

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

NEW SCHOOL BLUES by Theresa Breslin



www.florisbooks.co.uk

Themes/issues addressed in this book

Starting a new school; friendship; local history; land-rights and rights of way

Book Summary

Mary and Jamie meet on the first day at their new Secondary school. Mary's parents are strict and conventional whereas Jamie likes to break the rules, but they become friends. On a short-cut to Jamie's house by the graveyard, the children cross a field in which a farmer has installed a ferocious bull, and they get interested in the issue of rights of way across land. In addition, the graveyard becomes the focus of a local history project at school: they learn about children dying young, the cholera epidemic and the body snatchers, including Burke and Hare.

Theresa Breslin, a Carnegie medal-winning author, is very much in tune with the issues faced by children as they start secondary school, and there is plenty of humour in this story. This is a good book for children who like modern, fast-flowing language.

BEFORE READING

Individual Work

- Write about your first day at school.

Group Activities

- Discussion: what is it like to be a new pupil at school?
- Discussion: talk about infectious diseases and how they have been affected by modern immunization programmes.

AFTER READING

Group Activities

- Visit a local graveyard to look at the inscriptions on the gravestones. Based on the inscriptions, discuss the different ways that people died.
- Look at a local map and investigate which buildings are old, and how they are situated. Discuss new building projects in your local area and how they affect streets and pathways near you.
- Interview: talk to an old person about what the local area was like when he/she was young.
- Make a map of your local area as it looked one hundred years ago, using maps from the library.

Vocabulary

- Check you know what the following words mean:
 - curator
 - combat
 - precision
 - claustrophobic
 - ghoulish
 - genetic
 - archaeological
 - silhouetted
 - improvised
 - apparel
 - catastrophe
 - menacing
 - automatic

Kelpies Series Summary

The award-winning Kelpies series is Scotland's favourite collection of children's fiction. Floris Books took over publication of these books in 2001. The series includes such classic novels as Kathleen Fidler's The Desperate Journey, Mollie Hunter's The Thirteenth Member, and Theresa Breslin's Simon's Challenge. Genres included in the series range from historical and folklore to detective and adventure stories.

CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS COVERED

5-14 Curriculum (Scotland)

Years: P6-P7, S1-S3

Reading:

Reading for Information

Reading to Reflect

Awareness of Genre

Talking:

Talking in groups

Talking about texts

Talking about experiences, feeling and opinions

Writing:

Functional

Imaginative

National Curriculum (England, Wales, Northern Ireland)

Key Stages 2 and 3

English: Reading

Reading Strategies

Response to Texts, inc analysing and evaluating

Reading for Information

National Literacy Strategy:

Text-Level Reading

Text-Level Writing

Vocabulary