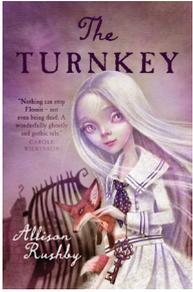




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



The Turnkey

By Allison Rushby
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Outline:

Flossie Birdwhistle is the Turnkey at London's Highgate Cemetery. As Turnkey, Flossie must ensure all the souls in the cemetery stay at rest. This is a difficult job at the best of times for a twelve-year-old ghost, but it is World War II and each night enemy bombers hammer London. Even the dead are unsettled. When Flossie encounters the ghost of a German soldier carrying a mysterious object, she becomes suspicious. What is he up to? Before long, Flossie uncovers a sinister plot that could result in the destruction of not only her cemetery, but also her beloved country. Can Flossie stop him before it is too late?

Author/Illustrator Information:

Allison Rushby, the daughter of an author, was raised on a wholesome diet of classic English literature. Some of her favourite books, re-read countless dog-eared times, include Rumer Godden's *The Dolls' House*, Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*, Joyce Lankester Brisley's *Milly-Molly-Mandy* series and Noel Streatfeild's *Shoes* series. She adores cities with long, winding histories, wild, overgrown cemeteries, red-brick Victorian museums, foxes and ivy. She likes to write with a cup of Darjeeling tea by her side and a Devon Rex cat called Claudia curled up in her lap. *The Turnkey* is Allison's first book with Walker.

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.

<p>These notes are for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary years 4-6 • Ages 9+ 	<p>Key Learning Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English 	<p>Example of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Novel 	<p>Themes/Ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility • WWII • Compassion • Mystery • Ghosts 				
<p>National Curriculum Focus:*</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td> <p>English Year 4 ACELA1492 ACELA1494 ACELA1496 ACELT1603 ACELT1605 ACELT1607 ACELT1794 ACELY1690 ACELY1694</p> </td> <td> <p>Year 5 ACELA1511 ACELT1608 ACELT1609 ACELT1610 ACELT1612 ACELT1798 ACELY1701 ACELY1704</p> </td> <td> <p>Year 6 ACELA1518 ACELT1613 ACELT1617 ACELT1618 ACELT1800 ACELY1709 ACELY1711 ACELY1714</p> </td> <td> <p>*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.</p> </td> </tr> </table>				<p>English Year 4 ACELA1492 ACELA1494 ACELA1496 ACELT1603 ACELT1605 ACELT1607 ACELT1794 ACELY1690 ACELY1694</p>	<p>Year 5 ACELA1511 ACELT1608 ACELT1609 ACELT1610 ACELT1612 ACELT1798 ACELY1701 ACELY1704</p>	<p>Year 6 ACELA1518 ACELT1613 ACELT1617 ACELT1618 ACELT1800 ACELY1709 ACELY1711 ACELY1714</p>	<p>*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.</p>
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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before reading *The Turnkey*, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

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

What are the themes in this novel? As a class or in small groups identify and list the themes. Individually write a statement of belief about each theme.

Fill out the below grid by identifying the orientation, complication and resolution of the story. Ask students to try to identify this structure in other books or movies. As a class, discuss how these narrative features give meaning to stories.

Orientation	Complication	Resolution

In small groups, make a mind map of some of the characteristics of the paranormal genre. Consider settings, characters, events and themes. In what ways does *The Turnkey* resemble a typical paranormal novel? How is it different?

Keep a “Vocab Journal” while reading the novel. Make a note of any words you come across that are unfamiliar 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.

In small groups, explain how Flossie demonstrates the following character traits in the novel:

- Resourcefulness
- Courage
- Persistence
- Compassion
- Leadership.

Choose a scene in the novel and rewrite it from the perspective of another character. For example, the scene where Flossie first sees the German soldier at St Paul’s, from the soldier’s perspective. Focus particularly on the character’s attitudes and feelings, rather than simply recounting events.

Find the “magnificent seven” on a map of London. Do these cemeteries still exist today? In *The Turnkey*, who are the turnkeys for each cemetery?

What is a “Turnkey”? What powers or abilities do they have? What is their purpose? What traits would make someone an ideal Turnkey?

This novel is set during World War II. Have a class discussion about WWII. What countries were fighting? Who were the key figures that are relevant to this novel (e.g. Hitler, Churchill, etc.)? What information does the reader learn about WWII from this novel?

Allison Rushby chose to set her novel during a real war and in mostly real locations. There are also a number of real-life people that appear as characters. Why do you think she chose to do that? Can the information and details about locations and people found in this book be treated as fact? Why or why not? What kind of book would you use to find out factual information about London or WWII?

Allison Rushby has also used popular real-life and mythical objects in the story, such as Mayan crystal skulls and the Holy Grail. Research these items to find other interpretations of what they are and the powers or significance they have. What other stories incorporate existing real or mythical objects in a new story? How are those stories similar or different to *The Turnkey*?

Track Flossie’s geographical movements in the story using a globe, atlas or Google Maps. Where are the countries she visits located? How far away are they from your school?

Why do you think Flossie is reluctant to tell Violet and Hugo about her connection to Viktor Brun?

Write a short companion story to *The Turnkey* using Flossie as the main character. It could be set before or after the events of the novel, or in between two of the chapters.

What do you think would have happened had the Nazis’ plan been successful?

Discuss Flossie’s relationship with Hazel. How do they support and help each other? If you were a Turnkey, what form would your advisor take?

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