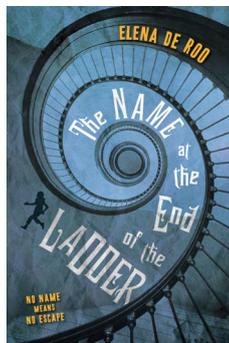




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



The Name at the End of the Ladder

Elena de Roo
ISBN: 9781922244475
ARRP: \$14.95
NZRRP: \$16.99
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

No name means no escape...

Win the game to choose your name and free the players who remain. Twelve-year-old September is determined to choose an adventurous name for herself from the Name Bank – not like all her friends, who are named after flowers or trees. Soon she discovers that she has no choice, unless she can win an ancient and mysterious board game. And every roll of the dice leads her further into danger.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Elena de Roo is an Auckland children's writer and poet. Her first book, *The Rain Train*, was illustrated by Brian Lovelock. This was followed by the Ophelia Wild series, illustrated by Tracy Duncan. *The Name at the End of the Ladder*, a junior fiction fantasy novel, will be released in 2014 from Walker Books Australia.

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 4-6
- Ages 9+

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Novel
- Fantasy genre
- Dystopian genre

Themes/ Ideas:

- Free will
- Adventure
- Board games
- Friendship
- Mystery
- Language

National Curriculum Focus:*

English content descriptions include:

Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ACELA1492	ACELA1502	ACELA1525
ACELA1498	ACELA1504	ACELT1614
ACELT1602	ACELA1512	ACELT1615
ACELT1603	ACELT1608	ACELT1616
ACELT1605	ACELT1609	ACELT1618
ACELT1607	ACELT1610	ACELT1800
ACELT1794	ACELT1612	ACELY1709
ACELY1689	ACELT1798	ACELY1710
ACELY1690	ACELY1698	ACELY1711
ACELY1692	ACELY1699	ACELY1801
	ACELY1796	
	ACELY1700	
	ACELY1701	
	ACELY1704	

*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.



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Elena de Roo on *The Name at the End of the Ladder*

Some of my favourite books as I was growing up were *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Wrinkle in Time*. I loved the way these stories could transport you to a completely other world. So when I decided to write a novel, fantasy was the genre I was naturally drawn to.

The Name at the End of the Ladder began as a short story. Although that particular story never took off, its concept – where names have the power to change one’s character and appearance – sat quietly at the back of my mind. Gradually, other ideas attached themselves to it. Often they were the things I’ve loved in other books and films – characters ending up inside a game or painting, or having to solve a riddle or puzzle to reach their goal. Finally, I felt I had enough material to begin.



However, instead of carefully planning out my novel, I decided it would be more interesting to just start writing and see where the story and characters took me. This meant I ended up having to rewrite the story many times before it was ready to be published. Maybe next time I’ll spend more time on an outline ... or maybe not.

Discussion Questions and Activities

Before reading *The Name at the End of the Ladder*, view the cover and title and identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author
- The illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb

Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about?
How do you think it will begin/end?

After reading, examine the structure and features of the book. Identify the following:

- Chapter headings
- Title page
- Dedication
- Page numbers
- Paragraphs
- Quotation marks

What are the themes in *The Name at the End of the Ladder*? Write a statement of belief for each theme, then assess how this book’s treatment of these themes makes you feel.

Keep a “Vocab Journal” while reading the novel. Make a note of any words you come across that you don’t know and look up their meaning. Also keep track of any words or phrases that you particularly like and write a note next to each explaining why you like that word/phrase.

What kind of text is *The Name at the End of the Ladder* (i.e. narrative, procedural, persuasion, information)? What features of the text make this apparent?

In small groups, make a mind map of some of the characteristics of the fantasy and dystopian genres. Consider settings, characters, events and themes. In what ways does *The Name at the End of the Ladder* resemble a typical fantasy or dystopian novel? How is it different?

Write a character report for September, August, Counsellor Garlic and Madame Alcina. Include a description of their appearance (or draw a picture), personality and character development throughout the novel. Pick out one pivotal scene from the book for each character and explain how the author influences the reader to feel a particular way about this character.

Use Wordle (www.wordle.net) or a similar site to create a word cloud to represent a character from the text.

How can the reader tell when a character is speaking? Identify a few examples from the book.

Write a book report on *The Name at the End of the Ladder* stating what you liked/disliked about the book, who you think would enjoy the book and mention any books that it is similar to. Use some quotes from the book to illustrate your statements. Create a class blog or Wiki to post your reviews and share them with other students. You can use this blog to post book reviews of any other book you read as a class or on your own. You can use Blogspot (www.blogger.com) or Wordpress (<http://wordpress.com/>) to create your class blog. Walker Books loves reading book reviews, send your class book reviews to educationwba@walkerbooks.com.au.

Whose point of view is this novel told from? Choose a key point in the book and rewrite it from another character’s point of view. What might the other character be thinking? How are they feeling? What is motivating their actions?

This novel deals with the power of names. Research the meaning of your name, keeping in mind that different sources or cultures could suggest different meanings. You can also ask your parents or guardians why they chose your name. Present the meaning or origins of your name to the class and discuss if you think your name suits your personality.



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

Imagine you were in September's position at the end of the novel and could choose your own name. What name would you choose? Research the meaning of names and imagine what powers or skills the name could give you.

This book uses only words to describe what is happening, where a comic uses mostly images and some text to show the reader what is happening. Create a comic strip of one of the scenes set in the Names and Ladders board game.

The prologue of this book is a letter addressed to a name candidate explaining what to expect during their first appointment at the Name Bank. Why do you think the author included this? How would the book be different if there was no prologue?

Reread the descriptions of Counsellor Garlic's office (Chapter Two) and Madame Alcina's office (Chapter Three). What language has the author used to create a rich description of the setting and atmosphere? Why do you think the author chose to describe these settings this way?

Write an extra chapter for the book in which September is given another powerful name. You can choose the name and create an imaginative meaning for it. How complications will this name cause for September? How will she overcome these problems?

What are September's motivations for visiting Madame Alcina and playing the Names and Ladders board game? How does her motivation change throughout the novel? Identify a pivotal scene where September's motivation for playing the game changes.

Have a class discussion on why you think the government would want to control the names that children are given in this book. Take turns explaining your idea and attempting to influence your classmates.

Choose another book that has a similar plot or shares elements of the plot (for example, a book about names, characters gaining new powers, a magical board game, etc.). Identify the similarities and differences between the books. Create a Venn diagram to illustrate your findings. Compare the way the two authors deal with similar plot elements.

Design a new book jacket for this book. Make sure to include all the important elements on the cover (title, author's name, blurb, publisher's logo, barcode, etc.). Present your new cover to the class and explain why you chose to design it that way.

September has to solve several riddles throughout the book to progress in the board game. Ask students if they know of any riddles to share with the class. Solve the below riddles:

Q. What has a face and two hands but no arms or legs?
A. A clock!

Q. What goes up and doesn't come back down?
A. Your age.

Q. Everyone has it and no one can lose it. What is it?
A. A shadow.

Q. Which month has 28 days?
A. All of them of course!

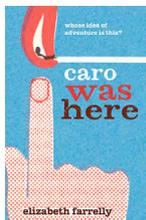
Q. What gets wetter as it dries?
A. A towel.

Q. If you take 3 apples from a group of 5, how many do you have?
A. Three – you just took them yourself!

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