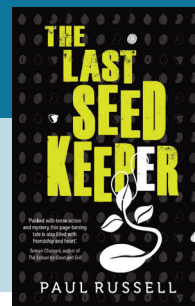


Title: The Last Seed Keeper

Author & Illustrator: Paul Russell

ISBN: 9781922539939 | **Publication date:** Mar 2025 | **Audience age:** 9-12 years (Middle-Grade Fiction)

Key Curriculum Areas: English, HASS, Drama, Visual Arts, Science / STEM



SYNOPSIS:

The first instalment in a gripping new trilogy, *The Last Seed Keeper* is an empowering read about corruption, environmentalism, and what we would do if nature gave us a second chance.

Ivy is a Groundling, bound to roam the surface of the Earth, eking a living from the rubble of the past. Skyler lives above the clouds in a haven of technology, wanting for nothing yet knowing there must be something more. Their paths are fixed, in a barren world that has forgotten nature... until Ivy makes a discovery that changes everything. Suddenly, a forgotten orphan from the Piles holds the key to building a new world. But change is never popular with those in power, and as word gets out, society begins to fracture. Both girls' lives unravel as Skyler uncovers the secrets that have been kept from her, and Ivy finds out just how important she is to the new world. *The Last Seed Keeper* is a tense, heart-pounding adventure about friendship, secrecy, breaking down barriers, questioning everything, and holding onto hope in the darkest of places.

THEMES:

- Fantasy • Friendship • Power & Corruption • Technology
- Environmentalism/Climate Change • Adventure

SELLING POINTS:

- A timely and urgent book that explores a worst-case scenario of the climate crisis, with an emphasis on hope, positive action and collaboration.
- An excellent classroom resource for teaching environmental impact, sustainability and climate change.
- Provides upper middle grade and early YA readers with a complex, dynamic plot, without the mature themes such as romance and violence that sometimes feature in this age bracket.
- Centres around two strong female characters

AUTHOR MOTIVATION:

This book started, as a 70 word picture book. I was inspired to write a book with an environmental focus and examined climate change. It was a really simple text that was going to be driven by powerful illustrations of a dirty, colourless world that suddenly had something green within it and that colour was going to spread throughout all of the characters until the final spread was going to show the beauty of nature. Demonstrating the hope that remains. I guess, the idea that a picture tells a thousand words rang true as I tried to write the same story as a middle-grade reader and it turned into a trilogy of books.

I feel like climate change and the environment destruction is a pivotal problem facing every aspect of the world as we know it and that it will continue to be exponentially important issue as we go into the future. I believe that for my children and the children of today, it will play a role in every decision and idea in their lifetimes and I feel we have spent too long with this knowledge, not looking for and embracing possible solutions. This text is a worst-case scenario, but I also really wanted to show that even in worst-case scenario, there are still options and still the chance of hope. A hope that must be embraced and adopted by the next generation in a future filled with questions, uncertainty and change.

AUTHOR BACKGROUND:

Paul Russell is a national award-winning picture book author, international presenter and teacher with more than twenty years' experience. He is passionate about empowering children through literature, imagination and the written word.

Paul's characters promote inclusion and the importance of individuality and finding your own place in the world. He is also a playwright, dyslexic, lover of chocolate and fine food, father and owner of an ill-disciplined, poorly trained but lovable dachshund named Enzo.

INTERVIEW

What is the inspiration for this story?

The inspiration for this book, as it ended up, was actually a picture book that I wrote that was very unsuccessful and was rightfully knocked back by my publisher. I wanted to write a book about the environment, it is something I think everyone needs to think about more and I wondered if I could write a picture book that took a bit of a different view. So, I wrote what I thought was an amazing picture book, it only had about 70 words which for me is an achievement, I normally use far too many words. But because I had such a clear picture in my mind of what this book should be, I wrote these huge notes about what should happen in the illustrations. After my publisher read it, she said that maybe this is a middle-grade book or a series, not just a picture book, and like always. Turned out she was right.

What was the most rewarding part of this project?

The most rewarding part of this project was the collaboration that occurred with my editing team. It was so great to be challenged when writing a project like this and have people reading my work and saying "have you thought about ?" or "Is that character really going to ...?" With a novel series, one tiny change can make an enormous knock on effect of changes and rewrites and further editing but it is such a rewarding process when it all comes together and the work is so much better for it. Having vigorous conversation about the book and needing to justify characters, choices and impacts is such a terrific way to create and I think is evident in the outcome and quality of the book.

What was the most challenging part of this project?

The exact same thing as above.

TEACHER ACTIVITIES/NOTES:

Activities are linked to the [Australian Curriculum](#).

BEFORE READING

- Ask the students what they know / wonder about 'Climate Change'. Do they have any concerns for the future? What do they hope for the future? Turn and talk to a friend.
- Show / hand out to students a variety of seeds / seed pods / bulbs. With a partner, students can discuss the 'possibilities' of these seeds for the future. Then propose the question, 'What if these didn't exist?'
- As a class, brainstorm some 'sustainability' ideas for a healthy future environment on a mind map.
- Look at the cover of *The Last Seed Keeper*. Ask, what do you notice? What does it make you wonder? What might this adventure be about? Does the cover entice you to find out? Why or why not?
- Considering the title, what might this tell us about the main character/s? How do you know?
- Read the blurb. Discuss.

CHAPTER 1:**Plot tension:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LE03](#)) ([AC9E4LE03](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E6LE03](#))

Opening line – *"Stop looking up. We don't look up," Hutch mumbled at Ivy through his thick beard, the silver flecks around his mouth catching the light, as he caught her gazing up through the skylight again.*" (p.1)

Closing line – *"Who have you been talking to?" the other man shouted before both Pickers pulled up their masks and raced after Durie.*" (p.15)

- How does the opening line hook you in? Why does it pique your interest? How does the author intend for readers to feel?
- What question/s does it bring about?
- How does this opening line implore you to find out more?
- What impression does the closing paragraph leave the reader? In what ways does it encourage the reader to keep reading?

Vocabulary:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LA10](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LA08](#))

'superstitious', 'sentimental', 'distortion', 'certifiable', 'sullenly', 'notoriously'

- Discuss and write down the meanings of the vocabulary terms. Write them in your own sentences.

Literary Technique: Visual Imagery

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LE03](#)) ([AC9E3LE04](#)) ([AC9E4LE03](#)) ([AC9E4LE04](#)) |

Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E6LA08](#)) ([AC9E5LE02](#)) ([AC9E5LE03](#)) ([AC9E5LE04](#)) ([AC9E6LE04](#)) ([AC9E5LE05](#)) ([AC9E6LE05](#))

- **P1 – 2:** How does the author use visual imagery to paint a picture of Hutch? What words and language are used to describe his personality and appearance?
- Draw a picture of how you imagine Hutch in your mind.
- Alternatively, write a sentence about Ivy using visual imagery techniques for a partner to illustrate.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- **P2-3:** How would you describe the differences between the Pickers and the Sorters? What do you think their roles are? What do you imagine this kind of environment looks like?
- **P4-9:** What can you infer about Ivy?
- What can you tell about the system of living?
- **P10-15:** What do Ivy and Durie have in common?
- How is Durie's view of the world different to Ivy's?
- Who do you think Durie is running from, and why?

CHAPTER 2:**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LA07](#)) ([AC9E3LA08](#)) ([AC9E4LA08](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LA08](#)) ([AC9E6LA06](#))

'mockingly', 'luxuriously', 'unenthusiastically', 'ironically'

- Write down the definitions of the above adverbs (describing an action). Use each one in a sentence to describe 'how' Skyler is behaving or the actions of the scene.

Literary Technique / Humour: Sarcasm

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LE03](#)) ([AC9E4LE03](#)) ([AC9E4LE04](#)) ([AC9E3LE05](#)) ([AC9E4LE05](#)) |

Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LA01](#)) ([AC9E5LE03](#)) ([AC9E5LE04](#)) ([AC9E5LE05](#))

- P24:** What is sarcasm? How is Skyler being sarcastic?
- Brainstorm more sarcastic statements in response to Amity's instructions.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- P17:** What can you immediately tell about the contrast between Ivy's world and Skyler's world?
- P18-23:** What can you infer about Skyler? How do you think she feels about her way of living? How do you know?
- How would you describe this particular system of living and the era it is set in?
- Do you have a preference for which of the two you'd like to live; Luxury E-12 Pod or in the Piles? Virtual learning or face-to-face learning? Provide reasoning for your choices.
- Which of the technological advancements mentioned would you like to see in the future? Any other ideas to add?

CHAPTER 3:**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LA10](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LA08](#))

'periscope', 'treacherous', 'solitude', 'ingenious'

- Discuss the definitions of the terms above. Find more unfamiliar terms in the chapter or add your own vocabulary terms that relate to Ivy's living conditions.

Literary Technique: Metaphors

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LE03](#)) ([AC9E3LE04](#)) ([AC9E4LE03](#)) ([AC9E4LE04](#)) ([AC9E3LE05](#)) ([AC9E4LE05](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E6LA08](#)) ([AC9E5LE02](#)) ([AC9E5LE03](#)) ([AC9E5LE04](#)) ([AC9E6LE04](#)) ([AC9E5LE05](#)) ([AC9E6LE05](#))

"...although the old Pickers swore they could feel it in their bones..." (p.29).

A metaphor is a figure of speech to represent an object or action symbolic of something else. To 'feel it in your bones' refers to an intuition or a belief so ingrained that the body can sense the truth. There is an age-old belief that people with certain medical conditions can predict weather changes due to their bones' sensitivity to barometer pressures. The author has utilised this metaphor with reference to the weather changes in the Piles.

- How do these sentiments symbolise both the literal sense and the metaphorical sense in terms of how hard the Pickers are working?
- Write another metaphor to describe Ivy's, or the Pickers' experience with the weather quickly turning. Be creative!

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- P32:** What is the biggest enemy to the Pickers? Discuss how dehydration might be more likely in Ivy's living conditions than in Skyler's (or yours).
- P33-34:** How do you think Ivy feels about the plant? Why does it bring so much fascination to her world? Why is it important to keep it alive?
- P36:** How is Ivy filtering the water? Draw a diagram of her piping system.
- What do you think the 'green thing' from the plant is? Do you think it could be edible or poisonous? What should Ivy do?

CHAPTER 4:**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LA06](#)) ([AC9E3LA07](#)) ([AC9E3LA08](#)) ([AC9E4LA11](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E6LA06](#))

'engaged', 'emerged', 'concealed'

- Write the definitions for the vocabulary terms. Discuss that these are verbs to describe a specific action or feeling. Use these in a sentence.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- **P43:** Considering the way Skyler's father talks about the world below, what does it make you wonder about other parts of our world that we don't get to see? Does it make you wonder about the living conditions in areas that may be less, or more, affluent than your own? Research and write a report about a part of the world different to your own.
- **P45:** Do you agree that most people don't care about things 'outside their own bubble'? What ways can you think of to share and learn about the world and how things work that also keep people engaged?
- Do you think people these days are too reliant on technology? Why or why not? Write a persuasive piece for your argument.

CHAPTER 5:**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LA10](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LA08](#))

'insulting', 'slender', 'spherical', 'oversized', 'precious'

- Write down the definitions of the above adjectives (describing words). Use each one in a sentence to describe a particular personality trait or characteristic of a character or object.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- **P50-51:** Why do you think the Sorter has reacted in this way to Ivy's treasure?
- **P56:** Why do you think beans are so valuable in this world?
- **P58-59:** Do you think Durie is trustworthy or not? Should Ivy be concerned with his number of credits? Give reasons for your answers.
- With her newfound wealth, do you think Ivy is in danger?

CHAPTER 6:**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LA10](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LA08](#)) ([AC9E6LA06](#))

'lapels', 'epaulets', 'drone', 'generators', 'pandemics'

- Find and write the definitions of these terms and use them in sentences.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- **P63:** How is Skyler's dad's description of 'a vital cog in the system' an analogy for how people work in the factories?
- **P66:** What is algae? How is it normally grown? Why do you think it might be important here, in the clouds?
- **P71:** Explain what 'Hemipterans' are. What does 'genetically modified' mean?
- What does this chapter tell you about how climate change may be a factor in the preservation of our future?
- What did you find most fascinating about the factory? Draw a diagram of one of the rooms, based on the visual language described.

CHAPTER 7:**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: (AC9E3LA06) (AC9E3LA07) (AC9E3LA08) (AC9E4LA11) | Years 5 & 6 English: (AC9E6LA06)

'mocking', 'crawled', 'smiling'

- Write down the definitions of these terms and a synonym for each. Write the similar words in a sentence that relates to the behaviours of the intruders.

Literary Technique: Simile / Hyperbole

Years 3 & 4 English: (AC9E3LE03) (AC9E3LE04) (AC9E4LE03) (AC9E4LE04)

Years 5 & 6 English: (AC9E6LA08) (AC9E5LE02) (AC9E5LE03) (AC9E5LE04) (AC9E6LE04) (AC9E5LE05) (AC9E6LE05)

"She had always dreamed of a life above the clouds, but it seemed about as likely to come true as for people who dreamed they could fly or shoot laser beams from their eyes." (p.75-76)

A simile is a figure of speech comparing one thing with another of a different kind, using words such as 'like', 'so', 'as' than'. Hyperbole is an exaggerated statement, not meant to be literal, and used in emotive / emphasised situations or dialogue.

- Highlight the simile and the hyperbole in the statement above.
- How does this language create a greater impact on the reader? Re-write the sentence beginning with 'She had always dreamed of a life above the clouds, but it seemed as likely to come true as...' with your own simile and exaggerated statement.
- Illustrate your sentence.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- Did you find Durie's actions surprising or predictable? Explain your reasoning.
- What do you think Ivy and Hutch might do next?

CHAPTER 8:**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: (AC9E3LA07) (AC9E3LA08) (AC9E4LA08) | Years 5 & 6 English: (AC9E5LA08) (AC9E6LA06)

'comfort', 'obsessed', 'demanded', 'snatched'

- Discuss the meanings of these emotive verbs. Write all of these in a sentence or short story, and illustrate. Find more emotive verbs or phrases in the text.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- P84:** Why do you think the employees at XyleCorp need to be tracked?
- P85:** Why do you think the artefacts are locked away? Why do you think these 'purposeless' things don't exist here anymore?
- P87-92:** What impression do you get of Eden Valentina? Do you think she is trustworthy? Why is she and Dr Blackwell interested in the seeds?

CHAPTER 9:**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: (AC9E3LA06) (AC9E3LA07) (AC9E3LA08) (AC9E3LA09) (AC9E4LA08) (AC9E4LA09)

Years 5 & 6 English: (AC9E5LA06) (AC9E5LA08) (AC9E6LA06)

'putrid', 'visibility', 'dangling', 'invisible', 'horizon', 'heavily', 'expendable', 'burrowed', 'relatively', 'indistinguishable'

- With a partner, sort the vocabulary terms into the following categories: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs. Add more interesting words to these lists from this chapter.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- How does the author use the literary strategies of visual literacy and ‘show don’t tell’ to describe Hutch’s home and the way Ivy is feeling about her discovery? Write another description to explain either how Ivy feels at the discovery of Hutch’s plant or when she learned that he dropped a seed into her Pile’s shaft.
- What similarities and differences can you find between Hutch’s home and Eden Valentina’s office?

CHAPTER 10:**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LA10](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LA08](#)) ([AC9E6LA06](#))

‘urgency’, ‘logical’, ‘technological’, ‘generation’

- Write these terms all in one or two related sentences or in a short story.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- **P110:** Why does Skyler’s dad call her ‘Katrina’?
- **P112-113:** What has happened to Skyler? What does this chapter make you wonder?
- What might happen next?

CHAPTER 11:**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LY12](#)) ([AC9E4LY11](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LY08](#)) ([AC9E6LY09](#))

‘new’, as in *“It’s a new day, Puggle...”* (p.115)

‘piece’, as in *“Ivy started using her finger in the bowl to get every last piece of the stuff stuck on the bottom that the spoon wouldn’t lift.”* (p.119)

‘through’, as in *“Hutch had gone back to his usual silent, stubborn self and just nodded and waved goodbye as he walked through the door.”* (p.121)

‘two’, ‘too’, ‘to’

These terms are homophones (words that share the same pronunciation but have different spelling and meanings).

- Write the matching homophones for the above terms, and use them in your own sentences that make sense with the correct spelling. Can you find more homophones in the text, or add your own to a list?
- Create a graphic showing the differences between homonyms, homophones and homographs, and students provide examples of each.

Literary Technique: Idioms

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LE03](#)) ([AC9E3LE04](#)) ([AC9E4LE03](#)) ([AC9E4LE04](#)) ([AC9E3LE05](#)) ([AC9E4LE05](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E6LA08](#)) ([AC9E5LE02](#)) ([AC9E5LE03](#)) ([AC9E5LE04](#)) ([AC9E6LE04](#)) ([AC9E5LE05](#)) ([AC9E6LE05](#))

“Ivy’s frustration grew and she was about to give the rude little ball of light in her hand a piece of her mind ...” (p.128)

- What is an idiom? What does the ‘a piece of her mind’ idiom mean? (ie. To tell someone why you are angry with them.)
- Brainstorm other ways to describe this idiom.
- What are some other idioms you know involving being angry or frustrated? For example, ‘fly off the handle’, ‘blow a fuse’, ‘to have a fit’, ‘to drive one up the wall’, etc.
- Make your own meme with your favourite saying and an image to match/contrast.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- **P117:** Can you imagine a world without taste? What do you think of Ivy's reaction to the cloud food? What new food have you tried recently?
- **P119-120:** What do you think about the Sky Folk trying to hold all the power? In what ways does this situation remind you of real life? How is this story an analogy?
- **P28-129:** Who is the unconscious girl? What do you think might happen when they meet? How do you think Ivy will solve her problem and escape?

CHAPTER 12:**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LA07](#)) ([AC9E3LA08](#)) ([AC9E4LA08](#)) ([AC9E4LA11](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LA08](#)) ([AC9E6LA06](#))

'blurled', 'chimed', 'surging', 'abandoned'

- Write the definitions for the vocabulary terms. Discuss that these are verbs to describe a specific action. Brainstorm and list synonyms and antonyms for these verbs.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- **P135:** Why is Dr Blackwell reluctant to help Ms Valentina?
- **P141:** What is meant by the term 'sedition'?
- What did you learn about Durie, Hutch and Eden in this chapter? What are their motivations/goals?
- What did you learn about the two different worlds and how they operate?
- Who is the 'baby platypus' that Eden is referring to? How do you know?

CHAPTER 13:**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LA06](#)) ([AC9E3LA07](#)) ([AC9E3LA08](#)) ([AC9E3LA09](#)) ([AC9E4LA08](#)) ([AC9E4LA09](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LY08](#)) ([AC9E6LY09](#))

'footprints', 'long-lost', 'bodyweight'

Notice that these terms are compound words (a series of two or more words that collectively form a single word). Break these into two words to write an equation. For example, 'foot' + 'prints' = 'footprints'. Write down other compound words including 'foot' (eg. footnote, football, bigfoot, footlocker, barefoot, etc).

- Find other compound words in the text.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- Explain how 'bugs' help to provide nutrients to soil in an information report.
- What surprised you in this chapter?

CHAPTER 14:**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LA07](#)) ([AC9E3LA08](#)) ([AC9E4LA08](#)) ([AC9E4LA06](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LA08](#)) ([AC9E6LA06](#)) ([AC9E5LA05](#)) ([AC9E6LA05](#))

'dreamed', 'racing', 'snapped'

- Discuss the meanings of these emotive verbs. Write each of these in a compound or complex sentence, making sure to use the correct tense.

Literary Technique / Humour: Sarcasm

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LE03](#)) ([AC9E4LE03](#)) ([AC9E4LE04](#)) ([AC9E3LE05](#)) ([AC9E4LE05](#)) |

Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LA01](#)) ([AC9E5LE03](#)) ([AC9E5LE04](#)) ([AC9E5LE05](#))

"I was being sarcastic," Durie yelled after them." (p.160)

- The author has used sarcasm as one of the humour strategies for comedic effect. Find and explain the part where Durie is being sarcastic. Why don't Dr Blackwell and Carlson understand the joke?

Discussion Questions and Comprehension

- Do you think Durie can save the world? What is meant by doing something 'bigger than yourself'?
- Do you think Eden Valentina will achieve her goal to destroy everything?
- What do you think will happen next?

CHAPTER 15:

Vocabulary:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LA07](#)) ([AC9E3LA08](#)) ([AC9E4LA08](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LA08](#)) ([AC9E6LA06](#))

'broad', 'healthy', 'groggy', 'reluctant'

- Find/turn these terms into adverbs (describing an action) and place them in appropriate sentences relevant to the scenarios in the book. For example, 'Ivy and Skyler followed and Durie reluctantly followed too, staying a good step behind Ivy.'
- Make a list of more adverbs or find some in the text.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- P175: Find out where Svalbard is and why it is significant in this instance.
- What are the potential dangers and consequences of entering the forbidden zone?
- Do you think Ivy and Durie can repair their relationship? Why or why not?

CHAPTER 16:

Vocabulary:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LA10](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LA08](#))

'identical', 'brighter', 'colder', 'toxic'

- Use each of the above adjectives (describing words) in a sentence or two to describe Eden Valentina's appearance or personality.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- Write a Character Profile for Eden Valentina. Include adjectives and terms to describe her appearance, character traits, behaviour and personality.

CHAPTER 17:

Vocabulary:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LA10](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LA08](#))

'economy', 'uninhabitable', 'outbreaks', 'suffocated', 'starvation', 'survival'

- Discuss the definitions of the terms above from Pages 186 - 187. Find more in the chapter or add your own vocabulary terms that relate to the event of the original world collapsing, as described by Katrina Blackwell.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- **P186:** What is meant by 'We needed money to get it off the ground, literally.'? What does Katrina mean by 'The First Rising'?
- **P190:** How has the revelation that Hutch is Ivy's dad made her feel? How do you know? How does it make YOU feel?
- **P194:** 'Little pig, little pig, let me in' is used as a literary strategy called 'allusion' (a reference to a literary work that is familiar or well-known). What story is the author referencing here?
- **P196:** Why did Ivy's blood work to open the bio-lock? How is she 'the key'?

CHAPTER 18:**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LY09](#)) ([AC9E3LY10](#)) ([AC9E3LY11](#)) ([AC9E4LY09](#)) ([AC9E4LY10](#))
Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LY08](#)) ([AC9E5LY09](#)) ([AC9E5LY10](#)) ([AC9E6LY08](#)) ([AC9E6LY09](#))

'enquiries', 'equipment', 'antiques'

- identify the common spelling pattern ('qu') in the terms above. Break down the words into sounds or syllables. List other words with similar spelling or phoneme patterns.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- Why do you think Eden has kept all the antiques and artefacts?
- Complete a Venn Diagram to show the similarities and differences between technology like 'Amity' and Eden's antiques.
- How do you feel about Eden's actions and plans for entering the Arctic Circle?

CHAPTER 19:**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LA10](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LA08](#)) ([AC9E6LA06](#))

'relic', 'corridor', 'foreign', 'architect', 'adrenaline'

- Write these terms all in one or two related sentences or in a short story.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- **P209:** Can you guess which countries' flags are being referred to?
- **P210:** Who is The Last Seed Keeper?
- What have you learned about the vaults in Svalbard? How will the friends save the planet?

CHAPTER 20:**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LA10](#)) | Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LA08](#))

'sneered', 'bizarre', 'desperately'

- Discuss and write down the meanings of the vocabulary terms. Write them in one sentence.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- **P214:** 'Two birds with one stone'. What is the full phrase and what does this idiom or proverb mean? (To kill two birds with one stone means to take care of two tasks at the same time with one action). Why does Eden use this phrase in this instance?
- Interpret and discuss the emotions the characters may have felt in this chapter. How did this chapter make you feel? Did it end the way you had expected?
- What might happen next?

CHAPTER 21:**Vocabulary:**

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LA06](#)) ([AC9E3LA07](#)) ([AC9E3LA08](#)) ([AC9E3LA09](#)) ([AC9E4LA08](#)) ([AC9E4LA09](#))
Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LA06](#)) ([AC9E5LA08](#)) ([AC9E6LA06](#))

'silently', 'completely', 'simply'

- Use each of these adverbs in a complex sentence.
- Write down the base word (an adjective) for each term.
(*silently* – *silent*, *completely* – *complete*, *simply* – *simple*).

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- Find and list the literary techniques used in this chapter (and throughout the book), and give evidence with an example. These might include: hyperbole, metaphors, similes, idioms, visual imagery, allusion, show don't tell, and any others you can discover.
- What major plot points did you find out / were resolved in this final chapter? These can relate to:
 - The relationship between Ivy and Durie.
 - How Ivy feels about Hutch being her father.
 - How Ivy feels about being 'the key'.
 - How Skyler feels about the discovery of her parents' identities.
 - The outcome of XyleCorp and potentially saving the world.
- What other points might still be left unanswered? For example:
 - The reason why Hutch kept his secret from Ivy.
 - What Eden Valentina might plan next.
 - Whether Ivy and Skyler will continue their mission.
- How do you feel about the conclusion of the story? Has it left you wanting more?
- What do you think will happen following this ending?

Further Discussion Questions:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LA04](#)) ([AC9E4LA07](#)) ([AC9E3LE01](#)) ([AC9E3LE02](#)) ([AC9E4LE02](#)) ([AC9E3LE03](#)) ([AC9E3LE04](#)) ([AC9E4LE03](#)) ([AC9E4LE04](#)) ([AC9E3LE05](#)) ([AC9E4LE05](#)) ([AC9E3LY02](#)) ([AC9E4LY02](#)) ([AC9E3LY05](#)) ([AC9E4LY05](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E6LA02](#)) ([AC9E5LA04](#)) ([AC9E6LA03](#)) ([AC9E6LA08](#)) ([AC9E5LE02](#)) ([AC9E6LE02](#)) ([AC9E5LE03](#)) ([AC9E5LE04](#)) ([AC9E6LE03](#)) ([AC9E6LE04](#)) ([AC9E5LE05](#)) ([AC9E6LE05](#)) ([AC9E6LY01](#)) ([AC9E5LY02](#)) ([AC9E6LY02](#)) ([AC9E5LY03](#)) ([AC9E5LY05](#)) ([AC9E6LY05](#))

- What are the main themes of the story? What important messages does the author intend to portray?
- What did you learn about the characters, in particular, Ivy and Skyler? What did you learn about their relationships with the people around them? What about their feelings about their home environments?
- What is your impression of Ivy, considering where she came from? As a Picker, would you view her differently to Skyler? Have your feelings about her changed from the beginning of the story to the end? Why?
- Did you find the revelations about any of the characters as surprising or predictable?
- What major contrasts could you find between the Clouds and the Piles? How might this relate to real life?
- How do you feel about Climate Change? What consequences do you believe this will have on our future? What strategies and tips can you share for looking after our world?
- What did you learn about the fictional advancements in technology? Do you see a future like this for us?
- What does the term 'dystopian' mean? How is this story an example of a dystopian world?
- How do you feel about the notion of 'good vs evil'? What have you learned about 'power', 'greed' and 'corruption'?
- Who were the villains in the story, what challenges did they create for the new world and its people? Did they change by the end of the story, or do you think they might change in the future?
- Discuss the ways and provide examples of how the different characters in the story showed / didn't show the some of the following values and traits: teamwork, bravery, confidence, self-belief, trust, understanding, kindness, humour, problem-solving, responsibility.
- Think about a particular scene with high emotion, such as Ivy starting to recall the past and accept the fact that Hutch is her dad. Write about this scenario whilst thinking from Ivy's perspective using the Six Thinking Hats (white: facts, red: emotions, yellow: benefits, green: creative thinking, blue: process, black: challenges).
- What did you learn about Svalbard and the seed vault?
- What is the importance of sustainability, conservation and protecting nature's resources? Why was it so important for children to be able to understand this for the future?
- How did you feel about reading the book with alternating chapters from the two different perspectives? Was it easy or challenging to keep track?

- How do you think the author has used language and concepts to appeal to readers, including use of humour and suspense? Did you find any parts particularly engaging or upsetting? Why?
- Did you find the dialogue between the characters realistic? Why or why not?
- Do you have a favourite scene from the story? Why this one?
- What do you think will happen after this story ends? What will become of the world/s? What will become of the relationships between the characters?

CHARACTERS:

Groundlings:

Ivy
Hutch
Durie
Bubbles
Other supporting characters

Sky Folk:

Skyler
Dr Robert Blackwell (Dad)
Dr Katrina Blackwell (Mum)
Eden Valentina
Carlson
Ari
Other supporting characters

- Who is your favourite character? Why?
- Who is your least favourite character? Why?

Character Analysis

Years 3 & 4 English: ([AC9E3LE01](#)) ([AC9E3LE02](#)) ([AC9E3LE03](#)) ([AC9E4LE03](#)) ([AC9E3LE05](#)) ([AC9E4LE05](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([AC9E5LA08](#)) ([AC9E5LE03](#)) ([AC9E5LE04](#)) ([AC9E5LE05](#)) ([AC9E6LE05](#))

Use the following acronym (STEAL) to identify features of one of the characters from *The Last Seed Keeper*. Find parts of the text to show the way they **Speak**, **Think**, **Effect** on others, **Act** and **Look**.

Speech – what does the character say? How do they speak?

Thought – what are the character's thoughts and feelings?

Effect on others – how do people react to the character?

Actions – what does the character do?

Looks – what does the character look like?

- Choose a character to create a character profile page, including a name, picture, adjectives / descriptive language to describe their appearance, personality traits, interests, dislikes, and so on.
- Use the STEAL method to develop your own character when writing a narrative.

Structure Format / Writing Style:

Writing style: Dystopian Fiction

The story of *The Last Seed Keeper* is set in a dystopian future; an 'imagined state or society where there is great suffering or injustice.' In the first chapter, we are introduced to a world of 'Pickers' and 'Sorters' with references to a 'Great War' and how the world has changed. In the second chapter, we are introduced to a world where everything is white and 'useful', and primary communication is via technology.

- What parts in the book would you consider factual and useful, realistic or unrealistic? Being set in the future, is there anything you can relate to (particularly with the use of technology and trends)?
- What, in real life, has the author used for inspiration?

Structure Format

The beginning and ending of each chapter keep the reader engaged throughout, with rising action and emotive language. For example:

Beginning: “Skyler-Jane, it is time to wake up and face your destiny.” (Ch.4, p.39).

Ending: “Maybe she should have stayed home and just posted about make-up.” (Ch.4, p.46).

- How does the ‘hook’ of the opening and closing lines of a chapter assist in structuring a narrative?
- The author has written the chapters by alternating back and forth between the two parallel worlds, until the point in which Ivy and Skyler’s interaction merge. Discuss how this has helped to illustrate the parallel storylines and keep the reader focused on the plot.

ENGLISH**Narrative writing**

Years 3 & 4 English: (AC9E3LA03) (AC9E3LA04) (AC9E4LA03) (AC9E4LA04) (AC9E4LA09) (AC9E4LA12) (AC9E4LE02) (AC9E3LE03) (AC9E4LE03) (AC9E3LE05) (AC9E4LE05) (AC9E3LY06) (AC9E3LY07) (AC9E4LY06) (AC9E4LY07)

Years 5 & 6 English: (AC9E5LA04) (AC9E6LA08) (AC9E5LE04) (AC9E5LE05) (AC9E6LE05) (AC9E5LY03) (AC9E5LY06) (AC9E5LY07) (AC9E6LY06) (AC9E6LY07)

Use the building blocks of writing to create great pieces of writing.

Reference: www.sevenstepswriting.com/what-are-the-seven-steps

Step 1: Plan for Success – brainstorm ideas, concepts, themes and plotlines.

Step 2: Sizzling Starts – start at an exciting moment to grab the reader’s attention.

Step 3: Tightening Tension – create tension and drama with a problem, build up momentum so the strongest challenge comes last, then the character can triumph in the end.

Step 4: Dynamic Dialogue – get to know your characters as they talk, walk and even stalk. Quotes from experts or celebrities can be powerful.

Step 5: Show, Don’t Tell – use the characters actions to show the reader their personality and feelings.

Step 6: Ban the Boring – ban boring events like bed, breakfast, bus trips. Make sure each sentence is engaging and important to the story.

Step 7: Exciting Endings – the end should have a punchline, like a joke. It could be a call to action, plot twist or leave the reader with a question and a lasting impression.

- **Idea 1:** Write a narrative with yourself in either Ivy’s or Skyler’s place, however with a common goal to save the world. Where, in the Piles or in the Clouds, does it take place? What would be your mission? Who is there to help you? How would you work together? Who and what challenges would you face (emotionally and physically)? How would you tighten the plot tension? What exciting ending occurs? Make sure to include a range of literary devices, humour and descriptive language. Re-read, edit and share.
- **Idea 2:** Write the sequel for The Last Seed Keeper. Can Ivy and Skyler save the world? Will Eden still be the villain, or someone else? What challenges will be faced this time, considering XyleCorp and the salt flats have been destroyed? What happens in this adventure?

Into the Future: Creative Writing

Years 3 & 4 English: (AC9E3LA03) (AC9E3LA04) (AC9E4LA03) (AC9E4LA04) (AC9E4LA09) (AC9E4LA12) (AC9E4LE02) (AC9E3LE03) (AC9E4LE03) (AC9E3LE05) (AC9E4LE05) (AC9E3LY06) (AC9E3LY07) (AC9E4LY06) (AC9E4LY07)

Years 5 & 6 English: (AC9E5LA04) (AC9E6LA08) (AC9E5LE04) (AC9E5LE05) (AC9E6LE05) (AC9E5LY03) (AC9E5LY06) (AC9E5LY07) (AC9E6LY06) (AC9E6LY07)

- Students can write a blog article or a YouTube documentary outlining a new world where Groundlings and Sky Folk co-exist. Students can work in small groups to brainstorm creative ideas about what this world looks like, the roles of the community, what technology and ancient artefacts are useful, and so on. They might like to focus on one separate aspect or an overview of all the elements.

- The completed article or documentary should include the 5W+H (who, what, when, where, why, how), an enticing introduction about the features and purpose of the world, dot points or paragraphs with benefits and potential obstacles to overcome, and a conclusion to sum it up. Students should use interesting language, and drawings or graphics to support the text.

Persuasive Text

Years 3 & 4 English: (AC9E3LA03) (AC9E3LA04) (AC9E4LA03) (AC9E4LA04) (AC9E4LA09) (AC9E4LA12) (AC9E4LE02) (AC9E3LE03) (AC9E4LE03) (AC9E3LE05) (AC9E4LE05) (AC9E3LY06) (AC9E3LY07) (AC9E4LY06) (AC9E4LY07)

Years 5 & 6 English: (AC9E5LA04) (AC9E6LA08) (AC9E5LE04) (AC9E5LE05) (AC9E6LE05) (AC9E5LY03) (AC9E5LY06) (AC9E5LY07) (AC9E6LY06) (AC9E6LY07)

- Students write a persuasive article to argue, for or against, whether they believe people are, or will be, too reliant on technology. They need to include an introductory paragraph with their opinion, supporting arguments and a conclusion to sum up their reasoning.
- Alternatively, students could consider writing about the benefits and/or disadvantages of 'Food for Taste vs Food for Sustenance', considering the social, emotional and physical health aspects.

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Information Report

Years 3 & 4 English: (AC9E3LA03) (AC9E3LA04) (AC9E4LA03) (AC9E4LA04) (AC9E4LA09) (AC9E4LA12) (AC9E4LE02) (AC9E3LE03) (AC9E4LE03) (AC9E3LE05) (AC9E4LE05) (AC9E3LY06) (AC9E3LY07) (AC9E4LY06) (AC9E4LY07)

Years 3 & 4 HASS: (AC9HS3K01) (AC9HS4K03) (AC9HS3S01) (AC9HS3S02) (AC9HS4S01) (AC9HS4S03) (AC9HS3S05) (AC9HS4S07)

Years 5 & 6 English: (AC9E5LA04) (AC9E6LA08) (AC9E5LE04) (AC9E5LE05) (AC9E6LE05) (AC9E5LY03) (AC9E5LY06) (AC9E5LY07) (AC9E6LY06) (AC9E6LY07)

Years 5 & 6 HASS: (AC9HS5K03) (AC9HS5S01) (AC9HS6S02) (AC9HS5S03) (AC9HS6S04) (AC9HS5S05) (AC9HS6S06) (AC9HS5S07) (AC9HS6S07)

- Students choose a significant historical war that changed the world, or The Great War (World War 1) to research and write an essay or report on. Students might be able to visit their local museum, library or council area for additional experiences.

The report needs to include:

- a title
- introduction stating the main idea of the topic
- several sub-headings including interesting facts such as title, how it started, who was involved, how long it lasted, the outcome, and other interesting facts.
- conclusion summing up the article, a final thought or suggestion for further study.

Information on World War 1 can be found at:

[World War 1 facts for kids](http://WorldWar1factsforkids.com) | [National Geographic Kids](http://NationalGeographicKids.com) (natgeokids.com)

A list of other significant wars in history can be found at:

[13 Wars in history that have shaped the world](http://13Warsinhistorythatshapedtheworld.com) | [Brainscape Academy](http://BrainscapeAcademy.com)

Alternatively, students could write a report about Svalbard, Norway and its Global Seed Vault – safeguarding seeds for the future. Information can be found at: [Svalbard Global Seed Vault](http://SvalbardGlobalSeedVault.com)

The information could be presented in a way that either represents the 'old' world or in a technologically advanced format, or a combination.

DRAMA

Exploring Tone in Dialogues / Script Writing

Years 3 & 4 Drama: (AC9ADR4E01) (AC9ADR4D01) (AC9ADR4C01) (AC9ADR4P01)

Years 5 & 6 Drama: (AC9ADR6E01) (AC9ADR6D01) (AC9ADR6C01) (AC9ADR6P01)

- Choose a scene of dialogue between Ivy and Durie or Hutch, or Skyler and Mr Blackwell from *The Last Seed Keeper*.
 - Read the speech with a partner, making sure to use an expressive tone of voice.
 - Read the speech again, this time change the tone in your voice (eg. from upbeat to dramatic, or from genuine to sarcastic). How does this change the 'feel' of the story?
 - Re-write the dialogue with a different tone. How will you re-phrase their words?

The Last Seed Keeper Theatre Show

Years 3 & 4 Drama: ([AC9ADR4E01](#)) ([AC9ADR4D01](#)) ([AC9ADR4C01](#)) ([AC9ADR4P01](#))

Years 5 & 6 Drama: ([AC9ADR6E01](#)) ([AC9ADR6D01](#)) ([AC9ADR6C01](#)) ([AC9ADR6P01](#))

- In groups, students create a 5 – 10 minute ‘re-telling’ or theatre show of their favourite / most significant parts of the book. They can wear or produce their own props and costumes. Focus on demonstrating emotion. Will they use any special effects, music, imagery, etc to accompany their performance?

VISUAL ARTS

Design a Bio-Lock and Key

Years 3 & 4 Art: ([AC9AVA4E01](#)) ([AC9AVA4D01](#)) ([AC9AVA4C01](#)) ([AC9AVA4P01](#)) | Years 5 & 6 Art: ([AC9AVA6E01](#)) ([AC9AVA6D01](#)) ([AC9AVA6C01](#)) ([AC9AVA6P01](#))

- Students can choose to use a medium of their choice to suit their tactile preferences, such as pencils, paint, collage or sculpture, or experiment with digital technologies, such as Paint, Photoshop, Sketchbook, Procreate, etc, to create a visual design of a bio-lock and keys. Experiment with the use of pattern, light and shade, and proportion. The shape of the keys could reflect a ‘bean’ and a ‘thumbprint’.
- What art techniques and small details will add interest and variety to your image? Perhaps students will include their own logo (or similar to XyleCorp’s) to match their personality.
- Explore other artworks and graphics for inspiration.

SCIENCE / STEM

Science of Bean Seeds

Years 3 & 4 Science – Biological sciences: ([AC9S3U01](#)) ([AC9S4U01](#)) ([AC9S3I01](#)) ([AC9S4I01](#)) ([AC9S3I04](#)) ([AC9S4I04](#)) ([AC9S3I06](#)) ([AC9S4I06](#))

Years 5 & 6 Science – Biological sciences: ([AC9S5U01](#)) ([AC9S6U01](#)) ([AC9S5H02](#)) ([AC9S6H02](#)) ([AC9S5I01](#)) ([AC9S6I01](#)) ([AC9S5I04](#)) ([AC9S6I04](#)) ([AC9S5I06](#)) ([AC9S6I06](#))

- Students research and write / draw about the formation, characteristics and life cycle of the bean – from seed to seedling to sapling to fully grown and growing flowers and more beans.
- Students can:
 - Research and write a list of various bean types.
 - Learn and write descriptions for each stage of the life cycle of a bean on a detailed and labelled diagram.
 - Write an information or procedural text about what seeds and plants need to grow.
 - In groups, plant a bean seed to grow for future use and regeneration.
 - Measure and record the plant’s growth over time using a record table / diary and photos or drawings.
 - Compare the outcomes of different beans planted in different areas. Students observe what happens in varying light, amount of water given and growing conditions for each plant. Students will need to write their goal (what they want to find out), their hypothesis or prediction, the step-by-step procedure, and the results. They will need containers and/ or ziplock bags with seeds and soil: 1. Water and Sun, 2. Water and NO Sun, 3. Sun and NO Water. Keep a journal and record growth over time for each container. What can students conclude after several weeks?

Information on how to grow bean seeds can be found here: [How to Grow Bean Seeds | The Seed Collection](#)

The stages of bean growth can be found at: [Beans Growth Stages & Timelines \(With Pictures\) | TheGrow](#)

And here: [LFLB2_PlantLifeCycle.pdf \(coolaustralia.org\)](#)

Comparison Texts

- ***Keeper of the Lost Cities*** series (Shannon Messenger) – Similar themes: Audience appeal and complexity of text, although longer, later books do aim at slightly older audience but great comparative text for demographic.
- ***Jane Doe Chronicles*** (Jeremy Lachlan) – Similar themes: A dystopic book with an interesting Science Fiction twist with similar market appeal. More complex language than traditional in middle grade. Suitable for less independent readers with parental/teacher reading support.
- ***Ottiie Colter and Narrowway Hunt*** (Rhiannon Williams) – Similar themes: A good example of this audience with a strong female character, however, more violence. Would fit comfortably in upper middle grade.
- ***Artemis Fowl*** (Eoin Colfer) – Similar themes: Clever language for younger readers with references and humour for an older audience.
- ***Kensy and Max*** series (Jacqueline Harvey) – Similar themes: Action driven text for a similar target audience.

MORE MIDDLE-GRADE FICTION



Game On: Shrinkle GAME ON SERIES, BOOK 1 Emily Snape

When rebellious Liam starts playing 'Shrinkle' on his babysitter's phone, the app shrinks Liam and his brother Max to the size of a minifigure! Their safe home has suddenly become a treacherous landscape. Can they escape before the phone goes flat!

THEMES: GAMING, RIDDLES, SIBLING RIVALRY, PROBLEM SOLVING, HUMOUR

9781922539397 | Paperback with Flaps | 210 x 135 mm | 8¼ x 5¼ in | 184 pp



Game On: Glitched GAME ON SERIES, BOOK 2 Emily Snape

In Game On: Glitched, Max and his brother Liam take a trip through time. History comes alive but to return home they must work together to solve some historical riddles.

THEMES: GAMING, RIDDLES, SIBLING RIVALRY, PROBLEM SOLVING, HISTORY

9781922539410 | Paperback with Flaps | 210 x 135 mm | 8¼ x 5¼ in | 224 pp

Ruby and the Pen THE PEN SERIES, BOOK 1 David Lawrence & Cherie Dignam

Ruby and the Pen is the story of a 12-year-old, cartoon-drawing girl who buys a pen from a mysterious market stall. She soon learns that the pen has a magical power: whatever she draws, happens! Soon, Ruby has problems galore and one big question to be answered - should she fix all of her problems with the stroke of a pen?

THEMES: DRAWING, ENVIRONMENT, PERSONAL ETHICS, FAMILY BREAKDOWN, RESPONSIBILITY

9781922539380 | Paperback with Flaps | 210 x 135 mm | 8¼ x 5¼ in | 280 pp



Xander and the Pen THE PEN SERIES, BOOK 2 David Lawrence & Cherie Dignam

Xander and the Pen tells the story of Xander, a boy who loves to draw superheroes. One day, Xander buys a magical pen. But can he handle the pen's power?

THEMES: DRAWING, ENVIRONMENT, PERSONAL ETHICS, FAMILY BREAKDOWN, RESPONSIBILITY

9781922539403 | Paperback with Flaps | 210 x 135 mm | 8¼ x 5¼ in | 280 pp



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