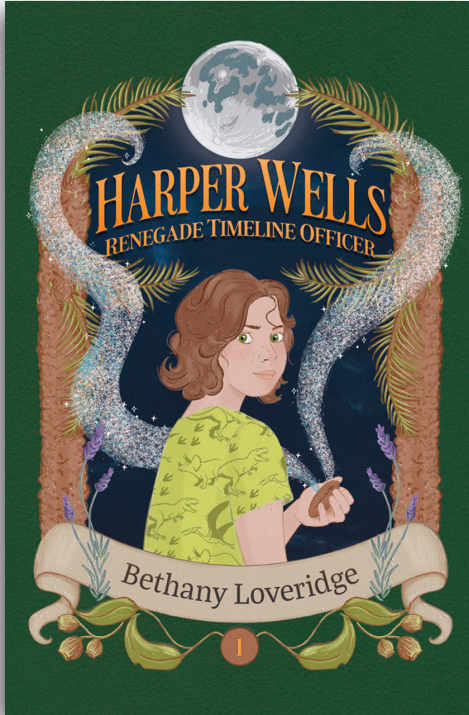


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# Teachers' Notes

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## HARPER WELLS: RENEGADE TIME OFFICER

Bethany Loveridge

ISBN: 9781761112928

Reading level: 10-14

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### BOOK SUMMARY

Harper Wells finally gets a room of her own, away from her annoying big brother. But on the first night in her brand-new bed, she wakes up in the past and meets a young girl named Edie. Has what Harper said to her changed the course of Australia's history?

And who does her strange time-travelling bed really belong to? Harper is thrown into a world of time-travelling spies and puts her life in danger as she tries to find a missing girl before time runs out.

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### THEMES

- Family Relationships • Engaging with the Natural Environment • Growing Independence •
- Time Travel • Questioning Retellings of History • Notability • Edith Cowan

## CONTENTS

Book Summary.....	1
Themes.....	1
About the Author.....	3
Discussion Questions.....	4
Classroom Activities.....	5
Key Curriculum Areas.....	6

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**Bethany Loveridge is available for author talks and workshops.  
Contact Wombat Books for more information.**

*Harper Wells 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

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Bethany Loveridge is an author-illustrator, film and art teacher, and lifelong bookworm. She's been in trouble for daydreaming and doodling since she could dribble and has dreamt of having a book of her own for almost as long. Bethany lives in Queensland, Australia with her trivia-loving husband and two creative kids. Her nonno really did raise tens of thousands of chickens in long tunnel sheds and one of her favourite pastimes was climbing the mulberry tree (preferably in mulberry season). *Harper Wells: Renegade Timeline Officer* is the first story in the Wollemi Trilogy and Bethany's debut book. Find her at [www.bethanyloveridge.com](http://www.bethanyloveridge.com) or hanging with the animals at Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary.

### AUTHOR NOTES

I love nature—particularly mountains, old trees and rivers and creeks. This story, and the 'magic' behind the time travel, came alive in 2020 after I read an article about the discovery of the Wollemi Pine, and had a thrilling dream. The next day I wrote the first seven thousand words! The Wollemi Pine is sometimes called the Dinosaur Tree, because it was thought to have become extinct a long time ago, but in 1994, a weather protected grove of Wollemi was accidentally discovered in the Blue Mountains. This discovery set off a huge response around the world and was the inspiration for the Wollemi Trilogy.

Each story in the trilogy also includes an historical Australian woman, which Harper Wells (the main character) visits in the past, and who helps her with her contemporary struggles too. In *Harper Wells: Renegade Timeline Officer*, we meet Edie Brown, a little girl with a tumultuous childhood, who eventually becomes Edith Cowan, Australia's first female parliamentarian! The 'scripts' or trips into the past are based on factual moments in Edith Cowan's life. Historical fiction is a fun genre to write in because it enlivens moments in our past while adding a sprinkle of drama (or in cases like this, magic)! As a student, I found it very difficult to listen and retain information about history (or geography, or science), and I wish I had discovered exciting retellings of history when I was younger.

Speaking of retellings of history, I have done a LOT of research to write these stories, and one question that kept coming up is, why do we know some people's (his)stories and not others'? Who decided which histories were worth keeping, and what don't we know about the past? These kinds of questions led me to design the WOTO, or the World Office of Timeline Officials, a clandestine agency known by many names previously, who control the Australian timeline. Is it right that they send Timeline Officers into the past to ensure the stability and comfort of their lives? Are the WOTO doing more than just watching and reporting? Then I came up with Chance, an oppositional agency, who as the name suggests, believe the timeline is best left to its own devices. The problem with Chance is they're not very kind. They'll try almost anything to stop the WOTO. Harper Wells gets stuck between the WOTO and Chance, and throughout the story and the trilogy, she struggles to find where her morals and beliefs fit. She realises that it's okay to question history and to question when she's asked to do something.

A note on anxiety. Like me, Harper often struggles with feeling overwhelmed — like her head and life are spinning out of control. In the Wollemi Trilogy I write about things like panic attacks and despair, but I also introduce real anchoring or grounding techniques that a psychologist might recommend. If you or someone you know is struggling with anxiety, information and resources are available at [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au).

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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### GENERAL QUESTIONS

- What event causes Harper to first travel through time?
- Who is Edie, and when does Harper meet her?
- What is WOTO, and why is it important to the story?
- What danger does Harper face if WOTO finds out about her travels?
- What personal challenge is Harper facing at the beginning of the story?
- What genre(s) does this book fall under?
- Why might Harper's grief over her missing mother make her more determined to help Edie?
- Why do you think the author included a secret organisation like WOTO in the plot?
- If you could travel back in time like Harper, what moment in history would you want to visit, and why?
- If you woke up in a strange place, what would your first reaction be?
- If you were Harper Wells, what questions would you have asked Maximilian Durand the first time you met?
- Which character do you relate to the most in this story and why?
- What are the earliest memories you have of your parent or carer?
- What was the most surprising, intriguing or challenging thing you learned about Edith Cowan's life?
- Why do you think the Timeline Officers are told (often) they're only to Watch and Report?
- What do you think will happen in HARPER WELLS: TIME WALKER (the next story in the trilogy)?

### EDITH COWAN & NOTABILITY

1. Examine key moments of Cowan's early life. How do you think these events shaped the values and beliefs of parliamentarian Edith Cowan?
2. In 1921, Cowan became the first woman elected to an Australian parliament, and it was front page news around the country. How was her election received at the time? Hint: the newspaper clippings referenced in the story were real!
3. Cowan was an advocate for social justice and a compassionate and inclusive society. In what ways did she demonstrate this advocacy?
4. Cowan was especially compassionate towards women, children and the under-privileged. How would you describe her legacy or impact on these three groups?
5. Look at an Australian \$50 banknote. Along with Edith Cowan's portrait, there are other key images or motifs. Explain their relevance to Cowan's notability.
6. To be notable means to be deserving of attention for being exceptional at something. If you were described as 'notable' for something in ten years time, what would you like to be notable for? What about in one hundred years time?

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7. Most countries include portraits of notable citizens on their banknotes. If you were redesigning Australia's banknotes, which notable citizens would you choose?
  8. What do you think Australia's choice of notable Australians on their banknotes says about what we value as a country?

## FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND COPING WITH LOSS

1. Because Harper's mother left when she was young, Harper has hardly any memories of her. How do you think memories contribute to our relationships with people?
2. Harper's feelings about her brother Morris change throughout the story. How and why do they change?
3. Harper often feels alone in her family even though her father and brother are there. Why do you think this is? Have you ever felt lonely, even when surrounded by people?
4. Harper uses a strategy sometimes called 'dropping an anchor' to avoid a panic attack. What does dropping an anchor mean in this metaphorical sense?
5. Harper can't always explain why she feels anxious. What adjectives would you use to describe her mood or circumstances just before she drops an anchor?
6. Have you ever felt like you were in the middle of an emotional storm? Can you remember why you felt that way? What makes you feel better? How do you think dropping an anchor might help?

## ENGAGING WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Harper engages with the natural environment using all five senses. Go outside to a place you love and use the following table to document what you can sense.

What can I...

see	hear	touch	smell	taste

- which of the senses do you notice first?
  - if you had to give up one sense, which would it be and why?
  - why do you think authors write about all five senses?
2. The Wollemi Pine is sometimes called the 'dinosaur tree' or a 'living fossil' and is special because it was thought to be extinct but was discovered alive in 1994 (in one of the most significant botanical finds of this century). Why did scientists think it was extinct?
  3. Did you know plants can be listed as a Threatened Species as well as animals? Can you list three contemporary threats to Wollemi Pine? What measures are in place to ensure the Wollemi's continued survival?
  4. The Wollemi Pine lucus is based on the site in the Wollemi National Park where the trees were discovered (and it really is top secret!). Some of the trees are estimated to be at least 1000 years old. If you were a 1000-year-old tree living in your backyard (or your school grounds), what significant moments in history would you have witnessed? If trees had feelings, how do you think they would feel about these developments?

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## TIME TRAVEL

1. Have you heard of something called a temporal or time-travel paradox? If you were writing a time-travel story, what 'rules' would you put in place to ensure your characters didn't 'break the timeline'?
2. If you could visit a character (literary or historical) in the past, who would you choose and why?
3. Harper could have given the Wollemi Bed back to the op-shop the moment she discovered it could time travel. Do you think she made the right choice to keep using it? Why, or why not? What would you have done?

## QUESTIONING RETELLINGS OF HISTORY

1. All history books have authors, and all authors choose which parts of history to document, and what to say about them. What do you think makes a moment in history worth documenting?
2. Some peoples tell their stories orally or through other traditions other than writing them down. Do you think these histories are as reliable as written-down words? Why or why not?
3. What are some of the ways your family has kept its own history? How are these methods changing generation to generation? Do you think it is important to keep a family history?
4. Who chooses the people featured on a country's legal tender (coins and banknotes)? How do you think they decide who to feature? Research an instance where a coin or banknote has been updated to feature a new person. Why do you think this decision was made? A possible extension for this activity would be looking at flags.
5. Think about the most significant moments in your life and plot them on a timeline. Do they have anything in common? Does anyone share these moments with you? What do you think would need to happen for part of your life to be remembered and recorded as history?

## GROWING INDEPENDENCE

1. In some ways Harper craved independence, and in other ways she wanted to be able to rely more on her father. Can you find examples in the text to support both of these desires?
2. Growing independence often requires us to try new things, take on responsibilities and make independent decisions. Harper does all three of these throughout the story, but often not by choice. Can you point to moments where Harper had agency (control) over her growing independence?
3. Growing independence also requires building confidence in our own abilities. Is confidence the same as bravery? Use a scene from the story to support your answer.
4. What goals and priorities did Harper have at the beginning of the story? Did she achieve these by the end? Who supported Harper to meet her goals and priorities, and how?
5. By the end of the story, Harper displayed use of all of the 21st century skills: critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration and teamwork, personal and social skills, and digital literacy. Can you give examples of each?

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## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

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### TIME TRAVEL TIMELINE

Students choose a real event from Australian history (possibly the one Harper might have encountered) and create a timeline showing what happened.

Have students imagine how that event could have changed if Harper or Edie had interfered. They write a "What If?" paragraph explaining the alternate outcome.

### DESIGN A TIME-TRAVEL BED

In pairs or individually, students design a "Wollemi Time-Travel Bed," drawing it and labeling features (e.g., how it activates, safety features, timeline locators).

Present designs to the class like an inventor's pitch.

### DIARY ENTRY FROM THE PAST

Students write a diary entry from Harper's perspective after her first visit with Edie. What did she see, feel, and wonder? What clues did she notice?

A diary entry from Edie's point of view, reacting to meeting someone from the future.

### WOTO AGENT TRAINING SIMULATION

Students roleplay as WOTO trainees. Present them with historical scenarios that could be altered by time travel. They must decide: Should WOTO intervene, and how?

Or create a mock WOTO tribunal where students debate whether Harper should be punished or praised.

### GRIEF AND GROWTH REFLECTION

Facilitate a discussion or journal writing session about Harper's grief over her mother and how it shapes her decisions.

Prompt: How does Harper's personal loss affect her desire to help others or fix the past?

### TIMELINE OFFICER FIELD GUIDE

Students create a field guide for new timeline officers, explaining:

- Rules of time travel
- How to avoid changing history
- Dangers (e.g., unauthorised use of Wollemi Beds)
- Famous historical "red flags" in Australia's past

### CHARACTER TRAIT MAPS

Create a trait map for Harper. Include:

- Adjectives that describe her
- Evidence from the book
- How she changes over time

You could optionally add on a comparison of her with Maximilian or Edie.

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## KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

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### CURRICULUM V9

#### YEAR 5

##### English

**AC9E5LE01** - identify aspects of literary texts that represent details or information about historical, social and cultural contexts in literature by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors

**AC9E5LE02** - present an opinion on a literary text using specific terms about literary devices, text structures and language features, and reflect on the viewpoints of others

**AC9E5LE03** - recognise that the point of view in a literary text influences how readers interpret and respond to events and characters

**AC9E5LY05** - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning to evaluate information and ideas

**AC9E5LY01** - describe the ways in which a text reflects the time and place in which it was created

##### Science

**AC9S5U01** - examine how particular structural features and behaviours of living things enable their survival in specific habitats

**AC9S5H01** - examine why advances in science are often the result of collaboration or build on the work of others

**AC9S5H02** - investigate how scientific knowledge is used by individuals and communities to identify problems, consider responses and make decisions

##### HASS

**AC9HS5K06** - the key values and features of Australia's democracy, including elections, and the roles and responsibilities of elected representatives

**AC9HS5K07** - how citizens (members of communities) with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve a civic goal

**AC9HS5S01** - to develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems

#### YEAR 6

##### English

**AC9E6LE01** - identify responses to characters and events in literary texts, drawn from historical, social or cultural contexts, by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors

**AC9E6LY05** - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning, and to connect and compare content from

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a variety of sources

**AC9E6LA02** - understand the uses of objective and subjective language, and identify bias

**AC9E6LY01** - examine texts including media texts that represent ideas and events, and identify how they reflect the context in which they were created

## **Science**

**AC9S6U01** - investigate the physical conditions of a habitat and analyse how the growth and survival of living things is affected by changing physical conditions

**AC9S6H01** - examine why advances in science are often the result of collaboration or build on the work of others

**AC9S6H02** - investigate how scientific knowledge is used by individuals and communities to identify problems, consider responses and make decisions

## **HASS**

**AC9HS6K06** - the key institutions of Australia's system of government, how it is based on the Westminster system, and the key values and beliefs of Western democracies

**AC9HS6S01** - to develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems

## **YEAR 7**

### **English**

**AC9E7LE01** - identify and explore ideas, points of view, characters, events and/or issues in literary texts, drawn from historical, social and/or cultural contexts, by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors

**AC9E7LE02** - form an opinion about characters, settings and events in texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others' opinions and justifying a response

**AC9E7LE03** - explain the ways that literary devices and language features such as dialogue, and images are used to create character, and to influence emotions and opinions in different types of texts

**AC9E7LE05** - identify and explain the ways that characters, settings and events combine to create meaning in narratives

**AC9E7LE06** - identify and explain how literary devices create layers of meaning in texts including poetry

### **History**

**AC9HH7S01** - to develop historical questions about the past to inform historical inquiry

**AC9HH7S07** - to explain historical interpretations about significant events, individuals and groups

### **Science**

**AC9S7H01** - explain how new evidence or different perspectives can lead to changes in scientific knowledge

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**AC9S7H02** - investigate how cultural perspectives and world views influence the development of scientific knowledge

**AC9S7H03** - examine how proposed scientific responses to contemporary issues may impact on society and explore ethical, environmental, social and economic considerations

**AC9S7H04** - explore the role of science communication in informing individual viewpoints and community policies and regulations

### **Civics and Citizenship**

**AC9HC7K04** - how Australia's secular democracy and pluralist, multi-faith society draws upon diverse cultural origins, including Christian and Western heritage, distinct First Nations Australian histories and cultures, and migrant communities

**AC9HC7K05** - how values based on freedom, respect, fairness and equality of opportunity can support social cohesion and democracy within Australian society

**AC9HC7S01** - to develop questions to investigate Australia's political and legal systems, and contemporary civic issues

**AC9HC7S03** - to analyse information, data and ideas about political, legal or civic issues to identify and explain differences in perspectives and potential challenges

## **YEAR 8**

### **English**

**AC9E8LE01** - explain the ways that ideas and points of view may represent the values of individuals and groups in literary texts, drawn from historical, social and cultural contexts, by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors

**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

**AC9E8LA02** - understand how layers of meaning can be created when evaluating by using literary devices such as simile and metaphor

**AC9E8LA03** - explain how texts are structured depending on their purpose and how language features vary, recognising that some texts are hybrids that combine different genres or elements of different genres

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**AC9E8LY04** - analyse how authors organise ideas to develop and shape meaning

## **Science**

**AC9S8H01** - explain how new evidence or different perspectives can lead to changes in scientific knowledge

**AC9S8H02** - investigate how cultural perspectives and world views influence the development of scientific knowledge

**AC9S8H03** - examine how proposed scientific responses to contemporary issues may impact on society and explore ethical, environmental, social and economic considerations

**AC9S8H04** - explore the role of science communication in informing individual viewpoints and community policies and regulations

## **Civics and Citizenship**

**AC9HC8K04** - the types of law in Australia, including criminal law and civil law, and the place of First Nations Australian customary law

**AC9HC8K05** - how culture and religion may influence individuals' and groups' perceptions and expressions of citizenship and their actions as citizens

**AC9HC8S03** - to analyse information, data and ideas about political, legal or civic issues to identify and explain differences in perspectives and potential challenges

**AC9HC8S04** - to explain the methods or strategies related to making decisions about civic participation

## **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

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metaphor, metonymy, allegory, symbolism and intertextual references

### **Civics and Citizenship**

**AC9HC9S03** - to analyse information, data and ideas about political, legal or civic issues to identify and evaluate differences in perspectives and interpretations

**AC9HC9K05** - how and why individuals and groups, including community, religious and cultural groups, participate in and contribute to civic life in Australia and to global citizenship

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

**AC9HC9S01** - to develop and modify questions to investigate Australia's political and legal systems, and contemporary civic issues

### **History**

**AC9HH9K06** - different experiences and perspectives of colonisers, settlers and First Nations Australians and the impact of these experiences on changes to Australian society's ideas, beliefs and values