

## Lesson Plan

### Level 2



## The New Zealand File Richard MacAndrew

### Aims

- to encourage students to try some creative writing
- to allow students to speculate about the main character in the book
- to stimulate students to read the book

1. Tell students the title of the book – *The New Zealand File* – and its genre – a thriller. Discuss as a class what students expect from a thriller.

**Possible answer:** A fast-paced story with lots of action, excitement, suspense and skilful plotting that often involves a resourceful hero trying to stop a bad, and usually more powerful, character from carrying out a crime.

Now tell students that the main character in the book is Ian Munro, a British spy. Make sure students know what a spy is (a person who works for his/her government to get secret information about another, usually hostile, country). Ask students what other spy stories or films they know of and write their suggestions on the board. They should mention James Bond – if not, give them a prompt!

2. Give students sticky notes or pieces of paper and divide them into pairs or small groups. Ask them to discuss what springs to mind when they think of James Bond and to write their ideas on the sticky notes or pieces of paper. Feedback to the whole class and then ask students to group their notes together into categories. (It does not matter if some words or ideas are repeated.) For example, there is likely to be a film title category, an actor category, a transport category, etc. Talk through these categories and refer back to your definition of a spy's work to decide whether students think James Bond is realistic or not.
3. Ask students to read Extract 1, which shows Ian Munro at work as a spy. Discuss as a class what happens in the extract. Now ask students to discuss – either as a class or in pairs or small groups – how the extract could be made more

like a scene from a James Bond film. Draw on the lists in the categories and encourage students to really think big – e.g. they might want to include divers, a car that can drive from the beach into the seas, helicopters with guns, women in bikinis, and so on.

**Optional extra:** If time allows, students could have a go at writing this scene.

4. Ask students to continue writing at the end of this scene. What happens next? Students can share these pieces of written work with the whole class or in small groups.
5. Ask students to read Extract 2, in which Munro kills a man. Tell them to invent some information about this man, e.g. what is his name? How old is he? Where does he come from? Who are his family? What's his favourite hobby? They should make notes. Now ask for volunteers to 'hot-seat' their character – i.e. they answer questions from the class as if they are the character.
 

**Optional extra:** Students could rewrite the extract – up until the point the man gets killed – in the first person, from the man's point of view. They should use the present tense and should tell and show us what the man is thinking and feeling.
6. Based on Extract 2, ask students what they think of Munro's character. Do they think that (a) he kills easily, or that (b) deep down he is troubled about killing people? Students then rewrite the end of the scene showing either (a) or (b) in their writing.
7. Ask students to read Extract 3 and talk about what is happening in the extract. (Munro is joined at a café by an attractive blonde nurse, Lisa Jardine. He stops working so she won't see what he's doing, but he enjoys talking to her. They laugh and they are attracted to each other. Lisa invites Munro back to her flat.) Refer back to James Bond once again. Is this scene similar to one in a James Bond film? (They are likely to think it is, at least slightly, since James Bond always gets the girl.)

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8. Point out the section in the extract that has reported speech (from 'Munro asked her about her job' to '(they were good to eat)'). Elicit what students think reported speech is (the writer tells us what was said instead of writing out the dialogue word for word (direct speech)). Why do students think writers sometimes use reported speech instead of direct speech? (To save time, so as not to slow down the action, etc.) Now ask students to rewrite this part of the extract in direct speech. Students can share some of these pieces of writing with the whole class. Ask them which version they think works best here, direct or reported speech.

9. Ask students to read Extract 4, in which Munro is thinking about why he likes his job. Discuss what is meant by 'For those moments when life felt real'.

**Suggested answer:** The times in Munro's life he enjoys the most, when he feels truly alive.

Now elicit which events or activities students think Munro is referring to immediately after this sentence fragment.

**Possible answers:** 'waiting for a cloud to move across the moon' – waiting until it is dark enough

to move and not be seen; 'escaping through the roof of a strange house' – getting away from men who are 'after' him by climbing up into someone's roof; 'meeting smiling blue eyes in an early-morning café' – meeting attractive women when you don't expect to; 'looking into the face of danger and not turning away' – doing what he has to do to get his job done, no matter how dangerous it is.

10. Ask students to think about the opinion of Munro's character they had in Exercise 6. After reading Extracts 3 and 4, have their opinions on Munro changed, or stayed the same? Working in pairs, ask students to imagine Munro's home life. For example, what family do they think he has if any? Where do they think he lives? What is the inside of his home like? What would he do at the weekend if he weren't working? Students now feedback to one or two other pairs or to the whole class. How similar are their views on Munro at home?
11. If there are enough copies of *The New Zealand File* to go round, hand them out and ask students to start reading.

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### Extract 1

Munro stood up and looked to the left and the right. The beach was empty. He walked down to the boat.

‘Longstaffe?’ he asked quietly.

‘Yes,’ the man replied. ‘Good to see you, Munro.’

Longstaffe was wearing dark trousers and a thick dark sweater under a dark jacket. He was carrying a large bag.

Munro took the bag from him.

‘Come on,’ he said. ‘Let’s get going.’

Longstaffe waved his thanks to the other man and the boat turned back to the open sea.

Munro and Longstaffe started up the beach. As they got to the long grass, there was the sound of a gun and Longstaffe fell to the ground. Munro went down next to him fast. He put his head up carefully and looked round to see who was shooting. He heard the gun again and something shot through the grass near his head. Quickly he put his head down again.

He looked at Longstaffe. There was blood coming from the side of his mouth. He did not look good.

‘Go,’ said Longstaffe. ‘You go – but take this.’ He tried to put his left hand in his pocket, but couldn’t.

‘Pocket,’ he said.

Munro put his hand into the pocket of Longstaffe’s jacket and pulled out a small white box. He looked inside. There was a picture card.

‘Picture card,’ said Longstaffe. He was finding it difficult to speak. ‘Important. Penguin. One-eyed penguin.’

### Extract 2

Munro ran to the corner and looked along Dundas Street. He was just in time. There was a small street off to the left and the man was turning into it. Munro followed quickly. He turned left after the man. It was

a short street with no way out. The man wasn’t there. Munro walked along the street looking at the doors. Then he heard a noise behind him. He turned. The man was coming out of a door on Munro’s left. He had a knife in his hand.

‘You’re not so clever after all, are you?’ he said. The man spoke English, but it wasn’t his first language. Munro couldn’t decide where he was from. Eastern Europe, Russia, maybe? The man’s eyes were cold. He moved easily. ‘He likes fighting with a knife,’ thought Munro. Munro looked round for help – a piece of wood, anything. Nothing. Slowly the man came closer and closer. Munro watched him carefully, arms out ready. The man moved quickly. His knife hand came out fast, but Munro was faster. He moved outside the man’s arm; his right hand took the man’s wrist, his left took the man’s elbow. He pulled with his right and pushed hard with his left. The knife fell. There was a breaking noise from the man’s elbow. He cried out loudly.

Munro pushed the man away. The man turned, his right arm by his side. Munro hit him once hard on the neck with the side of his hand. The man went down. His head hit the ground, his eyes closed. Munro put a hand on the man’s neck. He was dead. Quickly Munro looked through the man’s pockets. Money, credit cards in the name of Mr A. K. Krikorian, but nothing else no bills or letters, no passport.

Munro pulled the man’s body to the side of the street so it was difficult to see. Then he walked back and out onto Dundas Street.

### Extract 3

A young woman with short blonde hair, wearing a nurse’s uniform under a dark blue jacket, stood in front of him. She had a cup of coffee in her hand.

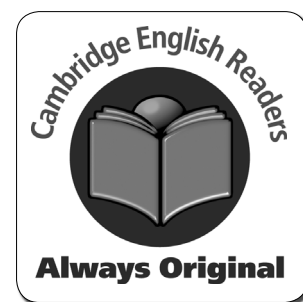
‘There’s nowhere else to sit,’ she explained. ‘Can I sit here?’

‘Sure,’ said Munro.

The woman put her coffee on the table and sat down. Munro shut down his computer and closed it.

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'Don't stop because of me,' said the woman.

'That's OK,' said Munro. 'It wasn't important.'

The woman smiled at him. She had friendly blue eyes and a nice smile.

'On holiday?' she asked.

'Something like that,' replied Munro.

The woman smiled again.

'Something like that?' she asked, her eyes still smiling. 'Well, for someone who's on holiday, you look very tired.'

'You look tired, too,' said Munro, beginning to enjoy talking to her.

'Well, as you can see, I'm a nurse,' she said, 'and I've just finished work.' She put her head a little to one side. 'What do you do?'

Munro moved a little closer to her and said quietly, 'I catch penguins. It's best to do it at night.'

The woman laughed.

Munro asked her about her job (working in a small hospital), about Wanaka (lovely place), and about where she was from (Auckland – on New Zealand's North Island and the largest town in the country).

She asked him if it was difficult to catch penguins (quite), why it was best to do it at night (they were asleep) and why he did it (they were good to eat).

They laughed. Then the woman put out a hand.

'Lisa,' she said. 'Lisa Jardine.'

Munro took her hand.

'Ian Munro,' he said. 'Nice to meet you.'

Lisa Jardine finished her coffee.

'Are you staying in Wanaka?' she asked.

'I'm not really staying anywhere at the moment,' said Munro. 'I've only just arrived here.'

'Well, my flat's just round the corner,' she said, looking him in the eye. 'I'm sure I can find somewhere for you to sleep.'

### Extract 4

It was dangerous for him, Munro, but that was why he did this job. For those moments when life felt real: waiting for a cloud to move across the moon, escaping through the roof of a strange house, meeting smiling blue eyes in an early-morning café, looking into the face of danger and not turning away. Today he was lucky. Lucky and alive. The next job could be different.