

THE BOOK AND BEYOND

An educator's guide for exploring children's and YA literature

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OF NEW ZEALAND

Title: Locked Down

Author(s): Jesse O (Jessica Le Bas)

Illustrator(s): Toby Morris

The aim of The Book and Beyond is to inspire an interest and passion for books and reading. This section is for your thoughts, questions and notes about different aspects of the book and to consider how you might frame discussion with students.

The book

Physical object

- Standard paperback size and orientation.
- Similar size to a school notebook that you might use as a diary.
- Cover illustration recognisable as Toby Morris' style, font.
- Pages of the father's journal are lined, like an exercise book.

Design & cover

- The heavy graphic font 'Locked Down' title dominates the page and then connects to the realistic cartoon-style illustration of the family of 5.
- The cover features Zac and his family — in realistic cartoon drawing. Zac appears at the forefront as the key character.
- 3D coronavirus symbols surround the family and the characters' facial expressions are tense, worried.

Illustration

- Toby Morris' distinctive, realistic cartoon-style characters, setting and object illustrations are sprinkled through the chapters, and in the opening, to connect to characters. The digital pen lines are strong, bold.
- A 'Where I Live' map of the suburb opens the book to help locate the reader to the setting.
- A lighter shaded coronavirus image is a background/theme for each chapter number.

Characters

- Zac is the central character and storyteller — we see his point of view.
- He is 12, grappling with the pandemic and lockdown, being in the middle of the family and having to be responsible after his father's death.
- James — Zac's father, present in his journal and often in Zac's thoughts.
- The rest of the family — mother, older sister, younger brother.
- Neighbours: Mrs Lilo, the colonel and his nephew. All have their own stories.

Plot

- Zac's account and point of view of his family, the local street and other friends and family reactions, actions and survival in a pandemic lockdown.
- Elements of mystery emerge to build a rising action/story arc - within Zac's world and in the discovery and account in his dead father's journal.

Setting

- Set in and around a small town or suburb of the town of Hansen in the South Island of New Zealand, in present time.
- The features of small-town New Zealand city, town and semi-rural life; motorway, farms and paddocks, harbour, mountain foothills, — but with fictional/familiar sounding place names (Mt Aspern, Judder's Creek) — make it an 'every town' to recognise and feel familiar with.

Theme & message

- Survival — the power of people working together to look after each other / get through.
- Sustainability — new vs. old and 'number 8 wire' fixes and repairs.
- Grief.
- Health/wellness and the effects of illness.
- Family life and connections — community

Language

- Short, snappy chapter diary entries, day-by-day.
- Zac's pre-teen language and perspective; colloquial phrases, sentences, expression, conversational tone.
- Use of lists, online messaging format, breakout boxes as explainers of technical and complex terms add to the story, situation and comic effect.

Mood & feeling

- A thread of anxiety runs through the novel, but doesn't overwhelm as Zac's outlook is matter-of-fact and positive.
- The pace slows down, along with the progress of the lockdown — as the family tackle life and the problems of staying home.
- Elements of mystery in the neighbourhood and in Dad's journal keep the pace up.

Genre & format

- A fictional diary account — elements of mystery and survival.

The inquiry

Rich question(s)

This section is for creating and exploring questions that might guide an overall inquiry for a particular book. These questions might be inspired by ideas in the book section and/or personal responses and/or the NZ Curriculum and/or available resources.

What makes a good community?

What qualities can help you deal with change and/or conflict?

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Make connections

The aim of The Book and Beyond is to inspire an interest and passion for books and reading. This section is designed to help students use the book as inspiration to share, wonder, question, and explore ideas, possibilities, connections, feelings, experiences and other viewpoints — either alone or together.

Personal

Create

- Invent a device to help them survive during a lockdown. Sketch/draw it and write brief instructions for use.
- Plan and plant a food garden to help you survive in an emergency — or just for everyday enjoyment.
- A class or 'street' market to offer, swap and trade items. Create/design a poster or set of instructions for the market.

Read more

Read the next in the series

Read another book by the same author or illustrator

- *The Treaty of Waitangi / Te Tiriti o Waitangi* by Toby Morris and Ross Calman et al.
- [The Spinoff Covid-19 illustrations and animations](#) by Toby Morris and Siouxie Wiles.

Read another book with the same idea/topic/ genre

- Try the My New Zealand Story series — told in diary format around historical New Zealand events/eras through a young teen's eyes.
- More details in this blogpost <https://natlib.govt.nz/blog/posts/my-new-zealand-story-reading-history>

Listen to an audio version of the book

Social (share your experience)

Join / Follow

Support students to find and follow organisations that link to the book and themes

- [New Zealand Mountain Safety Council](#)
- [Kiwi Conservation Club](#)

Talk

In groups ask students to discuss:

- What 5 items you would take to a deserted island and why?
- Whether you have an emergency survival kit in your home and what it contains.

What connections can you make to yourself, other texts, the world?

Text to self

- Can you share a story about yourself based on any of the characters or events in *Locked Down*?

Text to text

- Search in the library for other books about [Survival](#), such as *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen.

Text to world

- This book was originally written a long time before the COVID-19 pandemic. Think about the story and the similarities and differences to Zac's lockdown and the NZ 2020 lockdown(s).
- For example: similarities — family 'bubbles', staying home; differences — no electricity etc.

NZ Curriculum

This section is intended as a prompt for thinking about how the book might relate to the NZ Curriculum. For example, is it a story about *cultural diversity*? What *language, symbols and text* tell the story?

Learning areas		Principles		Values		Key competencies	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> English	<input type="radio"/> Maths & Statistics	<input type="radio"/> High expectations	<input type="radio"/> Future focus	<input type="radio"/> Excellence	<input type="radio"/> Community & participation	<input type="radio"/> Thinking	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Relating to others
<input checked="" type="radio"/> The Arts	<input type="radio"/> Science	<input type="radio"/> Treaty of Waitangi	<input type="radio"/> Learning to learn	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Innovation, inquiry, curiosity	<input type="radio"/> Ecological sustainability	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Using language, symbols & text	<input type="radio"/> Participating & contributing
<input type="radio"/> Health & PE	<input type="radio"/> Social Sciences	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Cultural diversity	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Community engagement	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Diversity	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Integrity	<input type="radio"/> Managing self	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Languages	<input type="radio"/> Technology	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Inclusion		<input checked="" type="radio"/> Equity			