

Trainsurfer

Chapter-by-chapter
lesson plans



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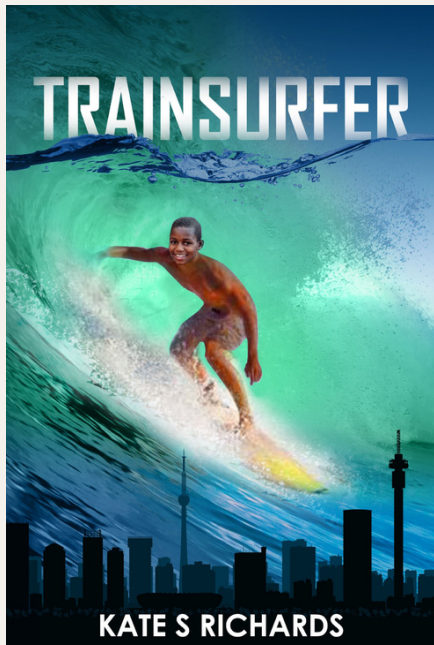
Kia ora from Kate

Kia ora, I'm Kate, author of *Trainsurfer*.

Trainsurfer is book one in a trilogy for teens called *The Adventures of Jabu & Friends*. It can be read and studied as a standalone story.

It is often used as a novel study for classes ranging from Y7 to Y10 in New Zealand Aotearoa and is also included in a South African homeschool curriculum.

This teacher resource is designed with Y7–8 students in mind, but can be adapted to younger or older students.



School librarians and teachers – please email me if you would like to order books for your school.

I can offer bulk discounts on novel sets, and post the books with an invoice. Thanks.

Kate S Richards

Teachers' tips

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

These chapter resources were inspired in part by the generosity of teacher Karen Wilson, who kindly shared some of her own classroom materials with me when I first began thinking about creating teaching resources for this novel. While the activities here have been developed independently, her willingness to share her ideas encouraged me to think more deeply about how the book could be explored in the classroom.

HOW TO USE THESE RESOURCES

Top tip for teachers: Open this PDF on your computer or tablet to access links.

Please adapt these resources to suit the needs and learning objectives of your class.

Some chapters include more than one activity. Feel free to use as many or as few activities as time allows.

Where a sketchnoting activity is suggested, students may create their sketchnotes by hand or digitally.

For storyboard activities, students could use tools such as Canva, StoryboardThat, or another app used in your school. Alternatively, a printable storyboard template may be used.

Some group activities can be adapted for online learning by using breakout rooms.

Look out for pages titled Teacher Resources, which include materials such as quiz answers, an optional storyboard assessment rubric and historical context.

Curriculum links

CURRICULUM LINKS

Curriculum Links – New Zealand Curriculum (English)

This resource supports learning in The New Zealand Curriculum: English – Years 7–8, particularly across the strands Making Meaning and Creating Meaning.

Students will engage with the following learning areas:

Making Meaning – Listening, Reading and Viewing

Students will:

- identify and describe themes and ideas within the text
- make connections between characters, settings, and their own experiences
- explore how language features such as metaphor, simile, and symbolism contribute to meaning
- interpret figurative language and imagery
- discuss how the author develops character and setting

Making Meaning – Speaking, Writing and Presenting

Students will:

- share ideas and interpretations through discussion
- respond creatively to literature
- organise and present ideas through writing, visual responses, and group activities
- use descriptive and figurative language in their own writing

Key Competencies

Activities in this resource support the development of:

- Thinking – analysing themes, symbols, and character motivations
- Using language, symbols and texts – interpreting literary language and imagery
- Relating to others – participating in discussion and collaborative activities
- Managing self – completing independent creative tasks
- Participating and contributing – sharing ideas and engaging in group learning

EXPLORING THE GLOSSARY



Learning intention:

We are learning to understand unfamiliar words from the novel and explore how language helps build the setting and culture of the story.

Activity 1: Glossary Warm-Up – Guess the Word

Before beginning the novel, play a short guessing game using words from the glossary.

1. One student chooses a word from the glossary but does not say the word aloud.
2. The student gives three clues about the word.
3. The class tries to guess the word.
4. Once the word is guessed, check the glossary definition.

Example clues might describe:

- what the word means
- what category it belongs to (food, surfing, language, place, etc.)
- how it might appear in the story
- where possible, mime an action word

This activity introduces some of the new vocabulary students will encounter while reading.

Activity 2: Build a Story Word Wall

Your class will create a Word Wall using words from the glossary.

1. The teacher gives each student one glossary word.
2. Students create a Word Card that includes:
 - the word
 - the meaning written in their own words
 - if possible, a small drawing or symbol to represent it
3. As the class reads the novel, listen for your word.
4. When your word appears in the story, add your card to the Story Word Wall.

By the end of the novel, the wall will display the many cultural, historical, and surfing words that appear throughout the story.

A DANGEROUS GAME

Read or listen to the **first chapter** of *Trainsurfer*. (It is available as a print book, ebook or audiobook.)

Learning intention: We are learning to identify and interpret the metaphors and similes that show Jabu's emotional state. Complete the following activity.



Activity: Metaphors, Similes and Symbols

Draw lines to match each image/symbol/metaphor from the chapter (left column) with the idea or feeling it represents (right column).

1. "...skinny legs obscured Jabu's view, rather like prison bars."	A. When you are lost, someone with charisma — even recklessness — can seem like an anchor.
2. "Arms and legs spread out like a planking squirrel"	B. Jabu's grief is overwhelming and unstoppable. He is being carried along by events he didn't choose.
3. The trainsurfers silhouetted against the sky	C. Feeling trapped, stuck, or closed in emotionally
4. "As if doing the limbo" under the deadly wires	D. A temporary escape and dissociation from grief or overwhelming emotions
5. The train itself, roaring along...	E. Pretending danger is a game to distract from fear
6. The "mental tunnel" where the world goes quiet	F. Symbolic of freedom, fearlessness, belonging — everything Jabu longs for.
7. The sudden catenary mast roaring into view	G. Feeling vulnerable, hanging on for survival
8. The leader in the red jacket who "moved like a dancer..."	H. A shocking jolt back to reality

A CAUTIONARY TALE



Read the **second chapter** of *Trainsurfer* or listen to it in the audiobook if you have access to it.

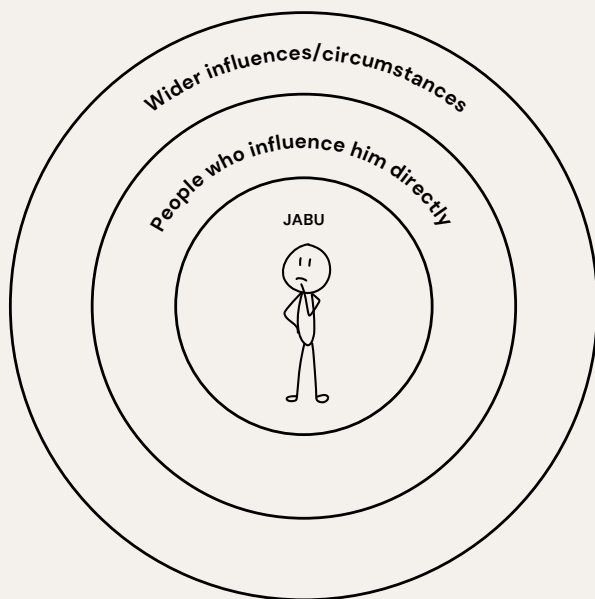
Learning intention: We are learning to understand how peer pressure influences the choices characters make.

Activity 1: Circle of Influence

Students draw three concentric circles:

1. Centre circle: Jabu
2. Middle circle: People who influence him directly
3. Outer circle: Wider influences / circumstances

Students fill in each layer.



A CAUTIONARY TALE



Learning intention: We are learning to understand how peer pressure influences the choices characters make.

Activity 2:

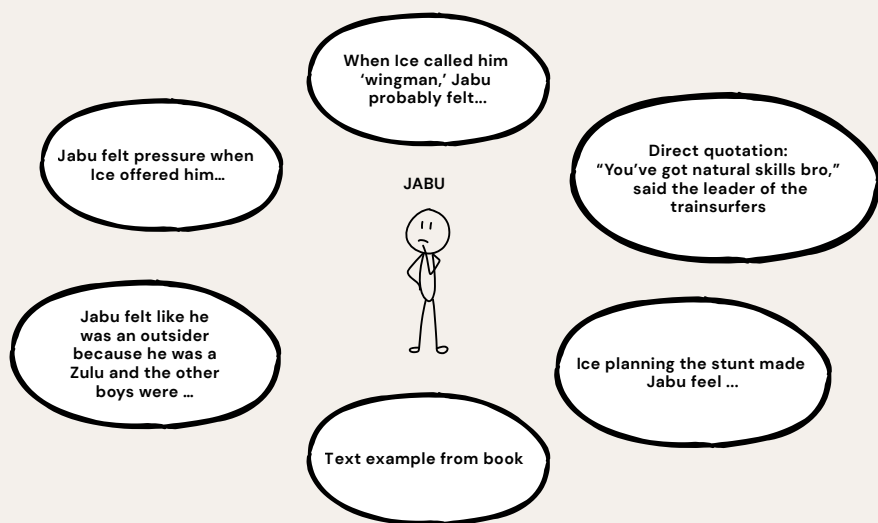
Students create a simple diagram showing the moments where Jabu felt pressure in this chapter.

How it works:

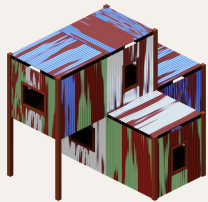
Draw Jabu in the centre as a stick figure.

Around him, students add bubbles showing moments in Chapter 2 when Jabu felt pressure to follow Ice and the group.

Some bubbles have a sentence starter — students complete it using what they remember from the print book, audiobook, or class read-aloud. If you have a print copy, you can create some bubbles with textual evidence or direct speech quotations from the book that show moments of peer pressure.



LEAVING HOME



Read or listen to the **third chapter** of *Trainsurfer*.

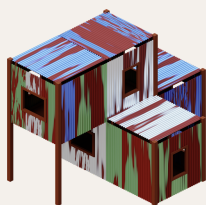
Learning intention: We are learning to understand what Jabu’s surroundings show us about life in Soweto during apartheid.

Activity 1: Through Jabu’s Eyes — Text Clues → Real-World Meaning

Draw lines to match what Jabu sees, hears or experiences in the first column with what it suggests about life in the township during apartheid, from the second column. Add your own examples.

What Jabu Notices in Chapter 3	What This Suggests About Life in Soweto
A. Police raiding a home at night	1.Overcrowding and poverty
B. Cooking over a coal stove	2.Stressful living conditions
C. Foggy streets and dangerous alleyways	3.Heavy policing in Black areas during apartheid
D. Matchbox houses and tin shacks	4.Lack of safety and infrastructure
E. Noisy, chaotic neighbours	5.Limited access to electricity and resources

LEAVING HOME

**Learning intention:**

We are learning to use imaginative writing to explore character perspective and understand how personal belongings can represent safety, memory, and identity.

Activity 2: What Would You Take? — A Reflective Empathy Quick-Write

In Chapter 3, Jabu decides to leave Soweto with only what he can carry. Think about what this moment would feel like and imagine you were in his situation.

Write 3–5 sentences responding to the prompt:

“If I had to leave home suddenly and could only take three small items, I would choose... because...”

Encourage students to focus on:

- practical needs
- sentimental objects
- things that represent safety or comfort



PRETTY GOOD, FOR A GIRL

Read or listen to the **fourth chapter** of *Trainsurfer*.

Learning intention:

We are learning to explore how language, stereotypes, and group culture can include or exclude people.

Group activities: You will be assigned a group (or breakout room if online learning). Each group has been assigned a task. As you read or listen, discuss with one another and answer your assigned questions.



BREAKOUT ROOM 1	BREAKOUT ROOM 2
- Listen out for surf jargon, like “grommet” and write down what you think the words mean. - List modern day surf slang used in New Zealand Aotearoa. - Why do groups, like surfers or gamers, use jargon or slang? How can it help them feel part of the group, have power or stick together? - Can using special group words or slang ever make people feel left out, and is it better to try to include everyone?	- Write down quotes, like “pretty good, for a girl,” or “crazy chick,” that put down or undermine Billie’s confidence. - What gender stereotypes appear in the surf scene, and how do they affect the characters? - Do you think the boys were gatekeeping the surf scene? - Reframe the put-downs in encouraging language.
BREAKOUT ROOM 3	BREAKOUT ROOM 4
Find textual evidence to describe Billie’s character. - Is she courageous or timid? Give examples. - Does she try to fit in with a particular group? - Who does she have a crush on and how does the narrator show this? - What negative-self-talk does she use and how might she reframe this?	- What point-of-view is the book written in? - Remember chapters 1–3. Were they written in Jabu’s voice (first person) or from a third person perspective? - And chapter 4? Why do you think the author chose to use this point of view? - Write a 3–4 line scene from this chapter in first person instead of third person, as a creative exercise.

SURF'S UP

Read or listen to the **fifth chapter** of *Trainsurfer*.

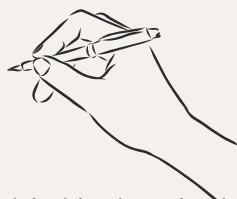
**Learning intention:**

We are learning to analyse how characters respond differently to injustice and how privilege influences their understanding of the world.

Activity: Thinking — Complete the following activity. Start at the level you think you are working at. Once completed, level up.

BLOOM'S LEVEL 1 – REMEMBER	BLOOM'S LEVEL 2 – UNDERSTAND	BLOOM'S LEVEL 5 – EVALUATE
- What rule did Billie and Kyle break that caused them to hide in the cupboard? - Who caught them and took them to the office? - What punishment did Mr Du Preez say Kyle and Billie would get? - Where do Billie and Kyle go after they run away from school? - What does Billie realise about the beach they are going to? - What kind of music did Billie put on Kyle's cassette?	- Why does Kyle want to run away instead of facing punishment? - Why does Billie start to feel uncomfortable listening to the political songs? - Explain in your own words how Billie and Kyle's lives are different from Black South Africans in the apartheid system. - Why does Billie get upset when Kyle repeats things he has heard from his parents? - How does surfing help Billie clear her emotions after the argument? 	- Do you think protest music is an effective way for young people to learn about injustice? Why or why not? - Billie and Kyle hear the same lyrics but react differently. Who do you think responds more thoughtfully, and what makes you say that? - Billie begins to notice her own privilege. What signs in the chapter show her thinking is shifting, and do you think this makes her a stronger or more likeable character? - Kyle repeats ideas he's been told at home. Should we judge people for their beliefs if they've only ever heard one side of a story? Explain your view. - If you were Billie, would you have forgiven Kyle after the beach argument? Why or why not?

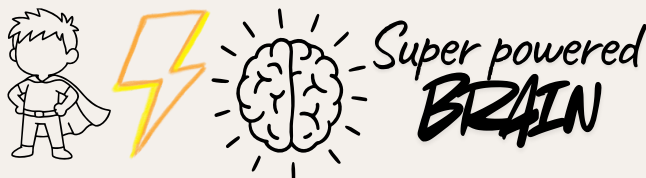
SKETCHNOTING



Learning intention: We are learning how to sketchnote.

What is sketchnoting? Teacher, please click [here](#) for a quick video introduction.
Why should you sketchnote?

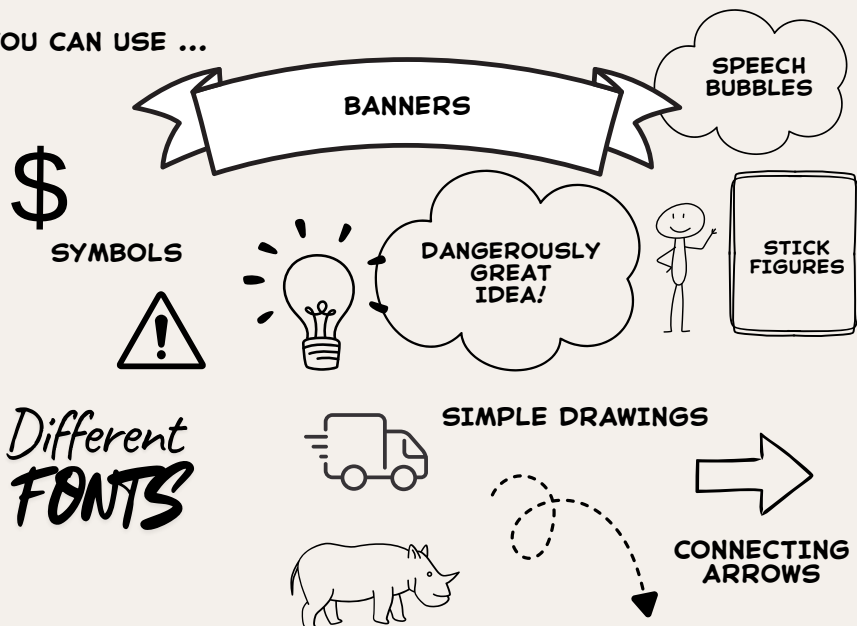
It gives you a



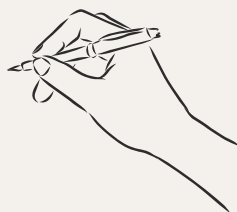
- It helps you remember things better because you're using pictures and words together.
- It keeps your brain awake and focused while you listen.
- It lets you be creative while you learn.
- It makes tricky ideas easier to understand.
- It gives you fun, colourful notes you'll actually want to look at again.

Activity 1: Now it's your turn — spend some time practicing, making a sketchnote from your favourite chapter so far.

YOU CAN USE ...



SKETCHNOTING



AN UNEXPECTED CARGO

Read or listen to the **sixth chapter** of *Trainsurfer*.

Learning intention: We are learning to summarise a chapter using images, symbols, and key ideas in a sketchnote.

Activity 2: Sketchnote the Chapter

Task:

Try to sketchnote as you listen to the chapter. Create a one-page sketchnote that captures the key events and feelings in Chapter 6.

Use felt tip pens, pens, pencils — or you could create a digital copy if you have access to Canva or similar educational tools.

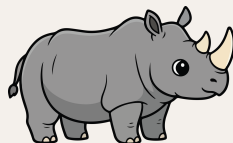
Remember: sketchnotes are meant to be quick, simple, and visual — this is not an art project.

Your sketchnote should include:

- 5–7 simple pictures or symbols showing the most important moments
- Short labels or keywords (no long sentences)
- Arrows, boxes, or speech bubbles to show movement or feelings
- Include key quotes from direct dialogue or thoughts
- At least one icon showing how Jabu feels at different points in the chapter
- Stick figures and doodles are absolutely fine — the goal is clarity, not perfection
- Enjoy!



THANDI



Read or listen to the **seventh chapter** of *Trainsurfer*.

Learning intention:

We are learning to explore how authors use parallel characters and shared experiences to deepen theme and develop empathy in a story.

Activity 1: Parallel Orphans – Venn Diagram

In this chapter, Jabu and Thandi are both orphans travelling toward uncertain futures. Although one is a boy and one is a baby rhinoceros, their journeys intersect in powerful ways.

Create a Venn diagram comparing Jabu and Thandi.

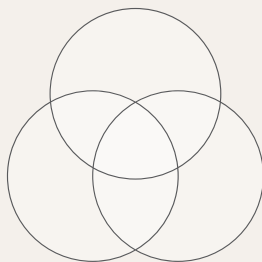
In one circle, write what is unique to Jabu.

In the other circle, write what is unique to Thandi.

In the overlapping section, record what they share.

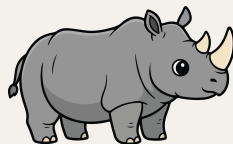
You might consider:

- Why are they alone?
- Who is responsible for them?
- How do others treat them?
- Who chooses whom?
- What kind of future awaits each of them?
- Who has protection? Who does not?
- How do they respond to separation?



After completing your diagram, write a short paragraph answering:

Why do you think the author places Jabu and Thandi together in this chapter? What does Thandi represent in Jabu's journey?

THANDI**Activity 2:** The Words He Doesn't Say

At the end of the chapter, Jabu says goodbye to Thandi. He speaks politely and bravely, but we know he is holding back strong emotion.

Write a short internal monologue from Jabu's perspective as the green lorry turns the corner and disappears.

You may include:

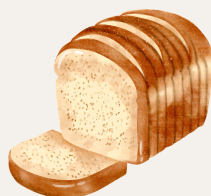
- What he is feeling but not saying aloud
- His fears about being alone again
- His hopes for Thandi's future
- What this goodbye reminds him of
- What he wishes someone would say to him

Focus on emotional honesty and depth rather than long description. This is about the quiet courage of letting go.



FATHER'S BOYS

Read or listen to the **eighth chapter** of Trainsurfer.



Learning intention:

We are learning to understand how setting and relationships influence characters' choices and feelings.

Activity 1: Levelled Thinking – Understanding the Setting

Start at the level you think you are working at. Once completed, level up.

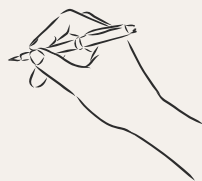
LEVEL 1 THINKING SKILLS FIND IT	LEVEL 2 THINKING SKILLS THINK ABOUT IT (INFERENTIAL)	LEVEL 10 THINKING SKILLS GO DEEPER (REFLECTIVE)
Answer in full sentences: • Why does Jabu buy bread instead of a sandwich? • Why are the boys afraid of the police? • Who is "Father"? • Why has Father been arrested? • What does the note on the tickey box say?	Use evidence from the chapter: • Why do the boys laugh at people in the street? • Why do they stay loyal to Father? • Why does Jabu feel a "weight of responsibility" at the end? • What does this chapter show us about life on the streets?	Choose ONE to respond to: • Do you think Father is a good leader? Why or why not? • What do the boys gain from being together, even though their situation is difficult? • What do you think Jabu is beginning to learn in this chapter?

Activity 2: Sketch the Turning Points

Create a sketchnote sequence of 5–6 pivotal moments in this chapter.

Examples:

- The tea-room and sharing the bread
- The broken tickey box
- Meeting Father's boys
- Hiding from the police
- Learning Father has been arrested
- The final moment of responsibility



Under each sketch, write one sentence explaining why that moment matters.

THE GREEN ROOM

Read or listen to the **ninth chapter** of *Trainsurfer*.



Learning intention:

We are learning to explore how authors use metaphor and symbolism to show turning points and new beginnings in a story.

Activity 1: Metaphor Hunt – The Green Room

Reread the green room section carefully.

- Highlight words and phrases that make the wave feel magical or transformative.
- Find examples of metaphor or figurative language
- Find descriptive verbs/adjectives.
- Identify how Billie feels before, during, and after the ride.

Thinking deeper:

- Why does the green room feel like more than just a wave?
- What does it represent in Billie's life?
- What does she leave behind inside the tube?
- If the green room is a doorway, what is Billie stepping into?

Activity 2: The Surfboard as a Promise

Reread this line: "The board felt like a promise."

Step 1 – Think First. Discuss or jot ideas:

- Why would a discarded board feel valuable to Jabu?
- What has Jabu lost recently?
- What choices has he made in this chapter?
- How is he different from Sipho and Vusi at this moment?

Step 2 – Define the Promise: Complete this sentence in your own words:

The board promises Jabu _____.

Try to think beyond "a surfboard." Consider:

Hope, dignity, a skill, a new direction, excitement, escapism, protection (it shelters them), potential, etc.

Step 3 – Design the Promise

Draw a large surfboard shape.

Inside the board, include:

- 5 words that represent what the board promises Jabu
- 3 symbols that represent his possible future
- 1 short quote from the chapter that connects to new beginnings



THE “AFRICAN BEACH”



Read or listen to the **tenth chapter** of *Trainsurfer*.

Learning intention:

To identify water safety risks and explain how smart decisions can prevent drowning.

Activity 1: What Went Wrong?

In small groups, reread the scene where Jabu paddles out too far.

Discuss and record:

- What mistakes did Jabu make?
- What warning signs were there?
- What made the situation more dangerous?
- What saved his life?

Refer to the text for evidence.

What dangers exist at NZ beaches?

- Rip currents
- Large surf
- Sudden drop-offs
- No lifeguards
- Cold water
- Overconfidence
- Why are swimming skills important in NZ?

Activity 2: Stay Safe at the Beach Poster

In the same groups, design a clear and eye-catching beach safety poster for young people.

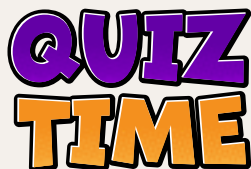
Your poster must include:

- At least 4 safety rules
- One strong slogan
- One simple visual image
- Advice specific to NZ beaches (e.g. swim between the flags, never swim alone)

Optional challenge:

Make your poster persuasive — not just informative.

A MATTER OF TRUST



Read or listen to the **eleventh chapter** of *Trainsurfer*.

Learning intention:

We are learning to read closely or listen carefully to the text and to remember details.

Activity: Complete the multiple choice quiz (20 questions):

1. Billie putting Jabu in the recovery position shows:
 - A. She is bossy
 - B. She is well trained and calm under pressure
 - C. She is nervous
 - D. She wants praise

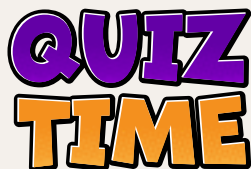
2. After Jabu wakes up, what is the first thing he worries about?
 - A. His surfboard
 - B. Billie
 - C. Sipho and Vusi
 - D. The police

3. Why does Jabu run into the bushes?
 - A. He is afraid of Billie
 - B. He is embarrassed
 - C. He wants to find his friends
 - D. He hears police sirens

4. When Jabu reaches the road, he must decide whether to:
 - A. Catch a taxi
 - B. Walk alone or return to Billie
 - C. Go back into the sea
 - D. Hide in the bushes

5. What does Jabu's decision to turn back suggest about his character?
 - A. He is weak
 - B. He avoids responsibility
 - C. He is brave enough to trust again
 - D. He prefers comfort

A MATTER OF TRUST



Quiz continued ...

6. What makes Jabu hesitate before trusting Billie?

- A. She is older than him
- B. She is a lifeguard
- C. She is white and it is a time of apartheid
- D. She is angry with him

7. Which detail shows Billie is trustworthy?

- A. She laughs at him
- B. She lectures him
- C. She stays with him until he feels better
- D. She ignores his story

8. Why does Jabu begin to cry?

- A. He is still coughing up water
- B. He is embarrassed
- C. Kindness brings his pain to the surface
- D. He wants attention

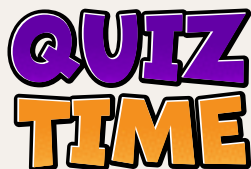
9. Which of these events does Jabu NOT tell Billie about?

- A. His mother's death
- B. Surfing on the train
- C. The baby rhino
- D. Spending his last coins on the broken tickey box

10. Why does Billie almost doubt Jabu's story?

- A. It sounds exaggerated and unbelievable
- B. She thinks he is lying
- C. She doesn't care
- D. She wasn't listening

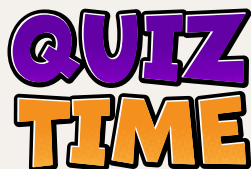
A MATTER OF TRUST



Quiz continued ...

11. What does Billie decide to do?
- A. Leave him at the beach
 - B. Take him to the police
 - C. Take him home and help him call his aunt
 - D. Give him money and leave
12. What vehicle does Billie use to take Jabu home?
- A. A car
 - B. A bicycle
 - C. A 50cc motorbike
 - D. A taxi
13. Which detail highlights the contrast between Jabu's life and Billie's?
- A. The buzz bike
 - B. The hot shower and clean pyjamas
 - C. The frogs and crickets
 - D. The busy road
14. What does Jabu drink after his meal?
- A. Water
 - B. Tea
 - C. Hot chocolate
 - D. Juice
15. What does Jabu wear after his shower?
- A. A wetsuit
 - B. His own clothes
 - C. Billie's jacket
 - D. Billie's younger brother's pyjamas

A MATTER OF TRUST



Quiz continued ...

16. Where does Jabu find his aunt's phone number?

- A. In his pocket
- B. Written on his hand
- C. Inside his Bible
- D. In Billie's phone

17. When Jabu calls his aunt, he feels:

- A. Angry
- B. Excited
- C. Nervous and uncertain
- D. Confident

18. The title "A Matter of Trust" mainly refers to:

- A. Surf safety
- B. Police rules
- C. Jabu deciding whether to trust Billie
- D. The motorbike ride

19. Which theme is strongest in this chapter?

- A. Revenge
- B. Trust and kindness
- C. Competition
- D. Humour

20. What is the author showing by contrasting Jabu's street life with Billie's comfortable home?

- A. The difference between living near the beach and living in the city
- B. The unequal living conditions created by apartheid laws
- C. How beaches can be dangerous places
- D. The difference between city and suburban life

QUIZ ANSWER SHEET*Teacher
resources*

Quiz answer sheet (for teachers):

1. B — She is well trained and calm under pressure
2. C — Sipho and Vusi
3. B — He is embarrassed
4. B — Walk alone or return to Billie
5. C — He is brave enough to trust again
6. C — She is white and it is a time of apartheid
7. C — She stays with him until he feels better
8. C — Kindness brings his pain to the surface
9. C — The baby rhino
10. A — It sounds exaggerated and unbelievable
11. C — Take him home and help him call his aunt
12. C — A 50cc motorbike
13. B — The hot shower and clean pyjamas
14. C — Hot chocolate
15. D — Billie's younger brother's pyjamas
16. C — Inside his Bible
17. C — Nervous and uncertain
18. C — Jabu deciding whether to trust Billie
19. B — Trust and kindness
20. B — The unequal living conditions created by apartheid laws

MANY MOUTHS TO FEED



Read or listen to the **twelfth chapter** of *Trainsurfer*.

Learning intention:

Students will use descriptive language and sensory details to show contrast between two different settings.

Activity: Contrast writing. Two Worlds

In this chapter, Jabu experiences two very different environments: the crowded, difficult life at Auntie Patience's homestead and the calm, comfortable garden and pool at Billie's home.

Write two short descriptive paragraphs that show the contrast between these places.

Paragraph 1:

Describe life at Auntie Patience's home.

Think about:

- the crowded house
- the crying baby
- the squabbling cousins
- the lack of food
- the heat and noise

Use sensory details (what Jabu might see, hear, smell, or feel).

Paragraph 2:

Describe Billie's garden and swimming pool.

Think about:

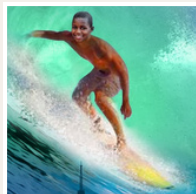
- the tropical plants
- the pool water
- birds calling overhead
- the peaceful garden
- the food Jabu receives while working

Again, use sensory details to help the reader imagine the setting.

Tip:

Try to make the mood and atmosphere in each paragraph feel different so the contrast between the two places is clear.

SPECTACULAR WIPE-OUTS



Read or listen to the **thirteenth chapter** of *Trainsurfer*.

Learning intention:

We are learning to identify how a character's emotions change during a story and explain how events influence those changes.

Activity: Mapping Jabu's Emotional Journey

In Chapter 13, Jabu experiences many different emotions as events unfold. His feelings change as he faces fear, excitement, disappointment, and hope.

Draw a simple line graph showing Jabu's emotions as the chapter progresses.

1. Draw a horizontal line representing the timeline of the chapter.
2. On the vertical axis, label emotions from very negative at the bottom to very positive at the top.
3. Plot points on the graph to show how Jabu feels during key moments in the chapter.

You could include moments such as:

- Riding to the beach feeling excited
- Standing at the water remembering his near drowning
- Learning to surf and improving over time
- Billie's father discovering the truth
- Losing his job and Auntie Patience's reaction
- Surfing alone again
- Receiving Billie's letter



After completing the graph, write a short explanation answering:

- Which moment was the lowest point for Jabu?
- Which moment gave him hope again?
- Why do you think the author included both setbacks and hopeful moments in this chapter?



A DARING RESCUE

Read or listen to the **fourteenth chapter** of *Trainsurfer*.

Learning intention:

Students will identify the key events in a story and understand how they form a narrative structure.

Activity: A teacher and class interactive activity.

1. **The teacher** draws a large narrative arc (story wave) on the whiteboard with six labelled sections:

- Setup
- Initial Incident
- Rising Action
- Crisis / Climax
- Falling Action / Turning Point
- Resolution





A DARING RESCUE

2. Groups Write Events on Sticky Notes

Each group receives sticky notes. They need to write events from this list onto separate notes. Students can add extra events from the chapter.

- Kyle and Josh looking for waves after exams.
- Murky water and shark warnings.
- Billie appears with Jabu.
- Kyle's jealousy and tension.
- Surf rivalry between Kyle and Jabu.
- Argument about the surfboard.
- Competitive wave riding.
- Kyle punches Jabu.
- Shark appears and knocks Kyle off his board.
- Kyle is in danger.
- Jabu rescues Kyle by catching a wave and dragging him away.
- Back on the beach.
- Kyle apologises.
- Jabu forgives him.
- Agreement to surf together.

Groups discuss where each moment should go on the wave.

3. Place the Sticky Notes

One person from each group comes to the board and places their sticky notes on the big wave. (Different placements should lead to a class discussion.)

**Jabu
rescues
Kyle from
shark**

**Kyle says
sorry**



A DARING RESCUE

4. Class Discussion

Teacher then reviews the placements and asks questions like:

Understanding the structure

- Which moment do most groups think is the climax?
- Why is this the most intense moment?

Cause and effect

- What events lead up to Kyle punching Jabu?
- How does the tension build before the shark appears?

Character thinking

- What is Kyle feeling during the rising tension?
- Why does Jabu decide to rescue him?

Writer's craft

- Why do you think the author places the shark right after the punch?

5. The "Aha" Moment

Optional final question:

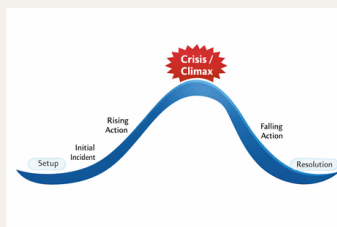
"What would happen to the story if the shark appeared at the beginning?"

(Students quickly realise that the earlier events build the tension that makes the climax powerful.)

Outcomes of this activity:

It helps students:

- see how stories are structured
- recognise how tension builds
- understand cause and effect in narrative
- analyse character motivation





SUMMER FRIENDSHIPS

Read or listen to the **fifteenth chapter** of *Trainsurfer*.

Learning intention:

We are learning to identify key moments in a chapter, explore characters' motivations, and understand how authors compress time to show important events.

Activity 1: Snapshots of Summer

This chapter moves through several important moments in a short space of time. Authors sometimes do this to show a period of life without describing every single day.

Create a storyboard showing the key moments of the summer, in correct sequence.

Choose 4–6 important scenes from the chapter and illustrate them in order.

Possible scenes you might include:

- The friends visiting Jabu's village with Christmas food and presents.
- Jabu opening the box and discovering the new surfboard.
- Kyle and Jabu surfing together over the summer.
- The conversation in the water about why they surf.
- Kyle telling his friends about the army call-up.
- The emotional goodbye before Kyle and Josh leave for training.

For each frame include:

- A drawing of the moment
- A short caption
- The emotion the characters are feeling

(Teachers could use a printable storyboard template or digital tools like Canva or StoryboardThat.)

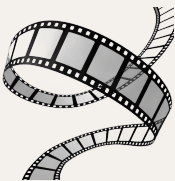
Teacher resources



Storyboard Assessment Rubric (Optional)

Teachers who wish to assess the storyboard activity may use the following rubric. It provides suggested criteria for evaluating students' understanding of key events, character emotions, and visual storytelling. The rubric can be adapted to suit individual classroom needs.

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Developing
Accuracy of Story Representation	Key events from Chapter 15 are clearly shown and in correct sequence. Characters, setting, and emotions accurately reflect the story.	Most main events are shown and mostly in order. Some details or emotions could be clearer.	Only some events shown or out of order; limited connection to the actual story.
Visual Design and Layout	Panels are clear, well organised, and visually engaging. Backgrounds, characters, and props match the setting and enhance understanding.	Panels mostly clear and logical; visuals support the story.	Panels may be unclear, cluttered, or missing key visual elements.
Text and Dialogue	Captions and speech accurately show what characters think, say, or feel. Writing is clear and correctly punctuated.	Text is mostly clear and relevant, with minor errors.	Text is unclear, incomplete, or contains frequent errors.
Effort and Presentation	Shows strong effort and attention to detail. Storyboard is neat, complete, and shows pride in work.	Good effort shown; mostly complete and tidy.	Some effort shown but rushed, incomplete, or lacks detail.



SUMMER FRIENDSHIPS

Activity 2: Character Thinking: Why Do They Surf?

During a quiet moment in the ocean, Kyle asks Jabu why he surfs. Their answers reveal a lot about their lives and dreams.

Complete the chart below.

Characters	Why they surf?	What they hope for in the future?
JABU		
KYLE		

Discuss:
How are Jabu’s reasons for surfing different from Kyle’s?
How might their backgrounds influence their dreams?
Which reason for surfing do you find most powerful, and why?

Activity 3:

Writer’s Craft Questions

This chapter covers many events from one summer quite quickly. In movies, this is sometimes shown through a montage (a series of short clips showing time passing).

Q. Why do you think the author chose to summarise this period of time instead of describing every event in detail? What effect does this have on the reader?

Foreshadowing: At the end of the chapter, the narrator hints that this happy summer happened before everything changed.

Q: What clues in the chapter suggest that difficult events may be coming later in the story?

Teacher note



Teacher Note: Historical Context for Chapters 16–17

Supporting discussion of apartheid, injustice, and moral choices

Chapters 16 and 17 explore difficult themes, including injustice under apartheid and a painful moment of betrayal between friends. While these events may feel confronting, they provide valuable opportunities for students to discuss fairness, courage, moral choices, and the impact that fear and unjust systems can have on people's decisions.

During apartheid in South Africa, laws enforced racial segregation in everyday life. One such law was the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953, which allowed public spaces such as beaches, buses, parks, and toilets to be reserved for specific racial groups. The law also stated that facilities for different races did not need to be equal, meaning that white South Africans were usually given far better access and resources than others.

This law helps explain the beach sign and the police action described in the story. Although the characters experience these events personally, they reflect a wider historical reality faced by millions of people during apartheid.

Teachers may wish to support students by discussing the historical context and encouraging empathy for the characters involved. These chapters can help students think about how unfair laws affect individuals and communities, and how people respond when faced with injustice.

Further background information:

[Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953](#)

These themes can support meaningful discussion in Year 7–8 classrooms when explored with guidance and sensitivity, helping students develop both historical understanding and empathy.

BEHIND BARS



Read or listen to the **sixteenth chapter** of *Trainsurfer*.

Learning intention:

Students will explore how characters' choices reveal themes of betrayal, trust, and injustice, and develop empathy by considering events from different perspectives.

Activity

1. Identify moments in the chapter

In small groups, students identify two examples of betrayal in the chapter.

Possible examples may include:

- Kyle denying that he knows Jabu when questioned by the police
- The unjust arrest of Jabu under apartheid laws

2. Identify moments of trust or humanity

Students then find one moment in the chapter that shows trust, kindness, or shared humanity.

For example:

- The earlier friendship and brotherhood between the boys while surfing
- Jabu's willingness to speak kindly to Father in the prison cell

3. Create a T-Chart

Students draw a T-chart titled Betrayal vs Trust.

On one side they list examples of betrayal from the chapter.

On the other side they list moments of trust, kindness, or loyalty.

4. Discuss

As a class, discuss what these moments reveal about:

- human nature
- fear and moral choices
- the unfairness of apartheid society

Teachers may guide students to consider how difficult situations can influence people's decisions.

INNOCENCE LOST



Read or listen to the **seventeenth chapter** of *Trainsurfer*

Learning intention: We are learning to recognise how unfair treatment affects people and to respond with empathy.

Activity:

- **Teacher's note:** Read a short excerpt. (If you have sensitive children, choose a less confronting excerpt than the sjambok scene, e.g. Jabu standing up for himself before the punishment).
- In groups or individually, students complete a "Think–Feel–Wonder" table:

THINK

What do you think is happening in this chapter?

- What are the key events?
- Why do you think the police treated Jabu this way?
- What do you think this moment means for him as a character?
- (Write 3–4 sentences.)

FEEL

How do you think Jabu feels during and after this scene?

- What emotions might he have (e.g. fear, anger, sadness, courage)?
- How would you feel in his place?
- What does this make you feel about the world of the story?
- (Use feeling words and explain why.)

WONDER

What do you wonder after reading this chapter?

- What questions do you have about fairness, justice, or courage?
- What might happen next for Jabu?
- What could the author be wanting readers to think about?

(Write at least two thoughtful "I wonder..." statements.)

DODGING THE COPS



Read or listen to the **eighteenth chapter** of *Trainsurfer*

Learning intention: We are learning to understand how courage and loyalty guide Jabu and Billie's choices, even when authority is unjust.

Quick Recap and Discussion (5–10 mins)

Ask:

- How was Jabu treated in Chapter 17?
- What kind of courage does it take to go back and help the children after everything he's been through?

Activity: Group Role Play (25–30 mins)

Setup:

Students work in small groups. Each group is assigned one moment from Chapter 18 — for example:

- Jabu decides to go back for the street kids.
- Billie hesitates when he calls for help.
- The children panic when they see the police.
- Billie faces the police questioning her car.

Each group:

1. Re-reads that short section to remind themselves what happens.
2. Discusses the choices the characters had.
 - What could they have done differently?
 - What risks did they face?
 - What values guided their actions?
3. Creates a short, one-minute re-enactment or tableau showing that decision moment and its emotional weight. (They don't need props or accents — just gestures and tone.)

Then, each group performs or presents briefly, followed by one discussion question:

"What kind of courage did we just see?"

4. Reflection

Students complete a short written reflection or discussion board post:

"Which character showed the greatest courage in Chapter 18 — and why?"

Encourage them to include what it cost the character and why it mattered.



AN EXTRAORDINARY DREAM

Read or listen to the **nineteenth chapter** of *Trainsurfer*

Learning intention:

We are learning to understand how dreams and imagination can inspire real change.

Quick Warm-Up – Dreams that Push Us Forward

Ask:

- Why do you think the chapter is called “An Extraordinary Dream”?
- Have you ever had a dream (real or goal-type) that made you think differently afterward?

Record a few ideas on the board linking dream → action → change.

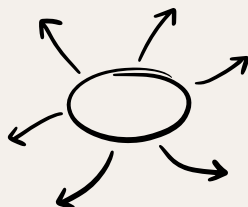
Activity 1: From Dream to Reality Mind-Map

Students create a mind-map showing how Kyle’s dream leads to real-world action.

Centre bubble: Kyle’s Dream

Radiating bubbles:

- What he sees in the dream
- What he feels
- What he realises about himself
- What actions he takes afterward
- How others respond (Billie, Josh, Jabu)
- The bigger message about hope or redemption



Encourage use of colour or small sketches (surfboards, waves, hearts, light) to express the emotional shift from fear and guilt → hope and purpose.

Activity 2: Reflection – Personal Connection

Writing prompt:

“Kyle’s dream gives him a new purpose. What’s something you’d like to do that could help others or make the world fairer? How could a dream or idea become real action?”

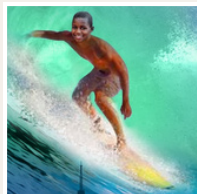
This can be shared aloud or collected privately — depending on your class dynamic.

Optional Creative Extension:

Art Connection: Students illustrate one symbol from Kyle’s dream (the shepherd, the light, the waves) and label what it represents.

Values Link: Discuss how dreams in stories can represent conscience, growth, or calling.

WILDCARD



Read or listen to the **twentieth chapter** of *Trainsurfer*

Learning intention:

We are learning to recognise how bias and perception can affect fairness and to consider how Jabu responds with courage.

Starter Discussion:

Ask:

- What does the word “wildcard” mean in a competition?
- Why do you think Kyle wanted Jabu to have this chance?
- What does Jabu’s performance show about who he is — not just as a surfer, but as a person?

Activity 1: “You Be the Judge!”

Students take the role of competition judges to explore bias and fairness.

Step 1:

Give each group or pair a short description of Jabu’s performance (from the summary or a short passage).

Step 2:

Groups create a judge’s scorecard with three categories:

- Skill (technique, risk, flow)
- Style (creativity, individuality)
- Sportsmanship (attitude, respect, effort)

SCORE		
		✓
		✗

They award scores out of 10 and justify each choice in a few words.

Step 3:

- Compare group results. Discuss:
- How do our scores differ from the “official” judges’?
- What might cause people to score someone unfairly? (Bias, different expectations, prejudice, etc.)
- How could the competition be fairer next time?

Optional: Have students rewrite the commentator’s summary as if they were a fair, open-minded judge praising Jabu’s innovation.

WILDCARD**Activity 2: Reflection**

Writing prompt:

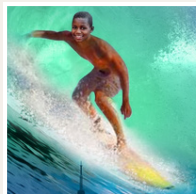
“What does Jabu’s experience in the competition teach us about fairness and perseverance?”

Encourage mention of how he responds to being judged unfairly and what that reveals about his character.

Extension or Creative Option:

Poster Idea:

Design a mini event poster for The Wildcard Open with a slogan celebrating fairness or individuality — e.g. “Ride Your Own Wave” or “Fair Play in Every Break.”





FORGIVENESS

Read or listen to the **twenty-first chapter** of *Trainsurfer*

Learning intention: We are learning to understand how forgiveness can change relationships and help people move forward.

Starter Discussion:

Discuss:

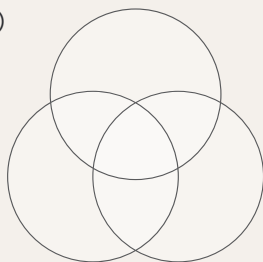
- Why can it be difficult to forgive someone who has hurt us?
- Why might Jabu find it especially hard to forgive Kyle?
- What do you think Kyle needed most in this moment?

(Record key ideas such as guilt, courage, understanding, healing.)

Activity: Two Sides of the Story – Emotion Map

Draw a Venn diagram to compare the characters' feelings.

- Kyle: guilt, shame, hope
- Jabu: anger, hurt, release
- Both: relief, peace, respect



Add words or short evidence from the text to support your ideas.

Reflection:

Question:

Why is forgiveness powerful? What changes for both Jabu and Kyle?

Write 3–4 sentences explaining your thinking.

Optional Extension:

Symbol Drawing: Create an image that represents forgiveness.

- Values Link: How does forgiveness help people relate to others?
- Soundtrack Moment: Choose a song that matches this scene and explain why.



THE BIG IDEA

Read or listen to the **twenty-second chapter** of *Trainsurfer*

Learning intention: We are learning to explore how choices and values shape our future.

Starter Discussion:

- What is Kyle's "big idea"?
- Why is Jabu's decision difficult?
- What does this moment show about friendship?

(Record key ideas such as opportunity, loyalty, sacrifice, future.)

Activity: Stay or Go?

Create a simple T-chart for Jabu's decision. Add:

- at least 2 reasons on each side
- one piece of evidence from the text

Finish with:

What do you think Jabu should do?

Take the Scholarship	Stay and Help with the Project
+ Better surf training and future career	+ Help friends build something meaningful
+ Travel overseas	+ Make a difference for others
– Might feel he's abandoning Kyle and the kids	– Miss personal opportunity
– Could lose contact with his new community	– Might regret giving up the scholarship





THE BIG IDEA

Reflection:

Prompt:

If you were Jabu, what would you choose, and why?

Write 3–4 sentences explaining your decision, using ideas from the story.

Optional Creative Extension – Mural Design

Learning Intention: We are learning to use art to express hope and belonging.

Kyle mentions painting murals on the walls of the house.

Students design a mural concept for one of the rooms:

- Symbols or images representing freedom, friendship, courage, or new beginnings.
- Include a short explanation:
- “My mural shows ... because ...”

You could display their sketches as a “Kids Surf 4 Life Gallery” on the classroom wall or Canva board.



KIDS SURF 4 LIFE



Read or listen to the **twenty-third chapter** of *Trainsurfer*. You will need to look back through the novel to find evidence for your answers.

Learning intention: We are learning to track how a character's situation changes across a story.

Activity: From Problem to Resolution

This chapter brings several storylines together.

Students complete the chart by:

- finding one or more examples from earlier in the book that show each problem
- then showing how that problem is resolved in this chapter, with evidence

Use brief notes or short quotations.

Problem/ Situation earlier in the story	Evidence from earlier in the book	Resolution/What changes in this chapter	Evidence from this chapter
Jabu feels like he doesn't fully belong			
Jabu is torn about whether to take the scholarship and leave			
Thandi the rhino's future is uncertain			
Philemon and Thabo were living on the streets and not safe			





KIDS SURF 4 LIFE

Activity continued:

Reflection:

Q. Which storyline changes the most across the book? Explain your thinking.

Q. Does Jabu’s belonging come from one moment — or lots of small ones building over time?

Activity 2: Looking Ahead

Some storylines are still developing. As you continue reading, keep an eye on these:

Unresolved Question / Event

What happens later?	Add when you find out what happens
Jabu doesn’t know where Vusi and Sipho are	
Can you spot the twist in the last chapter?	





THE FLYING GECKO

Read or listen to the **twenty-fourth chapter** of *Trainsurfer*.

Learning intention: We are learning to identify how a key moment reveals deeper ideas about what it means to succeed.

Activity 1: What Does Winning Look Like?

In this chapter, there are different kinds of “winning.”

Divide your page into two sections:

Winning on the Outside

What does winning look like on the surface?

(Think about the competition, results, and what people can see.)

Winning on the Inside

What does winning look like on a deeper level?

(Think about characters, choices, relationships, and personal growth.)

Add examples from the chapter to each side using words, phrases, or simple sketches.

At the bottom of your page, complete this sentence:

The real winner in this chapter is... because...

Activity 2: Freeze Frame – The Moment That Matters Most

Choose one moment from the chapter that you think is the most important.

You might choose:

- The reunion with Vusi and Sipho
- Alexia’s final wave
- The interview with Jabu
- The community watching on TV

Create a detailed freeze frame (a single scene) of this moment.

Include:

- What we can see (characters, setting, action)
- What we can hear (a line of dialogue or narration)
- What the characters might be thinking or feeling

Under your image, explain:

Why is this the most important moment in the chapter in your opinion?

Reflection: Alexia wins a trophy, but what bigger “win” does this moment represent for people in South Africa? Think about fairness, opportunity, and who was allowed to compete in the past.



A CELEBRATION FEAST

Read or listen to the **twenty-fifth chapter** of *Trainsurfer*.

Learning intention: We are learning to reflect on how a character's journey shows growth, belonging, and hope for the future.

Activity 1: Jabu's Journey – A River of Change

Create a river to represent Jabu's journey through the story.

Along the river, include:

- The source (where his journey begins)
- Key moments and turning points along the way
- Where the river flows to in this final chapter

You can add:

- Rapids or obstacles (challenges he faced)
- Calm sections (moments of safety or belonging)
- Other streams joining (people who helped him along the way)

At the end of the river, show where Jabu is now.

Under your diagram, explain:

How has Jabu changed from the beginning of the story to the end?

Activity 2: What Makes a Family?

This chapter shows that family can be formed through care, support, and shared experiences.

Create a brainstorm or sketchnote around the question: What makes a family?

Think about:

- How people treat each other
- How they support one another
- How they live and grow together

Then answer:

How is Green Room House like a family for Jabu and the others?



A CELEBRATION FEAST

Activity 3: A Good Start

In this chapter, Jabu reflects that they have made “a good start.”

What does he mean by this?

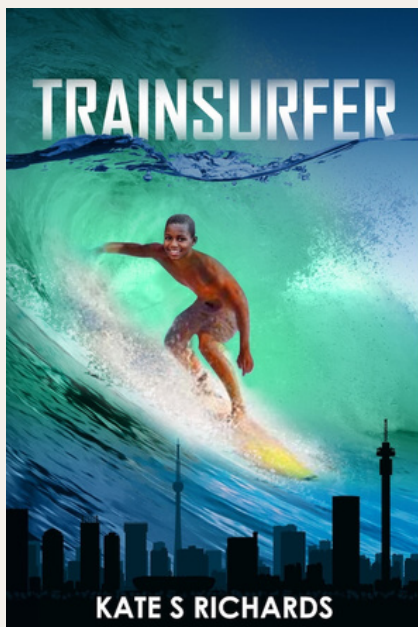
Write a short response explaining:

- What has improved in the characters’ lives
- What challenges still exist
- Why this moment is still hopeful

Reflection

At the end of the story, Jabu thinks he might have seen Ice.

Do you think it really was Ice? What might this moment suggest about second chances?



Teacher resources

ASSESSMENT IDEAS

Beyond the activities included in the chapter-by-chapter lessons, teachers may wish to use the following tasks as informal or formal assessments.

Reading Response

Students demonstrate understanding of the novel by:

- identifying themes in the story
- explaining how characters change during the novel
- interpreting figurative language such as metaphors and similes
- making connections between the story and real-world experiences

This may be assessed through:

- written responses
- discussion contributions
- reading journals

Creative Response

Students create a response inspired by the novel. Examples include:

- a diary entry written from a character's perspective
- a visual artwork representing a theme or scene
- a poem inspired by the ocean or surfing imagery in the story
- a short narrative imagining an additional scene in the story

Assessment may consider:

- understanding of character and theme
- creativity and originality
- clarity of ideas

Group Discussion

Students demonstrate their understanding by participating in discussions about:

- the challenges faced by the main character
- the importance of family and belonging in the story
- the symbolism of the ocean and surfing

Teachers may assess:

- engagement in discussion
- ability to explain ideas
- ability to listen and respond to others

Teacher resources

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Beyond the activities included in the chapter-by-chapter lessons, teachers may wish to use the following tasks as extension activities. For students who would like to explore the novel further, the following activities can deepen understanding.

Character Study

Choose one character from the novel and explore:

- their motivations
- their challenges
- how they change throughout the story

Students may present their ideas through:

- a written character profile
- a short presentation
- a creative diary written from the character's perspective

Theme Exploration

Identify one of the major themes of the novel, such as:

- belonging
- identity
- resilience
- friendship

Students write a short explanation of how this theme is shown through events in the story.

Creative Writing

Students write a short story inspired by the themes of the novel.

Ideas might include:

- a new surfing adventure
- a story about finding belonging in a new place
- a character facing a challenge and learning from it

Encourage students to include descriptive language and imagery.

Visual Interpretation

Students create a visual representation of the novel, such as:

- a book cover redesign
- a scene illustrated from the story
- a symbolic artwork representing a key theme

Students may explain their creative choices.

Teacher resources

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Kia ora

I hope you and your students enjoy exploring *Trainsurfer* through these chapter-by-chapter lessons.

The activities are designed to encourage thoughtful reading, discussion, and creative responses to the story. Please feel free to adapt the lessons to suit the needs, interests, and abilities of your students.

These resources support learning aligned with the New Zealand Curriculum – English and are intended to be used flexibly in different classroom contexts.

If you have questions, feedback, or ideas for how the resource might be used in the classroom, you are very welcome to get in touch.

Best wishes for many engaging reading conversations in your classroom.

Ngā mihi

Kate S Richards

Thank you for sharing stories with young readers and for supporting New Zealand writing.