Picnic at Hanging Rock
By Joan Lindsay
‘Everything begins and ends at exactly the right time and place’
About the book and the author

Picnic at Hanging Rock was written by Joan Lindsay (she married into the famous Lindsay artistic family) in 1967. Joan was born in Melbourne where she went to school as a day-girl for a few years at Clyde Girls Grammar. She knew and loved the Macedon district from her early years. In 1922 in London she married Daryl Lindsay. Daryl was a renowned artist and the first president of the National Trust. He died in 1978. Joan lived at their country home in Frankston. She died in 1984.

She wrote *Time Without Clocks* (1962), an autobiographical sketch of her early married life. *Time Without Clocks* describes her wedding and idyllic early married life. The work takes its title from a strange ability which Joan described herself as having, of stopping clocks and machinery when she came close. The title also plays on the idea that this period in her life was unstructured and free. Picnic at Hanging Rock was published in 1967 and was an instant sensation. (A renowned movie version directed by Peter Weir, was produced in 1978.) The story is fiction, though Lindsay dropped hints that it was based on an actual event. An ending that explained the girls' fates, in draft form, was removed by her publisher prior to publication and it is the unsolved nature of the mystery (in the book and the movie) that has made the story such a popular book. The final chapter was published only in the 1980s, in accordance with her wishes. Lindsay based Appleyard College, the setting for the novel, on the school that she had attended, Clyde Girls Grammar School at East St Kilda, Melbourne—which, incidentally, in 1919 was transferred to Woodend near Hanging Rock.

Joan bequeathed their home to the National Trust in 1984 with all of its furnishings in place, Mulberry Hill is a living house museum and is open to the public.

The Story
On St Valentine's Day 1900, three schoolgirls and a teacher from an exclusive English-style boarding school go missing at the mysterious Hanging Rock in central Victoria. One of the girls is found alive a week later with no recollection of what happened to her or her friends, but the others are never seen again. As morale within the school begins to disintegrate, the headmistress's
increasingly incoherent anger is turned towards one student, leading to her suicide. Although the police suspect Michael Fitzhubert, a young English aristocrat, and his manservant Albert, who was in the area at the time the girls disappeared, the mystery is never solved. There is no solution but many possibilities. The power of the book is its realism and the way it captures the Edwardian era especially its class divide the attempt to mimic English institutions and the frustrations of women living in a pre-emancipated Australian society. It is also a measure of the impact of a fictional work if readers actually believe it is true, and there are many who do.


Information about Hanging Rock: http://www.visitmacedonranges.com/


Movie trailer on Youtube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x05QuAhpq6o

**Remember**

- Make an illustrated timeline of events from the story or a story map.
- Complete a wordsearch, crossword, cloze and reading comprehension activities based on the story.
- Make a list of quotations from the story and link them to the character that said it.
- Prepare a thumbnail sketch of the following characters including both appearance and character. (Mrs Appleyard, Mademoiselle, Edith, Miranda. Detailed information on some of the girls is found on pages 67-69)

**Understand**

- Make a cartoon strip of an episode from the story.
- Create a pop up card for an event from the story.
- Design a missing person’s poster for the girls and Miss McCraw
- Make an illustrated bookmark based on one of the characters from the story.
- Act out a scene from the story and video tape it.
- Complete a literary socio-gram for major characters from the story.

**Application**

- Design a plan of Miss Appleyard’s school and its surrounds. Label interesting locales from the story in a story map.
- Make a travel brochure for a trip to Hanging Rock.
- Relate a personal experience similar to an event in the story. (Do you have vivid memories of a special place or going missing?)
- Design a newspaper front story as if a character from the story were relating his/her experiences to a journalist. Or write a sensational story about the ‘College Mystery’ (refer page 62)
- Make a board game about the story.
- Create a permission note for an excursion to Hanging Rock. Write an application to Mrs Appleyard as if you were the teacher in charge of the excursion detailing your planning for the event and safety precautions you are taking.
- Design a poster for the library to illustrate one of classic Australian books.
- Create a picnic menu. (page 22 lists some of the foods taken to the picnic) Include picnic games and activities.
- Mrs. Appleyard ‘falls to pieces’ after the loss of Miss McCraw and the girls. She ‘sells’ her school as an establishment that turns colonial girls into ‘English girls’ prepared for a suitable marriage. Write a newspaper advertisement for a new principal.
- Create a timetable for an Edwardian girl’s school.
- Sara wasn’t able to go on the picnic because she had failed to learn a poem. Try to memorise a short poem that you can recite to the class.

**Analysis**

- Visit Werribee Mansion and experience life in a manor house of the 19th Century.
- Make a list of conflict situations from the story. (Such as the sometimes thorny relationship between Michael and Albert ) Were they resolved? If so, how? If not, why not?
- Create a ‘Y Chart’ of an event from the story.
- Create a Venn diagram comparing the book and the movie.
• Write a theory about what might have happened as a police report.
• The story is set in the early Edwardian era. What was the Edwardian era? What happened in Australia at that time? Write a postcard to a friend overseas telling them about interesting things that are happening in Australia with an authentic Edwardian postcard image on the picture side.
• Some critics believe that Picnic at hanging Rock is a depiction of Joan Lindsay's educational experiences at the Clyde Girls' Grammar School and her social experiences as a daughter of a prominent Melbourne family during the late Edwardian era. What was life like for girls in those days? Research education, food, transport, manners, society expectations for girls, career possibilities, class distinction as a PowerPoint presentation.
• List some of the ominous foreshadowing of the mystery of Hanging Rock throughout the story.

Evaluate
• Design a new dust jacket for the book and include a personal review of the book as well as a blurb.
• Make a diorama of Hanging Rock or the Appleyard School
• If you included yourself in the story, who would you be? Why?

Create
• Make a diorama of Hanging Rock.
• Draw a series of illustrations for important episodes from the story.
• Write 5 alternative story chapter titles from those in the book.
• Write a list of 5 rules for the girls while on the picnic.
• There are constant references to swans in the text (refer 70 and 84) Discuss what you think the swans symbolise. Find ‘how to draw a swan’ instructions on the Internet to try.
• The characters in the book receive a Valentines Card that has a special significance to them (Even Miss McCraw received a card with little sums on it. Refer page 11) Create a Valentine’s Day card with a special theme that would appeal to someone you know.
• Put together a ‘unique’ collection of Victorian antiques or curiosities for a display. Hold a competition to see if people can tell what they are and how they work.
• Create a paper doll of a school girl with fashionable Edwardian clothes to put on her.

• Use Garage Band app to make a pod cast of some of Mrs Appleyard’s speeches (She has a ‘plummy voice specially imported from Kensington’) refer pages 13-14 for her instructions to the picnickers.

Page references refer to the 1980 Puffin paperback.

Edwardian girls

At the Hanging Rock by William Ford 1875 (Mentioned on page 35)
The girls at Miss Appleyard’s school were celebrating St Valentine’s Day and preparing for a picnic outing.

Michael and Albert find one of the girls on the rock and return to the school with her. She can’t remember what happened to the others.

Mr Hussey returns to the school minus 3 girls and Miss McCraw who have gone missing on Hanging Rock. One girl Edith is hysterical.

Children are withdrawn from the school due to the ‘College Mystery’. Mrs Appleyard commits suicide.
Picnic at Hanging Rock
Wordsearch

K D Y M A C E D O N
C A Y A K H M D L K
O V P Z S C K E X V
R M U P C D A U A P
G A I R L H N L C I
N K A R C E E I H C
I W C I A N Y C L N
G J M O T N T A X I
N O B I L A D V R C
A R N Y W C X A L D
H E B O A R D E R S
S O R P H A N I Q U
S H T I D E L R N U
Y C S X V H Y M B D
E A T H D E N A O Z

APPLEYARD
BOARDERS
CLOCK
EDITH
HANGING ROCK
IRMA
LINDSAY
MACEDON
MCCRAW
MICHAEL
MIRANDA
ORPHAN
PICNIC
VALENTINES
WATCH
Over five hundred feet in height.....volcanic....thousands of years old, pardon me, Miss McCraw, I should say millions. (Page 20)

I always like to know exactly where I am. (Page 10)

You’re such a good chap and nice girls don’t like being whistled at by fellows they don’t know. (Page 29)

Are we all present? Good, well then ladies, we are indeed fortunate in the weather for our picnic at Hanging Rock. I have instructed Mademoiselle that as the day is likely to be warm, you may remove your gloves once you have passed through Woodend. (Page 13-14)

I don’t know. I don’t want to wet my feet. I might get pneumonia and die and then you’d stop teasing me and be sorry. (Page 28)

The colonel knows I look after his horses well and don’t drink his whiskey. Well hardly ever, to tell you the truth I can’t stand the smell of the stuff. (Page 30)


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I’m sorry Man’selle. I don’t wear it anymore. I can’t stand it ticking all day long just above my heart. (Page 25)

Except for those people over there with the wagonette we might be the only living creatures in the whole world. (Page 23)

Choose from:
Marion, Edith, Mr Hussey, Miranda, Miss McCraw, Michael, Albert
Picnic at Hanging Rock  

**MISSING**

**Description**

**Reward**

If found contact Mrs. Tucker
Picnic at Hanging Rock    Literary Sociogram

Draw portraits and link up the characters and write what their relationship is to each other. (Does that relationship change during the course of the story)

Miss McCaw

Mrs Appleyard

Sara

Miss McCraw

Edith

Mr Hussey
Picnic at Hanging Rock Venn diagram

Compare

1967 novel

Similarities

1978 movie
Picnic at Hanging Rock
Picnic at Hanging Rock Writing ideas

Prepare a thumbnail sketch of the following characters including both appearance and character. (Mrs Appleyard, Mademoiselle, Edith, Miranda. Detailed information on some of the girls is found on pages 67-69)

Make a cartoon strip of an episode from the story.

Create a pop up card for an event from the story.

Design a missing person’s poster for the girls and Miss McCraw

Make an illustrated bookmark based on one of the characters from the story.

Act out a scene from the story and video tape it.

Design a plan of Miss Appleyard’s school and its surrounds. Label interesting locales from the story in a story map.

Make a travel brochure for a trip to Hanging Rock.

Michael left a note for Albert (page 102) about the locality of Irma. Re-write the note in a code of your choosing.
Design a newspaper front story as if a character from the story were relating his/her experiences to a journalist. Or write a sensational story about the ‘College Mystery’ (refer page 62)

Make a board game about the story.

Create a permission note for an excursion to Hanging Rock. Write an application to Mrs Appleyard as if you were the teacher in charge of the excursion detailing your planning for the event and safety precautions you are taking.

Design a poster for the library to illustrate one of classic Australian books.

Create a picnic menu. (Page 22 lists some of the foods taken to the picnic) Include picnic games and activities.

Mrs. Appleyard ‘falls to pieces’ after the loss of Miss McCraw and the girls. (She ‘sells’ her school as an establishment that turns colonial girls into ‘English girls’ prepared for a suitable marriage.) Write a newspaper advertisement for a new principal to continue her ‘fine’ work.

Create a timetable for an Edwardian girl’s school

Pretend you are Dr McKenzie or Dr Cooling and write a medical report about Edith, Michael or Irma.
Sara wasn’t able to go on the picnic because she had failed to learn a poem. Try to memorise a short poem that you can recite to the class.

Write a theory about what might have happened as a police report.

The story is set in the early Edwardian era. What was the Edwardian era? What happened in Australia at that time? Write a postcard to a friend overseas telling them about interesting things that are happening in Australia with an authentic Edwardian postcard image on the picture side.

The characters in the book receive a Valentines Card that has a special significance to them (Even Miss McCraw received a card with little sums on it. Refer page 11) Create a Valentine’s Day card with a special theme that would appeal to someone you know.

Write a long lost chapter for the book. (Joan Lindsay wrote a final chapter which revealed what happened to the girls but it wasn’t published until after her death)

Investigate an Edwardian mystery to share with the class.
Picnic at Hanging Rock  Reading Comprehension

A procession of beetles in bronze armour strolled across Miranda’s ankle as she woke up. In the colorless twilight every detail stood out. A huge untidy nest was perched in a stunted tree. You could see everything clearly. You could see the nest, Marion’s torn skirt, Irma’s ringlets framing her face. Edith woke up whimpering and rubbing her eyes. “Where am I Miranda? I feel awful”

The others were now wide awake and now on her feet. “Miranda I feel awful, when are we going home?” Miranda looked at her strangely as if she wasn’t seeing her. When Edith repeated the question more loudly, Miranda simply walked away up the rise with the other two following behind. They weren’t really walking; it was more like they were gliding over the stones in their bare feet. “Miranda” yelled Edith. “Miranda come back all of you. Don’t go up there-come back!”

Edith felt her voice croak and she tore at her lace collar. “Miranda” she croaked. But all three girls moved fast out of sight behind the monolith. “Miranda! Come back!” yelled Edith. There was no answering voice. The silence now closed in on Edith and she screamed. Only a wallaby squatting in a clump of bracken heard the screams. Edith turned and ran screaming towards the picnic party.

1. What was crawling across Miranda’s ankle
2. What part of the day was it?
3. How did Edith feel?
4. Who were the two others following Miranda?
5. How did the three girls move across the stones?
6. What is a monolith?(List some monoliths and write a fact file on one)
7. Describe Edith’s voice
8. Find images of Hanging Rock on Safari or Google and use watercolour paints to paint it or air dried clay to create the Hanging Rock scene.
Picnic at Hanging Rock

It is Saint Valentine's Day, February 14, 1900 at Appleyard College, an all-
1справочная school in rural 2справочная. The girls are going on
a picnic at Hanging Rock, a natural monument formed of ancient
3справочная rock. Before leaving, Miranda, one of the school girls, tells
her orphan friend, Sara that she will not be at the school much longer. While
having their 4справочная, four of the girls, Miranda, Marion, Irma and Edith
decide to explore the rocks. Edith, fatigued and cranky, does not want to
continue on as the other 5справочная do. She becomes frightened of
something as they are leaving her and she runs 6справочная back to
the picnic. Miranda, Marion, and Irma, in addition to their school teacher,
Miss. McCraw do not 7справочная. Two boys who saw the four girls while
they were exploring went looking for Miranda and her schoolmates. While
looking, one boy, Michael becomes 8справочная and injures himself
on the rocks. He had found Irma though, and the other boy, Albert (who
works for the colonel, is also an orphan, and is Sara's lost brother) goes back
up the rocks to find her. She is still 9справочная but she can't remember
anything that happened to her. Ms. Appleyard, the 10справочная of the school who also has a drinking problem, decides that Sara will not
attend the college anymore because she is not receiving any 11справочная
from her guardian. Later the same evening that she tells Sara of her fate to
go back to the orphanage, she pushes Sarah off the roof of the building in a
drunken fit. Ms. Appleyard died on the 27th of February trying to climb the
12справочная. The remaining missing girls and Miss. McCraw were never found.

Choose from: Australia, three, picnic, girls, rocks, volcanic, alive, money,
screaming, return, delirious, principal
Picnic at Hanging Rock

Crossword

2  

4

6

8

10

11

12

13

1

3

5

7

9

12

13
2. Hanging Rock is near the town of ................ in Victoria Australia.
6. Picnic at ......................... rock
7. Appleyard College was an all ..................... school.
8. The type of outing the girls were going on.
10. Miss McCraw taught .............................
11. Edith noticed a nasty red ....................... in the sky.
12. The author Joan ....................
13. Mrs .......................... was the Principal of the college

**Down**
1. Edith ran .................... into the bush
3. Ben ...................... was the owner of the Livery Stables in Woodend.
5. Mlle Poitiers was the dancing and ..................... teacher.
9. St. ....................... day

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