

TEACHING PACK

by Richard Durant

Year 8 curriculum pack:

Survival

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Introduction

This KS3 'survival-themed' teaching pack contains lesson plans, teaching ideas and student-facing resources (all of which were specifically commissioned for the pack). It also contains poems, fiction and non-fiction text excerpts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

It is organised into six parts or weeks, with each part focusing on a particular aspect of survival, such as 'Suffering' or 'Long term survival'. In each section you'll find a selection of:

- starter activities
- main activities
- plenary activities
- suggestions for differentiation.

The student-facing resources can be found at the end of each week. The texts are included, organised by week, at the end of the pack.

The pack lends itself to being used in different ways. It could be dipped into on an ad hoc basis or it could form the basis of half a term's work (or even a term's work if you wanted to dwell on certain texts and tasks a little more or even introduce your own text choices). The resources are all available in adaptable formats, making it easy to differentiate the tasks by ability.

This particular pack aims to introduce students to a variety of unseen and challenging texts and improve their critical reading skills. It also aims to lay the groundwork for skills required at GCSE (2015). The teaching ideas offer plenty of creative and written opportunities so that students can experiment with their writing and create personal responses to the texts along the way.

We've included links to each separate resource included in this pack so that you can access the resources directly on teachit.co.uk. We've also included the file number or name for each original resource — just pop this into Teachit's search box.

To help with navigation, there is a contents table which details which part of the pack each resource is used in and provides a page number. To go straight to a resource, hold the Ctrl key and click on the name of the resource you want to see.

Our thanks go to contributor Richard Durant who has written this pack.

We hope you enjoy using this pack. If you have any questions, please get in touch: email support@teachit.co.uk or call us on 01225 788850. Alternatively, you might like to give some feedback for other Teachit members — you can do this by adding a comment on the relevant [Teaching packs](#) page on Teachit.

Route through week one: Introduction to survival

Work based on *Ada Blackjack: A True Story of Survival in the Arctic* by Jennifer Niven and *Scrambles Amongst the Alps in the years 1860-69* by Edward Whymper

Starter activities

- 1. What is survival?** Put students into small groups. Write the word 'survival' on the board and ask groups to:
 - discuss and define what it means
 - write a number of sentences, each of which uses one of these words: survival, survive, survivor.
- 2. Kill or be killed.**

'If you don't hunt it down and kill it, it will hunt you down and kill you.'
(Flannery O'Connor)

Ask students to discuss whether they agree or disagree with this statement in a survival context. They could stand on different sides of the classroom, or stand up/sit down to show their opinions. Ask students to briefly share their ideas and reactions.

- 3. I don't know how I survived.** Give each student one minute to think about a time when they only just survived, then pair students and ask partners to take it in turns to tell their story, beginning with the words, 'I don't know how I survived ...'. It could be 'surviving' moving to a new school, losing your money on holiday, having a bird poo on your head etc.

Main activities

- 1. Surviving the text.** Put students into small groups. Give each group one of the two texts for the week: *Ada Blackjack: A True Story of Survival in the Arctic* and *Scrambles Amongst the Alps in the years 1860-69*. Stick each text in the middle of a sheet of A3. Ask the groups to annotate their text with ideas about the different ways the text is about survival (harsh landscapes, predators, physical hardships, mental challenges etc.).

Differentiation

The texts differ in their level of reading challenge, so make each group's starting text appropriate to their reading level. Alternatively, compose mixed ability groups. Give the most able reader/s the job of summarising the texts if necessary, and/or chairing the discussions. More confident readers could be given Whymper's text cut up for added challenge. Ask them to reassemble the text, using language and narrative clues to help them.

2. **Read, think, add.** After a pre-set period of time (perhaps 5-10 minutes), move each group onto another table on which there is a different text from the one they have already worked on. Give the groups a few minutes to read their new texts, consider the annotations and where appropriate, add to them. Ask the groups to think about their text in relation to the two quotations of the week:

'Without victory, there is no survival.'

(Winston Churchill)

'If you don't hunt it down and kill it, it will hunt you down and kill you.'

(Flannery O'Connor)

In what ways might the text illustrate one or both of the quotations? Ask for feedback.

3. **True story envoys.** Working in pairs, ask students to complete the textual analysis activities suggested in [Resource 1 – *Ada Blackjack: A true story of survival in the Arctic*](#), focusing on the Ada Blackjack text. To extend the activity, send one partner from each pair to the next table to discuss their ideas with the 'left behind' partner. You can repeat this process a few times.

Plenary activities

1. **Student assessors.** Encourage students to self-select examples of good practice analysis from the pair work/envoy activity to share with the class.
2. **Rolling feedback.** Gather feedback from students in relation to the tasks they have undertaken collaboratively. What ideas or insights have they gained? Rather than commenting on or evaluating their comments, ask other individual students to comment and evaluate, and then choose another student to respond to what they have said.

Work based on *Scrambles Amongst the Alps in the years 1860-69* by Edward Whymper

Starter activities

- 1. Picture this.** Some readers find it difficult to convert text into pictures in their head. Ask students to do a rough drawing of the first paragraph, taking account of all the details in the text. They could even label their drawing with relevant parts of the text or key quotes.
- 2. Punctuation detectives.** Put students into pairs or very small groups. Give each pair one of the following four pieces of punctuation:

: ; , !

Ask the group to find three uses of their punctuation mark in the text and to talk about its purpose at that point: what is their punctuation mark for at each of those points? Students can find their own marks in the text, or you could pre-highlight three examples of the mark on each copy of the text that you hand out.

- 3. Archaisms.** Ask students to identify any words or phrases they find challenging to understand. Can they find a modern alternative which improves their understanding?

Main activities

- 1. Dearie me, they're dead.** Model for students how to analyse the first paragraph in relation to the question: *How does Whymper feel about the deaths of his companions?* Consider Whymper's word choices and the way he relates the incident. How affected does he seem?
- 2. Once more with feeling.** Put students into groups and get them to analyse the next three paragraphs in the same way as above. Ask them to also consider how Whymper feels about his fellow survivors. To encourage close attention to the text, give each group a copy of the paragraphs stuck in the middle of a large piece of paper. They can then annotate the copy with their thoughts next to relevant evidence. After a period of time, all groups should move on to the next table and read and add to the annotations they find there.

Differentiation

Group students in ability, and give less confident readers just paragraph two. The more able students can engage with paragraph three-four as well, or the end of the text, beyond 'no sound returned'. Ask these students to concentrate entirely on Whymper's feelings towards Taugwalder (both father and son).

- 3. Dear Joan.** Whymper's account was written long after the event. Ask students to imagine that he wrote to his wife on the night he returned from the mountain. Ask them to write Whymper's letter. Insist that students use the information in Whymper's account as the basis for the content of their letter, but ask them to change the tone of his account to one of shock, horror or trauma.
- 4. Crime scene investigation.** Later in his book, Whymper tells us that the next day the authorities began an investigation into the tragedy. Put students into groups of four. Students should take on the roles of Peter Taugwalder (son), his father, Whymper and the investigator. The investigator should interview each of the three survivors to discover their role in the tragedy, and their thoughts and feelings. The group could work together, with the investigator carrying out an initial interview with all three survivors together. This would be unrealistic, but might produce some dramatic results! Encourage the investigator student to refer to details in Whymper's written account.

Plenary activities

- 1. Big picture.** If Whymper's story were a biopic film, give it a title, and decide who would play the part of Whymper.
- 2. Hot seat.** This is a quick variation on, or consolidation of the CSI activity above. Put a chair in the middle of a circle of students. Seat one student in the middle, in role as one of the survivors. Get students in the circle to ask questions in role as the investigator. Have the student in the middle answer these questions in role. Pause the activity every so often to allow students to consider how plausible the student's answers are in the light of Whymper's written account.

Differentiation

Your most confident or articulate readers will enjoy being in the hot seat role but encourage them to draw their responses from textual clues. Less able/confident students might find it helpful to prepare questions to ensure they are able to contribute:

Why did you say that young Taugwalder was 'cowardly'?

Do you blame anyone for the tragedy?

Work based on *The Siege* by Helen Dunmore

Starter activities

1. **Rapid response.** Show students some or all of the following words:

bread queue surges warehouse smell heaven shuffles ration cards secret pocket coat gold hide thieves survive risks rations family fainted robbed safer together strength walk queuing cough eats dizzy jacket gloves scarf burzhuika foot-cloths boots slipped ice snow grappling fighting face shawl eyes

Ask them for their ideas in response to:

- Who?
 - When?
 - Where?
 - What?
2. **Chopped up.** Give students a copy of the text cut up. They have to race against each other to reassemble the text as quickly as possible.

Main activities

1. **Feedback.** Take feedback from the starter activities.
2. **First impressions.** Give students the extract from *The Siege* and [Resource 2 – Impressions of a text](#). After reading the text, ask them to record their ideas, share them in pairs and be prepared to share their findings with the class. Take feedback, and check students' understanding of context.
3. **Word sort.** Using [Resource 3 – Word sort](#) from the pack, ask students to sort key vocabulary from the text into categories. Encourage students to write two sentences, or a paragraph if you have time, to explain the effect of Dunmore's choice of language, focusing on the words in two or more categories.

Differentiation

Less able/confident students might find it helpful to work through the word choice and categorisation task in pairs or small groups. More able students should be encouraged to complete the extension task and select their own titles and words for three new categories and write a paragraph of language analysis.

You could provide example or starter sentences for the writing task for less confident students:

Dunmore uses words associated with danger to engage the reader, such as ...

4. **Re-tell.** Ask students to re-write Anna's story in the first person as a diary entry or a flash fiction story (i.e. in 100-200 words). If students choose the flash fiction story option, encourage experiments with style, narrative perspective and sentence length.

Differentiation

This is potentially quite a challenging task. Less able students might find it helpful to create a quick stickman storyboard of the key events in the story, with quotes or captions to help them to identify the key events first and visualise the text better. You might also find it helpful to show students some examples of flash fiction. Alternatively you could put students into mixed ability pairs or groups and encourage them to write collaboratively.

Plenary activities

1. **Peer assessment.** Encourage students to swap their writing work. They should tell each other one thing they like and one suggestion for improvement.
2. **Summarise a summary.** Ask students to summarise the extract in five bullet points, then three, then one and then finally in one word!

Resource 1 — *Ada Blackjack: A true story of survival in the Arctic*

'Without victory, there is no survival.' Winston Churchill

- Read the text below and in pairs, talk about your reaction to it. How do you feel about Ada's situation?
- Now jot down your ideas about how the writing conveys a sense of danger and explores the theme of survival. An example has been done to help you.
- Thinking about the quote above, what is Ada's 'victory' and how do you think it might help her to survive?

Your ideas about the text and language used:

Ada Blackjack (1898–1983) was an Inuit woman who joined a small expedition to an uninhabited island in the Arctic Ocean in 1921. When the expedition failed due to lack of food and ill health, Ada was stranded for two years with the expedition's cat, Vic.

Helpful information about the text:

Ada was terrified of running into a polar bear while she was out checking the traps. She carried a snow knife with her, but that was all, because she was still frightened of rifles, and she knew she wouldn't have the slightest idea how to defend herself if she was caught by Nanook. While she was out walking, she would pause now and then, every so often, and have a look around for bears, knowing she would faint if she so much as caught a glimpse of one.

In Inuit mythology, Nanook was the master of bears.

Repetition of words like 'weak' and 'listless' show the effects of the harsh landscape.

She went out every day now, looking for food. There was nothing at camp, and Knight was too weak to hunt, too weak to do anything but rest in bed. Ada herself was feeling listless and tired, and very much alone. She missed Crawford and Galle and Maurer, but particularly Crawford and Galle. Everything had changed drastically and suddenly when they went away. Now Knight was sick and she must figure out how to help him and what to do to keep them fed, and she wished the men would come back and help her. She wanted to give up the trapping because there were never any foxes and it made her weary to walk all those miles every single day. Also, daylight hours were still minimal and she worried about being caught in the dark miles from camp.

Crawford, Galle, Maurer and Knight were the other members of the expedition. Only Knight remained at the camp with Ada, as he was suffering from scurvy, and eventually died in 1923. The others left in the hope of being rescued.

But she made herself go out, following Maurer's map until she learned the way herself, and one afternoon, she spotted some fox tracks circling around the traps, and she knelt down and dug the trap out of the snow. It was empty, and Ada figured she must have hidden it under too much snow last time. So she baited the trap again, leaving it uncovered.

The next morning, when she checked the traps, she found a fox lying in one of them. Her first one. Ada was proud and exhilarated. No one had told her how to fix the trap or to uncover it and leave it in the open. She had figured that out on her own and now she would have food to take to Knight. The very best part of it was that she had done it all herself.

Look at the rectangles below and try to complete each one in turn, starting from the inner square.

Discuss aspects of the grid with a partner if you need to.

What other aspects of the text would I like/do **I need** to find out more about?

What phrases/words/quotes do I think are **significant** and why?

What are the main **themes/ideas** in this text?

What is this text **about**?

Look at the selection of words in the box below, taken from an extract from *The Siege* by Helen Dunmore.

1. Some categories of words have been chosen for you. Find examples of words to fit each category. Some words have been chosen to help you get started.
2. What is the effect of these different word choices on the reader?

Extension: Three of the categories haven't been given a title. Suggest your own ideas for these category titles and find words to fit.

War words	Danger words	Words of illness
ration soldier hit fighting		
Food words	Clothes words	Family words
bad bakery boots bread burzhuika careful carefully coat collecting cough cross crust dizzy drinks eats energy eyes face fainted family father feet fighting foot-cloths gesture glass gloves gold grappling hand head heaven hide hit hot ice irritated jacket lips lose marathon queuing ration risks ritual rob robbed safer salt saved scarf secret shawl shuffles sign slipped slow-motion slowly smell snow soldiers stick strength strokes surges survive swathes sweepings thieves toys walk warehouse warms water wood		