



SCHEME OF WORK

PERFECT FOR:

Students aged 9+; a powerful story told in verse; poetry; exploring feelings; analysing the impact of language; play scripts; role-play and drama; joining a brave boy as he battles his demons and faces the trials and tribulations of his final school year.

KEY FOR CROSS-CURRICULAR OBJECTIVES:

English: Reading Comprehension; Poetry;
Creative Writing; Writing to Entertain and Inform;
Drama, Speaking and Listening
Design Technology and Art

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WEEK 1 (PAGES 1–95): THREE LITTLE BIRDS

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
Reading: Comprehension - Predict what might happen from details stated and implied. - Draw inferences, such as inferring characters' feelings. - Identify how language and structure contribute to meaning. Poetry - Interpret and perform a poem, using expression, actions and instruments to convey meaning. - Write a poem about an emotion. Drama, Speaking and Listening - Create a Conscience Alley to explore a character's thoughts and feelings and what motivates them to make a difficult decision.	1. Use the poem, 'Ya need to be able to pin this down', to draw and label a picture of the setting. You could also compare the two settings mentioned in the poem. (page 5–6) 2. Write your own poem in the style of 'Me (gonna do mine in rhyme)' to describe yourself. (page 11) 3. What do the poems on pages 14–17 tell us about the boys' dads? Do they give us an insight into Mum? You could compare these poems with 'Dad' by Andrew Fusek-Peters. 4. Explore the poem 'No. 115 dreams' by Jackie Kay. Can you write a poem in the same style, imagining you are Nate's house? What might it remember? What might it dream of? 5. Listen to 'Three Little Birds' by Bob Marley. Why might Mr Joshua have chosen this song? What impression do you get of him? Can you describe him in three words? (page 45) 6. Nate likes reading books by David Almond. Perhaps you could read some of his books alongside <i>The Final Year</i> and discuss why Nate might like them! 7. Read up to page 82. How is the relationship between Nate and Parker changing? Why do you think this might be? 8. How do you think Dylan is going to get on at school? (page 91) 9. What effect does the repetition on page 95 have? How might Nate be feeling? 10. What are your first impressions of Nate? Do you like him? How might he appeal to readers? Does he remind you of any other story or film characters?	Complete a Role on the Wall activity. Draw an outline of Nate. On the inside, write everything you learn about him over the course of the story. On the outside, record any questions you might like to ask him. In a different colour, you could image you are Nate and write the answers. One of the main themes is anger and how we deal with our emotions. Spend some time reading 'Albatross' by Laura Mucha, 'Anger' by John Foster and 'If Lonesome Was A Pot of Gold' by Dennis Lee. You might like to perform them in groups, too. Next, write your own poem about an emotion. Matt Goodfellow uses 'The Beast' to symbolize anger. How could you symbolize your emotion? As a class, create a Conscience Alley exploring what Nate should do on page 114. How would you react to Turner? Take it in turns to play Nate walking through the alley of voices. How do you feel? Write a paragraph in role, exploring your feelings and decision. How might the story have changed if Nate had reacted to Turner?



WEEK 2 (PAGES 96–190): A HANDFUL OF SNOW

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
Reading: Comprehension - Analyse symbolic language and features of poetry. - Retrieve and record information. - Explain your ideas and opinions. - Use an Emotions Graph to explore a character's thoughts. Poetry - Explore how poets have represented nature in their writing. - Write a poem inspired by nature. Design Technology and Art - Explore how artists have depicted a range of feelings. - Create a piece of artwork to symbolize a powerful emotion.	1. Use the illustration on page 101 to create your own self-portrait. You could even decorate it with your favourite lines from a range of poems. 2. What do we begin to learn about Caleb? How is he similar to Nate? Why might they like each other? (page 118) 3. What can you find out about the book <i>Skellig</i>? Why might it appeal to Nate? (page 120) 4. Why might snow look like someone has 'laid down feathers'? Why might the 'shoulders of the new world' be referring to? Perhaps you could compare this poem with 'First Snow' by John Mole? (page 139) 5. Pages 144 and 145 are taken up with a beautiful illustration by Joe Todd-Stanton. How does it make you feel? What might Nate be thinking and feeling? Why do you think there are no words on these pages? 6. What does the word 'transience' mean? What does the snow begin to teach Nate? How might he apply what he's learning to his own life? (page 152). 7. What do you think might be wrong with Dylan? Are there any clues that hint at what might be happening? (page 165) 8. What does Mr Joshua mean when he describes Nate as a 'sponge' and 'soaking it all up'. How does this link to the writing process? (page 171) 9. How does 'The noise' create a sense of tension and fear? Think about how the poem is set out. (page 174) 10. There are two blank pages on pages 178 and 179. Why? What impact does it have? How does it make you feel?	Create an Emotions Graph to plot Nate's changing thoughts and feelings throughout these pages. You may wish to refer to: <i>his changing relationship with PS, getting to know Caleb, visiting Windemere, Christmas, Dylan being rushed to hospital, the Sunshine Room.</i> Nature begins to play an important part in Nate's life when he visits Windemere. Explore some poems like 'Autumn Gilt' by Valerie Bloom, 'Ghost in the Garden' by Berlie Doherty, and 'Hunting in February' by Robert Hull. Spend some time outside in nature sketching what you see and creating a word bank. Now, write your own nature-themed poems. There are a number of famous paintings that highlight our inner struggles and emotions. Look at 'The Scream' by Edvard Munch, 'Head Series' by Sunil Das, 'The Great Day of His Wrath' by John Martin, and 'Aggression' by Mikalojus Povilas Vilutis. Discuss how each artist has depicted anger. Afterwards, create your own piece of artwork to depict a powerful emotion.



WEEK 3 (PAGES 191–285): IN THE DARKNESS WE FIND OUR PEOPLE

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
Reading: Comprehension - Identify and discuss the main themes in the story. - Create Character Profiles. - Retrieve and summarise information from a passage and use it to inform writing. Music - Use your voice and instruments with control and expression to create a soundscape. Writing in Role - Empathise with characters by writing an inner monologue. - Explore the difference between what a character says and does. Drama, Speaking and Listening - Rehearse and perform a scene from the story, thinking about characterisation and body language.	1. Summarise what we learn about Jax on page 200 in one sentence. What might Jax mean when he says he's the 'sugar-coated kid'? Do you agree? 2. Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast 'And then Jax is gone' (page 215) and 'The noise' (page 174). 3. Do you agree with Auntie San that Mum 'does her best'? Why? Why not? How are Mum and Nate similar and different? (page 227) 4. What do you think the 'wilderness', 'darkness' and 'light' all represent in the story? How did reading 'I pass him a poem' make you feel? (page 235) 5. Can we ever really know what a poem is about? (page 242) 6. Spend some time exploring 'Ten Things Found in a Wizard's Pocket', by Ian McMillan. Think about Nate and consider what you might find tucked away in his pocket. 7. How do you think the character of Mr Joshua will appeal to readers? Can you give examples and reasons? Do you think he is a good role model? Why? 8. Describe the following characters in one word and explain your word choice: <i>Nate, Mr Joshua, Turner, PS, Jax, Dylan, Mum</i>. Create a Character Profile about each one. 9. The main theme in this story is 'redemption'. Do you agree? 10. What do you think Nate learns about himself, his friends and family over the course of the story? How has he changed and grown?	Work in small groups to create a scary soundscape to accompany the poem 'The concrete cracks and crumbles' (page 252–253) and the descriptions of 'The Beast'. You could use your voices, body percussion and instruments to create strange, ethereal sounds. You could also use symbols to create a graphic score to represent your composition. What might Turner and Parker be thinking on page 206? Choose one of the characters and write an inner monologue to show their feelings. Now, act out the scene in pairs, taking time to pause and share your monologue. Is there a difference between what your character is saying and feeling? Choose a favourite scene or moment from this story and turn it into a play script. Think carefully about how a play script is set out and structured and use the artwork to help inform your stage instructions. Afterwards, work in small groups to rehearse and perform your play script, thinking about how you can use your body language and facial expressions!

