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Walker Books
TEACHERS' NOTES
Extracts and Notes for KS2 Teachers



AGENTS OF THE WILD
OPERATION HONEYHUNT
JENNIFER BELL & ALICE LICKENS



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INTRODUCTION

Suitable for: Ages 7+

Includes: Extracts from the text + corresponding discussion questions and activities
Themes: Illustrating Animal Characters; Agent Qualities; Animal Species in Danger; Villains

CONTENTS

EXTRACT 1: Illustrating Animal Characters (taken from Chapter One)

Objectives: Discuss how the story brings its animal characters to life; imagine your own animal character and illustrate them.

Subjects: Literacy, Art, Design and Technology, RSHE, Citizenship

EXTRACT 2: Agent Qualities (taken from Chapter Four)

Objectives: Create definitions for important agent qualities and skills; fill in a SPEARS Agent Application Form.

Subjects: Literacy, RSHE, Citizenship

EXTRACT 3: Species in Danger (taken from Chapter Four)

Objectives: Consider the theme of conservation in the text; identify how we can protect the environment and different species.

Subjects: Literacy, RSHE, Citizenship, Science, Geography

EXTRACT 4: Villains (taken from Chapter Six)

Objectives: Analyse the role of the villain in the text; create a 'Most Wanted' poster for your own villain.

Subjects: Literacy, Art, Design and Technology, Science, Geography, RSHE, Citizenship

ABOUT THE BOOK

Enter the world of Agnes & Attie: AGENTS OF THE WILD; fun-packed young fiction with wildlife conservation themes.

When 8-year-old Agnes is signed up for SPEARS (the Society for the Protection of Endangered and Awesomely Rare Species), she has no idea of the adventures that lie ahead with her elephant-shrew mentor Attie (short for "Attenborough"). Operation Honeyhunt sends them to the Brazilian rainforest, on a mission to save an endangered, dance-loving bee named Elton. Will Agnes pass the test and become a full SPEARS agent?

Species in danger? Girl and shrew to the rescue!



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Prepared by J. Baldwin, SHAPES for Schools.

EXTRACT 1: Illustrating Animal Characters (taken from chapter one)

The creature's arms flew to its hips as it puffed out its chest. "A POSSUM?" it exclaimed.

Agnes fell back against her bedroom door. The furry not-a-possum creature could speak? She didn't understand how it was possible... Was it some kind of trick? She stepped closer, her heart thudding like a train.

"I, *uneducated one*, am an ELEPHANT shrew, species *Rhynchocyon petersi*."

Agnes stumbled to repeat the phrase. "*Rin-cho-sion...*"

"Never mind, girl. Never mind," the elephant shrew said. "There's no time for introductions." He pointed to a badge pinned to the lapel of his safari shirt. "I'm a field agent for SPEARS, and I need you to come with me, now."



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What do you like about the illustration of Attie? How does the picture bring him to life?
- What type of creature is Attie? What is his nickname short for?
- How is humour created in this illustration and extract? What about in the rest of the text? Give examples.
- Which is your favourite animal character in the story and why? Explain your ideas.
- What animal would you like to have as a friend and why? What name would you give them?

ACTIVITY: Creating My Own Animal Character

SUBJECTS: Literacy, Art, Design and Technology, RSHE, Citizenship

In groups, discuss the different exotic animals that appear in the book. How many of them can you remember? What makes these animals awesome? If you could have any exotic animal as a pet or a friend, which would you choose and why? What would make them difficult or easy to look after?

When you have chosen one animal, make a few notes on the following questions:

- What name would you give them?
- What would their personality be like?
- What skills would they have?
- What clothes or accessories would they wear?

Then, draw an illustration of 'My Animal Character', labelling it with arrows to show as many elements of their personality and skill-set as possible. Share your illustrations with your classmates; what differences and similarities do your sketches have?

MY ANIMAL CHARACTER

EXTRACT 2: Agent Qualities (Taken from Chapter Four)

“Aha!” Aristophanes exclaimed triumphantly. “I can see you’ll make a fine agent – an eye for detail, imagination and courage. Those are essential. Now if you don’t mind, I need to get back to work. I must finish this repair before your flight training.”

As they headed back into the centre of the hall, Agnes ran through all the different qualities that the agents had told her she’d need to demonstrate to make a good SPEARS agent. The list made her stomach tighten. Her parents had possessed each of them for sure, but she had none of their experience or knowledge – how could she? All she did was go to school and live with her uncle Douglas. She wondered briefly how he was getting on with her chimp replacement.

The afternoon passed quickly. First, Agnes learnt the basics of animai-tai with Captain Marlina. Agnes’s reflexes were surprisingly good; perhaps all that time spent dodging angry geese and trying to avoid stepping on squirrel tails had helped. She realized she was a lot stronger than she thought too – then again, she’d never done a flying-hyena-lightning-strike attack on a punchbag before, so she had little to compare it to.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is another word for an ‘agent’? What does SPEARS stand for? Why do they need agents?
- What does Agnes learn about herself in the extract? What about later in the text? Give examples.
- Which agent qualities are mentioned in the extract? Highlight or underline them.
- Can you think of other important qualities or skills that would be useful for a SPEARS agent to have? Give examples.
- What missions do you think Agnes might be given in the future? What challenges might she face?

ACTIVITY: Applying to be an Agent

SUBJECTS: Literacy, RSHE, Citizenship

In pairs, look back through pages 63, 67, and 72. What agent qualities are mentioned on these pages? Write a definition of what each quality means and why it’s important in an agent. Make a list of other useful qualities or skills that you discussed earlier. Can you add anymore to this list?

Then, imagining that you would like to join Agnes and become a SPEARS agent, fill in the ‘SPEARS Agent Application Form’ below, listing your skills, qualities, experience, and anything else that you think would make you a great agent. Remember, SPEARS is made up of all kinds of different people and animals with different strengths, so be sure to think about what makes you special and unique!

Swap your applications with a different table and between you decide which is the most interesting application and why? Which person would you like to recruit as a SPEARS agent if you had to choose?

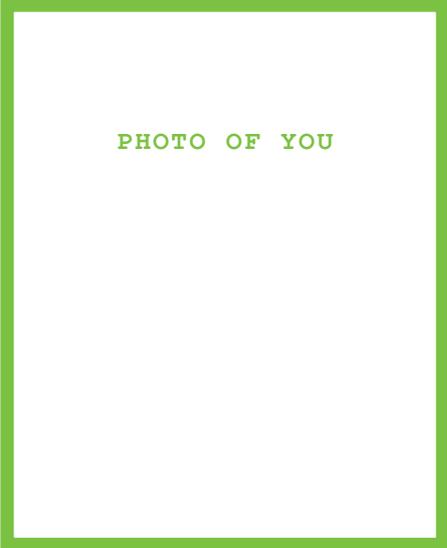
SPEARS AGENT APPLICATION FORM

NAME: _____

D.O.B: _____

EYE COLOUR: _____

BIGGEST FEAR:



PERSONAL QUALITIES:

UNIQUE SKILL:

WHY YOU WANT TO BE A SPEARS AGENTS:

WHERE YOU WOULD LIKE TO GO
ON YOUR FIRST MISSION:



EXTRACT 3: Species in Danger (Taken from Chapter Four)



Commander Phil cleared his throat. “As we all know, deforestation is destroying the habitats of many creatures who live in rainforests. Last week, SPEARS was tasked with relocating a hive of endangered *uruçu negra* bees in the Atlantic Forest to a protected sanctuary two hundred kilometres away. These bees do an important job pollinating many of the rare plant species in the area and are a vital part of the ecosystem. Sadly, an unexpected thunderstorm caused complications during the operation. In a rush to leave, the queen bee made a miscalculation when counting the colony and ... one bee was left behind.”

Behind Agnes, the other agents gasped.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Who is Commander Phil? Why is he asking for Agnes’s help? Which species is in trouble?
- What is ‘deforestation’? What about the ‘ecosystem’? How are they connected? Explain your ideas.
- Which other key words are in Commander Phil’s speech to Agnes? Highlight and discuss these words.
- Which other endangered species feature in the story? What could SPEARS do to help them?
- What can you do to help protect the environment and its creatures? Give examples.

ACTIVITY: Human Impact

SUBJECTS: Literacy, RSHE, Citizenship, Science, Geography

A major theme in the story is conservation and how humans have damaged and even destroyed the environment, including the natural habitat of many animals. Read through the ‘Who’s in Danger?’ pages spread from the text, thinking about why these animals are in danger. Which other animals and environments are also being affected by human beings? Why is this such a big problem? What more can countries, communities, and individual people do to help?

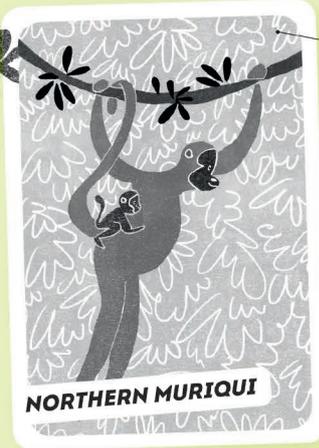
Using the text and discussions you’ve had for ideas, fill in the ‘Human Impact’ table making notes on how humans have had a negative impact on the world and what can be done about it.

When completed, go through each human impact as a class to see if there is anything else you can add to your table. Include as much detail as possible!

WHO'S IN DANGER?

Thousands of animal species live in the Atlantic Forest, from big cats like the jaguar to tiny flies like fungus gnats.

New kinds of plants and animals are still being discovered there, like the "unicorn" praying mantis, which has what looks like a horn in the middle of its head. But due to human activity like logging and farming (known as "deforestation"), many species are also in danger of extinction:



NORTHERN MURIQUI

Known as Woolly Spider Monkeys, these are the largest monkeys in South America.

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED



GOLDEN LION TAMARIN

The Golden Lion Tamarin is a small New World monkey with awesome bright orange fur.

It sleeps in a different den each day, so predators can't find it easily.

The Red-Tailed Parrot shows a band of red feathers when its tail opens.

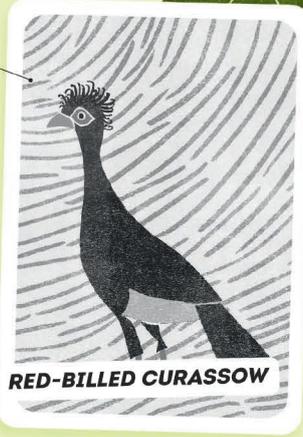


RED-TAILED PARROT

It eats fruit, seeds, nuts and berries.

The Red-Billed Curassow is a large, noisy bird with black feathers; the male has a red bill.

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED



RED-BILLED CURASSOW



MANED THREE-TOED SLOTH

The Maned Three-Toed Sloth spends most of its life hanging upside-down in the treetops! It is the largest species of sloth.



CENTRAL HUMMING FROG

The Uruçu Negra (black Uruçu, meaning "big bee") is so rare that it has only been found in the Brazilian state of Espírito Santo. The species of stingless bee was discovered in 1994, and added to Brazil's list of endangered species in 2003.

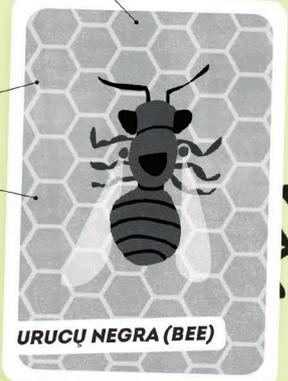
Only a low number of natural colonies have been discovered, which makes the species especially vulnerable to the effects of deforestation in its natural habitat.

The Ivory-Tailed Bluetip Dragonfly is VERY rare; it has a distinctive blue tip at the end of its tail.



IVORY-TAILED BLUETIP DRAGONFLY

The Uruçu Negra pollinates orchids, and is a type of "eusocial" bee, which means it lives in an organized bee community in which the queen reproduces and the rest of the bees help to care for the young.



URUÇU NEGRA (BEE)



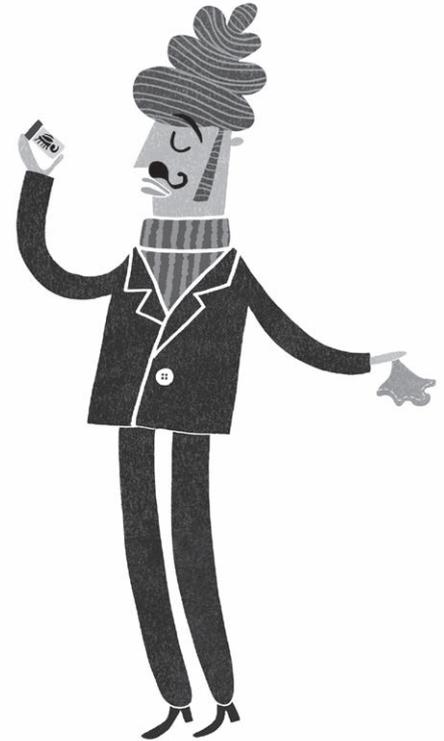
Human Impact	What are the NEGATIVE EFFECTS of this on animals and the environment? WHO is affected?	What can BE DONE TO PROTECT animals and the environment?
Deforestation		
Plastics and other Non-biodegradable goods		
Poaching		
Climate Change		

EXTRACT 4: Villains (Taken from Chapter Six)

A tall man in a slim-fitting silver suit stood cleaning one of the storage boxes. His white-blond hair was styled into a Mr Whippy-shaped swirl, and he had glacier-blue eyes and ice-white skin, as if he'd spent his life in a freezer.

“What are you three doing back?” he snapped. “I told you to stand guard all night.” He continued rubbing a cloth across one of the boxes. “I do not like to be disturbed when I am polishing.” The jewelled bodies of dead beetles glittered beneath the glass. They had been pinned with their wings open, and labelled in scratchy handwriting.

“But we have information, Massster Jabheart,” one of the creatures said, panting.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is a 'villain'? What other words might we use to describe a villain?
- Who is the villain of the story? How is he described in the extract? Highlight or underline key words.
- What makes Master Jabheart dangerous? Why must Agnes and the rest of the SPEARS team try and stop him?
- Are there any other villains in the story to watch out for? Who else is to blame for putting certain species in danger?
- Can you think of villains from any other stories you have read? What do they all have in common?

ACTIVITY: Most Wanted!

SUBJECTS: Literacy, Art, Design and Technology, Science, Geography, RSHE, Citizenship

Create a 'Most Wanted!' poster for a villain who is harming the environment. You could make up your own villain using some of the ideas from the 'Human Impact' table you completed in lesson 3, or try to come up the villain in the next *Agents of the Wild Series* which is *Operation Icebreak*. The aim of your poster is to help the SPEARS team to catch this villain who is placing certain species in danger. You also want to use your poster to raise awareness about other threats to the planet, asking people to report other villains who are putting the environment at risk.

Here are some ideas for headings or sub-headings in your poster to help you:

- A picture and description of the villain and why they must be stopped.
- Who or what is in danger if the villain is not found.
- Any accomplices they may have to look out for.
- Other advice on how to protect the environment.
- How to contact SPEARS with information.

Put your completed posters on display and see what villains you have all come up with. Perhaps you could even take it in turns to do impressions of your villains.

Great work SPEARS agents!



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