



TEACHING NOTES



Evacuation Road

By HM Waugh

ISBN: 9781761110351

Reading Level: 13+ years

Eva is far from home when everything goes wrong.

And then it gets even worse.

Her evacuation bus leaves her behind, stranded with classmates she barely knows. The chase is on. But South America is big, and the old rules are changing quickly.

This is the road trip Eva never knew she needed.

Themes

- -Change / chaos vs order • Heroism • Survival
- Wealth • Prejudice • Mental Health • Companionship as salvation

Key Curriculum Areas

English

Year 7 - ACELT1619, ACELT1620, ACELT1622

Year 8 - ACELT1827, ACELT1628, ACELT1807

Year 9 - ACELT1633, ACELT1635

Year 10 - ACELT1639, ACELT1812

Science

Year 7 - ACSSU116

Year 8 - ACSSU153

Year 9 - ASSU180

HASS

Year 7 - ACHASSI152

Geography

Year 8 - ACHGK048

Year 9 - ACHGK060

Year 10 - ACHGK076, ACHGK077, ACHGK078, ACHGK081

Spanish

Years 7 & 8 - ACLSPC172, ACLSPC179, ACLSPC180

Years 9 & 10 - ACLSPC181, ACLSPC183, ACLSPC184, ACLSPC186

Discussion Questions & Classroom Activities:

THEMES

Change / chaos vs order

1. In the book, the characters discuss how the old rules are changing now that money and banks have collapsed. What structures of society do we take for granted? Pick one to change, and write a story based in that world.
2. During the book there's a scene where the group have to think on their feet as they endure a chaotic road attack. How did this scene make you feel? Did it enable reflection about the order we expect every day?
3. Do relationships between the characters change when order does? If so, what changes about them? Do some people gain or lose power?
4. What doesn't change in the chaos?
E.g. When they are helped to escape the potential ambush at the end on one of the towns
The kindness at the end when they are taken in by the school
5. What kind of long-term effect do you think the fall of the banks will have on the world?

Heroism / what is a hero? / inner vs outer strength

1. Discuss whether Eva shows inner or outer strength during the book, with examples
2. In Chapter 23, Eva says "I think we'd all been heroes." What do you think it means to be a hero? What is a stereotypical hero to you? Does this match any of the characters in the book?
3. Is there anyone in your life you consider to be a hero? Do they have any of the matching traits of characters in the book?

Will to survive / survival

1. Do Eva and her friends show a will to survive? Discuss.
2. Judging from the way characters handle survival in the book, what does survival mean?
3. Discuss the situations in the book. Do Eva and her friends manage their survival well? How would you have acted in their shoes?
4. Map the route that Eva and her friends take in the book, look at the locations, and discuss the survival tactics used to get from point A to point B.

Wealth / what is it?

1. How does Eva's opinion of money change between the beginning, middle and end of the book?
2. Would you prefer a barter society, or one based around money? Explain.
3. Do we place too much emphasis on money? How might the world be better or different if we didn't have to rely on money?

Prejudice

1. In Chapter 4, Eva says “Only one hope. Entwined in my second-hand clothes, my cheap boots, my home-cut hair: Prejudice. Just as I’d immediately decided Mr Stinky was the source of the smell, maybe Elena wouldn’t expect anything worthwhile to be wrapped up in my worn package.” How does prejudice impact Eva in the book? What prejudices does she hold, and how are they challenged?
2. Do you think there are any other prejudices between characters throughout? What are they?

Mental Health

1. Mike Cho’s drug addiction, the pressure from his swim coach; how has this continued to affect him?
2. What is the impact of loss of structure on the mental health of the characters? Even the antagonists?
3. Are Eva’s trust issues part of her will to survive? How does she overcome this, as well as her fears?
4. Do you think the struggle that Eva and her friends went through so far from home are struggles that affect people today?
5. How do you think that your own mental health would have fared faced with the challenges in the book?

Companionship as Salvation

1. Despite not having had much time together before the bus left them, the three make obvious mentions that they would not ordinarily have been friends. Do you think they compromise with each other’s differences because of the situation, or do you think that they were able to find common ground with one another because of the situation? Discuss.
2. Do you think Eva could have gotten through the ordeal on her own? Why or why not?

GEOGRAPHY & SCIENCE

1. South America has many diverse landforms such as mountains, river valleys and plains. Mark out where these occur on the continent. How were these different landforms formed?
2. What main types of biome exist in South America and how are they influenced by landform? How is food production impacted in each biome?
3. During the book Eva notes areas of past or present mineral wealth, including silver and lithium. Research resources in South America. Pick one type and summarise the economic, environmental and cultural impacts of utilising or mining those resources in that location. Is this a renewable or non-renewable resource? Do you think it is beneficial to use it? Explain.

About the Author

HM Waugh is an environmental scientist, author and educator with a long-term love of wild places and high mountains. This has led to icy feet and sunburnt cheeks in magical countries like New Zealand, Nepal, Bolivia and Switzerland. She has studied dolphins in New Zealand and rare plants in the Wheatbelt, and worked in mining and construction projects across Western Australia. When she's not writing, she's teaching school and community groups about stories, science and the environment. This often involves working with children and animals concurrently, and she loves being able to truthfully say she handles dragons for a job. Her debut novel 'The Lost Stone of SkyCity' was shortlisted for a 2019 Aurealis Award.



Author Note

This story draws as heavily on my own experiences as it does on my imagination. When I was 21 I backpacked across South America. I didn't sign up for any epic multi-country tours, preferring to travel at my own pace on public transport, making friends as I went. I saw and experienced amazing things; incredibly tough things; terrifying things. I'd vanish into the jungle following tips from an old guidebook, get lifts across vast rivers in fishing canoes, climb mountains in search of mystical caves, and tackle icy streets in the middle of the night. I'd sleep hugging my backpack on overnight buses, holding my knife under my pillow in noisy hotels, and with the moonlight glimmering on mosquito netting in humid forests. It was the greatest and hardest thing I'd ever done. I was kidnapped twice, and caught in multiple road blockades – for some of which I had no choice but to shoulder my massive pack, traverse the barbed wire and burning tyres, and try to find someone on the other side willing to turn around and get me to where I was trying to go. And I grew strong. On the inside and the outside.

I loved that trip.

So when a book idea started to grow about a future where all the banks collapsed, where savings were lost and financial dominos kept falling, I jumped at the opportunity to combine this with my memories of South America – both the beautiful and the scary.