

# Welcome!



Thank you for downloading this Reflective Reading resource pack to accompany the novel *Hag Storm* by Victoria Williamson.

We really hope you enjoy reading about Rab's story and sharing this spooky, historical adventure!

Here are some useful links:

**Watch: Hag Storm Launch and Interview with Victoria Williamson**  
<https://www.crowdcast.io/e/book-launch-hag-storm>

**Look Inside Ch1-2 Hag Storm**  
<https://b2l.bz/NvvXdP>

Victoria Williamson is also available for author visits and school events.

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Scotland  
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Tam o' Shanter  
witches



## REFLECT AND RESPOND

This is a book imagining Robert Burns as a boy. Create a mind map in your group to capture all the information you know about Burns or his life and work and how and when it is celebrated.

Add the names of any of his poems you know/have heard of.



## READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch1: Create a character list for all of the characters mentioned so far.

Can you think of three interesting *adjectives* to describe each of them? Use quotes from the text to back up your choices.



## INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

Ch2: Rab's father is 'worried' as he looks over the papers on his desk in chapter 2.

What do you think he's worried about? Why do you think life on the farm might be difficult for the family? Explain your answer.

## READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch3: Using the information and description at the bottom of page 30, draw a detailed picture of Morven.

You may wish to *annotate* your drawing with quotes from the text.

Add Morven to your character list along with three *adjectives* to describe her.



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CHAPTERS 1-4

## CONNECT 4



Rab climbs the fence at Doonholm and takes some apples from the orchard. Do you think what he did was wrong or not?

Should you always need to ask permission before you take something that belongs to someone else, or are there times when it's okay not to ask?

## EXPLORE SOME MORE

What is a hag stone and what are its magical properties believed to be?

Do you think it was Cousin Betty who Rab saw through the hole? Why/why not?



## REFLECT AND RESPOND

Rab wishes he could be back at school instead of working on the farm. Why do you think this is?

What are your own hopes and dreams for your life after school? Do you think what you learn in school will be important to achieving those dreams? Explain your thoughts.

## CREATE SOMETHING GREAT

Cousin Betty makes a corn doll in Chapter 4. Try making your own 'corn' dolls out of wool after watching the video here:

<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Yarn-Doll>



In Ch1, Rab and Gil play at re-enacting the Battle of Stirling Bridge. Do some research to find out:

- When was the Battle of Stirling Bridge?
- Who fought at the Battle?
- Why were they fighting?

## READ AND UNDERSTAND

In Chapter 5, Rab thinks that *'For all the tinsel and baubles he wore, a man like Angus McNab wasn't any better than the rest of them underneath.'*

What do you think this means? Do you agree with this or not?



## INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

Ch6: Why do you think Cousin Betty and Morven were arguing in Chapter 6 when Morven visits Cousin Betty's house?

Why do you think Cousin Betty doesn't like Morven? Explain your thoughts.



## REFLECT AND RESPOND

Why do you think Morven is popular with all of the local people even though she's only been there a short time, while Cousin Betty isn't popular? Do you think this is fair?

What is it that makes celebrities today popular? Are these good things? What type of people do you think deserve to be celebrated?

## READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch6: Find the **similes** on p51 and p53.

Find & note the **definitions** of the following words: **foreboding**, **turbulent**, **dreary**

How does the author describe the lightning at the bottom of page 52? Why is this effective? What type of **literacy device** is this?

## CONNECT<sup>4</sup>



Rab puts insects under Factor McNab's wig to get his own back for the way the factor treated him at Doonholm. Do you think this was wrong, or do you think the factor deserved it?

Have you ever 'got your own back' on someone? Did it make you feel good, or feel guilty?



# HAG STORM

CHAPTERS 5-8

## INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

Ch8: *'Rab felt guilty when he saw their father look up from his books, ready to give her a telling off.'*

Why did Rab feel guilty, and why did he jump to Agnes's defence to make sure she didn't get into trouble this time?

## REFLECT AND RESPOND

Ch8: *'Something was coming for his sisters, held back only by the invisible force that seemed to be protecting them.'*

What do you think the 'invisible force' might be that's protecting his sisters from the shadows coming for them? Keep thinking about this through the rest of the book, and see if you're right when it's revealed what it is.

## CREATE SOMETHING GREAT

Have you ever tried making bannock bread? Look up the recipe on the internet, and try making your very own batch of traditional Scottish bannock bread.

OR

Research traditional Scottish foods and make a class recipe book or create your own mini fact file about Scottish dishes. ([scottishscan.com](http://scottishscan.com))

## READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch9: Rab is worried about what will happen when the last candle is **'snuffed'**. Use a dictionary to find out what this means.

Can you find some other words in these chapters that you might need to look up in a dictionary?



## INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

Ch9: Do you think it was Cousin Betty who knocked over the jug of milk? If not, what do you think might have happened?



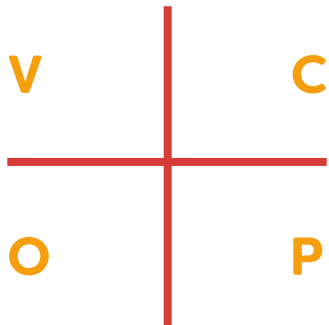
## EXPLORE SOME MORE

Ch10: Rab sees a **mausoleum** in the kirkyard. What is a **mausoleum**, and what kind of people were buried there?

Do you have any in your local graveyard? Are there any statues or monuments to famous people in your local area? What did these people do?

## EXPLORE SOME MORE

### VCOP Hunt



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CHAPTERS 9-12

## REFLECT AND RESPOND

Who is your favourite character so far and why?

Are you enjoying the story? Why/Why not?

What's your favourite bit so far?

What do you think will happen next?



## REFLECT AND RESPOND

How do you feel about Morven by this point in the story? Do you like her as much as Rab does?

Do you feel sorry for her, or do you feel something else? Use quotes from the text to back up your answers.

## CONNECT 4

Why do you think Rab and Agnes are always arguing? Do you think it means they don't like each other?

Do you have a brother or sister you argue with a lot? What do you think causes these arguments?

## CREATE SOMETHING GREAT

Imagine the sequence of events when Rab runs out into the night to save his sisters from the witches as a film scene.

Draw a **storyboard** for this scene, picking out the main camera shots you think would make the most dramatic pictures and writing a short description of each using the template provided.



## READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch13: The cook tells Morven to stop 'gabbing'. What does this mean? Can you find some other interesting **adjectives** to describe:

- The weather
- Hunger
- Encouraging someone to do something



## READ AND UNDERSTAND

In your group, discuss and write a short and snappy summary of today's chapter. Use the question headings **Who? What? Where? When?** and **Why?** to help you make notes under each one.

Now use your notes to write a paragraph summarising it.

## EXPLORE SOME MORE

Ch14: In Chapter 14, Betty speaks to Morven '**frostily**'. Find three more **adverbs** to describe the way that people talk.

How do these **adverbs** help you to understand how the characters are feeling, and the meaning of their words?

## REFLECT AND RESPOND

In chapter 14, Williams Burns warns his sons, '**And that's how drink turns men into fools.**'

What does he mean by this? Do you agree with his warning based on Tam's behaviour in the story?



  
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CHAPTERS 13-16

## CONNECT 4

The children love to hear Cousin Betty's folk tales of supernatural creatures. Discuss and make a list of supernatural creatures you've heard of in your group. Perhaps you've read about them or seen them in films.

Are they local, or do they appear in stories around the world? Are the creatures frightening, or are they friendly?

## INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

Ch15: '**Rab kept his own eyes trained on Cousin Betty, closing them only for a moment when the weight of his lids became too much to bear...**'

What do the three full stops (**ellipsis**) at the end of this line show? Do you think this is an effective way for the author to convey what is happening to the passage of time? How else could they show this?

## CREATE SOMETHING GREAT

Imagine you are the cover designer. Design a new cover for the book.

Imagine you are the author, write a new **blurb** for the back of the book.

Imagine you are the publisher, come up with a new **title** for the book.

## CREATE SOMETHING GREAT

Rab uses old Scots words like 'birkie', 'midden' and 'crabbit'. Can you find out what these mean? Do some research and find some other Scots words and their meanings. Create a quiz to test your classmates' knowledge of Scots words.

**OR**

Draw an outline map of Scotland and fill it with your favourite Scots words. See the shop at [scottishscran.com](http://scottishscran.com) for inspiration.

## CONNECT 4

Ch17: When Rab can't destroy the hag stone because the blacksmith's forge is shut, he feels like **'his whole world is crumbling around him'**. Have you ever felt like this?

What do you think is the best way to deal with difficult or disappointing life events?  
What advice would you give Rab?



## READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch17: **'You dinnae mean that we have to...'** **Rab gulped.** (p167) What does Rab think Morven wants to do to Cousin Betty?

Find a **simile** and a **metaphor** about the weather at the bottom of p171. Describe **'torrents of pent-up rain'** in your own words.

## INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

Ch18: Why do you think Gil is the one who works out what is causing the sickness instead of Rab?

Why is the usually easy-going Gil angry with Rab in this chapter?



## REFLECT AND RESPOND

Ch18: Were you surprised by the turn of events in chapter 18? Is this what you were expecting to happen, or was the revelation of the characters' actions and motivations unexpected?

Were there any clues in the previous chapters that could have helped you work out who was responsible for the strange goings-on at the farm?



  
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CHAPTERS 17-21

## READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch19: Who do you think the black dog is who emerges from the mausoleum at the stroke of midnight on Halloween?

Pick some lines from the text that help to explain your answer.

## REFLECT AND RESPOND

Why does Rab feel grateful at the end of the novel after all of the things that have happened to him?

If you were Rab, would you feel grateful, or would you feel upset, angry or something else entirely? Why would you feel this way?

Are you satisfied with the ending?



## CREATE SOMETHING GREAT

Write your own poem to describe the events in the final chapters of *Hag Storm* when Rab and Gil try to rescue their sisters from the witches in the Auld Kirk and make it over the keystone of the Brig o' Doon on Meg. You can use Scots or modern English.

Hold a poetry reading session where everyone gets the chance to read their poems to the rest of the class, or create pictures for them to be arranged on the wall for a class display.

## CREATE SOMETHING GREAT

Read the original poem *'Tam o' Shanter'* by Robert Burns and compare it to the version of events in *Hag Storm*. What are the similarities and differences?

**OR**

Write a 'postcard review' for *Hag Storm*, like the ones you see in bookshops. Give three reasons to read it, or your opinions about the book.

HAG STORM STORYBOARD

NAME: