still *liked* fairies – but she wasn’t so sure about the *believing*.” (Page 64.) Nana Mad teaches Maddy that there is still magic in nature, that the real fairies are orchids, you just have to know what you are looking for. She shares with Maddy a book on orchids where Maddy is able to see the magic for herself. “The next picture looked like a fairy helmet dropped in the grass. And the third like a fairy holding a lantern. On every page of the book orchid fairies skipped, flew, skated. Baby fairies burst off the stems of their nursery plants. Fairy dervishes spinning in tutus and pantaloons.” (Page 65-66.) Find pictures of orchids and use them as inspiration for your own fairies. Download the images and turn them into fairies using a graphics program or simply use the images as the basis for your own drawings. Give the fairies names and describe their personalities.

Civil War & Conflict

Grace, Nana Mad and Ellen have all experienced the effects of civil war. Work in groups to research and create a definition of “civil war”. What makes it different to other kinds of war? Find out what countries have had a civil war and if anyone you know might be a refugee from that war.

Research the civil war in Cyprus that Ellen describes to Maddy. Organise your information into Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? Do the same for the war in Sudan that Grace’s family fled from. Use a Venn diagram to compare the two civil wars.

In some ways, fights within families are a type of miniature civil war. Compare the features of civil war with the conflict between Maddy and her parents as well as the conflict between Nana Mad and Maddy’s parents.

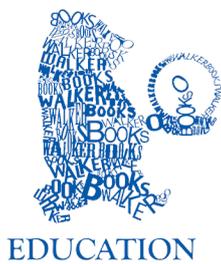
Read the conflict between Maddy and her parents in Chapter Eleven. In groups, take on the role of Maddy, Mother, Father and Grace to answer the following questions:

- What caused the argument?
- Is there any one person to be blamed?
- What made the argument worse?
- What made you angry?
- Why did you react the way you did?

Memory

When she first finds out that she has to move, Maddy is worried that she will forget her friends and home, but “Her parents had said that she would remember what was important.” (Page 34.) But she isn’t so sure when she tries to remember Popi Spyrou. “There wasn’t much more important than a grandfather and she’d forgotten him. It seemed more and more likely that she would forget everything.” (Page 48.) Why do you think Maddy is so concerned about forgetting? What else would she lose if she lost her memories? Why are memories so important to us? How do they help us understand ourselves?

In Chapter Thirteen, we learn that Nana Mad has dementia. Find out what dementia is and whom it affects. Do you know anyone who has dementia? What are some of the problems they face in day-to-day life? As Maddy feels more comfortable in her new home, she is less concerned about forgetting because it seems unimportant when she learns how serious Nana Mad’s dementia is. She is frightened by how much her grandmother forgets. “When her parents had said that Nana was forgetting things lately, Maddy had thought they meant people’s names or where she put her purse – things like that. She had never imagined this kind of forgetting.” (Page 106.) When Maddy and Grace find Nana Mad at the creek, we see how confronting dementia can be as the sufferers become disorientated and sometimes confuse the past with the present. When this happens they can get very frightened and upset because they don’t know where they are or how they got there. They often don’t recognise the people around them or confuse them with people from their past.



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

Familiar objects can often help people with dementia when they are confused or find themselves in an unfamiliar place. A glory box is a collection of objects or souvenirs of a special time in life. What would you include in a glory box of your own? Make a list of objects that represent important times in your own life and give a reason for your choice of each object. Take photos of the objects and create a digital glory box. You might also like to print the photos and make a poster or scrapbook.

Geography

All of the main characters in *Plenty* have come from other places. For Nana Mad, Ellen and Grace, their journey to Plenty was especially long and involved stops along the way. When she learns about the difficulties others go through Maddy realises that “Her move from Fitzroy had been so small ...” (Page 78.) Print out a copy of a world map. Mark out the stages of Eleni and Nana Mad’s journey from Cyprus (Chapter Fourteen) and Grace’s journey from Sudan (Chapter Nine). Make sure you label each of the stops. Calculate the distance of each journey and find out how long it would take to get from there to Upper Plenty if you weren’t a refugee. Compare this with how long it would have taken the characters in the story.

Constellations

Along with fairies, Maddy is a “Know-it-All” about stars, especially the constellation called the Pleiades or Karatgurk. Find versions of the Greek and Wurundjeri stories about the constellation. Use a Venn diagram to compare the stories and discuss some possible reasons for the similarities.

The Greeks and Wurundjeri are not the only people to have stories related to Pleiades. Find stories about the constellation from other cultures. Discuss similarities and differences. Why do you think people make up stories about the stars? Find other examples of constellations that have stories attached to more than one culture. Are there any other examples where different groups have come up with similar stories?

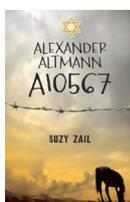
Using a star chart (you can find some online), connect the stars to make a picture. Use the picture as the basis for your own constellation. Give it a name and write a myth connected to it.

Grace’s brother also says: “Every one of those stars is a dead person ... A ghost.” (Page 93.) What other ideas about the origins of stars have you heard?

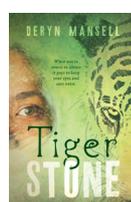
Other great books from Walker Books and Black Dog Books



Caro Was Here
Elizabeth Farrelly
9781922244833
AU\$16.95/NZ\$18.99



Alexander Altmann
A10567
Suzy Zail
9781922179999
AU\$18.95/NZ\$21.99
Classroom ideas available



Tiger Stone
Deryn Mansell
9781742032399
AU\$16.95/NZ\$18.99
Classroom ideas available



That Boy, Jack
Janeen Brian
9781922179005
AU\$16.95/NZ\$18.99
Classroom ideas available