

# Reading

## Thematic Overview

### 'The Explorer' – Katherine Rundell

*The Explorer* by Katherine Rundell is an adventurous tale of survival and self-discovery, following a group of young explorers stranded in the Amazon rainforest who must navigate its dangers and unlock the secrets of their surroundings to find hope and courage within themselves.

#### English

The story can be used to teach descriptive writing by encouraging students to create vivid settings and develop their own adventure narratives inspired by the Amazon rainforest. Additionally, students can explore the themes of bravery and friendship, writing character diaries or letters to practice expressing emotions and perspectives through different narrative forms.

#### Music

*The Explorer* can be used to teach music by exploring the sounds of the jungle and how different instruments can represent the natural environment, such as using percussion to mimic the sounds of animals and the rainforest. Students can also compose their own soundtracks for key scenes from the book, enhancing their understanding of how music can build atmosphere and emotion in storytelling.

#### Geography

Although set in a rainforest, the characters' survival skills and resourcefulness can be compared to what would be needed to live in a desert. Discussing the difficulties of surviving in the dense jungle can lead to conversations about whether students would prefer living in a desert.

The physical and mental challenges faced by the characters in the jungle can be compared to life in the Alps. The climate and landscape of the Alps would affect those living there, just as the rainforest shapes the characters' adventure.

#### Science

*The Explorer* can be used to explore scientific concepts such as ecosystems and biodiversity by examining the diverse wildlife and plant life in the Amazon rainforest. Students can also investigate the effects of environmental factors like climate and weather on survival, as seen through the characters' interactions with the jungle's harsh conditions.

#### ICT

Pupils may research the Amazon rainforest and survival skills, using digital tools to create interactive maps or presentations. Additionally, pupils could explore how technology aids in modern exploration, such as GPS, drones, or satellite imagery.

#### History

Set in the Amazon rainforest, the characters encounter an indigenous tribe and learn about their way of life. This provides an opportunity for discussions about ancient civilisations such as the Mayans. This helps students understand how the Mayans built an advanced society even in challenging environments.

The story also offers the chance to compare two different societies, such as the Mayans and the Anglo-Saxons, through their survival methods and social structures.

