

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

BREAKER by Annemarie Allan



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Themes/issues addressed in this book

Family, environmental disaster, green energy, living by the sea, science, moving to a new place, making friends

Book Summary

When Tom and Beth move to the seaside town of North Berwick, they are faced with a summer of no friends, a windswept, storm-battered coastline, and nothing to do. To make matters worse, their house is being renovated and they can't even relax at home. Fortunately, they happen upon Professor MacBlaine – a wacky inventor, with one or two skeletons in his closet – who introduces them to some of his weird and wonderful inventions, and things start to look up. Then disaster strikes when an oil tanker crashes onto the Bass Rock. The coastline will be decimated if the oil seeps into the sea. Tom, Beth, the Professor, and 'Gaia' – a small environmentally-friendly submarine – leap into action to try to save the Firth of Forth from catastrophe. This is a thrilling, fast-paced, environmentally aware novel from Annemarie Allan, author of the acclaimed *Hox*.

BEFORE READING

Group Activities

- Discussion: What is meant by 'environment'? What is your environment?
- Discussion: Where does oil come from? Why do we need it? What can you make from oil?
- Discussion: What kind of wildlife might you find near a coastal town like North Berwick? And in the Firth of Forth?

AFTER READING (note, contains spoilers!)

Individual Work

- Write a paragraph on the thoughts and feelings you had when:
 - a) The tanker crashes on the Bass Rock (chapter 4)
 - b) The 'suits' attempt to find out the professor's location (chapter 9)
 - c) The children meet 'Gaia' (chapter 12)
 - d) The net gets stuck (chapter 21)
- In chapter 12, you are given a vivid description of Gaia. Draw or paint a picture of what you think Gaia is like based on this description.
- What do you think it would be like to travel under the sea in Gaia? What do you think you would see? Where would you like to go? Write a poem about your adventure – at least ten lines. It does not have to rhyme.

Group Activities

- Class project involving group work: In groups, use the Internet and library to do some research into the following incidents which affected the environment: Chernobyl disaster, Exxon Valdez oil spill, Bhopal disaster, Tennessee Coal Sludge Spill, Seveso disaster. Would you say that these were environmental disasters? Why? What caused them? What was the outcome? How many people were affected? How many people died if any? Were any animals/birds/fish affected? Were any plants/forests affected? What do you think the effects of these incidents on the world have been? Write a report on your findings and present it to your class. Create a wall display on environmental disasters and how we can help to avoid them.
- Group activity: What is meant by the terms 'global warming', 'energy consumption', 'carbon footprint', and 'green energy'? Write a description of each of these terms, then list ten ways you could help to reduce your personal carbon footprint. Share these with your class. Did any groups have similar ideas?
- Class discussion: Lying. Read chapter 15 again. Beth lies to Elsie because Gaia's secret is not hers to give away. Did she do the right thing? Why? Why not? Is it ever acceptable to lie? Why? Why not?
(continued overleaf)

KELPIES

Series Summary

The award-winning Kelpies series is Scotland's favourite collection of children's fiction. Floris Books took over the list in 2001, republishing classic works by authors such as Kathleen Fidler and Allan Campbell McLean. Since then, we have continued to add to the series with a range of highly successful new Scottish novels for children. Of these, *Chill* by Alex Nye won a Royal Mail Award in 2007 and *Hox* by Annemarie Allan was nominated for a Royal Mail Award in 2008.

CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS COVERED

5-14 Curriculum (Scotland)

Years: P4-P7

Listening:

Listening in Groups
Listening for Information, including instructions and directions

Reading:

Reading for Information
Reading to Reflect
Awareness of Genre

Talking:

Talking in Groups
Talking about Texts
Talking about Experiences, including feelings and opinions

Writing:

Functional
Imaginative

National Curriculum (England, Wales, Northern Ireland)

Key Stage 2

English: Reading

Reading Strategies
Response to Texts, including analysing and evaluating
Reading for Information

National Literacy Strategy:

Text-Level Reading
Text-Level Writing
Vocabulary

Vocabulary

- Check you know what the following words mean (page numbers of example words in brackets):

adhesion (19)	algae (88)	ambient (19)	argocat (142)	biodegradable (22)
bioluminescent (23)	claustrophobia (81)	cleft (102)	crimson (53)	disconsolately (74)
eradicate (7)	feisty (20)	flailing (56)	flotilla (174)	grille (80)
horizon (8)	intent (50)	iridescent (45)	meagre (48)	navigator (92)
organism (88)	porpoise (143)	reverberate (150)	serpentine (149)	shroud (25)
stabiliser (161)	surreptitiously (62)	tarpaulin (128)	tendril (125)	toil (163)
trivia (41)	turret (147)	vacant (38)	vortex (20)	