



# TEACHERS' RESOURCES

## RECOMMENDED FOR

Lower secondary

## CONTENTS

1. Plot summary	1
2. About the author	2
3. Introduction	2
4. Pre-reading	2
5. During reading	3
6. After reading	4

## KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English, Humanities and Social Sciences
- **General capabilities:** Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability, Ethical Understanding, Intercultural Understanding

## PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia

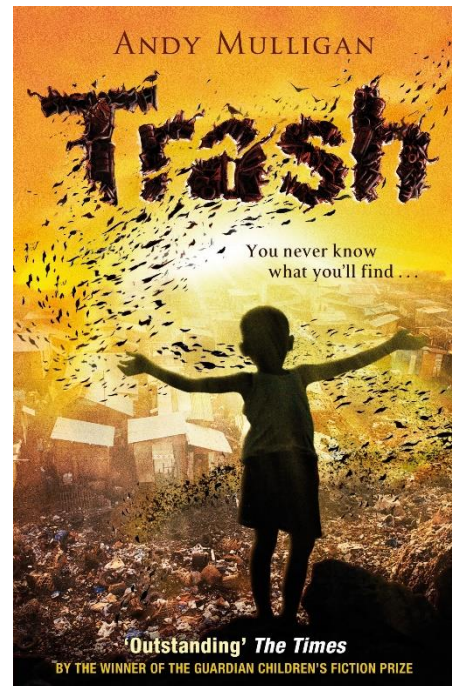
## PUBLICATION DETAILS

ISBN: 9781909531130 (paperback);  
9781409098119 (ebook)

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

Visit [penguin.com.au/teachers](http://penguin.com.au/teachers) to find out how our fantastic Penguin Random House Australia books can be used in the classroom, sign up to the teachers' newsletter and follow us on [@penguinteachers](https://twitter.com/penguinteachers).

Copyright © Penguin Random House Australia 2010



## Trash

Andy Mulligan

## PLOT SUMMARY

Raphael lives on a dumpsite, eking out a living sifting through rubbish. One unlucky-lucky day, he makes an extraordinary and deadly discovery. Now he and his two friends, Gardo and Rat, are wanted by the corrupt forces that run the city and will stop at nothing to get back what they've lost.

From the slums to the mansions of the elite, it's going to take all of their quick-thinking and fast-talking to stay ahead. And to stay alive.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy Mulligan was brought up in the south of London. He worked as a theatre director for ten years before travels in Asia prompted him to retrain as a teacher. He has taught English and drama in India, Brazil, the Philippines and the UK. He now divides his time between London and Manila.

## INTRODUCTION

*Trash* is a gem of a book for an English teacher – the kind that doesn't come around that often. It's a fast-paced thriller with a highly driven plot that swirls along with increasing fervour building to a beautiful climax; it's told by multiple equally loveable narrative voices; offers itself to a range of moral discussions and could inspire some wonderful creative work from the students. It would be equally suitable for a class of keen readers as it would for those more hesitant readers who enjoy a fast moving plot and not too many words on a page. It twists and turns around a unique and breath-taking story of unlikely heroes who eventually win the day in the most imaginative way possible. It's certainly short enough for most classes to read within lessons but I also doubt that there would be many students who would need much pushing to read a few chapters on their own at home.

These resources are pitched at Year 8 but an enthusiastic Year 7 class would do equally well with the book.

## PRE-READING

The best way into this book is simply to start reading. The opening narrative voice (that of Raphael) is instantly engaging and sets the class up for a good discussion of what he may have found on page 5 with the narrative hook: "Then one day I did." Here would be a good place to stop reading and explore the possibilities of what might be found on a dumpsite to change the life of someone like Raphael. (They should not have seen the blurb on the back as this tells us it's a key.)

Homework could also be set do research on child labour (both historically and in the present) and especially on children working on dumpsites. Mulligan was living in Manila when he wrote this book and it was a visit to the dumpsite in Manila known as Tondo (or "Smokey Mountain") that inspired this story but there are dumpsites where children work to reclaim and sell rubbish for recycling all over the world. There is indeed a school at Tondo created by a British woman – Jane Walker – who has put her heart and soul into changing the lives of these children and students could research that (possibly later during reading) as well.

Show some images of dumpsites, of slums, of children working on dumpsites (perhaps with a suitable moving soundtrack playing accordingly) and ask children to imagine what it would be like to work on a dumpsite. If they have done the homework research suggested above they should have a better idea of what the conditions might be like.

## Activities

There are videos on YouTube (search for 'children on dumpsites') and plenty of images on the net

- Give each student a pile of post-it notes and ask them to write down one idea per post-it note in response to the question: what would it be like to work on a dumpsite day after day?
- After two minutes of individual thinking, ask them to join with three or four other students to share and organise their ideas. They should group them together as they see fit, placing them on the table so that they can see all their ideas organised appropriately.
- After this give them a set of (different coloured) post-it notes to give each group of ideas a title.
- You can now get the groups to share their titles and ideas keeping notes on the board if appropriate.

They should now have a range of ideas that have been suitably organised. This could lead to a range of writing activities: a diary entry of a dumpsite worker; an informative leaflet about children who work on dumpsites; a persuasive letter or speech to stop child labour on dumpsites or any other activity the teacher sees fit.

1. "... maybe one day you'll find 'something nice'.  
Oh Yes.

Then one day I did.'

*Trash* revolves around a group of boys who work on a dumpsite sifting through the trash to collect things that may have some value. Raphael tells us about this work in the first two pages of the novel. Discuss with a partner what Raphael might find that would be a life-changing discovery.

Share your ideas with the class and imagine how these different scenarios might play out for someone like Raphael.

2. Many of us think that child labour is mostly a thing of the past. Research child labour and especially situations where children work on dumpsites to collect trash for selling/recycling. You might like to focus on working children or on life in the dumpsites.



3. Once you have done your research, your teacher will give you time to look at some images and/or videos of children working on dumpsites. After this you will write down all your thoughts and ideas about what life must be like for children who work and live in these conditions. Write one idea per post-it note.
  - Now join with 3/4 other students to share your ideas. Organise them into groups and lay them on the table so that you can all see all your ideas clearly.
  - Give each group of ideas a title.
  - Now share some of your ideas with the whole class.
4. You now have a chance to do some writing. You could choose one of these tasks or your teacher might choose one for you:
  - Write a diary entry for a child who works on the dumpsite
  - Write a leaflet persuading people to donate money to help children who work on dumpsites to gain an education
  - Write a persuasive letter to the government to persuade them to change the lives of these children

## DURING READING

### Characters and narrative voices

The book has a range of loveable characters who sew together the story. Once the students have read a few of the chapters written by different voices, ask them to select a character in whom they are interested. They should look for clues as to what is said about that character and how that character's voice is unique. They could create a list or a mind-map of the clues they have gathered about that character and then join with another student who has selected the same character. This could lead to a range of activities on examining characters and how they are created and contrast with each other. What makes each character unique? How is that conveyed to us? Less able students might be more comfortable making more overt distinctions like the ones between children and adults, good and bad characters but more able students might get a great deal out of examining the three protagonists and how they contrast with and complement each other, what their roles are within the group and how they rely on each other for accomplishing different tasks. This could lead to some cross-curricular work on friendships and how they work.

### Structure

The book is neatly divided into five parts, which can also make less able readers feel like they are making rapid progress as each part is quite short, and, of course, each part is neatly divided into chapters told by different narrative voices. There is a very clear structure to the book and it is mostly chronological. Discuss the strengths of this kind of structure: how does it contribute to the pace and excitement of the narrative? Students could be asked to create a diagram of some sort. I am fond of tension graphs that are neatly divided into different parts and clearly annotated to examine how and where tension is created. The possibilities for a graph or diagram plotting the story, who it is told by and where tension increases and relaxes are plentiful.

### Writer's craft

Students could then examine how tension is created at points that they have identified: look at what happens to sentence structure and vocabulary choices. Some tense moments are highly energised (like when the hundreds of children take to the streets to save the boys from the police) and some are quite still and anxious (like when the boys are working out the book code). This could, perhaps, lead to a writing exercise where students are challenged to build tension using some of the techniques Mulligan employs in *Trash*.

### Style and structure

Both these exercises should prepare them for some independent work on structure and tension when they come to the final few chapters where the boys tell the story together. They could examine how this contributes to the climax as well as looking at how the climax occurs at the onset of the typhoon that has been threatening throughout the narrative. This could be used to introduce the technique of pathetic fallacy and how the climax in the weather pattern supports the story. Whilst examining techniques, the class could examine how the dramatic irony in Part 5, Chapter 2 (where Mulligan allows us to realise that the money is in the grave before the boys do) draws us further in to this already very exciting point in the narrative.

### Activities

1. Read the first five chapters told by Raphael. Work with a partner to make a list of some of the key things we learn about him. You could organise your information in the way that suits you best but try to include some ideas about the following:
  - What he says about himself
  - What he says to others
  - What he does



- His appearance
- The kind of language he uses
- His relationships with others

What kind of a picture are you getting of this character so far? Do you like him and want him to succeed? Why is this? How does Mulligan make us have certain feelings about Raphael?

2. Continue reading some of the chapters told by some of the other characters. Even though this book is really all written by Andy Mulligan, he changes the way he writes for each character. This is called narrative voice. Try to identify some of the characteristics of each voice. You could create a table to compare the voices like this:

Character	What we know or can infer about him/her	His/her voice – the way s/he tells the story
Raphael	Works on dumps; hopeless before finding the key; innocent and street-smart at the same time; confident at times but reliant on Gardo; ready to fight for what he wants; realistic brave and willing to take a chance.	Talks directly to us like we are with him on his adventure; uses his own dialect sometimes; very honest about his feeling and experiences; sometimes uses quite a child-like register; switches between past and present tense.

**Extension task:** collect evidence for some of your statements about each character and add this to your table.

3. As you continue to read, create a chart on which you can monitor the structure of the book. A graph might work best so that you can plot where the tension increases and you can use different colours for each narrative voice. You might prefer to keep a table in which you can record what happens in each chapter and who tells the story. Try to identify the mini-climaxes throughout the book and why each character tells that part of the story.
4. Select one of the events in the story where you feel that tension is at a high point. Examine the way that this part of the story has been told. How does the writer manipulate us to increase the tension? What kind of sentence structures does he use? What kind of situations lead to tension? Look at how information is revealed to us and whether this has an effect on how tense we feel about the events we read about.

5. Once you have identified some of the techniques that Mulligan uses to create tension, have a go at writing a bit of narrative to create tension using the same techniques. You might choose to create your piece of writing based around some of the events in *Trash* or you might want to write your own narrative. The important thing is to demonstrate some of the techniques that Mulligan uses in *Trash*.
6. As you get towards the end of the novel, the narrators start to tell the story together. How does this increase the tension? In pairs try to identify some of the techniques that Mulligan uses in any chapter from Part 5 to maximise our interest in final few chapters of the novel.

## AFTER READING

### From page to screen

In many ways, *Trash* lends itself very persuasively to being turned into a film. The exciting narrative and the number of highly visual scenes are calling out to be put on screen. Students could select one of the highly visual scenes from this list or from elsewhere in the book:

- The scene in the corridors of the prison
- The scene where the street children take to the streets to protect the boys from the police
- The scene at the graveyard
- The typhoon of money
- Arriving in paradise

More able students could attempt to write pages for a screen play, describing images sound and camera effects between dialogue. Less able students could create a storyboard of how they would film the scene for maximum impact.

### Themes

The book raises a number of questions about morals: the police and government in the book are corrupt and greedy; the boys do a number of 'bad' things to achieve their final goal, which is ultimately a very good thing. A number of discussions about when or if it is right to do wrong or about working against 'the law' could be introduced. At the end, they give most of the money back to the people from whom it was stolen; students could consider other creative possibilities as to how that money might have been distributed amongst the people or what they would have done with it.



### Alternate ending

Mulligan said he knew the end of this book before he knew the beginning. Discuss with the class whether there could be other ways that the book might have ended – perhaps incorporating some of their ideas from the above suggestions. Students could be challenged to write an alternate ending that still shows understanding of the book and the writer’s intentions. They should be able to explain why their ending is appropriate for the book.

### Activities

- Now that you have read the whole novel, you probably have a favourite scene or at least a scene that you could really picture as part of a movie. It might be one of these:
  - The corridors of the prison
  - The scene where the street children take to the streets to protect the boys from the police
  - The scene at the graveyard
  - The typhoon of money
  - Arriving in paradise

Imagine you are in charge of turning this scene into a scene for the film. You can create a storyboard where you illustrate and label what you would like in each frame, including notes about camera angles, sound, dialogue and editing. You could also attempt to write the screenplay for this scene. This means you need to take what is written in the book and rewrite it for a movie director. You will include dialogue, notes on how you imagine camera angles, sound and editing to work.

- Moral Discussion:** In many ways the boys go against the law to achieve their final goal in where they return the money to the people it was initially stolen from. Did they do this the right way? How

else might it have been done? What role does the weather play in this part of the novel? Is it fair to just leave it up to chance like that?

You might like to do some research on corruption. What is this? In what ways is corruption evident in the police and government in *Trash*. What could be done about this? Are there countries where this sort of thing goes on all the time?

- Alternate Ending:** Now that you’ve discussed some ideas about how else the boys could have distributed the money, it’s your turn to write an alternate ending to the novel. You must still show sensitivity to the novel (for example, it wouldn’t be appropriate for Raphael to simply take all the money for himself and run off to start a casino or something silly like that).
- Hot-seating:** The boys and Pia finally make it to paradise at the end. Work in groups and take turns to hot-seat each character after they have arrived. Each member of your group gets a turn to be in role as one character. The others must ask him or her questions about their adventure, their feelings about it and their hopes for the future. Some questions to get you started:
  - When were you most afraid during your adventure?
  - When did you truly believe your plan might work?
  - Was there a time when you didn’t know if you could trust your allies?
  - What are you most excited about in your future?
  - Describe life on the dumps
  - Describe Sampalo



## ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
Trash	Andy Mulligan	9781909531130	7-9	\$17.99		
The Boy with Two Heads	Andy Mulligan	9780552573474	7-9	\$17.99		
<b>TOTAL</b>						

PLEASE NOTE THAT PRICES ARE RECOMMENDED RETAIL ONLY AND MAY HAVE CHANGED SINCE THE TIME OF PRINTING.  
PRICES ARE GST INCLUSIVE.

NAME: _____ SCHOOL: _____ ADDRESS: _____ STATE: _____ POSTCODE: _____ TEL: _____ EMAIL: _____ ACCOUNT NO.: _____ PURCHASE ORDER NO.: _____	PLEASE SEND ORDER FORMS TO YOUR LOCAL EDUCATION SUPPLIER.
--	---

