


# VCE Online Professional Learning



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A decorative vertical bar on the left side of the slide. It features a dark blue background with various geometric shapes in white, green, orange, pink, and yellow. At the bottom of the bar is the VATE logo, which consists of the letters 'V', 'A', 'T', and 'E' in white squares, with the text 'VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH' below it.

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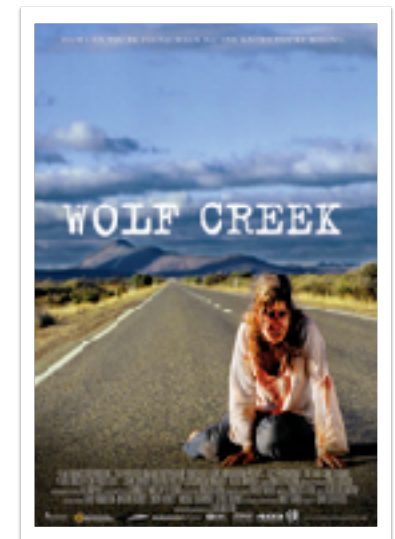



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# **‘Picnic at Hanging Rock’**

by Nathan Armstrong  
2021

The Australian landscape has long been a source of awe, fascination but also fear.

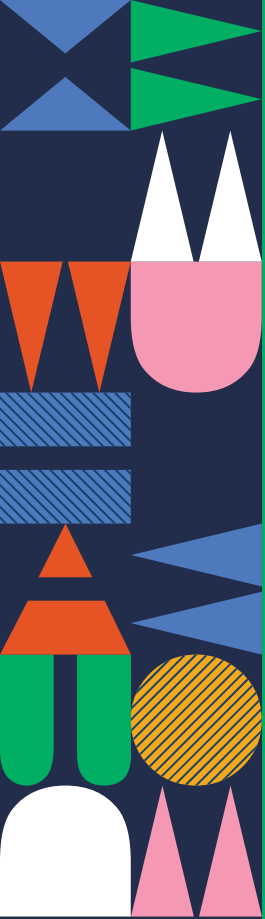




Find one quote to  
summarise the whole  
text.




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“There is no single instant on this  
spinning globe that is not, for  
millions of individuals,  
immeasurable by ordinary  
standards of time: a fragment of  
eternity forever unrelated to the  
calendar or the striking clock.”

(154)



“Few things were unmuddled,  
firmly outlined as they were surely  
intended to be? One could  
organise, direct, plan each hour in  
advance and still the muddle  
persisted. Nothing in life was really  
watertight, nothing secret, nothing  
secure.”  
(224)

# Picnic at Hanging Rock

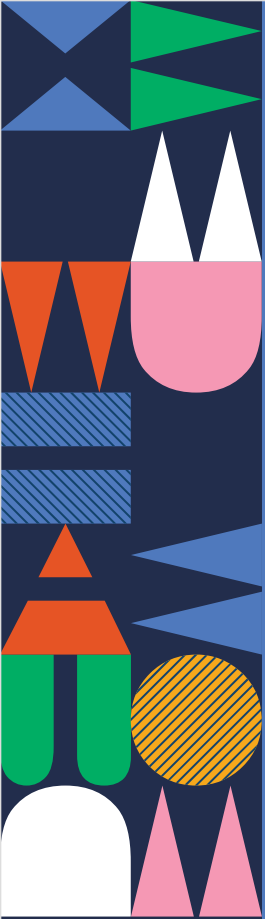
## CONTENT

- IDEAS to introduce the text
- Concerns in the text
  - Setting
  - Characters
  - Themes
- ADAPTATIONS and TRANSFORMATIONS
- CREATIVE
- PERSPECTIVES
- PASSAGE ANALYSIS



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# Ideas to introduce the texts

# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## IDEAS to introduce the text

### INITIAL INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- What is the role between place and identity?
  - Students can discuss with the class a particular place that has informed their sense of self and identity.
- How do the communities and institutions we belong to shape our identity/experience?
  - Students can discuss with the class a particular community or institution that they feel has contributed to their identity or experience.



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# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## IDEAS to introduce the text

### ‘A classic Australian text’

The novel is considered a ‘classic’ in Australian literature. A good way into the text is to get students to consider what this means. The following questions can help guide your discussion.

- What elements of the novel are Australian?
- What does the novel suggest about life in Australia at the time?
- What insights to we gain about Australia history by reading the text?
- What issues are explored that are particular to the Australian experience?
- What elements are universal?
- How does the novel differ from other texts in the course?

# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## IDEAS to introduce the text

### SEE/FEEL/THINK/WONDER introductory activity

Lindsay's novel makes great use of evocative settings.

- In order to get students to consider the impact of natural and man-made settings on our perspective you can get them to complete a SEE/FEEL/THINK/WONDER task.
- The class can then discuss what they see in particular images, how it makes them feel and what it makes them think/wonder.
- Such discussions can be grounded in the text by looking at various descriptions of the natural environment in chapters 1-5 and of Appleyard College in Chapters 1-3.



# Picnic at Hanging Rock

IDEAS to introduce the text

## A picnic at Hanging Rock



- Guided tour of the rock
- Creative writing exercises
- Reading of passages from the novel

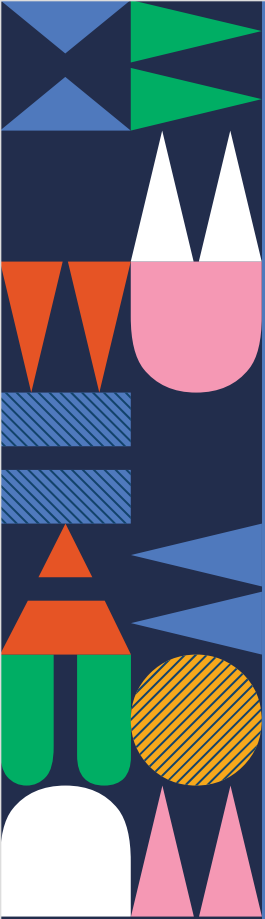
# Picnic at Hanging Rock

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# Setting

# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## Setting

The novel explores many different settings. A good way to begin to investigate each setting is to think of them as falling into the following categories:



Ordered/controlled	Uncontrolled/wild/untamed
Appleyard College	Hanging Rock
Lake House	The landscape of dreams
Church	
Police Station	

Albert's shed?

Picnic Grounds at the base of the rock?



# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## Setting



### Ordered/controlled

Appleyard College

**cicadas shrilling** all through breakfast from the loquat trees outside the dining-room windows and **bees murmuring** above the **pansies bordering the drive**. Heavy-headed dahlias flamed and drooped in the **immaculate flowerbeds**, the **well-trimmed lawns** steamed under the mounting sun (5)  
-the **bright unclouded sky** (5)

the grand opening day when the parents came up by train from Melbourne **to drink champagne on the lawns** (18)

Lakeview

Mike let himself out of the **French windows** of his room and **crossed the croquet lawn**, heavy with dew, **where his Aunt's peacock** was taking an early breakfast (90)

### PERSPECTIVES

Note how the ordered and controlled settings are as an indication of class and privilege.

# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## Setting



### Uncontrolled/wild/untamed

Hanging Rock

The immediate impact of its **soaring peaks** induced **a silence...** (35)

*Ominous*

**Huge boulders**, originally **spewed red hot** from the **boiling bowels of the earth** (36)

*Foreboding*

the Hanging Rock **floated in splendid isolation** on a sea of pale grass, in full sunlight its **jagged peaks** and pinnacles even **more sinister than the hideous caves** of Mike's recurring nightmares (94)

*Sinister*

on the Rock, **darkness stored all day** in its fetid **holes and caves seeped out into the twilight and it was night** (100)

*Alive - has a force*

the **shadow** of the Rock has **grown darker and longer...** The **dreadful shape** is a living monster lumbering towards them across the plain, scattering rocks and boulders (176)

### PERSPECTIVES

Note how people's descriptions and interaction with the landscape offer us insight into their motivations, fears and desires.

# Characters



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# Mrs Appleyard



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# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## Mrs Appleyard

### Adaptations

Note how the mini series deals this element

Curious,  
dubious or  
untoward  
circumstances  
of her arrival  
- what is her  
actual  
backstory?

Staunch, strict  
and steadfast

-newly arrived from England **with a considerable nest-egg and letters of introduction** to some of the leading Australian families (7)

-Whether the headmistress of Appleyard College...**had any previous experience in the educational field, was never divulged. It was unnecessary.** (8)

-**looking the part** is well known to be more than half the battle in any **form of business enterprise** (8)

-**the memory of Arthur** standing at her elbow as he often did while she struggled with a difficult piece of correspondence wiped the elegant guardian from her mind (76)

-with her **high-piled greying pompadour and ample bosom**, as **rigidly controlled and disciplined** as her private ambitions (8)

-**outwardly calm and reasonable**, and sick to death of the sullen tight-lipped child (47)

-churches in **Mrs Appleyard's opinion** being hot beds of gossip on a fine Sunday morning (58)

-Mrs Appleyard **was not prone to sentiment** (78)

# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## Mrs Appleyard

A change in circumstance leads to a change in disposition and demeanour

Mrs Appleyard had **sat down resolutely** at her desk and locked the study door. **It was becoming a habit.** As she went about her business, **erect, uncommunicative, outwardly unperturbed**, she was **increasingly aware of the rising murmur of questioning voices** from the outside world (75)

**strong-minded persons** in authority can **ordinarily grapple with practical problems of facts.** Facts, no matter how outrageous, can be dealt with by other facts. (129)

waking next morning **from uneasy sleep**, the Headmistress could feel its **pressure on a head already heavy under a hedgehog assortment of steel curling pins** (129)

for Mrs Appleyard, **staggering out into the glaring heat** of the street, the interview was over, but **the nightmare remained** and would **not be exorcised by a sleeping pill, nor a glass or two of brandy** at her city hotel (132)

**Mrs Appleyard shaken out of her usual public calm growing even more immense and purple** (137)

Tonight **her whole being cried out for decisive action.** (186)

she had lost a **great deal of weight in the past few weeks** and the **full silk skirts hung loosely about her massive hips** (194)



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# Michael Fitzhubert



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# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## Michael

Privileged,  
cultured and  
respectable.

The English youth **whose own ancient name was a valued personal possession that travelled everywhere with him**, like his pig-skin valise and well-filled notecase (33)

His shy charming smile and **English good manners** (65)

Only once in his life had he slept in the open - on the **French Riviera** with a **party of Cambridge friends** who had lost their way **somewhere on the hills at the back of Cannes**. There had been stars and vineyards and nearby lights, rugs for the girls **and fruit and wine left over from the day's excursion** (101)



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# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## Michael

Michael is also someone who wants to discover himself in the new landscape.

To shake off the shackles of privilege.

Dimly conscious of the difference between Lake View and Haddington Hall, whose ivied walls had existed and would go on existing for hundreds of years, **dominating the lives of succeeding generations of Fitzhubert's** (198)

'All my life I've been doing things **because other people said they were the right things to do. This time I'm going to do something because I say so** - even if you and everyone else thinks I'm mad' - (85)

# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## Michael

For Michael, Australia is a place to discover himself - a place of agency or self actualisation.

He reminded himself that **he was in Australia now: Australia, where anything can happen. In England everything had been done before: quite often by one's own ancestors, over and over again.** He sat down on a fallen log, heard Albert calling him through trees, and **knew that this was the country where he, Michael Fitzhubert, was going to live.** (34)

### PERSPECTIVES

How is Michael's ability to have agency related to his gender and class?

# Albert Crundall



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# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## Albert

Lives a life of  
juxtaposition  
compared with  
Michael

It's all the same if it's a bloody College they come from or the **Ballarat Orphanage where me and my kid sister was dragged up.**' (31)

'I haven't thought about that **bloody dump** for donkey's years' (32)

**'my dad used to change his name** every now and then when he **got in a tight corner.**' (33)

Unlike Michael, **Albert was fairly well used to the twists and turns a policeman** can give to the most innocent remark (68)

Tomorrow was Friday and Albert's day off, **long dedicated to a cockfight in Woodend** (84)

# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## Albert

This leads him to have a carefree and pragmatic approach to life.

He is a bit of a larrikin and endearing.

'what's the sense of you and me worrying our guts out? (We may as well finish the bottle.) Plenty of **other people have got themselves bushed before today** and as far as I'm concerned **that's the end of it.**' (83)

'thinking's all right if you have the time for it' (33)

-the Colonel's obstinate enthusiasm for the **time-wasting rose garden** that called for **more bloody weeding than an acre of spuds** and anyway **what was the good of all them roses?** (81)

'costs a packet to **live amongst the nobs**' (93)

'he's a **good boy, rough as bags**, but I'd be **damned sorry to lose him,**' (114)

It's a free country as far as I know. What's the harm in a whistle?' (31)

'The sheilas is all alike when it comes to the fellas' (31)

# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## Albert

His time with Michael and the concerns relating to the mystery also have an impact on his once direct and pragmatic view or perspective

-it was **a new sensation** for Albert to be **troubled by anything beyond his own immediate affairs** and he didn't care for it... his **thoughts kept reverting to his friend** alone all night at the creek (105)

-although he **normally fell into instant dreamless sleep** the moment his head touched the pillow, **Albert passed the rest of the night in a succession of disturbing dreams** in which the voice of Michael kept calling for help **from regions always inaccessible** (108)

# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## Albert

In the end, he is given the chance to develop a sense of agency

after **laboriously deciphering** the contents several times, he knew it by heart, address and all - a **boon granted to the non-reading fraternity** that accounts for their safe storage of any necessary factual information. **The unlettered farmer who sows and reaps according to the seasons has no need for writing down the dates in a notebook** (209)

he himself by a few casual words this morning had effectively **shaped the destinies of Tom and Minnie**, so had Irma's father, in a **moment of generous impulse, altered the entire course of Albert's life**. It is probably just as well for our nervous equilibrium that such **cataclysms of personal fortune** are usually disguised as ordinary everyday occurrences, **like the choice of boiled or poached eggs for breakfast** (210)

Albert felt he could do with a **short holiday** (210)

-you could of **nocked** me down with a feather when your letter and enclosed cheque **receeved** this morning (210)

-**he had never in his memory been given a present until today's magnificent gift** (211)

-\$1000 (pounds)...**large as life** in the jam tin (212)

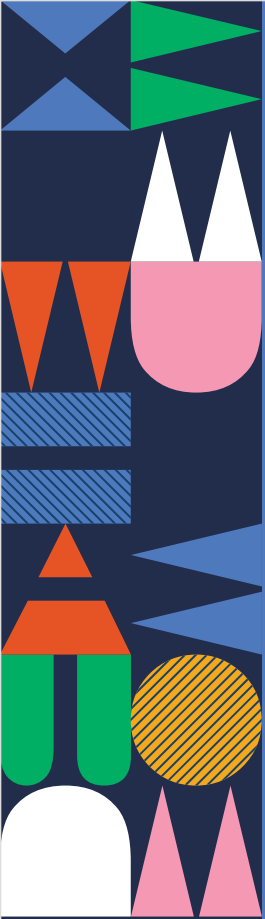
-nocked sideways at your **jennerous** gift (212)

### CREATIVE

Note Lindsay's use of phonetic spelling to infer class.



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# Albert & Michael



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## Michael & Albert

The pair form an unlikely bond.

Despite being from two completely different worlds, they develop a real affection and appreciation for each other.

-**Albert's worldly wisdom** was unending. Michael was **filled with admiration**. (32)

-**Mike was taking a temporary respite** from assisting at his aunt's annual garden party - (79)

-Michael Fitzhubert and Albert Crundall were seating in **amicable silence** before a bottle of Ballarat Bitter in the little rustic boathouse fronting Colonel Fitzhubert's ornamental lake (79)

-Transported to a world where boys of fifteen cheerfully spent their shilling on being thus disfigured for life, **Mike gazed at his friend with something like awe**. He himself at fifteen had been hardly more than a child with a shilling a week pocket money and another **for 'the plate' on Sunday mornings...** (80)

-**Albert loose of limb** in rolled-up shirt sleeves and moleskin trousers. **Michael stiff in garden party attire with a carnation in his buttonhole** - they looked **an ill-sorted pair** (80)

-For Mike, the **coachman's free-roving conversation** was a continual **source of pleasurable instruction**, not only **about life** in general but Australia - 81

-in each other's presence, **neither young man was conscious of his shortcomings**, if such they were - 81



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# Other characters



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# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## Other characters

Pragmatic	Teachers	Students	Upper Class	Other
Minnie	Greta McCraw	Miranda	Colonel and Mrs Fitzhubert	Reg Lumley
Tom	Mademoiselle De Potiers	Marion	Doctor McKenzie	Jasper Congrove
Mr Hussey	Dora Lumley	Irma		
Cook	Miss Buck	Edith Horton		
Police		Sara Waybourne		

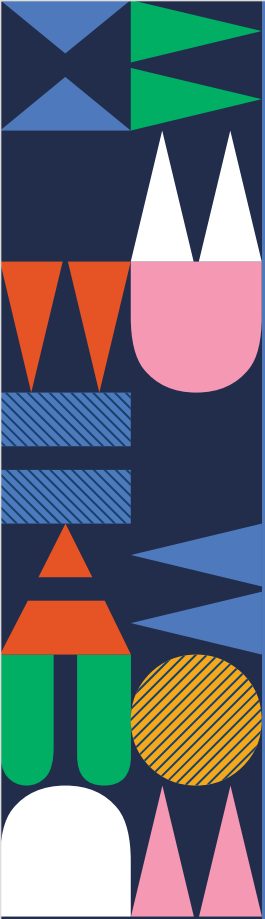
# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## The Landscape

-he felt almost light-hearted. In such an **exquisitely ordered world** the **Hanging Rock and its sinister implications were a nightmare**, thrust aside. In the avenue of chestnuts birds were awake and calling, hens cackling from a fowl yard. A puppy barked with joyous insistence on rousing the whole neighbourhood (90)

- the Hanging Rock floated in **splendid isolation** on a sea of pale grass, in full sunlight its **jagged peaks and pinnacles even more sinister** than the hideous caves of Mike's recurring nightmares (94)





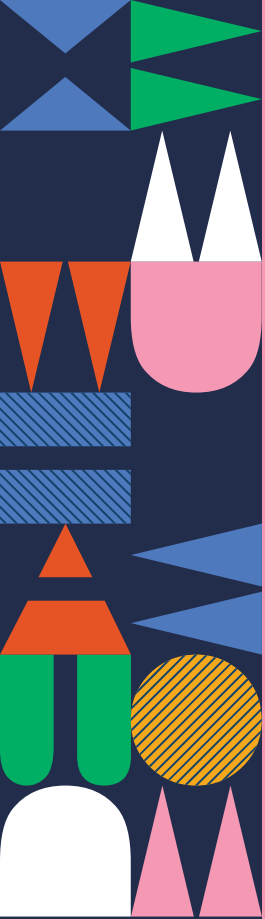
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# Themes



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# Dreams



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# Future



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# Love



# Reputation



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# Hopes



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# Fears

# Expectations



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# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## ADAPTATIONS and TRANSFORMATIONS

### Peter Weir's film and the FOXTEL miniseries

The film and miniseries are great ways to explore ideas in the novel. If you choose to use these adaptations as part of the Adaptations and Transformations SAC, or just part of the course, you may want to consider the following:

- What filmic conventions are used to convey aspects of Lindsay's narrative?
- What elements of the novel have been kept?
- What elements of the novel have been captured, developed or extended upon?
- What omissions have been made?
- What changes have been made?
- Why do you think certain choices have been made in the adaptations?



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# Picnic at Hanging Rock

## CREATIVE RESPONSES

### VISION and VOICE

Charting Lindsay's 'vision and voice' as the class study the novel is a great way to come up with a list of ideas and techniques that the students can use in creative responses.

VISION	VOICE
Description and impact of natural environments	Natural imagery
Description and impact of man-made environments/institutions	Man-made imagery
The role of education	Dialogue as an indication of class
Exploration of people from different classes	Role of time
The expectations of women/men	Use of reports, letters, articles etc
	Interjections
	Phonetic Dialogue



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# Picnic at Hanging Rock

# PERSPECTIVES

## PERSPECTIVE

Feminist

Marxist

Psychoanalytical

Post-Colonial

Reader-response



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