



CLouDBURST

WILBUR
SMITH
WITH CHRIS WAKLING

EXTRACTS AND NOTES FOR KS2 TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

Suitable for: Ages 9–11

Includes: Extracts from the text + corresponding discussion questions and activities

Themes: Conservation; Adventure Writing; Teamwork; Betrayal

CONTENTS

- **EXTRACT 1: Conservation (taken from Chapter Two)**

Objectives: Identify how the issues of conservation and corruption are linked in the text; create an action plan in order to help protect the natural world and wildlife of DR Congo.

Subjects: Literacy, RSHE, Geography

- **EXTRACT 2: Adventure Writing (taken from Chapter Twenty-Two)**

Objectives: Consider the main ingredients of a great adventure story; plan and write your own exciting adventure story.

Subjects: Literacy: Reading Comprehension and Creative Writing

- **EXTRACT 3: Teamwork (taken from Chapter Sixty-Five)**

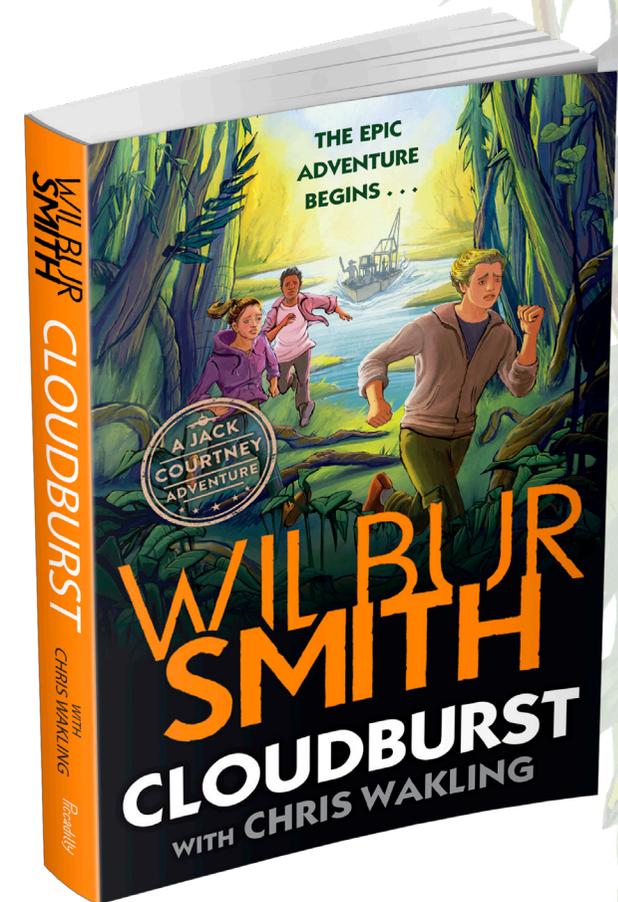
Objectives: Explore how different characters work together in order to have a positive impact in DR Congo; design a storyboard for a significant extract in the text.

Subjects: Literacy, RSHE, Design Art and Technology

- **EXTRACT 4: Betrayal (taken from Chapter Sixty-Six)**

Objectives: Act out an important scene from the book in order to explore the theme of 'betrayal'; write a reflection from the perspective of a character.

Subjects: Literacy, Drama, RSHE





ABOUT THE BOOK

When Jack Courtney's parents are abducted by mercenaries whilst the family are on a research trip, nobody seems to have any answers. Jack is pretty sure that it's got something to do with the nearby tantalum mines, but he needs to prove it. Along with Amelia and Xander, Jack must brave the jungle to save his parents. But standing in his way is a member of his own family – Caleb Courtney.

There are western gorillas, forest elephants and hippos. But there are also bandits, mercenaries and hostile tribes. The three friends will need their wits about them if they are to save, not only Jack's parents, but their own lives too.



**EXTRACT 1: CONSERVATION (Taken from Chapter Two)**

For ages there'd been nothing but trees visible below the plane. As Amelia pointed out, I was looking at the second largest rainforest in the world, after the Amazon, in a country roughly the size of western Europe, slap bang in central Africa. I couldn't help thinking that if the gorillas weren't able to sort themselves out down there the Courtney Foundation would have its work cut out to help them, but I didn't say that to Mum, obviously. I'm not a total idiot. Instead I listened as Amelia, who – true to form – had done her research, gave a mini lecture on the 'endemic corruption' the citizens of the Democratic Republic of Congo have to put up with.

'It's rife,' she said, 'as in quite possibly the most corrupt country on earth. There's more mineral wealth in the ground here than just about anywhere else, and yet the country's people are among the world's poorest. Even those who do the digging for the gold, cobalt and tantalum – which is used in mobile phones – barely see any of what it's worth. Foreign companies from China and the West bribe corrupt officials, buy up what's dug out for a pittance, sell it overseas and pocket the profit. Unless the government steps up properly – which is what the vote your folks are here to influence is all about – the country will have lost ninety-five per cent of its rainforest within the next eight years. Add in the militia, who've turned much of the country into a war zone, and the deforestation for charcoal, and the threat to wildlife from poachers . . .'

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Have you or anyone you know ever been to DR Congo or another part of Africa? What was it like?
- How big is the Congo Rainforest? What environmental threats does DR Congo face?
- Why are Jack and his friends travelling to DR Congo as part of the Courtney Foundation? What do they want to do?
- Amelia uses the phrase, 'endemic corruption'. What do you think this means? Note down a definition.
- What does the word 'conservation' mean? How is it connected to the issue of corruption in DR Congo?



ACTIVITY: CONSERVATION ACTION PLAN Subjects: Literacy, RSHE, Geography

- First of all, get into pairs; you are going to work together closely on this task.
- Congratulations! The Courtney Foundation needs some help. You have been chosen and given funding to create your own Foundation to help to conserve the wildlife of DR Congo and to challenge corruption. Your Foundation will need a name, so spend a minute or so coming up with one together.
- Go through the extract from Cloudburst again, highlighting some of the main problems in DR Congo that Amelia identifies.
- Next, use the 'Conservation Action Plan' worksheet to identify some of the main environmental and corruption issues in DR Congo that are raised in the text. Note: Think about the whole of the story now, not just Amelia's extract! Work with your partner to fill in the table explaining what the problems are, and what needs to be done in order to help protect the natural world and wildlife.
- As a class, talk through your action plans. In a different coloured pen, add in any good points that you might have missed.





NAME OF FOUNDATION AND ITS MEMBERS

<p>PROBLEM</p> <p>What is it? Give examples of how it affects the natural world and wildlife.</p>	<p>ACTION</p> <p>What needs to be done?</p>	<p>IMPACT</p> <p>How will your actions make a difference?</p>

**EXTRACT 2: ADVENTURE WRITING (Taken from Chapter Twenty-Two)**

A crashing sound cut off his answer. The foliage behind the troop shook and exploded. A huge gorilla, almost twice the size of the next biggest, shot headlong into the clearing. His back was a slab of muscle dusted in silver fur. It shimmered as he jockeyed sideways, carrying the momentum of a small car. He thumped the ground in front of him then rocked back on his haunches and beat his chest, making an astonishing percussive sound like two coconut halves whacked together. It echoed over the noise of the forest. This was Spenser. I couldn't believe the size of him. The other gorillas had seemed so solid and powerful, but this silverback dwarfed them. Without realising I'd done it, I'd copied Patience and shrunk low to the ground in the face of his display. Her head was bowed. I looked at my hands in my lap. They were quivering.

Yet Caleb was still standing beside me, arms folded across his chest. 'It's just for show,' he explained to Amelia, suddenly an expert, though his voice sounded a bit thin. 'Nothing to worry about.'

In a low murmur Innocent said, 'He's upset. We must be respectful.'

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why is this such a significant point in the story? What happens next?
- What do you think each of the characters is feeling and why?
- Which words or phrases in the extract suggest that the group are in danger? Give examples.
- What other threats exist in the text? Why does this make DR Congo a great setting for an adventure?
- Why does adventure writing need a quest or mission at the heart of it? What is Jack's quest or mission?



ACTIVITY: MY ADVENTURE Subjects: Literacy: Reading Comprehension and Creative Writing

- Take a moment to think about other adventure books or films that you know of. As a class, discuss what makes a good adventure story, then individually, summarise these ideas into a list of ‘Top Ten Adventure Writing Ingredients’ that you think are really important. Note: A few key words have been filled in to help you get started!

Top Ten Adventure Writing Ingredients

1. A **mission** or **quest** that is
2. **Characters** who are
3. A **setting** that is
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.



- You are now going to write your own short adventure story! Use your ‘Top Ten’ list to plan your ideas out carefully making sure that you include all the right ingredients to create a story that is out of the ordinary.
- When you have completed your plan, have a go at writing as much of your story as you can; however, make sure you don’t rush it! Keep referring back to the Cloudburst extract to see how the authors create tension and a sense of danger. Try to keep this in mind when writing.
- When your time is up, swap your story with a partner and read each other’s work. Remember, we are looking for quality not quantity, so even if your partner hasn’t finished his/her story, give them positive feedback based upon what they have done. You can always finish your piece for homework or in another creative writing lesson!



EXTRACT 3: TEAMWORK (Taken from Chapter Sixty-Five)

'This is Mr Mukwege,' Amelia answered, as if that should have been obvious. 'He's the chairman of the mining and conservation committee, and he's who we gave Jack's evidence to.'

'I told these ... children to wait for me,' he said, smiling. 'Possibly I should have guessed that having demonstrated such resourcefulness to date they might find it hard to wait around for help freeing you. So here I am, too late.' To me he said, 'You mentioned guards. What have you done with them?'

'They'd gone,' I shrugged.

'How strange.'

'Not really,' said Amelia. 'If the motive was to keep Nicholas and Janine away from the environmental summit until the conservation vote had passed, it makes sense to abandon the kidnapping about now.' Mum was looking at Mukwege in open awe, while Dad's face was closed, if anything in distaste. 'This evidence of Jack's,' Mum said. 'Was it any help?'

Mukwege chose his words carefully, delivering them from on high: 'It was profoundly influential, yes. I came as much to offer thanks as I did to help.'

'So,' said Mum tentatively. 'The vote went the right way.'

'It did.'

Mum gasped and took a little step sideways. I put an arm around her shoulders. She looked up at me.

'By which you mean?' said Dad.

His voice molasses, Mukwege replied. 'There will be no further mining in the country's national parks, and a full investigation into the use of child labour in the industry is underway.'

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What 'evidence' does Jack and his friends forward to Mr Mukwege? What impact does this have?
- What characterises a great team? Which personal characteristics make someone a good team player?
- How do Amelia, Xander, and Caleb help Jack in his quest(s)? Summarise their role(s).
- Who else contributes towards making a better future for the people, natural world, and wildlife of DR Congo? What action do they take?
- What does Cloudburst suggest about teamwork and friendship?

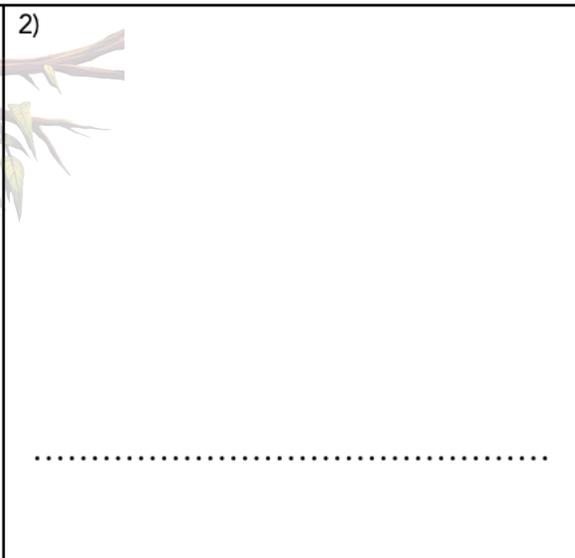
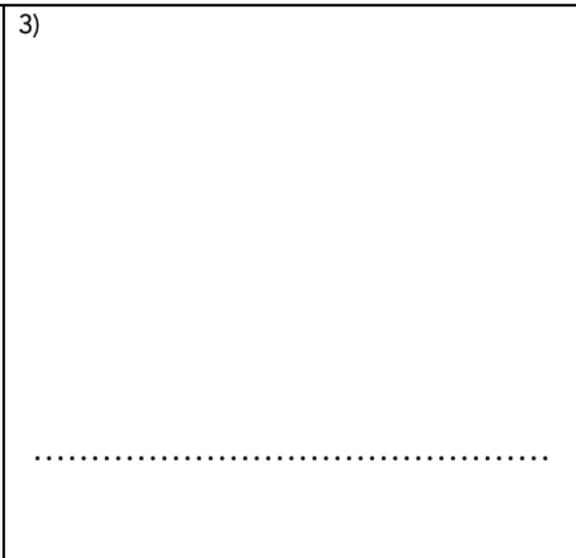
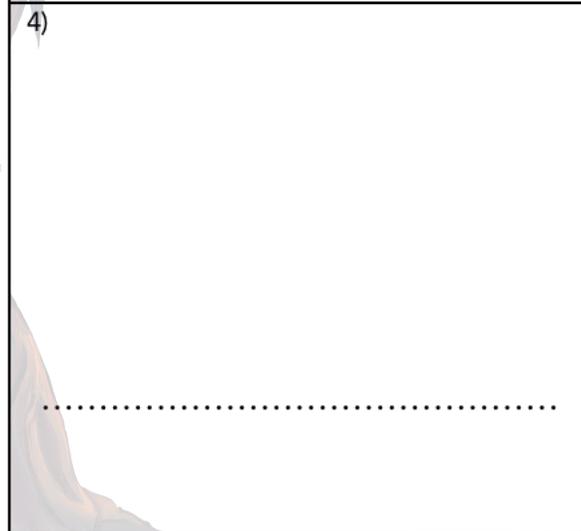
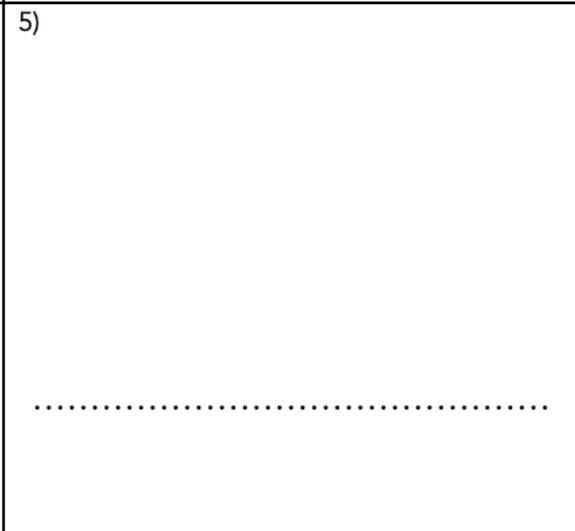
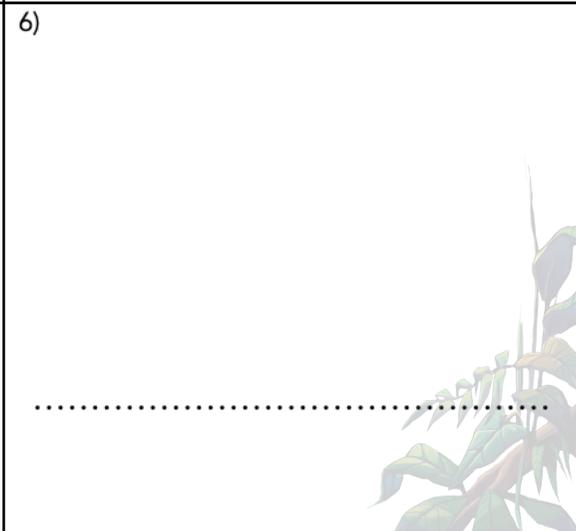
ACTIVITY: TEAMWORK STORYBOARD Subjects: Literacy, RSHE, Design Art and Technology

- Thinking back over all the examples of togetherness and friendship in the story, try to pick one that you think is the greatest example of teamwork. Find the relevant extract in the text.
- Using your extract and the discussions you've had as a class, create a storyboard for this significant scene making it as colourful and detailed as possible. Beneath each drawing, write a line or two describing what is taking place and how this teamwork helps Jack to fulfil his mission(s).





TEAMWORK STORYBOARD

1) 	2) 	3) 
4) 	5) 	6) 

EXTRACT 4: BETRAYAL (Taken from Chapter Sixty-Six)

His reserve was supposed to be dismissive, but I could see the lie behind it. So could Mum. With one quick step she arrived in front of Dad and struck him across the face. The slap sounded like the crack of a whipped towel. It stunned Dad. He did nothing in response. Just swayed there for a moment before turning his gaze upon me. He'd never looked at me that way before. The air in my lungs turned to ice before him. No words could have spelled out his hatred as plainly.

'Yup,' said Langdon. 'We should have kept the lot of them in the jungle. Caleb, too. But he had to mess that up with his stupid gorilla baiting. Still, we could simply have rounded them up on their return, as I suggested, even chucked them in the same tank as you.' He was slurring, drunk, happy to repeat himself. 'But no, no, no. Your boy was too witless to piece anything together, you insisted. Well someone pieced it together for him, and he turned Caleb against me while he was at it, and now the whole goddamn operation is blown.'

'From the very beginning,' said Mum. 'The fake storm, the robbery at the airport, the missed meetings. Kidnapping. All of it orchestrated, bought, for one purpose: to undermine me.'

'You'll get over it,' Dad hissed.

'My own husband,' whispered Mum.

'My own father,' I said.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- What does the word 'betrayal' mean? Can you think of any synonyms for this word?
- Who has betrayed Jack and his mother in this extract and why?
- How do you think the truth behind the kidnapping might affect Jack? What other familial experiences have affected him?
- Who else has been betrayed in the text? How does it feel to be betrayed and why can it be hard to forgive?
- Where do you think Jack's next adventure will be? What has he learnt from his experiences in DR Congo?



ACTIVITY: FREEZE FRAME Subjects: Literacy, Drama, RSHE

- In groups, re-enact the scene from the extract. The main roles should include: Jack, Mum, Dad, and Langdon. Stop at four separate points in the performance (once for each character) asking that person:
 - How are you **feeling** at this point in the text?
 - How does the theme of **betrayal** link to your character?
 - What have you **learnt** about yourself over the course of the story?
 - If you could go back in time would you **change** any of your actions?
- Finally, when you have acted out this scene and each character has experienced their own freeze frame and questions, write a reflection from the perspective of one of the characters. Try to explore the emotional and physical journeys your character has gone through in the story, keeping the four bullet points as well as the notion of betrayal in mind!



**The Wilbur & Niso Smith Foundation run an annual
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12-15: 1500-5000 words

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