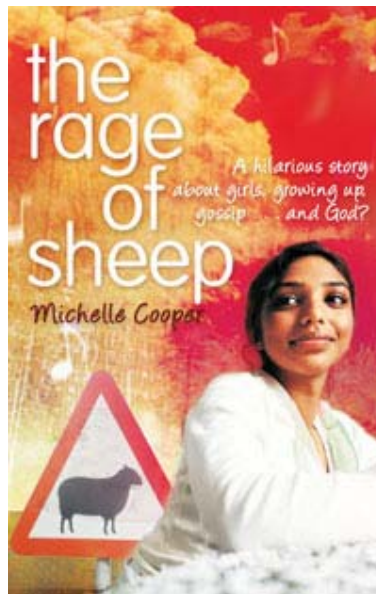


THE RAGE OF SHEEP

Michelle Cooper



TEACHING SUPPORT KIT

by
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THE RAGE OF SHEEP
Teaching Support Kit

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THE RAGE OF SHEEP

Teaching Support Kit

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Plot Summary

Set in the Australian regional township of Hastings, *The Rage of Sheep* describes the challenges of growing to adulthood as experienced by fifteen-year-old Indian–Australian girl Hester Jones. In essence, *The Rage of Sheep* is a rite of passage story, focusing on the struggle between the personal value of individuality and the social benefits of conformity.

The title and setting (the novel is set in the year 1984) bring to mind George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984*; however, *The Rage of Sheep* primarily explores a world much more immediate to its audience – the dystopia known as high school.

The novel begins with a letter; Hester is closeted in her school library during lunchtime writing to her best friend, Krystena, who has moved away from Hastings. Hester is hiding in the library in an effort to avoid her friend Natalie, who is 'Having A Big Sulk', upset over a minor incident from earlier in the day.

At the conclusion of lunch Hester joins her two closest friends, Lynda and the aforementioned Natalie, in Science class. Introduced to the reader in this class is the deeply religious and heavily bullied Joshua Mason. Joshua's usual chair has been vandalised by the school's primary bully, Alistair McDonald, and as a result he is moved to the seat next to Hester.

As the lesson begins, their teacher, Colonel Saunders, introduces the class to Darwin's theory of evolution before being interrupted by Joshua, who speculates that Darwin's theories are no more than theories and could be wrong – that God in fact created the world. Joshua makes overtures of friendship towards Hester, and this putative friendship seems likely to grow when the two are teamed together to complete an assignment on the Scopes Trial (a famous American legal case that tested a 1925 law forbidding the teaching of evolutionary theory, widely regarded as a watershed in the creation–evolution controversy).

From Science, the girls move to English, which is typically a 'bludge' class with their teacher Miss Fielding easily distracted from the lesson plan and induced into lengthy discussions of her impending wedding plans. The girls are shocked to discover, however, that Miss Fielding has taken a leave of absence from teaching so she can focus more fully on her wedding. The replacement English teacher, Mr Everett, is dramatically different – a man of great focus.

As this first day of the novel comes to an end, the trials of Hester do not abate. The bus ride from school to home is punctuated by racist bullying from her fellow students, and even as Hester arrives home feeling shaken and dispirited, her mother – pretty, fashion-conscious and concerned with appearances – criticises Hester's messy hairstyle.

At the dinner table, Hester is at first frustrated and bored as her father begins to lecture on willpower (or 'Will Power' as Hester describes it) but swiftly becomes horrorstruck at the unimaginable embarrassment of her father's proud announcement – as his bank is the key sponsor of the school Mathematics Competition Hester's father will be attending assembly tomorrow to present achievement certificates.

The following day at school, Hester is so embarrassed to be presented with an award at assembly by her own father that once it is over she sneaks off to the school canteen to recover her composure. In the canteen Hester discovers Joshua again being bullied and taunted by Alistair and, using her wit to ridicule Alistair in turn, Hester forces Alistair to leave Joshua alone.

The horrific assembly over, Hester rejoins her friends Natalie and Lynda. Both relate their own sympathetic embarrassment over Hester's assembly ordeal and admonish her to warn them of such things in future.

The three girls return to their current chief distraction – developing a guest list for Natalie's upcoming sixteenth birthday party. Natalie is among the school's most popular students and so the impending party is highly anticipated but also a tool of social judgement for Natalie – those who arouse her displeasure, which is an easy task, can find themselves quickly dropped from the guest list.

Shortly after the day of the assembly, the girls discover that their music teacher has suffered a heart attack and has been replaced by local radio celebrity Andrew Tyler. The news runs through the school like a jolt of electricity, sparking excitement among the entire student body. The students are universally in awe of the new music teacher, considering him the height of cool.

As the novel progresses Hester slowly begins to feel that she is different from her peers.

The casual racism of even her friends (at times they are not conscious of their racially charged comments) begins to wear Hester down, and she gradually realises she does not have the same interests as her two friends. Where Lynda and Natalie are content with gossip and schoolyard romance, Hester prefers a more serious and academic life. The devotion to a more mature and individual lifestyle is gently encouraged by Hester's English teacher, Mr Everett, and she comes to respect him for it immensely.

Despite this, Hester is concerned that her popularity will suffer should she follow her personal inclinations. As she wrestles with the issue, Lynda and Natalie convince Hester that she should seek a romance with Joshua.

Shortly after this discussion, Hester finds herself in the library with Joshua working on their shared Science assignment. The two cautiously begin to discuss their feelings for one another, but Joshua – although admitting to his attraction – refuses the possibility of a relationship. Hester at first imagines that the disapproval of Joshua's authoritarian father must be to blame, but in fact Joshua reveals that he considers 'racial adulteration' prohibited under the seventh commandment.

Furious and embarrassed, Hester hides in a corner of the library. Mr Everett comes across her in this state and comforts and encourages Hester to be herself by relaying an anecdote from when he himself was younger and saw his peers as silly, easily and willingly led sheep with himself as an independent, smart goat. Joshua approaches the two as they talk but Mr Everett sends him away.

Even as Hester shares this moment of self-realisation, trouble erupts. Mr Everett is reported by the school's temporary and highly officious fill-in librarian, Mrs Dunbar, for 'behaving inappropriately' with a student – she thinks that Mr Everett was touching Joshua.

Mr Everett resigns immediately, to Hester's great distress. Hester blames herself for the situation but as she helps Mr Everett carry his belongings from his office to his car, Hester discovers that Mr Everett and the radio celebrity, Andrew Tyler, are actually in a relationship. The surprising revelation gives Hester something to consider, a vision of a life combining 'cool' with individuality.

Hester continues her letters to Krystena, but comes to understand that the two had actually begun to grow apart even before she moved away. Hester's frustration at the sheep-like behaviour of the people she sees in the town grows daily, and on a number of occasions she has small outbursts in which she stands up for what she thinks or believes to be right.

This individualism results in Hester's invitation to Natalie's party being withdrawn, meaning she is instantly ostracised.

In the days immediately after the party, Lynda rings Hester – initially generating a swell of camaraderie from Hester – but it swiftly becomes clear that Lynda is merely seeking Hester's help with homework. Hester realises that she was fooling herself when she considered these people her friends.

Hester maintains her friendship with Andrew Tyler and Mr Everett. The two have opened a music store and, given her skill with numbers and academic credentials, they employ Hester part-time as their bookkeeper. When her friendship with the two becomes public knowledge neither Natalie nor Lynda can truly understand how Hester could be considered cool enough to keep such company.

At the end of the novel, we find Hester writing a Dear Diary entry, rather than a letter to Krystena. She has been to the Year Ten Farewell, and her choice to stand by her own individual style is complete when she wears a second-hand black velvet dress rather than the pink taffeta worn by all the other girls. We find out her father has been transferred to another city for work and she is looking forward to making a fresh beginning away from the 'sheep' in Hastings.

GENRE, STRUCTURE AND STYLE

The Rage of Sheep's first-person voice is incredibly authentic. It is sophisticated yet emotive, occasionally verging on stream-of-consciousness – the reader could honestly believe they were being spoken to by a passionate teenage girl. The narration changes intermittently to letter format – Hester regularly writes to her best friend, Krystena, who has moved away.

Rather than the more traditional series of linked plot points, the novel is written as a coming of age journey throughout which key knowledge is gradually delivered to the reader. The physical appearance of our protagonist, Hester, is not described in any detail until later in the novel, so that she is essentially whatever race, height and complexion the reader imagines her to be – naturally this would usually be similar to the reader.

As a result of the delayed revelation, the audience already loves and identifies with Hester before she can be stereotyped in any way. If the reader knew Hester looked a certain way or was of a certain race right from the start, then the possible differences between reader and subject could act as an instant, albeit small, barrier to the relationship between Hester and her audience. This would be true of any defining physical features attributed to a protagonist.

Further to this, when Hester's ethnicity is revealed, it is done so not as a statement of difference but more as an inference from circumstance. Prior to this revelation, the reader is exposed to a number of incidents which only expose themselves as passive (or less than passive) racism after the reader is made aware that Hester is in fact of Fijian-Indian descent.

For some readers, this delayed disclosure may allow a greater and perhaps unexpected sympathy for the prejudices Hester faces than might otherwise be the case.

To enhance the novel's broad appeal, the rite of passage Hester experiences is not an overly dramatic one – there is no death in the family or great conspiracy. Her rite of passage is simply trying to be an individual and suffering the social consequences – a much more familiar story for most teens.

The novel does not, however, lack depth. There is a strong message about conformity and individuality, racism, prejudice and family relationships. It also has enough drama and scandal to hook female teen readers.

Although *The Rage of Sheep* is set in Australia in 1984, there are few elements to the setting or language which could not be smoothly relocated to any similarly sized town in the developed world. The gentle localisation ensures the novel has an additional 'hook' for Australian readers but also means that it will alienate few immigrant or overseas readers.

PRE-READING NOTES AND ACTIVITIES

About the Author

Michelle Cooper is a speech pathologist specialising in learning disabilities and reluctant readers, so she's passionate about getting children and teenagers interested in books. Michelle was inspired to write *The Rage of Sheep* after events such as September 11, when she found that teenagers wanted to engage in discussions about religion and religious intolerance. Michelle lives in Sydney and is currently working on more novels for teenagers, including the sequels to her latest novel, *A Brief History of Montmaray*. Visit www.michellecooper-writer.com for more information about Michelle and her books.

Author Motivation

Michelle says:

'There are certainly some autobiographical aspects to *The Rage of Sheep*. Like Hester, I was a teenager in the 1980s, and I lived in a small town in country Australia. I was also a bit of an outsider, because my family was religious and my mother had migrated to Australia as an adult.

'I think it's interesting to see that some things really haven't changed, nearly a quarter of a century later. Gay kids, especially boys, still have a rough time at school; so do some gay teachers. Racist insults still get flung around the school yard. And wearing the wrong type of shoes is still enough to get you branded a social outcast!

'I was inspired to explore religion in this story after the September 11 terrorist attacks – my students were all really interested in talking about religion and religious intolerance. I started thinking about my own experiences with evangelical Christians – I grew up in a very Christian family. I went to church twice on Sundays, Bible study, prayer meetings, Christian youth camps, the lot! I always got into trouble in Bible study for asking difficult questions, though, and by the time I was twenty, I'd questioned so much, I'd turned into an agnostic. *The Rage of Sheep* is about a teenager, not so different from me, who's starting to question the values and beliefs she's grown up with.'

The Writing Process

Michelle says:

'I started writing *The Rage of Sheep* in 2002 in my spare hours, mostly during the weekends. I didn't consciously decide to write in the first person, but it certainly made it easier to get inside Hester's head. It helped that Hester and I shared so many characteristics – a distaste for the colour pink, an addiction to chocolate biscuits, a tendency to read maths textbooks for fun. I'd even had a dog just like Fred, when I was Hester's age.

'After nine months of work, I had a rambling, chaotic manuscript. Luckily, the Children's Book Council saw some potential in it and awarded me a mentorship with Alyssa Brugman. She was great. She tactfully pointed out bits that didn't make sense, bits that were unnecessary, and characters whose motivations were unclear. Three months later, the story was vastly improved. I even began to hope that someone might want to publish it, one day ...

'A few years later, the seventh draft was accepted for publication. In between, I'd spent countless hours agonising over word choices, rewriting sentences, changing chapters around, re-reading obscure Bible passages so I could quote them in the story, and listening to 1980s bands. It was very difficult at times – hey, some of that 80s music was pretty bad. But I'm really happy with the book now. Hopefully, readers will find it both entertaining and thought-provoking.'

Life in Australia in the 1980s

In the 1980s, Australia experienced a greater separation from England. *Advance Australia Fair* replaced *God Save The Queen* as the national anthem and the right to appeal to the Privy Court in England was abolished.

Great portions of land in Central Australia were handed over to Mutijulu people, Brisbane held the Commonwealth Games, the nation celebrated the bicentennial and Canberra opened the National Gallery of Art.

Homosexual issues became topical with the outbreak of AIDS. Although the NSW *Anti-Discrimination Act* was passed in 1977, which covered discrimination against an individual for their sexual preference, attitudes would take longer to change.

Music was characterised by a new, electronic sound. MTV was introduced, with the idea of video clips to accompany songs. Fashion was bold and brightly coloured, and band members had very big hair and garish make-up.

The economy was booming and people were spending a great deal and living well. However, the economy started to slow down, unemployment rose and the late 1980s saw Australia in a recession, with rural areas being hit the earliest and hardest.

George Orwell's Novel, 1984

It is perhaps no coincidence that *The Rage of Sheep* is set in 1984. This year is also a reference to George Orwell's futuristic novel (published in 1949), *1984*, a story analogous to Stalin's rule of Russia.

Winston Smith, the protagonist, lives in Oceania in what he thinks is the year 1984, which is ruled by a totalitarian government called The Party. The Party sees and hears everything going on through spies and is ruled by Big Brother. The Party prohibits free thought, sex and any expression of individuality.

Winston works for the Ministry of Truth, and it is his job to rewrite records of history to keep them in line with current party lines. Through his work, he finds information about a recent war, but seems to have a vague recollection that it was not always like this. He becomes fascinated with finding out the 'true' history and keeps a diary of his thoughts, which is illegal.

Winston falls in love with a co-worker, Julia; this action is banned. They have regular rendezvous by renting a room above the second-hand book store, and Winston becomes increasingly dissatisfied with The Party. Eventually their secret affair is discovered and they are both taken to the Ministry of Love, where they are brainwashed separately. Winston struggles against this brainwashing and is taken to Room 101 – the last resort, which is a room where your worst fear is realised.

Eventually Winston is defeated and turns on Julia. He is released and has learnt to love The Party and Big Brother.

Pre-Reading Activities

- Have a class discussion about what it means to be a sheep (follower). Brainstorm examples from real life and literature.
- Discuss what the quote appearing at the start of the novel means: 'I am awe-struck and tremble, for the rage of sheep is truly awful.' (James Whistler, after being criticised by Oscar Wilde)
- Find the references to sheep and goats in the bible. (Consider also the song by Cake, with its chorus 'Sheep go to heaven, goats go to hell'.)
- Have students interview a relative or friend about what life was like in the 1980s. You might even wish to bring in a guest speaker and have the students talk to that person.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Chapter	Plot Development
1	<p>Hester is writing a letter to her best friend, Krystena, who has moved away. She is writing about her two other best friends, Natalie and Lynda. It is clear to us already that Natalie is a drama queen. The three girls are in Science class and the school bullying victim, Joshua Mason, has been forced to sit next to the girls due to a prank played on him by Alistair McDonald. The Science teacher, Colonel Saunders, discusses Darwin's theory of evolution, much to Joshua's horror; he is an avid Christian and carries his bible to class. We find out Hester is also a Christian, but is not prepared to speak up. Natalie and Lynda think Joshua likes Hester.</p>
2	<p>Hester's English teacher, Miss Fielding, has taken leave to prepare for her wedding and has been replaced by a much stricter teacher, Mr. Everett. We discover Miss Fielding did very little teaching and spent most of the lesson either making wedding preparations or talking about them. Mr. Everett hands back some old essays of the students and has marked them harshly, which concerns Hester; she normally achieves As and was given a B, with the comment that it was perhaps not her best work.</p> <p>Hester is taking the bus home and is being bullied by Julie Jameson. We are given a hint that Hester is foreign by one of Julie's comments: 'I hate the way they're letting anyone into this country now. People who can't even speak English. Wogs and that.' (p 22)</p> <p>Hester passes a sheep farm on the way home: 'We passed these sheep every morning and afternoon, and they always acted the same way. What did they think we were going to do? Leap the fence and eat them? Sheep were so dumb.' (p 25)</p>
3	<p>Hester arrives home and greets her dog, Fred. Her mum asks Hester about her day. Her mother is quite pretty and takes a lot of pride in her appearance, whereas Hester does not. Hester's mother comments on how messy Hester's hair is. We find out Hester's dad might be making a presentation at assembly. We also find out Alistair McDonald's father is the town pharmacist and Alistair once sold hay-fever tablets at school, pretending they were amphetamines (though Hester's parents do not know about his bad behaviour). Hester goes to her room to start homework. She continues to write to Krystena and tries to put on some make-up that her mother had given her, with little success. 'Still staring at myself, I wondered why I couldn't have inherited some small part of my mother's beauty – her cheekbones, say, or her dimples, or even her graceful way of moving. All I'd got was her brown skin and even then mine was mud-coloured and blotchy rather than smooth dark chocolate.' (p 38) Her father is described as having 'freckles and marmalade hair' (p 38), which suggests her parents have an inter-racial marriage.</p> <p>We get the impression Hester lacks confidence: 'If I had to look different to everyone else in this blue-eyed town, couldn't I at least be gorgeous in an exotic, intriguing manner?' (p 38)</p>
4	<p>Hester's father has an obsession with the concept of willpower. Hester refers to it as Will Power – her father believes that it is the solution to any problem, including Hester's inability to knot her school tie properly. Hester believes he doesn't understand her: 'That was why he had no sympathy for me whenever anything bad happened. The other kids giving me a hard time because I went to church, wore daggy clothes, had the wrong colour skin? According to him, all I needed was a bit of Will Power and all my problems would be solved.' (p 42)</p> <p>Natalie is up to the fifteenth version of the guest list for her upcoming party. Natalie is very popular and this is to be the social event of the year. Hester makes suggestions about potential invitees based on common sense – for example, suggesting they not invite a particular boy, as he might bring his friends with him and cause trouble – whereas Natalie and Lynda are more concerned about inviting people who will enhance their reputation. They again tell Hester they think Joshua likes her, and want to invite him to the party for her.</p> <p>Natalie comments that Hester's mum has a 'cute accent', and Hester becomes quite upset,</p>

	<p>suggesting that her mother has an excellent grasp of the language and that we all have Australian accents.</p> <p>Later, Hester is in Advanced Maths, away from Natalie and Lynda. Alistair McDonald is in her class. She finds out that Maths Competition awards are being handed out at the next assembly and her father is presenting them. She has thoughts of how she will escape the embarrassment as they do not look alike, but then realises Alistair knows her father, so 'I let my head slump into my hands. I was doomed.' (p 49)</p>
5	<p>The students all gather in the hall for assembly: 'I trailed after the rest of the class towards the Assembly hall, feeling like a lamb being led to slaughter.' (p 50) Hester's father presents the certificates and gives a rather daggy speech, of course mentioning Will Power, but Hester manages to avoid any embarrassment as no one knew it was her father. She goes straight from assembly to the canteen to avoid Natalie and Lynda, only to find Alistair bullying Joshua. She tells Alistair to leave Joshua alone. He retaliates by picking on Hester's shoes, but her retort embarrasses Alistair in front of everyone. The bell rings and she leaves.</p>
6	<p>The girls are in Art and Natalie picks on Hester for embarrassing them by going up on stage in assembly. Hester walks past David Porter (the boy Lynda has a huge crush on) and compliments his drawing. Natalie and Lynda are very angry with Hester for 'flirting' with Lynda's man, and stop speaking to her. They change their minds later when Natalie has gossip she simply has to share.</p> <p>In Science, Colonel Saunders gives the class a group project; Natalie and Lynda pair up, leaving Hester to pair with Joshua.</p>
7	<p>Hester and the girls are in English. Mr Everett talks to the class about a short story they had read. The novel is about a well-run society, but in turn the society had to sacrifice their individual freedom. Hester is the only student who seems to understand the text.</p>
8	<p>Hester comes home and is introduced to her mother's friends from her Business Management course. Hester is walking her dog, who chases a ferret down a muddy pipe. Hester finds him, but runs into Mr Everett, who is visiting an old lady (we assume his mother) in the nursing home. Hester returns home and has a discussion with her parents over dinner. They talk about the Assembly, the local factory retrenchments, Hester's English teacher Mr Everett and, after hearing a news report on the radio, homosexuality. Hester's father feels it is wrong, but Hester is conflicted – she knows the bible says it is wrong, but feels this contradicts the message to love one another. Hester plans how she is going to convince her strict parents to allow her to go to Natalie's party.</p>
9	<p>A local radio hunk, Andrew Tyler, has replaced the old music teacher who had a heart attack, so all the girls are fawning over him and the boys idolise him. Natalie and Lynda encourage Hester to like Joshua.</p> <p>Hester meets Joshua in the library and they work on their Science assignment. Hester and Joshua discuss the bible – Joshua takes it literally, whereas Hester believes it is more symbolic. Hester feels that the girls are right and that Joshua does like her. She starts to think he is ok. While in the library, Hester comes across some stray 'restricted' books, which have young adult themes, and picks up a copy of <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>. The grumpy fill-in librarian tells her off. Mr Everett comes in at this time and borrows the novel on Hester's behalf. Hester finds out Mr Everett was once a student at Hastings High.</p>
10	<p>Classes are cancelled for the afternoon and all staff and students go to watch the school's hockey team play for an annual trophy against Oxley High. Natalie and Lynda talk to Hester about Joshua, the way they each talk about their own crushes.</p> <p>Natalie and Lynda are engrossed by the game – perhaps more specifically, David and Shane. Hester tries to read her novel, but Natalie takes it off her.</p>
11	<p>Hester is writing another letter to Krystena, commenting on how her father constantly interrupts her watching <i>Countdown</i>, a popular 1980s music show. Hester's mother takes her shopping, which is quite wearing on both of them – Hester's mum is trying to keep her</p>

	<p>daughter fashionable with no success and Hester is a reluctant participant. Her mother encourages her to buy a skirt, but Hester refuses. They run into Natalie and Lynda – Natalie and Hester’s mother talk about fashion and together decide on a pair of boots for Hester. Another ‘unsuspecting victim’ has been crossed off Natalie’s guest list due to a triviality.</p> <p>Hester reminisces about when Krystena was with her, and recalls she had started missing Krystena before she moved away: ‘When had that happened? When had we stopped being Kryssie-and-Hessie?’ (p 138) This gives us a clue that their friendship had been idealised.</p>
12	<p>Over dinner, Hester asks if she can go to Natalie’s party. Her mother asks her to find out who is supervising and what time it finishes. Hester starts work on her English essay and ponders where she fits in at school. Lynda calls for help with Maths homework. Hester also considers the concept of friendship and feels she has nothing in common with Lynda and Natalie.</p>
13	<p>The girls are in English and Natalie tries to copy Hester’s essay plan, only to find that Hester had, unusually, not completed it.</p> <p>The girls find out David’s mother (single parent) has lost her job at the local factory. Mr Everett doesn’t say anything about it, but doesn’t pull David up for his silly behaviour as frequently. Mr Everett calls David aside after class, concerned for his welfare. David becomes angry and runs out, and he and Shane call Mr Everett a faggot.</p>
14	<p>The girls finally have a music lesson with Andrew Tyler. Kiera is crossed off the guest list because she is flirting with Andrew and Natalie is jealous. The girls start talking about being in love, and again ask Hester if she wants to invite Joshua to the party.</p> <p>Hester is again paired up with Joshua in Science and she seems to be starting to like him, mainly due to peer pressure.</p>
15	<p>Hester is in church and the minister is giving a sermon about how the congregation should turn the other cheek and love their enemies. He also tells the congregation to be sheep and follow Jesus, and to not be goats. Hester begins to think about Joshua, and how much more she would be accepted by her friends if she was in love with him.</p> <p>Back at home, Hester brings up Natalie’s party again. To her surprise, her mother agrees without any hesitation. Her father is a little more reserved, wanting to know who is supervising, etc, but eventually agrees after giving another lecture on Will Power. Her mother suggests she should wear a skirt, with Hester saying that everyone will be wearing jeans. After speaking to the girls, Hester finds out all the girls will be wearing skirts. Hester drafts a few letters to Krystena, but throws them all out.</p>
16	<p>Hester finds out that Krystena has sent Natalie a birthday card, but has not responded to Hester’s letters.</p> <p>Natalie is talking about a bug, calling it a ‘wog’. Hester mishears, thinking it is a racial slur, and becomes upset.</p> <p>Hester meets Joshua in the library and they talk about their feelings for each other. It turns out Joshua does really like Hester as suspected, but cannot date her. Hester assumes it is because he has a strict father, but he tells her it is because the bible forbids inter-racial relationships. Hester is furious.</p>
17	<p>Hester finds a quiet spot in the library to hide. She is found by Mr Everett, who tries to find out what is wrong. He tells her about his time in high school and how he liked to think of the other students as mindless sheep and himself as a stubborn, independent goat.</p> <p>Joshua catches up with them. Mr Everett tries to shoo him away, but is caught by the librarian, who reports him to the principal. Hester is asked to go and see Ms Olivier. Mrs Dunbar had told the principal that Mr Everett had molested Joshua in the library. Hester tells Ms Olivier how ridiculous the idea is and that nothing had happened. She goes back to class and the class behave like sheep, gathering around the window to stare at what is happening outside.</p>

18	<p>The girls turn up to English to find that Mr Everett is not there, and has left their work on the board. Hester goes to Maths, where she has a test. She becomes distracted and looks out the window, wondering what is happening to Mr Everett. She sees him leaving and runs out after him. He tells her he is sick of the job and has resigned. Hester feels responsible for him leaving. Andrew Tyler is also there and Hester realises he and Mr Everett are actually a couple.</p> <p>Hester's mother has received a phone call from Hester's Maths teacher, who is worried about Hester. Hester and her mother chat, although Hester doesn't really reveal what is upsetting her. Her mother orders pizza (quite a treat in their household) and reassures her.</p>
19	<p>Natalie and Lynda have started to believe some of the rumours circulating about the incident, for example, that Hester was in love with Mr Everett. Hester contemplates 'leaving' the group, but realises how harmful that would be to her school life. Natalie and Lynda whisper about her in class, and at lunch time decide to hand Hester an invitation to the party, with the implied suggestion that it is her last chance to stay friends with them.</p> <p>Miss Fielding has been forced to return to teaching the class and had to abandon her wedding preparations. As a result, she shoots a lot of evil glares in Hester's direction, clearly blaming her for what happened. The class quickly falls back into its old habits – studying <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> as they had been doing all year, and distracting the teacher by asking her about the wedding preparations.</p> <p>Hester overhears one of the other students refer to Mr Everett as 'someone like that' and she snaps at the gossipier, insulting her. Someone launches a spitball onto her desk and Hester knows that more consequences will follow.</p>
20	<p>The next day at school, Natalie 'suggests' to Hester that she shouldn't come to the party. The girls still sit with her in class, and spend most of the lesson speculating why Joshua has been away for so long.</p> <p>That weekend, Hester writes another letter to Krystena, this time with no intention of sending it to her. She writes that she has decided God is punishing Joshua by making him sick and again questions her faith, by siding with the disciple, Thomas, who needed proof of Jesus' resurrection.</p> <p>The next week, she overhears Natalie and Lynda saying mean things about her in the toilets.</p> <p>Joshua returns to school when they are due to present the Science assignment. As Joshua had been away, Hester presents it herself, and says that what she had learned about evolution was that some humans were no different to sheep, which infuriates the teacher.</p> <p>Hester tries to avoid Joshua after class and runs into David Porter, Lynda's crush. They are alone, and they discuss his hockey and how David hates hockey and only plays it because it is what is expected of him. He is really good at Art, but is too afraid of the social ridicule he would suffer if he pursued it.</p> <p>Hester goes to the library after school and meets Andrew Tyler. He tells her he and Mr Everett are setting up a business and tells her about their secret plans for the business.</p> <p>Hester tells her mother she is no longer going to Natalie's party and finds out her mum knew all along it was unsupervised, but simply trusted Hester to make sensible decisions. Hester asks her mother if she can get a part-time job; the assumption being it has something to do with Andrew and Rob's business.</p>
21	<p>Lynda calls Hester and tells her about Natalie's party. The party was gatecrashed by Alistair and his friends; he vomited on the carpet and things were broken, which Natalie has to replace/fix. Hester thinks Lynda is being friendly, but realises all Lynda wants is help with her Maths homework. She tells her to go to hell.</p> <p>Hester's mother drives her downtown to meet Andrew and Rob. We find out they have</p>

	<p>opened a music shop and Hester has been employed to do their bookkeeping, much to the shock of Natalie and Lynda, who are customers in the store. Hester sees David there also and they chat.</p>
22	<p>Hester is writing again, but this time it is Dear Diary, instead of Dear Krystena.</p> <p>We find out she is leaving Hastings, as her dad has another job. She has attended the Year Ten Farewell dance, at which Andrew is the DJ. He gives her a lovely farewell speech. She talks to David, again about the expectations that mean he is prevented from doing things he likes, such as painting.</p> <p>Hester speaks to Joshua one last time – he is worried that people ‘might get the wrong idea’ (p 272) about her black dress.</p> <p>She says goodbye to the town as her family leaves, and is looking forward to her new life.</p>

THEMES, MOTIFS AND SYMBOLS

MOTIFS AND SYMBOLS

Sheep

A picture is built up of how sheep act and how the Hastings townsfolk act similarly. Most of the characters, adults as well as students, are afraid to think for themselves, preferring instead to follow the lead of others.

QUOTES:

- We passed these sheep every morning and afternoon, and they always acted the same way. What did they think we were going to do? Leap the fence and eat them? Sheep were so dumb. (p 25)
- I trailed after the rest of the class towards the Assembly hall, feeling like a lamb being led to slaughter. (p 50)
- "For God will separate the people", ' quoted the minister, perched high in the pulpit like an oversized raven, "as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left." (p 178)
- 'Lord,' said the minister, 'help us to be sheep. Not goats.' (p 181)
- 'Sheep. When I was at school, it always helped me to imagine the others as sheep. Not very intelligent animals, sheep. Tend to panic and rush around in circles if anything interesting appears in their midst. ... Stupid, but essentially harmless. Now goats, on the other hand, they're quite different animals. Smart. Stubborn. Able to scale high mountains, that sort of thing.' (Mr Everett, p 203)
- They were sheep, I reminded myself. I knew that. But sheep bites could be nasty things. (p 247)
- Remember those sheep embryos – how they looked like human ones? Well, now I know that people aren't any different to sheep! Flocking together, everyone looking and acting exactly the same. (p 249)

Goats

Although not referred to as often as sheep, goats are another common reference, symbolising independence and individuality. Although referred to in a negative way by the church, which implies that non-conformity is inappropriate, Hester learns to accept her status as a 'goat' and is proud of it. This also enforces Hester's shift towards atheism.

QUOTES:

- 'Sheep. When I was at school, it always helped me to imagine the others as sheep. Not very intelligent animals, sheep. Tend to panic and rush around in circles if anything interesting appears in their midst. ... Stupid, but essentially harmless. Now goats, on the other hand, they're quite different animals. Smart. Stubborn. Able to scale high mountains, that sort of thing.' (p 203)
- 'I was glad to be a goat. I really was.' (p 280)

The English Class Text

The English class text explored in Chapter 7 discusses a society in which there is no crime, no homeless and no poverty, but to achieve this, the inhabitants sacrifice individual freedom and choice. This mirrors the actions of the students, in how they sacrifice individual freedom and choice to be popular.

The 'Restricted' Section in the Library

The fact that the school library has a 'Restricted Section' reinforces to Hester that the students are discouraged from thinking for themselves. *The Catcher in the Rye* is also referenced. This is a novel about a boy rebelling against high school and conformity. This novel is out of reach for Hester (it is a 'restricted' novel), but Mr Everett borrows it for her. This suggests that Hester wants to be her own person and not conform, and that she has is reaching a level of maturity above that of her classmates, but she is being held back. Mr Everett helps to facilitate her growth.

The Minister's Sermon and the Church

In chapter 15, Hester is in church listening to the minister asking his congregation to be sheep (followers of Jesus), not goats.

Hester is struggling with her own faith throughout the novel, with the church being one more influence in her life trying to force her to conform, which leads her towards atheism.

Compare also the different views of the church Hester presents, from the minister's harsh warnings (see quotes above re sheep) to the window in the church, which perhaps represents what Hester would *like* her experience of religion to be: 'my mind's eye was filled with a very pure, shining blue, the exact shade of the north-east window at church when morning sunlight pierced it. For a while, I'd half-believed that the blue glow was God, looking in on the congregation to say hello. Of course, I knew better now, but I still loved the sight of those blue rays creeping down the stone walls and along the dusty carpet. It made even the longest, most tedious sermon easier to listen to – so perhaps there was something of God in it, after all.' (pp 36–37)

Hester's writing

Hester writes letters to her friend, Krystena, despite receiving no correspondence from her in return. She constantly asks her mother if there is any mail for her, but the answer is always no. The friendship between her and Krystena has clearly ended, but Hester has trouble letting go.

Interestingly, after she realises that Krystena is clearly not going to return her friendship, she compares her to God, writing a letter that she knows she will not send: 'writing to you is a little like praying – I always feel a bit better afterwards, even if the words don't go anywhere.' (p 243)

At the end of the novel, Hester has found her independence and no longer lets her friends, including Krystena, influence her morals and decisions. This is represented in the last chapter when we see her write a Dear Diary entry – a letter to herself, rather than a friend.

THEMES

Individualism vs Pressure to Conform

One of the main themes explored in the novel is individualism versus the pressure to conform. Hester struggles to be true to herself and stand up for what she thinks is right. The only problem is, girls who don't conform to the silly, giggly, boy-obsessed fashion queen stereotype are treated harshly by others and school becomes a very unpleasant place to be. Hester believes the whole town are simply sheep – followers who can't think for themselves.

Joshua Mason, the religious outcast, seems to be an individual and initially Hester admires his dedication to his faith. Even his Science teacher pressures him to conform by finding trivial

excuses to punish him for his different opinions. We gradually discover, however, that Joshua may be an individual as far as school is concerned, but conforms to his father's religious way of life and more importantly, the literal teachings of the bible. For example, when he realises he has feelings for Hester and she reciprocates, he is torn because the bible says he can't commit racial adultery. This suggests he is just as sheep-like as the rest of the town.

Natalie O'Brien appears to be full of confidence and independence, but as the saga with her party invites shows, she conforms to what is popular and cool – she invited boys, all the 'trendy' people and the party had alcohol and no parental supervision. As a result, the party is a disaster – the boys break things and vomit on the carpet. She also 'conforms' to fashion magazines; she will only wear what *Girl!* magazine says she should.

QUOTES:

- We passed these sheep every morning and afternoon, and they always acted the same way. What did they think we were going to do? Leap the fence and eat them? Sheep were so dumb. (p 25)
- I trailed after the rest of the class towards the Assembly hall, feeling like a lamb being led to slaughter. (p 50)
- 'Sheep. When I was at school, it always helped me to imagine the others as sheep. Not very intelligent animals, sheep. Tend to panic and rush around in circles if anything interesting appears in their midst. ... Stupid, but essentially harmless. Now goats, on the other hand, they're quite different animals. Smart. Stubborn. Able to scale high mountains, that sort of thing.' (p 203)
- They were sheep, I reminded myself. I knew that. But sheep bites could be nasty things. (p 247)
- Remember those sheep embryos – how they looked like human ones? Well, now I know that people aren't any different to sheep! Flocking together, everyone looking and acting exactly the same.' (p 249)
- 'Oh, and by the way, you looked like a total dag going up on stage like that at Assembly. Thanks for warning us.' (p 64)
- This was coming from someone whose fashion decisions were all made for her by the people at *Girl!* Magazine. If it wasn't declared 'hot and happening' this season by the experts, she wouldn't be seen dead in it. All right, it meant that she always looked great, but it didn't sound like individuality to me. (p 78)

Prejudice & Racism

The town of Hastings shows prejudice in a number of ways. Natalie's love of gossip is typical of the town's attitude.

Throughout the novel, Joshua is ridiculed because of his faith, even by his teachers.

Hester is bullied on the bus by the Jameson girls because of her race and even Natalie and Lynda often unintentionally make offensive comments about the fact Hester is different. She is also shunned by her two best friends when she tries to stand up for what is right, such as defending Joshua for his religious beliefs and Mr Everett for his homosexuality. When the girls decide Hester is too weird and therefore a liability to their cool factor, Hester is 'uninvited' to Natalie's party.

Mr Everett is homosexual and because of this is instantly assumed to pursue relationships with the male students. Alistair assumed David was held back after class so Mr Everett could see David 'alone' and Mrs Dunbar, the crotchety, fill-in librarian, assumed he had molested a student, when in fact he was simply telling the boy to leave Hester alone.

Joshua's reason for why he cannot date Hester also shows prejudice and racism, and demonstrates how the bible has been interpreted by some sects to allow racist beliefs.

QUOTES:

- I hate the way they're letting anyone into this country now. People who can't even speak English. Wogs and that. (p 22)
- 'Excuse me, I don't have an accent,' said Natalie. 'And Lynda doesn't either. You ...' She considered for a whole *insulting* second. 'You don't. But your mum does. Of course she does. She's a ... she's *foreign*.' (p 46)
- 'God, how could they ever let someone like *that* be a teacher?' shrieked Kiera. (p 237)
- 'Running out of class that day, yelling at people in Science, getting upset about *Mr Everett*, for God's sake, who shouldn't even have been allowed to teach, someone like him -' (p 263)
- 'So many people misinterpret that one when they read it in the Bible,' he [Joshua] said. 'It doesn't mean sex outside of marriage, that's covered in the tenth commandment, "Do not covet your neighbour's wife". God wouldn't repeat Himself, He's perfect. The seventh refers to racial adultery. You know, mixing the seedline. Mixing the genes. It's forbidden.' ... 'You see, I'm one of Adam's descendants and you're not,' he said. 'Adam and Eve were, well, white and it's only their descendants through Abel who are the Chosen People of God. It's very clear in the Bible who the Twelve Tribes of Israel really are, it's, you know, Anglo-Saxons and Germans and . . . well, you know, it's the Christian nations. And race-mixing is strictly forbidden. We have to keep the races separate. I can show you all the scriptures, it's in Exodus and Numbers and Deuteronomy and ...' ... 'No, Hester, it doesn't mean you're bad, just that God has a different use for you, a separate use. It's in the Bible, in Romans, I had to learn it for last week's prayer meeting. "The man who makes the pots –" that's God, of course, and the pots are humans –" has the right to use the clay as he wishes and to make two pots from the same lump of clay, one for beauty and distinction and honourable use, and the other for menial use. And maybe your parents didn't even know what a sin it was, getting married, probably no-one told them, but –' (pp 198–199)

Family Relationships

Hester is hassled and embarrassed by her parents and assumes they know nothing; a familiar story for most teenagers! As the novel progresses, Hester begins to realise that maybe her parents do understand her and aren't quite as clueless as she thought. Her father's consistent speeches about Will Power turn out to be somewhat helpful, and her mother knows more about what life is like as a teenager than Hester initially believes.

QUOTES:

- That was why he had no sympathy for me whenever anything bad happened. The other kids giving me a hard time because I went to church, wore daggy clothes, had the wrong colour skin? According to him, all I needed was a bit of Will Power and all my problems would be solved. (p 42)
- Why did I have to have the most embarrassing parents in the entire world, I asked myself (p 145)

Friendship

The fickleness and frailty of teenage friendships is a consistent theme in the novel. Friendships appear to be conditional; if you conform and act normally, you are worthy of a friendship. This is shown through the treatment of Joshua (he is 'weird' so has no friends).

Hester's friendships are also conditional. Natalie and Lynda are only friends when Hester doesn't embarrass them by standing up for what she believes in or when they need her help with homework. Even Krystena, who Hester idolised, was not such a great friend. She would never let Hester talk about her problems; instead, she would change the subject. She also neglected to write to Hester after moving away.

QUOTE:

- They were sheep, I reminded myself. I knew that. But sheep bites could be nasty things. (p 247)
- 'Just a minute.' I took a deep breath. 'Let me get this straight. I go back to being your personal Maths tutor and in return, I get the privilege of sitting with you and Natalie in class again' (p 262)

Religion

Hester is conflicted about her religion and how it applies to her life. She sees how firm Joshua holds his beliefs, and calls herself a 'very wimpy Christian' (p 10). She also knows God hates homosexuality, but feels it is not their fault they fell in love with someone of the same sex. Hester then feels guilty for questioning God.

Hester is further confused when her minister gives a sermon about people seeking to become sheep instead of goats, when this is exactly the opposite to what Hester feels is right. In addition, Joshua's interpretation of the seventh commandment applying to racial adultery, rather than inter-marital adultery, is hurtful. She eventually seems to lean towards atheism at the end of the novel.

QUOTE:

- Yes, I was already aware, thank you very much, that Jesus had ordered His followers to turn the other cheek when they were slapped in the face, but He hadn't had Jo Jameson call Him a dyke in the changing room after PE on Friday because He'd supposedly been staring at her.' (p 177)
- What if the bible isn't always right? Or what if it was right for the people who wrote it down, but not for me, thousands of years later and on the other side of the world? (p 245)

The Role of Women in Society

In a subtle way, the novel also examines the role of women at home and in society and the changes that feminism and the women's movement brought about. In some ways Hester's family is a 'traditional' nuclear family, with working father and stay-at-home mother. However, note that during the course of the book, we see their roles beginning to change: Hester's mum has taken up learning Business Studies, and we see Hester's dad helping with the vacuuming.

Consider also how Hester's parents want her to dress in a more feminine way, such as wearing skirts and the colour pink, but Hester likes to wear jeans and black clothes.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Hester Jones

Hester Jones is struggling to conform to a high school full of 'sheep' without sacrificing her integrity. She is caring and thoughtful, and has a strong sense of justice, unable to let prejudice prevail in the school. This is possibly because of her own experiences with prejudice: she is Fijian-Indian in a town full of white Australians, and often feels different. Despite the fact her friends turned against her because of it, Hester gradually develops the confidence to be herself, with the help of Mr Everett, and is much happier for it. She works for Mr Everett and Andrew Tyler as a part-time bookkeeper for their trendy music store, to the amazement of Natalie and Lynda. In addition, David, one of the 'cool' boys and Lynda's crush, talks to her, which again shocks Natalie and Lynda.

Natalie O'Brien

Natalie O'Brien is the school's 'Mean Girl', and one of Hester's best friends. She is a pretty, popular drama queen whose life revolves around fashion and boys. She is having a birthday party which is to be the social event of the year – a sleepover with boys, alcohol and no parents. She is constantly crossing guests 'off the list' for minor reasons. She eventually withdraws Hester's invitation to the party for acting weird (basically standing up for what is right). The party turns out to be a disaster, and Natalie blames everyone else.

Although Natalie may seem confident and independent, she is still a sheep – she follows fashion magazines and what is 'cool'.

Lynda Griffiths

Lynda is Hester's other best friend and Natalie's loyal sidekick. She is less callous than Natalie; she shows some compassion for the feelings of others. Although Hester had no real interest in boys, Lynda created a love interest for Hester in Joshua, and talked about him to Hester all the time. Although Lynda clearly didn't understand her friend, it was a nice gesture – it was her way of trying to help Hester be normal and fit into the group. She also encourages Natalie to invite Hester to her party when she is having doubts. As the novel progresses, however, Lynda shows that although she generally means well, she is too scared to show any signs of independent thought. She follows Natalie's orders and in return, she remains popular.

Joshua Mason

Joshua Mason is the school's bullying target. He is an avid Christian, carrying his bible with him everywhere. He is not afraid to stand up for his Christian beliefs, even though this is social suicide – he is constantly tormented by Alistair McDonald and is even picked on by one of his teachers. Although Joshua seems independent, he is also a sheep. He is afraid to stand up to his father and refuses to think for himself, rather, relying on a narrow, literal interpretation of the bible's message. Even though Hester is the only person in the school who is nice to him, he refuses to date her because he believes God forbids racial adulteration in the seventh commandment, which Hester sees as a very narrow and outdated construction.

Alistair McDonald

Alistair McDonald is the school bully. He makes Joshua's life a misery, and when Hester defends Joshua, Alistair turns his attentions on her. Alistair again appears independent, but is the male equivalent to Natalie – he does what people expect is 'cool', even if that means torturing the

misfits. His bullying elevates his social status; with a very slight figure and curly red hair, he had to fight to gain credibility. It is also revealed that Alistair is able to fool adults as to his behaviour: his father calls Alistair his 'little scallywag' (p 29).

Mr & Mrs Jones

Mr & Mrs Jones are Hester's parents. They have an inter-racial marriage, which is unusual in the town. Hester believes their only purpose in life is to embarrass her, but in reality they sound like normal, caring parents. Her father has red hair and pale skin, and consistently lectures Hester on willpower (referred to by Hester as Will Power) to overcome obstacles in her life. Hester's mother is pretty and fashion-conscious. She asks Hester to do some chores and keep her room clean, but also recognises when her daughter needs help. For example, she makes her a hot chocolate when she has had a bad day, or orders pizza as a treat to cheer her up. Initially when Hester was going to Natalie's party, her mother knew there was alcohol and no adult supervision but was prepared to let Hester go anyway because she trusted her daughter to make sensible decisions. She also realised how cruel high school can be – Hester had little interest in fashion, so her mother tried to take her shopping and update her 'daggy' wardrobe.

Rob Everett

Rob Everett is a senior English teacher at the school. He takes over Hester's English class when her regular teacher takes leave to plan her wedding. Whereas Miss Fielding could easily be distracted by a question about her wedding, Mr Everett was strict and focused – he pulled the class up on behaviour and critiqued their essays properly.

Mr Everett is homosexual and in a relationship with the town's radio hunk, Andrew Tyler, though they are not public about their relationship. Because of his homosexuality, he is a victim of the town's prejudice. He is falsely accused of molesting a student and subsequently resigns. He and Andrew Tyler open up a trendy music store and hire Hester as their part-time bookkeeper.

David Porter

David Porter is one of the 'cool' boys who plays hockey and is Lynda's crush. Although he seems like all the other boys initially, we gradually learn he is a lot like Hester – an independent thinker with dreams that go beyond what is 'allowed' by the social norms – but he lacks Hester's strength and integrity. David confesses to Hester that he hates hockey and loves Art, but plays hockey because it is what is expected and he is afraid of the social repercussions. David and Hester become tentative friends, much to the surprise of Natalie and Lynda.

THE RAGE OF SHEEP

Teaching Support Kit

ACTIVITIES

Below is a list of different post-reading classroom activities you might wish to do.

Activities on Background, Setting and Structure

Activity 1 – *You Be The Author*

- Refer to BLM 1

Activity 2 *Changing Views*

- Refer to BLM 2

Activities on Plot

Activity 3A – *Timeline*

- Have students create a timeline of main events in the novel. They can then compare notes with a partner. Have students add a picture of a sheep or a goat to describe the behaviour at the time.

Activity 3B – *Comic Strips*

- Refer to BLM 3

Activities on Characters

Activity 4 – *Sheep or Goat?*

- Refer to BLM 4 – have students use a ‘sheep’ or ‘goat’ page for each of the main characters and describe the character’s sheep-like or goat-like behaviour.

Activity 5 – *Music Mania!*

- Refer to BLM 5

Activities on Themes

Activity 6 – *Creation vs Evolution Research Task*

- Refer to BLM 6

Activity 7 – *Life in the ‘80s!*

- Refer to BLM 7

Activity 8 – *Individual vs Society*

- Have students read, or read as a class, *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger or *1984* by George Orwell and discuss why it has been referenced in *The Rage of Sheep*. (TEACHER CHEAT – If you are short of time to read either of the novels, print out the Sparknotes or Wikipedia summary instead!)

Activity 9 – *The Ten Commandments*

- Refer to BLM 8

Activity 10 – *Name That Chapter!*

- Refer to BLM 9

Activity 11 – *Themes Brainstorm*

- Brainstorm a list of themes together on the board, and then allocate a theme to individuals or pairs. Students then write down their theme on a sheet of A3 paper and cut-and-paste pictures from magazines that relate to their theme.

Activity 12 – *You Be The Illustrator*

- Refer to BLM 10

Activities on Text Analysis

Activity 13 – *Text Response Essay Questions*

Essay Topics:

- By the end of novel, *The Rage of Sheep*, Hester has totally changed her perception of religion and faith. Discuss.
- Remember those sheep embryos – how they looked like human ones? Well, now I know that people aren't any different to sheep! Flocking together, everyone looking and acting exactly the same.' (p 249) In what ways did the characters in *The Rage of Sheep* behave like sheep? Discuss.
- *The Rage of Sheep* is a story of racism and prejudice. Do you agree?
- *The Rage of Sheep* shows us the dangers of gossip. Do you agree?
- Hester's strength of conviction alone allowed her to achieve true happiness. Do you agree?

Activity 15 – *Chapter Review Questions*

- Refer to BLM 11

Links to other Curriculum Areas

- Science
 - Students could explore Darwin's Theory of Evolution
- Historical Literature
 - Students could read and discuss George Orwell's novel, *1984* – how does Orwell's vision of 1984 (published in 1948) differ from the reality presented in *The Rage of Sheep*?
- History
 - Students could study significant world events in the 1980s.
- Religion and Society
 - Students can explore the ten commandments and different ways they can be interpreted.

THE RAGE OF SHEEP
Teaching Support Kit

STUDENT WORKSHEETS



You Be The Author!

The Rage of Sheep concludes with Hester looking forward to a new life, away from Hastings. The publishers have decided to write a sequel, but unfortunately the author is unavailable. They have heard of your amazing writing talents and have asked you to write the sequel!

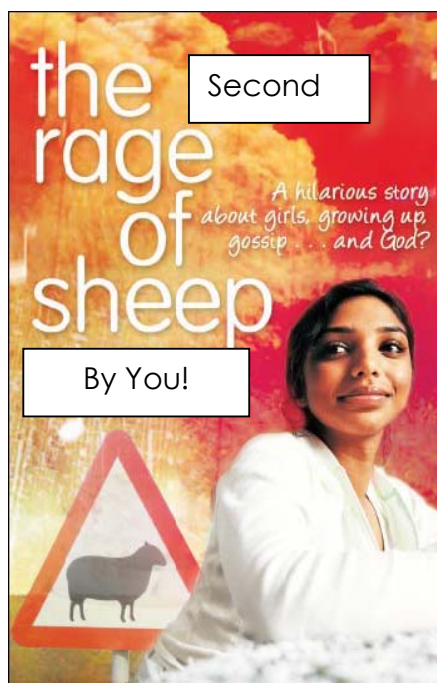
Your task is to tell us what happens to Hester after she moves away. You might want to think about:

- What her new school is like
- What her new town is like
- How she makes friends
- What her relationship with her parents is like
- Whether she keeps in contact with Rob, Andrew and David.

You also need to make sure that you are true to the author's narrative style, so you will need to think about things like:

- The narrative style the author has chosen (ie first person, letters, etc, asides in brackets etc)
- The type of language she used
- The fact that it is set in 1984

You will be graded according to the attached criteria. Obviously, you are not expected to write 300 pages! Aim for one or two pages.



You Be The Author!

WRITING FOLIO ASSESSMENT TASK

Criteria	5 Very High	4 High	3 Med	2 Low	1 Very Low	Not Shown
Content						
Demonstrates knowledge of the chosen content – you stayed true to the characters and the novel						
Structure and Language Features						
Was able to mimic the author’s style appropriately						
Ability to use effective, accurate and expressive language specifically suited to the audience and purpose of the task						
Ability to use paragraphs for the coherent ordering and linking of ideas						
Has used correct grammar and spelling						
Preparation						
Has carefully drafted and edited writing						

Total: /30

Comments:

Changing Views

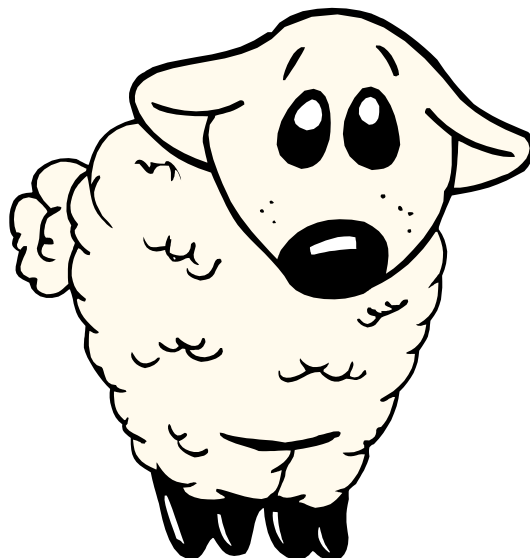
Have you ever wondered how Joshua would have seen the events that took place in *The Rage of Sheep*? What about someone like Natalie? What if the novel was set in 1960, not in 1984? What if it was set today?

You don't have to wonder any more! Your task is to rewrite the story (in one or two pages). The trick is you will need to change perspective. The novel is told through the eyes of Hester in Hastings in 1984. Choose one of the following perspectives to write from:

- Natalie's point of view
- Joshua's point of view
- Lynda's point of view
- Rob Everett's point of view
- David's point of view
- Select a different year to set the story in
- Select a different place to set the story in

You will be graded according to the attached criteria.

Enjoy the different perspective!



Changing Views

WRITING FOLIO ASSESSMENT TASK

Criteria	5 Very High	4 High	3 Med	2 Low	1 Very Low	Not Shown
Content						
Demonstrates knowledge of the chosen content						
Structure and Language Features						
Demonstrates ability to write appropriately for the audience and purpose and has used the correct format						
Ability to use effective, accurate and expressive language specifically suited to the audience and purpose of the task						
Ability to use paragraphs for the coherent ordering and linking of ideas						
Has used correct grammar and spelling						
Preparation						
Has carefully drafted and edited writing						

Total: /30

Comments:

Comic Strips!

Create a comic strip to re-tell the main events in *The Rage of Sheep*.

Sheep or Goat?

Character:



Character's sheep-like behaviour:

(These should be quotes from the novel. Don't forget to include page numbers.)

Sheep or Goat?

Character:



Character's goat-like behaviour:

(These should be quotes from the novel. Don't forget to include page numbers.)

Music Mania!

Music is an important part in the lives of most teenagers and Hester and her friends are no different. Using the novel to help you, write down which bands Hester and Natalie/Lynda liked.

You will then need to think about the bands and music artists around today. Which bands and singers do you think the girls would like if the book was set today? Why?

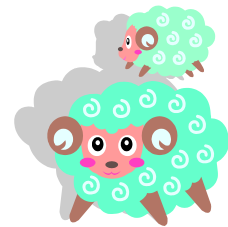
Hester



Bands/music artists she liked in the novel:

Bands/music artists she would like if the story was set in this decade and why you think she would like them:

Natalie & Lynda



Bands/music artists they liked in the novel:

Bands/music artists they would like if the story was set in this decade and why you think they would like them:

Creation vs Evolution

Research Task

In the very first chapter of the novel, Hester is learning about Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Joshua, an avid believer of the bible, is quite disturbed by Colonel Saunders' teachings, and tells him so.

The creation vs evolution debate is not new. The 1925 Scopes trial explores just this.

Your task is to write a report on the topic. You will need to research the topic effectively to ensure you know what you are talking about! Make sure you include a bibliography.

You might wish to follow the format outlined below:

Introduction

- Tell the reader what the topic is and why it is such an issue.

Creation

- Spend one to two paragraphs explaining what the Story of Creation is. Use research/evidence to support your claims.

Evolution

- Spend one to two paragraphs explaining what Darwin's Theory of Evolution is. Use research/evidence to support your claims.

The Scopes Trial

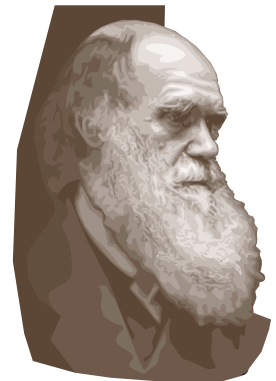
- Spend one to two paragraphs explaining what the Scopes Trial was all about. Use research/evidence to support your claims.

The Debate Today

- Spend one to two paragraphs discussing where the debate has gone since the Scopes Trial and where you think it could be heading.



Happy researching!



Creation vs Evolution

WRITING FOLIO ASSESSMENT TASK

Criteria	5 Very High	4 High	3 Med	2 Low	1 Very Low	Not Shown
Content						
Demonstrates knowledge of the chosen content						
Structure and Language Features						
Demonstrates ability to write appropriately for the audience and purpose and has used the correct format						
Ability to use effective, accurate and expressive language specifically suited to the audience and purpose of the task						
Ability to use paragraphs for the coherent ordering and linking of ideas						
Has used correct grammar and spelling						
Preparation						
Has carefully drafted and edited writing						

Total: /30

Comments:

Back to the '80s!

Oral Presentation

To gain a full appreciation of the novel, you will need to find out what life was like in the 1980s.

Working in pairs, find out as much as you can about the following in Australia's 1980s:

- Politics (ie who was the Prime Minister?)
- Major celebrations
- Major tragedies
- Popular issues
- Music
- Fashion
- Popular films
- The state of the economy (boom, recession, depression, etc)
- Sporting achievements
- Any other interesting information

Your presentation should go for approximately 3–5 minutes.

Things to remember when doing an oral presentation:

- BE CREATIVE! Think of unusual and fun ways to present this to the class.
- Keep your audience entertained by the use of props to enhance your presentation.
- Speak S L O W L Y and clearly – we are all interested in what you have to say! Take deep breaths if you need to stay calm.

You will be marked according to the following criteria:

Criteria	Very High 5	High 4	Med 3	Low 2	Very Low 1
Your understanding of life in the 1980s					
Your body language and use of voice. Did you speak clearly? Did you maintain eye contact? Did you read from notes, or have your presentation rehearsed?					
Use of props and other aides to enhance your presentation					
Your overall preparation and presentation					

Total: /20

The Ten Commandments

Hester is disgusted when Joshua tells her their friendship cannot develop into romance – because ‘adultery’ is forbidden by the seventh commandment, and he believes adultery to be mixing races.

One of the main issues with the bible is the different ways it can be interpreted. The works were traditionally written in Hebrew, so it has been translated a number of times and people take the words to mean different things.

Below is a list of the Ten Commandments (taken from the New International Version of the bible), which are thought to be God’s rules for society.

With a partner, work out as many different meanings as you can for each commandment. Hint: try and find as many meanings as you can for the key phrases, and go from there. You might find a dictionary and thesaurus very helpful!

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.
3. You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Name That Chapter!

You will notice that the chapters in *The Rage of Sheep* are referred to simply by number. To help you remember what happens in each chapter, you will need to give each chapter a name. Don't forget to explain why you chose to name the chapter as you did.

Once you have filled out the chart below, you might wish to write the chapter's new 'name' in your copy of the novel to help you revise.

Chapter	Name	Reason
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		

Chapter	Name	Reason
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		



You Be The Illustrator

The publishers have decided to make a new edition of *The Rage of Sheep*. To go with the new reprint, they want a fantastic new cover.

Although this sounds simple, the cover illustration has two very important jobs (apart from keeping the pages together!). It needs to:

- Be eye-catching, encouraging people browsing bookshelves to buy the novel
- Give the reader clues as to what the novel may be about, such as the characters, setting, themes and issues.

You have been given the honour of this prestigious task. It is recommended you complete a draft in your workbook before you complete the final copy of the cover. You might also wish to jot down a list of themes, characters, setting and any other information you wish to portray before you start, to make sure you don't forget to include anything. It might also be a good way to get some ideas going.



Grading Criteria:

Criteria	Very High 5	High 4	Med 3	Low 2	Very Low 1
Your understanding of the novel, including characters, setting and themes.					
How well your cover conveyed accurate information.					
Your overall preparation and presentation.					

Total: /15

Chapter Review Questions

Chapter 1

1. Who is Hester writing to?
2. What do you learn about Natalie in this chapter? How do you know this?
3. Why do you think the author chose to name the science teacher Colonel Saunders?

Chapter 2

1. Why does Hester's English class have a new teacher?
2. What is your first impression of Mr Everett?
3. Why did one of the Jameson girls pick on Hester?

Chapter 3

1. Describe Hester's mother.
2. What do we learn about Krystena?
3. How is Hester feeling in this chapter?

Chapter 4

1. Why is 'Will Power' capitalised, even though it is not a proper noun?
2. What does the discussion about the guest list tell us about Natalie and Lynda?
3. Hester was upset by two things in this chapter. What were they?

Chapter 5

1. Why didn't Hester want to catch up with Natalie and Lynda after assembly?
2. Why do you think Hester defended Joshua?
3. What do you think will happen to Hester after she embarrassed Alistair?

Chapter 6

1. Why did Hester like hanging around with Natalie and Lynda, even though they were quite mean to her?
2. Why did Hester end up working with Joshua?
3. In what ways is Hester different to Natalie and Lynda?

Chapter 7

1. What do Natalie and Lynda think Joshua has passed to Hester? What was it?
2. What relevance does the class text the students study have on Hester's story?
3. Why doesn't Hester want to fall in love?

Chapter 8

1. Who did Hester come across when she was chasing her dog?
2. What topics did Hester and her parents discuss over the dinner table?
3. Why do you think it was important for the author to include this conversation between Hester and her parents?

Chapter 9

1. Who arrives at the school and causes a big fuss amongst the students?

2. What is Hester's opinion on the bible, based on her discussions with Joshua?
3. What is the title of the restricted novel Hester finds? How does she end up getting a copy of it to read?

Chapter 10

1. What further clues are we given to suggest Hester is different to Natalie and Lynda?
2. How does Hester describe David on the hockey field?
3. Who is the only other person who seems to be feeling the same way about the game as Hester? Why do you think this?

Chapter 11

1. What television show is Hester watching that her father keeps interrupting? What kind of show is it, and what would an equivalent be today?
2. Who chooses Hester's shoes? Why is this odd?
3. What interesting thing do we learn about Hester's relationship with Krystena?

Chapter 12

1. Why does Hester think her parents are so embarrassing?
2. Are your parents embarrassing? Are there any similarities between your parents and Hester's parents?
3. What two things did Hester think deeply about while trying to study?

Chapter 13

1. What happened to David?
2. Why did Mr Everett speak to David after class?
3. Why did Shane say Mr Everett held David back?

Chapter 14

1. What plan do the girls devise to ensure Hester is allowed to sleep over at the party?
2. Why is Natalie so keen to invite Joshua to her party?
3. What clues are we given to suggest Hester is starting to like Joshua?

Chapter 15

1. What is significant about the following quote: 'Lord,' said the minister, 'help us to be sheep. Not goats.' (p 181)
2. Why does Hester decide she should like Joshua?
3. What two things did Hester's mother do that surprised her?

Chapter 16

1. Why was Hester upset by Natalie's birthday card?
2. What does Natalie say to upset Hester?
3. What was Joshua's reason for not being able to date Hester?

Chapter 17

1. What did Mr Everett say he pictured the other students as when he was young?
2. What did Ms Dunbar accuse Mr Everett of?
3. 'I couldn't think of a thing to say to them. Baa, I thought.' (p 215) Why does Hester think this?

Chapter 18

1. What happened to Mr Everett?
2. Who does Hester blame for what happened to Mr Everett?
3. What does Hester learn about Mr Everett and Andrew Tyler?

Chapter 19

1. What are some of the rumours circulating about what had happened with Mr Everett?
2. Why does Hester decide not to let Natalie and Lynda 'walk away for good'?
3. Natalie states that those invited to her party is 'everyone who matters'. What kind of person do you think might 'matter', according to Natalie?

Chapter 20

1. What had Hester done to cause Natalie to withdraw Hester's invitation to her party?
2. What was David's secret?
3. What 'secret' did Hester's mother somehow find out about? Why didn't she tell Hester she knew until now?

Chapter 21

1. Why did Lynda ring Hester after Natalie's party?
2. What is Hester's part-time job?
3. What two events shock Natalie and Lynda?

Chapter 22

1. What is different about the letter at the start of this chapter?
2. Why is this significant?
3. Why does Hester comment that she is glad to be a goat?

THE RAGE OF SHEEP
Teaching Support Kit

TEACHER 'CHEAT SHEETS'



Chapter Review Questions

Chapter 1

1. Who is Hester writing to?
Kyrstena, her best friend who has moved away.
2. What do you learn about Natalie in this chapter? How do you know this?
Natalie has red hair, which she prefers to call 'strawberry blonde'. This tells us she is concerned about her appearance. She is a drama queen – she became upset over a minor incident. She loves to gossip and seems to have no sympathy for Joshua Mason, the boy the class is picking on.
3. Why do you think the author chose to name the science teacher Colonel Saunders?
It makes us think of Colonel Sanders, the character used to advertise KFC. This is a creative way to give us a clear picture of what the science teacher is like.

Chapter 2

1. Why does Hester's English class have a new teacher?
Miss Fielding took leave to plan her wedding to Mr Russo, the PE teacher.
2. What is your first impression of Mr Everett?
Mr Everett seems professional, strict and cynical. He marks the student's essays harshly, he does not seem impressed with Miss Fielding's reason for leaving, he notices everything going on in the class, he learns the student's names quickly and is concerned about how little they have covered in the class so far.
3. Why did one of the Jameson girls pick on Hester?
One of the Jameson girls picks on Hester because she is from a different ethnic background.

Chapter 3

1. Describe Hester's mother.
Hester's mother is attractive and takes pride in her appearance. She seems reasonably strict, but cares about her daughter. She completes short courses regularly. She has an inter-racial marriage.
2. What do we learn about Krystena?
We learn that Krystena has not written back to Hester.
3. How is Hester feeling in this chapter?
Hester is lacking confidence. She feels like she is an unattractive outcast.

Chapter 4

1. Why is 'Will Power' capitalised, even though it is not a proper noun?
Will Power is capitalised to give it emphasis/importance and to show how greatly her father values it. The author uses this technique to add humour.
2. What does the discussion about the guest list tell us about Natalie and Lynda?
The number of changes made to the guest list tells us that Natalie is quite fickle. It also tells us Natalie and Lynda are concerned about their popularity.
3. Hester was upset by two things in this chapter. What were they?

Hester was upset by Natalie saying her mother had an accent. She was also upset by the fact her father would be presenting certificates at the school assembly, which would be embarrassing.

Chapter 5

1. Why didn't Hester want to catch up with Natalie and Lynda after assembly?
Hester felt like being alone, probably because she was afraid they would pick on her about her dad being at assembly.
2. Why do you think Hester defended Joshua?
Hester probably defended Joshua because she was feeling powerless about her own life at that moment. She also felt what the boys were doing was really cruel and unfair.
3. What do you think will happen to Hester after she embarrassed Alistair?
Subjective answers.

Chapter 6

1. Why did Hester like hanging around with Natalie and Lynda, even though they were quite mean to her?
Hester liked being with Natalie and Lynda because they were pretty, popular and confident. Hester was not, so she was hoping some of their confidence would rub off on her.
2. Why did Hester end up working with Joshua?
Hester was used to choosing the topic for herself and chose the one Colonel Saunders wanted Joshua to do. Natalie and Lynda chose a topic of their own.
3. In what ways is Hester different to Natalie and Lynda?
Hester lacks confidence, is smart and does not have much of an interest in boys.

Chapter 7

1. What do Natalie and Lynda think Joshua has passed to Hester? What was it?
The girls think Joshua passed Hester a love note; however, it was asking when they could meet up to work on their assignment.
2. What relevance does the class text the students study have on Hester's story?
The class text reflects what is happening in the story: people are not free to make their own choices. Those who do are outcasts.
3. Why doesn't Hester want to fall in love?
Hester does not want to fall in love because it turns people into idiots.

Chapter 8

1. Who did Hester come across when she was chasing her dog?
Hester came across Mr Everett.
2. What topics did Hester and her parents discuss over the dinner table?
Hester and her parents discuss: the assembly, Mr Everett, the local factory retrenchments, AIDS and homosexuals and the bible.
3. Why do you think it was important for the author to include this conversation between Hester and her parents?
This conversation was important because it was like any normal family dinner conversation, which helps the reader identify with the characters. It could also give us clues as to what might happen later in the story.

Chapter 9

1. Who arrives at the school and causes a big fuss amongst the students?
Andrew Tyler, a local radio personality.
2. What is Hester's opinion on the bible, based on her discussions with Joshua?
Hester believes the bible's message is symbolic, rather than literal.
3. What is the title of the restricted novel Hester finds? How does she end up getting a copy of it to read?
*Hester finds a copy of *The Catcher in the Rye*. Mr Everett borrows it under his own name and gives it to her to read.*

Chapter 10

1. What further clues are we given to suggest Hester is different to Natalie and Lynda?
Hester is not talking about boys; she doesn't really care about the hockey game and wants to read her novel instead.
2. How does Hester describe David on the hockey field?
Hester describes David as frenzied and looking desperate.
3. Who is the only other person who seems to be feeling the same way about the game as Hester? Why do you think this?
Mr Everett also appears disinterested in the game; he didn't clap at the end and walked away.

Chapter 11

1. What television show is Hester watching that her father keeps interrupting? What kind of show is it, and what would an equivalent be today?
*Hester is watching *Countdown*, an '80s music show. Today's equivalent could be *Rage*, *Video Hits*, etc.*
2. Who chooses Hester's shoes? Why is this odd?
Hester's mother and Natalie choose Hester's shoes. This is odd because Hester should be able to choose her own shoes.
3. What interesting thing do we learn about Hester's relationship with Krystena?
We learn that Hester and Krystena's friendship had started to change before Krystena moved away.

Chapter 12

1. Why does Hester think her parents are so embarrassing?
Hester thinks her parents are embarrassing because they talk about when they dated, and her dad gave another one of his Will Power lectures.
2. Are your parents embarrassing? Are there any similarities between your parents and Hester's parents?
Subjective answers.
3. What two things did Hester think deeply about whilst trying to study?
Hester thought about where she fit in at school and her friendship with Natalie and Lynda.

Chapter 13

1. What happened to David?
David's mother, who was a single parent, had been retrenched.
2. Why did Mr Everett speak to David after class?
Mr Everett spoke to David after class to see if he was OK.
3. Why did Shane say Mr Everett held David back?

Shane said Mr Everett wanted to get David alone, implying Mr Everett was homosexual.

Chapter 14

1. What plan do the girls devise to ensure Hester is allowed to sleep over at the party?
The girls tell Hester to say that Natalie's mother and grandmother will be supervising. They then tell Hester to call her parents at the scheduled pick-up time to say she is staying over to help clean up.
2. Why is Natalie so keen to invite Joshua to her party?
Natalie wants Joshua to come to her party so that she has an excuse to invite his sister, Tabitha, who is popular and 'cool'.
3. What clues are we given to suggest Hester is starting to like Joshua?
Hester is starting to notice little details about Joshua and can't stop thinking about how he smells.

Chapter 15

1. What is significant about the following quote: 'Lord,' said the minister, 'help us to be sheep. Not goats.' (p 181)
It suggests that the church is telling the congregation to be like everybody else, which is what she decides to do in this chapter.
2. Why does Hester decide she should like Joshua?
Hester thinks that if she likes Joshua, she would be 'normal' and accepted by Natalie and Lynda.
3. What two things did Hester's mother do that surprised her?
Hester's mother let her go to the party without any fuss and knew what all the girls would be wearing.

Chapter 16

1. Why was Hester upset by Natalie's birthday card?
Hester was upset because the card was from Krystena, who had 'not had time' to write to Hester, but could find the time to write to Natalie.
2. What does Natalie say to upset Hester?
Hester overhears Natalie talking about a 'wog'. Natalie means a flu/virus, but Hester instantly assumes it is a racial slur about someone.
3. What was Joshua's reason for not being able to date Hester?
Joshua refused to date Hester because the seventh commandment forbids adultery; his interpretation of that is not having an inter-marital affair as generally assumed – rather, the adulteration of races.

Chapter 17

1. What did Mr Everett say he pictured the other students as when he was young?
Mr Everett pictured the other students as sheep.
2. What did Ms Dunbar accuse Mr Everett of?
Ms Dunbar accused Mr Everett of behaving inappropriately with students.
3. 'I couldn't think of a thing to say to them. Baa, I thought.' (p 215) Why does Hester think this?
Hester thinks this because the students are behaving like sheep – 'tend to panic and rush around in circles if anything interesting appears in their midst.' (p 203)

Chapter 18

1. What happened to Mr Everett?
Mr Everett resigned after the false accusation that he behaved inappropriately with a student.
2. Who does Hester blame for what happened to Mr Everett?
Hester blames herself for what happened to Mr Everett.
3. What does Hester learn about Mr Everett and Andrew Tyler?
Hester learns that Mr Everett and Andrew Tyler are a couple.

Chapter 19

1. What are some of the rumours circulating about what had happened with Mr Everett?
Apparently Hester had flown into a fit of rage over an embrace between Joshua and Mr Everett, she was in love with Joshua, she was in love with Mr Everett and Mr Everett had bribed her with the Year 10 exam answers to keep his and Joshua's secret.
2. Why does Hester decide not to let Natalie and Lynda 'walk away for good'?
Hester realises other students would make her school life very difficult if she was not friends with Natalie and Lynda.
3. Natalie states that those invited to her party is 'everyone who matters'. What kind of person do you think might 'matter', according to Natalie?
Subjective answers, but generally someone who could add to the party in some way or enhance Natalie's popularity.

Chapter 20

1. What had Hester done to cause Natalie to withdraw Hester's invitation to her party?
Hester had an outburst in class about Mr Everett and had blown her implied 'last chance' by embarrassing Natalie and Lynda.
2. What was David's secret?
David's secret was that he hated hockey and loved Art, but played hockey because that was the norm.
3. What 'secret' did Hester's mother somehow find out about? Why didn't she tell Hester she knew until now?
Hester's mother knew Natalie's party was unsupervised. She didn't tell Hester about it because she trusted Hester to make sensible decisions at the party.

Chapter 21

1. Why did Lynda ring Hester after Natalie's party?
Lynda called Hester for help with her Maths homework.
2. What is Hester's part-time job?
Hester is working as Andrew and Rob's bookkeeper for their music store.
3. What two events shock Natalie and Lynda?
Natalie and Lynda are shocked by the fact that Hester is working as a bookkeeper in a 'cool' shop and the fact that Hester and David seem to be friends.

Chapter 22

1. What is different about the letter at the start of this chapter?
The letter is a Dear Diary entry, rather than a letter to Krystena.

2. Why is this significant?

This is significant because it shows Hester is now independent.

3. Why does Hester comment that she is glad to be a goat?

Hester comments that she is glad to be a goat because she sees a flock of sheep as she is leaving and it reminds her of the sheep-like behaviour of the people in the town.