

# Walker Books Classroom Ideas



## Ash Rover: Keeper of the Phoenix (Book 1)

Aleesah Darlison  
ISBN: 9781922179029  
ARRP: \$14.95  
NZRRP: \$16.99  
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\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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## Outline:

Ash Rover wants to do something important with his life. When he discovers a phoenix egg, he gets his wish. But the magical bird brings trouble to Ash's village. Soon Ash is not only the unlikely Keeper of the Phoenix, he is also on a desperate quest to save his family and friends.

Can Ash rescue the village and break the evil wizard's spell in time?

## Author Information:

Aleesah Darlison writes picture books and novels for children and reviews books for *The Sun Herald*. Her previous Walker titles include the Unicorn Riders series (illustrated by Jill Brailsford) and *I Dare You*, part of the Lightning Strikes series. When Aleesah isn't chasing her writing rainbow, she's usually looking after her three very energetic children and her Jack Russell, Floyd.

## How to use these notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

### These notes are for:

- Primary years 3-6
- Ages 8+

### Key Learning Areas:

- English

### Example of:

- Novel
- Fantasy genre

### Themes/ Ideas:

- Action
- Adventure
- Friendship
- Fantasy
- Mythical creatures

### National Curriculum Focus:\*

English content descriptions include:

Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ACELA1476	ACELA1498	ACELA1502	ACELA1525
ACELT1601	ACELT1605	ACELT1610	ACELT1614
ACELT1594	ACELT1794	ACELT1798	ACELT1800
ACELT1791	ACELT1607	ACELT1609	ACELT1613
ACELT1599	ACELY1694	ACELT1608	ACELT1617
ACELT1600	ACELY1687	ACELT1612	ACELY1709
ACELY1675	ACELY1690	ACELY1704	ACELT1801
ACELY1682			
ACELY1676			

\*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.



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## Aleesah Darlison on *Ash Rover: Keeper of the Phoenix (Book 1)*

I've always loved reading fantasy stories and been fascinated with fantasy creatures. As a kid I had loads of books with illustrations and amazing facts about all sorts of creatures, which I'd pore over for hours on end. Now, as an adult and an author, it's the absolute best fun bringing these classic fantasy creatures to life in my stories and also creating my own unique fantasy creatures.

Ash's character and story came to me in a flash of inspiration late one night when I was holidaying in the Blue Mountains. Completely unbidden, ideas for a new fantasy adventure story began running through my mind. Ideas kept building and building: characters, names, plots and sub-plots, settings, snatches of dialogue. My imagination was so alive with these things, I couldn't sleep so I decided to get up and write everything down in my notebook before I lost it all. I wrote for about four or five hours through the night and into the early hours of the morning. It all came together so clearly.

When I returned home, I sat down at my computer to begin writing *Ash Rover*. It didn't take long to get that first draft out, but as every good author knows, there was still plenty of editing required afterwards to polish the story ready for publication.

I wrote *Ash Rover* for pure enjoyment of the fantasy adventure genre. My three key ingredients are magic, mystery and humour. I really hope young readers relate to my main characters Ash, Taine and Rhyll. They're gutsy, loyal, funny, tenacious and resourceful. Sometimes they're scared. Sometimes they make mistakes. They're far from perfect, but they're always supportive of each other and try their best.

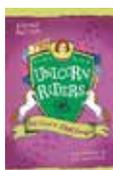
My original story has now grown into a three-book series, starting with *Ash Rover: Keeper of the Phoenix*. Book 2 will be *Ash Rover: Taker of the Kraken* and Book 3 will be *Ash Rover: Sentry to the Centaurs*. So, stay tuned, there are still lots of fun adventures to come!



### Other books by Aleesah Darlison



**Unicorn Riders Book 1:  
Quinn's Riddles**  
9781921529979  
AU\$9.95/NZ\$11.99



**Unicorn Riders Book 2:  
Willow's Challenge**  
9781921529986  
AU\$9.95/NZ\$11.99



**Unicorn Riders Book 3:  
Krystal's Choice**  
9781921529993  
AU\$9.95/NZ\$11.99



**Unicorn Riders Book 4:  
Ellabeth's Test**  
9781921720000  
AU\$9.95/NZ\$11.99



**Unicorn Riders Book 5:  
Quinn's Truth**  
9781921720017  
AU\$9.95/NZ\$11.99



**Unicorn Riders Book 6:  
Willow's Victory**  
9781921720024  
AU\$9.95/NZ\$11.99



**Unicorn Riders Book 7:  
Krystal's Charge**  
9781922077653  
AU\$9.95/NZ\$11.99



**Unicorn Riders Book 8:  
Ellabeth's Light**  
9781922077660  
AU\$9.95/NZ\$11.99



**Lightning Strikes:  
I Dare You**  
9781921977510  
AU\$12.95/NZ\$15.99



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas

## Discussion Questions and Activities

Before reading *Ash Rover: Keeper of the Phoenix*, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author
- The publisher
- The blurb

Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end?

What is a genre? What genre is this novel? In small groups, make a mind map of some of the characteristics of the fantasy genre. Consider settings, characters, events and themes. In what ways does *Ash Rover: Keeper of the Phoenix* resemble a typical fantasy novel? How is it different?

Where is this novel set? Is it a real place? How is it similar or different to where you live?

What is the purpose of this novel (i.e. to entertain, to inform or to persuade)? How can you tell? Write a paragraph about the novel using only informative language that is unbiased. Write another paragraph using persuasive language to convince the reader to share your opinion of the novel.

What are the themes in this novel? As a class or in small groups identify and list the themes. Individually write a statement of belief about each theme.

Identify the orientation, complication and resolution of the story. Ask students to identify this structure in other books or movies. As a class, discuss how these narrative features give meaning to stories.

Keep a "Vocab Journal" while reading the novel. Make a note of any words you come across that are unfamiliar and look up their meaning. Also keep track of any words or phrases that you particularly like and write a note next to each explaining why you like that word/phrase.

Write a character study on Ash, Taine, Rhyll and Gwaam. Draw an illustration of each of them and list their strengths, weaknesses and skills.

Why did the author include a prologue? What is the purpose of a prologue? How would the book be different without it?

What is a quest? Can you think of any other books that feature a quest? How are they similar or different?

Create a comic strip of a key scene from the novel.

Research phoenixes online or in your school library. What are some different stories/legends about them? Discuss how the stories are similar and how they are different.

What are Ash's motivations for accepting Lady Belgrave's quest? Were his motivations in Gwaam's best interests or his own?

In small groups, explain how Ash demonstrates the following character traits in the novel:

- Resourcefulness
- Courage
- Persistence
- Compassion
- Independence

Write a manual to give to new Phoenix Keepers outlining their responsibilities and care instructions.

What is it called when every animal of a species dies? What can cause this? What are some animals this has happened to? Research one of these animals to discover the reason they died out and what could have been done to prevent it.

Write another chapter that could fit into the novel where Ash, Taine, Rhyll and Gwaam meet another fantasy creature in the forest.

Research author Aleesah Darlison. What other books has she written? Are her other books similar or different to *Ash Rover: Keeper of the Phoenix*?

Write a book report on *Ash Rover: Keeper of the Phoenix* stating what you liked/disliked about the book, who you think would enjoy the book and mention any books that it is similar to. Use some quotes from the book to illustrate your statements. Create a class blog or wiki to post your reviews and share them with other students. You can use this blog to post book reviews of any other book you read as a class or on your own. You can use Blogspot ([www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)) or Wordpress (<http://wordpress.com/>) to create your class blog. Walker Books loves reading book reviews, so send yours to [educationwba@walkerbooks.com.au](mailto:educationwba@walkerbooks.com.au).

Draw a map of Ash's journey from Icamore to Zadoc's castle. Point out where Ash and his companions meet the characters along the way.

Imagine that a movie was being made of *Ash Rover: Keeper of the Phoenix*. In small groups, create a soundtrack to accompany some of the key scenes, thinking particularly about the mood you want to convey. You could either make a compilation of existing songs or compose your own musical pieces. Present your soundtrack to the class, explaining why you have chosen the pieces you have.