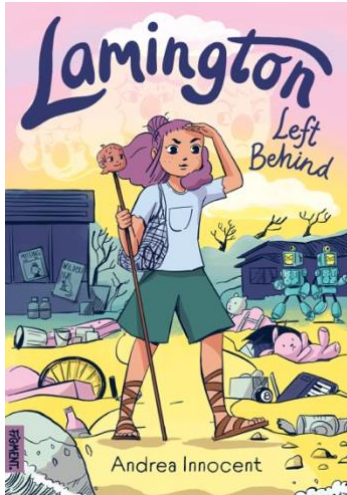


## Teacher's Notes



*Lamington Left Behind*  
Written and illustrated by Andrea Innocent  
Teacher's Notes by Jennifer Asha

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### LEARNING OUTCOMES

#### RECOMMENDED FOR

8–12 years aged readers

Notes written for Years 4 and 5 classrooms

#### KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- English
- Geography
- General capabilities:
  - Critical and creative thinking
  - Ethical understanding
  - Literacy

### THEMES

- Climate change
- Wildlife preservation

### SYNOPSIS

Ever since a great flood wiped out her home, Lamington has lived alone in the Australian wilderness – until the day she stumbles upon a ragtag family of animals hiding underground. Lamington is astonished to discover she can understand the animals, and they can understand *her*. They need her help to find a precious library of seeds – but the journey will be perilous, and there are troublemakers who want the seeds for themselves. Yet if Lamington and her friends *don't* try, the forest will die. And this could be Lamington's only chance to find her mother again ...



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

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From <https://publishing.hardiegrant.com/en-au/authors/andrea-innocent>

**Andrea Innocent** (she/her) began her career as an illustrator after living in Japan for three years. She has worked as a character designer and illustrator on various projects, from advertising and editorial illustrations to soft sculpture and multimedia art for exhibitions. *Lamington Left Behind* is her first graphic novel.

Andrea works from her home in Warburton, Victoria, where she resides with her partner, train-obsessed son and two snappy corgis. She also moonlights as a wildlife carer, so you will often find her sharing her work desk with small native marsupials.

## THEMES

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*Lamington Left Behind* explores themes related to the effects of climate change, species extinction, rising sea levels and severe weather events. Wildlife – flora and fauna – preservation is referred to with a basis in contemporary programs such as seed banks and wildlife rescue.

Help students to make connections with or build background knowledge about these themes using the following resources:

- Visit <https://www.botanicgardens.org.au/our-science/science-facilities/australian-plantbank>
- Discuss wildlife rescue agencies such as <https://www.rspcansw.org.au/> or <https://www.wires.org.au/>
- Learn about mycelium <https://www.anbg.gov.au/fungi/mycelium.html>
- Stock the classroom library with books such as *Tree* by Claire Saxby and Jess Racklyeft, *The Australian Climate Change Book* by Polly Marsden and Chris Nixon, *The Dog Runner* or *The Apprentice Witnesser* by Bren McDibble.

## WRITING STYLE

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In the style characteristic of graphic novels, Andrea Innocent uses dialogue to progress the plot, show interactions between characters and reveal the protagonist's thoughts and feelings. The main character and secondary characters use **colloquial language**, and their turns of phrase hint at the cultural context of the story and its Australian setting.

- Use examples of colloquialisms to discuss the characters' vocabulary. Try acting out scenes in character. Use the following pages:
  - P. 88: 'The one that fought the **ginormous** axodragon?'
  - P. 89: '**Hang on**' and 'Dangerous place for a **dip**.'
  - P. 96–7: 'We're not taking the **mushies** [...]' and '**Way too** far to swim to.'



The use of **onomatopoeia** draws the reader into the dramatic scenes.

- Search the text for examples of onomatopoeia, e.g. p. 2, p. 35 and p. 294–9. Discuss the impact of this literary feature. Make soundscapes to add to other sections of the graphic novel.

Innocent builds the **characterisation** of Lamington through the character's actions.

- Look through the graphic novel for examples of actions that characterise Lamington as:
  - Brave, e.g. p. 51–5 when Lamington goes 'home' even when she doesn't want to.
  - Independent, e.g. p. 29 when she assures Ulysses she can outrun the Botz.
  - Problem-solver, e.g. p. 100–03 when Lamington comes up with a plan to save the mycelium.
  - Peacemaker, e.g. p. 99 when she breaks up a fight between Bread and Sushi.
  - Caring, e.g. p. 111 when Lamington helps Cheetah after finding him floating in an upturned umbrella.
  - Determined, e.g. p. 272 when she steals the keys from her mother in order to save the seeds.
- Discuss the reasons Innocent would characterise her protagonist in this way. What does this tell us she is hoping young readers will consider regarding personality traits and personal resilience?

## COMPREHENSION

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The **antagonist** and **secondary characters** are developed to a lesser extent than Lamington.

- Compare the secondary characters of Bread, Sushi and Snag to Lamington by discussing the role of names in characterisation.
- Draw different graphic organisers such as webs or Venn diagrams to show the similarities and differences of characters and the relationships between them.

*Lamington Left Behind* uses a **narrative genre** with stages of prologue ^ orientation ^ complication ^ resolution ^ coda to structure the story.

- Plot the narrative structure and discuss which parts of the story provide each of these stages.
- Ask students to decide on the key elements of each stage and represent them visually, through drawing or a freeze-frame drama representation.
- Have students search within stages for the events phase/s (that show succeeding events within the stages), reaction phase/s (that show characters behavioural or attitudinal responses to events), problem phase/s (that create tension) or solution phase/s (that release or solve tension).



## WRITING EXERCISE

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Have students compose visual and written responses to the story that share the significant message they have gained from the graphic novel.

Use *Lamington Left Behind* as inspiration and write one stage of a new story (ie. Just the prologue or just the complication) that builds on the story told through this graphic novel, appropriating the characters and what happens to them after the end of *Lamington Left Behind*.

Have students write further conversations between key characters explaining or negotiating events in *Lamington Left Behind*. For example, Bread talking to Sushi about how he felt when they were left behind. Lamington talking to her mum about her experiences of the three years since she was left behind. Or the mycelium talking to Lamington's mum about what they have been through.

Have students put themselves in the shoes of one of the characters and write a journal entry giving their perspective on the dystopian environment of the orientation of the narrative.

## ILLUSTRATION STYLE

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Innocent's illustrative style, again, uses the conventions of graphic novels: stylised characters set against stark scenes of a dystopian future Australia showing the harsh impact of human-induced climate change. A muted colour palette gives a dystopian atmosphere to the scenes and makes use of light and dark clothing to indicate the villains and heroes.

- Have students redraw one of the scenes and change the colour scheme to change the mood created.

Close-up shots zoom in on the facial expressions of characters while long shots zoom out to show the action and the scarred landscapes.

- Ask students to find examples of each type of distance and discuss the impact on the story and how it is visually communicated.

Repetition of characters/participants is used to show movement and time passing.

- Have students locate examples and appropriate the technique to create short 'storyboards' showing the characters of *Lamington Left Behind* undertaking actions that characterise them.

## CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

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The chapter title pages visually provide an orientation/reorientation to each section or chapter of the story.

- Conduct close viewing of several chapter title pages and notice all the details that Innocent has included.
- Create full-page illustrations appropriating Innocent's technique and include details of a scene students are familiar with in the real world or other stories. Use the scenes to include details that represent the historical and cultural context of the setting for the viewer.



## RELATED READING

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[https://www.readwritethink.org/sites/default/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson1102/terms.pdf](https://www.readwritethink.org/sites/default/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1102/terms.pdf)

[https://cdn2.penguin.com.au/content/resources/TR\\_OppositeLand.pdf](https://cdn2.penguin.com.au/content/resources/TR_OppositeLand.pdf)

Asha, J. & McDonald, L. (2026). Adding spice to your teaching with graphic novels. *Literacy learning: the Middle Years*. 34(1), 16–30.

<https://search.informit.org/doi/abs/10.3316/informit.T2026013000010501467131017?download=true>

