



Walker Books Classroom Ideas



The Mummy Smugglers of Crumblin Castle

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

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Outline:

1873 England

Orphaned Hattie goes to live with her great uncle and aunt in their crumbling castle in the English Fens. There, Great Aunt Iphigenia hosts flamboyant mummy-unwrapping parties to save her home from ruin – until the mummy supply runs out. On a dangerous search for more, a thousand miles up the Nile, Hattie is haunted by these ancient souls and tries to free them with unexpected consequences. A potent blend of fantasy and history, this rambunctious story has it all!

Author/Illustrator Information:

Pamela Rushby is the author of over 200 books for children and young adults, as well as children's TV scripts, documentaries, short stories and freelance journalism. Pam has been an advertising copywriter, pre-school teacher, and producer of educational television, audio and multimedia. She has won several awards, including the NSW Premier's Ethel Turner Prize, five CBCA Notable Books – and a bag of gold coins at a film festival in Iran! Pam believes the strangest, most riveting, heart-breaking, laugh-out-loud stories aren't fiction. They're real. They come from history. And she loves tripping over unusual incidents from history – and then writing about them.

Her website is www.pamelarushby.com

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 9-12

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Fiction

Themes/Ideas:

- History
- Adventure
- Mythology
- Family



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before Reading

Before reading *The Mummy Smugglers of Crumblin Castle*, view the cover and title of the book. 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? Revisit your answer after reading the story to see if your predictions were correct.

Exploring the Text

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.

Identify 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.

Discuss the title of the book. Do you think this is a good title? Why or why not? If you were asked to choose an alternative title for the book, what would it be? Remember, a good title should capture the audience's attention and give them some idea of what the book is about.

Consider the world Pamela Rushby has created in *The Mummy Smugglers of Crumblin Castle*. What elements in the world seem like facts, and what seems fantastical? Read the Author's Notes at the back. Were you surprised that the mummy unwrapping parties were real? Why or why not?

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

- Resourcefulness
- Courage
- Resilience
- Compassion

How does Pamela Rushby weave Egyptian mythology through the story? You could consider the character of Sekhmet, the talismans Hattie gives out, or her lessons from Uncle Sisyphus. Choose an Egyptian god mentioned in the text and find out more about them. You can share your findings with the class.

"They were the most stunning people Hattie had ever seen. And she took an immediate and intense dislike to them. Beautiful as they were, they looked, somehow, hungry. Although, she struggled to be fair, that might only be because they hadn't had any crumpets yet." (page 32*). Hattie knows there's something afoot with the Ravens as soon as she meets them. What clues can you find from Hattie's first introduction about the sort of people the Ravens prove themselves to be? How important are first impressions? Write a paragraph about a time your first impression of someone was either very right, or very wrong. Each chapter title gives you a hint of what's to come: *"Chapter*

4: In which Hattie meets the kittens and is conducted around Crumblin Castle," for example. How did this affect you as a reader? Choose a chapter and choose an alternate line for it. Did you find it challenging to sum up a chapter with a sentence? Why or why not?

In her author's note, Pamela Rushby presents two points of view on whether or not human remains be displayed in museums. Have a class debate on this topic: you can consider how different characters from the book might think on this issue and why.

"The two girls sat, each afraid in her own way, staring at the river. They did not understand each other at all" (page 171*). Compare and contrast the characters of Hattie and Amal. Things to consider could include their interests, their fears, their dreams and their families. How do they find a way to connect with each other?

Family is an important theme in the novel. How do Great-uncle Sisyphus and Great-aunt Iphigenia show Hattie what it means to be a family? How is this different to what she's known in her life so far? How would you define your own 'family'? Does it go beyond just your close blood relations?

Do some research on hieroglyphs (you could start with National Geographic <https://www.natgeokids.com/au/discover/history/egypt/hieroglyphics-uncovered/> or Britannica Kids <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/hieroglyphics/353247>). As a language, how are hieroglyphs similar or different to another language you already know? What challenges might there be to learn how to read hieroglyphs? Use the chart available on National Geographic Kids to write your own name in hieroglyphs!

The novel is set in England and Egypt in 1873. How does the time period affect the story? How is Hattie's daily life different from your own?

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.



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Creative Responses to the Text

Design your own cover for the book with new imagery and a new tagline that will persuade and interest people in reading the book.

Choose a scene in the novel and rewrite it from the perspective of another character. Focus particularly on the character's attitudes and feelings, rather than simply recounting events. How might another character see and experience events differently to Hattie?

Write a short story about an object that you imagine could be found in the Cabinet of Curiosities, and about the member of the Lambton family who found it.

Imagine that a movie was being made of *The Mummy Smugglers of Crumblin Castle*. In small groups, create a soundtrack to accompany some of the key scenes, thinking particularly about the mood you want to convey. You could either make a compilation of existing songs or compose your own musical pieces. Present your soundtrack to the class, explaining why you have chosen the pieces you have. Also choose your ideal cast for the movie and create a movie poster.

*Please check page numbers against a final copy of the book

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