



A Teacher's Guide to Rawah Arja's

The F Team

INTRODUCTION

The F Team is a thought-provoking, inspiring and uplifting novel, ideal for the diverse classroom. The characters are relatable, the concepts are socially relevant to our modern context and the conflicts resonate within all teens. Arja has encapsulated the warmth of family, the struggles of high school friendships and the importance of belonging in a comical way that will compel your students to read on.

The novel explores the complexities of teenage relationships with family and friends and also provides a strong social comment on a society divided by racial stigmas between ethnic-Australian and anglo-Australian youth. Arja brings to light the impact of the 2005 Cronulla Riots in Sydney Australia and the repercussions it has had on our perceptions of discrimination and acceptance within distinct racial communities. The result, overall, is a lighthearted and comical portrayal of how young adults cope with understanding themselves and the world around them.

This teaching guide aids to develop your students' understanding of the complexities of the novel and makes *The F Team* suitable to teach in any classroom. Some activities are differentiated or scaffolded to allow teachers to work towards the needs of their students.

THE STORY

Fifteen-year-old Tariq is caught in the middle of one of the biggest challenges of his young adult life. Faced with the potential closure of his school, the responsibility of being a role model, losing his football team captaincy title and a prospective young romance, Tariq discovers more about himself, his friends and his family than he ever thought he would. Things for Tariq quickly go from bad to worse when the new principal Mr Archie, forces his Wolf Pack to join in a rugby competition with their new team members – the boys from the Cronulla Shire. Tariq is faced with two options: reject the offer and face expulsion from the school, or fight for what is right and try to keep the school open for all. With his best friend Huss constantly reminding him of the differences between the white boys from Cronulla and the Lebs of Punchbowl, Tariq struggles to find a middle ground between the two. Add to this the chaos of his loud Arab family, his dad's never-ending lectures about being “smart but dumb”, his quick temper, the uncertainties of his romance with Jamila, and the pressures of writing poetry for Mrs K's poetry competition, and it looks like the perfect recipe for disaster. Tariq quickly learns that all people cope with emotions differently and that some words can't ever be taken back.

BEFORE READING

The importance of storytelling

It is helpful to have your students consider the purpose of storytelling before you begin to teach the unit. Facilitate a class discussion about the importance of storytelling. Probe students with questions like: why do we tell stories? In what ways are stories told? How important is the moral of the story to the story line? Is the delivery of the story important to the message of the story?

Encourage students to think about how stories are used to *unite* and *entertain* people but also to *inform*.

Play the clip entitled '[Chapter 1 – Why do we Tell Stories](#)'. Have students understand that all stories are told to serve a purpose or to relay a moral.

Context and the way we view the world

As a class, conduct a mind-mapping exercise exploring the question: What is social context and how does it affect the way we see the world?

Social, historical and cultural contexts are the prevailing set of characteristics that relate to a particular group, period of history or way of life. Texts have external contexts – social, cultural and historical as well as internal contexts – structure and features.

Internal contexts include the text's narrative features: setting, characters, plot and theme. Considering texts in context involves exploring both inside and outside the text in order to make the greatest meaning of the text. Because of the complexity of the context of *The F Team*, it is important for students to understand that the external context plays an important role in what is occurring *within* the text itself.

Brainstorm the concept of time and perception – the evolving understanding of ‘politically correct’ representations of people and communities. Discuss the power of language and words on how we perceive situations and individuals. Explain to your students how the term ‘politically correct’ is used to dismiss language or behaviours that can be seen as excluding, marginalising or insulting groups of people disadvantaged or discriminated against such as groups defined by ethnicity or gender.

Some examples include:

- *Wog* – ethnic
- *Actress* – actor
- *Sportsman* – athlete
- *Black* – coloured
- *Aboriginal* – Indigenous Australian
- *Fat* – overweight / heavy
- *Blind* – visually impaired
- *Anglo* – caucasian
- *Yehuda* – Jewish person
- *Mozzie* – Muslim

Empathy Task: Ask your students to write about a time when they or someone they know felt marginalised or even excluded from a situation. How did that make them feel? How did they deal with the situation?

The Cronulla Riots (2005)

Explain to your students that *The F Team* is inspired by a specific social context: The Cronulla Riots of 2005. Ask the students if they have any knowledge of the event to facilitate a class discussion. Use the following [fact sheet](#) to explain the context of the riots to the students. You can read this as a class or students can read it individually. (**Disclaimer** – there is one reference of blasphemy and profanity in the fact sheet that should be omitted before reading.)

To further explain the impact that the riots had on the Lebanese Australian community, watch the SBS documentary: [‘The Cronulla Riots – The Day That Shocked The Nation’](#). Encourage the students to write a news article about the events that ensued on that day.

Allow your students to develop their understanding of visual literacy techniques by showing images of the Cronulla Riots or still shots from the SBS video. Facilitate a discussion on racism and class prejudice – using some visual literacy techniques such as:

- Vector lines
- Saliency
- Colour (and effects)
- Modality
- Gaze
- Foreground/background (positioning)
- Non/Contextual background

How are techniques used in these images to reflect the problematic social context of Sydney, Australia during the Cronulla Riots of 2005? Discuss how this might affect the themes or concerns of the novel. How might our contemporary context influence the way we read the text?

Who is Rawah Arja? Understanding the authors' context

Students are to view the following [YouTube clip](#) of Rawah Arja introducing her novel.

Students then listen to '[Characters From Experience: with Rawah Arja](#)'. In this interview, Rawah talks to host James Roy about the experience of growing up Lebanese-Australian in Western Sydney and how this influenced the writing of her first novel. Whilst listening students should take note of the key issues that helped Arja develop her book.

WHILE READING THE NOVEL

Introducing the characters

Read Chapter 1 as a class. Students are to record their initial impressions of the members of The Wolf Pack (Tariq: BBL and Team Captain, Huss: The Hustler, PJ: The Tank, Ibbby: The Panda) in their exercise books. Encourage students to use direct quotes from the novel. Allow your students to determine which character resonates with them the most and why.

Teacher is to explain the symbolism of the 'Wolf Pack'. Wolves are a symbol of guardianship and loyalty. They hunt together and protect one another. In a wolf pack there are definitive social structures and rules of conduct. Encourage students to consider what The Wolf Pack in *The F Team* may foreshadow?

Students can draw an image of each member of The Wolf Pack based on the imagery Arja provides in the opening chapter. In this way, as the novel progresses, the students can visualise what their characters look like as the plot thickens.

Comic Relief and The Power of Language

In the first chapter, Arja establishes the tone of the book. There are intense social issues disguised with light humour/satire.

One key social issue addressed is racial profiling or stereotyping. Examples include: '*Homegrown terrorists*', '*Bin Laden's best friends*', '*You're an arab from Punchbowl. No one will believe you*'.

Encourage students to explore the role of comic relief in trying to alleviate some of the tension in this scene.

A second fundamental social issue Arja addresses from the beginning of *The F Team* is the influence of the media on society.

How does this idea align with our understanding of the context of the Cronulla Riots and the novel?

Have your students create a newspaper article based on what the media may say about the school fight in Chapter 1. Students are encouraged to create a catchy headline and use the correct structure of an article.

The media is renowned for its ability to sensationalise certain issues. Students are to read the news broadcast on page 24 of the novel where a reporter from Channel Nine is reporting on the incident at the school. Have students highlight words which give a negative portrayal of the school. Explore the importance of language in media coverage to create certain biases in news coverage.

Tariq's Family

Tariq's family are fundamental figures in his change and maturation as the novel progresses.

After reading Chapter 2, students are to take notes on the way Tariq portrays members of his family. How does the language Tariq uses to describe his family affect the way the audience perceives the characters? Students are to choose one of the family members and create a Facebook/Instagram profile for them.

The Bildungsroman Genre

The F Team is categorised as a bildungsroman genre novel. Explain to your students that bildungsroman means 'coming of age' or 'the development of the protagonist'. It is a genre that is associated with change and transition as a result of maturation.

The features of a bildungsroman novel include:

1. A single individual's growth and development within the context of a defined social order.
2. This growth process has been described as a 'search for meaningful existence' within a society.
3. To spur the protagonist on to their journey, some form of loss or discontent must jar them at an early stage away from their setting.
4. The process of maturity is long, difficult and takes place over a long period of time, consisting of repeated clashes between the protagonist's needs and desires and the views and judgements enforced by some sort of social order.
5. Eventually the spirit and values of the social order become evident in the protagonist who is then accommodated into society. The novel ends with an assessment by the protagonist of himself and his new place in society.

Some examples of bildungsroman novels include *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *The Outsiders*, *Harry Potter*. Examples of coming-of-age films include *Clueless*, *Mean Girls*, *Good Will Hunting*.

After students copy the notes about the features of the bildungsroman genre in their exercise books, they are to identify a novel or a film of the genre and dissect the journey of the protagonist to relate to the features of the bildungsroman genre.

Differentiated Task: Ask your students to brainstorm as many novels or films they can that are considered bildungsroman or coming-of-age.

Understanding the setting: Punchbowl

On page 19 Tariq briefly addresses the social climate of Punchbowl.

The Muslim and Christian private school kids hated it when their bus stopped in our area. We'd yell out stuff or give them the finger because they walked around with their noses in the air as though we were beneath them. We knew by their stares and smirks that they thought Punchbowl kids were like animals that needed to be tamed or

put down...Kids like that – kids with money – didn't have graffiti on their walls or have to worry about bad reputations.

What impression do we get about both Tariq and the people of Punchbowl? How does the language used by Tariq reflect the society he lives in? For teachers, this would be a great time to explore colloquialisms and vernacular (every day or colloquial language including slang expressions) with the class. Encourage the students to consider how the way a person speaks can reflect the society to which they belong or are part of.

Tariq continues on page 20:

Punchbowl didn't have the best reputation. Nobody outside the suburb thought it was worth anything. But we knew better. It was our hometown and we were proud of it.

There is a great sense of identity in Punchbowl that unites the people. Arja paints a picture of how a community stands together even in the face of indifference. As a class, discuss the importance of belonging to a community. Encourage students to draw a visual representation or map of what Punchbowl may look like.

Understanding Cronulla

Explore the stark juxtaposition in the portrayal of Cronulla compared to the earlier descriptions of Punchbowl.

The only thing I'd learnt about Cronulla was from my brothers and cousins who told me about the riots there and how ugly they'd been. Something about Arabs going swimming and checking out some chicks which somehow turned into an altercation with lifeguards which then turned into a mini civil war. I even Googled it and those images of angry faces with the Australian flag and sprays of alcohol was enough for me to know that it was always going to be US vs Them, not Us with Them.

It was about showing the rest of Sydney that we could act like humans, even around our new white friends from the Shire.

How might Tariq's preconceived view of Cronulla affect his interactions with the new members of his team? Can students relate to Tariq's experiences? Ask your students if they have ever felt that a predetermined perception of someone can affect the way they treat a person. Tie this into the earlier discussions about context and the way we view our world.

Mr Archie Vs. Mr Ahmed

Students are to record their initial impressions of Mr Archie on page 37.

In groups, students create a character profile poster on Mr Archie or Mr Ahmed. They must include the following information on the posters and supporting evidence:

- Character's name
- Physical characteristics
- Personality Traits
- Relationship to other characters
- Any other relevant information

Each group is to present their posters/information to the class. Students then write a reflection on whether the two characters have the same roles/identities in the novel or whether they are different – explain your answers. Do they aim to serve the same purpose?

The importance of education

Ask your students to consider what school means to them. Facilitate a class discussion about the importance of school. The place where students spend 8 hours a day, 5 days a week. Encourage students to think about their online/remote learning experiences and if that made them appreciate returning to school. School is the place where friendships are made, lessons are learnt and knowledge is gained. It is important to understand that school for The Wolf Pack is even more than this. For The Wolf Pack, school is a safety network. For Tariq it is important to keep the school open at any expense. School is a symbol of belonging.

Ask students to write a journal entry from Tariq's perspective outlining how he feels about the school's potential closure at the beginning of the novel.

Later in the novel, Tariq actually outlines what the school means to him and The Wolf Pack at the Bankstown Poetry Slam in a piece that is both comical and engaging (Chapter 32, page 323). Teachers can encourage students to read the poetry piece and outline what school means to each member of The Wolf Pack in each stanza.

The Rugby Camp

In Chapter 8 Tariq and the boys embark on the week-long sports camp with the boys from Cronulla.

Students are to record The Wolf Pack's initial impressions of the boys from Cronulla – do they fit the stereotypes we researched during our context study? We see the perspective of Tariq and the boys presented to us through Arja's writing. Encourage students to view The Wolf Pack from the eyes of the boys from Cronulla. They could write a diary entry or a script about a conversation between two or more of the characters discussing their views of The Wolf Pack.

After arriving late, the boys are given the team name 'F Team' – what significance does this serve? Why would Arja choose to make this the title of her book?

As a class read the scene of the cafeteria fight and discuss how our perceptions of certain characters have changed. Have your students consider how our view of the Cronulla boys may have changed. After making breakfast for the entire camp and the firecrackers prank, The F Team starts to forge an alliance and although they won't admit it, The Wolf Pack seem to appreciate their new teammates. Encourage students to speculate where the climax of the story may lead us. Allow them an opportunity to take educated guesses about what will happen next in the plot.

Mr Archie forces the team into many team-building exercises – the bushwalk, campfire competition, cleaning up around the farm, the campfire discussion (which proves to be the most challenging) – the characters begin to expose their feelings to their new teammates and to the audience. Consider character narration in these scenes. How effective is the story being told in first person? Choose a short section from the chapter to retell in third person. What effect does this have on the language, message or mood being presented. Which perspective is more effective and why?

Have your students choose three important events from these chapters (8–13) and explain how they would have handled them differently to the characters in the story. Encourage students to explain how it may have changed the outcome of the story in either a small or major way. Allow them to be insightful here and think of the cause and effect. Sometimes the smallest action can have a major impact on others.

Chapters 8– 13 reveal a lot to the audience about each character and their certain obstacles. Students are to use these chapters to propose six ‘chapter headlines’ for each chapter. The purpose of a headline is to simultaneously report key information while grabbing the attention of the reader. A good headline tells what the article is about and encourages the audience to read more. Therefore, the words must be carefully and purposefully chosen in order to both report and persuade. Students are to write six headlines that reveal key elements of the chapter such as plot, character and setting to encourage the reader to read on. This is a great lesson to pair with rhetorical devices. Students should try to use rhetorical strategies such as alliteration, puns and repetition to make each headline more appealing. Students then explain how the headlines connect to the chapter and the book and how they grab attention.

Reader’s Theatre: Have your students choose any scene from Chapters 8–13 and turn it into a script. Students should choose a critical event and have the students perform it in small groups. Readers theatre provides meaningful understanding and can trigger some great discussion around these critical events. Teach students to use appropriate tone of voice to convey the feelings behind the characters and events in the script.

Overcoming Personal Struggles

By now, it is evident that virtually every character in the novel is overcoming a personal struggle in their lives.

It is helpful for students to tabulate each character, their struggle, a quote to demonstrate how the character feels about this struggle and if applicable a literary technique. The table should look like this:

| Character | Personal Struggle | Evidence | Literary Technique (if applicable) |
|---------------|-------------------|----------|------------------------------------|
| Tariq | | | |
| Huss | | | |
| PJ | | | |
| Ibby | | | |
| Mr Archie | | | |
| Aaron | | | |
| Riley | | | |
| Lee | | | |
| Matt | | | |
| Amira (Bob) | | | |
| Aaron’s Mum | | | |
| Uncle Charlie | | | |

Some of the issues the students may address include:

- Tariq: Becoming team captain, keeping the school open, redeeming himself for disrespecting Feda, his tumultuous friendship with Huss
- Aaron: Dealing with his dad's death and his relationship with his mum, belonging to a certain social circle, dealing with Hunter, being loyal to his friends, becoming team captain.
- PJ: Absence of his drug-abusing mum
- Ibby: a love of cooking to escape the reality of his mum's battle with cancer
- Huss: protecting Big Haji, the absence of his father
- Mr Archie: Making sure the students behave, keeping the school open
- Mr Ahmed: Trying to maintain a rapport with the students but also to keep the school open
- Riley: White hair medical condition / victim of Hunter's bullying
- Lee/Nintendo: Desire to become YouTube famous. His dad's family were refugees from Vietnam, dealing with his violent imagination

Representation of women

One of the key misconceptions in Islam is the portrayal of women as oppressed and lacking a voice. Arja portrays the women in Tariq's life as the source of his change, as we see the novel progress.

Students are to take notes on the representation of women in *The F Team*.

- Tariq's mum, Ronda: member of the P&C, head chef of the family and all their uninvited guests
- Feda: a medical student at the end of her registration who defies the gender expectations of her culture and put her career before getting married
- Jamila May: the source of Tariq's understanding and catalyst of his change
- Mrs K: always keeping Tariq in check and offering advice.
- Amira: a reminder of Tariq's innocence and youth
- Auntie Salma: more than just 'Botox and looks'

The male figures in the novel, (especially Tariq's father) advocate the respect of women in the novel. The first instance of this is depicted when Tariq and his friends are forced to be driven to the Girls School in Uncle Charlie's ice-cream truck to deliver an apology for egging the school. In this situation there is a sense of comic relief (humour content in a literary work to offset a more serious issue). Ibby is stung by a bee, Huss sculls a bottle of Pepsi, the ice-cream truck blares its tune as the Wolf Pack are forced onto the school grounds to apologise for their mistreatment of the GHS.

Students are to select a female character in the novel and explain how she is portrayed and why. What does she offer to the story line?

Extension Activity: Write a diary entry from a female character's perspective about a particular event in the novel where she is presented. Examples can include (but are not limited to) Tariq disrespecting Feda, Auntie Salma not getting along with Uncle Charlie, Auntie Salma offering Tariq advice, Mrs K and the influence she has on Tariq, Big Haji and the role she has in (directly or indirectly) uniting Huss and Tariq, Aaron's mum and the tumultuous relationship she has with Aaron after his father's death, Jamila May and her overprotective nature towards her brother and towards Amira (her motherly instinct to protect in the absence of her own mother).

Differentiated Activity: students work in groups to select one particular female in the novel and create a presentation outlining their importance to the text.

When two worlds collide

Arja very cleverly portrays the way two unique worlds clash in the center of Sydney. She shows us the world of Tariq and his family and then juxtaposes it in the Shire at Aaron's house in Chapter 22, when Mr Archie forces Tariq and Aaron to meet outside of school. This chapter portrays many stereotypes, innuendos, allusions and references to demonstrate just how different Aaron and Tariq's worlds are. Yet still both teenagers have personal problems that they deal with differently. As a class read through this chapter and highlight the differences between the two teenagers' lives. Consider their language, their mannerisms, their representations of their families. Compare this with how the boys see Aaron's house in Chapter 29 and how Aaron's mum treats Tariq in this chapter.

Teenage Male Anger - Dealing with human emotions in a healthy way

One of the most important lessons *The F Team* teaches its audiences is that there are a multitude of ways to deal with anger and emotion. All the characters in the novel are subjected to anger in one way or another and each character deals with that anger in a unique way. Anger does not discriminate between age, gender or race. Everyone gets angry. Especially teenagers who are struggling to express themselves or their ideas as they mature and try to find themselves in an ever-changing world.

Activity: students are to identify how they themselves deal with anger or have seen adults deal with anger. Teacher to facilitate a class discussion about healthy and unhealthy ways of coping with anger, encouraging students to draw a distinct difference between the two. Unhealthy ways of coping with anger include bottling things in, raging, isolating oneself, self-harm. Classroom teachers can use this opportunity to educate students about the healthy ways of dealing with anger. (e.g. Finding an effective outlet such as drawing or painting or sport. Engaging in active communication – speaking to someone like a teacher, sibling, friend, parent, a professional.)

Activity: Students are to think about what angers them and how they deal with their emotions when they are angry. This can be done as a class discussion, a written activity for more introverted students or can be completed in small groups/pairs. Students can be given hypothetical situations such as receiving a bad grade at school or their favourite football team losing the game to stimulate discussion.

Relating anger to *The F Team*

Now that we have identified the characters' personal struggles, it is important to understand that many characters deal with their anger in different ways.

Tariq – Blows up at everyone when he is angry. He takes out his frustrations on everyone around him. Fedra, Huss, Aaron, Uncle Charlie. He is deeply affected when he has something on his mind like his captaincy or his crush on Jamila May. He feels bad after he disrespects Fedra and Uncle Charlie. He doesn't know how to deal with upsetting Huss.

Some accounts of Tariq's anger include:

- Fight with Feda (Chapter 17): *'I knew I lashed out unfairly at her, but I didn't know how I was supposed to make it right.'*
- Anger at Huss (page 194): *'I don't need anything from you. You already screwed me over once. Just back off and play the game.'*
- Anger at Uncle Charlie (page 285): *"Don't you start," I lashed out. "I'm not going to sell your dumb honey jars and embarrass myself, so stop asking me. Why won't you leave me alone?"*

Aaron – Bottles things in and keeps to himself. He becomes introverted and releases his anger on his mum. In the beginning of the book Aaron is misunderstood and disliked by The Wolf Pack. After we discover that he is grieving the loss of his father, we see a different Aaron who is hot-tempered around his mother. His mother tries to enrol him into the football program so that he has a way to deal with his pent-up rage and grief.

Jamilla May – Angry at her mother for abandoning her family. Jamilla uses humour and comic relief to deal with her frustration. She also uses slam poetry as a creative outlet for her emotions.

Feda – confident and strong. Mediator in awkward situations. Acts as a motherly figure to Huss and Tariq when they need her. In her anger, she finds clarity in speaking her mind.

Huss – Bottles things up. He confides in Feda for advice, but doesn't talk to his closest friends. He uses dark humour and sarcasm to overcome awkward situations. He is aggressive and rough. Hot-tempered and will pick a fight easily.

- To Tariq: *'Tell him if he speaks to me like that again, I won't be responsible for what will happen'*

Hunter – Bully. Antagonist and ill-tempered. Instigator – started the fight at the camp cafeteria.

Lee/Nintendo – violent inner-thoughts that he expresses in random conversations with the boys.

- *'We could duct-tape his mouth when he's sleeping and shove tissues up his nose to stop him from breathing'* (page 131)

Uncle Charlie – introverted and keeps to himself after the loss of his wife. He keeps himself busy with his bee-keeping and humouring Amira. Often misunderstood by people like Tariq, but he is harmless.

Activity: Teacher is to introduce the students to the [Anger Iceberg](#) – although **anger** is displayed outwardly, other emotions may be hidden beneath the surface. These other feelings – such as sadness, fear, or guilt – might cause a person to feel vulnerable, or they may not have the skills to manage them effectively. Students can access [this worksheet](#) to help their understanding.

Students are to act as a counsellor to one of the characters above. They are to write a script helping them talk through their issues and find a solution for their anger. Possible intervention measures could be to encourage the character to figure out what has triggered their anger or anxiety, adopt effective breathing exercises, work on open communication, go for a walk – whatever the student feels would work best for their chosen character. This should be treated as an empathy task. Alternatively, students can partake in a role play with their peers where one student acts as a mediator and the other takes the role of the troubled character.

Exploring Symbols in *The F Team*

Symbols in literature are the author's way of creating meaning and emotion in their text. Often, symbols are used to bring light to an issue or situation in a discreet or implied way. Arja utilises a range of symbols in her text both explicitly and implicitly.

Sport is one of the most obvious symbols/motifs in the novel. Football is a symbol of the struggles / burdens each character from the F Team carries. It is an outlet to help the characters express themselves, which is why Tariq and Aaron feel so strongly about being captain. Being captain is like being in control of your emotions. We know the captaincy represents this for Tariq and we also come to learn about Aaron's need to control his emotions. When Aaron and Tariq are announced as Co-Captains of the team, it is at a point in the novel where they have finally learned to get along and unify their teammates. When Tariq is stood down as captain later in the novel (Chapter 17), it is the catalyst for all the other issues in his life to crumble. Football becomes the basis for their new found friendships but also becomes an important outlet to help the boys express their frustrations, their anger, their loss, their sadness, their grief.

Ask the students to go through the novel and make a note of every instance in which a game is being played on the football field and how the characters react to each game (before, during and after each match). Then encourage the students to tabulate what is happening in the personas' personal lives at the time of each game. How does the match reciprocate/trigger or highlight these emotions? How do the characters deal?

Extension Task: Add an extra column to the table for students to identify key quotes from the passage that reinforces the connection between personal issues and the physical game.

| Match Number (Page) | Characters involved | What is occurring in their personal lives at the time of the game | Connection between personal issues and the game |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|---|
| Example: Match 1, page 54 | Mr Archie and Tariq | Mr Archie is trying to assert himself as the school principal but it is not being received well by The Wolf Pack | The game is an intense one where Mr Archie and his team do not go easy on the boys. This foreshadows how intensely Mr Archie is going to try to create change within The Wolf Pack and the school itself. |

Although he is considered a secondary character in the novel, Uncle Charlie's beekeeping is also a great symbol for his characterisation. In western culture, bees symbolise a need to belong to a community, a feeling that you need to organise your life or a desire or concern to busy oneself and have a purpose (hence the saying 'busy as a bee'). Essentially beekeeping is 'busy work' to help preoccupy Uncle Charlie from his deep-seated grief that he has learned to conceal. In this way, beekeeping also becomes an outlet for Uncle Charlie to cope with the hardships of his life before returning to his isolated shed/garage on his own. When Tariq snaps at Uncle Charlie about selling his honey jars, it hits that much closer to home because it makes him feel as though everything he has been doing to cope until now is useless.

Other symbols that the teacher and the students may wish to explore in the novel include:

- Aarons dad's collection of luxury cars
- Riley's beanie
- Amira's desire to climb the monkey bars
- The Poetry Slam Competition with the girls high school

Bankstown Poetry Slam

Class should read the BPS slam (Chapter 32) performance collectively. Each stanza is told from one of the boys' perspectives. It highlights the importance of what the school means to them. Students can identify the various poetic devices implemented in a performance poetry piece delivered by The Wolf Pack. Look for how each character uses different techniques to portray his perspective.

Differentiated Task: Select various students to perform the poetry piece to their peers as members of The Wolf Pack.

Extension Activity: Have students create their own performance poetry piece in groups or individually where they outline the importance of their own education and their own school.

Huss's betrayal

Just as Tariq is showing signs of maturity and growth, Huss's betrayal of the leaked videos to the media sets him over the edge. Students explore this situation in relation to the plot and connect it to their understanding of the features of the bildungsroman genre. Chapter 34–36 are intense for Tariq who is trying really hard to control his anger. At the end of Chapter 36 he snaps at Huss: 'no wonder your dad walked out on you, who would want a snitch as their son?'

Students need to realise the weight of their words on the people they care about. Words have the power to heal or the power to destroy. In Tariq's instance, his words were too harsh. Students are to compose a diary entry from the perspective of Tariq and/or Huss about this confrontation. Teachers can use discretion about the nature of the empathy task here.

The Final Try

The final game versus The A Team in chapter 38 is the culmination of all the boys' hard work, patience, and struggles come to life on the football field. This should be read as a class so the students get a feel for the momentum of the final football game.

AFTER READING THE NOVEL

It's a Theme *Park*

Teachers can facilitate a class discussion about some of the key themes presented in *The F Team*.

Allow students to brainstorm what themes they think were the most obvious in the text and how they were presented. Some suggestions could include:

- coming of age
- friendship
- anger / self-control
- the importance of education
- unity in family
- courage and heroism
- prejudice
- Individual vs Society

Once the themes have been identified and examples for each have been presented students are to be divided into groups of 4–5. They are to design a Theme Park based on the literary ideas presented in *The F Team*. The various aspects of the park from the layout, to the rides, to the characters should all be inspired by the novel.

- As a guide, students may want to consider the following questions:
- What are the major themes of the novel? How can these themes be represented in a theme park?
- What are the major plot points of the novel? How can these be represented by the ‘lands’ in the theme park?
- Who are the major characters of the novel? How can these characters inspire theme park characters and rides?
- What is the setting of the novel? How can this setting inspire the architecture of the park?
- How can merchandise sold in the theme park relate to the novel?

For this activity students will create a theme park map, shows/attractions, characters, merchandise. Students will then present their project to the class.

That’s A Wrap

To conclude their study of the novel, teachers can implement one or more of these final activities depending on the capabilities of the class.

Novel Podcast Project

Students work with a group to create a podcast episode on the novel *The F Team*.

The podcast must include:

- A clever name for the podcast including a catchy introduction
- The students’ initial thoughts about the novel and how they changed over time
- A discussion of key elements from the novel such as characters, plot, theme, conflict, symbolism, setting, writing style
- A brief biography of the writer with relevant background information
- A discussion of how the novel connects to other pieces of literature, historical / current events and or the group’s members’ lives
- A recommendation of the book including their own rating system

Group roles for the podcast include:

- *The Ring Leader*: this person works to keep the group organised and on topic.

- *The Show Host*: this person is the lead speaker of the podcast who directs changes in topics, keeps the group discussion on track and manages the overall flow of the conversation
- *The Content Writer / editors*: these are the people who organise and outline the content of the show. They also draft specific points that will be covered in the podcast. This should not be scripted – it is a podcast. Group members should have ‘talking points’ and notes on general ideas they want to cover but they should not be reading information during the podcast.

Audio Engineer: these are the people responsible for editing the final show. They make the decision to cut and paste portions of the show as needed. They add music, the introduction, the ending and any sound effects that may be needed.

Talk Show

Students can conduct a talk show about the book. In much the same way as Oprah or Ellen can talk to celebrities and authors about their arts, students can conduct a role play where a talk show host interviews members of the cast – students can pretend to be Tariq, Huss, Aaron, essentially any character from the book.

Create A Book Trailer

Movie previews always offer a quick sequence of the best moments that make us want to watch it – storyboard or narrate the scenes for your trailer. Focus on verbs.

Create A Billboard

All good books turn into movies (that are never actually as good as the original book). Students can create a billboard about what they think would be the most compelling image(s) and create an advertisement for the film. Students can present these to the class and make notes on which celebrity they would get to play each role and why.

Convention Introduction

You have been asked to introduce the book’s author to a convention of English teachers. What would you say? Write and deliver your speech.

Character Instagram

Students create a fictitious Instagram account for a character from the F Team. They can use the template found [here](#). Students should consider the following questions:

- What kind of content would the character post?
- How would this character explain or caption each post?
- What kind of language would this character use?
- Who would this character follow on Instagram?
- What kind of comments would people leave on this character’s post?
- Who is friends with this character?
- What are the key events and issues from the story that might appear on this character’s Instagram feed?

The chosen character’s Instagram page should include the following elements:

- The character's profile
- A profile picture of the character
- Two to three Insta Story Highlight Covers
- Three posts from the character with a relevant caption that relates to the story
- Each post must contain 2–3 relevant comments from followers
- An explanation of how the Instagram account connects to the book – this could be presented to the class

Essay Writing Strategies

As a class, use the practice essay question below to formulate an A-Grade introduction. Discuss what is needed:

1. Strong thesis
2. Introduction of the texts
3. Introductions of the historical/cultural contexts
4. Introductions of the composers and their personal contexts

When teaching essay body writing strategies, many acronyms can be used to help students identify the features of paragraph writing. Some include P.E.E.L, T.E.E.L, S.E.X.Y. One that works very well is P.E.T.A.L. Teacher is to introduce students to the P.E.T.A.L paragraph structure.

- **Point** – write a point for your paragraph that links to the essay question
- **Example / evidence** – identify a scenario where this point is presented with a relevant quote from the text
- **Technique** – what literary technique is used in the selected quote?
- **Analysis** – how does this quote relate to the idea you have presented in detail?
- **Link** – how does this relate to the essay question and the text as a whole?

Students are to practice building point paragraphs as a class about a certain essay topic and the teacher is encouraged to guide student writing. Complete several class examples before encouraging students to complete some on their own.

Possible focus essay questions could include:

- Explore three important themes portrayed in *The F Team* and the way in which they aid the progression of the plot.
- How does Tariq's characterisation change as a result of his experiences in the novel?
- What role does belonging play in creating a personal identity?
- How does prejudice affect our interactions with people? Use evidence from the novel *The F Team*.
- What criticism of contemporary society is Arja making in her novel *The F Team*?