



Walker Books Classroom Ideas



The Goose Road

By Rowena House
ISBN: 9781406371673
June 2018

*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 Bethany Nevile.
For enquiries please contact:
educationwba@walkerbooks.com.au

Notes © 2018 Walker Books Australia Pty. Ltd.
All Rights Reserved

Outline:

France 1916. Angélique Lacroix is haymaking when the postman delivers the news: her father is dead, killed on a distant battlefield. She makes herself a promise: the farm will remain exactly the same until her beloved older brother comes home from the Front. "I think of it like a magical spell. If I can stop time, if nothing ever changes, then maybe he won't change either." But a storm ruins the harvest, her mother falls ill and then the requisition appears... In a last-ditch attempt to save the farm from bankruptcy, Angélique embarks on a journey across France with her brother's flock of magnificent Toulouse geese.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Rowena House studied journalism at LSE and spent several years on Fleet Street, reporting for various news agencies. She has lived and worked in France, Africa and Belgium as a Reuter's foreign correspondent and covered the fall of Addis Ababa at the end of Ethiopia's 30-year civil war. She now lives in Devon and works as a freelance journalist. In 2013, Rowena won a competition run by Andersen Press, which published her winning entry, "The Marshalling of Angélique's Geese" in *War Girls*, a collection of short stories about WWI as seen through the eyes of young women. *The Goose Road* is her novelisation of that story.

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:

- Secondary, years 7+
- Ages 12+

Key Learning Areas:

- English
- History

Example of:

- Novel

Themes/Ideas:

- Bravery
- WWI
- Emotional and Physical Journeys



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

Discussion Questions and Activities:

Based on the cover and title, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Revisit your answer when you've completed the book. Was your answer correct?

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.

Discuss a particular episode in the story that you remember most. What themes does it touch on? Why do you think it remains so clear to you?

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

- Resourcefulness
- Courage
- Persistence
- Compassion
- Resilience

How does Angélique develop as a character over the course of the novel? Identify specific points in the book which signal growth or change, then present these on a timeline.

The book ends before we see Pascal return home. Write a story about Pascal and Angélique's reunion, from either character's perspective.

Angélique experiences many moments of sadness and loss throughout the novel. Consider the different ways she grieves for her father, Amandine and Uncle Gustav. What does this tell us about the roles they played in her life?

The Goose Road is set in France during World War I. Have a class discussion about WWI. What role did France play in the war? What other countries were fighting? What information does the reader learn about WWI from this novel?

Reread Pascal's letters home from the front. How does he describe the life of a soldier? Do you think this is historically accurate? Find some primary sources of other soldiers' letters to compare.

Pascal fights at the Battle of Verdun and the Battle of the Somme. How do different people Angélique meets react to hearing where her brother is fighting? What else do we learn about Verdun and the Somme from characters in the novel? Compare this to your own research about both battles.

Read the Author's Note from Rowena House at the back of the book, where she writes about her inspiration for the novel and her research methods. She says "I tried to be as accurate as possible about the history of the time, but some facts I did change to make them fit my story." Identify the elements of the text which could be viewed as historically accurate and those where the author may have used creative license to invent or embellish.

Find four websites that can be used to learn more about the book's setting or time period. Assess the websites to see if the information on them is trustworthy. Identify the purpose of the websites and compare it to the purpose of *The Goose Road*. What techniques have the authors used to achieve their purposes?

The requisition comes to take the Lacroix family's animals to support the soldiers. How do different characters feel about the requisition? Do you think that it was a fair process? Research the requisition, and have a class debate with one group taking the pro-requisition side, and the other against.

We learn that many of the geese are ill by the end of the novel, and that selling sick geese is not allowed. The novel implies that the birds are sick with the flu, which became a pandemic in 1918, killing an estimated fifty million people. How did conditions at the time help make this so deadly? How has it had a lasting impact on society? You could consider other more recent flu scares, such as the swine flu in 2009 or modern day bird flu.

Other Great Titles From Walker Books



Scythe
Neal Shusterman
9781406379242 PB
Classroom ideas available



Landscape with Invisible Hand
M.T. Anderson
9780763699505 PB
Classroom ideas available



Alexander Altmann A10567
Suzy Zail
9781922179999 PB
Classroom ideas available



The Knife of Never Letting Go
Patrick Ness
9781406379167 PB
Classroom ideas available