

# \* Activity Ideas \*

## Ancient Civilisations

- In chapters 11-14, Ami and the team find themselves in the burial chamber of a Mayan temple. You could use these chapters to introduce a history curriculum topic on Mayan civilisation, which occurred in central America around 900 AD, or to enhance and extend an existing topic on the Mayans or other ancient civilisations.
- Read chapters 11-14 with pupils. What do the descriptions tell us about the Mayans? Ask pupils to draw what they think a Mayan burial chamber might have looked like, based on the descriptions in the book. Then show them real historical images to compare. They could use these as a starting point for some research into Mayan burial rites and beliefs.
- Use Google images to find out where in the world the Mayans lived. Can pupils find the equivalent modern-day countries on today's world map?
- Adjoa recognises the Mayan hieroglyphics. Show pupils some images of Mayan symbols and sounds (e.g. using a website such as <https://www.mayaarchaeologist.co.uk/school-resources/maya-world/maya-writing-system/> — contains a table of all symbols and related sounds). Challenge pupils to write their name using the hieroglyphics. These could be coloured-in and used to create a display.
- In chapter 12, Adjoa explains the symbol representing Hunab Ku, who some believe was the Mayan god who created everything. Can pupils find out anything more about Mayan gods and beliefs? Look at the symbol together and discuss what the shapes could represent. Find images of some other Mayan symbols and find similarities in the shapes, colour and design that the Mayans used. Ask pupils to create their own Mayan-style symbols to represent important aspects of how we live now (e.g. family — including pets, traditions and festivals, religion, hobbies, schooling etc).
- Adjoa teaches the others about different Mayan calendars (pages 111-113). Use information such as that on <https://www.historyonthenet.com/the-mayan-calendar> to help pupils understand the calendar, and what they believed about certain days and times. Using some card and a split pin, can they make their own Mayan calendar? Ask pupils to convert some modern dates into a Long Count date (they could use this site to help them: <http://maya.nmai.si.edu/calendar/maya-calendar-converter>). What would their birthday look like? Or their friend's birthday? How about today's date, or the last date of term?
- You could use the information pupils get from Adjoa as a starting point for a much bigger project about the Mayans, finding out more about Mayan life including how they lived, what they ate, whether they went to school, their beliefs, their cities and buildings etc. Tell pupils that there are still remains of Mayan civilisation that people can visit in central American countries today, such as the El Castillo pyramid in Mexico. Challenge them to build their own Mayan pyramid!



Thank you for using these resources!

#EscapeRoom @nosycrow @edgechristopher

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# FIND THE ANSWER. SAVE THE WORLD.



A MIND-BLOWING new adventure from  
**CHRISTOPHER EDGE**

'A writer of genuine originality'  
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# A MIND-BLOWING new adventure from CHRISTOPHER EDGE

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## About this Resource

This resource uses *Escape Room* as a starting point to help explore cross-curricular themes around topics of friendship, the environment and ancient civilisations. There are suggested activities and discussion questions which can be used with a whole class or groups within a class, but can also be used to develop further activities and ideas, or to pose some 'big questions' for pupils to develop into personal projects.

## Before Reading

Start by discussing pupils' initial impressions of the book, including its look and feel. Look at the cover and title with the whole class, and ask questions such as:

- What do you think this book will be about?
- What kind of story do you think this is?
- How does the cover make you feel about the book? How/why does it do that?
- Why do you think there's a strapline? ('Find the answer. Save the world.')
- What else about the book persuades someone to read it?
- Is this a book you'd like to read? Why?

## After Reading

- What are pupils' reactions to the book? How does the ending make them feel? Are they surprised by it? Did they predict it? Does it make them feel sad/hopeful/excited/confused/satisfied? Make a list of class words that they would associate with their feelings about the story.
- Were pupils surprised by what they learned about Ami at the end of the story? Did they find any clues that gave hints about the ending? What do they think might happen next in the story?
- Would they recommend this story to other people of their age? Why/why not?
- You could use this book to explore understanding of genre – for example, is this an example of sci-fi, fantasy, adventure, mystery etc?

## \* Activity Ideas \*

All activities are suggestions, and can be adapted, extended or developed to fit with you and your class's curriculum needs. They could be used while reading the book or afterwards, although for some of them pupils will need to have finished the book.

### Friendship and Team-Building

- Discuss the character traits and characteristics of the children in the story. What kind of people are they? Pause in reading at different times to ask pupils what they think a particular situation tells us about the people involved, and whether this is something that they would have expected or not. They can use their discussions to write descriptions of each character, the kind of person they are, and how we know this.
- The five children in the book have to work together as a team, even though they have never met before the story begins. Ask pupils to discuss in pairs what they think are good characteristics for working in a team, then ask them to share their list with other pairs. Ask each small group to try and put the characteristics on their list in order from most to least important. Can they say why they've chosen this order? As the class gets to know the characters better, can they identify strengths and weakness of them as team members? If they could choose one of the characters to be on a team with them, who would they choose, and why? Ask them to identify any characteristics they have that would make them a good team member.
- Discuss friendships, and how we know someone is a friend. Pupils could complete the sentence 'A good friend is someone who...'. Which children in the book do pupils think would make a good friend and why? Are there any who they wouldn't like as a friend? For example, how does Ami show friendship to Min? How does Adjoa show that she is Ami's friend? Is Oscar a good friend to Ami?
- Discuss with the class how friendships can change. Think about the way Oscar and Ami's relationship changes over the course of the story. Would the class say they are friends at the end? Give reasons why.
- Ask pupils to choose their favourite escape room (i.e. the chess attic, the library of dust, the Mayan tomb, etc.), giving reasons for their choice. In small groups, ask pupils to design their own escape room. They could give this escape room a theme linked to the idea of saving the world. What puzzles, challenges and clues could they include in the room? They could get creative, writing a description, drawing a picture or creating a model of their escape room.

### The Environment, Plastic Pollution and Climate Change

- In chapter 21, Ami describes the terrible state of the beach that she finds herself on, which is covered in plastic. Do pupils think this kind of situation could really happen, or is it fiction? Find some real images of plastic pollution on beaches (e.g. from the BBC or Greenpeace websites, or news reports about Henderson Island in the South Pacific) to show pupils, to demonstrate that this is actually happening now. Why do they think it is such a big problem?
- Bring in, or ask pupils to bring in, some clean plastic waste, and to find some from around the classroom (e.g. bottles, straws, takeaway coffee cups, coffee pods, beer can holders, packaging, plastic bags, fruit trays, plastic clothes labels etc.). They might be surprised at how much they find once they start looking! Ask pupils to do some research into how long it takes these things to decompose. They could use the plastic and their research to create a display, or to write a presentation or newsletter, or to create a poster to inform people of the implications of plastic use.
- In chapters 16 and 17, Ami and Adjoa come across three animals which are extinct. Ask pupils to find some images of these species and find out when they were alive, then challenge them to find out why these species went extinct. Can they find out about any other species that are now extinct (e.g. dinosaurs, the dodo, the Tasmanian tiger)?
- Ask pupils if species of plants and animals could go extinct today in the same way as they did thousands of years ago. Challenge them to find out about endangered species, and why they are in danger. What can we do to prevent these species from dying out?
- Discuss with pupils how sometimes the world's environmental problems can seem enormous, and they might wonder how they themselves can make a difference. Challenge the class to ask themselves: *How can I change the world today?* and come up with a list of easy, everyday things they can do (e.g. recycling, cycling or walking to school, donating old clothes to a charity shop, reusing a plastic bag etc.). When they have come up with a list of ideas, see if they can do at least one thing (or something else) every day. This could inspire a school-wide challenge to change habits and behaviours. Encourage them to share what they have done, or ask if they want to add new suggestions to the list.