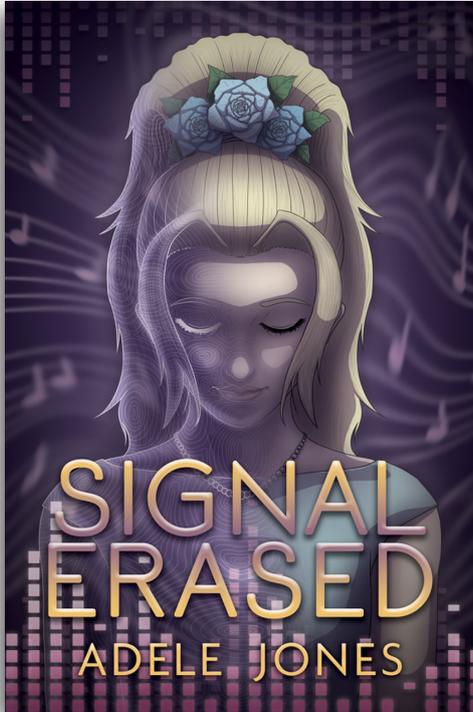


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# Teachers' Notes

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## IMMORTAL MISTAKE

Adele Jones

ISBN: 9781761111433

Reading level: 12+ years

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### BOOK SUMMARY

Anna Faraday's carefully ordered world comes crashing down when her gift of singing is turned against her. After a reckless car drive ruins a night of romance, her gifted voice is then exploited for a secret frequency-based experiment that alters her atomic state.

Unseen and unheard, her dreams of finishing high school and dating the new American guy in her class rapidly fade.

As time runs out, she seeks help from the last guy she ever thought she'd ask—a guy who has been all but invisible to her, until now. Will he, or anyone, understand what's happened before she disappears forever?

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## THEMES

- Loss/Grief ▪ Relationships (friendship/romantic/family) ▪ Risky behaviours and road safety ▪ Safety ▪ Quantum Physics theory ▪ Music therapy ▪ Judgement and decision making

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

'Science fiction for the real world.'



Australian author, Adele Jones, writes young adult fringe, science-fanta-sy and near-science fiction that explores the underbelly of bioethics and confronting teen issues, including disability, self-worth, loss, domestic conflict, and more. She also writes historical fiction, poetry, inspirational non-fiction and short fictional works, with themes of social justice, hu-manity, faith, natural beauty and meaning in life's journey. Adele's first YA novel *Integrate* (book one of the *Blaine Colton Trilogy*) was award-ed the 2013 CALEB Prize for unpublished manuscript. As a speaker she seeks to present a practical and encouraging message by drawing on themes from her writing.

To find out more visit [www.adelejonesauthor.com](http://www.adelejonesauthor.com)

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**Adele Jones is available for author talks and workshops.  
Contact Rhiza Edge for more information.**

*Signal Erased Teachers' Notes can be used in schools (independent learning, small groups, and whole classes); at home with caregivers; and as part of mental health support programs facilitated by counsellors, psychologists, children's charities, etc.*



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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

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### LOSS & GRIEF

Grief and loss can manifest in vastly different ways, especially an unexpected and sudden loss, with culture, belief systems, gender, age and other experiences of loss influencing the grief experience<sup>1</sup>. Anna Faraday, the heroine of *Signal Erased*, has had the sudden and tragic loss of her older brother minimised by being repeatedly told her grief is less viable, less legitimate than that of her family—because she was so young when he passed. Now, as a teenager in her senior year of high school, Anna’s means of coping is to suppress her loss, play it safe to prevent further harm being suffered by her family, and put on a happy face. Her whole behaviour has been modified by the perception her grief is invalid. In effect, she has fostered “masked grief”<sup>2</sup> that has normalised her behaviour. Masked grief can outwork itself in other ways, including physical disorders like headaches, stomach aches, sleeplessness, frequent illness and emotional exhaustion. Below are some keys for a grieving person to acknowledge and process masked grief<sup>3</sup>:

- Understand your grief is not a burden
  - Acknowledging your grief is not selfish
  - There is no shame in seeking professional help from a therapist or professional counsellor
  - Detachment, sadness, guilt or anger are normal emotions attached to grief
  - Bottled grief will manifest as different behaviours
1. Anna’s cautious approach to life has influenced many of her life decisions. Name one of those choices and write a two-paragraph expose exploring the validity of her logic behind this action.
  2. Reflect on the series of key turning points in the story and select one you can relate to from your own experiences. Instead of Anna, place yourself as the point-of-view character and re-write the scene.
  3. Based on the novel, name one key from the above list that Anna experienced towards “unmasking” her grief over her brother’s death. Research the emotional and/or psychological value of that key and write one to two paragraphs on how why this is so important in the grieving process.

### RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships in the teenage years can be challenging as young people navigate multiple factors including peer pressure, bullying, insecurity and low self-esteem, romantic attraction, pressure towards sexual relationships, parental conflict and other family dynamics<sup>4</sup>. When trauma is added to this complex emotional landscape, it may manifest in a range of actions and choices as a form of self-protection, along with subconscious somatic responses.

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1 Headspace 2023, ‘Understanding grief and loss – for family and friends’, <https://headspace.org.au/explore-topics/supporting-a-young-person/grief-and-loss/>

2 Roldan, K. 2021, ‘Masked Grief: 10 Things to Know About Stuffing Your Grief’, usurns online: <https://www.usurnsonline.com/grief-loss/masked-grief/>

3 Headspace 2023

4 Relationships Australia 2023, ‘Building Healthy Relationships for Teens’: <https://www.relationshipsnsw.org.au/support/services/building-healthy-relationships/>

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In *Signal Erased* Anna's best friend, Cassidy, teases her about being a 'safe Sally'. As you began to understand why Anna was so cautious, how did you feel about the relationship between Cassidy and Anna? Did this view of their friendship, and Cassidy, change as the story progressed? In 200-300 words, explain your reflections.

Pair up and discuss the following questions:

1. What was the strongest influence informing Anna's decision to get in the car with Chase?
2. Do you think she would have made the same choice if she didn't have a crush on him?
3. What message did this send to Rennie about her value of him as a friend?
4. If you had been in Anna's shoes, would you have got in the car? Why?

Reflect on Anna's communications and interactions with her parents and write down four adjectives to describe this relationship. Discuss your impressions with a classmate and together identify one way Anna could improve her relationship with her parents.

## RISKY BEHAVIOURS AND MOTOR VEHICLES

Teenagers are generally recognised as exhibiting higher-risk behaviours than adults, including on the roads, with motor vehicle crashes a leading cause of death amongst teens.<sup>5</sup> The Australian Institute of Family Studies reports low to moderate speeding and driving when fatigued as the most common offenses of teen drivers, and though most of these young inexperienced drivers took these chances infrequently, a small number regularly engaged in high-risk driving with studies revealing a high correlation between behavioural/conduct issues and intentionally risky driving<sup>6</sup>. Other resources suggest nearly 80% of P-plate holders and 55% of learner drivers had engaged in risky driving, with young drivers carrying the highest crash risk in their first year of unsupervised driving<sup>7</sup>. Some key factors influencing risky driving include a developmental propensity towards deviance and higher-risk behaviours and driving with peers in the vehicle—especially if young males—with independent driving providing a strong social context for teenagers.<sup>8</sup>

1. In 200-400 words, describe Anna's response to Chase's driving. Include whether you think she overreacted and explain why.
2. From the information above, what other behaviours did Chase display that suggested he might have a higher likelihood to engage in high-risk driving? Name at least one risk-related factor you observed from the novel, then break into small groups and discuss what your observations tell you about Chase.
3. Different Australian States and Territories have different rules for provisional licence holders. Research the rules for P-plate drivers in your State. Select two of these rules, conduct a review of literature, and

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5 Allen, J. and Bradford Brown, B. 2008, 'Adolescents, Peers, and Motor Vehicles The Perfect Storm?', *Am. J. Prev. Med.*, Vol. 35, Suppl. 3, pp. S289-S293. doi: 10.1016/j.amepre.2008.06.017

6 Australian Government (AIFS) 2023, 'Safe on our roads? Teens and risky driving', <https://aifs.gov.au/media/safe-our-roads-teens-and-risky-driving>

7 Vassallo, S. 2019, 'LSAC Annual Statistical Report 2018 chapter: 6. Risky driving among Australian Teens', <https://growingupinaustralia.gov.au/research-findings-2018/risky-driving-among-australian-teens>

8 Interaction Design Foundation – IxDF. (2020, September 5). Safety: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Interaction Design Foundation – IxDF. <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/safety-maslow-s-hierarchy-of-needs>

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either write a justification for, or argument against, the enforcement of these conditions.

## SAFETY

Hierarchy of Needs describe the basic human needs, which include security of body, employment, resources, morality of family, and health, and suggest that when a threat is detected environmentally, an emotional response is triggered.<sup>9</sup> For this reason safety is the primary motivator in most of our decision making and situational responses, and people adopt protective behaviours as a way of navigating unsafe experiences in life. Physical responses are like an “early warning system” for personal safety risks and based on past experiences, this becomes a part of our protective behaviours, while fear (of judgement, not being believed, blame etc) and shame are common reasons for young people to not tell someone when they feel unsafe.<sup>10</sup> Making young people familiar with the characteristics of respectful relationships is a valuable tool for building skills to recognise unsafe people, while school-based educational programs have been implemented to develop safe behaviours to maintain wellbeing, risk assess and respond safely to situations.<sup>11</sup>

1. In the second scene of Chapter 1, Anna describes Rennie as having a pre-constructed wall keeping her from getting to know him. As she learns more of his troubled past, she begins to understand why his behaviour is often distant. Take a moment to consider how you interact with others and how your past experiences and need for safety may have influenced how you engage. From this, write a short reflective essay (300-400 words).
2. Read Chapter 4 and identify physical indicators that the situation is unsafe. Then, reflect on a recent situation where you felt unsafe and identify the physical warning signs your body demonstrated to alert you of potential risk.
3. Think about how you respond to unsafe situations. Research typical responses to personal safety threats and resources on navigating these situations in a way that promotes safety and wellbeing. Identify at least one way that could help you respond better in situations of risk.

## QUANTUM THEORY

Quantum Theory describes the theoretical basis for the atomic and subatomic nature and behaviour of matter and energy, as described in quantum physics or quantum mechanics.<sup>12</sup> *Signal Erased* draws on and fictionally extends these principles, primarily in the context of sound, light, matter and electromagnetic frequency waves. The story incorporates phenomena like the Doppler Effect, frequency modulation, atoms and electron fields, wave interference, Blackbody radiation, acoustic interactions on the atomic structure of materials, Solfeggio frequencies and more. Despite 100 years of Quantum Theory being used to define much of our modern technology, many gaps and unanswered questions still exist in understanding these

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9 Interaction Design Foundation – IxDF.

10 ACT 2018, 'Raising Awareness: Protective Awareness', [https://www.education.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/1381995/Developing-Personal-Safety-Skills-for-Teenagers-2018.pdf](https://www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1381995/Developing-Personal-Safety-Skills-for-Teenagers-2018.pdf)

11 NSW Department of Education 2021, 'How can I keep myself and others safe?', <https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhppe/media/documents/pdhppe-s2-unit-how-i-keep-myself-and-others-safe.docx>

12 Wigmore, I., 2020, 'WhatIs.com: quantum theory', <https://www.techtarget.com/whatis/definition/quantum-theory>

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theories.<sup>13</sup> The concept of “Sound Frequency Healing” is one of those areas linked to quantum physics in which understanding gaps remain, even though the effects have been observed, and reported as a symphony of electromagnetic energies and sound vibrations that have capacity to modulate biological signalling, gene expression and healing.<sup>14</sup>

1. Reflecting on the story, each character brings a different understanding of quantum physics and the relevance of these concepts in their daily life. In this context, which character do you relate to most? Explain.
2. Research “Sound Frequency Healing”, including the concepts and benefits, and write a 300–500-word summary of your findings.
3. Solfeggio frequencies are mentioned multiple times in the novel and are said to represent frequencies that impart spiritual blessings and balance energy, body, mind and spirit. Select an Australian newspaper or magazine and write a 300 – 400 word opinion piece on Solfeggio frequencies in the context of quantum physics that would be suitable (based on the submission guidelines) for this publication.

## MUSIC THERAPY

Music is a medium that speaks to the soul<sup>15</sup> and has the potential to profoundly influence a person’s socio-emotional development and well-being, including building resilience and providing a therapeutic pathway towards healing.<sup>16</sup> These positive effects are irrespective of the individual’s sense of connection to music, with songs and music that evoke happy memories or lift the spirits having long been recognised to relieve stress and improve health outcomes.<sup>17</sup> Whilst the mechanisms of how music promotes wellbeing may not be entirely clear, the benefits are supported by research that has identified changes in biomarkers, mood modulation, social connections and more.<sup>18</sup> Akin to this topic is the increasing interest in acoustic therapies that suggest there are certain “healing frequencies” associated with the human body.<sup>19</sup>

1. Music is engrained in Anna’s identity and a natural response to her environment. Can you relate to her integration of music in all aspects of life? Explain, providing an example from your own experiences.
2. In 200-500 words write about an experience in your life that is forever defined by a certain song or sound,

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13 Cavalcanti, E., Chaves, R., Giacomini, F. and Liang, Y-C, 2023, ‘Fresh perspectives on the foundations of quantum physics’, Nature Reviews Physics, Vol. 5, pp. 323-325: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s42254-023-00586-z>

14 Muehsam, D. and Ventura, C. 2014, ‘Life Rhythm as a Symphony of Oscillatory Patterns: Electromagnetic Energy and Sound Vibration Modulates Gene Expression for Biological Signaling and Healing’, Glob. Adv. Health Med. Vol. 3, Iss. 2, pp. 40-55: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4010966/>

15 Mental Health America 2023, ‘Parenting with a Mental Health Condition’, <https://mhanational.org/parenting-mental-health-condition>

16 Reynolds, F. 2023, ‘The Transformative Power of Music in Mental Well-Being’, American Psychiatric Association, August 2023: <https://www.psychiatry.org/News-room/APA-Blogs/Power-of-Music-in-Mental-Well-Being>

17 Harvard Health Publishing 2016, ‘How music can help you heal’, Mind & Mood, February 2016: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/how-music-can-help-you-he>

18 Dingel, G., Sharman, L., Bauer, Z., Beckman, E., Broughton, M., Bunzli, E., Davidson, R., Draper, G., Fairley, S., Farrell, C., Flynn, L., Sjaan, G., Hong, M., Larwood, J., Lee, C., Lee, J., Nitschinsk, L., Peluso, N., Reedman, S., Vidas, D., Walter, Z. and Wright, O. 2021, ‘How Do Music Activities Affect Health and Well-Being? A Scoping Review of Studies Examining Psychosocial Mechanisms’, Frontiers in Psychology, Vol. 12, pp. 1-12: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.713818/full>

19 Ocean, L. 2020, ‘Healing Frequencies of the Human Body: Full List and Benefits’, Mind is Master: <https://mindisthemaster.com/sound-frequency-healing-human-body-benefits/>

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such that whenever you hear that auditory stimulus (song or sound) you are instantly transported back to that moment.

3. Can music heal? Select either an affirmative or negative stance and write a response to this question, backing your position with evidence-based findings and data.

## JUDGEMENT & DECISION MAKING

Every day we size up situations, relationships and interactions with others based on the sensory evidence available to us, but does this make us judgemental? Making judgements is a necessary part of navigating life. However, certain characteristics are associated with being judgemental, such as overt criticism, negative assumptions, a lack of empathy, and devaluing others to feel better about oneself.<sup>20</sup> Insecurity and low self-esteem, or a personal experience of criticism are often associated with a tendency towards being judgemental, along with a lack of insight into one's own flaws, and a tendency to make comparisons and over-express opinions in a way that makes others feel inadequate, much of which can be associated with attaining a sense of control.<sup>21</sup> A key to developing greater empathy is adopting a position of understanding and appreciating that every person comes from a framework of different values and situational dynamics, and often what people do is a complex action that isn't necessarily a reflection of who they are, but a response in a given circumstance (for example, irresponsibility in a peer pressure situation).<sup>22</sup>

1. Based on Cassidy's remarks in Chapter 2, would you consider her a judgemental person lacking understanding and empathy, or is she just opinionated? Based on what you know about Rennie by the end of the novel, imagine and draft a dialogue between yourself and Cassidy on the way to dance practise, after she leaves Anna at the pick-up point.
2. Anna's awareness of Rennie at the beginning of the story is captured in the following quote from Chapter 5, p. 52 "Rennie was just ... Rennie". Compare Anna's disinterest in Rennie to her overt interest in Chase. Do you think Anna's response is due mostly to:
  - a) Rennie's lack of openness and shy personality?
  - b) Chase's attractive appearance and charismatic personality?
  - c) Judging by external appearances instead of getting to know Chase and Rennie first?
  - d) A combination of the above points?
  - e) Something else entirely? Explain.
3. Anna's beliefs are different to the other young adult characters in the story. Do you think Anna's faith-based perspective make her more prone to judging others, or do all the young adult characters make external judgements in their own way? Explain.
4. Select one of the teachers from the story and write a brief character profile based of the novel. As a reader, reflect on whether you were judgemental in your initial assessment of them? Why?

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20 Gupta, S. 2023, 'How to be Less Judgemental', verywellmind: <https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-be-less-judgmental-7104645>

21 Robinson, F. 2023, '9 reasons why some people are so highly judgmental of others', a conscious rethink: <https://www.aconsciousrethink.com/16811/why-are-people-judgmental/>

22 Henriques, G. 2013, 'On Making Judgments and Being Judgmental', Psychology Today: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/theory-knowledge/201305/making-judgments-and-being-judgmental>

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## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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1. Read Chapter 10. Select and investigate one of the quantum physics concepts mentioned in this chapter. Write a scenario based on the phenomenon you selected, theoretically extending this concept in a way that seems reasonable based on your findings, but challenges general expectations.
2. The following is a quote from Chapter 10, p. 95: 'We're mostly empty space held apart by rapidly moving electrons. If those charges were negated and everything compressed our "nothingness" would be revealed.'
3. Do you believe this is a valid statement? Why? (Provide evidence, if requested by your teacher.)
4. Consider this concept and reflect on how this influences your perspective of your world and your place in it. Discuss your thoughts with a classmate.
5. Research the "sonic boom" phenomenon and its relationship to the Doppler effect. Formulate a thesis statement and write an analytical essay presenting your findings.

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## NARRATIVE STRUCTURE AND PLOT

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1. The Rashomon Effect is a storytelling term used primarily in film, science and law, describing the way a single event is diversely (unreliably) told by different witnesses.<sup>23</sup> Although Anna is the point-of-view narrator throughout the story, read pp. 166 – 170 (first part of the second scene in Chapter 16) and reflect on how these interactions would be experienced by the other characters involved.
  - a) Referencing the Rashomon Effect, re-write this part-scene from the point-of-view of each participating character, drawing on all you've learned about them (personality, typical responses, worldview, likes and dislikes, etc) throughout the story.
  - b) Is their one character would you say is more unreliable over the others? Explain.
2. Identify the following story "beats" (from the hero's journey story structure) and write a brief two to three sentence summary of each beat from the novel:
  - a) Theme stated (lesson to be learnt)
  - b) Debate
  - c) Fun and games
  - d) Midpoint false loss or false victory
  - e) Finale: gathering the team & executing the plan (sub-beats)
3. Famous novelist, Stephen King, has been quoted as saying, "The road to hell is paved with adverbs." This position is in keeping with the trend of modern fiction writing to eliminate the use of adverbs, wherever possible. Read the first scene of Chapter 1 (pp. 1 – 6) and identify adverb usage.
  - a) Select two of the identified adverbs and see if you can rewrite the sentence by replacing the adverb with an adverbial clause. (An adverbial clause is always a dependent clause).
  - b) What is the structure of the sentences in which you selected the two adverbs?

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23 DeGuzman, K. 2022, 'What is The Rashomon Effect in Film? Definition & Examples Explained', Studiobinder: <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/what-is-the-rashomon-effect-definition/>

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- c)** Select a paragraph from this passage of text and re-write it using as many adverbs as you can. Does this change the feel of the paragraph? Explain.

## CREATIVE WRITING EXERCISES

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- 1.** You are an on-the-spot reporter arriving with the police for the final scene of Chapter 18 (pp. 191 – 195). Write a script for your 45 – 60 second report detailing the unfolding events.
- 2.** Write a 500-to-800-word story from the point of view of either of Anna's parents, when they find out what really happened while they were away.
  - a)** Ensure you show, don't tell
  - b)** Include visceral responses to indicate how they are feeling
  - c)** Try to incorporate fresh symbols and metaphors in your writing
  - d)** When this story is completed, swap your story with a classmate and edit each other's work by correcting grammar and making suggestions to improve comprehension and flow
- 3.** Devise five questions you would like to ask one of the characters in the story, that were not answered in the novel. Then, based on what you know of that character, write responses in a style consistent with their personality.
- 4.** Which of the primary young adult characters do you think demonstrated the greatest amount of personal growth through the events depicted in the story? Explain.

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## KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

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### YEAR 7

English, Science

AC9E7LE02	AC9E7LE03	AC9E7LE05	AC9E7LY07
AC9E7LY08	ACELT1620		
ACSHE120	ACSIS132	AC9S7I01	AC9S7U05
AC9S7H03	AC9S7I08		

### YEAR 8

English, Science

AC9E8LE01	AC9E8LE02	AC9E8LE06	AC9E8LY04
AC9E8L05	ACELT1807		
ACSSU155	ACSHE135	AC9S8H03	AC9S8I08

### YEAR 9

English, Science

AC9E9L09	AC9E9LA05	AC9E9LE01	AC9E9LE02
AC9E9LY08	ACELT1633	ACELT1635	ACELT1639
ACSSU182	ACSIS170	ACSIS172	AC9S9U04
AC9S9I08			

### YEAR 10

English, Science

AC9E10L06	AC9E10LE03	AC9E10LE08	AC9E10LY05
AC9E10LY06	AC9E10LY08	AC9E10LA05	AC9E10LE02
AC9E10LA01	AC9E10LE04	AC9E10LA02	AC9E10LE05
AC9E10LY04	AC9E10LA03	AC9E10LA01	ACELT1639
ACELT1812			
AC9S10U05	AC9S10I08		

### SENIOR ENGLISH

Essential (Unit 1)

ACEEE001	ACEEE002	ACEEE003	ACEEE004
ACEEE006	ACEEE007	ACEEE008	ACEEE011
ACEEE012	ACEEE013		

Essential (Unit 2)

ACEEE015	ACEEE016	ACEEE017	ACEEE018
ACEEE021	ACEEE022	ACEEE026	ACEEE027

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Essential (Unit 3)

ACEEE029	ACEEE031	ACEEE032	ACEEE035
ACEEE037	ACEEE040	ACEEE041	

General (Unit 1)

ACEEN004	ACEEN010	ACEEN018	
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General (Unit 2)

ACEEN022	ACEEN024	ACEEN028	ACEEN029
ACEEN034	ACEEN035	ACEEN036	ACEEN037
ACEEN038	ACEEN040		

General (Unit 3)

ACEEN041	ACEEN044	ACEEN047	ACEEN051
ACEEN055	ACEEN056	ACEEN057	

**SENIOR PHYSICS**

Unit 2

ACSPH045	ACSPH049	ACSPH052	ACSPH054
ACSPH055	ACSPH057	ACSPH053	ACSPH069
ACSPH072	ACSPH074	ACSPH076	

Unit 3

ACSPH078	ACSPH082	ACSPH085	ACSPH090
ACSPH109	ACSPH112	ACSPH113	

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