



Hector

Author: Adrienne Wright
Illustrator: Adrienne Wright
Publisher: Jacana Media

The Otto Foundation Children's Book Award
Chapter Book Shortlist

On June 16, 1976, Hector Pieterse, an ordinary boy, lost his life after getting caught up in what was supposed to be a peaceful protest. Black South African students were marching against a new law requiring that they be taught half of their subjects in Afrikaans, the language of the white government. The story's events unfold from the perspectives of Hector, his sister, and the photographer who captured their photo in the chaos. This book can serve as a pertinent tool for adults discussing global history and race relations with children. Its graphic novel style and mixed media art portray the vibrancy and grit of Hector's daily life and untimely death. With powerful sequential art, debut author-illustrator Adrienne Wright tells Hector Pieterse's story and recounts the heartbreaking events that woke up the world and helped lead to the end of South Africa's apartheid.

- Jacana Media

Teaching notes

These notes have been written by the Otto Foundation to provide teachers and caregivers with ideas to develop text comprehension and support literacy skills. They encourage deep reading of the text and illustrations, which may happen over a series of reading sessions, not just one sitting.

These notes have been written with Grade 4, 5, 6 and 7 readers in mind, but teachers and caregivers will need to adapt them to the age and experience of their readers.

Themes

- History
- Family
- Community
- Death
- Determination
- Friendship
- Bravery/Courage
- Taking a stand

Before reading the story

- Open the discussion by allowing the children to share their initial responses to the front cover of the book. Encourage the children to discuss what they see and their responses to it.
 - *What do you notice about the cover illustration?*
 - *What does the cover illustration make you think about?*

- How does the cover illustration make you feel?
- What do you like most about the cover illustration?
- Explain that the title of the book is **Hector**. Ask the children to share their thoughts on the book cover.
 - What kind of book do you think this is going to be based on the title?
 - What thoughts do you have about the boy on the cover? What makes you think this?
 - What do you think might happen to the boy in this book?
 - Who might the boy meet during the story?
- Read the back cover blurb to the children. Explore how they might change their ideas about the story now that they have more information.
 - How does reading the blurb change what you think might happen in the story?
 - What is the name of the important day in South African history we remember on June 16th?

Reading aloud discussion points

Hector: Soweto, Saturday, June 12

- What activities did Hector enjoy doing with his friends on the weekend? How different are these activities from what you enjoy doing with your friends on a weekend?
- Who do you think is a better team **Orlando Pirates** or **Kaizer Chiefs**? Why?
- What is a **traditional name**? What is the **traditional name** Hector's mother calls him by? Why do some people have different names depending on who they are speaking to?
- Hector **drags himself away from the game**. What does it mean to **drag yourself away** from an activity? How do you think Hector felt when his mother called him, and he **drags himself away from the game**?
- What is a **chore**? What type of **chores** did Hector do in the illustrations on page 2? What type of **chores** do you do to help at home?
- Hector's mother suggests he practices counting in Afrikaans. Look at the expression on Hector's face, how does he feel about counting in Afrikaans? Why do you think he feels this way?
- What did Hector like to spend his pocket money on?
- Hector's hero is **Bruce Lee**. What is **Bruce Lee** famous for?
- Hector and his friend's **re-enact** their favourite scenes from the movies they watch. What does **re-enact** mean? What movies do you enjoy watching? Which scenes do you **re-enact** from the movies you watch?

Hector: Granny Mma's house, Monday, June 14

- What is Hector's sister's name?
- What kind of relationship do you think Hector has with his sister Antoinette? What makes you think this?
- Why does Antoinette say to Hector: **I hope your hands are clean!**
- Antoinette lived with Granny Mma and Hector lived with Mma. Why do you think this might be?

- Granny Mma gives Hector money to take home to Ma. Why do you think she told him to **keep it safe**?
- Hector took a shortcut through **the veld** on his way home. What is **the veld**? Why does Hector like going through **the veld**?
- Some **tsotsis** tried to rob Hector. What is a **tsotsi**? How did Hector escape from the **tsotsis**?
- What is the name of the **thorny plant** Hector ran through in the veld?
- Hector **pulls himself together** after the **tsotsis** tried to rob him. What does it mean to **pull yourself together**?
- Why do you think Hector did not want to tell Mma about the **tsotsis**?
- How did Mma know that Hector has been through the veld when she sees him?
- What message did Hector share with Mma from Antoinette and Granny Mma?
- What is a **blackjack**? Why do you think Mma asked Hector to pick off the **blackjacks** before he could come inside the house?

Hector: Soweto, Wednesday, June 16

- Describe how Hector got ready for school by looking at the illustrations on pages 9 – 10.
- What did Hector dream about having inside his house one day?
- What were the names of the two karate moves Hector invented with his friend? If you invented a karate move what would you call it?
- What was unusual about the sign above Hector's head as he entered the train station? Why would there have been a sign saying **non-whites only** at the train station?
- What surprised Hector when he arrived at school?
- Hector heard students protesting. What were they protesting about?
- Do you think it was fair for there to be a law that half of the children's school lessons needed to be taught in Afrikaans? Why or why not?
- Look at the illustration of the students protesting on page 11. How do you think they felt? Why do you think that?
- What is a **hippo truck**? Do you think Hector and the other students were safe? Why or why not?
- What protest songs did the students sing?
- Look closely at the illustrations on page 13. What did the protest signs the students are carrying say? What does the word **abolished** mean?
- Do you think the students were brave or foolish not to listen to the police? Why do you think this?
- What did the police do to try to scare the students?
- As the police got more angry, Hector looked around **frantically** for his friend. What does **frantically** mean? Why do you think Hector felt **frantic**?
- Hector saw Antoinette and she told him he needed **to go home now!** Why do you think Antoinette said this to Hector?
- Describe what happened in the illustrations on pages 15 – 16.

Antoinette: Granny Mma's house, Wednesday, June 16

- What is the reason for Antoinette staying with Granny Mma and not Mma?
- What is a **rumour**? What **rumour** do you think Antoinette had heard about the protest?
- Why do you think Granny Mma was feeling worried?
- Look carefully at the illustration on page 18. What is the name of the banned protest song the students were singing?

- The police exploded **tear gas** into the air. What is **tear gas**? Look at the illustration on page 21. How do you think the students caught in the **tear gas** felt?
- How do you think Antoinette and Hector got separated in the protest?
- Describe what is happening in the illustration on page 22.
- Look at the expression on Hector's face on page 22. How do you think he was feeling? Why do you think he was feeling this way?
- What did Antoinette see had happened as the smoke cleared?
- How do you feel knowing that Hector was hurt? What makes you feel this way?
- What do you hope happens next in the story?

Sam: Soweto, Wednesday, June 16

- Sam was a **photojournalist**. What does a **photojournalist** do?
- Why do you think Sam wore a band on his arm saying **PRESS**? Why might it be important for him to identify himself as **PRESS** and not a student protestor?
- What important event was Sam photographing?
- Describe the pictures Sam took on page 24. What do you think the mood of the student protestors was in these photographs? Why do you think that?
- Sam takes photographs of the following: **Students marching, police arriving, dogs barking, children singing and police shooting**. Describe what was happening in the story during these moments from Sam's perspective.
- What is the illustration of on page 26? What moment was Sam capturing through his lens? Who do you think the student in this photo was? Why do you think that?
- Why do you think the police destroyed all of Sam's film?
- Sam is **one step ahead** of the police. What does it mean to be **one step ahead**? What did Sam do with his film that put him **one step ahead** of the police?
- Look carefully at the illustration of Sam's film on page 28. Describe what story is being told in the frames of his film.
- What is the name of the newspaper Granny Mma and Mma were looking at? What news were they reading about? How do you think they felt about what they read?
- Hector had not come home. What do you think had happened to Hector?
- What did Hector become a symbol of?

Topics for discussion after reading the story

- Explore with your children:
 - Is there anything you particularly liked or disliked about this story? If so, what? And why did you like or dislike it?
 - Has anything that happened in this book ever happened to you?
 - What is something you have learnt from this story?
 - If the author asked you what could be improved in the book, what would you say?
 - What would you tell your friends about this book?

Activity ideas for after reading the story

- Research the main characters from the story with your class and prepare oral feedback on each individual:
 - *Hector Zolile Pieterse*
 - *Antoinette Sithole*
 - *Sam Nzima*
- Ask your children to illustrate a scene from Hector which stood out to them. Create a display with their illustrations to encourage others to read Hector.
- Ask your children to brainstorm what they would like to change about their own education by asking these questions:
 - *If you could create a perfect school day, what would it look like?*
 - *What is one thing you would like to change about your classroom or school?*
 - *What is a subject you wish you could learn more about?*
 - *What could you do to help make school a more positive experience for yourself and your classmates?*
- While apartheid ended in the early 1990's, its effects are still felt today. Ask your children to write about what changes they would like to see in South Africa and how they might be able to contribute to these changes.

Please see the following pages for Grade specific CAPS aligned skills covered in these teaching notes.

CAPS skills covered in teaching notes

Listening and speaking

Grade 4

- Predict what a text could be about
- Identify characters
- Name characters correctly
- Listen for main message and specific details
- Describe events
- Identify specific details
- Discuss main ideas and specific details
- Express feelings in relation to events
- Express thoughts and feelings about a story/characters/setting or theme of a text
- Relate to own life experiences
- Answer oral questions based on the text
- Participate in group discussions
- Take turns to speak
- Share ideas, opinions and participate in the discussion
- Ask relevant questions
- Keep to the topic
- Maintain discussions
- Respond to others' ideas with empathy and respect

Reading and viewing

Grade 4

- Pre reading: Make predictions for the title and cover of the text
- Predict from title and discuss related themes/content
- Make predictions
- Identify and explain central events
- Identify and comment on the plot, setting and characters
- Discuss characters
- Give reasons for the actions of characters
- Give and explain own feelings about the text
- Express emotional response to text read
- Identify and discuss values in the text
- Use reading strategies: Make predictions and use contextual cues
- Use contextual cues to make meaning
- Discuss message/moral of the story
- Reflect on text read
- Infer meaning of unfamiliar words and images
- Use reading comprehension strategies: Visualisation and making connections
- Determine the impact of visual techniques
- Discuss new vocabulary from the text
- Understand vocabulary

Listening and speaking

Grade 5

- Make predictions
- Describe events
- Identify and explain cause and effect
- Comment on social, moral and cultural values
- Ask critical questions
- Express and justify own opinion with reasons
- Use information from the text in response to questions
- Identify main ideas and specific details
- Identify central idea, plot, setting and characters
- Relate text content to own life
- Discuss and give own opinion
- Express thoughts and feelings about the storyline
- Participate in group discussions
- Ask relevant questions
- Justify own opinion
- Maintain discussion
- Take turns to speak
- Respond to others' ideas with empathy and respect

Reading and viewing

Grade 5

- Pre reading: Predict from title and pictures and discuss related themes/content
- Comment on choice of pictures in text
- Share ideas and offers opinion using speculation
- Use reading strategies: Contextual clues and prior knowledge
- Discuss characters
- Give reason for actions of characters
- Discuss the central idea, plot, characters and setting
- Discuss cause and effect in the story
- Identify and discuss feelings expressed in text
- Express own feelings and opinion
- Identify and explain how central events and characters relate to own life
- Infer the meaning of unfamiliar words and images
- Discuss new vocabulary from text

Listening and speaking

Grade 6

- Predict what will happen in a story
- Discuss main ideas and specific details
- Identify themes
- Discuss characters
- Discuss plot, conflict and setting
- Discuss messages in text
- Discuss responses to text
- Discuss social, moral and cultural values in text
- Relate ideas to own life experiences
- Ask relevant questions and respond appropriately
- Stay on topic
- Explain logically
- Interact positively during group discussions
- Respond to others' ideas with empathy and respect

Reading and viewing

Grade 6

- Pre reading: Make predictions based on title and/or graphics and related themes/content
- Make predictions about the text
- Ask questions about the text
- Make inferences about the text
- Visualise parts of the text
- Identify and explain the central idea
- Interpret and discuss the text
- Discuss plot, theme, setting and characters
- Discuss suspense and twist
- Critically discusses cultural and social values in the text
- Relate events and characters to own life
- Show understanding of the text and relationship to own life
- Identify and discuss feelings expressed in text
- Express emotional response to texts read
- Identify different perspectives
- Give own perspective based on evidence in the text
- Infer meaning of unfamiliar words and images
- Invent or describe preferred results or endings

Listening and speaking

Grade 7

- Make predictions from cover page and blurb
- Confirm predictions
- Identify main and supporting ideas
- Make inferences
- Share ideas and experiences to show understanding of concepts
- Share ideas and opinions
- Identify characters
- Identify main and supporting ideas
- Use appropriate language
- Answer questions

Reading and viewing

Grade 7

- Make predictions
- Make connections
- Identify key features of a text such as characters, plot, setting, conflict, theme and message
- Discuss main ideas and themes
- Discuss fact or opinion in text
- Infer meaning of unfamiliar words
- Infer meaning and conclusions
- Visualise parts of the text
- Identify formal/informal language in the text
- Answer questions based on text