

Teachers' Notes by Fran Knight

New Guinea Moon by Kate Constable

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Recommended for ages 13-16 yrs

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Introduction	
Plot summary.....	2
Australian curriculum.....	3
Background to <i>New Guinea Moon</i>	4
Themes	
Racism.....	5
Colonialism.....	7
Women's roles.....	8
Growing up.....	9
Language in the text	
Pidgin.....	9
The language of race.....	11
Description and metaphor.....	11
Text structure	
Structure.....	12
Setting.....	13
Characters.....	14
Author study.....	14
Literature Circle & related books.....	16
Thinking outside the square.....	21
About the writers.....	22



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INTRODUCTION

PLOT SUMMARY

When sixteen year old Julie flies to Port Moresby she is unsure. She is meeting her father for the first time and is a little guilty at leaving her mother in Brisbane. But she is also excited: excited to meet him, excited about being in a new place and excited with the possibilities of what may happen.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) in 1974 is a place still tied by its colonial strings to Australia. Gough Whitlam has announced that Papua New Guinea will become independent in the following year. People in PNG are excited: those born there are looking forward to a future without the Australian administration of their country; many see it as a future without Australian people telling them what to do; some want all foreign nationals out; while some are more sanguine in their views for their future—but people know things will change. Expatriates like Julie's dad and some of his friends see their homes as in PNG and cannot believe they will have to leave, while some can't wait to leave and return to Australia.

Julie lands in Port Moresby to be picked up by a smaller plane to take her to her father at Mt Hagen. But at the airport she is involved in a small altercation with a local, resulting in her offering a lift to the young man who helps her, thereby missing his own flight.

Simon is the son of the coffee planter in the area and his PNG wife. He has been to school in Australia, but the colour of his skin puts him outside the view of many Australian expats.

In Mt Hagen, Julie meets her father and his friends, and is installed in her father's small house. She becomes involved in the lives of the expats for the few weeks she is there, and sees the gulf between many of the nationals and the expats. Her father's boss, Curry Crabtree, has a son, Ryan, who is interested in Julie and their relationship causes her some angst, especially as she prefers the company of the rather enigmatic Simon.

After her father's death, she resists the calls to return to Australia, and goes to Wewak with the group her father had planned to take. It is there that things change...

* * *

This novel is a fascinating insight into the lives of those expats who administered PNG between World War Two and independence in 1975. The gulf between the nationals and the expats reflects that disparity the world over between one group of people subjected to the laws and government of a group from another country. Here it is specifically Australian law that governs the country and the novel exposes for readers the range of Australian attitudes towards those they rule. Similarly the novel shows the great variety of different reactions of the PNG people to their coming independence. Many see it as an opportunity to kick out the expats and take over their own country; some see it as a slow change; while others, like the raskols, see it as an opportunity to cause mayhem.

Kate Constable has a sound background to write such a novel, having spent some of her childhood in PNG. Born in 1966, her family moved there when she was six, her father working as a pilot. She would have seen firsthand the changeover from an Australian administration to self rule, as well as being part of the expat community.

The novel reflects a time of change for PNG, and this is paralleled with a time of change for the main character, who goes from being a young unsure girl to a more independent and self reliant young woman, making decisions about her future.

Themes of racism and colonialism stand out and will make a fascinating study for the class, while the themes of growing up and the role of women could also be studied.

Before the novel is studied, I strongly suggest that the introductory suggestions are tackled in class to give the students some background to PNG and Australia's involvement in its history and participation in its affairs today.

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

The Australian Curriculum divides the study of English into three distinct strands, Language, Literature and Literacy and these can be found at

<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/English/Content-structure>

These notes are divided into sections following the three strands.

Language:	Language variation and change Language for interaction Text structure and organisation Expressing and developing ideas Sound and letter knowledge
Literature:	Literature and context Responding to literature Examining literature Creating literature
Literacy:	Texts in context Interacting with others Interpreting, analysing and evaluating Creating texts

The sections of these teachers notes align with the Australian Curriculum as follows:

Teachers Notes	Strand	Field
Background to <i>New Guinea Moon</i>	Literacy	Texts in context
Themes	Literature	Examining literature
Language in the text	Language	Language variation and change
Text structure	Language	Text structure and organisation
Author study	Literacy	Texts in context
Literature circle	Literature	Literature and context
Thinking outside the square	Literature	Creating Literature

Before the novel study

It may be expedient to read aloud the first chapter and talk about it in class to ensure interest is raised. The following chapters could be read at home, then perhaps chapter 6 or 7 read aloud in class to check how students are reading and what they are taking in of the novel.

During and after the novel study

Various things the whole class can do while working on this unit include: a graffiti wall of things that interested them as they work, a question box of things some did not quite understand, a futures wall of what might happen after the novel is finished, have an Oscar Event where the class votes for the best setting, the best character, the best incident, the best description etc, or have a one minute review lesson, where everyone must present a review of the book taking one minute each, or have a dress up afternoon (what clothes would these people have worn in 1974? what food did they eat? - check out the local op shop and Mum's recipe books!)

BACKGROUND TO *NEW GUINEA MOON*

(Literacy: Texts in Context)

Set in Papua New Guinea (PNG), the novel lends itself to an introduction to this country, one of Australia's closest neighbours and a significant partner in Australia's foreign affairs and trade.

- Before you start the novel:
- hang a large wall map which shows Australia and PNG
- have a class set of atlases or the Electronic Whiteboard (EWB) ready with a map to share.
- have a flag of PNG on the display board, along with any newspaper articles or on line articles you have found that may be relevant.
- ask if any in the class has any memorabilia from PNG they are willing to show and tell

With the EWB or the atlases:

- list the major islands which make up PNG
- list the main towns and cities of PNG
- list the seas, mountain ranges, rivers and neighbours of PNG
- look closely at its neighbour, Irian Jaya
 - who owns/governs this territory?
 - what are its main cities, towns, mountain ranges and rivers?
 - what problems exist in Irian Jaya which impact upon PNG?

There are several main internet sites which have a great amount of information about PNG which could be accessed by your students to develop a list of strategic information to know about this country. These are

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/png/index.html> (DEFAT: Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade)

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/papua-new-guinea> (Lonely Planet)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papua_New_Guinea (Wikipedia)

<https://www.cia.gov/index.html> (CIA)

Suggestions:

1. Divide the class into small groups and have each group access one of these sites to dip into.
2. Each group must list 5 new, important points they have found from the site they are looking at, to share with the class.
3. Bring the class back together to put all their research together on the EWB, or butcher paper.
4. Put their research into headings, Geography, History, Economics, Foreign Affairs, Tourism, etc.
5. Ask the class what they think is missing? This may lead to some further discussion and research.
6. Set up a quiz for the class to have in one session to see how much they know.

Some questions to set the class going follow: these could be used as a research assignment or class quiz.

What mountain range runs along the middle of PNG	Name the main river system in PNG
Name the capital and two other major towns in PNG	Describe the flag of PNG. What do the symbols mean?
Describe PNG's emblem. What is its significance?	What island groups are part of PNG?
What languages are spoken in PNG?	What is their main product?
What do tourists wish to see in PNG?	Where is the Kokoda Track? Why is it significant to Australia and PNG?
Where is Milne Bay? Why is this area significant to Australia and PNG?	Why was the island once called German New Guinea?
What volcanoes are still active on the island?	Why was PNG once administered by Australia?
Who is the Prime Minister of PNG?	Why is Australia linked to PNG?
What is the western part of the island of New Guinea called?	Who administers the western part of New Guinea/

THEMES

(Literature)

THEME 1: RACISM

From page one there is evidence of racism and racist attitudes from both nationals and the expatriates in particular.

Class discussion

Create a class definition of racism. Begin by brainstorming ideas the class has about what constitutes racism.

Racism	Ask the class to find a definition of racism and put this up for all to see and discuss.
Nationals and Expats	Find out what these two words mean. Can the class elicit meanings from the story?

Collect examples of racism found in the book, *New Guinea Moon*. Put these examples on the electronic whiteboard (some clear examples follow) to discuss

In chapter 1, Julie is immediately aware of the divide between nationals and expats	Jot down the examples given that demonstrate this divide e.g., page 2 the official at the desk at the airport
In chapter 3, Julie asks her father about the local women she sees with stained teeth	Discuss his casual reference to 'native stuff'. What is he talking about? Why is he so dismissive?
In chapter 4, Julie asks questions about Koki, the Crabtree's maid	What does this show us about the divide between locals and expats?
In chapter 6, Simon tells Julie about the education system in PNG	Explain this education system in your own words. How does the missionary justify this division of education? (chapter 9)
In chapter 11, Julie works for Curry when Teddie is ill. She talks to Joseph	Why is he called 'boi'? What does it mean? Why is this racist? Are there any other terms that you have come across in the story that reflect this form of racism?
In chapter 14, the group goes swimming, but Simon is approached by a staff member to check that he is staying at the hotel	Why does this happen? What effect does it have on Simon? And Julie? How does Simon dismiss the incident? Can you find other incidents in the book where people of darker skin colouring are not allowed to go somewhere?
In chapter 16, Julie goes to Goroka to follow up her half sister	What is her motivation? Why is she shocked when the young girl refuses to go to Australia?

There are many other examples of racist attitudes both by the expat community, and occasionally Simon and Julie. It is their growing maturity which allows them to see through the racism and see each other for what they are.

Individual work

Choose one and write 200 words in response

1. Read one of the incidents quoted above again. Retell the incident in your own words, taking the perspective of a different person involved (for example, if taking the discussion about Koki, retell the discussion from Koki's point of view)
2. In chapter one, Julie shows one form of racism in her assumption about the man taking her cases. Why is her reaction racist? How could she have handled this incident better?
3. In chapter 8, Barbara Crabtree dismisses Koki. How could this incident have been better handled? What could Julie have said that would have stopped Barbara from behaving as she did? Write up a short script for the incident, or imagine you are a lawyer gathering evidence for an unfair dismissal case. Present your findings.
4. There are very different expat groups represented in this novel. The pilots working for Crabtree, missionaries, administration officers and wives and families. Choose one group you have noticed in the book and explain how they feel about being in PNG.

5. Julie is unsure of what to call the local people, but in chapter 5 on a trip to the local market with the Crabtrees, she is told. Reread the chapter and list the words found there that are used to differentiate the people in the country. Have you come across any other words in the book? Add these to your list, and summarise just who uses which words and why.
6. In chapter 6, a description is given about the education each group in PNG receives. Find the reference and imagine you are an administrator. How would you justify this education of the nationals? If you were a national how would you see this as racist?
7. Choose any major incident in the story which reflects the Australians attitudes to the nationals. Would this attitude be tolerated today? What has changed? Why?

THEME 2: COLONIALISM

Linked firmly to racism, colonialism is shown throughout the novel, *New Guinea Moon* as Julie is part of the colonial community, administering PNG.

Class discussion:

- Brainstorm a definition of colonialism with the class.
- Use dictionaries and edictionaries to find a definition acceptable to the class.
- Look briefly at examples of colonial powers around the world.

The following table may help students explore colonialism as it is reflected in *New Guinea Moon*.

In Chapter 1, Julie notices differences between those who work for the colonial power and those who do not.	Look at instances in Chapter 1: the man who stamps her passport, the dress of those in charge, the way that Tony Spargo presents himself.	Remind students of the work they did prior to reading the novel, concerning just why Australia is administering PNG in 1974.
In chapter 4, Julie is told of the missionaries living next door.	In chapter 9 she asks the missionaries how they feel about teaching Christianity.	How might Julie have retold this story to her father?
In Chapter 5 the group at the Crabtrees discuss what will happen following Independence.	List the various opinions about 1975 and what it will mean to them all.	Find out what actually happened when PNG became Independent.
In chapter 5, Julie goes to the market with the Crabtrees.	Reread the chapter, looking at it from a stall holder's point of view.	What might one of the stall holders have told their friends at the end of the day?
In chapter 16, Julie goes to Goroka. What is her aim in going there?	How could her attitude to Helen be seen as racist?	What does she eventually plan to do?
In chapter 21, Julie's plans for Helen could be construed as reflecting colonialism.	What are her plans for Helen? How does she come to see her plans as misguided?	What compromise do the two girls reach?

In chapter 22, the Crabtree family finds Julie in a hotel room with Simon.	What is their reaction? What words do they use which reflect the colonial attitude of 'us and them'?	What is Julie's response to this intrusion?
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Individual Work

1. Australia is still criticised for being a colonial power. How can this criticism be levelled at Australia today?
2. Australia still has some administrative power over dependencies. See Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dependent_territory for a list of these. Why do you think we still have some control over these places? What criticism is levelled at Australia because of this?
3. How do Julie's attitudes to PNG change over the course of the novel?
4. What will happen when PNG becomes Independent? What part may Julie play in this new country when she returns?

THEME 3: WOMEN'S ROLES

The character of Julie is a neat vehicle for displaying the different way women are treated both in PNG culture and the colonial society.

At this time, Women's Liberation was only just getting off the ground around western society, demanding equal pay and equal rights, but attitudes are hard to change and in a colonial situation, even more entrenched. Julie notices the way women are treated by both groups.

- How do the nationals define women's work?
- Read chapter 10 to see how the people saw women's work.
- Can you see evidence that this attitude has changed by 1974?

The expats have little work for the married women. Remember it is 1974, and fewer married women worked then than now.	What work is taken up by the expat women in Mt Hagen? What do women like Mrs Crabtree see as the role for women in PNG?	How is Julie able to get work so quickly?
The story of Crabtree's maid, Koki (chapter 4) is cleverly juxtaposed with the story of Teddie's maid (chapter 8)	Reread the sections about each woman. Retell the story of Teddie's maid from her point of view	What happened with Koki? Retell the incident in your own words
Another maid is mentioned in passing towards the end of the novel. (Helen's mother, chapter 15r)	What is this woman's story?	How does each of the stories about these maids reflect the colonial attitudes at the time, as well as older attitudes to women?
Simon's mother, Dulcie is quite different from the other national women Julie meets	Reread the chapter where Julie first meets Dulcie (chapter 9)	What might the Crabtrees (especially Barbara) have thought of this visit?

<p>There are other instances of talk of women's roles in this book.</p> <p>Search out what the expat community thinks about Teddie.</p>	<p>Think about how difficult life would have been for expat wives.</p>	<p>Constable shows a wide variation of attitudes amongst these women. List the women in this group and show how they appear in the novel.</p>
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THEME FOUR: GROWING UP

Throughout the novel, Julie is beset with ideas and images of what being an adult is like. She stays with her father and notices how he copes by himself; she begins a relationship with Ryan, and does not know how to end it when she is more attracted to Simon; she handles the intruder in her house with ease; and is able to deal with her father's death with maturity. Later, as she begins to understand the difficulties in living in PNG, she rejects the colonialism of many of the expats, wanting rather to gain her qualifications and go back when older. She also rejects the narrow view that the missionaries take of life in PNG.

It must have been amazingly confrontational for people going there in the days before Independence.

Independent work or work in small groups:

1. Look closely at Julie's arrival in Port Moresby and then Mt Hagen. What things does she expect to see? What are her first impressions? How can the reader tell that she is naive or innocent?
2. What events in her first few days at Mt Hagen change her impressions of the place?
3. How does her relationship with Ryan change her?
4. How does working for Mr Crabtree develop her independence and maturity?
5. What impression does she get of PNG after she has been woken by an intruder?
6. What incidents occur which make her think about what is going on, rather than view her stay as a holiday?
7. What impact does her growing relationship with Simon have?
8. Some things she sees and is involved with would have shocked many (the intruder, meeting Simon's mother, being held up by the raskols, finding that she has a half-sister, and so on). Choose one of these incidents and compare her reaction to somebody else in the community.
9. How different is Julie at the end of the novel to the 16 year old tourist who landed there one month before? What are the indications of her growing maturity?

LANGUAGE IN THE TEXT

(Language)

1. PIDGIN ENGLISH

From chapter one, we are introduced to the Pidgin English spoken in PNG as many of the characters in the novel go about their normal day's routines. From Julie's perspective, we see and hear the words used in everyday conversation. Many are obvious when they are given in context, some are adaptations of known words and so can be worked out, but some require some thought.

Class activities:

As the novel is read, jot down the Pidgin English words encountered (see brief list below)	If the meaning is understood, jot down the meaning as well.	Create a dictionary of these words as a word document.
Activity Make flash cards and pin the words and their meanings around the classroom.	Activity Create a dictionary to share with the class.	Activity Take a half dozen words and create a series of antonyms and synonyms.
Activity Seek out several incidents where language is a problem.	e.g. Teddie's use of the word, 'meri' (chapter 8) Write an email to a friend describing the problem that Teddie had.	e.g. Julie's inability to understand the 'raskols' (chapter 19) Write a police report about this incident.
Activity Make sure you understand what is meant by Pidgin English.	Activity Reread chapter 5 at the market, where Ryan explains what Pidgin English is	Write this explanation as a letter to home to explain the language differences and your use of Pidgin English
Activity Think about places where pidgin might be used in Australia.	Use the Wikipedia site on Kriol in Australia to list the places it is used.	List some of the words used in Australia which constitute Kriol

Some Pidgin English words in the novel are listed below. Find the word, see how it is used in context, and write the word and its meaning, and how the word may have developed. Keep jotting own examples o these words as you read the book.

p6: Raus	
p10: balus	
p44: guria	
p53: bilum	
p57: meri	
p62: raskols	
p68: yu baim muli	
p91: yu kam bariap	
p104: gumi	
p117: wontok	
p118: kaukau	

There are many more instances which the class can compile while reading the novel.

Sometimes languages such as these are called Creole. Some Australian Aboriginal language is now called Kriol. From where did the word originate? Find some words now used in everyday language that are derived from Creole or Kriol (there are Wikipedia sites for both languages, as well as Pidgin)

Perhaps the class may like to use some of the words in a conversation, or set up a display of objects with the Pidgin word attached.

2. THE LANGUAGE OF RACE

1. In telling us this story, Constable has used many words which signify racial differences accentuating the differences between Indigenous and Non Indigenous people in PNG.

Relook at some of the terms used as you read the story:

- Dark faces surround her at the airport; she is rescued by a man with the face the colour of milky tea (chapter 1). What other words are used in this chapter to denote difference?
- She is told about betel juice and 'native stuff' (chapter 2). What is 'native stuff'?
- Nadine Crabtree tells her that it is because they are black and the expats are white that there is so much difference. Why can Nadine say this?
- Koki is described (chapter 3). What words are used to describe Koki which would not be used to describe Julie?

2. The missionaries next door tell her that their work is justified because the nationals are racially inferior (pages 48/9). What is their argument for their work in PNG?

3. Chapter 5 opens Julie's eyes to the divisions between the two groups of people. Reread pages 50 to the end of the chapter, where the women have gone to the market, to see what is said about nationals, natives and then kanakas. How are these words seen by the group? Which words does Julie understand that she must now use?

4. Look at the words used by the Europeans and the nationals as the book is read. There is a plethora of different words, from *national*, *native*, *boi*, to *white*, *European* and *invaders*. Draw up a list of these words and where they occur in the book. Decide which words are used every day and which some people find offensive. Which would you find offensive?

3. DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE

Constable aptly describes the PNG background to us in sumptuous language.

Relook at several instances where she describes what Julie sees. List the adjectival words used. Can a picture be found of the scene described? Perhaps some students would like to try their hand at drawing the scene.

4. METAPHOR

Revise the meaning of the word metaphor. Look at several incidents in the book.

In chapter 11, Julie becomes lost in the bush. What is this a metaphor for? What is the author saying about Julie?

In chapter 12, she is found by Simon who takes her to his father's plantation. He shows her his birds, a rare species of bird that mate for life. When describing these birds to her, what is he really saying? Why is this a metaphor?

TEXT STRUCTURE

(Literacy)

The novel can be divided neatly into four sections -

1. Chapters 1-7, *Introduction*, Julie's "honeymoon" period in PNG where she becomes involved with the expat community and sees blasé attitudes to the nationals. She develops an interest in Ryan, the son of her father's boss.
2. Chapters 8-12, *Colonialism*, Julie realises there is more beneath the surface than the lives led by the expats, and sees parallels between some of what she sees, especially on her visit to the Murphy's plantation.
3. Chapters 13-18, *Death* of Julie's father and losing interest in Ryan. She goes to Wewak which further fosters her insight into the characters of all the people she knows.
4. Chapters 18-25, *Maturity*, Julie finds out that she is more involved with the nationals than she thought, coinciding with her growing attraction to Simon. She goes to Goroka, and then realises that she wants to return to PNG.

Teacher directed work

- On the electronic whiteboard, chart the four main sections of the novel.
- Ask students to brainstorm the various incidents in the novel which reflect the themes of the four sections, add these to the chart on the whiteboard, highlighting those that reflect her growing maturity and the evidences of racism shown to the reader.
- Ask students to select one incident to reread and retell in their own words. This could be a shared class experience.
- On the electronic whiteboard, bring up the map of PNG. Locate the places talked about in the novel – Port Moresby, Mt Hagen Goroka, Wewak, Highlands etc. – to place upon the map.
- Using the whiteboard, find some information about these places (size, people, population, setting, place in PNG, isolation etc.)
- Discuss with the class the reasons the author may have had for using isolated communities as her settings. Does this help the structure of the novel? Does it underline the closed-in sense of the expat community?
- Discuss why the author chose these places rather than Port Moresby, for example.
- Discuss how the European people are seen by the nationals. Do we get a sense of their being disliked, even hated?

STRUCTURE

Discuss these within a group and bring the responses back to the classroom for a general discussion

Chapters 1-7	List Julie's first impressions of Port Moresby and Mt Hagen.	List the people she meets and their place in the community.
	List the people she meets in the first 7 chapters.	Where do all these people fit around her father? What do they think about Julie?

	These chapters introduce the idea of PNG to the reader. What else do the readers see through Julie's eyes?	Julie can see the PNG villagers' homes from her window. Compare the two forms of housing in Mt Hagen.
Chapters 8-12	Note down the things which make Julie see things with a different perspective.	There is quite a contrast between the 2 homes she visits: the Crabtree's and the Murphy's. List the similarities and differences
	Several incidents stand out as forming an impression in Julie's mind.	What do these incidents show of the expat community's attitudes towards the nationals?
	Julie's growing interest in Simon coincides with her ability to see things more clearly.	How would the rest of this community have viewed Julie's growing interest in Simon?
Chapters 13-18	The death of Julie's father is a climax in this novel.	How does his death galvanise Julie's view of the community?
	Write an obituary for Tony McGinty.	Why does Julie still insist on going to Wewak?
Chapters 20-26	What does Julie find on cleaning out her father's unit?	What does she do with this information?
	The denouement occurs when the Crabtrees invade Julie's motel room and are stunned when they find Julie and Simon together.	What is their reaction to this scene? How does Julie explain the situation?
	Resolution occurs when all is explained and comes to an end.	What does Julie determine to do?

SETTING

Each of the major sections of the novel introduces a different place. In the first 7 chapters, the setting is Mt Hagen, then in the second half dozen chapters Julie goes to Gerika which changes some of her perspectives of life in PNG. After this, she travels with the group to Wewak as Tony had wished, and finally she travels to Goroka, to carry out what she believes Tony may have wanted for his other daughter.

Think about:

- Why does a change of place emphasise and in a way determine significant changes in Julie's life?
- What other novels have been read which use a change of setting to underline a character's change of opinion?

- Many 'coming of age' novels are told retrospectively. Some are told in a diary format, some as a looking back from some time in the future, others simply told in past tense. Why do you think Kate Constable has chosen to write her novel in the present tense?
- How does this make the structure of the novel quite fixed?

CHARACTERS

The cast of characters is really quite small.	List all the main characters met in the first chapter	Why is the cast of characters deliberately small?
Introducing a new character underlines a change in Julie's perception of the place	Look again at one chapter where a new character has been introduced	What changes does this new character make upon the proceedings of the story?
People in Mt Hagen have a varying impact on Julie's life	Choose three characters who have made an impact on Julie's life	Write a letter from Julie to her friend in Brisbane outlining the three who have had an impact on her life
Julie decides to return to Australia at the end of the novel	What things helped her come to this decision?	Did she have any choices? What other options were open to her?

AUTHOR STUDY: KATE CONSTABLE (Literacy: Texts in Context)

Teacher directed class work

On the electronic whiteboard, bring up one of the websites below to look at with the class.

Discuss an overview of Kate Constable and her work, asking students to select one area of her work to investigate further. Some may chose to look at her early life and its influence on her writing, some may chose to follow her life to now, others to look at her body of work, or how she writes, or what other work she does, or her interests.

The main websites are:

http://writeonteens.blogspot.com.au/2012/02/author-interview-kate-constable.html (a blog called Write On!)	www.allenandunwin.com > Home > Our Authors (Allen and Unwin authors)
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kate_Constable (Wikipedia)	http://kateconstable.blogspot.com.au/ (Kate Constable's blog)
http://www.qbd.com.au/author/Kate_Constable (CBD online bookshop)	http://bookedout.com.au/find-a-speaker/author/kate-constable/ (Her page on Booked Out, a booking agency for authors)

When the class has spent a lesson on this work, ask them to 'show and tell' their results.

Student work

Journals:

Many authors keep a journal of fascinating facts, newspaper cuttings, references to information and stories they have read, and cuttings from wherever they find them. Some authors' scrapbooks are a messy pile of clippings, while others are neatly filed and annotated. What sort of things might Kate Constable have collected prior to writing *New Guinea Moon*?

Build up your own version of her journal for this novel (this could be in the form of a poster full of collage, or a folder of information, an actual journal, etc.)

Kate Constable's blog:

Look at Kate Constable's blog and read one day's inclusion.

- What sorts of things interest her?
- Where does her information come from?
- Is this another way of keeping a journal?
- What are the positive features and the negative features of a blog?
- How long do you think Kate Constable may spend on her blog?
- Do you think this may erode her writing time?
- Why do authors now keep blogs?
- Find some other authors' blogs and compare and contrast them with Kate Constable's blog.

Imagine that you are a children's author. Write up two days of your blog, using the things you have learnt about blogs from this exercise (250words) and reflecting the work you do as an author.

The author:

<p>Kate Constable's books: Find a list of the books Kate Constable has had published. You may like to do a timeline of her books with their publication dates</p>	<p>Work to do: Find out a little about each of her novels, enough to write a tweet for each to add to the timeline</p>
<p>Scan the information about Kate Constable's life in Wikipedia and the Allen & Unwin site.</p>	<p>What early influences do you think turned her to writing? How is her early life reflected in this novel?</p>
<p>Think about the research needed to write this novel. List the places she may have gone to seek background information.</p>	<p>Where would you have gone to seek out background information for this novel?</p>
<p>Kate Constable's early books were fantasy novels, and then <i>Cicada Summer</i> and <i>Crow Country</i> contained a time-slip element.</p>	<p>What similarities can you discern between the two time-slip novels and this historical novel?</p>

Class work

Create a Kate Constable corner in your library. Enlist the help of the teacher librarian, to get together all of Kate Constable's books, help the class find more information and access bookmarks, posters and ephemera.

- Ask the class to nominate a theme for the corner (the life of, the work of, the author etc.).
- Ask them to list the things they wish to display and what the end product may look like.
- Collect together all the things needed for the display, have several students make a poster, fact file, author profile etc., or collect the work done so far by the class in this unit of work.
- Get a small group of students to work out what to display and how to set up the display (e.g. they may use a map of Australasia as the central part of the display, with large arrows pointing out where her novels have been set, or they may create a fantasy world for her fantasy novels, or a garden for *Cicada Summer*, or Toni's hut for *New Guinea Moon*, or the ruins of a cemetery for *Crow Country*)
- Create some three dimensional objects to augment the display (gravestone, lightning, Toni's hut, coffee plantation etc)

20 Questions

A small group within the class may like to create a Kate Constable quiz to have fun at the end of one lesson

Reader's Cup

Set up a Reader's Cup, with students in groups of 3 or 4, reading and questioning each other about the book. A person outside class can set a number of questions and then set up a Reader's Cup, where the teams compete against each other

(see *Promote Reading, activities and strategies to motivate reading* (ed. Pat Pledger, <http://www.readplus.com.au/resources.php>)

Audiobooks

A growing area of publication is in audio books. Check out what audio books have been made of Kate Constable's novels.

I found some at www.theaudiobookstore.com/authors/kate-constable/

See if there are audio versions of any other of her books.

Who is the reader? Some audio websites allow you to listen to some of the CD. See if you can find one to listen to. Does it make a difference who the reader is?

Select a chapter to record as an audio, ready for another class member or class to use. How difficult is it to record a smooth and inviting reading, one which excites the listener?

LITERATURE CIRCLE: NEW GUINEA MOON

(Literacy)

A Literature Circle occurs when a class is divided into small groups, each group reading one of a group of books similar to the one being studied, and getting the groups to set the rules of the group and assess themselves. It is expected that a group read one book over 6 or so weeks, keep records about what they like about that book and report back to the class at the end of the unit. Ask your teacher librarian for suggestions and help with this as they may be able to suggest other works to include, and do a book talk for your class to select the book each group

will read. I usually have 6 or so copies of each of the books ready for the groups to select and allow each group to make the selection of which novel they will read.

Once selected, the groups will have a lesson a week to read in class, and the leader of the group will allocate how much of the book will be read between lessons. At each session, the group will discuss what has been read so far and work out things like plot, story, characters and theme, to be able to present this to the class at the end of the unit. Proformas could look like this

Group names		
Novel being read	Author	Characters
When is the novel set?	Where is the novel set?	What is the theme of the story?

Week	Story	Background	Prediction
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Summary of story and its theme	The reasons my group enjoyed the story

Each group then is able to make a presentation at the end to showcase in some way the book they have read.

There are several themes which come to mind when reading *New Guinea Moon*. A literature circle could use the theme of novels set in the areas around Papua New Guinea, or racism, or look at 'coming of age' novels, or perhaps make a study of Kate Constable's novels. I have suggested a number of novels which fit each category to use in a literature circle.

SET 1: NOVELS SET IN THE ISLANDS NORTH OF AUSTRALIA

Angels of Kokoda (David Mulligan, Lothian, 2006)

Derek refuses to leave with the women and children as the Japanese move south into New Guinea, staying with his friend and helping in some small way on the Kokoda Track.

Angel of Kokoda (Mark Wilson, Hatchette, 2010)

Kari's peaceful existence is shattered when a bomb hits her village in the highlands of New Guinea. A picture book which tells the story of the Kokoda Track simply and effectively.

Break of Day (Tony Palmer, Penguin, 2007)

Murray recalls the events in his past which have led him to fight on the Kokoda Track, enlisting and so leaving his parents' farm along with his brother Will, and town bully Sid.

Finding Darcy (Sue Lawson, black dog, 2009)

Darcy begins to research information about her long dead great-grandfather. He was aboard a ship called the Montevideo Maru, a prisoner of war ship sunk by the Americans after leaving Rabaul in 1942. A little known event which claimed over 1000 lives in the Pacific War.

The Heroes of the Kokoda Track (Nicholas Brasch, black dog books, 2011)

An amazingly jammed pack non-fiction book about this place in Australia's history, with maps, diary accounts, photographs and firsthand accounts, making an absorbingly detailed account of the time 550 inexperienced Australians defeated 6000 trained men of the Japanese Army.

Kokoda Track: 101 days (Peter Macinnis, black dog, 2007)

A non-fiction book about the Kokoda Track, giving a great deal of detail, easily assimilated. It is the quintessential Australian story of the underdog fighting against overwhelming odds but managing to defeat the enemy.

Krakatoa Lighthouse (Allan Baillie, Puffin, 2009)

An absorbing tale set around the mammoth explosion of Krakatoa in the Indonesian islands in 1883, an eruption felt around the world and affecting the sunsets for many months.

Loku and the Shark Attack (Deborah Carlyon, ill. by John Danalis, UQP, 2006)

Loku lives in a small village in New Guinea but he is disappointed with the way his brother, Nul, and his cousins play while he works with his father. Nul boasts that at night he secretly followed the men and listened to their secret business. This is a modern myth for younger readers.

Photographs in the Mud (Dianne Wolfer, Fremantle Press, 2006)

Two wounded soldiers lie side by side in the mud of Papua New Guinea, one Japanese, one Australian. Through the night they realise that there is little difference between them.

Treasure Hunters (Allan Baillie, Penguin, 2002)

Pat joins his father off the coast of an Indonesian island to search for sunken treasure. But there is political turmoil on the island and their expedition gets caught up in the violence.

SET 2: GROWING UP/COMING OF AGE

6 (Karen Tayleur), black dog books, 2010

Six teenagers. One car. One after-party. Six voices, six points of view. But only one outcome. So says the blurb about this book which shows a coming of age with a thud as one teen is killed in this car with 5 seat belts and 6 passengers.

All I ever Wanted (Vicki Wakefield, Text, 2010)

A young woman growing up in the poverty bound streets of the northern suburbs of Adelaide, determines that she will never be like her mother, but through the course of the novel we see her mature and find that there are some things from which she cannot escape.

Cannily, Cannily (Simon French, Walker, 2012)

A boy who has moved unconditionally each time his itinerant parents find work, decides to take a stand. This is one of the hugely successful novels by French, now reprinted by Walker, which includes, *Change the locks*. Another, *Other brother*, is newly published and tells the story of one boy's acceptance of his cousin's differences.

Crossing the Line (Dianne Bates, Ford St, 2008)

Intelligent Sophie has lived in foster homes all her life and is desperate to belong. Her psychologist helps her with setting up a flat with two people, Amy and Matt, and she must overcome some of her issues to deal with a different way of living.

Dougy (James Moloney, UQP, 2011)

A reprint of this very successful novel, one of a trilogy outlining the tale of Dougy and his sister, Gracey and then their friend Angela, as each overcomes the trials in their lives, having Aboriginal background with which they must find some common ground with the European society they are part of.

Happy as Larry (Scot Gardner, Allen and Unwin, 2010)

This wonderful story tells the tale of Larry, growing up with the most caring parents, being bullied by a local boy, finding his way through the morass of suburbia that threatens to close in on them.

On Orchard Road (Elspeth Edgar, Walker, 2011)

Jane moves to a country town where she knows no-one and has to deal with a new school and a smaller house. Her mother and new baby sister are still in Melbourne, where the baby is in intensive care. A growing maturity sees her able to solve problems and make decisions for herself. (younger readers)

A Straight Line to my Heart (Bill Condon, Allen and Unwin, 2011)

Tiff has finished school, and is doing some work experience at the local country newspaper, where she feels she is not up to the job. The old journalist called the Shark, her supervisor, is difficult, evasive, sometimes disparaging and often distant, and she wonders whether she will even finish the week.

What now, Tilda B? (Kathryn Lomer, UQP, 2010)

Nearing the end of her year 12, Tilda has no idea of what she wants to do. Beset with pressure from all sides, she happens upon a baby seal, washed up on the shore near her home, and this develops into a turning point in her life as she becomes one of the army of volunteers in caring for this seeming orphan.

SET 3: KATE CONSTABLE'S NOVELS

Cicada Summer

Absolutely charming story of a young lonely girl who finds a friend in the garden at her grandmother's old house

Crow Country

An award winning time-slip novel handling issues of Aboriginal death and cover up; drought and its effects on the land; and the closeness of family.

The Taste of Lightning

Swordsmen are pursuing the three, Tansy, Perrin and Skir, escaping from war, but on different sides. Now they must work together to live.

Chanters of Tremaris trilogy (3)

The Singer of all Songs, *The Waterless Sea* and *The Tenth Power* make up this remarkable story of the Sisters of Antaris, living behind the ice wall which separates them from Tremaris.

Girlfriend series (2)

Always Mackenzie and *Winter of Grace* are two good reads in the Girlfriend series, published for young teenage girls

SET 4: RACISM

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian (Sherman Alexie, Anderson Press, 2006)

A sardonic look at growing up on a reservation in the USA, with the knowledge that there are worlds out there. Racism shadows his life until there is no place where he feels at home.

Digger J Jones (Richard J Frankland, Scholastic, 2007)

Digger's father is away in Vietnam and it is 1967. Digger's dad can vote, but Digger and his mum cannot. They are Aboriginal. When Digger's father is killed, the issue shifts to the coming referendum to make Aboriginal people citizens.

The Ink Bridge (Neil Grant, Allen and Unwin, 2011)

The racism shown by the Taliban results in one young boy having his tongue cut out. When he finds work in Melbourne after his tormented journey he is deported by immigration but the friend he made goes to Afghanistan to search for him.

Jasper Jones (Craig Silvey, Allen and Unwin, 2009)

A dead girl hangs from a tree in a spot everyone knows is Jasper's private place. Together the unlikely duo, Charlie and Jasper, try to uncover the killer before the police come for Jasper, knowing full well that if this happens, Jasper will end his days in jail. An enthralling tale redolent of the racism inherent in rural Australia in the latter part of the twentieth century.

Little Paradise (Gabrielle Wang, Penguin, 2010)

17 year old Mirabel, living in Melbourne in 1943, meets Jin Jing, a young officer from China and pregnant, travels to China to find him when he returns. But it is the end of the war and the beginning of civil unrest in China, so she must use all her know-how to keep herself and her baby safe while searching for Jin Jing.

A Medal for Leroy (Michael Morpurgo, Walker, 2012)

A boy of Afro-American descent is brought up by his single mother after World War Two, in London, and visits his great-aunts regularly, despite their coldness. For Leroy, the only thing which makes it worthwhile is their dog which he loves.

Moon (Jeremy Gavron, Simon and Schuster, 2004)

An older novel, but worth seeking out as it tells the story of betrayal in 1950's Africa, when a white young boy befriends his father's black driver and is forced to take sides.

Rebel Cargo (James Riordan, Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2007)

This story of a young man, Mungo, coming across an escaped slave in the late eighteenth century, leads the reader through the horror that was slavery in those times. Through Mungo's eyes we see the black slave trade carried out between Africa, Britain and the Americas.

The Wah-Wah Diaries (Richard E Grant, Macmillan, 2006)

Published to accompany the film of the same name, this tale by Grant tells of his childhood growing up in Swaziland, where the colonial regime held sway over the black Africans, and the society in which he and his family moved was narrow and claustrophobic. For mature readers.

Where the Streets had a Name (Randa Abdel-Fattah, Pan Macmillan, 2009)

13 year old Hayaat searches for a handful of soil from her grandmother's home in Jerusalem but the red tape, curfews and inhospitable administration all dampen her spirits in achieving this task. (See also her novel, **Does My Head Look Big in This** (Pan, 2005)

THINKING OUTSIDE THE SQUARE

1. Kate Constable has based much of this novel on her experiences living in PNG at the time of Independence. What changes has she made to add to the excitement of the story?
2. If Julie returns to PNG after Independence to work as a bookkeeper (accountant) as is her plan, what changes might she notice?
3. Make up a trifold tourist brochure for Wewak, Mt Hagen, Port Moresby, or Goroka.
4. Typing in 'Papua New Guinea Orphanages' on Google will take you to a number of sites of missionary activity in PNG today, looking after kids who are orphaned. One site has a video on YouTube to watch. Some children are abandoned because they are of mixed heritage. In *New Guinea Moon*, two children are treated quite differently: Simon is part of his father's family and will probably look after the plantation once his father dies; Julie's half sister has been supported by Tony since she was born. Neither has been placed in an orphanage. How different would their lives have been if they had been denied by their fathers?
5. Being orphaned in PNG today is quite a different scenario. Use Google to find a Radio National broadcast about PNG orphans called *PNG's growing number of orphans*, which accounts for about one in eight children there today, many of whom have AIDS. Read the article and compare the situations found in the novel with the reality today.
6. There are some fascinating stories about PNG throughout the novel. When Simon's father, Patrick Murphy talks about his past, he touches on several incidents. One is that nobody knew that people lived over the mountains, and it was a shock for both peoples to find each other. A delightful piece of footage shows Sir David Attenborough meeting some of these people for the first time, after the first few seconds of the volcano, (see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBeEqNKiSx8>).

Why did Europeans first go into PNG? Why was Patrick Murphy there?

What hints does Simon give of his father's activities when he first arrived in PNG?

7. Another story of Patrick Murphy's time in PNG, concerns the Second World War. There are many books written about the Kokoda Track, but there were many other areas of conflict between Australians and the Japanese. Find out more about one of these other scenes of conflict, draw up a large map to show where it occurred and how it unfolded to share with the class.
8. Plan a trip to PNG to showcase this novel. You will need an itinerary, a map, a list of clothes to pack in your case, things to take in your hand luggage, flight information within PNG and some information about cheap hotels or backpacker hostels. (This could be presented as a display in the library.)
9. PNG is in our papers and newsfeeds today because of the reopening of Manus Island for asylum seekers. Where is this island? What is happening on this island? Why is the administration on that island causing problems for the Australian government and vice versa?
10. In going to Wewak, Julie finds out more about what happened during World War Two in PNG. What does she see in Wewak? What other war memorabilia exists in PNG that may interest Australians?
11. Why *Moon*? Think about what the moon represents. Look up *moon* in the dictionary, in a thesaurus, in a dictionary of poetical terms as well as *The Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (Brewer), *Familiar Quotations* (Bartlett) to see how other authors have used the idea of moon.

Think about the songs where 'moon' is used; think about other books where 'moon' is used in the title; think about poems with 'moon' in the; , think about the different festivals to do with the moon. So, why does Kate Constable use the word 'moon' in the

title? Why not 'sun' or 'star'. What is the significance of the moon? Julie refers to the moon in several places. Find them to add to your notion of why the word 'moon' is part of the title.

Create a collage of all things moon to present your idea of why moon is used in the title of the novel, *New Guinea Moon*.

ABOUT THE WRITERS

KATE CONSTABLE

Kate has written about her background thus:

I was born in Melbourne in 1966 and spent part of my childhood (from six to eleven) in Papua New Guinea, where my father was a pilot in the Highlands. In Mt Hagen in the 1970's there was no television and I spent most of my time reading Jean Plaidy historical novels and old-fashioned English fantasy books from the tiny library, and writing stories of my own. I told anyone who asked that I wanted to be "an author" when I grew up.

When we returned to Australia, I found the time in PNG had given me a rather skewed sense of reality. I knew nothing about TV, football, pop music, fashion or swapcards, but quite a lot about King Arthur, Greek myths and *The Phoenix and the Carpet*.

During my childhood I lived in nine different houses and changed schools nine times.

After high school I drifted into an Arts/Law degree at Melbourne University because I thought I wanted to be Rumpole of the Bailey (having concluded it would be impractical to pursue my previous ambition, to be a philosopher.) After a year I realised I didn't have what it took to be Rumpole, but as there was no HECS in those days, I spread the degree luxuriously over seven years.

To support myself I had various jobs, including doughnut girl at Cowes Bakery, drinks waitress at the Swagman Restaurant (complete with milkmaid cap), and transferring poetry to computer for a poet who doesn't like technology. But my main source of income was part-time work at a record company. In the 1980s this was still rather glamorous and wicked, and there was a lot of free alcohol and live music involved. (Not any more...)

After finishing my studies, I made the obligatory back-packers' tour of Europe, spending most of the time in Scotland. When I returned I decided that I really wanted to be a writer after all. I went back to the record company, and wrote short stories and dull confessional novels (unpublished).

Eventually I married my boss (I suppose there was still a smattering of wickedness), and retired to bring up our two daughters, and write books.

FRAN KNIGHT

Fran is a retired teacher librarian who loves adolescent fiction. She speaks at conferences, writes teachers notes and has articles in *The Literature Base*, *Magpies*, *ACCESS* and *Viewpoint* and has reviewed since the 1970's for *Magpies* and *Fiction Focus*.

In 2005, her book, *Ngadjuri: Aboriginal peoples of South Australia's Mid North Region* was published, following 20 years of research. Pledger Consulting has published ten books which reflect Fran's reading, with lists of books in subject headings, the latest being *Literature to support the Australian curriculum, History*.

Fran's contribution to teacher librarianship has been recognised with the South Australian Teacher Librarian of the Year award in 2005, and Honorary Life Membership of SLASA (School Library Association of South Australia) in 2007.