

**Teachers' Notes**  
**by Ananda Braxton-Smith**

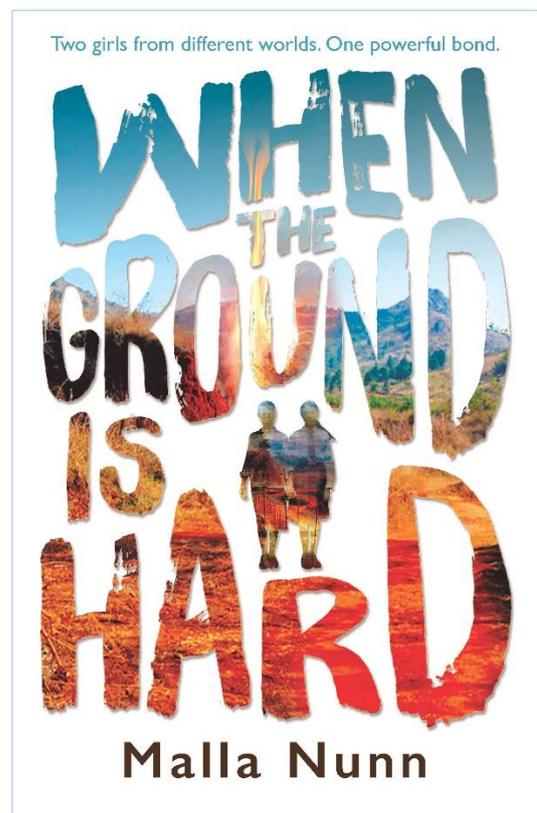
**When the Ground is Hard**  
**by**  
**Malla Nunn**

**ISBN 9781760524814**

**Recommended for ages 12 to 18 yrs**

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

Introduction.....	2
Synopsis .....	3
<i>A note on the complexities of class</i> ....	3
Textual features.....	4
Curriculum alignment.....	4
Activities .....	4
English literature & literacy .....	4
Year 7 .....	5
Year 7 & 8 .....	6
Year 9 .....	7
Year 10 .....	9
History .....	11
Year 9 .....	11
Year 10 .....	13
Resources & Bibliography .....	14
About the writers .....	17



## INTRODUCTION

### SYNOPSIS

Adele Joubert is 16-years-old. She lives with her mother and her brother in a small community in the British Protectorate of Swaziland. It is 1965 and under British rule there are three kinds of people: white, mixed-race, and native Swazi. White people are the top people, mixed-race people are next, and native people are the lowest. White people get the best education, the best jobs, the best hospitals. They get the best food and the best houses. Mixed-race people get the next best, and black people get the worst of everything.

*That's just how things are.*

Adele and her family are mixed-race people. Father is white, and Mother is mixed-race. Father is a 'sometimes' father who lives in Johannesburg with his white family. Mother and Father are not married but he is a good man, Mother says. He comes to see them when he can. He sends Mother money and is reliable about paying the school fees. Every Tuesday night Mother rings him from the public phone box at the crossroads—and he always answers. But he cannot live with them.

*That's just how things are.*

Father's money pays for Adele to attend Keziah Christian Academy, a boarding school for mixed-race children. At Keziah, Adele is a top person and a member of the top girl group. Like all the top girls, her father's money buys new clothes, books of her own, and extra food to supplement the school food and to bribe other students. Mother is beautiful and well-dressed. She has only one man coming to her house—and that's Adele's father. Not like some mothers.

Some children are very poor; they are charity students. Their fathers don't come and they don't send money. They have no extra food and the teachers have to find clothes for them out of the poor box. Who your father is, the morals of your mother, and the wealth of your family: these are the things that matter. That's just the way things are at Keziah. It can't be helped and it can't be changed.

*Except when, suddenly, it does.*

When Adele boards the school bus to take her spot at the front among the top girls, there is no room. Another girl has taken her place on the front seats. The top girls have replaced her with someone richer, someone better. She must find another seat but all the front seats are taken. There isn't even any room in the middle of the bus. Adele is forced right to the back where the low people sit. She has to sit next to the poorest, lowest girl at school—Lottie Diamond.

Lottie Diamond has a dead Jewish father, and the rest of her is Scottish and Zulu. She is nearly white-skinned, but she lives on the edge of a reserve and mixes with native Swazis. She spits and swears and fights. Adele herself is always polite, always obedient, and respectful of rules. She stays away from the Swazi compounds. That way people know she's not low class.

At school the new girl has been given Adele's bunk. Adele is to bunk with Lottie Diamond in a small disused sickroom. Three years before a girl died in this shed. Adele, evicted by her friends, is frightened. Maybe the dead girl will haunt the shed? Maybe her spirit will hang around Adele? Maybe she will be angry?

But Lottie Diamond doesn't believe in spirits. Adele knows her mother wants her to be polite to poor students but she can't help thinking that Lottie is probably a thief as well as an unbeliever. And maybe even a bad girl too, a slut. All Adele wants is to find her way back into the top girl group.

At the very first assembly Adele and Lottie are caught talking. It was Lottie's fault but they are both given three stripes of the cane. In front of the whole school. Adele will never get back into the top girl group now.

Lottie talks a lot. She says a lot of things. She says why should it be alright for men to have many children from many women, but not alright for women to have many men? She says she's going to have a farm when she's grown up. She also says that Adele is clever with books but ignorant. Adele is not sure what Lottie means.

Lottie Diamond's mother survives by working for almost nothing, and through men with spare money. She wants Lottie to stay at school, and get her own house. So that she never has to be dependent on a man's approval.

Adele remembers Mother smiling whenever Father comes. Smiling and smiling. And reminding Adele and Rian to smile. Getting Adele to tell Father how happy she is at school. Mother ironing her hair and filling the icebox with beer. And all of them smiling until their jaws ache.

Lottie Diamond doesn't let boys disrespect her. She takes her punishments without a sound. She doesn't take bribes from rich students. She is stoic in the face of insults. These things make Adele feel a little proud. She's brave.

Brave like Mother walking through town to the phone every Tuesday, with all the married ladies staring.

Lottie doesn't make friends with people because of fathers, or money, or skin colour. She makes you her friend because she likes you. Adele is her friend and so is Darnell Parn. Darnell is slow. There's something wrong with him, but Lottie likes him. Darnell is always running away from school. But he always comes back. He ran away a week ago, though, and this time he hasn't come back.

Adele and Lottie search for Darnell. Their search takes them out-of-bounds, along banned routes through a Swazi compound and finally onto land owned by the violent and racist Mr Bosman. It is here they find Darnell's body. There is no proof that Bosman is responsible for Darnell's death and Adele and Lottie must accept it. They sit with his body, calming his spirit, until his family can come and take him home.

It is Adele who is changed. She is no longer ignorant. She knows things now, like what she wants—and what she doesn't want. That there is a difference between good rules and bad rules and between friends and just cronies. She knows that there is a time to break rules, a time to go out-of-bounds, and a time to fight. That the way things are is not always the way things should be.

### **A NOTE ON COMPLEXITIES OF SOCIAL CLASS IN *WHEN THE GROUND IS HARD*.**

*When the Ground is Hard* does not simplify the various ways in which people are classified. The text investigates the complexity of racial distinction in a British Protectorate in 1965, but there is a concurrent discussion of gender and the economy that enriches understandings about Adele's life under an effective social apartheid.

At Adele's school all the students are mixed-race, so distinctions other than race decide status: Adele's mother's marital status, her white father's wealth, whether he comes to see her and what gifts he gives her: All this and more is calculated in a complicated sum. The answer to the sum confers social status: a person can be low, middle or top class.

In the complex calculations of Keziah, having a father who publicly loves you, by giving gifts and money, raises your worth in the community. New clothes, clean books, food in your school trunk: these are the signs of being loved. Students who lack these things are thought unloved, and certainly without protection. Such a person can be mistreated without fear.

To complicate matters, the students of Keziah have peculiar distinctions of their own that add to or subtract from a person's status.

*When the Ground is Hard* provides opportunities to consider discrimination based on the smallest personal differences to the largest.

## TEXTUAL FEATURES

- Genre: Boarding-school book/coming-of-age literature/post-colonial literature
- First person narrative
- Themes: Race, gender, social class, modern African history, self-realisation
- Intertext: *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte & *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys

## CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

*When the Ground is Hard* provides opportunities for learning in the subject areas of History/Geography, and for both formal learning and creative engagement with ideas through activities in Literature and Literacy. The text's focus is on the experience of race discrimination in a particular place and time, but also includes a discussion of gender and economic discrimination that can provide enrichment to any studies of society.

### WHEN THE GROUND IS HARD & THE GENERAL CAPABILITIES

*When the Ground is Hard* provides material for learning and discussion across the capabilities of Literacy, Critical & Creative Thinking, Personal & Social Competence, Ethical Behaviour, and Intercultural Understanding.

### CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT OF THESE TEACHERS NOTES

(Australian Curriculum accessed 14/5/2019)

#### English Literature and Literacy

- Yr 7: ACELA1764/ACELY1725/ACELY1728
- Yr 7 & 8: ACELT1619/ACELT1625/ACELT1626/ACELY1725/ACELT1807/ACELY1736/ACELY1738
- Yr 9: ACELY1743/ ACELT1635/ACELY1747/ACELY1748
- Yr 10: ACELT1639/ ACELT1642/ACELY1756/ACELY1757/ACELY1776  
ACELY1756/ACELY1776/ACELY1757

#### History

- Yr 9: ACDSEH019
- Yr 10: ACOKFH022

## ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

---

### ENGLISH LITERATURE AND LITERACY

---

#### Vocab Stop!

1. **Postcolonial:** Occurring or existing after the end of colonial rule

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/postcolonial>

2. **Postcolonial literature:** Texts that engage with the consequences of colonial rule, in particular the colonialisms of western European practiced over the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

[\[definition by A. Braxton-Smith\]](#)

## Year 7

### 1. Picture it - The phone at the Crossroads

ACELA1764/ACELY1725/ACELY1728

*It's Thursday night so we walk down Live Long Street to the public telephone booth at the inter-section of three footpaths called Left Path, Right Path and Centre Path. My torch beam bounces the length of the dirt Road and picks out uneven ground and potholes, of which there are many ... The phone booth appears in my torch beam: a rectangle of silver metal cemented into red earth. Right Path, Left Path and Centre Path split off and disappear into vacant land covered in weeds. Bored children and drunks have left their initials their boot prints on the glass walls, but, by some miracle, the interior light still gives off a dim glow, which attracts a circling cloud of white moths.*

[pp. 1-3]

Modern authors often use effects drawn from film-making in writing both fiction and non-fiction. Effects such as panning in or panning out, close-up or long-shot, even a type of slow-motion have become such familiar acts of imagination that they seem natural. When such filmic devices are used in literature the images, or scenes, they create tend to stand out. They remain in the mind in a way more literary constructions may not. These scenes are often emblems of the story, or of some central idea in the text.

When encountering filmic writing it can be enlightening to make a visual representation of the scene to study. Filmic images made in words can be analysed in similar ways to images made in film or art, and by using similar strategies. Making a visual representation of an image in a literary text can provide students with keys to theme and character, and create fluency across an increasingly interdependent media of words and pictures.

As an activity completed before reading the entire text this activity offers an exercise in textual expectation. Students read the passage, create the image, and from the image predict the theme of the story.

#### Activity 1a: Storyboard

*When the Ground is Hard* has passages of intensely visual language. This is most noticeable when the text is locating characters in a landscape. Every element is purposefully placed and offers opportunities for contemplating Adele's situation.

With the whole class, READ CLOSELY pages 1-3 of *When the Ground is Hard*. LOCATE the immediate visual elements of the scene. DISCUSS what in the passage is extra to these visual elements? (For instance, thoughts and feelings are not visual elements.) NOTE the visual elements on the board so that students are clear about the image they will make.

CREATE a visual representation of the scene. Start with a sketch mapping out the basic elements and when satisfied make a clean COPY. REMEMBER that the scene is focused through Adele's point of view.

NOTE:

- placement of roads
- lighting effects: such as torchlight or cracks of light under doors
- location of characters

The finished image can be a storyboard still drawn by hand, either in lead pencil or a colour medium, or it can be a scene created on PowerPoint. Once the basic elements are in place, ADD visual detail from the text paying special attention to light and what is illuminated.

SHARE your image with the class. DISCUSS the effects of the image on your understanding of the word text.

## CONSIDER:

- the image and its function as the first scene
- the image and what it says about Adele's situation
- the image as a set-up of the themes
- the placement of the three roads
- the lighting effects including the darkness, the torchlight, the cracks of light under doors
- symbolism such as the phone booth in the middle of nowhere or the white moths attracted to the dim light

### Activity 1b: Scene Change

CREATE other images of the same scene but use different points of view. Every living thing has its own point of view, and consciously changing perspectives is an interesting exercise in creative storytelling, and in developing empathy.

EXPLORE how the above scene could have been different if written as if viewed through different eyes. TRY the following points of view:

- Mother's eye view
- a neighbour's eye view
- a moth's eye view

How does this change of point of view change the meaning of the image?

## Year 7 & 8

### Vocab Stop!

**Voice:** The narrative voice in a poem (or a story) that speaks of his or her situation or feelings.

[paraphrased from [https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit\\_terms\\_P.html#poetic\\_speaker\\_anchor/](https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_P.html#poetic_speaker_anchor/)]

## 2. Warring voices in *When the Ground is Hard*

ACELT1619/ACELT1625/ACELT1626/ACELY1725/ACELT1807/ACELY1736/ACELY1738

Authors of fiction create imaginary characters and use them to act out stories on pages instead of stages. A fictional character is, among other things, an embodied worldview – or a voice that speaks from a particular experience. Such voices and their worldviews are deployed against one another in texts in order to move stories forward and explore conflict.

Authors must write words for characters in text, whose worldviews they disagree with in life. The words such characters speak must sound as real as words more sympathetic characters speak. Written badly, unsympathetic characters become stereotypes; done well, they engage us emotionally and deepen awareness.

*When the Ground is Hard* deploys various voices that speak to the experience of colonialism in general, and to the specifics of colonialism practiced within British Protectorates during 1965 in particular. The complexities of race and class discrimination in the colonised Swaziland of the text are layered, if not tortuous. The various voices speak from specific seemingly immovable social and moral positions. The 16-year-old protagonist, Adele, is the exception to this rule; her moral position shifts over the story's time-frame. This moral shift is caused by a sudden change in her social position, which in turn causes a shift in her perspective.

## Activity 2a: Hearing Voices

Learning to locate voices in fictional characters provides skills that help the task of locating them in non-fiction texts, where there are no 'characters' but only the voices of invisible 'authors'.

Because the story is told in a first-person perspective the voices of characters other than Adele are heard only in conversation, or seen in actions.

As a class, READ ALOUD sections of the text where characters give voice to ideas and/or embody experiences of race, gender and/or economic class discrimination. NOTE that there are layers of discrimination operating in each section below. ASK yourself who is this character? Where do they come from? What is important to them? What are they feeling?

- Adele — on the school bus pp 18/19 ['I hurry past ... teachers' morning tea']
- Mother — when father comes to visit pp 9-11 ['Mother sits cross-legged ... take care of itself.']
- Lottie & Mrs Vincent — after the white boy's attack pp116-118 ['I grab a stone ... "You're dismissed." ']
- Mr Bosman & his daughter — pp 208/209 [ "What you looking at, coon?" ... free from the rules.']

DISCUSS the attitude to race or gender voiced by each character. LIST the qualities they ascribe to other people of lower social class. NAME the emotions experienced by characters suffering discrimination.

It is also enlightening to NAME emotions experienced by readers upon reading the material. The suffering and shame of race and gender discrimination is not merely historical.

## Activity 2b: Words in their Mouths

REREAD the sections above. CHOOSE a character that holds different views to you and give them words. As a starter, you can RESEARCH characters. For instance, by looking into the ambitions and lives of Christian missionaries in Africa in the 60s, you will be able to give Mr or Mrs Vincent believable voices.

WRITE a letter in the voice of your chosen character. Have the character tell the story of the events they have witnessed in your chosen section.

First, PLAN your letter. Who is the recipient? How close are the correspondents? Do they write often? Do they agree on matters of race and gender? How important is the opinion of the recipient to the letter-writer? These decisions will help determine the tone of the letter.

DRAFT your letter, experimenting with language and tone to achieve the voice you want.

EDIT for:

- voice
- consistency
- unintentional repetitions

WRITE your letter by hand. SWAP letters with your neighbour. Can you hear the voices of the letters? TELL your neighbour what you can hear in the letter.

## Year 9

### 3. That's just how it is: Complacency in *When the Ground is Hard*

ACELY1743/ ACELT1635/ACELY1747/ACELY1748

Adele is 16-years-old. All the rules about who a person is, how they are treated, and what they can expect from life, have been decided by adults before she was born. Where she lives some adults

have decided that white people are top class and native people are the lowest. Mixed-Race people like her are officially in the middle.

It's just the way it is.

Men may have many different women, and many children by those women. Women are sluts if they have only one man, unless they're married to that man. When they're sluts they can be treated badly. Women must work harder than men and be paid less. They must always smile and be pretty, or people will think they're witches. If they are raped it is their own fault.

That's just how that is.

There is much injustice in life and it is often justified or explained away in the spirit of Malla Nunn's textual refrain: That's just the way it is. Along with race- and gender- based injustice, there are also injustices based on age difference. The young must obey adults and never talk back.

Young people can often feel their opinions are not important. They can also feel that their learning at school is not connected to real life — that what is required of them is to merely ingest and regurgitate the teaching of adults.

### **Activity 3: That's just how they Are**

This ESSAY offers Year 9s an opportunity to explore their own attitudes to ideas about gender and race through their own experience, reading, contemplation and discussion with peers, followed by the writing of an essay as a credo or statement of personal belief.

As you READ through the novel HIGHLIGHT sections that use the textual refrain That's just how it is. CHOOSE two instances of this refrain from the text.

DISCUSS in SMALL GROUPS the instances you have chosen. CONSIDER: What is the injustice being perpetuated? Why is it unjust? How does it make you feel?

REFLECT: Have you been the victim of an injustice? Has anyone ever said to you: Well, that's just the way it is? Why do you think they said that? How did it make you feel? What would you rather they had said or done? OR Have you ever said it to another person? Why did you say it at the time? How did the other person react? As you listen, NOTE elements of the discussion that are important to you.

WRITE a short ESSAY entitled 'That's Just How It Is.'

INCLUDE:

- an introduction — in one paragraph state the subject of your essay
- the two instances from the text in the essay
- an event from your life and/or from the news
- a closing paragraph — in one paragraph state your conclusion including a short statement of belief regarding your subject
- finish with a suggestion for a response to the statement That's just how it is?

Using a word programme DRAFT your essay. Make sure you have included everything you wanted to say, and that you have said it as clearly as you can. Do not use Bold or Italics for emphasis. The word 'very' is banned for this exercise. Try to find exactly the right word instead.

EDIT for:

- sense and flow of information
- repetition
- introductory & final paragraphs
- spelling & grammar

This essay is not an informative or persuasive exercise, but a clarifying personal experience. If you like, you can publish the essays in booklet form entitled 'That's Just How It Is'. They can be stored in the class or the library, for other students to enjoy.

You could hold a competition to find the best response to the statement: *That's just how it is.*

## Year 10

### 4. Companion plants: Intertextual ground between *When the Ground is Hard* & *Jane Eyre*

ACELT1639/ ACELT1642/ACELY1756/ACELY1757/ACELY1776

*When the Ground is Hard* uses an overt intertext with the 1847 novel *Jane Eyre* by English author Charlotte Bronte to illuminate connections between discriminations of seemingly different types. Malla Nunn quotes passages directly from *Jane Eyre* throughout as in private moments Adele and Lottie read the novel aloud to each other. Their commentary measures their situations against Jane's and provides material for exploring the uses of intertextuality. Here, Adele contemplates one similarity between herself and the orphaned English Jane:

*English weather is alien to me, but Jane's unhappy position inside her aunt's house is all too familiar. Jane has a roof over her head and shoes on her feet, but she'll never be part of the 'real' family, never be anyone's darling. Jane is stuck in the space between things. That's how I feel when I imagine Father and the others smiling for their family photo: their pale faces glowing with a sense of belonging. Like Jane, I am a stranger at the feast.*

[p. 80]

#### Activity 4: Hello, Jane: *Jane Eyre* & *When the Ground is Hard*

The characters in *When the Ground is Hard* and *Jane Eyre* are constructed around ideas of race and gender, ideas that change in different times and places. Elements of the two texts are listed below and offer textual entry points into comparative studies of those ideas as they are experienced by individuals in the texts.

CHOOSE one of the following as your area of comparative study between the two texts:

- **The Other Adele**—Adele's namesake in *Jane Eyre* is the little French girl Jane is hired to teach at Thornfield. Her parentage is ambiguous. She is the daughter of a French 'dancer' and Rochester's ward if not his illegitimate daughter. In spite of supporting her, he is cold toward her. The Adele of *When the Ground is Hard* has a father removed physically from her but who shows affection when he is there. What does each girl want from her father? How does she try to achieve that? What is he unable to give? Why?
- **Two Good Girls**—Jane is a poor girl in class-conscious Victorian England and Adele is a mixed-race girl in race-conscious 1965 Swaziland. Compare their experience at school. What are the results of their respective attempts to be 'good' girls. What does each hope? What does each fear? What are the results of being a 'good' girl or a 'bad' girl according to the texts?
- **Helpful Friends**—Jane is befriended by the stoic Helen, who is both maddening and helpful in coping with the hardships of life at Lowood School; Adele is befriended by Lottie, the fighting girl. Compare the two friendships, noting what the two protagonists learn in relationship with their friends.

READ *When the Ground is Hard*.

READ *Jane Eyre*.

MARK important passages and NOTE down ideas for further research suggested by those passages.

CHOOSE the passage that most interests you when considering your subject matter. Start your investigation with that passage, noting the character's assumptions or what they are taking for

granted. Sometimes characters express assumptions overtly, and sometimes you must extrapolate assumptions.

NOTE passages that further illuminate your subject matter.

RESEARCH the assumptions you have located in the text. Find historical information online and/or in the library regarding race and gender theory of the correct period. Use educational sites only.

WRITE a comparative textual study between *When the Ground is Hard* and *Jane Eyre*. QUOTE the passages you have marked and DISCUSS them in terms of their assumptions. LOCATE those assumptions in their historical origins.

CITE your sources and NOTE the imprint of the novel you are working from.

## Year 10

### 5: School & the World

ACELY1756/ACELY1776/ACELY1757

Schools are not protected from attitudes and discriminations that exist in the world. Keziah Christian Academy is like all schools in that it is a microcosm of the larger world. It is a place of traditional hierarchies, and a training ground for the particular bigotries of its time and place, as well as a place to learn how to recognise and struggle with them.

#### Activity 5: Breaking the Rules

The British Protectorate of Swaziland officially classified people as 'White, Mixed-Race or Native (Black)', a classification which determined where you lived, where you socialised, and where you went to school. As everyone at the Academy is classified as 'Mixed-Race', other elements that determine the niceties of social status have arisen.

READ *When the Ground is Hard*. NOTE passages that overtly lay out the rules for specific classes of person. The rules can be official or customary. LIST the rules.

HERE are some starter passages:

- on the bus p. 19
- in the school cafeteria p. 61
- Mother's rules for girls p. 67

CONSIDER the source of these rules. Who POLICES specific rules? What is their JUSTIFICATION for the rule? What is the RESULT of the rule?

RESEARCH possible sources for the rules, and for those ideas informing the rules:

- the Bible is a source of assumptions and attitudes
- racist theory provided justifications for discriminatory law
- sexist theory provided justifications for discriminatory law
- economic theory of the 1700s/1800s provided rationalisations of slavery
- eugenics used 'science' to justify racist and sexist policy

Save LINKS to sites of interest that broaden your essay.

CONSIDER your sources of information. Do not quote from blogs or personal sites as if they were sites of academic reliability.

WRITE a persuasive essay which interrogates three instances of the rules in *When the Ground is Hard*.

DECIDE your target readership. Is it for your teacher or your friend? Is it for a magazine? Which magazine? Is it for a literary blog? Who reads that blog? At each decision during the creation of the text, ask how your target readership will respond.

DECIDE on structure:

- will you link ideas by theme, or present your research in chronological form?
- will you use sub-headings to present linked information?
- how will you present the rules?
- how will you include your links?

QUOTE the rules as they are embedded in their contexts. TRACE their origins in theory and/or in custom. EVALUATE them according to new information, and to social theory developed over the past fifty years. REFERENCE your information consistently using appropriate citation for books or online sources. NOTE the imprint of your version of the novel.

The essay is to be read online. INSERT LINKS to your saved sites of interest at pertinent points in the text.

SHARE your first draft with a friend. READ each other's work for sense and structure and DISCUSS any problems in the text. NOTE the criticisms and consider remedies for any problems. EXPERIMENT with structure and with language.

EDIT for:

- grammar and spelling
- repetition
- referencing
- functionality of links

SEND it to your teacher to read online.

---

## HISTORY

---

### Vocab Stop!

**Imperialism:** state policy, practice, or advocacy of extending power and dominion, especially by direct territorial acquisition or by gaining political and economic control of other areas.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/imperialism>

**Origin:** 'General sense of "one country's rule over another" first recorded 1878.'

<https://www.etymonline.com/word/imperialism>

## Year 9

### 6: New empires: new Excuses

ACDSEH019

Empire-building in its simplest form, as an attempt to politically dominate another group and to acquire its wealth, has been a part of human activity for so long nobody can know when it started.

The earliest records are of the Assyrian Empire, which endured from 600 years from ca1200BC until ca 600BC. This lasted until the rise of the Persian Empire in 550BC, which was then eclipsed by the Greeks. The Greek Empire lasted until 146BC with the death of Alexander the Great, and then Rome built an empire stretching from Egypt to Britain and lasting until 1453.

In the modern era there have been three major periods of empire-building. Between 1400 and 1700 there were the exploratory, expansionist and colonial policies of England, France, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain as they sought financial control in India and the East Indies, and in the Americas. Between 1850 and World War 1, imperialism expanded Russia, Italy, Germany, the USA, and Japan.

Imperialism began to be broadly challenged after World War 1, and the League of Nations was formed. But then Japan attacked China in 1931 and over the 1930s and 1940s Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and the Soviet Union started another intense period of imperialism. \*

### **Activity 6: Claims & counter-claims in Imperialism**

Nations, like people, must often justify their actions to others. Ancient empires had no need of justifications for their imperial action beyond loyalty to deities, honour and glory. In the modern era there are four main justifications for the practice of imperialism. Commonly, imperial nations use a mix of arguments:

- 'Economic' arguments state that imperialism brings wealth
- 'Darwinian' arguments state that imperialism is a manifestation of the 'struggle for survival' and therefore natural. Under this theory, 'inferior' people should be allowed to die
- 'Security' arguments state that nations have a right to protect their interests through extended borders, 'buffer' states, control of shared communication lines, and the establishment of permanent military bases
- 'Moral' arguments have a missionary aspect. Justifications include the liberation of oppressed people, and the bringing of 'superior' ways of life, including religion

There is of course the argument that nations pursue imperial ends for the same reason people pursue power: that is, they wish to enhance their prestige and prove they're better than everyone else. But it being unlikely that leaders of modern nations could express such a sentiment without censure, it would be difficult to argue for or against it as a justification.

Form a small GROUP. CHOOSE together one of the above justifications of empire. DISCUSS what you think the justification means.

RESEARCH the justification and its claims, using at least three RELIABLE sources of information. How did people defend the justification? What did they think they were achieving?

RESEARCH counter-arguments to the justification. DISCUSS the counter-arguments in your GROUP. Which are the strongest? Which interested you the most? NOTE examples where such imperial justifications have proved to be wrong.

FOR EXAMPLE, the justification above concerned with homeland security and national interest is countered by instances that show how expanding into others' homelands tends to cause conflict, thereby weakening not strengthening national 'security'. To continue exploring this line, students RESEARCH instances where imperial tactics intended to increase security have backfired and caused violence against imperialist powers, either in the dominion or in the home of the empire. Two instances of such backfires are England's control of Northern Ireland and the IRA's subsequent terrorism in London, or the actions of the USA in the Middle East that led to 9/11.

NOTE your sources as you collect your information. COPY website addresses and note access dates. NOTE book title and author, imprint pages and page numbers.

As a group PREPARE & WRITE a 10-minute report. INCLUDE an OVERVIEW of the justification of empire you have chosen, OPINIONS from contemporary people explaining some aspect of their

---

\*Above intro compiled through use of following sites:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/imperialism>

<https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-middle-east/persian-empire>

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Assyrians.html>

support for their imperial policy, and a presentation of the counter argument with its examples. CITE your sources using an appropriate citation system. PRESENT your report to the class. TAKE TURNS to speak.

## Year 10

### 7: Free From ...

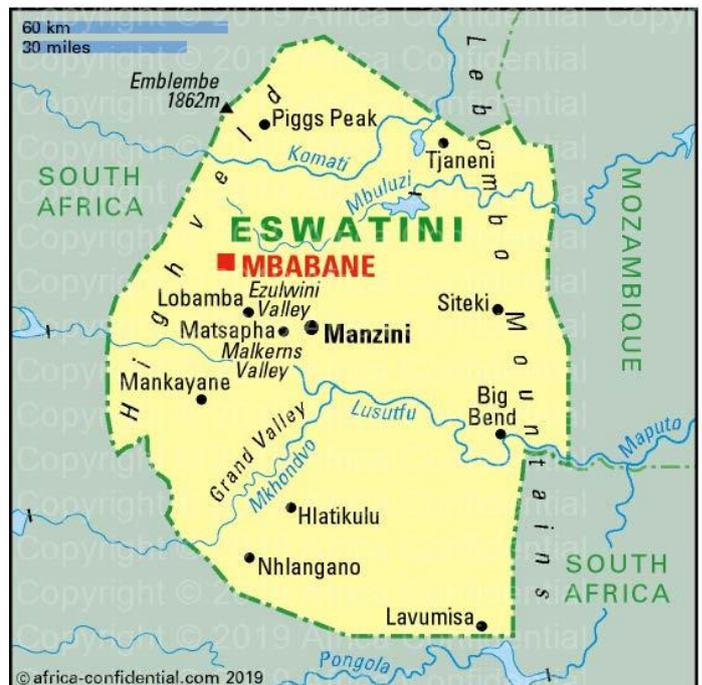
ACOKFH022

The British Empire lasted from the 16th century, when England began to settle America and to confiscate land in Ireland, to 1997 when Hong Kong was officially given back to China. During that time, it grew to cover about a fifth of the world's land surface and oversaw 412 million people: as a result of its size it was known as the empire on which 'the sun never sets'.

The British Empire in Africa included Egypt and large territories in western, eastern and southern Africa. The British had been engaged in the western African slave trade until the early 1800s when the British government abolished slavery after which they developed a trading relationship with local leaders. It should be noted that a belief that slavery is morally wrong does not necessarily correspond to a belief in racial equality. The British were able to uphold abolition while at the same time feeling superior to 'blacks'.

South Africa in the 1800s was officially under control of Dutch settlers called the Boers. In the late 1800s gold and diamonds were discovered and the British presence increased. The British and the Boers had different goals: the British wanted to industrialise South Africa and the Boers wanted to maintain an agricultural economy. In addition, the Boers believed that blacks were 'inferior' and supported slavery, while the British, officially at least, believed in the rights of the African people.

This belief did not stop them engaging in wars with African peoples.



Accessed 4/6/19. Larger versions available for download at [Africa-confidential.com](http://Africa-confidential.com) and [Ontheworldmaps.com](http://Ontheworldmaps.com).

## Activity 7: Free at Last!

Swaziland is a small landlocked country in southern Africa. The word 'Swaziland' is a blend of African and English meaning 'land of the Swazi'. In April 2018 King Mswati III of Swaziland changed the name of his country to eSwatini. For much of the twentieth century eSwatini was under British control and the name change is a symbolic divesting of colonial rule. It means 'land of the Swazi' in the Swazi language. eSwatini gained its independence from the British in 1968. In this activity Swaziland will be referred to by its new name.

Immediately preceding independence eSwatini was a British Protectorate.

WRITE an essay exploring issues of imperialism and the movement toward independence in eSwatini

RESEARCH the history of eSwatini from its joint rule by the British Empire and the Boer Republic, up to independence in 1968. WRITE an overview of this history, focusing on imperial activity and effects. MAKE a timeline of important events, people and changes on the road to independence. CHOOSE three and RESEARCH these important elements in detail.

INCLUDE some of the following to flesh out your essay:

- people in independence movements and their actions
- justifications for imperial activity in eSwatini (Swaziland) and their counter-arguments
- arguments for independence and their counter-arguments
- primary document material, illustrating aspects of your subject: include personal documents such as letters or diaries
- photographs
- maps

CHOOSE your strongest material and compile into an informative essay. DECIDE how you will organise your DATA: chronologically or by theme, or through the eyes of particular historic witnesses. Use a MIX OF MATERIAL to create an interesting account.

CITE your sources using an appropriate citation system, including source of photos or maps.

DATE when you have accessed websites.

## RESOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

### RACE

An article on how race isn't a real thing

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn25129-racial-categories-arent-hardwired-in-our-minds/>

An article on mistaking population variation for race difference

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2018/04/race-genetics-science-africa/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/busting-myths-about-human-nature/201204/race-is-real-not-in-the-way-many-people-think>

Swaziland under colonial rule

<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ad30>

### HISTORY

Overview of justifications and counter-arguments for imperialism

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/imperialism>

Timeline of British imperialism

<https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/Timeline-Of-The-British-Empire/>

European imperialism in South Africa

<https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/imperialism-and-socialism-context-africa>

The British Empire through time

<https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/guides/zf7fr82/revision/1>

The British in Africa

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/empire/g2/cs3/background.htm>

The British in Cape Town along with Afrikaans reaction to the British in their midst

<http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/british.htm>

Key events in eSwatini (Swaziland) on the way to independence

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14095711>

### **APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Short videos about different aspects of apartheid from the 1960s to the 1990s

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0160mtw>

1957 documentary about apartheid featuring short interviews with black and Afrikaaner leaders

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdID-Q9wmfy> [Occasional loss of sound]

What is the Afrikaaner Nationalist Movement, an overview

[www.autocww.colorado.edu/~toldy3/E64ContentFiles/AfricanHistory/AfrikanerNationalism.html](http://www.autocww.colorado.edu/~toldy3/E64ContentFiles/AfricanHistory/AfrikanerNationalism.html)

Information on Afrikaaner history

<https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/afrikaner>

PICTURES of public signs (50s & 60s) from South Africa under apartheid (example on next page)

<https://mashable.com/2015/06/20/apartheid-south-africa-signs/>

**NOTE:** Swaziland (and Lesotho and Botswana) were not part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century nation of South Africa. They remained British Protectorates until they gained independence at various times during the 1960s. Therefore, they did not suffer under the legal Apartheid system of South Africa. However, there were racial tensions present under British colonial rule, which saw labour movement within the empire—for example, from India to Africa—and prejudice against marriages between Europeans and Africans. European children had enjoyed compulsory and free education in Swaziland since the 1920s. The state did not provide education for other children: the colonial authorities left this largely to missionaries. The special fee-paying and usually religious-based schools for mixed-race children evolved slowly over the following decades. Education for rural African children developed even more slowly.

**A picture says a thousand words**



Image: Three Lions/Getty Images accessed 11/6/2019

<https://mashable.com/2015/06/20/apartheid-south-africa-signs/>

## ABOUT THE WRITERS

### MALLA NUNN

Born and raised in Swaziland on the far edges of the British Empire, Malla attended a boarding school specially set up for “mixed race” children. The students at the school spent their time learning the Bible, breaking the rules, and then lying about it. In common with most colonial institutions, stealing, fighting, and violence were common. It was in this charged atmosphere that Nunn developed a fascination with bad behaviour, risk, and punishment.

After her family migrated to Australia to escape apartheid, Nunn graduated with a double degree in English and History and then earned a Master of Arts in Theater Studies from Villanova University in the USA. Faced with a life of chronic under-employment, she dabbled in acting and screenwriting. She wrote and directed three award-winning films

including *Servant of the Ancestors*, which won Best Documentary awards at film festivals in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Zanzibar and was shown on national television in Australia. She married in a traditional Swazi ceremony. Her bride price was eighteen cows. She now lives and works in a weatherboard house with a tin roof and an olive tree in the garden in Sydney, Australia.



### Malla Nunn says...

‘I’m a migrant to Australia. I grew up in the Swaziland countryside in a house tucked between rolling hills. At the time there was one traffic light in the whole country. My father drove us there to watch the lights change from green to yellow to red. It was a good night. There was no TV in Southern Africa but we had plenty of cows, birds and snakes to watch out for. We swam in rivers and walked for miles and miles under wide African skies. I have flat ‘hobbit’ feet because I rarely wore shoes.

‘Everyone around me in Swaziland loved to tell stories and I loved to listen to them. I didn’t know what a writer was back then but I understood the magic of a good story.

‘I moved with my family to Australia to escape racial segregation in Swaziland and South Africa. My family is mixed race and we were considered less intelligent and less worthy than white people. My father knew this was wrong: that his children were capable of achieving whatever we put our minds to.

‘Living in Perth, Western Australia, was a huge change from living in Swaziland but it was a good change. I went to high school with Greek, Italian, English and Macedonian students. Most of us were ‘fresh off the boat’ and making our way in a new country. History and English were my best subjects. At the time, I really wanted to write down some of the stories that came into my head but I stopped myself because I didn’t think I was smart enough to be a ‘good’ writer.

‘After university and working a heap of different jobs (nanny, film-set runner, waitress) I was ready to sit down and give writing a go. My first book, *A Beautiful Place to Die*, was published and I then wrote three books with the same characters over the next few years. I’ve written screenplays and short stories as well. Writing is the love of my life and I wouldn’t give up my job for anything.

'I write on the back stairs of my house, in the lounge room and at the kitchen table. I often find dead leaves and dried crumbs stuck in my computer keyboard.

'*When the Ground is Hard* is based on my childhood in Swaziland.'

### **ANANDA BRAXTON-SMITH**

Ananda is a community journalist and author. She has written four books for young adult readers. These include a history of the bubonic plague from 1347 – 1900 entitled *The Death: the horror of the plague* (2009), and the novels of the Secrets of Carrick series: *Merrow* (2010), *Tantony* (2011) and *Ghostheart* (2013). *Merrow* was a CBCA 2010 Notable Book and was also shortlisted for a 2010 Aurealis award. She has also published a novel for younger readers, *Plenty* (2014) and a picture book for ages 5 and over, *Backyard* (2018). With her husband she sings in a bluegrass band called the HillWilliams, and lives in Victoria's Dandenong Ranges with him and two young adult sons.