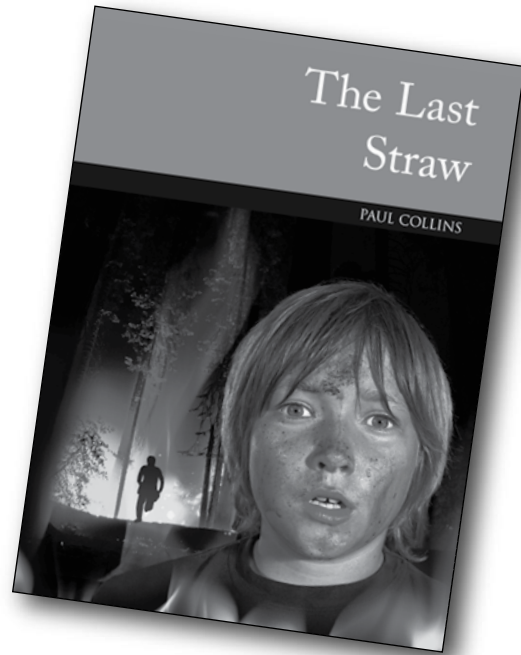


Springboard 5

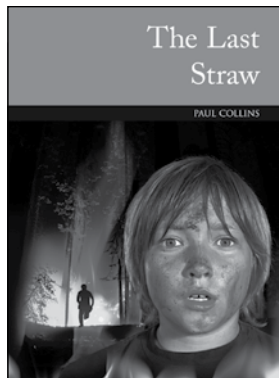


The Last Straw

Fiction

Title	Text Type	Word Count
Rogue Robot	Science Fiction	6000–6900 words
The Last Straw	Realistic Fiction	6000–6900 words
Asteroid Attack	Science Fiction	7000–7900 words
Go to Your Room	Humour	7000–7900 words
The Potter's Son	Myth	8000–8900 words
Court in the Act	Fantasy	8000–8900 words

We have designed these lesson plans so that you can have the plan in front of you as you teach, along with a copy of the book. Suggestions for teaching have been divided into questions and discussion that you may have with students before, during, and after they read. You may prefer to explore the meaning and the language in more detail before students read. Your decisions will depend on the gap between students' current knowledge and the content, vocabulary, and language of the book they are about to read. The more information students have up front, the easier it will be for them to read the text.



THE LAST STRAW

Lower level fiction

Text type: Realistic Fiction

Reading age 9.5–10.5

Word count 6000–6900

Guide questions for teachers are in *italics*.

Before Reading

Activate prior knowledge by asking students if they have read any realistic fiction stories. Explain that these are stories that have plots, settings, and characters that might be found in real life. Invite students to suggest the titles of books, films, and TV shows.

Discuss the plots and settings of the titles suggested. Explain that, by observing how the characters behave and solve problems, they can help us learn how to deal with things that happen in everyday life. Guide the discussion to build understandings that when we see the way the main characters deal with the things that happen to them, we may be exposed to ways of acting and thinking that are new or unfamiliar to us.

COVER

Before Reading

Read the title and ask the students to consider what this story might be about.

Discussion and question guide:

Who might the person on the cover be? What does the cover image suggest?

Does the illustration give any clues to what this story might be about?

Read the blurb on the back cover. Discuss the term realistic fiction. What is the plot in this story? What is an orangutan? What are poachers?

What sorts of twists and turns might this book have? Invite prediction.

Consider the title, cover illustration, and blurb. What do you think might happen in this story?

KAYAN MENTARANG

Before Reading

Read page 4. What do you think this chapter will be about? Encourage students to make predictions. Where is this chapter set? Why does the silence suggest that something might be wrong? From the information we have from the blurb, can you predict what might be bothering the animals? What is the top canopy? What does the word raucously mean?

As you read this chapter, take note of any information that tells you where this story occurs. Jot down how you think the plot of the story might develop and be ready to share what you learn about the members of Troy's family.

After Reading

Who is telling this story?

Where is this story set? Where is Sumatra? Have students infer using the knowledge that smoke from the burning forest reached Australia in 1997. Locate Sumatra on a map or globe.

What are monsoons?

How do you think the plot of this story will develop? What do you know about Troy and his parents? What sort of people do you think they are? What do they value? What issue do they feel particularly passionate about? What are their fears for the orangutans? What are their fears for Troy? What is an inadvertent witness?

What do the poachers do with the orangutans?

FLOPPER

Before Reading

Who or what do you think Flopper might be? Read page 11 and be ready to discuss your predictions about what this chapter is about.

As you read this chapter you will learn about Flopper, an orangutan that is special to Troy's family. Be ready to share what you learn about this orangutan and why he is special to Troy and his parents.

As you get to the end of the chapter, be thinking about the last sentence and what it might mean.

After Reading

Who is Flopper? Why does Flopper visit the house? Is he the only orangutan that visits the family's house? What do you think makes Flopper Troy's favourite orangutan?

Describe the humorous incident involving Flopper.

What do the orangutans eat? What is a durian? How does the author describe this fruit? Revisit page 12 if needed.

What do you think the last sentence means? Who could the visitors be? Invite predictions.

CAPTURED

Before Reading

Read the title and invite students to predict what the chapter is about. *Who or what might be captured? Read page 15. What does it mean to have turned a blind eye? Why do you think the police might do this?*

Read this chapter and be ready to share what you learn about the smugglers and how far they will go to continue poaching orangutans.

Be ready to share your predictions about what might be in store for Troy.

After Reading

What sort of action towards Troy's dad did the poachers initiate? What do you think they were hoping to achieve? Does Troy's dad seem like the kind of person to back off? Explain. What did Troy's dad do with the letter?

What is government funding? Why might the government give money to the family?

Troy suspects immediately that the visitors are a threat to him. What is his first thought when the jeep arrives? What thoughts does he have when the first man tells him they have been sent to collect him? How does Troy know the man is lying? Revisit pages 18 and 19 to check if needed.

How does the author describe the visitors to make it clear to readers that these are not friendly people?

What do you think will happen next?

DEEP IN THE JUNGLE

Before Reading

What does the title suggest? Read page 21 and be ready to predict what might happen in this chapter.

What does it mean to gag? Invite inferences.

What do you think might be going through Troy's mind during the trip in the jeep?

Read this chapter and find out what happens. Be ready to discuss the problem and what the smugglers might be hoping to gain from Troy's capture. Imagine how Troy might be feeling.

After Reading

What do you learn in this chapter?

What does it mean to use someone as leverage? What is a hostage? What might the smugglers do with Troy?

On page 23, Troy thinks that if the smugglers realize that he recognizes them he might not get out alive. What does he mean by this? Why is it important for the smugglers not be recognized?

Troy has some nicknames for the smugglers. What are these nicknames and how do you think he arrived at them?

What is a corrupt person? Revisit page 25 to clarify if needed.

What do you expect to happen next?

TIME STANDS STILL

Before Reading

Read page 28. What does the title mean? What do you expect this chapter to be about?

Where is this chapter likely to be set?

As you read this chapter you will see that a relationship develops between Troy and one of his captors. Be ready to share your thoughts on this relationship. You will also see how Troy tries to get the smuggler to think about his actions. Be prepared to discuss why Troy might be doing this. Finally, you will learn why this person is involved in the smuggling trade.

After Reading

Why do you think Troy lost track of time while he was held captive?

What does Troy learn about the captor he calls Tarantula? Why is Tarantula involved in smuggling? Does this help you to understand his behaviour? Does it change the way you view him? Why or why not? Support students to understand that, when faced with difficult situations, sometimes people do things that they would not normally do.

What does Troy try to do during their conversations? How does Troy connect Tarantula's mother's illness to the destruction of the rainforest? Is this deliberate? What is Troy's strategy? What do you think of this?

Does Tarantula want the rainforest destroyed? Revisit pages 32 and 33 to support students to understand that people sometimes feel powerless to act against things over which they feel they have little or no control.

WHERE THERE'S SMOKE...

Before Reading

Discuss the title and what it may mean. Read page 34. Does this page give you any clues about what this chapter might be about? Why do you think Troy never sees his other captors?

In this chapter something happens that enables Troy to be released. Be ready to share what happens and also to discuss your thoughts on how the character Tarantula treats Troy.

After Reading

What happens in this chapter? Why are the fires out of control? What is the risk to the national park?

What are government-sanctioned fires?

What happens to Troy? How does Tarantula treat Troy? Why does he give Troy a wet singlet to put over his head? Do you sense a more friendly relationship developing between Troy and Tarantula?

What do you think will happen next?

TO THE RIVER

Before Reading

What do you think the title means? Invite inferences. Read page 39 to gather more information. Discuss what might happen during this chapter.

As you read this chapter you see Tarantula put Troy's safety before his own. Be ready to discuss why Tarantula's actions show his unselfishness.

After Reading

What does Tarantula do that shows Troy that he is putting Troy's safety first?

Travelling in the dugout canoe is not something that Tarantula feels comfortable about. Why is this? On page 40, Troy says that Tarantula had jeopardized his own safety to save me. What does this tell Troy? Why do you think Tarantula did not go in the jeep and save his own neck?

What happens to Tarantula at the end of the chapter? What dangerous animals lives in the river?

What do you think will happen next?

EARLY RETIREMENT

Before Reading

What does the title suggest? Read page 42 and discuss.

In this chapter, you will learn how Troy saves Tarantula after Tarantula saves him.

You will also find out what happens to the other smugglers and what plans Tarantula has for the future.

An unusual friendship between Troy and Tarantula develops in the story. Be ready to share what you think happens to each character after the story ends.

After Reading

What happens to Tarantula after he falls into the water? Troy finally learns his captor's real name. What is it? Why do you think Tarantula tells Troy his name?

What happens to the other smugglers? What does the way the others behave as they attempt to flee suggest about them?

What does Tarantula do at the end of the story? What sad news does he share with Troy about his mother?

Troy tells the reader more about the damage Ute and others like him have caused to the mangroves in the park ecosystem. Why do you think this information was shared with the reader?

▲ CODE BREAKER

An idiom is a group of words that when used together carry a message that is different from the meaning of the words on their own. For example, people sometimes say break a leg. The words are not intended to be taken literally, and the speaker is not actually inviting the person to break a leg; rather, they are repeating an expression used to wish someone luck.

Discuss these idioms from the story:

- turned a blind eye
- the last straw

■ MEANING MAKER

In this story, the main character has a good understanding of the importance of looking after the environment. Discuss the environmental theme in this book and prompt students to consider their thoughts about:

- clearing rainforests
- poaching and selling animals or animal parts
- logging

◆ TEXT USER

Realistic fiction has plots, characters, and settings that might be found in real life. Revisit this story and find all the things that can and do happen in real life.

Stories like this are an important way of learning how to deal with a range of problems that can arise in real life. This story prompts the reader to think about a range of social and ethical issues. Have students identify these issues in the book.

● TEXT CRITIC

Authors write books for a reason. Sometimes, the purpose is simply to entertain the reader. Other times, it may be to teach the reader something, or even to shape the way the reader thinks about something.

Discuss this story and have students consider whether the author wants to shape the way readers think or feel about poaching and protecting our forests. Have students revisit the text and find evidence to support their thinking.

USING MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Partner/small group activity

Choose: Choose an animal that you would like to protect from poachers. (I)

Design: Design a nature reserve that people can visit to observe and learn about this animal. (S)

Create: Create a model of your idea. (S)

Record: Record some interesting information about your animal and your reserve. (V)

Design: Design a brochure to market your idea. (S, V)

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

The theory of multiple intelligences was developed by Howard Gardner, a professor of education at Harvard University. Howard Gardner's theory suggests that the current view of intelligence, as measured by IQ tests, is far too limited and discriminates against students who think in different ways. He proposes taking a broader perspective and has identified eight different intelligences. These are:

verbal-linguistic intelligence – word smart

logical-mathematical intelligence – number/
reasoning smart

spatial intelligence – picture smart

bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence
– body smart

musical intelligence – music smart

interpersonal intelligence – people smart

intrapersonal intelligence – self smart

naturalist intelligence – nature smart

Multiple intelligences have enormous potential as a tool in furthering reading and language development. Traditionally, the teaching of language and reading has focused mainly on two intelligences: logical-mathematical and verbal-linguistic. This means that many students who possess different intelligences do not receive the necessary opportunities, encouragement, instruction, or reinforcement to succeed with reading as well as they might.

The Last Straw

Name _____

Graphic Organizer (before and during reading)

Fill in the table. Write the main problem in the story, write about a development that complicates the main problem, then write about how Troy's kidnapping, the conservation issues, and any other problems are resolved by the end of the story.

The problem	
The complications	
How Troy's kidnapping is resolved	
How the conservation issues are resolved	
How other issues are resolved	

The Last Straw

Name _____

🔍 Code Breaker

Use the book to infer what these words mean. Record your inferences. Check the dictionary and record the dictionary meanings.

Word	My inference	Dictionary meaning
raucously		
canopy		
nonchalantly		
poach		
inadvertent		
durian		
hostage		
corrupt		
conservation		

Write synonyms for the words in italics.

A bird called *raucously* from the top canopy.

I *nonchalantly* followed her gaze.

I remained *stock still* and barely dared to breathe.

You might be an *inadvertent* witness to the poaching.

The poachers were going to use me as *leverage* against Dad.

The Last Straw

Name _____

☐ Meaning Maker

Use the book to answer these questions.

1. What do orangutans eat?

2. What do orangutans look like?

3. Why do poachers hunt orangutans?

4. Why might poachers enter a national park to poach animals?

5. Would you be keen to eat a durian? Why or why not?

6. On page 16 the author refers to the use of unlicensed weapons. What are these?

7. On page 16 the author talks of government funding. Why might the government provide funding to Troy's family?

8. Reread page 17. What made Troy suspicious of the men in the jeep?

9. What is corrupt a police officer?

10. What are some other animals that you think might be at risk from poaching?

The Last Straw

Name _____

⦿ Text User

Answer these questions to give your opinions about the plot of the story.

1. What would you change about the beginning or end of this story? Why?

2. Did the events in the story flow in an order that made sense? Explain.

3. Did the story move along at a comfortable pace? Did it move too fast or too slow? Explain.

4. What are three problems in this story?

5. Did you feel involved in this story? Explain.

6. This is a story that could happen in real life. What could make a story like this happen?

The Last Straw

Name _____

● Text Critic

The author constructed Ahmad's (Tarantula) character very deliberately in this story. He began as Troy's captor, then he befriended Troy, and, finally, he saved Troy from the fire. Use these chapters of the book to find evidence to show how this character changed over course of the story.

Captured

Time Stands Still

Where There's Smoke...

To the River

Early Retirement

Do you think that Ahmad continued to poach orangutans after the end of this story?

Do you think Ahmad and Troy could remain friends after what had happened? Explain.

The Last Straw

Name _____

Multiple Intelligences

Logical-mathematical, Intrapersonal

Choose two conservation issues that you feel strongly about. Construct an idea web in each blank box to show your thinking about each issue. On the lines next to each box, record some things you could do to raise awareness of the issue.

Issue one: _____

Issue two: _____

The Last Straw

Name _____

Realistic Fiction

How were these elements of the story realistic? Use words from the story to support your opinions.

The plot

The setting

The characters

The kidnapping

The ending

Was there anything unrealistic about this story? Explain.

Do you enjoy realistic fiction? Explain.

What other realistic fiction stories/shows/films do you know?
