The EXPLORER

KATHERINE RUNDELL

CREATIVE WRITING RESOURCE PACK FOR KS2 TEACHERS

Dear teachers and librarians,

This resource pack is based on The Explorer*, by the author of the bestselling Impossible Creatures series, Katherine Rundell. It is a modern classic of an adventure that will not only transport you away from the classroom to the Amazon, but also spark the imaginations of all of the young explorers in your class. (And yes, we know there are many!) The lessons in this pack serve as a mini scheme of work with literacy objectives, providing material for five or more KS2 lessons – perfect for classes of any ability in years five to six. Even better, the final outcome of these lessons is for each child in your class to let their creative talents loose and produce some writing of their own – following in Katherine Rundell's adventurous footsteps!*

If all this sounds as exciting to you as it does to us, it's time to pack your bags and sharpen those survival instincts. Your class's creative journey starts here …

THE AIM

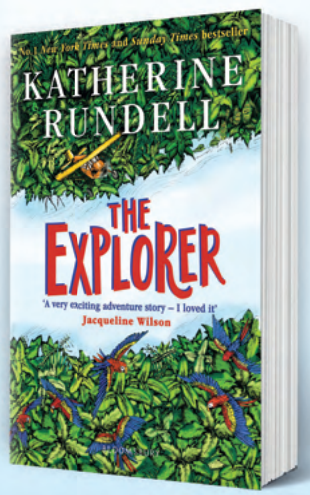
This resource pack is designed for children aged 9–11. It is based on *The Explorer* by Katherine Rundell and invites everyone in your class to explore, in every sense of the word! The lessons included have been designed as sequential activities and can be taught as whole units or as individual activities to be dipped in and out of. Each activity will guide pupils through the different elements of creative writing on the topic of 'survival', giving them the skills and confidence they need to draft, structure and write a creative piece of their own. We hope you enjoy the journey!



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CREATIVE WRITING OBJECTIVES

This resource pack provides material for six hour-long lessons that can take place during KS2 classes or as extra-curricular activities. The pack covers literacy objectives that include but are not limited to:

ENGLISH

Reading: comprehension

Help students to:

- Develop positive attitudes to reading, and an understanding of what they read, by:
    i. listening to and discussing a wide range of fiction
    ii. discussing words and phrases that capture the reader's interest and imagination
- Understand what they read, in books they can read independently, by
    i. identifying how language, structure, and presentation contribute to meaning
    ii. drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence

Writing: composition

Help students to:

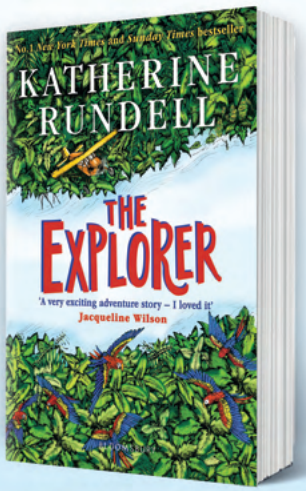
- Plan their writing by:
    i. discussing writing similar to that which they are planning to write in order to understand and learn from its structure, vocabulary and grammar
- Draft and write by:
    i. forming narratives, describing settings, characters and atmosphere and integrating dialogue to convey character and advance the action
- Evaluate and edit by:
    i. assessing the effectiveness of their own and others' writing and suggesting improvements



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INTRODUCTORY TASK FREE WRITING

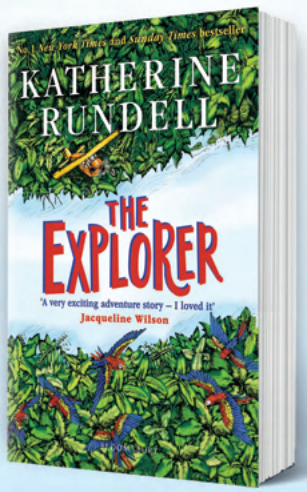
This task is designed to help students explore ideas and write in a free and unrestricted way.

It's time to get creative! Remember, this is a private writing task and no one is ever going to read your work, unless you would like them to. Now, it's time to get started. Begin with the words: 'I remember, I remember, I remember' until a thought comes into your head. As soon as it does, write it down! Continue to write, without stopping, until three minutes have passed. Don't worry, if you get writer's block you can go back to writing 'I remember' until a new thought comes. Relax, and enjoy!

Feedback questions:

- How did you find this experience?
- Was anyone surprised by the thoughts that came to them as they were writing?
- Would anyone like to share his or her work?





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LESSON ONE SHELTER

Lead-in questions:

- What does the title *The Explorer* make you think about?
- What important things do we need in order to survive? Write your own survival list!

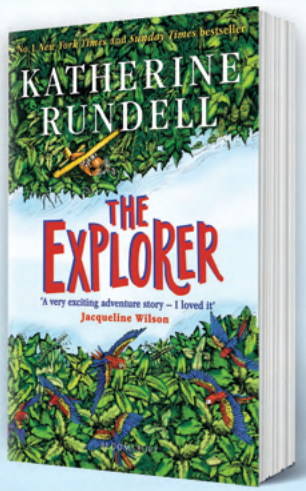
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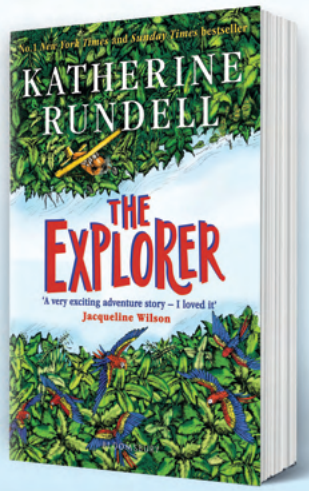


Task one:

Look at the following genre cards. Can you come up with a definition and example of each genre type on the cards?

FANTASY DEFINITION: A book set in an imaginary world, often including magic or supernatural elements. EXAMPLE: Harry Potter	**AUTOBIOGRAPHY** DEFINITION: EXAMPLE:
REFERENCE DEFINITION: EXAMPLE:	**HORROR** DEFINITION: EXAMPLE:
ADVENTURE DEFINITION: EXAMPLE:	**COMEDY** DEFINITION: EXAMPLE:

What genre do you think Katherine Rundell's *The Explorer* might fit into?





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Task two:

The others were asleep, sprawled on their stomachs in the warmth of the den. He scrambled out of the shelter and ran down to the river where he'd stacked the wood. The sun was hot and the air was clear; his skin had already burnt a furious red, but he barely felt it as he knelt by the pile of branches.

He looped each of the branches together with lianas, working a figure of eight, tying them so many times over that the raft was deep green, every inch embroidered with vines. Fred worked fast, biting down on his wrist and swearing as quietly as he could when he drove a thorn into his thumb.

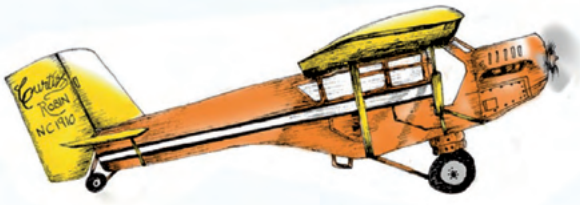
He made four squares, each about six foot by six foot. Then he stacked them into two thicker squares, and tied the two squares together, tugging the knots tight with his teeth.

'Yuck.' He spat out a beetle. Then he stood back.

(pages 75–76)

Read this extract from the book and complete the following comprehension questions/tasks:

1. What word does Fred use to describe the den? What does this suggest he feels about it?
2. What does Fred leave the den to do?
3. What time of day do you think it is in the extract?
4. What words or phrases used give hints about the setting?
5. What words would you use to describe Fred in this extract?

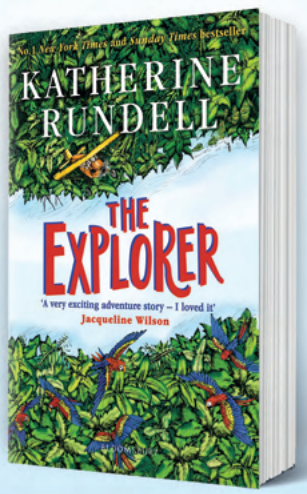




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Task three:

Now that you have guessed the genre of the book, imagine that you are an illustrator and you have been asked to design a front cover for *The Explorer*. First of all, make a list of five criteria for a good front cover!

CRITERIA FOR A SUCCESSFUL FRONT COVER:

1. Striking colours
2.
3.
4.
5.

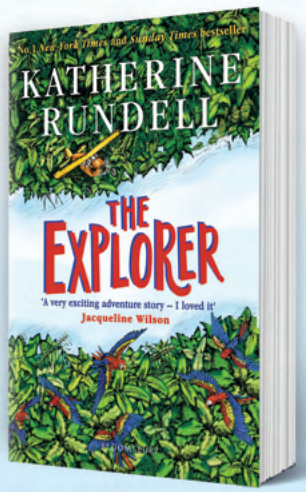
Make sure that you refer to the success criteria above when you create your cover, and don't forget to share it with us on Twitter at @KidsBloomsbury!



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LESSON TWO WATER

Recap question:

- What sort of setting does Katherine Rundell use in *The Explorer*?

Task one:

Fred kept poling. The branch was giving him new, shilling-sized blisters on the pads of his hands, but he didn't slow down. There was a twist, he found, that he could give the pole that made them speed faster. It blew Max's snot in a high ribbon up his face. The sun was hot and sharp out here. The air tasted brand new.

'Faster!' shouted Max. He rocked backwards and forwards on his haunches.

They hadn't gone far before there was another fork; one looked choked with weeds, so Fred chose the other. 'Left!' called Lila.

'Left,' Con echoed and nodded.

The left bend took them into a narrower river, winding slowly among close-set trees. Fred pulled up his pole and they drifted, staring down into the water. A shoal of fish swam helter-skelter under the raft. Max leant dangerously over the edge, dangling his fingers in the water.

Suddenly Con jumped. The hairs on her arms rose up in a blonde wave. 'What's that?'

'What's what?'

'Something down there. Silver. Down there! A piranha!' Con's voice came out thin and high. 'Max, get your hands out of the water!'

(pages 84–85)

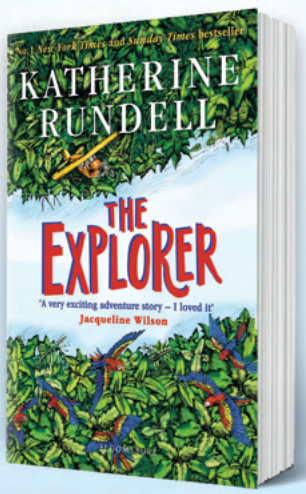
1. Underline any powerful words that stand out to you.
2. Underline as many ADJECTIVES as you can.
3. Underline as many ADVERBS as you can.



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Task two:

In pairs, pick out phrases that show evidence of the following:

1. The river is windy
2. The river is dangerous
3. The water is cold

Task three:

Can you match the following senses to a phrase in the paragraph?

SIGHT

SMELL

TASTE

SOUND

TOUCH

Task four:

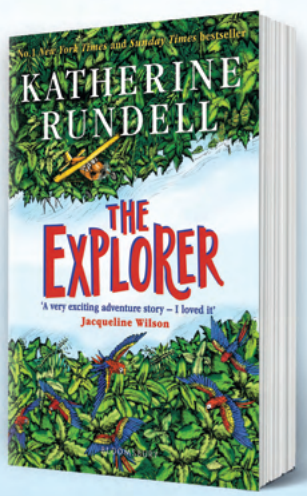
Now it's your turn! Write one paragraph to describe WATER. Think about the things you can see, smell, taste, hear and touch. Don't forget to use **powerful words**, **adjectives** and **adverbs** and to use plenty of **sensory description**.



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LESSON THREE FOOD

Task one:

Imagine you were in a plane crash and you find yourself in a strange place. How would you feel?

Put the emotion cards below in order from one to five (one being the emotion you'd feel the most and five being the emotion you'd feel the least).

OVERWHELMED

TERRIFIED

CURIOUS

SAD

DESPERATE

Task two:

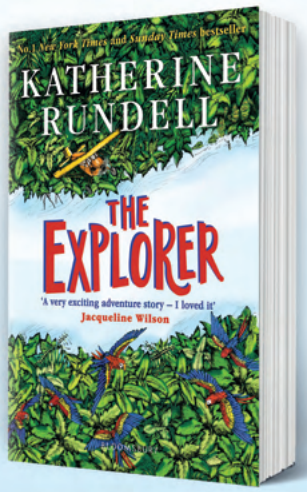
There is a blank emotion card for you to add your own ideas. Is there any emotion not listed that you think you might feel?



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Task three:

Although Fred had drunk so much water that the skin on his stomach was stretched tight, he was still painfully hungry. His insides ached and growled noisily. Con giggled. Fred thumped his front with a fist. His body felt half-mast: and flimsily built.

He hadn't eaten anything since an apple before he boarded the aeroplane. He wasn't sure how long ago that was – a day and a half? He thought back: the flight had been on Saturday, so today was probably – unless they'd all been unconscious for a long time – Sunday.

Fred shivered. He shook his head, trying desperately to clear the picture of the burning plane from behind his eyes. 'I think that there are insects you can eat,' he blurted out, more to distract himself than anything else.

(pages 50–51)

Of all the things on your survival list from lesson one, what do you think Fred needs the most right now?

Task four:

Using your emotion cards again, rank how you think Fred feels by putting them in order from one to five (one being the emotion he'd feel the most and five being the emotion he'd feel the least). For each card, pick out a word or phrase that shows evidence of it. There might be more than one word or phrase for each emotion. Here's an example:

DESPERATE: *"He shook his head, trying desperately to clear the picture of the burning plane from behind his eyes"*

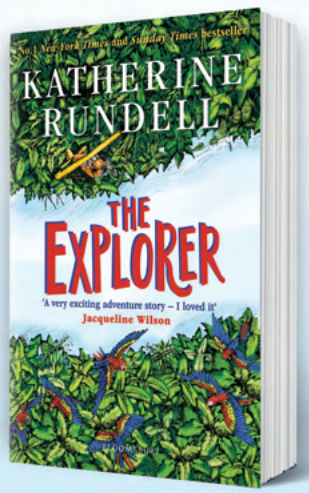
Don't forget to add another emotion that you think Fred has on to the blank emotion card.



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Task five:

Put yourself in Fred's shoes. You've just survived a plane crash and landed in a strange and dangerous place. Write a diary entry to explain how you are feeling. Try to use elements of your environment to reflect your emotions.

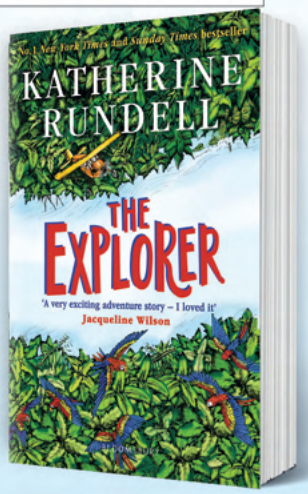
Dear Diary,



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LESSON FOUR FIRE

Lead-in task:

Using one word, describe the following things:

WATER

FIRE

SHELTER

FOOD

Task one:

Lila added a handful of dry moss. Fred blew again. The fire seemed to breathe in, and then exhaled a cough of flames. Max whooped. Lila held out a sheaf of twigs. The fire caught at them, made five burning fingers, then ate them whole. It belched upwards.

'More!' said Max. He was dancing in a tight circle, slapping at his ribs. 'Feed it more!'

Fred added a handful of bone-dry leaves, and another and another. The fire made a noise like an idea being born, a crackle that sounded like hope, and sent up a column of flames.

(pages 62–63)

Read this extract from the book and complete the following tasks:

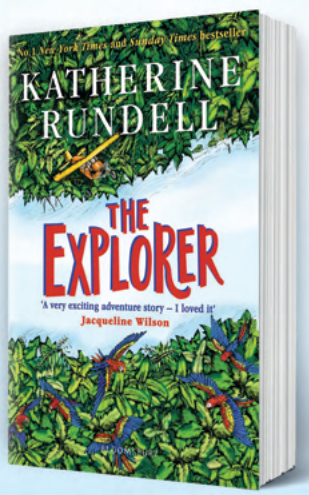
1. Pick out any words or phrases that describe the fire as if it were a person.
2. Pick out any words or phrases that show how the fire represents the characters' emotions.



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Task two:

Katherine Rundell uses a technique in this extract called PERSONIFICATION. In groups of four, try to use the same technique. First, you each need to choose one of the things from the lead-in task: water, fire, shelter or food.

Imagine that your chosen thing is a person. Think about the following questions:

1. What sort of personality would it have?
2. How would it behave?
3. What would it say?
4. How would people feel about it?

Task three:

Drama time! In the same groups, it's time to do some hot-seating! Each person should take it in turns to sit in the hot seat and speak, think and act as the character they have just created, whether it's water, fire, shelter or food. The other members of the group need to ask this person questions about their life. Use Katherine Rundell's extract as inspiration. Is your character well behaved? Naughty? Dangerous? Cheeky?

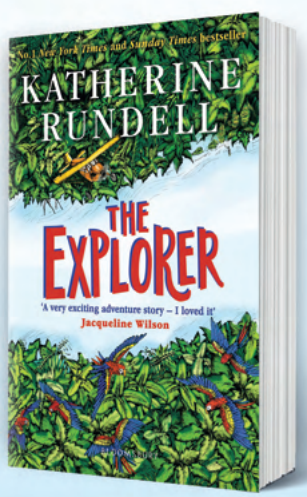
Don't forget to make notes on everything you hear. It will help you with your creative writing in the next lesson!



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LESSON FIVE SURVIVAL

Recap task:

Referring to your notes from last lesson, how did your classmates PERSONIFY the following things?

WATER

FIRE

SHELTER

FOOD

Task one:

Imagine you are stranded, just like Fred and his friends in *The Explorer*, but you have just found one of the things from the list above. Complete the following sentences.

I can see …

I can hear …

I can smell …

I can touch …

I can taste …

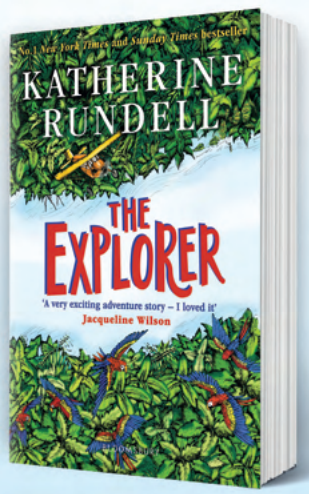
I feel …



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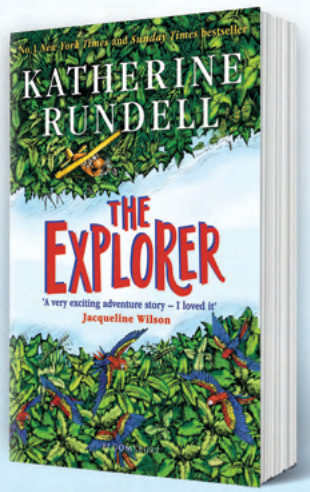
Task two:

Using your notes from task one, draw what you can see in your mind's eye. Annotate your drawing with the different senses that you used above.

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Task three:

Now, still imagining that you're stranded in a faraway place, write a postcard describing what it is like and how you feel. Use your drawing from task two to help you, as well as all of the techniques that you have learned throughout these lessons.

Task four:

Attach the front of your postcard (from task two) to the back of your postcard (above). Take a picture of your postcard and share it with us on Twitter at @KidsBloomsbury!



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