

# Neighbours, Asia/Pacific: Junior Secondary English, Year 7

## *Helping hands*

This unit, *Helping hands*, explores fiction, non-fiction and multi-modal texts related to the 2004 Asian tsunami and its tragic aftermath. Texts used include the young adult novel *The Killing Sea* by Richard Lewis, the picture book *The Day of the Elephant* by Barbara Kerr Wilson and Frané Lessac, the memoir *Hands Across the Waters* by Peter Baines, non-fiction books *The Asian Tsunami 2004* by John Townsend and *Surviving Tsunamis: Children's true stories* by Kevin Cunningham, and a traditional Thai folktale, 'Makato and the Cowrie Shell'.

### Focus

**This unit provides opportunities to explore the ideas that:**

- hazards are natural and steps can be taken to prevent them from becoming a disaster. They have the potential to become disasters when they occur near a major human settlement
- disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis receive great media attention, especially when dramatic images are available. However, there is often little follow-up on recovery
- the media shows cultural bias when reporting on disasters in foreign countries
- the later examination of reports and rumours around disasters is a necessary process
- life saving acts of heroism can also be life changing for the hero
- our responsibility to help our neighbours during disasters should continue after disasters have passed
- folk tales from around the world explore universal themes of human experience and show the values of the culture that created them.

# Australian Curriculum: English

The general capabilities emphasised in the unit of work, *Helping hands*, are literacy, information and communication technology (ICT) capability, critical and creative thinking, ethical behaviour and intercultural understanding.

This unit addresses the cross-curriculum priority *Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia*. The Australian Curriculum: English is built around the three interrelated strands of Language, Literature and Literacy. This unit of work addresses all three strands.

## Content

Students will be provided opportunities through the activities to engage with aspects of the following content descriptions.

<p><b>Language</b> Language for interaction</p>	<p>Understand how language is used to evaluate texts and how evaluations about a text can be substantiated by reference to the text and other sources (ACELA1782)</p>
<p><b>Text structure and organisation</b></p>	<p>Understand that the coherence of more complex texts relies on devices that signal text structure and guide readers, for example overviews, initial and concluding paragraphs and topic sentences, indexes or site maps or breadcrumb trails for online texts (ACELA1763)</p>
<p><b>Literature</b> Responding to literature</p>	<p>Reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others and justifying a point of view (ACELT1620)</p> <p>Compare the ways that language and images are used to create character, and to influence emotions and opinions in different types of texts (ACELT1621)</p>

<p><b>Examining literature</b></p>	<p>Recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches (ACELT1622)</p>
<p><b>Creating literature</b></p>	<p>Create literary texts that adapt stylistic features encountered in other texts, for example, narrative viewpoint, structure of stanzas, contrast and juxtaposition (ACELT1625)</p>
<p><b>Literacy</b> <b>Interpreting, analysing, evaluating</b></p>	<p>Use comprehension strategies to interpret, analyse and synthesise ideas and information, critiquing ideas and issues from a variety of textual sources (ACELY1723)</p>
<p><b>Creating texts</b></p>	<p>Edit for meaning by removing repetition, refining ideas, reordering sentences and adding or substituting words for impact (ACELY1726)</p>

# NSW 7–10 English Syllabus

Syllabus outcomes	Students learn to	Students learn about
<b>OUTCOME 1: A student responds to and composes texts for understanding, interpretation, critical analysis and pleasure</b>	1.1 respond to imaginative, factual and critical texts, including the required range of texts, through wide and close listening, reading and viewing  1.3 compose imaginative, factual and critical texts for different purposes, audiences and contexts  1.9 demonstrate understanding of the complexity of meaning in texts	
<b>OUTCOME 3: A student responds to and composes texts in different technologies</b>	3.2 respond critically and imaginatively to texts in a range of technologies, including video, computers, print and handwriting	
<b>OUTCOME 4: A student uses and describes language forms and features, and structures of texts appropriate to different purposes, audiences and contexts</b>	4.1 identify and describe the purpose, audience and context of texts	4.7 the effectiveness of specific language forms and features and structures of texts for different purposes, audiences and contexts and for specific modes and mediums  4.11 the interaction of different language modes and different media to create meaning in multimodal texts
<b>OUTCOME 5: A student makes informed language choices to shape meaning with accuracy, clarity and coherence</b>	5.1 express considered points of view in speech or writing, accurately and coherently and with confidence and fluency in rehearsed, unrehearsed and impromptu situations	5.9 the ways in which purpose, audience and context affect a composer's choices of content, language forms and features and structures of texts

Syllabus outcomes	Students learn to	Students learn about
<b>OUTCOME 6: A student draws on information, experience and ideas to imaginatively and interpretively respond to and compose texts</b>	<p>6.1 compose coherent, imaginative texts that use and explore students' own experiences, thoughts and feelings and their imaginings</p> <p>6.3 explore real and imagined (including virtual) worlds through close and wide engagement with texts</p> <p>6.5 identify the ways characters, situations and concerns in texts connect to students' own experiences, thoughts and feelings</p>	6.8 the ways 'the real world' is represented in the imaginary worlds of texts including literature, film, media and multimedia texts
<b>OUTCOME 7: A student thinks critically and interpretively about information, ideas and arguments to respond to and compose texts</b>	7.8 form an opinion about the validity or persuasiveness of texts	
<b>OUTCOME 10: A student identifies, considers and appreciates cultural expression in texts</b>	<p>10.1 recognise and consider cultural factors, including cultural background and perspective, when responding to and composing texts</p> <p>10.2 identify and explore the ways different cultures, cultural stories and icons, including Australian images and significant Australians, including Aboriginal Australians, are depicted in texts</p>	

# Teaching & learning activities

## 1. Introduce the unit with *The Day of the Elephant* and the context for *The Killing Sea*

Share-read the picture book *The Day of the Elephant*<sup>1</sup>. In a village in southern Thailand, an elephant rescues several Thai children. The book shows everyday life, including schooling, before the disaster. It describes and pictures the tsunami wave but does not show the tragic aftermath.

Discuss what students know of the 2004 Asian tsunami, often referred to as the 'Boxing Day Tsunami', which would have occurred when they were small children. Return to page 19 of *The Day of the Elephant*. Read the vivid description of the wave then examine the use of imagery and figurative language in the book, such as in the example:

***'A dark, impossibly high curling wave was rushing towards the beach.  
It was like the full moon tide magnified a thousand times.  
Everyone heard its mighty rushing ROAR.'***

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A vivid image of the wave is created in the first sentence through the use of well-chosen adjectives, an adverb and action verb used to exactly describe the look of the wave and its action. The second sentence more poetically uses simile, to create a very vivid image. The third sentence focuses on sound and uses personification.

### Approaching *The Killing Sea*

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The 'Author's Note' from *The Killing Sea*<sup>2</sup> provides a very vivid account of the tsunami. Explain how non-fiction texts often have an author's note, usually in end pages, to explain why the book was written and how it was researched. Students are going to approach this book by first reading the note at the end.

Share-read the author's note and the first paragraph of the acknowledgments following. Note in particular the fact that the author worked as a volunteer relief aid worker in Western Aceh immediately after the tsunami, which gives authenticity to his novel.

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Kerr Wilson (2005) *The Day of the Elephant*, illustrated by Frané Lessac, HarperCollins Australia, Sydney.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Lewis (2006) *The Killing Sea*, Simon & Schuster UK Ltd, London.

Have students work in pairs or small groups to search for the two similes and a metaphor used to describe the tsunami in the author's note.

Similes	Metaphor
<p><i>'... a powerful series of waves that in the deep ocean travelled as fast as a jet plane.'</i></p> <p><i>'... like a rearing snake ready to strike them'</i></p>	<p><i>'the wave train'</i></p>

Have students then find two other comparisons that are not similes but are imagery that help the reader to vividly see the size or scope of the disaster:

*'An area of seafloor the size of California sprang up'*  
*'the steep face of one of these monster waves, already taller than a coconut tree'*

and two sentences that vividly show the force of the waves.

After sharing with the class, students now move on to individual work. On a copy of the author's note text, have them underline the many strong verbs the author uses to exactly describe the action of the waves.

## Found poem activity

Have students write a 'found poem' haiku, from discussion and reading so far, to express impressions of the destructive force of nature in the 2004 Asian tsunami. To craft a 'found poem' students use words and phrases they have highlighted in the author's notes and also words and phrases from the extract from page 19 of *The Day of the Elephant*. The format is 17 syllables over three lines — five syllables, then seven syllables, then five syllables. Lines do not rhyme.

## 2. Truth and rumour, heroic elephants and real heroes

Return to the picture book *The Day of the Elephant*.

As with *The Killing Sea*, have students look for an author's note in *The Day of the Elephant*, this time at the beginning. It mentions 'reports and rumours of people being rescued by tamed elephants', and 'reports' that 'elephants of their own volition saved humans from the tsunami waves' as a basis for the book.

The book 'depicts one elephant, Mae Jabu, who collaborated with her mahout in saving children in southern Thailand.' Have students read pages 17 to 22 of the book, to note that the mahout ordering the elephant to pick up the children is not mentioned or shown in images. This can be a point to discuss the editing of narratives or recounts to suit a story, rather than remaining completely faithful to facts. Consider other contexts where narratives from real life might be 'edited', such as reality television programs, even news reports.

## 'Elephantasy'

In 2005 the website Snopes.com debunked the 'miraculous stories' that heroic elephants of their own volition saved human lives in the 2004 Asian tsunami. The site is considered reputable, and is referenced by large media organisations. On the digital whiteboard, share-read [this article](#)<sup>3</sup>, explaining and defining terms where necessary.

Discuss the difference between a rumour and a report. As a class, compile a list of attributes for each.

### Example

Rumours	Reports
Are anecdotal (from personal stories)	Are officially recorded in some way
Are unverified (meaning no one is able to confirm the truth of them)	Can be verified by witnesses or other evidence

## Heroes and Tilly Smith's story

Eleven-year-old English girl Tilly Smith was reported to have saved 100 people on a beach in Thailand by warning them that a tsunami was coming because she'd just learnt about them at school. Do students think this is a true story or an urban myth?

Share-read Tilly Smith's story in *Surviving Tsunamis: Children's true stories*<sup>4</sup> on pages 20–24. The last page has a map with the epicentre of the earthquake that generated tsunami waves, and the areas in the Indian Ocean affected. Note to students how prominent the western half of Australia is in the right-hand corner of the map: that these countries are Australia's neighbours.

Show the video [Lessons save lives: The story of Tilly Smith](#)<sup>5</sup>. Tilly Smith's parents restricted media

<sup>3</sup> Elephant rescue during tsunami, article on Snopes.com: <http://www.snopes.com/critters/defender/elephant.asp>.

<sup>4</sup> Kevin Cunningham (2011) *Surviving Tsunamis: Children's true stories*, Raintree, London.

<sup>5</sup> Tilly Smith video: <http://www.unisdr.org/we/advocate/education>.

access to their young daughter, but allowed her to be interviewed to help raise awareness about the need for disaster preparation, including education. In the clip, Tilly modestly claims that her geography teacher (also interviewed at length) is the real hero. Significant Australian aid and development is spent in the important work of educating our Asia-Pacific neighbours about natural hazards and how 'disasters' can be managed and even prevented from taking human life.

## What makes a hero?

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Writer Joseph Campbell spent his life studying and comparing the mythology of the world's cultures and thinking about their relevance to contemporary life. He was especially interested in the idea of the 'Hero's Journey'. He said, 'A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself'. He described two types of heroic deeds:

*'One is the physical deed, in which the hero performs a courageous act in battle or saves a life. The other kind is the spiritual deed, in which the hero learns to experience the supernormal range of human spiritual life and then comes back with a message.'*<sup>6</sup>

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Why is it that Tilly appears to be a hero despite her claims? Why does Tilly claim her geography teacher as the real hero? Taking into account the Campbell quote above, what sort of deed did Tilly do? Have students in pairs or small groups discuss and make notes about this, and then share their ideas with the class.

## Hands Across the Water

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Australian Peter Baines, who helped form the charity Hands Across the Water that helps Thai children orphaned by the 2004 Asian tsunami, was introduced to Thailand by his work<sup>7</sup> as a police forensic investigator in the tsunami's aftermath. His memoir *Hands Across the Water*<sup>7</sup> includes one of the most important stories he tells as a public speaker on leadership, about an old man's courage in the face of the tsunami. 'Courage for me is when you are faced with a choice and you have to make a hard decision, knowing the outcome can change, or in some instances even cost, lives' (page 161). Share-read Chapter 22, 'The race of his life'

In pairs or small groups, discuss the decision that the old man had to make: 'He was faced with a decision that no one should have to make. If he had not made that decision, all three of them would

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<sup>6</sup> Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers (1988) *The Power of Myth*, Chapter 5: 'The Hero's Adventure', Doubleday, New York, page 123.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Baines (2011) *Hands Across the Water*, Pan Macmillan, Australia.

have died. But he did have the courage to make that decision, and whilst that meant Tom died, it also meant that Aek survived.’ (page 164)

Have students write in their learning journals about the most courageous decision they (or someone among their family or friends) have made.

## **The Killing Sea**

Students will now begin to independently read *The Killing Sea*. The novel chapters alternate between the point of view of Indonesian boy Ruslan and American girl Sarah. One aim of their reading will be to consider and make notes in their journal on how the disaster has affected and will affect the different parts of Ruslan’s life. The outcome will be to write one paragraph under each of the eight parts of his life affected. Work in Teaching and learning activity 3 in this module will help prepare students for this.

	Shelter		Possessions		Emotions
	Family	Ruslan’s life How might the disaster have affected different parts of Ruslan’s life?			Food/Water
	Health		Safety		Education

As a second objective, and using the Joseph Campbell quote above, students will note Sarah’s deeds of physical courage, but above all the spiritual courage that she shows and what message it reveals to her that she brings back from her ‘hero’s journey’.

Students will ultimately write a persuasive text making close reference to the text of *The Killing Sea* to be presented as a talk: ‘The hero’s journey’.

Set aside in-class time throughout the unit for students to read *The Killing Sea* in class, and to participate in reading circle discussions with peers about how they are going with their reading and journaling, what they are enjoying and any difficulties they are having with comprehension or flagging interest.

### 3. Children of the tsunami and reporting disasters

Tilly Smith could go back to England after the tsunami, and still had her parents. What about the reality for the children, such as Ruslan, who survived but were orphaned and had to make a life in the wreckage? Carole Bellamy, UNICEF Executive Director said: 'It is hard to imagine the fear, confusion and desperation of children who have seen enormous waves wash away their worlds.'<sup>8</sup>

Share-read the section, 'Children of the tsunami' on pages 38–41 of *The Asian Tsunami 2004*. How might such a disaster affect different parts of a child's life?

Have students individually read the text 'Impacts of disasters' from *Get Connected*, Issue 10 and write a complete sentence on each of the eight affected parts of life shown.

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<sup>8</sup> Carole Bellamy quoted in John Townsend (2006) *The Asian Tsunami 2004: A huge wave kills thousands*, Raintree, London, page 40.

## Impacts of disaster

The immediate effects of a disaster are clear for all to see through the images on television — death, injuries, loss of homes and the destruction of buildings. Other social, economic and environmental impacts are less obvious and happen after the cameras have left.



**Disease:** After a disaster, tens of thousands may crowd into emergency shelters that have poor sanitation and limited clean water, food and medicine. In this setting, infectious diseases can spread quickly and add to the death toll.

### Hunger and malnutrition:

When people lose their usual way of making a living or their crops are destroyed, food becomes scarce and people experience hunger and malnutrition. Emergency rations may not last until the next harvest or until businesses get underway again.



**Infrastructure and business:** In poor countries, infrastructure (such as roads, businesses, schools and hospitals, communication and energy systems) is limited and precious. Disasters can destroy years of development work. Rebuilding these essential items is costly and slow.

experience distress. Some reactions can include crying, sadness and deep grief. Programs need to encourage increased family and community support for people affected by the crisis and help people return to a normal routine.

**Distress:** It is normal for survivors of a disaster to



**Environment:** The 2004 tsunami led to increased salinity across fertile coastal land. This would affect the land's ability to grow necessary crops. In response, aid and development organisations worked to 'wash' the fields and paddy lands to remove the salinity.

**Women and children:** The hardest hit in a disaster tend to be the poorest and most vulnerable — children, the elderly, women, and the disabled. They may require additional support and protection as part of the disaster response activities.



	<b>Shelter</b>		<b>Possessions</b>		<b>Emotions</b>
	<b>Family</b>	<b>Disasters</b> How might a disaster affect different parts of a child's life?			<b>Food/Water</b>
	<b>Health</b>		<b>Safety</b>		<b>Education</b>

**Source:** Adapted from World Vision Australia (2011) *Get Connected: Issue 10—Disasters*

## Reporting disasters

### Disaster strikes!

Lights, camera, action! It happens at least once a year. For a few brief weeks, some desperate corner of the world becomes a flurry of international activity. The TV cameras focus, satellite dishes dance with action, hotels brim with journalists and the local people are portrayed in living colour around the world — either in their misery or in a feeding line, being given an emergency meal.

Suddenly, and just as quickly, the focus shifts to another part of the world. After the most sensational part of the story is over, after the emergency rations have been given out, after the crisis has calmed, journalists pack away their cameras and notebooks and the hotels empty. The cyclone or war moves off page one and on a good day, gets a mention in the back of the paper. Public interest wanes and donations slow to a trickle.



Images of devastation by disasters, like this from the Haiti earthquake, are important to ensure media coverage.

But a year later, when the real rebuilding should be taking place, the money has dried up and only a handful of aid organisations remain. The long-term recovery process and ongoing struggles are rarely featured.

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## Disasters in the media

Disaster stories are popular with the media. However, some disasters are more popular than others. These include:

1. **Local disasters.** Smaller disasters which happen in Australia or which involve Australians are more popular than more significant disasters that occur overseas — especially in developing countries with which Australians are not familiar.
2. **Sudden or rapid-onset disasters like earthquakes and tsunamis.** Gradual and ongoing disasters like droughts, famines and land degradation receive less coverage than the more ‘spectacular’ disasters.
3. **Disasters occurring in England or the USA.** The influence of American and English media in Australia means greater coverage is given to these countries.
4. **Disasters that are sensational and include dramatic images.** The popular media prefers footage of spectacular escapes, gruesome death, heroic rescues or ‘survival against the odds’ stories. A common media saying is ‘If it bleeds, it leads.’ Major disasters and tragedies that are not filmed receive little coverage.

**Source:** World Vision Australia (2011) *Get Connected*: Issue 10—Disasters

Share-read ‘Disaster strikes!’ In pairs, students share any examples they have noticed of the international media focus when a disaster occurs, but how little is heard of the rebuilding and recovery process (perhaps prompt them to think of the Christchurch earthquakes).

Share-read ‘Reporting disasters’. Discuss the idea that disasters are more ‘popular’ or newsworthy in the Western media if they have aspects described in this list from World Vision, or correspond to other criteria for newsworthiness, such as this [newsworthiness list](#)<sup>9</sup>.

Back in their pairs, students again discuss previously mentioned disaster examples. Have them note their examples and classify them under four categories, then share with them with class.

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<sup>9</sup> ‘What makes a story newsworthy?’ from MediaCollege.com: <http://www.mediacollege.com/journalism/news/newsworthy.html>.

Local	Sudden	In UK or USA	Sensational

In pairs or small groups, have students discuss the newsworthy elements of the 2004 Asian tsunami then share their ideas with class.

Share this statement<sup>10</sup> with the class:

***‘Note that proximity doesn’t have to mean geographical distance. Stories from countries with which we have a particular bond or similarity have the same effect. For example, Australians would be expected to relate more to a story from a distant Western nation than a story from a much closer Asian country.’***

In small groups, students discuss whether they agree or disagree with this. Do they really think Australians relate more closely to stories from far-off Western nations than from our neighbours in Southeast Asia?

Turning the statement on its head and introducing a sense of moral obligation (through modality), students must now argue that ‘Australians *should* relate more closely to a news story from a much closer Asian country than a distant Western nation’. They individually write down three reasons why this should be the case.

## Modelling recounts

In ‘The lucky survivors’ section of *The Asian Tsunami 2004* (pages 22–29), the author would have sourced news articles to write one or two paragraph recounts. Point out the structure of those recounts. He has either an introductory paragraph (for Rizal and Melawati) or a topic sentence that serves to hook the reader. He then describes what happened, in Malawati’s case using an extract from *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

A short and emphatic final sentence summarises the outcome (only in the Melawati example is the style different, as it is from the *SMH*):

- **‘Amazingly, Rizal only had minor injuries.’**
- **‘The crew said Melawati cried throughout her three days aboard the trawler.’**
- **‘He probably stayed alive by drinking rainwater.’**

<sup>10</sup> As above.

- **‘Their hope paid off.’**
- **‘He was called Tsunami.’**

The original reports include interviews with people who were on the spot, if not the survivor then the rescuer, but Townsend only incorporates a quote in one of the examples.

## Research

Have students in individual work choose one of the people from the ‘The lucky survivors’ section, then search the web to find a detailed news story about that survivor. (Tip: They might use the term OR when there are different spellings of a name; for example, ‘Rizal Syahputra OR Shahputra’. Searching the person’s name with ‘tsunami’, as in ‘Melawati tsunami’, also gives good results.)

Students can then use that source material to write their own one-paragraph summary. Aim for it to sound different to Townsend’s, perhaps choosing a different angle or slant in their topic sentence and conclusion. Emphasise different information and, unlike Townsend, make sure they have a quote from the survivor or rescuer. They might also nominate a visual to go with their recount; if possible a different one from the one used by Townsend.

## Reflecting on cultural bias

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Although Townsend was very careful to include nearly all Asian people in ‘The lucky survivors’, notice how the only Westerner here gets a double page spread, ‘Steve Hunter’s story’ (on pages 26–27). Share-read this extract. In their groups, students discuss what is different about the Steve Hunter piece, then share their ideas with class. It has extensive first person quotations, a detailed account of his pain, distress, injuries and treatment, and how he is coping now. There are also two photographs, one of him looking well and relaxed, in contrast to the distressed pictures of the others, and a close-up of his injuries. Might it be true that he seems much more particularised and humanised while the Asian people seem generalised?

Have a class discussion on whether this is cultural bias — when those seen as culturally the same are considered to be of more interest to the reader.

## 4. Messages from the hero's journey

By now students should have finished reading *The Killing Sea* and completed the activity to reflect on Ruslan's life.

	Shelter		Possessions		Emotions
	Family	Ruslan's life How might the disaster have affected different parts of Ruslan's life?			Food/Water
	Health		Safety		Education

### Writing activity

Have students now refer to the following text and images from *Get Connected: Issue 10*, to complete the activity to follow, from Ruslan's point of view.

Have students imagine that the images below are actually of Ruslan's hometown two weeks after the tsunami and then two years later. Have them write entries for two weeks and two years after, as if from Ruslan's point of view in his diary.

## 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami — revisited

Two weeks after the Indian Ocean tsunami, many cities and towns were still completely devastated. Thousands of people had been killed and many more were still missing. Schools, shops, homes, transport, communication and power systems had all been destroyed.



The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami destroyed the town of Keudah on the Pennayong River in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. This photo was taken two weeks after the tsunami hit.

Two years after the tsunami, recovery and reconstruction efforts meant that communities were functioning with rebuilt schools, houses and roads. Many of the countries affected have now introduced more comprehensive disaster preparation programs and early warning systems for their people.



Two years on, this same town had been rebuilt. World Vision has worked with the local community to rebuild houses, schools and roads.

## The hero's journey and Sarah

The second objective for students reading *The Killing Sea* was to develop their talk on 'The hero's journey' for Sarah. The focus here is on the 'message' about intercultural understanding and the bias of the Western media that Sarah has brought back from her experience.

The following text references may assist in teaching — some are from Ruslan's point of view but help in understanding the realisations that Sarah makes. Some key references for Sarah's development of intercultural understanding:

Pages	Text references
4	In the opening chapter, Sarah rebels against wearing a headscarf. Her mother says that it is the local custom and that she should respect the culture of Sumatra. Sarah replies that as she is not a local, 'if they get offended, it's their problem, not mine' and that 'It's <i>their</i> turn to respect <i>my</i> culture'. Ruslan, observing, is surprised to see a teenage daughter disobey her mother in such a way.
79, 84, 92	Sarah begins to get to know the local people when she rescues an Acehnese woman, Aisyah, floating on debris into the fishermen's boat, who immediately shows care and concern for her brother, Peter. Ruslan, who is also on his way to Calang, later joins up with them and as they journey other local people join their band, including a grandmother and a mute girl.
101, 103	When Ruslan wants to leave the band to find his father, Sarah beseeches him not to go as they need his help because they are foreigners and he is the only one who can speak English. He is affected by Sarah's tears but thinks, '... some duties were higher than others. What did his father say? <i>A man's duty is first to God, and then to family, and then to those who ask for help.</i> ' However, Ruslan decides, 'But sometimes one's duty to God is exactly the same as one's duty to others. Especially, perhaps, to foreigners in one's country.'
112, 113	At the military hospital in Calang, Sarah asks the Javanese intelligence officer who is questioning her if a search party can be organised for her father. He tells Ruslan incredulously in Acehnese, 'Does she know how many people are missing? We don't have enough people to bury the dead, let alone go search for the missing.' However, Ruslan translates that they will try to find him. The officer says, 'Typical Western arrogance. Think we ought to drop everything to go look for one of their own. Do Westerners deserve something special that we don't?' Ruslan replies, 'She's alone with her sick brother and is very brave.'
130, 138	Aisyah continues to help Peter with traditional medicine, as the hospital at Calang has no medication. Sarah begins to see some benefit in having faith. They decide to go to the hospital at Meulaboh.

<b>141, 156, 157, 158– 61, 169</b>	<p>There are instances of others who help Sarah, such as the soldiers. A traumatised fisherman who had lost all his family asks her for help, some medication to help him sleep; Sarah cannot help him but reaches out to touch him. She, Peter and Ruslan are finally taken by military helicopter to Meulaboh. It is crucial that Peter get immediate help, but they are intercepted by the media wanting to get the exclusive story on Sarah and Peter Bedford until they are rescued by US marines. Officer Herzog promises they will organise a search party for her father. They find her mother's body.</p>
<b>170–73</b>	<p>There is huge media interest in the American children's story, so a single press conference is organised. Sarah asks for a scarf to cover her head and though she is dissuaded, she says, 'It's still their country. I'd like to wear one. A sign of respect.' The ship's media officer had helped her prepare a speech that she was to read out; however, she realises that the account is missing Aisyah, the mute girl, and Ruslan and she begins to tell about the brave local people who accompanied her. 'Yet a funny thing — the journalists didn't seem to care about that. They wanted more of her. Just her and Peter.' They continue to ask intrusive personal questions.</p> <p><i>Still the journalists weren't sated. They wanted to devour her with their questions. Sarah glanced out the window, wishing to be outside and alone, and saw several refugee children peering through the louvered panes. A resilient curiosity was back in their eyes.</i></p> <p><i>Another, more genuine anger rose in her. 'Why are you all so interested in me?' she said. 'We just happened to be passing by. This isn't my tragedy, the Bedford family tragedy. This is an Aceh tragedy. See these kids out there? You should be telling the world their stories, not mine.'</i></p>

Students are to write a persuasive text, of 1–2 pages in length, making close reference to the text of *The Killing Sea*, to be presented as a talk: 'The hero's journey'.

The aim is to persuade the reader that Sarah's journey of discovery was akin to the hero's journey as described by the Joseph Campbell quote:

***'One is the physical deed, in which the hero performs a courageous act in battle or saves a life. The other kind is the spiritual deed, in which the hero learns to experience the supernormal range of human spiritual life and then comes back with a message.'*<sup>11</sup>**

... that Sarah came back with a 'message' which is a valuable one for all of us to understand.

<sup>11</sup> Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers (1988) *The Power of Myth*, Doubleday, NY, Chapter 5: 'The Hero's Adventure', page 123.

## Hands Across the Water

Have students listen to parts of an [interview with Peter Baines](#)<sup>12</sup> about the aftermath of the tsunami in Thailand, and read related excerpts from his memoir *Hands Across the Water*, to write answers to the following questions.

Audio reference	Reference/students read	Question	Answer
Up to 6:59 min	Chapter 12: 'Finding Alexander', pages 94–99	How does Baines explain to his children, in a way that they could understand and relate to, why he wanted to help after the tsunami and why he was away for so long?	
8:44 min – 11:16 min	'... you got this very hard lesson in caring for people left behind ...'	How did Baines get this 'hard lesson' and how did it influence him wanting to help in Thailand?	
Up to 11:17 min	Chapter 19: 'The Home of the stream of love', mid-page 139 to mid-140	What does Hands Across the Water do?	
Up to 13:00 min	Read mid-page 191 to 192	How does Hands Across the Water look towards the future of the children and the community and focus on sustainability?	

As a point of reflection for discussion: Is Peter Baines a hero? Why?

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<sup>12</sup> ABC Interview with Peter Baines: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/lifematters/peter-baines-hands-across-the-water/2936690>.

## Makato and the Cowrie Shell

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Folk tales often involve poor people or peasants struggling with overcoming difficulty or hardship in everyday life — they invariably have a strong moral, a lesson to be learned about the consequences of human actions. While there are many similarities in folk tales from around the world because they deal with universal themes, folk tales also provide insight into the values of the culture the stories come from.

The traditional Thai folk tale ‘Makato and the Cowrie Shell’ is about a young Thai orphan who must support himself. He rises high up in society by hard work, ingenuity and showing respect to his elders and the king.

In England in the nineteenth century, Joseph Jacobs (who was born and lived in Australia until he was 18<sup>13</sup>) collected and wrote down many English folk tales including ‘Dick Whittington and his cat’,<sup>14</sup> about a young English orphan.

Have students read ‘Makato and the Cowrie Shell’ (accessible in Global Words online) and Jacobs’s version of ‘Dick Whittington’ (above) and in groups compare and contrast them. The stories are set in a similar time period, so the values of the two cultures can be compared.

Students may notice how no one is unkind to the orphan Makato, though he is expected to fend for himself, while nearly everyone is cruel to the orphan Dick, who is also expected to work to support himself. In European folk and fairy tales, orphans are invariably treated cruelly. There is no evil character in ‘Makato’. However, hard work and ingenuity is the answer to both boys’ problems.

How similar would the experience today of a Thai orphan be to Makato’s experience? How true would the experience of a contemporary English orphan be to Dick’s experience? As students have learned from Peter Baines, in Thailand, orphans without extended family are tragically still left to fend for themselves — might the folktale of ‘Makato and the Cowrie Shell’ still ring true today?

In their learning journals, students respond to these questions, referring to previously read extracts from *Hands Across the Water* (mid-page 139 to mid-140, mid page 191–92): Do you think that a Thai child in one of the Hands Across the Water orphanages might relate to and find comfort and inspiration in the story of ‘Makato and the Cowrie Shell’? Why?

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<sup>13</sup> Joseph Jacobs biography: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/jacobs-joseph-6817>.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Whittington and his cat’, Fairy tales of Joseph Jacobs: <http://www.authorama.com/english-fairy-tales-34.html>.

## Global citizenship in action

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Have students watch the video *What do you really need?*<sup>15</sup>. Students might research an aid and development organisation that works to address disasters in our neighbouring Asia-Pacific countries. Have the students organise a presentation to the school about the disaster and conduct a fundraiser to support this work. Invite a speaker from the aid and development organisation to address the school.

## For the teacher

Use a *disaster simulation game*<sup>16</sup> from the UNISDR. TVE Asia Pacific has the resource *Children of the Tsunami*<sup>17</sup>, with stories from eight children in videos. The BBC four-part series *Tsunami Prayers*<sup>18</sup> has personal stories of survival while also exploring four different faiths, and features Rizal Shaputro who appears in this unit (resources are transcripts).

*Christopher Vogler*<sup>19</sup> summarises the 12 stages of the Hero's Journey (select 'Hero's Journey' on the left). Vogler also describes the 12 stages on the *myths, dreams and symbols*<sup>20</sup> website, with scenes from *The Matrix* that appear appropriate for Year 7, though the film itself is rated M.

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<sup>15</sup> World Vision Video 'What do you really need?':

<http://www.worldvision.com.au/Learn/SchoolResources/getconnectedsupplementaryresources/GetConnectedVideos10.aspx>.

<sup>16</sup> Stop Disasters! UNISDR simulation game: <http://www.stopdisastersgame.org/en/home.html>.

<sup>17</sup> Children of the Tsunami website: <http://www.childrenoftsunami.info/index.php>.

<sup>18</sup> BBC news channel: *Tsunami Prayers*: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/4604287.stm>.

<sup>19</sup> Christopher Vogler website (follow the link 'The Hero's Journey' on the left): <http://www.thewritersjourney.com/>.

<sup>20</sup> Vogler video with schema of the 12 stages of the Hero's Journey: <http://www.mythsdreamssymbols.com/herojourney.html>.