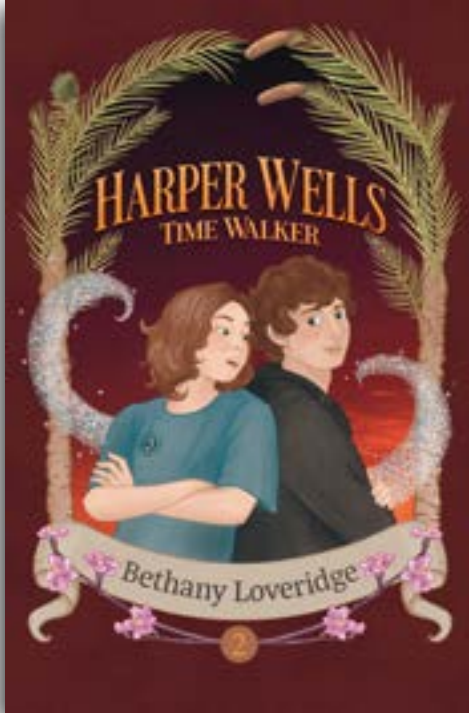

Teachers' Notes



HARPER WELLS: TIME WALKER

Bethany Loveridge

ISBN: 9781761113482

Reading level: 10-14

BOOK SUMMARY

After Harper's brother Morris has a dream about their mother, Harper realises her mum is alive, somewhere in the past. If she can use the Issue 42 Wollemi Bed to bring her mother home, could this be her chance to have a normal family?

Harper searches for clues in her mother's greenhouse and at her old office at State Museum. She can't work out why she keeps waking up in a random organ-building workshop with a pernickety girl called Constance Stone. When she's out of leads, can Harper swallow her pride and ask for help? And if she ever finds her mum, can Harper convince her to come home?

THEMES

▪ Family Relationships ▪ Australian History ▪ Importance of Loved Ones ▪

Time Travel ▪ Women's Careers ▪ Women's Education ▪ Emma Constance Stone

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Rhiza Edge, PO Box 302, Chinchilla, Queensland 4413 admin@wombatrhiza.com.au



**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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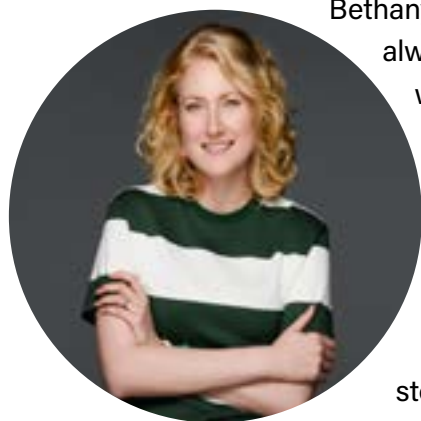


Stories you'll want to Share

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Bethany is a passionate arts educator and children's author-illustrator who has always loved storytelling and the natural world. Her past jobs include youth worker, film and television teacher, curriculum specialist and museum nerd (not the official title). You can find Bethany at 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. 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. Questions about who determines historical legacy 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 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.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GENERAL

- What genre or combination of genres would you use to describe *Harper Wells: Time Walker*? What features of the story support your answer?
- What visual elements on the cover hint at the story's combination of history, mystery and time travel? How do these elements connect to events in the novel?
- The Wollemi Pine is sometimes described as a 'living fossil' or 'dinosaur tree'. Why do you think the author chose the Wollemi Pine as the basis for the Wollemi Bed and the story's time-travel technology?
- What are some of the biggest challenges Harper faces throughout the story? Which challenge do you think has the greatest impact on her?
- Which of Harper's decisions have the biggest consequences? Do you think she makes the right choices?
- Harper often has to solve problems without knowing the whole story. What does the novel suggest about persistence, critical thinking and being willing to ask for help?
- Which character did you find most interesting or relate to? What did you learn about them through their actions, decisions and relationships with others?
- How does the novel combine real historical people and events with fictional characters and time-travel elements? Why do you think the author chose to tell the story this way?
- What personal challenge is Harper facing at the beginning of the story?
- If you woke up in a strange place, what would your immediate first reaction be?
- How does Harper manage her anxiety in times of high stress? What grounding techniques did you notice her using?

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS & THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVED ONES

1. How would you describe Harper's family at the beginning of the novel? What has caused the family to become fractured?
2. How does Harper's love for her mother motivate her actions throughout the story?
3. What are the earliest memories you have of your parents or carers? How do our earliest memories shape our expectations of family?
4. How does the disappearance of Harper's mother affect each member of the family differently? What does this say about the ways in which people experience love and loss differently from one another?
5. Harper's mother tricks her children and sends them back to their correct timeline to keep them safe, which feels like a deep emotional betrayal to Harper. Was her mother right to do this? Why or why not?
6. Consider the following statement in relation to Harper's mother's actions:

- *How do we balance a parent's desire to protect with a child's need for the truth?*

What are your thoughts?

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7. Contrast Harper's family at the start of the book with the end of the book. Even though the WOTO remains a threat and the bed is gone, in what ways is their family unit stronger?
 8. What is it like as a child to have a grieving and struggling parent? Reflect on Harper and Morris' relationship with their father and the way they cope with his grief.
 9. How does Morris support Harper throughout the story? What does their relationship reveal about the importance of siblings?
 10. How does the novel show that loving someone does not always mean being able to protect them from difficult experiences?
 11. Ximi, Harper's previous friend, betrays her. How does this betrayal contrast with the fierce loyalty shown between Harper and her brother Morris?

AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

1. Harper wakes up in a 19th-century workshop. What visual clues in the book show how everyday working and living conditions in colonial Australia differ from today?
2. The story is set before women had the right to vote or equal access to the workforce. What broad legal, financial, and social barriers did women face in late 1800s Australia that young people do not experience today?
3. How does the historical setting help Harper understand her own life and the choices available to people today?
4. If the WOTO has been secretly controlling the Australian timeline to ensure the "stability and comfort" of their own lives, whose voices and histories do you think they deliberately left out or suppressed?
5. The author mentions that much of her historical research "doesn't end up on the page." Who usually decides which historical events are taught in schools, and which ones get left out?
6. 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?
7. Some histories are passed down through oral storytelling, family traditions or other forms rather than written records. Why is it important to consider different ways of recording and sharing history?
8. Do some research on oral histories and storytelling. This tradition is very common in cultures across the globe, including First Nations Australians, and is still commonplace. Compare and contrast the culture of oral history and written history, and what positives and drawbacks there are to each.

TIME TRAVEL

1. What is the WOTO, and why is it important to the story?
2. Why does the WOTO consider controlling the timeline necessary?
3. Why does an organisation like the WOTO keep themselves and their operations secret?
4. What danger does Harper face if the WOTO finds out about her travels?
5. What makes Harper believe her mother is in the past?

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6. Consider the dangers of travelling through time in the novel. What could happen if someone interfered with historical events?
 7. Why are Timeline Officers instructed to 'Watch and Report' rather than interfere? Do you agree with this rule?
 8. If you could travel to one moment in Australian history like Harper, which moment would you choose and why? What would you hope to learn?
 9. Why might someone from the future choose to guide someone from the past cryptically instead of just telling them the answers?
 10. 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'?

WOMEN'S CAREERS

1. What barriers prevented women from entering some professions in nineteenth-century Australia?
2. How are the career opportunities available to women in the novel's historical setting different from those available to women today?
3. Why is access to education important for people who want to pursue particular careers?
4. How might limiting women's career choices have affected Australian society?
5. How have expectations about the careers women can pursue changed since the nineteenth century?
6. Consider the expectations placed on particular careers and job opportunities available for Emma Constance Stone versus the expectations that Harper might be used to. Are any careers still stereotyped today?

WOMEN'S EDUCATION

1. Why was access to higher education an important issue for women and what challenges did they face in nineteenth-century Australia?
2. How might a lack of access to education limit a person's choices and opportunities? Should equal access be given regardless of gender?
3. Why do you think some people opposed women receiving the same educational opportunities as men?
4. How does Emma Constance Stone's determination to study medicine challenge the expectations placed on women at the time?
5. Compare the educational opportunities available to Constance with those available to Harper. What has changed?
6. What opportunities do people have today because of changes in access to education?

EMMA CONSTANCE STONE

1. Before reading the novel, had you heard of Emma Constance Stone? What did you learn about her through the story?

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2. Emma Constance Stone was the first woman to practise medicine as a doctor in Australia. Why do you think her story is important to remember?
 3. In real life, Emma Constance Stone travelled to the United States to study medicine because Australian universities would not admit women to medical courses. What does this tell us about her determination?
 4. Knowing about Emma's struggles to achieve her dreams how does this reframe her "pernickety" attitude in the workshop?
 5. How does the fictional Emma Constance Stone in the novel compare with the real historical figure?
 6. Emma Constance Stone can be described as determined, intelligent and particular about how things are done. How do these characteristics help her overcome the barriers she faces?
 7. Why might an author choose to include a real historical figure as a character in a fictional time-travel story? What did you learn about Emma Constance Stone from the novel that you would like to investigate further?
 8. Why is it important to remember the achievements of women whose contributions may have been overlooked or forgotten?
 9. Who is a female historical figure that you find fascinating or interesting? Choose a figure to discuss with your classmates. Some ideas can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

PROBLEM-SOLVING

1. Harper discovers a secret room in her mother's museum office. Walk through her problem-solving process: how does she use research, interrogation, and environmental clues to outsmart a global agency like the WOTO?
2. When her initial leads run dry, Harper has to "swallow her pride and ask for help" from her brother, Morris. Why is asking for help considered a vital problem-solving skill rather than a weakness?
3. Janus gives Harper highly cryptic, mysterious hints rather than clear instructions. How does Harper learn to decode these vague clues, and what does this teach us about solving problems when we don't have all the facts?
4. Harper relies on her friend Ximi, who ultimately betrays her. How does this unexpected twist force Harper to pivot her problem-solving strategy on the fly during the book's climax?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

DIARY ENTRY

Research Emma Constance Stone's real-life achievements. Write a diary entry from Constance's perspective on the day she met a strange, out-of-time girl named Harper Wells.

THE AGENCY DEBATE

Divide the classroom into two sides representing the WOTO (World Office of Timeline Officials) and Chance. Hold a structured debate on the ethics of time alteration.

Thesis statement - *"Should history be tightly controlled and curated to ensure societal stability (WOTO), or should the timeline be left completely to free will and natural consequences (Chance)?"*

LOST STORIES

Prompted by the author's question about whose stories get kept, it is your turn to act as "History Detectives." Research a lesser-known, marginalised, or unsung hero from Australian history (especially women, Indigenous figures, or working-class individuals from the 1800/1900s). Create a one-page "Exhibits Profile" for a museum detailing why this person's story must be preserved.

TIMELINE OFFICER FIELD GUIDE

Create a field guide for new Timeline Officers, explaining:

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

THE MINDFULNESS TOOLBOX

Address the anxiety and panic attacks Harper experiences. Research and practice real-world sensory grounding techniques. Design a visual "Anxiety Anchor Card" that Harper—or any student feeling overwhelmed—could keep in their pocket.

THE BOTANICAL TIMELINE PITCH

The author used the Wollemi Pine due to its real-world history as a hidden, ancient tree found protected in a Blue Mountains gorge. Choose a different native Australian tree or plant (e.g. the Ghost Gum, Boab tree, or Banksia) and pitch it to the class as a magical vehicle for a time-travel spin-off.

You must explain the plant's unique biological traits, where it grows in Australia, and what specific era of Australian history it naturally connects to based on its ancient origins.

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CURRICULUM AREAS

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