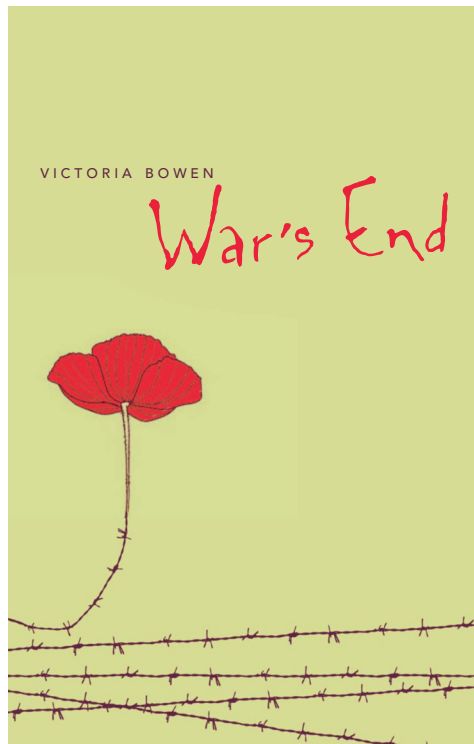




# WAR'S END

Victoria Bowen



Teaching Support Kit  
by  
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# WAR'S END

## Teaching Support Kit: Student Learning Activity Notes

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### Background information

#### Outline of the story

**War's End** follows the life of a working class family living in an outer suburb of Perth, Western Australia, in the immediate aftermath of the Great War.

The father of the house has been away since December 1914 fighting first at Gallipoli and then in France. In his absence his family have managed to make ends meet from the income from their grandfather's wood business, the amount allocated to his wife from Dad's soldier's pay and the small wage handed over each week from the son of the house, who was taken out of school early to work as a telegraph boy. The two girls of the family, Martha in her last year at school and Nell in her last year in primary school, help with the work in the house and garden.

The end of the war was declared on the eleventh of November 1918 and six months later Dad is finally on his way home. But something else from the war has reached Western Australia before him — the Spanish Influenza that will kill more people around the world than the Great War itself.

Note: **War's End** is a work of fiction informed by research into the time.

#### Narrative structure

The story is told from Nell's point of view and takes place during a train journey from the hills outside Perth to a suburb on the other side of city. Dad and Pa have come to the Greenmount Isolation Hospital to bring Nell home after her recovery from influenza.

tween her father and her grandfather and adds her thoughts and memories to the narrative. The reader gradually comes to know this family and what they have been through. Like most returned soldiers Dad will not speak of the war but readers will gain some knowledge of what it was like to be in France and what it was like at home constantly on edge and trying to make do with dwindling food and household supplies.

#### Characters:

Nell            12-years-old, non-academic, self-absorbed and much put upon in her own opinion.

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Martha	the shining child of the family. Academically bright, she wants a life different to most women of her time.
Jack	pushed too early in life to take on responsibilities, wants a quiet life.
Mum	one of those strong women left behind to hold the family together, supported by her father, the much-loved grandfather of the three children.
Dad	unknown. Nell can't remember him but the other family members do and they all hold his homecoming as the end of their trials and the beginning of a new, better way of life for the family.

### Suggested reading age

Level Four to Nine (ages 10-15)

### Themes

- Family relationships
- Wars and depressions
- Epidemics
- Place
- Perception
- Change
- Love and loss

## Notes to the teacher

The suggested learning activities are designed to be used by individual students or as part of larger class activities. They can be used as Learning or Literature Circle activities, or as extension work for wider reading.

They form the basis for some research and thinking around four Key Learning Areas, and can be developed, refined or edited to fit in with each teacher's learning program.

Learning activities are addressed directly to the students.

## Language and literacy

### Reading

#### Wiki reading list

Contribute to a class wiki to create a reading list of stories, books and films that link to this one. It could be called: If you enjoyed War's End, then we think you'll like....

#### Other people's lives

Conduct a search to find digital stories of people's experiences from the time of War's End.

Ref:

[http://qldstories.slq.qld.gov.au/home/digital\\_stories/themes](http://qldstories.slq.qld.gov.au/home/digital_stories/themes)

<http://dl.screenaustralia.gov.au>

### Writing

#### Word pictures

Victoria Bowen creates characters through word pictures. Look at the description of Matron on page 9 starting from, "She could... down to ...task"

What do you notice about his description?

Do you know anything about Matron's appearance from this?

Can you picture her?

Take part in a Think Pair Share exercise to identify the writing techniques used here.

After the discussion, think of a person you know and try these techniques to create a word picture of the character for your classmates.

#### Flashback

The time in this story moves forward and backwards, using the flashback technique to tell two connected stories at once. Experiment with using this way of telling a story by planning your two stories using a Venn diagram, and/ or coloured post-it notes to help you see where they overlap and how to plan the sequencing.

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### Speaking and listening

#### Autobiography - sharing stories

Nell tells her story using the first person narrative.

Her story of what happened to her when the war ended is made up of many short stories. Small stories that sometimes have a funny ending are called anecdotes. Can you think of an event that happened to you that would make interesting anecdotes that your classmates might enjoy hearing about? Discuss ideas in pairs, and then share your story aloud in a Learning Circle. What did you notice about the stories? What did you learn from them?

#### Out loud

Choose a section or excerpt from the book that you think would make an excellent radio play. In small groups develop a script from the dialogue in the text, rehearse and record it. You may wish to use:

- sound effects
- music
- vocal effects ( for example, overlapping voices)

to add to the scene.

Upload your recording as a podcast onto the school intranet or website where it can be shared with others.

## History/SOSE

#### Time travel- what is ordinary?

Create a PMI poster to explore ideas about Nell's life at this time.

#### My life- other lives

In small groups, develop a Compare and Contrast chart to show how your life and Nell's life are different and similar.

#### Research task

Find out about two examples of people from the past from your community who have been affected by major world events, for example war or disease. You may have a class excursion to the cemetery to begin your search, or the local war memorial.

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For each step in your research, write down, what you did, where you looked, who you asked, how you found it and what search terms you used, for example interviewing, reading, search terms, and the information you found.

Sample Table

Source	Method	Information
Old lady - Neighbour	Interview	The local street was named after her brother who died of polio
...	...	...

Hint: you may not get any information from some sources but include them in the table anyway to show where you looked.

## Science

After a focus activity such as a short video or reading, develop some inquiry questions around flu epidemics.

For example:

- How do they spread so quickly?
- Where do they come from?
- Why are people quarantined?

Write all your questions up on a wall chart and select the most interesting ones to find out about.

*Possible link to 2009 Swine flu outbreak*      *Issues in the news.*

### Maths

From your research on the earlier activity, construct a graph to show how quickly the outbreak spreads with days or weeks along the bottom of the graph and numbers on the vertical axis.

### Exploring themes

- family
- war
- change
- love and loss

Form small groups and select one of the themes above.

Develop a mind map to show questions and ideas from the novel that you are interested in and would like to explore further, and any connections you might have observed.

### Integrated Activity

Use the research and reading you have done on this book as the basis for a digital story.

You will need to decide the purpose and audience for your story. It will last for one minute and should use an original narration, story, poem or song.

You can use it to tell a short story of your own life connected to the themes of the book, or as a reflection of your history research or for any other purpose negotiated with your teacher.