



Hotel Grimm

Novel Study

Second Level





Background to Project

Mike Nicholson (Author) linked in with us at Lasswade Primary School during COVID! We had all been tasked to teach from home and we were looking for ways to engage our children with reading! Mike worked really hard with us to create a novel study based on his book, Catscape. Natalie Mack (DHT) created learning activities and Mike read the novel for our pupils to listen to. Jonathan Henderson (Digital Lead) developed our online resource that was accessed by children all over the world with some hits in the USA and even Peru!

Mike asked us to read another of his books, Grimm, and we thought it was great. He has reduced the word count and republished the book with a fresh new look but the same brilliant story! We love the new look and decided to work together again and set up a new novel study for August 2026! The first year will be a trial year and we look forward to feedback! Enjoy!

A message from Mike

Hi – thanks so much for taking an interest in ‘Hotel Grimm’!

This book was first published as ‘Grimm’ in 2008 and now in 2026 it’s had a refresh as ‘Hotel Grimm’.

I was keen to bring the story back for a new generation of readers. It offers an intriguing and sometimes funny mystery adventure, with the option to explore lots of other themes – prejudice, acceptance, fake news, honesty and forgiveness – the book is back as I felt having ways to talk about these things is ever-more important.

There is Background Information and FAQs at the end of this document explaining the book’s origins. There are spoilers in the background info, but it will help to explain the themes and help you explore these better.

If you or your school class have any further questions needing answered, I would be really happy to hear from you – please do get in touch through the contact form on my website

www.mikenicholson.co.uk

Do also get in touch if you want to let me know how your class is getting on and what activities you are doing as you read the book. I look forward to hearing from you.

Mike





"Mysteries abound, strands are revealed and pursued and past and present merge as a wonderfully complex jigsaw of a plot is resolved with striking pace and panache. A splendidly complex puzzle with grand characters hovering between fantasy and reality but with feet firmly rooted in relationships and loyalties..."

The School Librarian Journal

"We have used Hotel Grimm for many years as a class reader...a wonderfully intricate mystery involving fake news, relevant now more than ever. The humour and fast-paced action keep the story moving at pace. The characters launch fully-formed off the page and inhabit the classroom, giving rise to endless questions for discussion: What is fake news? Why is marketing so effective? How do we treat people with disability? Have we ever done something we've regretted? Do we really know our own grandparents? And how easy is it to misjudge other people? The story keeps you guessing up to the end, where everything dovetails nicely and you realise just how carefully the story has been pieced together."

Jack Jackman, Loretto Junior School, Edinburgh





Intended Learning

Overview

This is a novel study so is heavily English and Literacy focused. We do however think it's great to make links, extend learning, ensure relevance and have FUN, so activities and links across the curriculum will be suggested throughout. This novel study has been split in to 6 weeks- but please adapt everything for the needs of your setting and learners.

We would love feedback and suggestions, so please contact us using contact information on the last page. Review and edits will be made in light of feedback and CIC.

Learning Outcomes

Listening and Talking

As I listen or watch, I can identify and discuss the purpose, main ideas and supporting detail contained within the text, and use this information for different purposes.

LIT 2-04a

When listening and talking with others for different purposes, I can:

- share information, experiences and opinions
 - explain processes and ideas
- identify issues raised and summarise main points or findings
 - clarify points by asking questions or by asking others to say more. **LIT 2-09a**

Writing

I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience.

LIT 2-20a

Throughout the writing process, I can check that my writing makes sense and meets its purpose. **LIT 2-23a**

By considering the type of text I am creating, I can select ideas and relevant information, organise these in an appropriate way for my purpose and use suitable vocabulary for my audience. **LIT 2-26a**

Reading

I can select and use a range of strategies and resources before I read, and as I read, to make meaning clear and give reasons for my selection. **LIT 2-13a**

I can make notes, organise them under suitable headings and use them to understand information, develop my thinking, explore problems and create new texts, using my own words as appropriate.

LIT 2-15a

To help me develop an informed view, I can identify and explain the difference between fact and opinion, recognise when I am being influenced, and have assessed how useful and believable my sources are. **LIT 2-18a**

I can:

- discuss structure, characterisation and/or setting
- recognise the relevance of the writer's theme and how this relates to my own and others' experiences
- discuss the writer's style and other features appropriate to genre.

ENG 2-19a

Intended Learning

Learning Outcomes

Health and Wellbeing

I know that friendship, caring, sharing, fairness, equality and love are important in building positive relationships. As I develop and value relationships, I care and show respect for myself and others. **HWB 2-05a**

I understand that people can feel alone and can be misunderstood and left out by others. I am learning how to give appropriate support. **HWB 2-08a**

As I explore the rights to which I and others are entitled, I am able to exercise these rights appropriately and accept the responsibilities that go with them. I show respect for the rights of others. **HWB 2-09a**



Expressive Arts

Inspired by a range of stimuli, I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through drama.. **EXA 2-13a**

I have created and presented scripted or improvised drama, beginning to take account of audience and atmosphere. **EXA 2-14a**

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Many of the rights of the child are explored through this study. Here are a few key ones!



Week 1- Pre-reading: Front Cover, Blurb and Prologue



Prologue Chapter Summary

A figure emerges from a mysterious hilltop hotel at night. A cable car descends to the town. A letter is delivered- it is sealed with a sinister emblem.

Skipping Song to end the chapter.

Blurb



If you have the misfortune to spend a night at Hotel Grimm, it may be the last one you spend anywhere!

Or so the residents of Aberfintry believe...

From its vantage point high above the town, the hotel has a decades-long catalogue of dead guests and terrifying stories.

When Rory McKenna becomes an overnight advertising sensation for Zizz Cola, Hotel Grimm's mysterious owner Granville Grimm chooses Rory to give his hotel a new image. Refusal is not an option. Packed with unexpected twists, turns, and surprising allies, Rory's life is about to get very complicated. Can Zizz Boy succeed with the impossible challenge or will he become Hotel Grimm's next victim?

Vocabulary

hawsers
perched
emerged
sagging
creaked
dilapidated
clattered
creaked
precariously
clutched



Reading

Inference - Prediction

Use clues from the front cover, back cover and prologue to make predictions about Hotel Grimm.

What do you think will happen? (Plot)
Who do you think key characters will be?
Where will the story take place? (Setting)
What genre is this book?
Do you think you will enjoy this book? Why?



What contributes to your thoughts? Justify your answers and use evidence from the text.

These predictions will use your inference skills.

Characters

Keep a character profile- how does this develop throughout the book?

Do characters change? How?

Draw/design a character display for your classroom so you can visualise them.



Plot

Look at the evidence board on the back of the book...why don't you also keep a list of clues! Add important names, dates and headlines as you read the book.



Metaskills

Curiosity

Collaborating





Week 1- Pre-reading: Front Cover, Blurb and Prologue Continued

Skipping Song

This book has really fun features at the start of some chapters. These enhance the story, build atmosphere or sometimes hint at what's to come. Each of these has an illustration below it, which gives a clue to something that appears or happens in the chapter ahead.

The first of these is at The Prologue. There is a children's skipping song showing how a local mythology has built up about Hotel Grimm which children learn about through play -or is this the first example of fake news!

Research skipping songs / jump rope songs.

You Tube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3KDVbKU7is>
(The Singing Street- children playing in Edinburgh-1950s)

Do your family or friends know any songs?

Mike's Author challenge!



Wax Seals

What are wax seals?
Why were they used? How did they work? Are they still used today?

Get creative- can you design your own wax seal?

Front Cover

Take a good look at the front cover. What catches your eye and would make you pick this book up in a library or book shop instead of another book?



Previous Cover

The book used to have a different cover...what do you think of it?
Which cover do you prefer and why?



Writing- edit and improve

Edit a small section of the blurb / prologue or a sneaky peak from chapter 1.

Improve and uplevel what you have read. This is all part of the editing and publishing process of writing a book.



Inference/Prediction/Vocabulary

What does the word 'Grimm' mean?

What does the use of this word make you think about the book or the hotel?

What other words can you think that mean the same or similar to 'grimm'?



Week 2- Chapters 1-7 summaries

Note: some of the early chapters are very short and chapters 1-4 are in flashback, building up the picture of what happened before The Prologue and the delivery of the letter.



Chapter 1- The wax sealed envelope

Introducing Rory McKenna- the recipient of the letter. He is deeply worried about what it says. There is a suggestion of Rory's past success involving Zizz Cola cans, receiving an award, and mention of his 'achievement.'

Chapter 2- Four months earlier

Rory is receiving a special award for an international Marketing Awards ceremony for his achievements for helping Zizz Cola become so popular. Rory enjoys the acclaim but the idea that he might not have rightly earned this award is mentioned. Rory imagines what his Grandad would say.

Chapter 3- One year ago

Rory is at the art gallery cafe drinking Zizz Cola. He hears a girl singing a happy song about Zizz Cola. A stranger (Harvey Finkleman) starts asking Rory why he is drinking Zizz Cola. Eventually Rory repeats the happy song. Finkleman is impressed and exchanges details with Rory- he is a marketing executive for Zizz. Rory's mum (Morag McKenna, 'Momo') is introduced- she is a wacky artist who Rory can feel embarrassed by. Rory's dad is introduced- slightly distant, always reading the paper. Two other characters are introduced who will feature later: Malky Mackay- local policeman and Lachlan Stagg- local celebrity (hint of him being a record breaker and of being dead.) The chapter concludes with an email from Finkleman- requesting Rory's involvement in adverts for Zizz which will use the phrase he told Finkleman (and which Rory had heard the girl saying.)

Chapter 4- The marketing genius

Rory becomes famous because Zizz Cola has speedy success as a result of the adverts and the unique story of Rory's involvement. Gracie and Gordon Goodman are introduced- they are twins and bullies at school. 'The Chronicle' is introduced, Aberfintry's local newspaper. Derek Goodman is the editor and Gordon and Grace's dad. Rory receives and turns down requests for other marketing work. He feels uncomfortable knowing that the successful line about Zizz was not actually his. The chapter ends saying that the mysterious letter has arrived. *Children's song to end the chapter.*

Chapter 5- The impossible challenge

The contents of the letter are revealed. Rory 'has been chosen' to go to Hotel Grimm for a meeting with owner Granville Grimm. Rory despairs at this - visiting a dangerous place to do an impossible job - 'rebranding Hotel Grimm'. His fears are confirmed when he finds stories from The Chronicle of people being injured after turning down the hotel's jobs. *Search engine message.*

Chapter 6- Too many Dead Guests

1948 is introduced as a significant but undefined time in the life of Hotel Grimm- a turning point where misfortune begins. The Lachlan Stagg statue is introduced- a memorial to a local hero. The mural is also introduced- a community painting of Aberfintry sponsored by The Chronicle, but doesn't feature Hotel Grimm. Bonnie is introduced as a bookworm with the nickname, 'The Worm.' *Limerick to end.*

Chapter 7- Boglehole Road

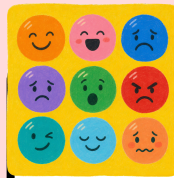
Grandad is introduced as being elderly and frail. We learn that he used to do things in his workshop in the garden but it's locked. He has a box of memorabilia which he uses to tell stories of his life. We learn more about Lachlan Stagg and his records. A girl, Bonnie who uses a wheelchair, approaches Rory, knowing about his interest in Hotel Grimm- she wants to know more but Rory is unable to say anything.



Vocabulary

silhouette
 flummoxed
 persistent
 intensity
 interrogation
 carbuncle
 exasperated
 legacy
 notoriety
 knack
 gargoyle
 imminent
 lugs
 nimble
 sinister

Week 2- Chapters 1-7 Learning Activities



Reading Task Inference of emotion

Identify language and phrases used in the first chapter to tell you how Rory is feeling.

What techniques has the author used to set the scene? Share emotions? And to interest the reader to read on?



Metaskills

Feeling

Focusing



Writing Task - Limerick

At the end of Chapter 6- Mike Nicholson adds a Limerick. These are a really fun type of short poem.

Read some more limericks and learn about the specific structure and purpose.

Try to write your own limericks with a Hotel Grimm theme! Why not share them with Mike?!

Art/ STEM/ Drama

Create your own statue...



Use Clay, LEGO, junk, building bricks... whatever you like! OR Pause in position of a statue...

Give detail as to why you chose to make the statue you designed.

Listening and Talking



Talk to your family- do they know any skipping or hand-clapping songs? Learn them and teach them to your class!

Scots Language

Grandad uses the word, 'lugs.' What other Scots words for body parts do you know? Try the song- heid, shooders, knaps, tae, een, lugs, mooth, neb...

Listening and Talking/ Drama

Can you create a marketing campaign for an item or product.

Research other successful marketing and perform or record your advert just like Rory.



Art/Science/History Challenge- Silhouette

- Look at examples of silhouettes.
- When have they been used in history?
- Can you create your own silhouettes?
- Can you guess the object from the silhouette?



Mike's Author challenge!



Week 3- Chapters 8- 14 summaries



Chapter 8- Ramsay and the rats

Bonnie left binoculars for Rory- she knew he would go up the hill! Rory climbs Scrab Hill and enjoys the new and different view of Aberfintry. The Pavilion is introduced- wrecked building. Ramsay Sandilands, the hotel's chef, appears- with pet rats. He denies the hotel is evil but mentions the Curse of the Stonemason as an important part of the hotel's misfortune. The chapter ends as Rory finally approaches the hotel's front door! *Local cautionary tale.*

Chapter 9- Granville Grimm

Rory is taken on a tour by Grog the grumpy butler. At the meeting with Granville Grimm he is polite and serious and there is no room for Rory to negotiate out his involvement. Rory has the job of getting more hotel guests whether he likes it or not. Rory raises the idea of the Curse but this is not a welcome topic of conversation. Rory is told to keep away from Corridor 5.

Chapter 10- The guided tour

Rory's tour of the hotel continues. In the disused ballroom, there is a plaque with birth/death dates for LG. Later they pass portraits by GG. Near Corridor 5, scary noises start up when close by. From a hotel turret, Rory gets a view of the ledge and pavilion. They meet Ramsay in a gleaming kitchen. The library has a secret staircase connecting it to other parts of the hotel. Grog says problems started at the hotel 'since M'lady died.' *Knock knock joke.*

Chapter 11- Clues in the graveyard

When leaving the hotel, Rory gets lost and ends up in nearby graveyard where he sees Gwendolen Grimm's grave (wife and mother) and a respectful memorial to the dead hotel guests. There is an additional name on this- Lottie Gilchrist. Ramsay leaves top quality baking for Rory on the ledge.

Chapter 12- Back down to earth

We learn that Grandad can't see very well and that Malky MacKay was watching Rory's trip up the hill from Grandad's. Grandad dismisses some Grimm scare stories and casually reveals that he worked there as an apprentice stonemason as a young school leaver. He carved some of the hotel's stonework and statues. Rory feels daunted by his task. Grandad suggests Finkleman and Bonnie as possible sources of help. Rory leaves wanting to see Bonnie.

Chapter 13- The masked ball

Rory speaks to Bonnie and reveals the challenge he is facing. Bonnie joins Rory at Grandad's and hunts for a memento in Grandad's box- they find an invitation to a masked ball in 1949. This is revealed as the same date as Lottie Gilchrist's death. Grandad tells the story of a tragic accident- she fell through the glass roof into the ballroom. Rory comes up with the idea to rebrand the hotel as being a curiosity and place for weird people. Bonnie strongly disagrees with the idea! *Children's chant to end.*

Chapter 14- The mural and the mystery painter

Rory receives an email from Finkleman- Zizz continues to do well and he has some 'curious family news' to follow up on. Bonnie asks Rory to look at the mural- they realise the hotel has gradually emerged in the painting. Bonnie believes that someone is gradually adding the hotel at night. They plan for Rory to have an overnight stakeout at the mural to catch the mystery painter. Grimson is revealed as GG, the painter of the portraits. The fact that there's a young Grimm, who refers to Granville as Dad, and calls Hotel Grimm 'home' forces Rory to reassess his perspective.

Week 3- Chapters 8-14

Learning Activities



Vocabulary

hermit
incredulously
derision
leering
recoiled
cavernous
meagre
melancholic
impertinent
dwindled
sceptical
ornate
gawp
furtive
perplexed
stealthily

Reading Task- Description

Chapter 9 has descriptions of the building that reflects the 'Grimm' name. Identify language used for effect and scene setting. Bring to life what you read by drawing based on the descriptions. Are there words you need to look up the meaning of, would you add any further description? Compare and discuss with other learners.



Fake News

What is fake news?
Is this a new concept
or has it been
around for a while?

Descriptive- Writing

Mike Nicholson uses some very descriptive language to bring the story to life. Choose another real or imagined room or character in Hotel Grimm and write a paragraph to describe it or them. Ask a friend to illustrate your writing using your description- were you able to accurately describe what you imagined?



Art- Mask Making

Investigate the use of masks across the world. Investigate masked balls.

Create your own masks. Why do you choose the design you have chosen and are you able to make it wearable?



Writing Task - Functional: invitation

Either using paper or a digital programme, design an invitation for a masked ball at Hotel Grimm.



You need to make sure it is clear to read and understand. You must clearly state all the important information and ensure it is legible. Design must also be suitable for the purpose.

Metaskills

Critical thinking

Adapting



Geography/Digital

Explore aerial views of your local area. What does it look like from above where you live?

Explore Google Maps and the functions they have to have an alternative view. Why is this useful and when are they used in real life?

History and Fake News!

Research...what was The Plague?

Find out more about rats! They have a pretty bad reputation, but is it fair or is it fake news?



Mike's Author challenge!





Week 4- Chapters 15-21 summaries

Chapter 15- Make or break

Rory's return to Hotel Grimm doesn't go well. Granville Grimm dislikes his ideas and reacts to them just as Bonnie did. He feels they're being made a freak show, oddity and something to gawp at. Rory escapes to the toilet, only to find it a haven for Grog's collection of amphibians and reptiles (links with newspaper story of a guest finding a snake under their pillow.) Grimson finds Rory and provides welcome relief.

Chapter 16- The gallery

Grimson's room is like an art gallery. Rory recognises many of the paintings' subjects as being Aberfintry's residents. Grimson says he uses the cable car's telescopes to see people. Rory still considers the cable car to be a deathtrap. Rory sees a very different image of Granville Grimm and talks to Grimson about his mother. Grimson says that since she died, his father has been living 'in a cloud of sadness.' Grimson convinces Rory to go back to Aberfintry by cable car *Quote to end.*

Chapter 17- Stobo

We learn that Stobo the cable car mechanic lives a hermit-like existence shunned by the town and taunted by children. He is a gruff character, who has worked on the cable car since taking over from his father who was the mechanic when it opened. The cable car is now in good working order but only used to get things to and from the hotel. Stobo gets food from Ramsay. The chapter finishes with Rory receiving a text from Bonnie.

Chapter 18- Never known but never forgotten

Bonnie meets Rory at Aberfintry's cemetery. She has found Lottie Gilchrist's grave. It is very well looked after, despite the length of time since she died. Fresh flowers have the note, 'Never known but never forgotten DG.' Back in the town, the twins are bullying Grog before Bonnie and Rory intervene. Rory is convinced that Grandad isn't telling him the full truth. *Chronicle strapline to end.*

Chapter 19- Confrontation and the Chronicle

Under pressure, Grandad reveals more information. Lottie had a sister called Nancy- she was Derek Goodman's mum but she died young. Lottie was therefore Derek's aunt. Rory speculates that Goodman may hold a grudge against the hotel and be printing false stories about it. Rory goes to the Chronicle office to raise this- there are framed front pages of old editions of the Chronicle- including ones about Lachlan Stagg gathering world records, and one about a fire at the hotel involving a tourist and member of staff. Rory accuses Goodman of creating fake news because of his family connections. Goodman flips the argument and says that Rory's family is at the root of the problem- Goodman tells Rory to ask his Grandad about the Curse of the Stonemason. *Dictionary definition of 'curse' to end.*

Chapter 20- The curse of the stonemason

Rory and Bonnie visit the library to learn more about the curse. It involves a young grandad and professional jealousy between stonemasons when Grandad completes a wolf statue- the Stonemason curses him! Grandad reveals he was with Lottie when she fell. Was the curse on Grandad and Lottie's death the start of the hotel's troubled past? He gives Rory a key to his workshop and tells Rory to go there to reveal another secret. *Singing round.*

Chapter 21- Finkleman and the fire

Rory discovers a workshop full of animal stone carvings- all Grandad's work. News breaks that the Goodman twins were temporarily trapped in the cable car, tension rises in the town and Rory worries this will fuel the fake news about the hotel. Finkleman phones Rory. He has a past story of an aunt who was caught in a fire in Aberfintry. Rory realises Grog is the hero who saved her. Finkleman plans to visit the town. *Chant.*



Vocabulary

disconcerted
niche
intrigued
scuttled
salvaged
exaggerate
bravado
tentatively
monosyllabic
contemptuously
piercing
unkempt
ballistic
despair

Metaskills

Integrity

Feeling

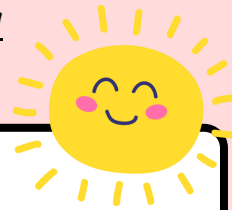
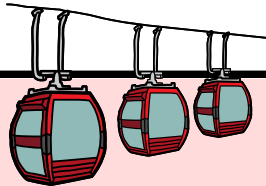


Week 4- Chapters 15-21 Learning Activities



Reading Tasks

Look at chapter 16 and identify contrasting language and writer skills to show differing emotions and feelings about the cable cars.
OR
Identify first and secondary sources for reliability for newspapers. Explore bias.



Art

Develop your knowledge of facial proportions- create your own class portrait gallery.

Art- Portraits



Explore portraits- perhaps research The Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh. Think about when and why they're used and how they've changed over time. Find a portrait you like and share the story of the person!

Writing Task - Diary Entry

You know the characters really well now and Mike has made their inner feelings and emotions clear. You can tell by their actions what they're thinking too. Write a diary entry for one of the characters showing how they really feel about the events at this stage. Perhaps you'll make some predictions about what they'd like to do next! Or, what they think of other characters!



HWB- theme: prejudice

Bonnie is a very strong character in the book. Explore the character development for her- what have we learned about her? Have your opinions changed?

She is very clever and is instrumental in helping Rory. She is in a wheelchair- explore how other people with disabilities have done amazing things! You may research the Paralympics!



Health and Wellbeing

Why is it inappropriate to use Rory's initial marketing plan? How would that make them feel?

The portrait of Bonnie doesn't include her wheelchair because, 'I never paint furniture.'
What is meant by this?



Fake News!

Fake news – two of these animals are real, one is fake – Coconut Crab, Postman Ant, the Dumbo Octopus.

Which do you think is fake and what makes you think that?
What are your information sources and how trustworthy are they?



Mike's Author challenge!



Week 5- Chapters 22- 28 summaries



Chapter 22- Campaign for closure

The paper begins a strong and final campaign to force the hotel to shut with the slogan 'No Ifs No Buts It Has to Shut.' The campaign grows at school with everyone being asked to sign a petition- Rory chooses not to.

Chapter 23- The Halfway House

Momo interrupts a meeting with Rory, Bonnie and Grandad. She enthuses about her new exhibition- 'Half Measures.' Rory is inspired about the idea of 'halfway' and 'compromise.' He imagines the Pavilion on the ledge as a 'Halfway House'- a cafe between the hotel and the town, accessible by cable car. The chapter concludes that a good idea is still a huge challenge. *Chapter ends with a Zizz slogan.*

Chapter 24- Confession

Finkleman meets Rory who arranges for him to visit the hotel. They go up the hill and Finkleman is impressed with the view- he comments on the wrecked state of the pavilion but talks of the experience of Zizz Cafes opening quickly. As they talk about Grandad keeping secrets, Rory confesses about the origins of the Zizz Cola slogan. Finkleman reassures Rory and talks about the positive impact on Zizz. When they arrive at the hotel, Finkleman is introduced to Grog. Rory sets off to explore Corridor 5 which he considers to be final unsolved mystery of the hotel. *Poem to end the chapter.*

Chapter 25- Corridor 5

Rory approaches corridor 5 with confidence but is quickly rattled by the 'Beasts' noise. After an exciting stand-off, the Beast is revealed as Lachlan Stagg- hiding in the hotel to get a new record for remaining hidden for the longest time. Loose ends are resolved such as Stagg's connection with Ramsay and an explanation for the library poltergeist. Rory tells Lachlan about The Chronicle campaign- Lachlan realises the negative consequences of his actions. Rory thinks Lachlan can help to stop the campaign.

Chapter 26- The hit squad

Rory proposes the idea of the Halfway House to Granville Grimm. Rory reveals the Beast of Corridor 5 to be Lachlan Stag- Granville's reacts by finding this hilarious and he bears no grudge. Rory proposes the transformation of the Halfway House in 7 days- Lachlan and Finkleman offer their help along with Grog, Ramsay and Stobo making up the hit squad. *Promotional flier to end.*

Chapter 27- Deadline approaching

Rory tells Bonnie and Grandad about Lachlan being alive and the 7 day plan to create the Halfway House. Grimson designs a flier to announce the café opening, deliberately coinciding with the campaign for closure's public gathering. He and Stobo leaflet the town under cover of darkness. Grimson reports on good progress of the construction site but Rory struggles to stay positive. Bonnie says a key line, 'What hope is there if people who believe that something is wrong, decide not to make a noise about it? How will anything ever change?' Grandad wishes them luck.

Chapter 28- The advance party

Rory and Bonnie go to the public gathering where there is a big crowd and impassioned speech from Derek Goodman encouraging people to 'rise up.' Rory speaks and introduces the Halfway House and he reveals Lachlan Stagg. He apologises for his deception and speaks up for Hotel Grimm and Granville Grimm. The crowd feel uncomfortable about the anti-hotel feelings. Grandad appears with Momo. He challenges the crowd to think differently and they head to the cable car. Granville Grimm is grateful to Rory and ready to receive guests. The queues for the next cable car start building up, including Rory's dad. Everyone has a fresh view of the hotel and of the town. *Advertising campaign to finish.*

Vocabulary

ballistic
despair
catapulted
taunting
protested
flamboyance
sincerity
panache
eloquent
impassively
interspersed
thwarted

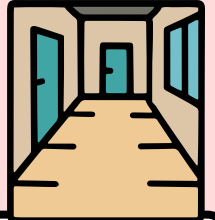


Week 5- Chapters 22 - 28 Learning Activities



Reading Task

Look at newspaper articles from a range of different newspapers. Discuss the difference in the newspapers and reliability. News isn't just in the papers though- how do we now access online news and how can we ensure reliability so we don't get fake news? Does fake news still exist? Look closely at sources used in the news. (Look again and maybe change for lit circle task)



World Record

Investigate world records! What excites and surprises you. What world record would you like to get?



Character Development

Characters have changed over the course of the book. What assumptions were made at the start and how have they changed with new information?



Writing task- Writers' Craft

Create a list of Mike Nicholson's writing style...now you are going to write in the style of him! Give an extract from Chapter 25- Corridor 5 but stop before the big reveal. Pupils should continue the story in the style of the writer!

HWB

Rory and Bonnie are very brave characters and have to fight against peer pressure. Do they realise this?



Explore through drama scenarios- peer pressure scenarios, being brave, managing fake news and the characters in the book.

Drama/listening and talking - Persuasive language

Choose a product that seems 'unmarketable' and work together in a collaborative group to create a marketing strategy!

Use your best persuasive language to sell it to your class! Investigate other marketing campaigns for help and tips!

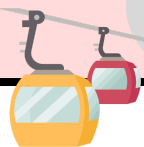


Metaskills

Integrity
Sense making
Initiative



Cable Cars



Time to do some research! What are cable cars? Where and when are they used? Why are they used?

Challenge: Can you think of some alternative uses for cable cars?

Mike's Author challenge!



Advert- Persuasive writing

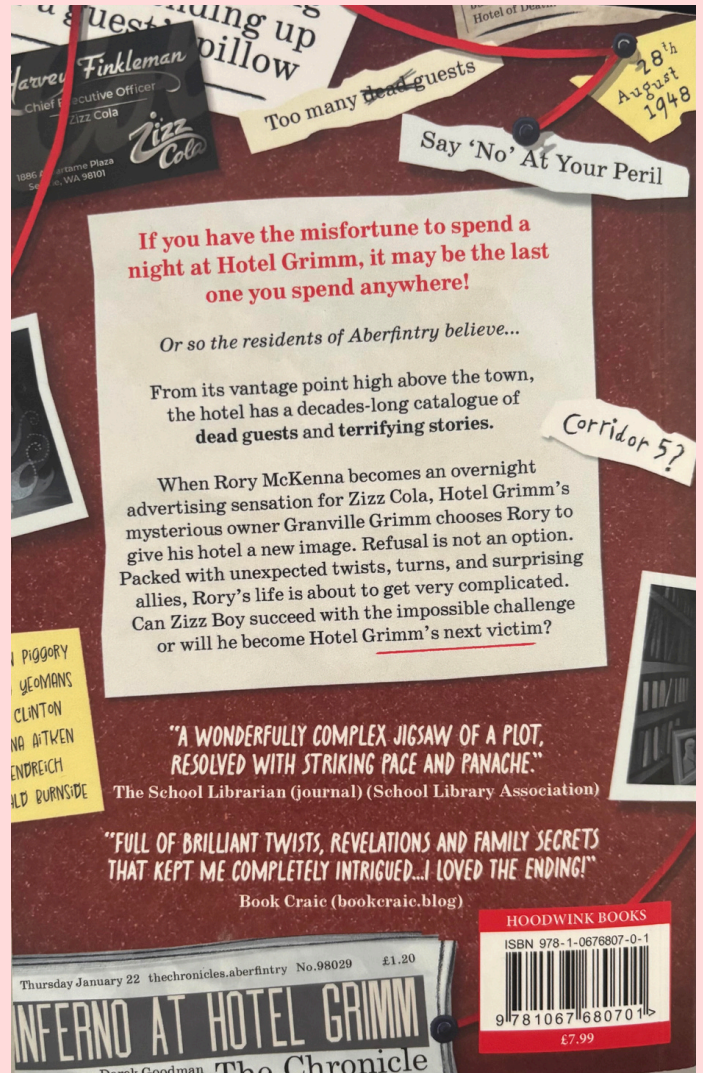
Design a persuasive flyer or newspaper advert to encourage people to attend the Halfway House!



Week 6- Epilogue

Epilogue

A page from the new version of the town's newspaper including an apology from Derek Goodman. Many of the articles in the paper resolve outstanding issues or are redemptive and restorative stories.



Week 6- Epilogue Learning Activities



Vocabulary

remarkable
entrenched
thus
curse
dubbed

Reading Task- Inference Using Drama skills- Hot Seating

Thinking about various characters from the story reading the new Chronicle article- hot seat what their thoughts might be and how they might react to what happened in the final chapter. Use your knowledge of the characters and plot to get in to character and justify your answers. You could add thought bubbles to large images you create of the characters. (look again at lit circle roles- poss alternative activity)



Writing task

The Chronicle newspaper plays a huge role in Hotel Grimm. The epilogue shows the NEW newspaper.

it lists what to find 'Inside the issue.'
Choose one to write an article for a class newspaper. OR write a front page article all about the events of the final chapter.

Reading- Inference

What would the sequel to Hotel Grimm be called? What would happen? Think about what would be similar and what would be different- would you keep the same characters or add some new ones? Justify your answers based on your understanding of the book and by your knowledge of the author and his style of writing.



HWB-

Apologies are important! Discuss how to give and receive genuine apologies.

Design

Design a new front cover for the book based on what you know!

Metaskills

Communicating

Sense making

Real Author Engagement

What questions do you have for Mike? If they aren't answered in the FAQ...get in touch with him!

Think back...

Were your predictions at the start of the book correct?



Mike's Author challenge!

Feedback

Do you have suggestions of activities you'd have liked as part of this novel study? Any improvements? Contact Natalie to share them!

Mike's Author Challenge

Write a new quote for the back of the book
OR
write a summary to display next to the book in a bookshop.



Week 6- Epilogue Learning Activities



I get asked lots of questions about Hotel Grimm. Here are some answers to some of my more frequently asked questions!



FAQ

What inspires your books?

I loved reading when I was at primary school. I particularly liked mysteries and adventures. I wanted to write books that kept people guessing, and that have exciting and funny moments too – I like the idea of delicious danger – stories where people are in tricky situations but it all works out.

Where did the idea for Hotel Grimm come from?

I was reading about companies spending lots of money on changing their logo and rebranding. I started to think about what the toughest thing would be to rebrand – I reckoned a hotel where guests had died in weird ways would be tough to sell! I liked the challenge of trying to make a really dangerous place seem like a good place to go to.

Where do you get your names from?

Some of them are people's first names or surnames that I've heard along the way. For example I knew a boy called Ramsay and someone else who had the surname Sandilands. They just seemed to go well together.

What inspired the setting for Hotel Grimm?

There was a book (and film) called Where Eagles Dare that I loved as a teenager. Set in WW2 it had a fortress on a hill with a cable car down to the ground. That definitely gave me the setting. Then I was on a hill above Aberfeldy in Scotland looking down on the town and that gave me the idea for the view of the town being important and linking in with the idea of 'seeing things differently'. I named the town Aberfintry as a nod to that place.

Week 6- Epilogue Learning Activities



I get asked lots of questions about Hotel Grimm. Here are some answers to some of my more frequently asked questions!



FAQ Continued

Do you plan out your books?

I usually write in scenes. I get a strong idea about a particular scene, for example Rory meeting Ramsay Sandilands and the rats, and write that up – I then have to work out how it fits into the story. Often I write things that are not in order. But with Hotel Grimm I reached a point where I needed a plan because I had to work out when each fact was revealed and how the story from the past fitted in.

How long did Hotel Grimm take to write?

It probably took 3 and a half years. I wrote in in bits and pieces at a very busy time of life. At first the hotel was a more magical place – there was a talking crow! But that just wasn't working and I realised that the story was more about finding the truth of what was happening behind the hotel's doors. So I made a few wrong turnings in the early drafts.

What's the important theme of the book?

Don't judge people on first impressions! Most of the characters in Hotel Grimm turn out different than you expect after you first meet them – whether that's Grog, Finkleman, Momo or Grandad. They all have an unexpected side to them.



Background Information

This will help you understand some of the hidden themes of the book but this does contain spoilers!

I wanted to write a book where nothing was what it seemed at first sight. I was exploring how we can judge people or situations without having all the facts, and in the case of the town of Aberfintry a whole community jumps to the wrong conclusions. The book explores 'fear of the other' – how do we react when people are different to us?

From the start everyone thinks Rory is an expert – he knows (and we know) that he isn't – will he keep living a lie or will he come clean, stop carrying his secret, and will that change how people think about him?

Is Rory's Grandad really just an elderly housebound man? Or does he (like all older people) have an interesting past – and in Grandad's case have stories which unlock the mysteries of the present.

Is Rory's mum just wacky and scatter-brained? Yes she is, but her different way of thinking unlocks the eventual solution to Rory's dilemma.

Is the hotel the death-trap it seems to be? Or is there a different story behind the front door? Is the owner really an ogre or is there another story to tell us who he is and why he behaves like he does? Can we sympathise with someone who seems to be a monster?

Is the grumpy limping coughing butler as unpleasant as he seems? Or is there another story to why he limps and coughs...and could he actually have a heroic backstory?

Are rats as bad as they are made out to be?

Everyone worships the missing-presumed-dead character Lachlan Stagg as a local hero – are they right to do so?

Other things that change from scary to accepted – Grog's snakes and amphibians, the Beast of Corridor 5.

Are all of the newspaper stories about Hotel Grimm true, or is that just one perspective?

Along the way I had some fun with names – is Derek Goodman a good man?

Is Bella Valentine as lovely as her name suggests?

I called Stobo the oily cable car mechanic after a place which has a spa offering beauty treatments.

Is Hotel Grimm really grim?

By the end I like to think that most of the main characters will be viewed differently than when you first met them. There is redemption for all and if that hasn't happened in the story, then the Epilogue (page from the new newspaper) helps to serve this purpose and ties up lots of loose ends.



We hope you've enjoyed this novel study. This is version 1 so 2026-27 is this novel study's test year!



If you or your school class have any further questions needing answered, I would be really happy to hear from you - please do get in touch through the contact form on my website

www.mikenicholson.co.uk



Get in touch with Natalie Mack about any content queries, activity suggestions or amendments- especially as it's in it's draft stage.

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