

The Immortal

By Michael Panckridge

GENRE

Mystery/suspense/horror

ABOUT THE IMMORTAL

In 1957, agent Jeremy Brighton is on his last mission. He must collect a formula so secret that not even he can know about its function. The mission has international consequences. It has personal consequences for Jeremy. It is his last mission before he retires to spend time with his wife and son.

The mission goes horrible wrong. Jeremy is injected with the formula and trapped in a tunnel. The only person who knows that he is there is a small boy. No help comes and Jeremy remains trapped until 2009. Miraculously, he does not age.

In 2009, Cameron Bergman is sent to Sea Cottage for the summer holidays. His father has had little time for him since the death of Cameron's mother. Lonely and lost, Cameron imagines that he hears someone calling for his help. Together with his friends Ben and Emily, they follow a trail of clues that leads to a chilling discovery of Jeremy and the Mikado – a formula that can give eternal life.

The Immortal draws the reader in from the first page, providing students with the opportunity to make predictions about narrative and character. It explores important themes such as grief, death, family, friendships, courage and greed. It provides an opportunity for interesting discussions about the life cycle and the need for individual lives to be finite.

The novel is an excellent example of this genre. After reading, students will have a strong understanding of the conventions, allowing them to create some fantastic suspenseful stories of their own.

Genre: Mystery/suspense/horror

Readership: Upper primary, lower secondary

Themes: Grief, Death, Family relationships, Friendships, Isolation/loneliness, Courage, Greed, The life cycle, Societal change/individual change



ENGLISH

Reading and writing

Cameron, Ben and Emily solve a frightening mystery in this book. They must put together the clues from the past and the present day to find the secret of the Mikado. As you collect clues in these activities, record all answers in your journal.

Pre reading activities

- Find out the meaning of the word 'immortal' and record this in your journal.
- Would you like to live forever? Make a list of the positive and negative aspects of eternal life. Hold a group discussion about your lists.

Reading activities

As you read the novel, complete the chapter activities outlined below.

Prologue

- Make some predictions about the events of the novel based on this chapter.
- As a class, discuss how a child might feel in a mortuary. What questions might young children have about death?

Chapter 1

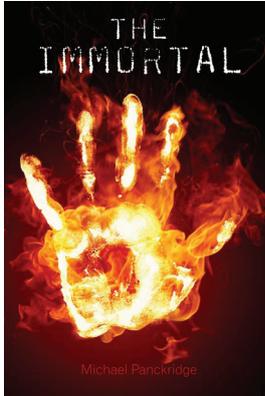
- What clues are we given about Jeremy's character in this chapter?
- What clues are we given about David's character?

Chapter 2

- What do you think are the most interesting things about Cameron?

Chapter 3

- Draw a picture of the most exciting part of this chapter.



Chapter 4

- Make a list of important things that Cameron finds out in this chapter.

Chapter 5

- What do you think would be the most horrible thing about Jeremy's situation?
- Make some predictions about why Jeremy has started to feel hope.

Chapter 6

- What do you predict will happen in Chapter 7? Who is calling Cameron for help?

Chapter 7

- Ben is claustrophobic. Write a journal entry about a time when you were afraid of someone or something.

Chapter 8

- What would you have done if you were in the same situation as Cameron?
- What would you have done if you were Emily?

Chapters 9 and 10

- As a class, discuss what things would you miss the most about the world if you were trapped like Jeremy.

Chapter 11

- 'And do you think that if something in your head is true, it is true?' Jeremy asks Emily. How would you answer Jeremy's question?



Chapter 12

- Cameron and Ben have become quite good friends. Write a journal entry about one of your good friends. Remember to show the reader what a good friend they are instead of simply telling the reader this fact. For example, if they are loyal describe a time when they did not betray you.

Chapters 13 and 14

- Do you think Jeremy has died? Make a list of questions that you have after reading these chapters.

Chapter 15

- Add to the list you made about immortality in the pre reading activities. In what ways is eternal life a curse?

Chapter 16

- Write Cameron's journal entry after he has left his dad's office. How does he feel about the way his dad treats him? What reasons can you give for how his dad behaves?
- Do you predict that Cameron's dad will change? Why or why not?

Chapter 17 and 18

- In what ways is Tomako wiser than her father?
- Do you trust Tomako? Why or why not?
- What is Cameron's special gift?

Chapters 19

- Do you trust Jeremy at the end of this chapter? Why or why not?



Chapter 20

- Discuss the answers that are revealed in this chapter.
- Look over the predictions you made in these activities. Discuss where you were right and wrong.

Epilogue

- If you were Jeremy, would you take the antidote?

Post reading activities

- Allocate each student one word from the vocabulary list.
- Have students record the definition in their journal.
- Have students draw a picture of the meaning next to the definition.
- Put students into groups of four or five. Have them create a play that includes their allocated words. For example, group one might have to make a play that includes foliage, claustrophobia, a person gesticulating and someone who is sceptical.

Vocabulary List

Foliage (p.5)

Allegiance (p.11)

Emphatic (p.22)

Naively (p.28)

Keeled (p.30)

Reverberated (p.35)

Corrosion (p.50)

Sallow (p.51)

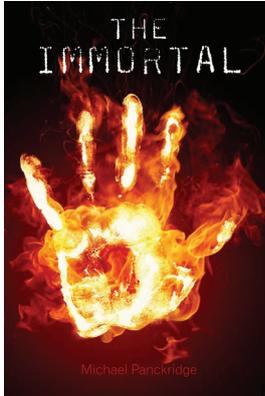
Malaise (p.52)

Quizzically (p.57)

Mortar (p.62)

Claustrophobic (p.66)

Descended (p.67)



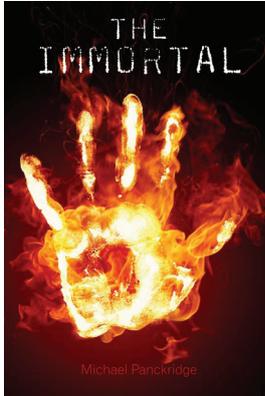
- Inaudible (p.90)
- Sceptical (p.107)
- Gesticulating (p.109)
- Gingerly (p.117)
- Intangible (p.120)
- Appraising (p.131)
- Defunct (p.138)
- Derelict (p.153)
- Gnarled (p.180)
- Elixir (p.183)
- Nonchalant (p.199)
- Futile (p.201)
- Plausible (p.202)
- Forlorn (p.246)
- Incoherent (p.258)
- Irony (p.265)

Structure

Construct a timeline to show the order of important events in *The Immortal*.

You might like to represent the events using pictures or symbols. Remember to represent the date of the event.

- As a class, discuss the meaning of chronological order.
- Discuss reasons why Michael Panckridge has not written this book in chronological order.
- Have students think of other books that are not written in chronological order.
- Discuss some of the important things that authors and editors must consider when choosing this style of narrative. (For example, clear headings and dates, clues in the text, careful planning of narrative.)



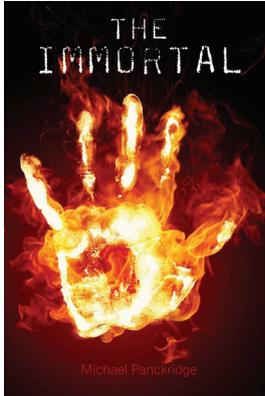
Themes

- As a class, brainstorm the major themes of the novel.
- Have students discuss how these themes relate to their lives.
- Allocate small groups one major theme in the novel. Have groups make a list of events and key quotes that relate to their theme.
- Have students design a front cover for their journal highlighting the most important themes of the novel.

Characters

Complete the table below.

Character	Plus (Positive characteristics)	Minus (Negative characteristics)	Interesting (Characteristics that caught your attention)
	Similarities (Note experiences or traits that characters share)		
Jeremy			
Glen Bergman			
Cameron Bergman			
Jeremy Brighton			
David Stokes			
Ben			
Emily			
Hamish Collins			
Tomako			
Master Shinobu			



Language

Metaphors, similes and symbols

Michael Panckridge uses interesting similes, metaphors and symbols throughout his novel.

- Define the term metaphor.
- Define the term simile.
- Define the term symbol.
- Find some examples of similes, metaphors and symbols in the book.

Suspense

- Michael Panckridge successfully creates a feeling of suspense in the novel. How does he do this? Discuss things such as sentence length, concrete images, use of adjectives and use of dialogue.

Writing activities

- Cameron, Ben and Emily have the adventure of a lifetime on their summer holidays. Write a story about a summer adventure that you have had.
- Write the first chapter of Jeremy's next adventure: the final operation to destroy the Mikado.
- Write a letter from Glen Bergman to his son, Cameron, explaining why he has been so distant over the years.
- Imagine that it is the year 3000. You were given the Mikado in 2009. What things have you experienced? What is the world like now?
- Write your own suspenseful short story. Give your reader some clues but remember to keep them guessing until the end of the story!



Speaking and listening

Write a monologue as one of the characters explaining how the events of the summer have changed you. For example, perhaps before this summer Cameron might have thought the idea of eternal life was a good thing. (If his mother had taken it she would still be alive.) Ben has found a friend and some acceptance. Glen has been reconnected with his son.

Read some ghost stories as a class. Discuss the important elements of this genre. (Look at structure, character, plot and language.)

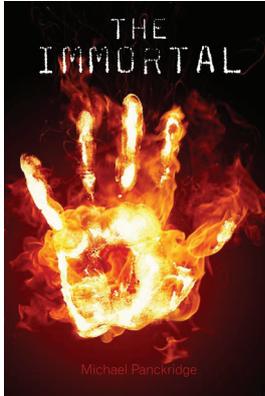
SOSE/HISE

There is a real place called Channel Point in Australia.

- Draw a map of Australia and mark in Channel Point.
- Mark in the states, territories and capital cities as we know them today.
- Mark in the surrounding seas and oceans. Include a border, title, northing, key and scale on your map.

Jeremy became trapped in 1957. Australia would have been a very different place during this year. In groups, research some of the differences between life in 1957 and life in 2009. Some possible areas of difference are listed below. Create a poster to show some of these differences.

- Fashions
- Sport/Leisure
- Technology
- Medicine
- Politics
- Money
- Architecture
- Families
- Equal opportunity (gender, race, disability)
- Education/work



SCIENCE

- Jeremy is trapped in 1957 and is freed in 2009. Research one scientific discovery or medical advancement that occurred during this time. Make notes on the discovery or advancement and the scientist(s) involved. Present your findings as a PowerPoint.
- Many people in the book are tempted by eternal life. Everything in the world has a life cycle, though. Choose one animal or insect and research its life cycle. Present your findings in your journal.

CREATIVE ARTS

- Create a map to show Sea Cottage and the surrounding areas. Mark the tunnel on your map.
- Choose the most exciting part of the book. In groups, write this part as a play script. Perform it for the class. Remember to use costumes and sound effects to add impact!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Panckridge is the author of the acclaimed Legends and Anniversary Legends series. These series are a culmination of many years of dedicated sports-mania combined with an enthusiastic exploration of what boys and girls really want to read.

Michael Panckridge enjoys talking to children, parents and teachers about reading and writing — and especially boys about reading.

Michael is a teacher at Geelong College and has been working there for 12 years. He is pretty mad-keen on sport. He has played cricket, football, soccer, tennis, hockey, golf. He also collects sporting things. He has a massive collection of football cards and lots of cricket books too.