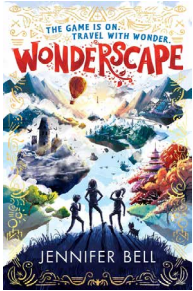




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Wonderscape

Jennifer Bell
ISBN 9781406391725
June 2020

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

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Outline:

When Arthur, Ren and Cecily investigate a mysterious explosion, they find themselves trapped in the year 2473. Lost in the Wonderscape, an epic in-reality adventure game, they must call on the help of some unlikely historical heroes to play their way home before time runs out.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Jennifer Bell's bestselling *The Uncommoners* series has sold over 55,000 copies in the UK and sold translation rights in 15 countries, and it was a Waterstones Children's Book of the Month. Inspired by her career as a former children's bookseller at Foyles, Jennifer is widely known for the magical story worlds she creates. Jennifer lives in Surrey.

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+

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Novel

Themes/Ideas:

- Video Games
- Friendship
- History
- Adventure



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before Reading

Before reading *Wonderscape*, view the cover of the book. Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author
- The tagline
- 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 book – how close were your predictions to the actual novel?

Exploring the story

What are some of 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.

Split into small groups, and assign each group one of the three main characters: Arthur, Ren or Cecily. Ask students to explain how their character demonstrates the following character traits in the novel:

- Resourcefulness
- Courage
- Resilience
- Compassion

How do Arthur, Ren and Cecily approach problems differently? Choose an obstacle the trio come up against, and consider different ways the three characters try to solve it.

"He imagined how things would change now. If he needed help, if he wanted someone to talk to, he could call upon Ren and Cecily. They didn't care how much money he had or where he came from; they were real friends: they liked him for him" (page 344). Arthur, Ren and Cecily grow as friends and as teammates throughout the novel. Compare how they interacted with each-other and work together when we first meet them at the Peacepoint estate to how they face their final challenge together in Mary Shelley's realm. How have they changed? Can you go back through the novel and pinpoint moments they learned new ways to work together? Do you think they'll stay friends after the events of the novel? Why or why not?

Many of the chapters in *Wonderscape* almost feel like levels in a video game. What techniques has Jennifer Bell used to achieve that effect? You could consider things like pace, dialogue, narrative devices and more.

Discuss the ways reading a book is similar or different to playing a video game. How do you progress in one compared to the other? Are there any similar challenges?

When he's explaining time travel, Isaac Newtown says *"imagine a jar of bubble-gums. Each bubble-gum is in exactly the right place, but as soon as you pull one out, the rest fall into different positions. Travelling through time has the same effect on the order of universe – it scrambles everything"* (page 70). Choose another text you like that has an element of time travel – it could be a movie, a book or a TV show – and consider how the rules of time travel are different or similar to the rules in *Wonderscape*.

Split the class into 5 groups, and assign each group one of the heroes we meet in the novel: Isaac Newton, Tomoe Gozen, Wangari Maathai, Thomas Edison or Mary Shelley. Ask each group to research the real life of their historical figure, and present their findings to the class.

What other stories incorporate existing real people in a new story? How are those stories similar or different to *Wonderscape*?

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.

A novel will describe the setting and action in words, allowing the reader to visualise using their imagination. A comic strip or graphic novel uses illustrations to show the reader the setting, action and character's emotions. Create a comic strip of a key scene from *Wonderscape*.

Choose another historical figure, and write a paragraph about what their realm might look like if they were a hero in the *Wonderscape*. What would their realm's challenge be and why? Arthur, Ren and Cecily are transported to the year 2473. Write a list of ten predictions about you think the world might look like that far into the future!

Imagine that a movie was being made of *Wonderscape*. 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.

Other Great Titles From Walker Books:



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Thomas Taylor
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Allison Rushby
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Jacob Sager Weinstein
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Classroom ideas available



**Agents of the Wild:
Operation Honeyhunt**
Jennifer Bell
Alice Lickens
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