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A **STUDY GUIDE** BY KATY MARRINER

AUSTRALIAN TEACHERS OF MEDIA

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‘Everybody who knows us has forgotten us.’

***Nowhere Boys* (2013), a thirteen-part Australian children’s television series created by Tony Ayres for Matchbox Pictures, is the story of four teenage boys who return from a school excursion to discover they are stuck in a parallel world in which they were never born. A compelling combination of drama, adventure and the supernatural, *Nowhere Boys* develops and enriches its audience’s knowledge and understanding of the experiences of adolescence as Andy, Felix, Jake and Sam endeavour to resolve their differences, solve their dilemma and find a way home.**

CURRICULUM LINKS

The *Nowhere Boys* study guide has been written for upper primary and lower secondary students. It provides information and suggestions for learning activities in English.

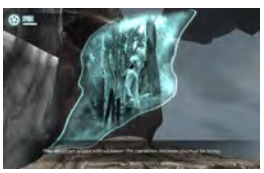
In English, students engage with a variety of texts for enjoyment. They read and view, and also interpret and evaluate these texts in which the primary purpose is aesthetic. As a classroom resource, *Nowhere Boys* is relevant to the teaching of the Literature strand, allowing students to respond to, examine and create literature. In Media, students view, analyse and evaluate media texts and the contexts within which they are made. As a classroom resource, *Nowhere Boys* is relevant to the teaching of how media texts engage audiences, draw on codes and conventions, and construct representations.

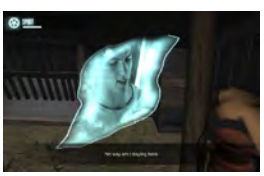
The tasks described in the *Nowhere Boy* study guide provide opportunities for students to complete a close analysis of the series and the key ideas and values on which it is based, and to engage in the processes of listening, speaking, reading, viewing and writing. Teachers are advised to choose tasks that are age-appropriate.

In completing the tasks, students will have demonstrated the ability to:

- identify personal ideas, experiences and opinions about texts and discuss them with others;
- describe and explain how events, characters and settings in texts are depicted;
- analyse, explain and evaluate the structure of a text and how the features of the text influence audience response;
- explain and analyse the ways in which stories, characters, settings and experiences are reflected in particular genres, and to discuss the appeal of these genres;
- create a wide range of texts, make presentations and contribute actively to class and group discussions;
- when writing, demonstrate understanding of grammar, select specific vocabulary and use accurate spelling and punctuation, editing their work to provide structure and meaning;
- use a range of software to create, edit and publish texts.

Stills from *The 5th Boy* online game





SERIES SYNOPSIS

When four very different teenage boys get lost while trekking through Bremin National Park, an already tiresome school excursion becomes even worse. After surviving a terrifying night and a twister that seems out to get them, Andy, Felix, Jake and Sam return to town expecting a heroic reception. Instead, they discover that they are now total strangers to their friends and families

The alternate world the boys return to is identical to theirs except for one startling difference – they were never born. All public records of them have vanished and the world has reconfigured itself. Their families are living very different lives. Felix's disabled brother can walk. Jake's struggling parents are now leading successful lives. Andy's family – and in particular his sister – are less straight-laced. Sam is not pleased to discover that he has been replaced.

The 'nowhere boys' are forced to fend for themselves. They band together to find out what is going on, but as one bizarre situation after enough threatens their survival, Andy's scientific obsession with finding a rational explanation gives way to Felix's belief that they are up against something otherworldly. Felix comes into the possession of an ornate talisman through Phoebe, who runs the local new-age spirituality shop. He discovers that when all the boys are together, they possess magical powers that allow them to use the talisman to ward off the demonic force that is intent on destroying them.

In this strange new world, the boys are still drawn to their families. Jake meets the father he never had. Sam faces up to his self-indulgent flaws. Andy enjoys his first taste of independence. Felix is accepted by his family in a way never possible after the accident that injured his brother. Meanwhile, the demon grows ever more powerful, possessing animals and humans in its quest to wreak havoc. Convinced that Phoebe is behind it all, the boys confront her, but Phoebe just wants to find her sister, Alice. Phoebe believes the boys can help find Alice because Felix is bestowed with the gift of magic.

When the boys are presented with a chance to revisit the forest where they went missing, they grow hopeful of a return home, only to discover the demon is now stronger than ever. Having barely survived, the boys are back where they started and old tensions are renewed as they begin to see their chances of returning to their old lives fade away.

The demon takes advantage of Sam's frustration to trick him into destroying the talisman, leaving the boys vulnerable. To make matters worse, the boys' new-world mothers simultaneously succumb to mysterious ailments triggered by the boys themselves. The four must work together to cast a spell that reverses the effects before it is too late.

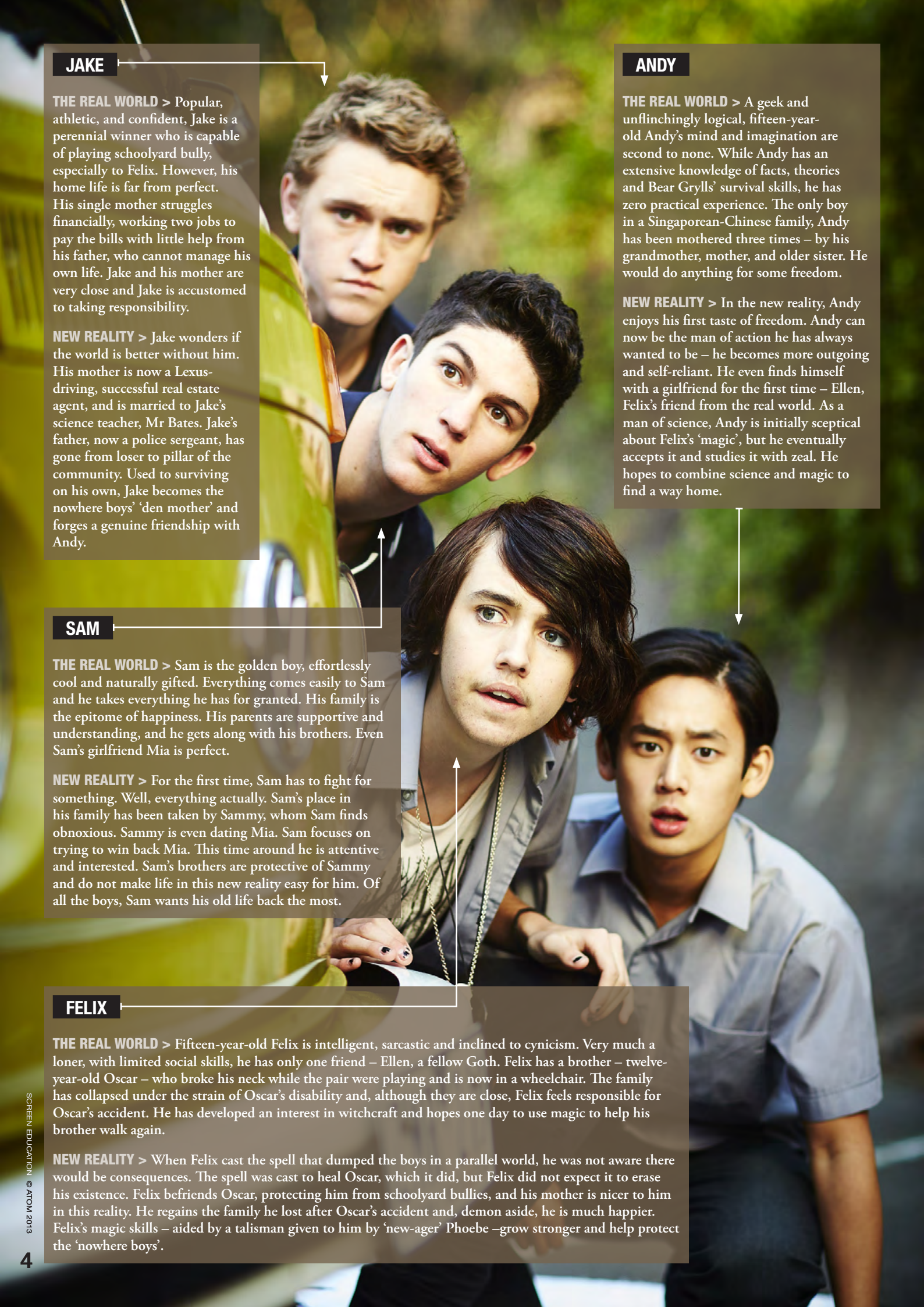
Each episode has a running time of 26 minutes

Determined to find a way home, their bond is threatened yet again when Felix is revealed to be responsible for their dilemma. He cast the spell that brought them to this other Bremin in an attempt to heal his brother Oscar. Felix has always blamed himself for the accident that put Oscar in a wheelchair. To work the spell, he needed the other three boys, to create a unification of the elements – Jake is earth, Andy is water, Sam is air and Felix is fire.

Despite their anger, the boys can only return home if they work together. The demon is now at the peak of its power and uses Oscar to capture Felix. The boys realise that Oscar represents the fifth element – spirit. Having unlocked the mystery, they repair the talisman and defeat the demon.

In a final confrontation, just as the boys are returned to their world, the demon is revealed to be Phoebe's sister, Alice. But something has changed. Each of the boys now possesses power over their respective elements and Alice has followed them home …

In addition to the television series, *Nowhere Boys* has a truly unique online game hosted on the ABC3 website. This interactive online game unfolds as each of the six worlds (Earth, Air, Water, Fire, Spirit, and Darkness) are unlocked at key stages during the TV broadcast schedule. The user will take on the persona of a fifth boy who is lost between dimensions as he journeys through Negative Space, battles demonic forces, and gains elemental powers to help the nowhere boys return home. The online narrative runs parallel to the TV series until both stories converge, revealing a dramatic twist. This innovative, groundbreaking experience will give users an extra perspective on the TV series as it screens.



JAKE

THE REAL WORLD > Popular, athletic, and confident, Jake is a perennial winner who is capable of playing schoolyard bully, especially to Felix. However, his home life is far from perfect. His single mother struggles financially, working two jobs to pay the bills with little help from his father, who cannot manage his own life. Jake and his mother are very close and Jake is accustomed to taking responsibility.

NEW REALITY > Jake wonders if the world is better without him. His mother is now a Lexus-driving, successful real estate agent, and is married to Jake's science teacher, Mr Bates. Jake's father, now a police sergeant, has gone from loser to pillar of the community. Used to surviving on his own, Jake becomes the nowhere boys' 'den mother' and forges a genuine friendship with Andy.

ANDY

THE REAL WORLD > A geek and unflinchingly logical, fifteen-year-old Andy's mind and imagination are second to none. While Andy has an extensive knowledge of facts, theories and Bear Grylls' survival skills, he has zero practical experience. The only boy in a Singaporean-Chinese family, Andy has been mothered three times – by his grandmother, mother, and older sister. He would do anything for some freedom.

NEW REALITY > In the new reality, Andy enjoys his first taste of freedom. Andy can now be the man of action he has always wanted to be – he becomes more outgoing and self-reliant. He even finds himself with a girlfriend for the first time – Ellen, Felix's friend from the real world. As a man of science, Andy is initially sceptical about Felix's 'magic', but he eventually accepts it and studies it with zeal. He hopes to combine science and magic to find a way home.

SAM

THE REAL WORLD > Sam is the golden boy, effortlessly cool and naturally gifted. Everything comes easily to Sam and he takes everything he has for granted. His family is the epitome of happiness. His parents are supportive and understanding, and he gets along with his brothers. Even Sam's girlfriend Mia is perfect.

NEW REALITY > For the first time, Sam has to fight for something. Well, everything actually. Sam's place in his family has been taken by Sammy, whom Sam finds obnoxious. Sammy is even dating Mia. Sam focuses on trying to win back Mia. This time around he is attentive and interested. Sam's brothers are protective of Sammy and do not make life in this new reality easy for him. Of all the boys, Sam wants his old life back the most.

FELIX

THE REAL WORLD > Fifteen-year-old Felix is intelligent, sarcastic and inclined to cynicism. Very much a loner, with limited social skills, he has only one friend – Ellen, a fellow Goth. Felix has a brother – twelve-year-old Oscar – who broke his neck while the pair were playing and is now in a wheelchair. The family has collapsed under the strain of Oscar's disability and, although they are close, Felix feels responsible for Oscar's accident. He has developed an interest in witchcraft and hopes one day to use magic to help his brother walk again.

NEW REALITY > When Felix cast the spell that dumped the boys in a parallel world, he was not aware there would be consequences. The spell was cast to heal Oscar, which it did, but Felix did not expect it to erase his existence. Felix befriends Oscar, protecting him from schoolyard bullies, and his mother is nicer to him in this reality. He regains the family he lost after Oscar's accident and, demon aside, he is much happier. Felix's magic skills – aided by a talisman given to him by 'new-ager' Phoebe –grow stronger and help protect the 'nowhere boys'.

Episode 7

'My name is Felix, and these are my cousins, Jake, Andy and Sam.' – *Felix*

SYNOPSIS

In an effort to allay the growing suspicions of the Bremin community, the boys return to school. Sam is least fazed by the arduous task of assimilation that awaits the boys, anticipating an effortless return to his former Golden Boy status. His expectations are quickly dashed when he discovers that Andy is the centre of everybody's attention, especially Ellen's.

While Jake re-establishes himself with his old friends and Felix continues to bond with Oscar, Sam struggles with real loneliness for the first time in his life. A desperate Sam acts out in a bid to win back Mia, but another painful rejection forces him to accept that he must change his selfish ways in order to be accepted. Meanwhile, Andy is faced with the terrifying prospect of a first kiss, when Ellen reveals that she was the author of the love letter he received days earlier.

Adopting a less selfish approach, Sam starts to make real headway with Mia but their chemistry is ruined by the arrival of a vicious canine. Sam summons all of his courage to protect Mia, as the

possessed dogs descend upon the school and all hell breaks loose.

The boys find each other and attempt to flee for their lives. Cornered by the hellhounds they don't get far. Felix openly uses his magic in front of the other boys, turning the ravenous beasts back into the pet dogs of Bremin.

* Teachers may choose to provide students with the episode synopsis or ask students to complete **Worksheet 1: Episode summary**

1. Why does Phoebe insist that Andy, Felix, Jake and Sam return to school?

2. Sam is happy to be back at school. He tells a surprised Jake, 'This is way better than hanging out in that lame shed. There's a canteen, showers, hot girls.'

- What does the flashback sequence reveal about Sam and his status at Bremin High?
- What goes for wrong for Sam on his first day back at Bremin High?
- Does anything go right?

'This is way better than hanging out in that lame shed. There's a canteen, showers, hot girls.'

3. Andy is anticipating spending time in the library studying wormholes.

- Does his day go to plan?
- Does he enjoy being popular?

4. Does Jake cope better than the others with being back at Bremin High?

5. How does Felix spend lunchtime?

6. Are first days at a new school ever easy? Can you remember your first day of primary school? Share your experiences of your first day at secondary school. Have you ever been the 'new kid'?

7. Demonic dogs aside, is the filmmaker's portrayal of a day at school credible?

8. Oscar: Is this like the bees?

Felix: I think so.

The dogs of Bremin have gone mad.

- Explain how the production values of this

sequence convey both threat and fear.

Felix finds Andy, Jake and Sam, pulls the talisman from around his neck and casts a spell.

- What does Oscar think of Felix's power?

- What do Andy, Jake and Sam think of Felix's power?

9. The following words are part of the dialogue of Episode 7. Write a definition of each word in the space provided. There is room for you to add other words to the grid.

10. What will happen next? Finish your Episode 7 blog entries by predicting what you think will happen in Episode 8.

WORD	MEANING
suspicious	
lame	
flyer	
stressful	
consolation	
affinity	
summon	
quest	
forth	
Wikileaks	

Episode 8

'So you're from another world and you're in this world, where none of you were ever born.' – Phoebe

SYNOPSIS

Having narrowly survived the dog attack at Bremin High, the boys' suspicion turns to Phoebe, believing she could be the reason they are in this parallel universe. Felix thinks that the Book of Shadows holds the answer. The boys split up. Felix and Sam follow Phoebe. Andy and Jake break into Arcane Lane.

Felix and Sam are intrigued when they discover Phoebe visiting all of the places where the boys were attacked. Andy and Jake search the back room of the shop for clues to Phoebe's interest in them. When Phoebe arrives, they manage to escape. As they run, Jake collapses, having eaten something from one of Phoebe's many pickling jars. Luckily Lily is passing by and Andy is able to call on his Nai Nai's herbalist skills to help save Jake.

In the meantime, Felix and Sam confront Phoebe and demand an explanation. Phoebe reveals that she thinks a restoring demon is to blame, and the boys reluctantly reveal the circumstances behind their arrival in Bremin. Convinced of Felix's magical abilities, Phoebe brokers a deal. Phoebe will help the boys get home, providing Felix helps her find her sister, Alice (the real witch), who went missing ten years ago.

The demon tracks Andy and Jake to Lily Lau's restaurant where, it inhabits its first human host: the formidable Lily Lau. Felix's arrival for dinner with his family represents the kind of inclusion all the boys so sorely miss. A hungry Sam is there as well, unaware that this may be his last supper if the demonic Lily prevails. Fortunately, the ever-reliable talisman kicks into action and the demon spirit leaves Lily, no doubt on the hunt for a new host.

Later that night, as Andy, Felix, Jake and Sam debate the finer details of demonic possession, they realise that they might not need Phoebe to return

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home after all. Mr Bates is taking the Year 10 Science class on 'that' excursion.

* Teachers may choose to provide students with the episode synopsis or ask students to complete **Worksheet 1: Episode summary**

1. What does the flashback reveal about Phoebe? Is she good at her job? After all, she insults Felix and is hardly enthusiastic about serving Mia. Why is Phoebe at Arcane Lane and why is she helping the boys?

2. 'It's a talisman. Like a good luck charm. I got it from Phoebe when the attacks started.' – Felix

The talisman is more than a good luck charm. The talisman has already saved the boys' lives more than once.

- Do you have a good luck charm? Share the story of how the charm came into your possession and explain why you believe it brings good luck.
- What does Felix tell Andy, Jake and Sam about the talisman?
- What do the boys think of Felix's explanation?

'It's a talisman. Like a good luck charm. I got it from Phoebe when the attacks started.'

3. Has the boys' relationship changed? Do you think they are starting to work as a team?

4. What do Andy and Jake find at Arcane Lane?

- Even if you were as hungry as Jake, would you have eaten a pickle from one of Phoebe's specimen jars?
- Why does Lily help Andy and Jake?

5. Oscar invites Felix to a family dinner at Lily Lau's restaurant. The other boys are jealous of Felix's connection with his family.

- Why is the dinner important to Felix?
- Why are the other boys at the restaurant?

Lily becomes possessed by the restoring demon and is about to wreak havoc with a cleaver. Lives are saved when Felix accidentally activates the talisman.

- How do the filmmakers portray the danger of the situation? Explain the use of humour in the scenes portraying Lily's demonic possession.

6. 'Prove you're innocent. Show us your Book of

WORD	MEANING
charm	
renowned	
lair	
demonology	
bonafide	
herbalist	
harness	
incarcerate	
irrational	
counter-intuitive	

Shadows.' – Felix

- What is the Book of Shadows? Who does it really belong to?
- Why does Phoebe finally decide to trust Felix with the Book of Shadows?

7. 'From the signature, it looks like a restoring demon, created to restore the natural order after a magical disturbance.' – Phoebe

- Does Phoebe's theory make sense?

'Prove you're innocent. Show us your Book of Shadows'

8. Andy: In this world, the excursion was cancelled and rescheduled for tomorrow.

Jake: So if we go back and do it all again.

Sam: Maybe we can find our own way home.

- Do you think that reliving the events of the excursion will allow the boys to solve their dilemma?

9. The above words are part of the dialogue of Episode 8. Write a definition of each word in the space provided. There is room for you to add other words to the grid.

10. What will happen next? Finish your Episode 8 blog entries by predicting what you think will happen in Episode 9.

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Episode 9

'This place is malevolent. Strange stuff happens here.' – Roland

The boys prepare to return to the Bremin Ranges, hoping to replicate the conditions of the first excursion in a bid to return home. Andy believes that they are looking for a wormhole and as usual, blindly dismisses Felix's belief that magic may be at play.

Andy confides in Jake that he convinced Mr Bates to go ahead with the original excursion even though there was a storm brewing. Jake insists that the boys all played a part in getting lost and it will take a group effort for them to get home.

The Year 10 Science class arrive at the Bremin Ranges, but this time the boys aren't placed in the same small group. Unwilling to miss a chance to find their way back to their old reality, the boys defy Mr Bates and run into the forest together.

As the storm builds, the boys find the spot where they spent the night. Believing that they are near the wormhole, they race ahead, only to stumble across one of Roland's traps. When Felix falls to the ground, the talisman flies from his hand. Felix searches for it, only to find a disturbingly familiar spiral carving. There is no time to wonder what it means when Roland, suddenly possessed by the demon, turns from friend to foe. Yet again, the boys find themselves fighting for their lives.

Andy saves the day when he finds the talisman and Felix utters the spell. The talisman is activated and the demon flees Roland's body. Now Andy has seen first-hand that magic does exist.

As the boys prepare to camp out for the night, they are found by Mr Bates, and are forced to board the bus back to Bremin. Arriving back at the hideout, the boys are startled to discover the police searching through the place. Threatened again, the boys have no choice but to flee.

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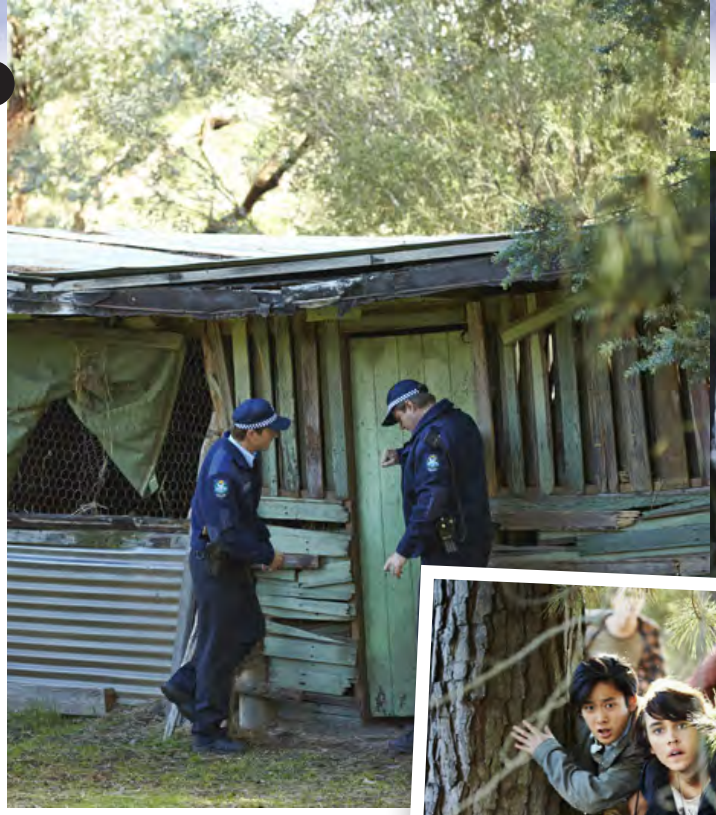

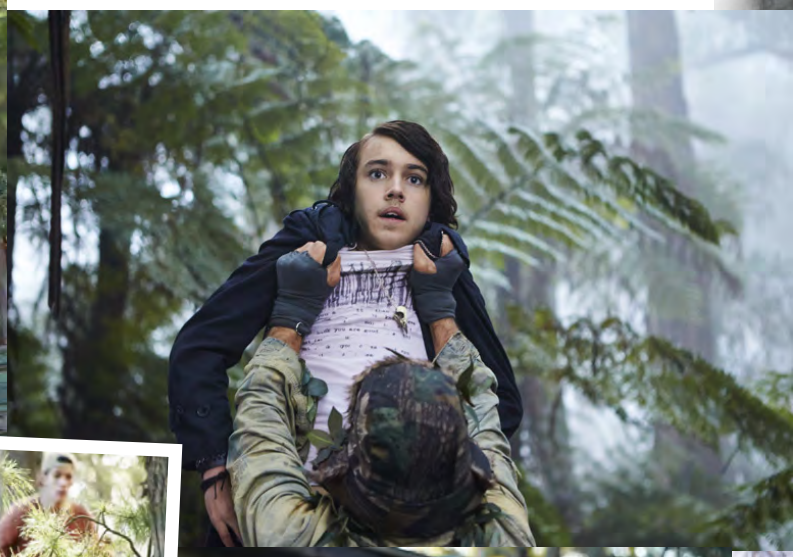

* Teachers may choose to provide students with the episode synopsis or ask students to complete **Worksheet 1: Episode summary**

1. It's all my fault.' – Andy

- Jake attempts to reason with Andy, 'Look Andy, I was trying to win an imaginary race, Felix lost the map, Sam fell down a cliff. Who knows whose fault it was?
- Why does Andy blame himself for their dilemma?

Andy is insistent that they return to the forest. Felix believes that they should visit Arcane Lane. Andy takes charge, 'Magic or Science? Which path do we take?' The boys vote. They are going wormhole hunting.

- Which way would you have voted?

2. Sam and Andy have girl trouble. Mia is still dating Sammy and Ellen is angry with Andy for standing her up.

'we're living in a shed, and we're always hungry, and oh yeah, there's a demon trying to kill us.'

- Is Mia interested in Sam (again)?
- Does Andy now want a girlfriend?
- Is Felix jealous?

3. Why isn't Jake interested in joining the footy team?

4. Felix: Maybe this reality isn't so bad.

Jake: Except we're living in a shed, and we're always hungry, and oh yeah, there's a demon trying to kill us.

Sam: Home, here we come. This has been the worst experience of my life.

Andy: If I had to break it down: 60 to 70% hate it; 17% over stimulated mainly because a girl likes me; 13 to 23% kind of fun.

- Why do the boys' perceptions of the new reality differ?
- Who wants to go home? Who isn't sure?

5. The boys head into Bremin National Park determined to repeat the past.

- Working with a partner, make a list of what is the same and what is different this time around.

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WORD	MEANING
confluence	
harebrained	
quantum	
physics	
geometric	
malevolent	
manifest	
game changer	
nulla nulla	
mindset	

6. 'What are you boys doing back here?' – Roland

'What are you boys doing back here?'

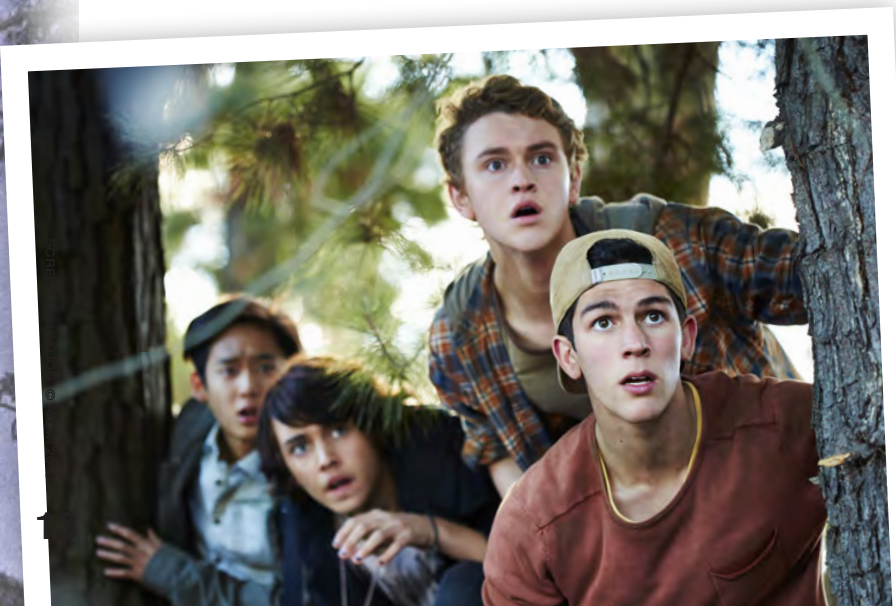
Roland has rescued the boys once before.

- What happens this time?
- Is it the boys or the talisman that the demon wants?
- What evidence proves that the demon is becoming more powerful?

Andy: Ok. Magic totally exists.

- Why does Andy finally give up on the wormhole theory?

7. Roland warns the boys to move on.



- What evidence proves that Roland is right, that the forest really is a dangerous place?
- Why does Sam refuse to leave the forest despite Roland's warning?
- What does Andy, Felix and Jake's decision to stay with Sam reveal about the boys' relationship?

8. 'They don't understand what you're going through. But I do. Let me help you.' – a voice

- Why do you think the voice speaks to Sam?

9. The above words are part of the dialogue of Episode 9. Write a definition of each word in the space provided. There is room for you to add other words to the grid.

10. What will happen next? Finish your Episode 9 blog entries by predicting what you think will happen in Episode 10.

Episode 10

'There's a connection between you and her.' – Phoebe

SYNOPSIS

The boys make a midnight call at Arcane Lane after Sergeant Riles' discovery of the hideout. While Andy, Felix and Jake are keen to tell Phoebe all that has happened, Sam struggles with his disappointment that the boys are still stuck in the parallel world.

Phoebe is reluctant to help the boys after being stood up, but when Felix shows her what he has found in the forest, Phoebe's belief that Felix can bring Alice back is reignited. As Felix delves into Alice's Book of Shadows, Andy hits the books keen to learn all he can about the science of magic.

Sam, meanwhile, finds himself unusually removed from his friends and increasingly infatuated with the talisman. Are his troubling dreams symptoms of something more sinister?

The boys return to school, where Mr Bates, who is exasperated by the boys' constant disregard for rules, gives them a stern talking to about their behaviour. The only thing that makes Sam happy is when he witnesses Mia breaking up with Sammy. Finally he has a chance to be with her again but the demon has other plans.

A demon-possessed Mia convinces Sam that if he destroys the talisman, he will return to his old life. Sam steals the talisman from Felix and smashes it apart. Now nothing can stop Demon Mia, as she hunts Felix through the labyrinth of corridors and classrooms.

Released from the demon's hold, Sam is remorseful, and desperate to make amends. The

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'So instead of sticking to our deal. You went looking for you own way home. Thanks.'

1. What is trust?

- Who do you trust? Are you trustworthy? Can you recall a time in your life when your trust was betrayed? Can you recall a time in your life when you broke someone's trust in you? Can you recall a time when you could not gain someone's trust?
- Write a personal or imaginative narrative about trust.
- Working as a class, list all the different examples of trust that feature in Episode 10.

2. Why does the episode begin with Sam's memory of watching a scary movie with Mia?

3. Phoebe: So instead of sticking to our deal. You went looking for your own way home. Thanks.

Andy: We had to take the chance.

boys track down Felix and return the now glued together talisman. The battleground shifts to the school's auto workshop. Sam puts his own life on the line to save his friends, the boys flee and the demon spirit defeated yet again leaves Mia.

As the boys recover from the ordeal, Andy wonders why the demon keeps targeting Felix more than the others. Felix changes the subject, but his behaviour suggests he may know more than he is letting on.

* Teachers may choose to provide students with the episode synopsis or ask students to complete **Worksheet 1: Episode summary**

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Sam: it was an epic fail on all fronts.

Having fled the police, the boys seek shelter at Arcane Lane. It is late when the boys knock on the front door of the shop. Phoebe is not pleased to see them.

- Why does Phoebe initially ask the boys to leave? Why does she change her mind?

4. Andy: Sam, if science can't get us home, magic will.

- Why is Sam in such a bad mood?

5. Phoebe: Somewhere in here is the spell my sister cast. Find her for all our sakes.

Felix: How would I know which one it is?

- Why does Phoebe trust Felix?

Felix turns the pages but stops at an unmaking spell:

Water. Fire. Earth and Air.
Elements that we all share.
Water wash our sins away.
Earth guide us to a place.
Wind brings with it fear.
Flames of fire we must face.
Walk upon this earth again.
Walk upon this earth again.

- Explain the significance of the unmaking spell.

6. Jake: I want to go home and show my mum I can be a better person.

Sam: So do I.

- Has Sam become a better person in the new reality?
- In what ways has Jake changed? How do the filmmakers show that Jake is proud of the person he has become?

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‘It is keeping you here. Destroy it. You’ll return to where you belong.’

7. ‘It is keeping you here. Destroy it. You’ll return to where you belong.’ – demonic Mia

- Is Sam a traitor? Or is he under Mia’s spell? While Sam can be blamed for the boys’ predicament in this episode, does he make amends for his betrayal?

8. Andy: There’s something that keeps bothering me. Magic is governed by a strict set of principles. Cause and effect. Kind of like science. So then what’s the cause? Why us?

Andy hits the library books. He shares his newfound knowledge about magic with the other boys, ‘According to the rules of magic, a spell has to be cast by someone. The question is what spell and who cast it?’ He is also confounded by the demon’s interest in Felix.

- How does Felix react to Andy’s theories? Is Felix’s behaviour suspicious?

9. The following words are part of the dialogue of Episode 10. Write a definition of each word in the space provided. There is room for you to add other words to the grid.

10. What will happen next? Finish your Episode 10 blog entries by predicting what you think will happen in Episode 11.

WORD	MEANING
unrealistic	
epic	
conjuration	
literally	
maternal	
voodoo	
guardian	
trespassing	
portal	
parallel	

Episode 11

'Is today Mother's Day?' – Jake

It's Mother's Day and the boys' thoughts turn to family. Jake slips away from Arcane Lane to visit Sarah, who is happy to see him. He helps out with some odd jobs around the Bates house and Sarah offers him lunch in return.

When Felix discovers that he needs all four boys to repair the talisman, the search for Jake begins. Andy, Felix and Sam don't get too far. It is the Bremin Mother's Day Fun Run and all of their mothers are present at the event. At the sausage sizzle tent, the boys engage in conversation with their mothers. When the boys go to pay,

Dee, Kathy and Nicole suffer severe allergic reactions. Jake receives a similar scare, when he wanders inside the Bates home and discovers an unconscious Sarah. He calls an ambulance.

Believing that this is another demon attack, the boys return to Arcane Lane to seek Phoebe's help. It doesn't take long for them to realise that they are causing their mothers to fall ill. Andy thinks through the science of the situation and Felix investigates how magic can save the mothers. The solution is an incantation that will inoculate the mothers. Andy, Felix, Jake and Sam need to find an item that links them to their mothers in order to activate the spell.

The boys' mothers are admitted into the hospital in a dire state, as the boys regroup, each with their special item. The spell is activated just in time. The mothers recover. Felix is no longer a 'freak'. Sam rates him 'cool', as the gang, closer than ever before, make their way back to Arcane Lane.

The triumph is short lived. Andy's curiosity about magic, leads him to Felix's diary, a book of shadows that confirms Felix is responsible for their transportation to the parallel universe. With the boys' solidarity threatened, the demon returns.

* Teachers may choose to provide students with the episode synopsis or ask students to complete **Worksheet 1: Episode summary**

1. Sam: Every Mother's Day me and my brothers always promise my mum that we won't fight for the whole day.

Jake: In our world me and mum would be getting ready for the game right about now.

Felix: My dad always tells me and my brother to make a card. And then my brother gives my mum the card and she cries.

- Does your family celebrate Mother's Day?
- What makes the day a special day for you mother?
- What do the boys' comments reveal about their relationships with their mothers?

'Every Mother's Day me and my brothers always promise my mum that we won't fight for the whole day.'

2. Phoebe: Did you find Alice's spell? She's your best chance to defeat the demon.

Felix: Is she that powerful?

- Writing as Felix and drawing on previous episodes, add a diary entry about Alice to Felix's book of shadows. The diary entry should provide information about: Alice as a person; her disappearance; her abilities as a witch; and her whereabouts in the Bremin Ranges.

3. Discuss the boys' conversation with their mothers. What do the boys talk about? How do the mothers respond? How does Andy's conversation with his mother differ from the conversations between Felix and Kathy, Jake and Sarah, and Sam and Dee?

4. Andy: it's like our mothers have become allergic to us.

The nowhere boys need a spell that will inoculate the mothers so that their sons do not make them ill.

Felix combines a healing spell and a protection spell. The boys need to source the ingredients.

- What items do they choose to prove their connection with their mother?
- Can you think of an item that represents your relationship with your mother?

5. When Jake searches through Sarah belongings, he finds a photograph of Sarah and Gary. Gary also visits the hospital to check on Sarah's condition.

- What did this connect between Sarah and Gary in the altered reality make you wonder?

6. What evidence in this episode suggests that the boys are closer than ever?

'You mean your book of shadows. Interesting reading.'

7. Andy: You mean your book of shadows. Interesting reading.

- Felix's book of shadows contains information about each of the Nowhere Boys. Design the pages about Andy, Felix, Jake and Sam that feature in Felix's book of shadows.

8. Andy: You know how we are here because of a magical event. Felix is that event.

Felix: I'm really, really sorry.

- Describe Andy, Jake and Sam's reactions to

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the revelation that Felix is to blame for their predicament. How does Phoebe respond?
- Is Felix genuinely sorry for the trouble that he has caused?

9. The following words are part of the dialogue of Episode 11. Write a definition of each word in the space provided. There is room for you to add other words to the grid.

10. What will happen next? Finish your Episode 11 blog entries by predicting what you think will happen in Episode 12.

WORD	MEANING
BLT	
toxic	
banishment	
antihistamine	
inoculation	
symptoms	
immune	
berserk	
tablet	
stabilise	

Episode 12

'Now we know how we got here, we should be able to work out a way home.' – Andy

As the fallout from Felix's betrayal threatens to tear the boys apart, there is a glimmer of hope when Felix realises that Oscar is the fifth element; the missing ingredient needed to reactivate the talisman and bring the boys home.

But the demon, now inhabiting Mr Bates, has other plans. Strong and conniving, demonic Mr Bates manages to separate the boys from Felix when Sergeant Riles and Constable Roberts apprehend them to discuss a variety of charges.

It is up to the other boys, particularly Jake, to appeal to Sergeant Riles' better nature and get the police on side in their bid to rescue Felix. Alone at Arcane Lane, Phoebe ends up worse for wear, when she takes on Demon Bates.

Felix tracks down Oscar, finally confessing to him that they are brothers from a parallel universe.

The brothers manage to escape the seemingly omnipresent Bates, and appear to reactivate the talisman with a spell, but their success is short-lived.

When the demon inhabits Oscar as well, Felix is defenceless. Demon Bates drives the get away car in the direction of the Bremin Ranges. The police are soon in pursuit of the vehicle. Andy, Jake and Sam reunite with Phoebe to prepare themselves for a showdown with the demon.

* Teachers may choose to provide students with the episode synopsis or ask students to complete **Worksheet 1: Episode summary**

1. Jake: You used gothed up magic to transport us here.

Sam: And you didn't even tell us. Unbelievable.

Andy: But you lied to us, all this time.

Sam: Because of you we ate garbage, we slept in

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sheds and our mothers almost died.

Jake: And there's a demon trying to kill us.

Felix: I cast a spell to make Oscar walk again. I didn't think it would actually work.

- Is the boys' anger and disappointment understandable?

2. 'I knew it. You're a true witch.' – Phoebe

- When did you first become suspicious of Felix?

3. Why is the demon interested in all of the nowhere boys?

4. 'I think the talisman can do more than just protect us. I think we can use it to get home.' – Felix

- Is Felix correct?

5. 'According to pagan law there are four worldly elements. Earth, Fire. Air and Water and then the fifth element Spirit. It helps us connect to our higher power.' – Phoebe

- Who is the fifth element?

6. 'Mr Bates has flipped out.' – Andy

- Describe the danger that Demon Bates poses in this episode.

7. Andy: We're not from this world, Sergeant Riles.

Sam: We're from a parallel universe exactly like this one, except here we don't exist.

Jake: It's the truth.

Sergeant Riles: Tell me then, who are you?

- What do the boys tell Sergeant Riles? How does he respond?

'We're not from this world, Sergeant Riles.'

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Later at Arcane Lane, Andy, Jake and Sam, tell Mia and Ellen their story. The action cuts from Arcane Lane to the pursuit.

- What do you think the nowhere boys tell the girls? Write the scene. Begin your scene with Andy's line: It's probably confession time, guys and Sam's line: it all started with the school excursion.

8. Felix: I need your spirit to make this talisman work.

Oscar: Why me?

Felix: Because in another world you're my brother.

'I need your spirit to make this talisman work. Because in another world you're my brother.'

- Why is Oscar pleased to learn that he is Felix's brother?
- Does Oscar think it is all just a game?

9. The following words are part of the dialogue of Episode 12. Write a definition of each word in the space provided. There is room for you to add other words to the grid.

10. What will happen next? Finish your Episode 12 blog entries by predicting what you think will happen in Episode 13.

WORD	MEANING
random	
potential	
uphold	
vessel	
pagan	
activate	
cult	
allegation	
supernatural	
pursuit	

Episode 13

'It's a restoring demon, meant to restore order by any means necessary.' – Andy

Phoebe and the boys prepare to engage in a final battle against the demon and save Felix. Having confessed their incredible story to Ellen and Mia, Andy and Sam say their farewells, while Jake and Sarah share a tender moment when Jake confesses that he is the son Sarah never got to have in this reality.

Sergeant Riles pursues the demonic Bates and Oscar as they take Felix to the forest but when Riles eventually catches up with them, he too becomes possessed. Felix manages to free himself as the possessed hosts hunt him down.

Luckily Felix stumbles upon Roland in the forest. Overcome with guilt, Felix is considering sacrificing himself to the Demon but Roland convinces him that he is better off trying to make things right. It is then that the pair finds themselves facing the demonic trio. Felix leads the possessed Bates, Oscar and Riles away as Roland heads off to find the other boys. Felix is no match for the ever-strengthening Demon and soon finds himself overcome. Tying Felix to a tree, the demon constructs the spiral symbol, invoking a furious storm.

Roland finds Phoebe and the boys. They spot the twister and race towards it. Arriving at the altar, the presence of the other nowhere boys activates the talisman. A familiar face appears in the twister; the demon is Alice, Phoebe's sister. The now

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de-possessed Oscar joins the boys. As the storm reaches a crescendo, Andy, Felix, Jake, Sam and Oscar yell the unmaking spell, hoping it will restore order.

The boys awaken to find calm has fallen across the forest. They are back in their world. The search party stumbles upon them, reuniting the worried fathers with their lost sons.

The boys return to their homes and families. There is much to celebrate. Yet things have changed. Each boy's potential has been realised. Each boy's elemental power is in his possession and given that Alice is back, they may need to use it.

* Teachers may choose to provide students with the episode synopsis or ask students to complete **Worksheet 1: Episode summary**

'So, if the demon kills Felix, then the magic spell dies with him.'

1. 'It's been eleven days now.' – Mr Bates

- Why does the episode begin with the boys' fathers searching the Bremin Ranges for their sons?

2. Ellen: So, if the demon kills Felix, then the magic spell dies with him.

Sam: Does that mean we get to go home?

- Would Sam really sacrifice Felix?
- Why do Jake and Andy challenge Sam?

3. Why is the demon taking Felix to the forest? Why not just kill him?

4. What connections have the boys forged in this world? Is it easy for Jake, Andy and Sam to say goodbye to Sarah, Ellen and Mia?

5. A guilty Felix confesses to Roland, 'I should let the demon do its job.' Roland refuses to listen to Felix's 'theatrics'. He wants to know if Felix can fix things.

- Why is Roland keen to help?

6. Who or what is the demon?

- What does it take to overpower the demon?

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WORD	MEANING
salient	
chalice	
sacrifice	
rational	
braniac	
theatrics	
dispel	
disarm	
dwell	
summon	

'It's ok, we're home.'

As Episode 13 reached its conclusion, what were you left wondering? Share your unanswered questions with the class.

ONLINE

Would you like to help the Nowhere Boys return home? Visit *Nowhere Boys* online at http://www.abc.net.au/abc3/.

Nowhere Boys on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ABC3NowhereBoys.

7. 'It's ok, we're home.' – Sam

- Describe each boy's experience of being home.

8. 'Felix said we had potential.' – Andy

- What powers do the boys now possess? Do they have control of their powers?

9. The following words are part of the dialogue of Episode 13. Write a definition of each word in the space provided. There is room for you to add other words to the grid.

10. Do you think Alice is happy to be home?

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Worksheet 1 - Episode Summary

KEY SCENES	CHARACTERS	SETTINGS	THEMES
Make a list of key scenes. Write a brief synopsis for each key scene that you have listed.	Name the characters that appear in each key scene.	Identify the settings and write a brief description of the setting for each key scene.	Use a word to identify the most important theme of each key scene.

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Genre

Genre is a term used to describe the style or category of a text. Each genre has its own conventions. Some texts can be easily labelled as belonging to one genre. Other texts fit into multiple genres.

RESPOND

Discuss your answers to the following questions as a class.

- Do you like stories like *Nowhere Boys*?
- *Nowhere Boys* is screening on ABC3. It can be labelled as a children's television series. Do you think that *Nowhere Boys* is only for kids? Does the program have broader appeal?

EXAMINE

Write your answers to the following questions in the space provided.

- '*Nowhere Boys* is an adventure for the audience as much as it is for the four protagonists.'
  Do you agree?

- *Nowhere Boys* draws on several genres.
  What other words best describe the genre of *Nowhere Boys*? For each word that you offer, provide direct and indirect evidence from the series.

- Despite the seriousness of the boys' predicaments, their story is told with humour.
  Identify examples of the humorous scenes and dialogue.
  What function does humour serve in *Nowhere Boys*?

CREATE

- Working with a partner, storyboard and write the script of a scene to add to any episode of *Nowhere Boys*. Your scene should reflect one or more of the genres that you have indicated.
  Before you begin, research the genre that you have selected. What are the conventions of the genre? How will your scene make use of these conventions?

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Worksheet 3

Adolescent identity

Themes are the subject of a story. A story may have several themes. A key theme of *Nowhere Boys* is adolescent identity.

The four teenage boys express their adolescent identity in very different ways. Some are more certain of who they are than others. Some find it easy to conform to norms and expectations, while others question and challenge the views and values of their family and peers. Some 'fit in' in Bremin but find themselves outsiders in the altered reality that they return to after the school excursion. The reverse is also the case, with some of the boys finding themselves no longer excluded but accepted in the new Bremin.

RESPOND

Andy is a geek. Felix is a Goth. Jake is a jock. Sam is the most popular boy in school. Are the boys individuals or are they just stereotypes?

EXAMINE

Finish the following sentence.

An adolescent is

What five words best describe **ANDY**'s adolescent identity? Use direct and indirect evidence from *Nowhere Boys* to endorse your choices.

What five words best describe **FELIX**'s adolescent identity? Use direct and indirect evidence from *Nowhere Boys* to endorse your choices.

What five words best describe **JAKE**'s adolescent identity? Use direct and indirect evidence from *Nowhere Boys* to endorse your choices.

What five words best describe **SAM**'s adolescent identity? Use direct and indirect evidence from *Nowhere Boys* to endorse your choices.

What five words best describe **YOUR** identity? Use experiences from your life to endorse your choices.

CREATE

'Feeling lost is a normal part of adolescence.'

Write a personal or imaginative narrative that explores this prompt.

Aim to write 250–350 words.

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Science and Magic

Felix: Science doesn't explain everything, Andy.

Andy: But superstition does?

Nowhere Boys explores the subjects of both science and magic. Andy relies on science. Felix believes in magic.

Andy's theory is that they have fallen down a wormhole. Felix knows that it is the unmaking spell that has caused them to arrive in an alternate reality.

DEFINE AND DISCUSS

What is science?

What is magic?

Are you a member of Team Andy or Team Felix? Do you think that there is a logical explanation for everything? Or, do you think that some things defy logical explanation?

EXAMINE

Is magic a help or a hindrance?

Working with a partner, complete the plus and minus chart to determine whether magic is a creative or a destructive force in *Nowhere Boys*. In the Plus column list examples of magic helping the boys. In the Minus column list examples of magic harming the boys.

PLUS	MINUS

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ARGUMENTS	EVIDENCE	REBUTTAL
List the reasons to support your stance.	Use real world examples and evidence from the fictional world of Nowhere Boys	What will the other team argue? Be ready to challenge their arguments.

DEBATE

TOPIC: That magic is science that hasn't been explained yet.

Hold a line debate.

A line debate is a debate that requires you to work with a team of classmates. Your teacher will divide the class into two teams. The affirmative team will agree with this contention. The negative team will disagree with this contention. Each speaker will have one minute to state and prove an argument that is relevant to the topic. Each speaker (with the exception of Affirmative 1) will be expected to rebut the previous speaker.

Use the table above to organise your team's case.

CREATE

Alice's Book of Shadows is filled with all sorts of spells.

- What type of spell would you most like to cast?
- Write the spell that you would like to cast in the space to the right.

Remember: Your spell will take the form of a poem. Pay attention to the pattern of sounds made by the words. Poets use rhythm and rhyme to create sound patterns. Rhythm requires you to count the syllables in a line and think about which syllables in words are stressed. Aim for a regular rhythm. You may like to experiment with lines that differ in their rhythm. Rhyme is achieved by making the ends of lines sound similar. Poets will rhyme lines in pairs or rhyme every other line or rhyme the first and last lines in a verse.

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Survival

Themes are the subject of a story. A story may have several themes. A key theme of *Nowhere Boys* is survival.

Most teenagers really don't have to worry about their day-to-day survival but that doesn't mean that life is trouble free. For Andy, Felix, Jake and Sam, ordinary life has its ups and downs; although, Sam's life seems to have more 'ups' than 'downs'. When the boys find themselves in the alternate Bremin, life becomes a lot more difficult.

DEFINE AND DISCUSS

What is the difference between a need and a want?

Thinking about the boys' lives in the real Bremin, list the boys' needs and wants.

WANTS	NEEDS

Thinking about the boys' lives in the alternate Bremin, list the boys' needs and wants.

WANTS	NEEDS

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	PROS	CONS
Andy Reality		
Andy Altered reality		
Felix Reality		
Felix Altered reality		
Jake Reality		
Jake Altered reality		
Sam Reality		
Sam Altered reality		

EXAMINE

What are the pros and cons of each boy's existence in the real Bremin and in the alternate Bremin? Fill in table this page.

CREATE

Adopt the persona of one of the nowhere boys.

Write and deliver a monologue that describes the role you played in aiding the nowhere boys' survival in the alternate Bremin and return to the real Bremin.

JUST WONDERING

The nowhere boys get to escape the routine of their daily lives – like school (well at least for a few days)!

Would you like to escape some of the routines of your day-to-day existence?

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Symbols

Symbolism is when something is used to represent something else. Symbols are used in *Nowhere Boys* to add to the viewer's understanding of the plot, themes, characters and setting.

- The elemental talisman is the dominant symbol of *The Mirror Never Lies*. Draw the elemental talisman in the sqaure below, left. Annotate the illustration. Your annotations should explain the symbolism of the elemental talisman.
- Name, draw and explain the meaning of five other symbols that feature in *Nowhere Boys*

ILLUSTRATION 1

Symbol and meaning:

ILLUSTRATION 2

Symbol and meaning:

ILLUSTRATION 3

Symbol and meaning:

ILLUSTRATION 4

Symbol and meaning:

ILLUSTRATION 5

Symbol and meaning:

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Worksheet 7

Nowhere boys and girls

EXAMINE

- Why do you think the four protagonists – Andy, Felix, Jake and Sam – are all teenage boys?

- What type of boy is Oscar?

Why is Oscar the target of bullies like Trent and Dylan in the alternate reality?

- Is Mike, bullied in both the real and the alternate Bremin, a 'nowhere boy'?

- What role do the teenage girl characters – Mia and Ellen – play in *Nowhere Boys*?

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CREATE

Your task is to pitch a series called *Nowhere Girls* to the class. A pitch is a presentation of an idea for a film or television series. Work in a team of 3 – 4 students to prepare the pitch. Submit the following summary sheet as part of the pitch.

Series synopsis (50 words):

t

Nowhere Girls (Provide the characters' names and profiles describing personality traits and family circumstances):

1.

2.

3.

4.

Antagonist (An antagonist is the opponent of the protagonists.)

Setting (Provide a brief description of the time and place settings)

Key themes

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NOWHERE BOYS

KEY CREATIVES

TONY AYRES | SERIES CREATOR, PRODUCER AND SHOWRUNNER > Tony Ayres is an award-winning showrunner, writer and director. He is also one of the founding members of Matchbox Pictures. Ayres' scripted television credits include *Bogan Pride*, *Saved*, *Underground: The Julian Assange Story* (Robert Connolly, 2012) and *The Slap*. His feature films include *Walking on Water* (2002), *The Home Song Stories* (2007) and *Cut Snake* (2014). *Nowhere Boys* is Ayres' first production for children's television.

BETH FREY | PRODUCER > Beth Frey is a multi-award-winning film, television and cross-platform producer. Her film and television credits include *Next Stop Hollywood, Dr Sarmast's Music School* (Polly Watkins, 2012), *Rollerboy* (Jayson Sutcliffe & Polly Watkins, 2011), *You Exposed, Once Bitten*, *The ABC of Dance For Film*, *Embedded With The Murri Mob* (Sophie Meyrick & Sarah-Jane Woulahan, 2008), *Stranded* (Stuart McDonald, 2006), *Vietnam Nurses* (Polly Watkins, 2005), *The Long Lunch* (Antony Redman, 2003) and *A Telephone Call For Genevieve Snow* (Peter Long, 2001).

DAINA REID | DIRECTOR > Daina Reid directs for both film and television. Her credits include *Paper Giants: The Birth of Cleo* and *Howzat! Kerry Packer's War*. Reid directed four episodes of *Nowhere Boy*.

CRAIG IRVIN | DIRECTOR AND WRITER > Craig Irvin's directing credits include *Best and Fairest* (2010) and *Tethered*. As well as writing and directing three episodes of *Nowhere Boys*, Irvin completed extensive research for the production.

PETER CARSTAIRS | DIRECTOR > Peter Carstairs' credits as a director include short films *Gate* (2000), *Afterwards* and *Little Blue* (2002), as well as the feature film *September* (2007). Carstairs directed three episodes of *Nowhere Boys*.

ALISTER GRIERSON | DIRECTOR > Well known for directing the feature films *Kokoda: 39th Battalion* (2006) and *Sanctum* (2011), Alister Grierson directed three episodes of *Nowhere Boys*.

CREDITS

CREATED by **Tony Ayres**
PRODUCED by **Tony Ayres**, **Beth Frey**
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **Michael McMahon**, **Helen Panckhurst**
DIRECTORS **Daina Reid** (Episodes 1–4), **Peter Carstairs** (Episodes 5–7), **Craig Irvin** (Episodes 8–10), **Alister Grierson** (Episodes 11–13)
WRITERS **Roger Monk** (Episodes 1, 9, 12, 13), **Rhys Graham** (Episodes 2, 4), **Craig Irvin** (Episodes 3, 5, 10), **Elise McCredie** (Episode 6), **Polly Staniford** (Episode 7), **Shanti Gudgeon** (Episodes 8, 11)
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY **Simon Chapman** ACS
PRODUCTION DESIGN **Jo Briscoe**
COSTUME DESIGN **Louise McCarthy**
CASTING **Jane Norris**, **Mullinars Melbourne**
EDITORS **Matt Atkin** (Episodes 1–4, 10–13), **Jane Usher** (Episodes 5–7, 8–9)
ORIGINAL MUSIC by **Cornel Wilzcek**
LINE PRODUCER **Brendan Campbell**

CAST

Felix **Dougie Baldwin**
Andy **Joel Lok**
Jake **Matthew Testro**
Sam **Rahart Sadquizai**
Oscar **Sean Rees-Wemyss**
Phoebe **Michala Banas**
Ellen **Darci McDonald**
Mia **Tamala Shelton**
Alice **Victoria Thaine**
Kath **Heidi Arena**
Ken **Ben Anderson**
Michael **Anthony Brandon Wong**
Nicole **Pearl Tan**
Lily **Cecilia Tan**
Viv **Michelle Gerster**
Gary **Damien Richardson**
Sarah **Libby Tanner**
Tom **Peter Stefanou**
Dee **Nicole Nabout**
Mr Bates **Nicholas Coghlan**
Roland **Jim Russell**
Sammy **Jesse Williams**
Peter **Lester Ellis**
Vince **Daniel Di Giovanni**
Mike **Sam Sharwood**
Trent **Logan Phillips**
Dylan **Zelman Cressey-Gladwin**
Bus Driver **Roy Edmunds**
Delivery Driver **Terry Carter**
Paramedic **David Cormick**
Janet **Elise McCredie**
Suzie **Tayla Duyal**
Dr Grant **Shash Lall**
Raquel **Stella Silagy**

MATCHBOX

Formed in 2008 by Tony Ayres, Penny Chapman, Helen Bowden, Michael McMahon and Helen Panckhurst, Matchbox is one of Australia's most dynamic production houses. In May 2011, NBCUniversal took a majority stake in Matchbox Pictures and this has allowed the company to diversify its content. Matchbox produce television drama, children's programming, factual and entertainment content, animation and feature films for the domestic and international marketplace.

http://www.matchboxpictures.com

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