



FLIP

Rebecca Fraser ISBN: 9781761112898 Reading level: reading age of 10+, interest age 12+.

BOOK SUMMARY

Denim Davies wishes he could flip his life, just like the vintage items he sells online. He and his dad have spent a year moving from town to town and Denim feels like he's drifting through life without an anchor.

When they arrive in the small town of Driftwood Heights, Denim doesn't see the point of getting close to anyone when they're just going to move again. Then he befriends Mina and his new home starts to look a little brighter. But a vintage find goes horribly wrong and Denim has a tough decision to make—one that could ruin his friendship forever.

THEMES

- Self-Discovery
 Social Issues (Housing Crisis)
 Bullying
 Death and Grief
 - New Kid Home & Belonging Family and Friendship Sustainability

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Rebecca Fraser is available for author talks and workshops. Contact Rhiza Edge for more information.

Flip 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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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Rebecca chairs and participates in panels at festivals and facilitates author 'in conversations' at libraries, as well as facilitating creative writing workshops for

authors of every age and ability. She has served as a convenor and on the judging panel of nationallyrecognised literary competitions, was the co-founder and now a sponsor of the national youth competition Little Stories, Big Ideas and a proud participant in the Australian Author Pen Pals program.

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AUTHOR NOTES

At the time I was writing Flip, the headlines were filled (and still are) with articles and news about The Housing Crisis, and the impact it was having on thousands of Australians. The rise of house prices and interest rates, the increased costs of living, and a shortage of rental properties meant homelessness for many singles, couples, and families. This frightening scenario was the inspiration for the events that eventually lead Denim and his father to Driftwood Heights, where the main plot unfolds. Denim's 'flipping' of second hand goods online seemed a great way for him to make money as he works towards his dream of eventually being able to afford to rent a property for him and his father, and return to his old life in Melbourne. I love op shopping, and one thing I've noticed in recent years is the number of teenagers that do too – whether they're hunting for cool, vintage clothing, or they're doing exactly what Denim does: hunting down treasure to sell for a profit. I viewed a lot of TikTok videos where teens were showing what they had found and made money on, and was impressed by their knowledge of what to look for, and what's rare and collectable. I decided that Denim was going to be a 'next level' buyer and seller – the ultimate flipper. Of course, that all started to come unravelled when I added in the dilemma of a garage sale find that had the ability to end his new found friendship...

I loved writing Flip. Denim is a character I feel very close to, and I hope he forgives me for putting him through a bit of trauma in order for him to grow and shine. I made sure I left him in a much happier place than he was when we first meet him!

I hope readers will relate to Denim with compassion and empathy. The Housing Crisis continues to impact everyday Australians. Homelessness doesn't always mean 'sleeping rough' – people without a home also often live in temporary, insecure, or unsafe housing situations such as rooming houses, cars, or government-funded crisis accommodation. Other people live in severely overcrowded accommodation, or are couch surfing with family or friends. Ultimately, Flip is a story of family, friendship, and hope – a powerful force that can lead to positive change and resilience.

OVERVIEW

MAIN CHARACTER

Denim Davies is a 15-year-old with a sharp eye for style and a soft spot for second-hand treasures. He's clever, thoughtful, and independent, always on the lookout for hidden gems at garage sales and thrift stores to flip online for extra cash. What started as a hobby has become a lifeline—he dreams of earning enough money to help him and his dad move back to Melbourne and finally have a stable home.

Denim's life has been anything but settled. Since the death of his mum and the growing pressures of the housing crisis, he and his dad have bounced from town to town in search of work and affordable rent. Every time they move, Denim has to start again—new school, new faces, same feeling of being the outsider. Now they've landed in Driftwood Heights, a coastal town where Denim doesn't expect much to change. Living in a caravan park and feeling like he doesn't belong, he's more closed-off than ever.

But things begin to shift when he meets Mina—a bright, quirky local with a knack for saying exactly what she thinks. As their friendship deepens, Denim finds himself questioning what he's willing to risk to hold onto the people he's finally letting in. When he accidentally buys a valuable family heirloom from Mina's grandmother and tries to sell it online, Denim faces a moral crossroads that forces him to reckon with who he is and who he wants to be.

By the end of the story, Denim takes real ownership of his choices. He begins to understand that home isn't just a place—it's the people you choose to stay for.

Denim's Strengths	Denim's Weaknesses
Resourceful and Entrepreneurial: Denim is smart	Emotionally Guarded: Denim finds it hard to open
with money and knows how to spot a good deal.	up or trust people, fearing they'll just disappear.
Resilient: Despite a difficult year, he keeps moving	Avoids Conflict: He tends to hide mistakes rather
forward and trying again.	than face uncomfortable truths.
Kind and Reflective: He genuinely cares about	Feels Rootless: Constant moving has left him
doing the right thing, even when it's hard.	feeling disconnected from others and unsure where
Independent: Used to fending for himself, Denim is	he belongs.
self-sufficient and mature beyond his years.	Carries Unresolved Grief: The loss of his mum
	weighs heavily on him, though he rarely talks about
	it.

OTHER CHARACTERS

Phil Davies (Dad): A warm, affectionate father doing his best under tough circumstances. Phil's background in carpentry and building hasn't translated into steady work lately, but he remains upbeat and hopeful. He's known for cracking jokes and seeing silver linings, even when things look grim. He's Denim's biggest supporter, and while he sometimes misses the depth of his son's struggles, his love is never in doubt.

Mina: Denim's first real friend in Driftwood Heights. Outgoing, expressive, and just a bit chaotic, Mina is the opposite of Denim in many ways. Her grandmother, who raised her, is experiencing dementia, and Mina *These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use within schools, but not offered for commercial sale.*

carries a quiet strength underneath her eccentric surface. She's loyal and emotionally honest, and she challenges Denim to be more open and brave in return.

Tyler: At first, Tyler is Denim's main source of stress—he bullies Denim at school and seems to enjoy making his life harder. But as the story unfolds, we learn Tyler is struggling too. His mum is seriously ill with cancer, and his aggression stems from fear and helplessness. Through a mentoring program and some unexpected acts of understanding, Tyler and Denim move from enemies to unlikely friends.

Grandma Jean: Mina's grandmother, a once-sharp woman now slowly losing pieces of herself to dementia. She unknowingly sells the Cartier watch, a treasured memento of her late husband, for \$5 at a garage sale. Her condition reminds readers of the emotional weight tied to memory, legacy, and loss.

'FLIPPING' AND OP SHOPS

In *Flip*, Denim's main hobby—and his side hustle—is flipping vintage items he finds in op shops, garage sales, and thrift stores. "Flipping" refers to the process of buying something second-hand, often for a very low price, then reselling it online for a profit. For Denim, it's not just about money—it's about the thrill of discovery, the satisfaction of finding value where others might not see it, and the hope of one day earning enough to change his and his dad's living situation.

Op shops (short for "opportunity shops") are common throughout Australia and are often run by charities like the Salvos (Salvation Army), Vinnies (St Vincent de Paul), or Lifeline. These stores sell donated clothes, books, furniture, and homewares at low prices. They're not just places for bargain hunters—they also play a key role in supporting communities, reducing waste, and funding essential services.

For Denim, op shopping is a form of quiet rebellion and creativity. While others spend their money on the newest trends, he finds treasure in the forgotten. Each item he flips—whether it's a retro denim jacket, a quirky lamp, or, fatefully, a luxury watch—is a small attempt to regain control over his unpredictable life.

LIFE IN DRIFTWOOD HEIGHTS

Driftwood Heights is a small coastal town where everyone knows everyone, and secrets don't stay buried for long. Life here is slower but close-knit. It's the kind of place where kids have grown up together, generations live in the same street, and change is viewed with suspicion. For someone like Denim, a newcomer who doesn't quite fit the mould, it can feel isolating. But it's also a town with heart. The local caravan park is more than temporary housing—it's a community. Places like the Men's Shed and local op shops show the town's willingness to support those doing it tough, even if help sometimes arrives in unexpected ways.

LIFE IN DRIFTWOOD HEIGHTS

Flip is deeply grounded in the reality of Australia's current housing and cost of living crises, which are affecting thousands of families across the country—especially renters and low-income earners.

In the story, Denim and his dad move from town to town because they can't find stable work or affordable long-term housing. They stay in temporary accommodation like motels and caravan parks, with no sense of permanence or home. This kind of transience is becoming increasingly common in Australia, particularly

among single-parent families, casual workers, and those affected by unexpected events like illness or job loss.

What is the housing crisis?

The housing crisis in Australia refers to the shortage of affordable rental properties, the skyrocketing cost of buying a home, and the increasing number of people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity. As of recent years, rental prices have surged in both cities and regional towns, while public and social housing waitlists continue to grow.

What is the cost of living crisis?

This describes the rising cost of basic needs—like food, electricity, fuel, healthcare, and housing—without a matching increase in wages. Many families are struggling to cover essentials, even when working full-time. Young people are particularly affected, with fewer opportunities for independence or home ownership in the future.

In *Flip*, this crisis isn't just background noise—it's a key part of Denim's story. His dad, Phil, is skilled and hardworking, but the lack of secure jobs and affordable rent means they live on the edge. The instability weighs heavily on Denim, who longs for a permanent home and a return to a more predictable life in Melbourne.

MESSAGE OF THE NOVEL

Flip is a story about finding your footing when the ground keeps shifting beneath you. Through Denim's journey, the novel explores how grief, instability, and financial pressure can shape a young person's identity—and how resilience, kindness, and connection can rebuild it.

It reminds readers that doing the right thing isn't always easy, especially when it means giving up something you desperately want. But *Flip* also celebrates small acts of courage—telling the truth, making a friend, forgiving someone who hurt you.

At its heart, *Flip* is a story about choosing to stay instead of run. It's about building a life not through grand gestures, but through quiet choices—returning a watch, forgiving a bully, opening up to a new friend. And it's a powerful reminder that "home" isn't just a place on a map. It's where you decide to belong.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- What scene in the book had the biggest emotional impact on you? Why?
- If you could ask Denim one question, what would it be?
- How would the story change if it were told from Mina's point of view?
- What life lessons does *Flip* offer to readers your age?
- Do you think *Flip* ends on a hopeful note? Why or why not?
- Where does the story take place? How does the setting (Driftwood Heights) shape Denim's experience?
- What turning points in the story help Denim start to feel more settled?
- Which characters did you connect with most, and why?
- If you were in Denim's position at the garage sale, what would you have done differently (or the same)?
- Do you think the author is trying to deliver a message through the story? What do you think it is?
- If this story were made into a film or TV series, what would be one scene you'd want to see on screen?
 Why?
- Do you think it's harder to be honest with a friend when you've made a mistake, like Denim was with Mina? Why?
- How does the story show that people aren't always what they seem on the surface?

SELF-DISCOVERY

- Denim is faced with a big moral dilemma when he purchases the watch at Mina's Nan's garage sale. Do you think he did the right thing in the end? Why or why not?
- 2. Mina's reaction to Denim returning her Nan's watch is not what he expected. How was Denim expecting Mina to react? What does Mina's reaction tell you about her character? Can you list three personality traits that support this?
- **3.** How does Denim change from the start to the end of the novel? What events or people help shape this growth?
- **4.** What does the Cartier watch symbolise in Denim's journey toward discovering who he is and what matters to him?
- 5. Denim begins the story focused on returning to Melbourne. What makes him start to rethink this goal?
- 6. How does Denim's relationship with Mina help him see himself differently?

SOCIAL ISSUES

- 1. Do you know anyone who has been impacted by the housing crisis?
- 2. Try and put yourself in Phil's shoes. What are the responsibilities that he has? Do you think he is meeting them satisfactorily? Is there anything that he could do differently? These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use within schools, but not offered for commercial sale.

- 3. How does the housing crisis affect Denim's daily life, friendships, and sense of safety?
- **4.** Why do you think Phil and Denim keep moving rather than settling somewhere less ideal? What pressures are influencing their choices?
- **5.** What impact do financial struggles have on mental health? Can you find evidence of this in Denim's actions or thoughts?
- **6.** What support networks exist in Driftwood Heights that help families doing it tough? Are these realistic or idealised?
- 7. What does the book suggest is needed to help people affected by the housing crisis?

BULLYING

- **1.** Denim is bullied by Tyler, but ultimately Denim forgives him. Do you agree with Denim's forgiveness? Does Tyler's family situation excuse his behaviour?
- **2.** When we finish the book, Denim and Tyler are on their way to a place of friendship. Describe the moment Tyler and Denim make peace with each other. How did it make you feel?
- **3.** Why do you think Tyler targets Denim? How do we learn that there's more to Tyler's story than his behaviour?
- 4. Is it ever possible to fully forgive someone who bullied you? What might help or prevent this?
- 5. In what ways does Denim stand up for himself—or fail to—throughout the book?
- 6. How can adults (like teachers or mentors) play a role in reducing bullying, as shown in Flip?
- 7. Do you think Denim and Tyler could ever become real friends? Why or why not?

DEATH AND GRIEF

- 1. How does Denim cope with his mother's death? What signs show that he's still grieving?
- 2. In what ways is Denim's grief different from Tyler's situation with his mother? How are they similar?
- **3.** Why do you think Denim and Phil rarely talk directly about the mother's death? What are the effects of this silence?
- **4.** Mina's grandmother is living with dementia, a form of loss that looks different to death. How does this affect Mina?
- 5. How does the novel show that grief doesn't have a timeline?
- **6.** Some characters in the book are also dealing with loss—like Mina with her grandmother's dementia and Tyler with his mum's illness. How do their experiences with grief compare to Denim's?
- **7.** Do you think Denim has fully processed his grief by the end of the novel? What signs suggest he is healing or still holding back?
- **8.** Do you think Denim avoids talking about his mother? What are some instances of Denim talking about his mother with his loved ones and how does he talk about her?

NEW KID

 Denim's life has been in turmoil. He is grieving the loss of his mother, and has been continuously on These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use within schools, but not offered for commercial sale. the move, drifting from town to town. Each move means starting a new school. Have you ever been the 'new kid' at school? Can you share and discuss your experience?

- **2.** If you have never been in that situation, has Denim's experience made you feel differently about how you might empathise with a new person at your school?
- 3. What are some of the challenges Denim faces as a newcomer at school? How does he handle them?
- 4. Why do you think Denim avoids forming new friendships at first?
- 5. How is being the new kid different in a small town like Driftwood Heights compared to a big city?
- 6. What advice would you give Denim for making new connections? Would he take it?
- 7. Can being the "new kid" ever be a positive thing? Why or why not?

HOME & BELONGING

- 1. Denim comes to the realisation that his father wants the same things as Denim: a house, stability and security for his family, friendship, and connection. Can you find two examples in the book where Denim reaches this understanding? (*Hint: The Men's Shed / Phil's introduction to Amber*)
- 2. One of the themes in *Flip* revolves around the housing crisis and encourages readers to reflect on what home means to them. What does home mean to you?
- 3. How does Denim's idea of home change over the course of the novel?
- 4. What makes a place feel like home? Is it people, stability, location—or something else?
- 5. Driftwood Heights feels unwelcoming to Denim at first. What moments change that?
- 6. Why does Denim stop wanting to return to Melbourne by the end of the book?
- 7. Do you think Driftwood Heights becomes a real "home" for Denim? Why or why not?

FAMILY & FRIENDSHIP

- **1.** Denim has a close relationship with his father, Phil, even though it has been tested over the last few years. Do you think Phil is too optimistic at times? Why do you think he acts this way?
- **2.** Despite their situation, Phil does his best to be a good father and role model to Denim. Can you find three examples in the book where he demonstrates this?
- **3.** Mina is confident in her individuality and is a good friend. Find three examples in the text that demonstrate how Mina shows Denim her friendship.
- 4. Mina's reaction to Denim returning her Nan's watch is not what he expected. How was Denim expecting Mina to react? What does Mina's reaction tell you about her character? Can you list three personality traits that support this?
- 5. How does Denim and Phil's relationship grow and shift throughout the novel?
- 6. How do Phil's actions help build a sense of stability for Denim, even when they don't have a permanent home?
- 7. How would you describe the friendship between Mina and Denim? What makes it special?
- 8. Do you think Mina and Denim would have become friends if Denim hadn't bought the watch?

- 9. What makes a good friend? How does Flip explore that idea?
- 10. In what ways does Phil act as a role model—not just for Denim, but also for Tyler?

SUSTAINABILITY

- **1.** Denim sources the items he 'flips' online from op shops, garage sales, tip shops, etc. Identify and list as many of Denim's finds as you can. Are these items familiar to you?
- 2. What is the activity Mina does that contributes to sustainability?
- **3.** How do you feel about the trend for 'fast fashion' (cheap, disposable clothing) through online and department store retailers? Is it a good or bad thing? Why?
- 4. What do Denim's flipping habits teach us about reusing and repurposing items?
- 5. Do you think flipping is a sustainable way to shop and live? Why or why not?
- 6. What role do op shops and garage sales play in communities like Driftwood Heights?
- 7. Mina takes action to reduce waste in her own way. What does this say about her values?
- 8. What are some sustainable alternatives to fast fashion? Could you see yourself choosing them?
- 9. Have you ever bought something second-hand? How did it compare to buying something brand new?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

FLIP 'SHOW AND TELL' - SECOND-HAND TREASURE HUNT

Task:

Visit a local op shop (opportunity shop), garage sale, or tip shop. Try to find an item that could be considered rare, interesting, or collectable. You may choose to bring the item to school or share a photo of it. Prepare a short *Flip*-themed 'Show and Tell' presentation.

In your presentation, consider the following questions:

- What is your item? What is it used for, and who might have originally owned or used it?
- Where did you find it? Was it easy or difficult to discover?
- What makes the item collectable or valuable? (Is it old, rare, or currently trending?)
- What year was it made, and how much did it cost?
- Do you think it was priced fairly? Could you flip it for a profit online?
- Could the item have another use (e.g. upcycling into something new)?

Extension Option:

Research how flipping second-hand items supports sustainability and waste reduction. Share your thoughts in a class discussion.

LIVING ON A BUDGET - A WEEK IN A CARAVAN PARK

Task:

Imagine you are living with a parent or guardian in a caravan park for one week. Create a realistic weekly budget that includes all basic living expenses.

Your budget should include:

- Caravan park site fees (research the average cost in your local or regional area).
- Food and groceries (include all meals, snacks, and essential items like toiletries).
- School-related expenses (stationery, uniforms, transport, fees).
- Petrol or travel expenses (for school, job hunting, errands).
- Other necessary costs (phone credit, laundry, emergencies, internet access).

Reflection Questions:

- Was it difficult to stay within a budget? What surprised you?
- How might living like this affect a young person's education, social life, or mental health?
- What kind of support or services could make life easier for someone in this situation?

RESEARCH A CHARITY - PRESENT THE HOPE OF SUPPORT

Task:

Research an organisation or charity in Australia that supports people affected by homelessness or the housing crisis. Choose one group to investigate, then prepare a short presentation or poster to share with your class.

In your research, include:

- The name and history of the organisation (How long have they been active? Why were they founded?)
- Their mission or purpose
- The types of support or services they provide (e.g. shelter, food, financial counselling, job assistance)
- How they raise money (events, partnerships, donations)
- Any statistics or success stories related to the number of people they've helped

Some organisations you might explore:

- Mission Australia
- Launch Housing
- The Salvation Army
- Vinnies (St Vincent de Paul Society)
- Orange Sky Laundry
- Kids Under Cover

Extension:

Discuss what more could be done in your local community or school to support people in crisis.

DESIGN A 'FLIP' MOOD BOARD

Task:

Create a digital or physical mood board that captures the atmosphere, emotions, characters, and key themes in *Flip*. Think of it as a visual collage that represents Denim's journey—from feeling lost to finding connection and belonging in Driftwood Heights.

Your mood board could include:

- Images or illustrations that represent key locations (e.g. the caravan park, op shops, school, the beach)
- Quotes from the book that reflect Denim's growth or struggles
- Colours and textures that match the mood or setting
- Objects (real or symbolic)—like the watch, a surfboard, vintage clothing, a caravan, or a Men's Shed tool
- Words or symbols that represent themes like grief, resilience, friendship, or hope

Presentation Options:

- Create a digital board using tools like Canva, PowerPoint, or Google Slides
- Use magazines, newspapers, drawings, and other materials for a physical board

Reflection Questions (for follow-up discussion or a written component):

- Why did you choose the colours, images, or symbols you used?
- What part of Denim's journey did you connect with most? How is it shown in your design?
- How does your mood board reflect Denim's transformation or the book's message?

Extension:

Create a second board from the perspective of another character (e.g. Mina, Tyler, or Phil) to explore their emotional world and point of view.

WRITING A LETTER - WALKING IN DENIM'S SHOES

Task:

Write a personal letter from the perspective of Denim, addressed to either:

His mum (who has passed away),

OR

• His future self (five years from now).

The letter should reflect on his experiences living in Driftwood Heights, the challenges he's faced, and what he has learned about friendship, belonging, grief, or growing up.

In your letter, you might include:

- How Denim is feeling about their current situation (living in a caravan, moving again, missing his mum)
- His thoughts about the people he's met-Phil, Mina, Tyler-and what they've taught him
- Regrets or difficult moments, like the watch incident
- Hopes for the future—stability, connection, or staying in one place
- What he wishes he could say to his mum or what he hopes for his future self

Reflection Questions (optional writing prompts or follow-up discussion):

- Was it easy or hard to imagine life from Denim's point of view? Why?
- How does writing as Denim change the way you understand his choices and emotions?
- What would you say to a friend going through a tough time like Denim?

Extension Option:

Turn your letter into a monologue and perform it in small groups or for the class.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

CURRICULUM V9

YEAR 8

English

AC9E8LE03 - explain how language and/or images in texts position readers to respond and form viewpoints

AC9E8LY01 - identify how texts reflect contexts

AC9E8LY05 - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring, questioning and inferring to interpret and evaluate ideas in texts

AC9E8LE04 - identify intertextual references in literary texts and explain how the references enable new understanding of the aesthetic quality of the text

AC9E8LY03 - analyse and evaluate the ways that language features vary according to the purpose and audience of the text, and the ways that sources and quotations are used in a text

YEAR 9

English

AC9E9LA08 - analyse how vocabulary choices contribute to style, mood and tone

AC9E9LA02 - understand how evaluation can be expressed directly and indirectly using devices such as allusion, evocative vocabulary and metaphor

AC9E9LE04 - analyse texts and evaluate the aesthetic qualities and appeal of an author's literary style

AC9E9LY01 - analyse how representations of people, places, events and concepts reflect contexts

AC9E9LY03 - analyse and evaluate how language features are used to represent a perspective of an issue, event, situation, individual or group

AC9E9LA01 - recognise how language empowers relationships and roles

AC9E9LE02 - present a personal response to a literary text comparing initial impressions and subsequent analysis of the whole text

AC9E9LE03 - analyse how features of literary texts influence readers' preference for texts

AC9E9LE05 - analyse the effect of text structures, language features and literary devices such as extended metaphor, metonymy, allegory, symbolism and intertextual references

Civics and Citizenship

AC9HC9K06 - the influence of a range of media, including social media, in shaping identity and attitudes to diversity

YEAR 10 English

AC9E10LA01 - understand how language can have inclusive and exclusive social effects, and can empower or disempower people

AC9E10LE06 - compare and evaluate how "voice" as a literary device is used in different types of texts, such as poetry, novels and film, to evoke emotional responses

AC9E10LE05 - analyse how text structure, language features, literary devices and intertextual connections shape interpretations of texts

AC9E10LE04 - evaluate the social, moral or ethical positions represented in literature

AC9E10LE03 - analyse how the aesthetic qualities associated with text structures, language features, literary devices and visual features, and the context in which these texts are experienced, influence audience response

AC9E10LY03 - analyse and evaluate how language features are used to implicitly or explicitly represent values, beliefs and attitudes

AC9E10LE07 - analyse and evaluate the aesthetic qualities of texts, for example, analysing and evaluating the use of literary devices.

AC9E10LY01 - analyse and evaluate how people, places, events and concepts are represented in texts and reflect contexts

AC9E10LA02 - understand that language used to evaluate, implicitly or explicitly reveals an individual's values

CURRICULUM 8.4

SENIOR SECONDARY

English

Flip can be used as a text for Years 11 and 12. It can be used in English, Literature, and Essential English. The applications can include the intersection of humanities, health, and economics. Character arcs and motivations can also be observed.