

## 90 PACKETS OF INSTANT NOODLES

DEB FITZPATRICK

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YEAR LEVEL: Y6–10

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Joel and Craggs are in it together. They drink together, they flirt with petty theft together and, when Craggs turns violent, they face the consequences together. That's until Joel's dad makes a deal with the police. Craggs is off to juvenile detention and Joel to solitary confinement – ninety days of fending for himself in a remote bush shack with no radio, telephone or fridge. Miles from anywhere, Joel starts to like his own company, until one day the past tracks him down. Craggs is on his doorstep, and he hasn't changed a bit.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Deb Fitzpatrick is an award-winning author whose books have been published internationally. Deb regularly teaches creative writing to people of all ages. She lived for several years in the cloud forest of Costa Rica and still pretends to speak some Spanish. Deb loves bushwalking and shares her life with a lovely family and their kelpie, who is absolutely not a failed sheepdog.

### THEMES

- Family
- Friendship
- Personal growth
- Adventure
- Crime
- Survival

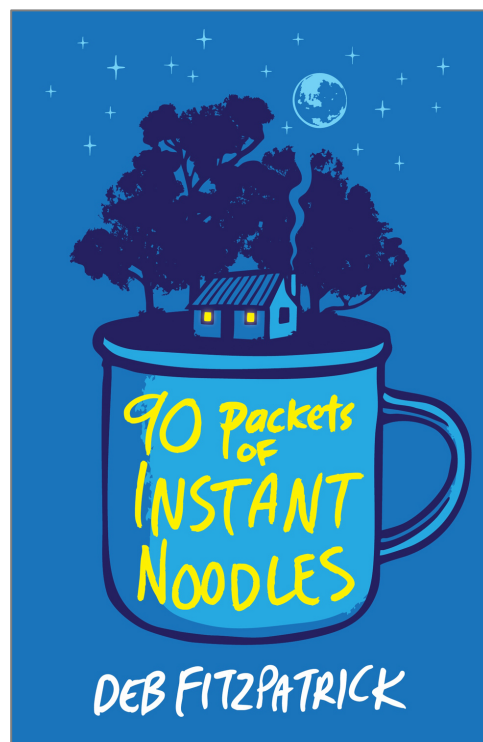
### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Y6 HASS

Y6–10 English

### USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author's website: [debfitzpatrick.com.au/](http://debfitzpatrick.com.au/)
- Author's Facebook: [facebook.com/debfitzpatrickwriter/](https://www.facebook.com/debfitzpatrickwriter/)
- Author's Instagram: [instagram.com/debfitzpatrick9/](https://www.instagram.com/debfitzpatrick9/)



## CLASSROOM IDEAS

### Before reading

Have a look at the cover.

1. What do you think the novel could be about?
2. When you read the title, *90 Packets of Instant Noodles*, what ideas does it give you?
3. Does it make you want to read the novel? Why or why not?

### During reading

Answer these questions after you have read the first 17 chapters of the novel (pp. 9–98):

1. What do you find out about the main character, Joel, in the first chapter? What information would you like to find out about him?
2. Describe in your own words the 'deal' Joel and his dad make with the Juvenile Justice Team.
3. Why do you think the author began the novel with the beginning of Joel's punishment, rather than with the crime he committed?
4. List the other characters that you meet in the first three chapters. What do you know about them? What is their relationship to Joel? What role do you think they will play in the story? (Hint: a table may help you organize this information.)
5. How would you describe Joel's relationship with his dad? Is it healthy or unhealthy? Why?
6. When you find out about the crime in chapters 12, 13 and 14, how does it change the way you read the story? Does it change your idea of Joel?
7. Why does the author choose to tell the story of the crime at this point in the novel?
8. What is Joel's attitude toward the punishment and the shack at the beginning of the novel? How does it change over the first 100 pages of the book? Why do you think it changes?
9. In the first part of the novel, the action takes place in a few different locations. Make a list of these locations. Do you recognise any of them? Which ones are real and which ones are fictional?

Answer these questions after you have read chapter 18 to chapter 32 (pp. 99–183):

10. What new information do we find out about Joel and his previous life in this part of the novel? How does this change the way you understand him?
11. In this section of the novel we get to read a lot of the letters Joel gets from his dad, Bella and Craggs. Read the letters from each of these characters and answer these questions:
  - What do you notice about the way each character writes?
  - What can you tell about each character from their letters?
  - How do each character's letters affect Joel?
  - Why do you think the author has included the letters for us to read?
12. What are Joel's main challenges when he is living in the shack? How does he confront each of them?
13. Based on what you can tell about the shack from the description in this section of the novel, draw a floor plan. You will need to think about where the door is, where the kitchen is, how many rooms it has, etc. (Note: You will need to use your imagination for some parts, because there is not enough information in the novel to draw the floor plan exactly.)
14. How does Joel change in this section of the novel? Provide evidence for your answer with quotes from the novel.
15. What can you tell about the old man that lives near Joel? Why do you think he lives out in the forest?
16. Joel thinks that Bella's letters change over time, and he gets worried. How does Joel think the letters change? What does Joel think this means? Is he correct, or does he worry for no reason? Use quotes from the novel to back up your answer.
17. In chapter 18, Joel has a dream about Sull. Write a short description of the dream. What do you think it means?
18. In chapter 27, Joel discovers a hemp plantation. How do you think the hemp got there?
19. Do you think Craggs is going to show up in the next section of the novel? Why or why not? Depending on your answer, what do you think will happen in this last section? Make a detailed prediction based on what you have already read.

## After reading

Answer these questions after you have read chapter 33 to chapter 57 and the epilogue (pp. 184–310):

20. From what perspective is the novel written? Why do you think the author has chosen to write the novel from this perspective?
21. Why does Craggs come down to Nallerup?
22. Has Craggs's experience in the detention centre changed him? Give evidence for your answer from the novel. How is this effect different/similar to the effect Joel's experience had on him?
23. How has Joel's attitude toward Craggs changed since their crime? What does Joel show this change in attitude? Why has his attitude changed?
24. Write a list of the slang words that Joel and Craggs use when they talk to each other (not including swear words). Write a definition for each one, and include at least one example of the word from the novel, with the number of the page it appears on.
25. When does Joel stutter during the novel? Why does he stutter at these times?
26. Some chapters in this section are in italics. Why has the author chosen to do this?
27. Why does Joel want to be at Craggs's trial? Do you think this was a good idea? Why?
28. After the trial, Joel decides to complete his time at the shack. What are his reasons?
29. In the chapter named '[after]', we find out about Craggs's sentencing and Joel's life after the shack. How do you think Joel will live his life after this? Will he live successfully? Why?

## Writing activity

Write a review of this novel for the book section of the *West Australian*.

To do this you will need to:

1. Find the book section of the *West Australian* and collect a few reviews for other books to use as examples.
2. Read each review and answer the following questions:
  - What style of writing does the review use? Are the sentences short or long? Do they use formal or informal language? What kinds of words do they use? How long is it?
  - What are the written conventions of the review? Is there a title and a picture? What information about the book is included? What kinds of opinions does the writer include?
  - What does the writer of the review want the reader to understand? What is their main point? What kinds of questions are the reviews answering?
3. What is your opinion of the novel?
  - Do you think it is a good novel? Why or why not?
  - Is the story gripping and/or enjoyable?
  - Do you think other people should read it? Why or why not?
  - What is the author trying to communicate to the reader?
4. Work out what you would like to say about the novel and write it out in point form. You will need to work out how to introduce your review, the points you would like to make and how you will conclude.
5. Write the first draft of your review. Flesh out each of the points in your plan so that you have a fully written review. Get a friend to proofread your draft to pick up mistakes and make helpful suggestions.
6. Once you are happy with your review, write out a final draft. Remember to include a headline, and any images if possible.

## Reading activity

Create a timeline of the events in the novel.

The events in the novel are not revealed in chronological order; you find out about events from the past in certain chapters, and sometimes you even get hints of what may happen in the future.

In groups, create a timeline poster of the events in the novel by placing them in the order they happened.

To do this, you will need to:

1. Get into groups of three or four.
2. Go through the novel chapter by chapter and decide when the events of each chapter take place. It may be helpful to mark each chapter as 'present', 'past' or 'future'. If you mark a chapter 'past' or 'future', you will need to work out when the events actually happened in Joel's life.
3. Draw a draft timeline. You may need some large paper to draw on. Draw a long line to represent these years of Joel's life, and place the events of the novel on the timeline in the order they actually happened.

4. When you are happy that you have the order correct, create your timeline poster. Write short descriptions of the events in time order. You may like to decorate your poster, perhaps with drawings of the events.
5. Display your poster and compare your timeline with other group's timelines. Your timelines might differ slightly – that's ok, the information in the novel isn't exact.

## Mapping/spatial activity

Draw a map of the area around Nallerup and Joel's shack.

To do this you will need to:

1. Scour the novel for information about the location of various places Joel goes around the shack and the town. Make notes of any useful information in the novel. You will need to think about the location of such places as:
  - the water hole
  - the old man's shack
  - the hemp plantation
  - the ridge
  - the Bibbulman track
  - the track into town
  - the short-cut track
  - any other places the novel mentions.
2. You will also need to think about the location of places in town, such as the store and the real estate agency.
3. Use the information you have gathered to make a rough draft map of the area. Have a look at some other maps to get ideas for how maps are drawn. You may want to use certain map conventions like a legend, contours or grid coordinates.
4. Create the final draft of your map. You will need some large paper or card. Sketch out your map on the paper, then colour and decorate it.
5. Display your map for the class.

## Creative writing activity

Write part of the story from the perspective of another character.

As you have discovered, the novel is written in the first person, from Joel's perspective. What do you think the story would look like from Bella's perspective? Or from Joel's dad's perspective? How would the story be different? What new information might we discover? That's for you to decide. Choose one of the three options below, and write part of the story from the perspective of that character.

Option 1: Write four diary entries from Bella's perspective. You could include entries from when she was with Joel and entries from when Joel is at the shack. What is going on in her life? How does she feel at these times?

Option 2: Write a short story from Joel's dad's perspective about his experience of Joel's crime and punishment. What does Joel's dad think about the situation? What kinds of things would he want to say about it?

Option 3: Imagine you are Craggs near the end of the novel, after he has been arrested for the second time. Write Craggs's statement to police about what he did to the old man and what he did in town. How does Craggs understand the events? What would he want to say about them? How is he feeling?

To do this you will need to:

1. Think about how that character writes and talks. What kinds of words would they use? How would they express their ideas? Collect evidence of this from the novel.
2. Brainstorm ideas for what your character is thinking and doing while Joel is at the shack. Write your ideas down in dot points, then order them into a dot-point plan for your piece of writing.
3. Write a first draft of your story. Ask a friend or family member to review it and provide feedback.
4. Write your final draft of your story, taking in any suggestions.

## Speaking/debate activity

Hold a debate on one of the issues that is raised in the novel.

*90 Packets of Instant Noodles* raises a number of important issues that are relevant to our lives. Was sending Joel to the shack a good idea or a bad idea? When Joel found the hemp plantation, should he have told the police, or just stayed quiet? Should Craggs have been expelled from his school? All these questions are raised by the story.

In groups, hold a debate on one of the following statements.

Statement 1: Young people who are convicted of crime should always be incarcerated.

Statement 2: Sending Joel to the shack was an appropriate punishment.

Statement 3: When Joel found the hemp plantation, he should have told authorities.

Statement 4: Young offenders like Craggs should not be expelled from their school.

Statement 5: Craggs was less responsible for his actions because his father abused him.

Statement 6: Bella's father was right to screen her calls and confiscate her mobile.

To do this you will need to:

1. Get into groups of three.
2. Choose a statement and whether you will be for (affirmative) or against (negative). Remember that another group will need to take the other side!
3. Read through the novel for examples and information that will be relevant to your debate. Make notes of the examples and record the page number of each one.
4. Do research on your issue. Find as much information as you can about the issue you are debating.
5. Discuss your issue and use all the information you have gathered to form your arguments. Write out the arguments you will use in your debate. Try to predict what arguments your opposition will come up with and find ways to rebut them.
6. Decide who will use each argument in their speech. You can't use the same argument twice in the debate.
7. Write each of the three speeches for your side of the debate. Each speech should be 2 minutes long. Make sure you include strong arguments in each one, and leave time for rebuttal in the second and third speech. Write the three speeches together – you need to know what each person will say.
8. Make palm cards that will remind you of what to say during your speech. You are not allowed to read your speech in a debate.
9. Hold the debate in front of the class. An adjudicator will time your speech and decide the winner at the end. Or after the debate, you may like to ask the class to vote for the winning team.



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