TEACHERS’ RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR
Upper primary
(ages 9+)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS
- **Learning areas:** English, Humanities and Social Sciences (7–10 History: The Ancient World)
- **General capabilities:** Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability, Ethical Understanding

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK
- Investigate historical, geographic, civic and economic concepts and ideas
- Develop critical and creative thinking

THEMES
- Ancient History (Paleolithic Age)
- Relationships
- Society
- Personal and social ethics
- Language
- Exploration and European historical identity

PREPARED BY
Penguin Random House Australia

PUBLICATION DETAILS
ISBN: 9780143309376 (paperback); 9781760143145 (ebook)

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Tarin of the Mammoths: The Exile
Jo Sandhu

PLOT SUMMARY
Tarin longs to be a hunter, but his twisted leg means he is feared and bullied. After a disastrous mishap, Tarin is forced to leave his family and travel alone across wild, unknown land to save the Mammoth Clan.

Battling the hostile and savage Boar Clan, a deadly illness and treacherous terrain with twins Kaija and Luuka and their wolf cubs, Tarin realises that if they are all to survive he must conquer his greatest fear – his true self – and embrace the magic that is hiding within him.

The first book in an exciting new Stone Age adventure series.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Growing up, Jo was sure she was going to be a Shakespearean actress or a pianist, and gained her Associate Diploma in Speech and Drama. However, on leaving school she spent a year in Finland as a Rotary Exchange Student before returning to Australia and working in banking and HR.

These days she is a writer, a personal carer, and volunteers at her sons’ sporting clubs. Her short stories have been highly commended in numerous competitions, including the FAW Mary Grant Bruce Award for Children’s Literature, and the CYA Later Alligator Competition (Brisbane) in both the Children’s and YA sections. She is a member of Queensland Writers Centre and the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators.

Jo currently lives in the Tweed Valley in Northern NSW with her family and enjoys cooking, travelling and reading.

AUTHOR’S INSPIRATION
Jo says:
I’ve always been passionately interested in Ancient History. One of the very first stories I ever wrote was in my Year 7 History Class. It was a time-slip story of a modern girl (me) who wakes up in Neanderthal times, and I wrote it on pretty yellow paper. I think I got an ‘A’ for it. Many years later, I was reading adult novels such as William Golding’s The Inheritors and Jean Auel’s ‘Earth’s Children’ series, and I thought I’d like to write a story I could share with my own children.

I was sure about three things:
1. It would be a Quest story, with an unlikely hero.
2. It would have mammoths and wolves and Neanderthals in it.
3. It would be set in the Palaeolithic age, approximately 30 000 years ago, in Northern European, close to the ice shelf that covered Scandinavia in the last stages of the Ice Age.

I spent a year as an Exchange Student in Rovaniemi, Lapland in Northern Finland, and it is my experiences with the forests and snow and the long winter that I used to create Tarin’s world. The idea of a boy with a twisted leg came to me one day when I was brainstorming Tarin’s character. I’ve always liked the idea of an unlikely hero and I wanted him to have hidden strengths and talents that even he was unaware of. Kaija was always the feisty one in my mind, but I wanted her to fear and worry and make mistakes too, because that’s what we all do, isn’t it?

The history I’ve used to create Tarin’s world is as authentic as possible, always remembering Tarin of the Mammoths is a work of fiction. Approximately 30,000 years ago, people lived in earth lodges made of mammoth bones and animals hides in places such as Mezhirich in Ukraine and Kostenki in Russia. Neanderthal tools have been found as far north as Byzovaya in Northern Russia. And 30 000 years ago, mammoths, bison and aurochs roamed the steppes and cave lions and cave bears were larger than their modern day equivalents.

I hope you enjoy following Tarin on his journey, in this world of so long ago.

WRITING STYLE
Questions
1. What is the novel’s writing style? Consider how and when information is revealed, and the use of different narrative perspectives. How effectively does this contribute to the novel’s storytelling?
2. What is another way this story could have been told? Compare and contrast to another book you have read.
3. What are the main themes of the novel and how does the use of history and culture contribute to the story?
4. How does the third-person point-of-view affect what is revealed to the reader? What does Tarin/Kaija know or not know? How might the story have been different if only Tarin’s perspective had been used? Choose an incident in the story and write it in first-person from Tarin’s perspective.
5. What do you think of the use of first-person in the opening scene? Why do you think first person wasn’t use for the rest of the book?
6. How authentic is the landscape and culture depicted in the book.
7. What did you think of the novel’s ending? Was it the best ending for this particular story?
8. How does the book’s title relate to its content? What does it refer to?
9. Read the note about history at the end of the book. What are the main types of evidence that a historian might look up? Where in the story
can you see that the author has researched using the methods and evidence he mentions?

10. Use the resources at the end of the book to look up more interesting information about this period of history and about the Finnish/Sammi language. Include information from one website, one online newspaper and one book

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Prepare students for their journey to this primitive age by discussing their earliest memories or the earliest events in history they know about. Put these on a timeline and introduce the idea of just how long ago the Stone Age was. Is it a period that students have heard of?

2. Get students to think about what life was like back then. What did early humans look like, what did they wear and how did they communicate?

3. Research the Stone Age, including when it was and why it is split into three different parts (Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic).

KEY STUDY TOPICS

Questions and activities

1. What did people in the Stone Age eat? How did they hunt for food?

2. The Stone Age is a time that pre-dates language and written records. Everything we know about the period has come from archaeology.

3. Near the end of the day, empty the classroom rubbish bin onto a table. Ask students to identify the items and, using only the evidence in front of them, write a brief account of the day. What have they done that is not included in the account? Why could they not include it? This is a simple activity that can help students realise we only have a partial account of prehistory depending on what artefacts have survived.

4. What tools were used during the Stone Age? How were they made and how were they used?

5. Ask groups to put the weapons in the order they think they were invented. Can they explain why tools became more sophisticated over the course of the Stone Age? As a technology task, challenge students to mould some Stone Age-style tools from clay, using sticks as wooden handles where necessary.

6. Early humans were hunter-gatherers, so what do students think they ate?

7. Working in groups, ask them to write down their ideas about the Stone Age diet. What are the main differences from what we eat today? If possible, ask your class to bring in some items for a Stone Age snack such as sunflower seeds, blackberries and hazelnuts.

8. See the Bibliography at the back of the novel. How has Sammi and Finnish language evolved?

9. As a group, write up the list of Sammi/Finnish words and meanings on the whiteboard. Find some other words in Sammi/Finnish that still exist today/have relevance today.

FURTHER READING

Books


Websites

http://donsmaps.com – Information on the Palaeolithic era

http://www.welcome-ural.ru – An adventure travel expedition site: River rafting and visiting Palaeolithic sites and caves

http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com – Information on animals and landscapes

http://www.luontoportti.com/suomi – Information on plants and animals in Finland

http://www.primitiveways.com – Survival skills


http://www.mariatrebenherbs.com/ – herbal remedies
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