

**Teachers' Notes**  
**by Heather Zubek**

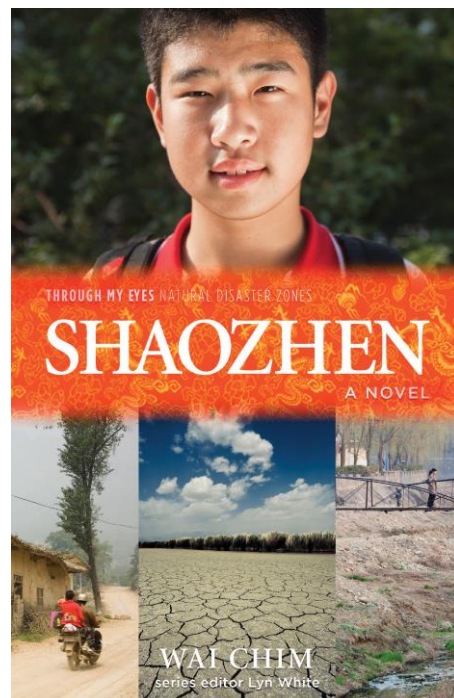
**Shaozhen: Through My Eyes**  
**- Natural Disaster Zones**

by  
**Wai Chim**  
Series editor: Lyn White

ISBN 9781760113766  
Recommended for ages 11-14 yrs

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83 Alexander Street  
Crows Nest, Sydney  
NSW 2065  
Australia

PO Box 8500  
St Leonards  
NSW 1590  
Australia

ph: (61 2) 8425 0100  
fax: (61 2) 9906 2218

[info@allenandunwin.com](mailto:info@allenandunwin.com)  
[www.allenandunwin.com](http://www.allenandunwin.com)

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## INTRODUCTION

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*Shaozhen* is the second book in the Through My Eyes – Natural Disaster Zones series. The realistic historical fiction series aims to pay tribute to the inspiring courage and resilience of children, who are often the most vulnerable in post-disaster periods. Four inspirational stories give insight into environment, culture and identity through one child's eyes.

[www.throughmyeyesbooks.com.au](http://www.throughmyeyesbooks.com.au)

### Advisory Note

There are children in our schools for whom the themes and events depicted in *Shaozhen* will be all too real. Where drought is not considered an immediate disaster, its long-term effects are. The theme of the 'left-behind children' could also trigger strong emotions in some children. Teachers are encouraged to read the text before sharing it with their class. They are also encouraged to monitor student reactions and respond appropriately.

Most of the webpage links in these notes are to educational sites. However, some are to news sites with changing news stories and ads in sidebars. It is recommended that these sites be previewed by the teacher *on the day students will view them*: possibly disturbing or inappropriate material may be headlined in the sidebar for that day.

### SYNOPSIS

*Shaozhen* by Wai Chim is based on the true story of the water shortages and social implications of the 2014 drought in Henan, China.

The story opens in 2014 with fourteen-year old Shaozhen walking home from school for the summer holidays. The reader is introduced to the character's interests and fears as he makes his way through his small farming village, Hongsha. Shaozhen is pleased to see his mother and grandmother Nainai but his happiness is short lived as his mother tells him that she must move to the city to work with his father. The drought conditions are causing problems for the farmers and many workers are heading to the city to earn money. The migrant workers are unable to take their children to the cities because of the government's residential system that denies access to education and health care to migrant workers.

Shaozhen's mother leaves and he becomes a farm labourer. With the drought conditions getting worse, he and Yangyang, a young girl his family adopted, must search for water. Work on the farm is hard and so is the search for water and the feisty Yangyang tries his patience. Shaozhen's only release from his new life is a game of basketball but he has a sporting rival in Tingming who becomes his nemesis. One night the new Village Secretary Xian, joins Shaozhen and his friends in a game of basketball. He has many ideas for a new Hongsha and Shaozhen at last sees some hope.

A climactic episode sees Shaozhen caught in a landslide as he searches the mountains for water. Injured, he hurries down the mountain fearful that his family and the entire village could be wiped out. Everyone is safe—everyone except his young friend Xiaoping. The villagers go in search of the toddler but it is Shaozhen who finds him safe with a strange elderly man called Shen who lives alone on the mountain.

The water situation becomes dire when, as a result of the landslide, the spring that provides water for the village is blocked. People are turning to the government for help. It has been arranged that water is trucked to a nearby town. The villagers must carry buckets many miles each day. People from all over the region are queuing up for water. They are also told that they are only allowed two buckets of water per family.

When queuing for water one day Nainai collapses and, in helping her, Shaozhen moves away from his buckets of water. He returns to find someone is taking them. A confrontation ensues and unexpectedly Tingming turns up to help. Shaozhen gets his water and they all make their way home.

Shaozhen and Yangyang continue to walk each day to the neighbouring town for water. Things take a turn for the worse when Nainai has a fall at home. Xian uses his own transport to take Nainai into the local hospital where it is thought she may have a broken hip. Shaozhen receives a letter from his mother but she is unable to send any money to help her children.

One morning Shaozhen meets Shen at the water station. Shen is very bitter about the Party and the village of Hongsha but Shaozhen is confused. Shaozhen and Yangyang work together to try to save some of the family's failing crops.

Nainai finally returns home but there is further bad news for Shaozhen – his friend Kang is also moving to the city for work.

Shaozhen soon realises the elderly villagers cannot make the daily journey with their water buckets. He devises a water-carrying and delivery plan and enlists the help of his friend Chun who has a motorcycle. To Shaozhen's surprise, Tingming finds out about the plan and offers his help as do many of the village teenagers. Xian donates his village truck and Shaozhen is hailed as a local hero.

Despite the drought, the villagers all band together to harvest the meagre crop. A wonderful celebration is enjoyed and Xian's plan for a bigger, better village is accepted by everyone. The revitalisation of Hongsha may mean Shaozhen can remain in the village, care for Nainai and attend senior school. The day after the harvest, the long-awaited rains arrive.

*Shaozhen* is an excellent text for exploring relevant contemporary themes, including:

- Disaster resilience and survival
- Courage in the face of danger and adversity
- Importance of friendship and community
- Family and culture
- Ethics in government and business
- Civic action, methods for bringing about change
- Environmental sustainability and global warming

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## LINKS TO THE CURRICULUM

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*Shaozhen* is especially suitable for study in the English learning area Years 6 – 9. It supports Australian Curriculum Content Descriptions for Year 7 and Year 8 English.

The text is highly relevant for integrated learning across learning areas such as HASS – Geography and History, Languages (Chinese) and the Cross-curriculum priorities of Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia and Sustainability. The exploration of *Shaozhen* supports engagement with the General capabilities of Intercultural Understanding, Personal and Social Capability, Ethical Understanding and Critical and Creative Thinking.

*Shaozhen* can be studied as a class text and is perfect for a tuning-in resource for Inquiry Units across a range of learning areas. It is also extremely suitable for use in literature circles and guided reading in the upper primary setting and for inclusion on suggested reading lists for lower secondary classes.

More specifically, the activities in these teachers notes provide the opportunity to address the following content descriptions for Years 6, 7 and 8.

**Note:** a sample only is provided. Cross-curriculum Priorities and General capabilities are listed below the following tables.

### Year 6 English

Language	Literature	Literacy
Understand that strategies for interaction become more complex and demanding as levels of formality and social distance increase (ACELA1516)	Make connections between students’ own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1613)	Participate in and contribute to discussions, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions (ACELY1709)
Investigate how vocabulary choices, including evaluative language can express shades of meaning, feeling and opinion (ACELA1525)	Identify and explain how choices in language, for example modality, emphasis, repetition and metaphor, influence personal response to different texts (ACELT1615)	Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content and multimodal elements for defined audiences and purposes, making appropriate choices for modality and emphasis (ACELY1710)
	Create literary texts that adapt or combine aspects of texts students have experienced in innovative ways (ACELT1618)	Analyse how text structures and language features work together to meet the purpose of a text (ACELY1711)
	Experiment with text structures and language features and their effects in creating literary texts, for example, using imagery, sentence variation, metaphor and word choice (ACELT1800)	Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, choosing and experimenting with text structures, language features, images and digital resources appropriate to purpose and audience (ACELY1714)

## Year 6 History and Social Studies (HASS)

Inquiry and Skills
<p>Locate and collect relevant information and data from primary sources and secondary sources (ACHASSI123)</p> <p>Sequence information about people’s lives, events, developments and phenomena using a variety of methods including timelines (ACHASSI125)</p> <p>Examine different viewpoints on actions, events, issues and phenomena in the past and present (ACHASSI127)</p>
History – Level Description
<p>Students investigate the importance of rights and responsibilities and informed decision-making, at the personal level of consumption and civic participation, and at the national level through studies of economic, ecological and government processes and systems. <b>In particular</b>, students examine Asia’s natural, demographic and cultural diversity, with opportunities to understand their connections to Asian environments. These studies enable students to understand how they are interconnected with diverse people and places across the globe.</p>
Geography – Knowledge and Understanding
<p>The content in the geography sub-strand provides opportunities to develop students’ understanding of <b>place, space, environment, interconnection</b> and <b>change</b>. Students explore the diverse environments, peoples and cultures within the Asia region and at a global level (space, place, environment) and expand their mental map of the world. (ACHASSK138) (ACHASSK139)</p>

## Year 7 English

Language	Literature	Literacy
<p>Understand how accents, styles of speech and idioms express and create personal and social identities (ACELA1529)</p>	<p>Identify and explore ideas and viewpoints about events, issues and characters represented in texts drawn from different...cultural contexts (ACELT1619)</p>	<p>Analyse and explain the ways text structures and language features shape meaning and vary according to audience and purpose (ACELY1721)</p>
<p>Analyse how point of view is generated in visual texts by means of choices, for example gaze, angle and social distance (ACELA1764)</p>	<p>Compare the ways that language and images are used to create character, and to influence emotions and opinions in different types of texts (ACELT1621)</p>	<p>Use prior knowledge and text processing strategies to interpret a range of types of texts (ACELY1722)</p>
	<p>Recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches (ACELT1622)</p>	<p>Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, selecting aspects of subject matter and particular language... features to convey information and ideas (ACELY1725)</p>

## Year 7 HASS

<b>HASS – Inquiry and Skills</b>
Analyse primary sources and secondary sources to identify values and perspectives on people, actions, events, issues and phenomena, past and present (ACHASSI157)
<b>HASS Geography – Knowledge and Understanding</b>
Water in the world (ACHASSK186) (ACHASSK187) Place and liveability (ACHASSK188) (ACHASSK189) (ACHASSK190) (ACHASSK191)

## Year 7 Geography

<b>Geographical Knowledge and Understanding</b>
Water in the world: (ACHGK042) Place and liveability (ACHGK045) (ACHGK046)

## Year 8 English

<b>Literature</b>	<b>Literacy</b>
Explore the ways that ideas and viewpoints in literary texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts may reflect or challenge the values of individuals and groups (ACELT1626)	Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content, including multimodal elements, to reflect a diversity of viewpoints (ACELY1731)
Share, reflect on, clarify and evaluate opinions and arguments about aspects of literary texts (ACELT1627)	Analyse and evaluate the ways that text structures and language features vary according to the purpose of the text [...] (ACELY1732)
Recognise and explain differing viewpoints about the world, cultures, individual people and concerns represented in texts (ACELT1807)	Use comprehension strategies to interpret and evaluate texts by reflecting on the validity of content and the credibility of sources, including finding evidence in the text for the author's point of view (ACELY1734)
Create literary texts that draw upon text structures and language features of other texts for particular purposes and effects (ACELT1632)	

## Year 8 Geography

<b>Geography – Level Description</b>
'Landforms and landscapes' focuses on investigating geomorphology through a study of landscapes and their landforms. This unit examines the processes that shape individual landforms, the values and meanings placed on landforms and landscapes by diverse cultures, hazards associated with landscapes, and management of landscapes. 'Landforms and landscapes' develops students' understanding of the concept of environment and enables them to explore the significance of landscapes to people... These distinctive aspects of landforms and landscapes are investigated using studies drawn from Australia and throughout the world. /cont next page

### 'Geography – Level Description' continued...

The key inquiry questions for Year 8 are:

- How do environmental and human processes affect the characteristics of places and environment?
- How do the interconnections between places, people and environments affect the lives of people?

What are the consequences of changes to places and environments and how can these changes be managed?

### Geography – Knowledge and Understanding

Causes, impacts and responses to geomorphological hazard (ACHGK053)

## Cross-curriculum Priorities and General Capabilities

*Shaozhen* would also be useful for implementing the **Cross-curriculum Priorities** of:

- **Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia**  
The novel is set in China and provides some insight into various aspects of the culture including traditional rural village life; the hierarchy of local government in the People's Republic of China; the importance of community and familial loyalties; and the social phenomenon of the 'left-behind' children.
- **Sustainability**  
An important theme of the novel is a critical examination of the conflicting challenges of living in a volatile natural environment with cyclical drought. Water topics that can be explored include water scarcity and variability, the value of water and water management in rural and urban areas.

In addition, the novel can be used to target the following **General Capabilities**:

- **Intercultural understanding** as students are introduced to village life in Henan and Shaozhen's experience of growing up as an adolescent in rural China. The resilient teenagers led by Shaozhen and the challenges they face inspire young readers and create informed empathy.
- **Ethical understanding** as students consider the different perspectives on a complex social issue, i.e. maintaining the livelihood of villages in the face of a natural disaster and the role of government in caring for its people.
- **Personal and social capability** as students explore the ways characters regulate their emotions in trying circumstances, establishing and building positive relationships (both in friendship groups and within a wider community), make responsible decisions, work effectively in teams and develop leadership skills to handle the challenging situation of saving their village. Importantly, the novel also explores the traumatised characters' struggles to find reason for hope and optimism.

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## BRIEF BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

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### DROUGHT IN CHINA – OVERVIEW

Between 2010 and 2011, eight provinces in the northern part of China were hit by the worst drought in 60 years affecting most of the country's wheat producing areas.

As well as destroying wheat crops, the drought caused water shortages for over 2 million people and livestock. By early 2011, nearly 8 million hectares of wheat had been affected causing world wheat prices to increase. Many of China's lakes dried up causing people to move to other areas.

By June 2011, the drought had affected 35 million people with over 4 million people facing a drinking water shortage.

What is known as 'China's Bread Basket', the area in the northeast, suffered its worst drought in 50 years in 2014. This area was crucial for the agricultural and food security of the nation and historically provided China with most of its corn, wheat and soybean production. In the central province of Henan, where *Shaozhen* is set, some rural communities had no drinking water or water for irrigation for three months.

## **DROUGHT**

Overview of drought – Definition of a drought, types of droughts

<https://www.livescience.com/21469-drought-definition.html>

Basic overview of drought conditions for students. American based but contains good information and activity ideas:

[http://www.weatherwizkids.com/?page\\_id=89](http://www.weatherwizkids.com/?page_id=89)

Basic overview of drought conditions for students:

<http://eschooltoday.com/natural-disasters/droughts/what-is-a-drought.html>

Useful links to information for students about drought conditions in Australia – especially children's responses to drought:

<http://www.abc.net.au/btn/story/s3953562.htm>

More detailed information on drought conditions – Drought Science:

[http://ewater.org.au/drought/beating\\_drought.shtml](http://ewater.org.au/drought/beating_drought.shtml)

Good overview of drought conditions around the world. Excellent images:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/drought/>

Useful resource for students on drought conditions:

<http://www.basicplanet.com/drought/>

## **DROUGHT IN CHINA**

Overview on drought facts for students. Includes video on drought in China:

<http://www.disaster-survival-resources.com/facts-about-drought.html>

Basic dot points on the drought in China:

<http://factsanddetails.com/china/cat10/sub64/item1879.html>

Useful video and information giving an overview of the drought in the Henan province. Comments from farmers about people having to leave farms to work in the city.

<http://english.cntv.cn/2014/08/02/VIDE1406985363675923.shtml>

Overview of drought affected areas through news site:

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2014/09/24/china-historic-drought-worsens-long-term-crisis-declining-groundwater-in.html>

An overview of rainfall and irrigation problems in China during the drought:

[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-08/09/content\\_18277760.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-08/09/content_18277760.htm)

Excellent image of China showing the extent of the drought

<https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/NaturalHazards/view.php?id=18208>

Good overview of drought in China:

<https://www.businessinsider.com.au/china-water-risk-2011-11?r=US&IR=T#china-is-expected-to-be-199-billion-cubic-meters-short-of-water-by-2030-1>

Case Study on drought in China:

<http://www.wvi.org/pressrelease/china-drought-causes-water-food-shortages>



## HENAN PROVINCE – AN OVERVIEW

Henan is a province in China's Yellow River Valley. It is believed to be the birth place of Chinese civilisation. The province has over 3000 years of recorded history and up until 1000 years ago, Henan was China's centre of culture, economics and politics. Henan covers a large part of China's fertile and populated North China Plain. It is the country's third most populated province with over 94 million people but is considered to be one of China's less developed areas.

Save the Children's work in China:

<http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.8649613/k.B5C5/China.htm>

## THE LEFT-BEHIND CHILDREN

When parents from China's rural communities move to urban areas for work, many leave young children behind to be cared for by family. Often these family members include grandparents who are too elderly or ill to care for the children. According to one census done in 2010, there were over 60 million left-behind children with 40 per cent being under the age of five.

This phenomenon has been happening since the 1980s when the industrial revolution in China caused many people from rural populations to move to the cities in search of better paid jobs. Due to the 'hukou' or residency permit system in China, people can only access social welfare in their place of birth. Parents are therefore forced to leave their children behind so the children can access free education and healthcare in their home village.

News story on left-behind children – good case study material:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-35994481>

News story on left-behind children – good overview:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-06/millions-of-chinas-children-left-behind/7816010>

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## BEFORE READING

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### DEVELOPING EMPATHY

#### ACTIVITY: What were you doing in 2014?

Students create a diary of their activities from the summer of 2014. In it they can describe any holidays taken, any activities such as swimming, how they cooled down from the heat, the type of food they would have eaten and the activities they did as school closed for the summer.

A class display can be created using actual photos or depictions of the activities described by the students.

### LEARNING ABOUT DROUGHT

#### ACTIVITY: Drought – Before and After

- Ask students to complete the first of two columns on a page: What I Know About Drought. Discussion starters could include: what causes drought in Australia? Does drought just mean going without rain? Who is impacted by drought?

What I know about drought	What I have learned about drought
<i>Drought means lack of water</i>	
<i>Crops don't grow in a drought</i>	

- Have the students look at this article about drought in Australia. Each photo is a 'before and after'. Once they have read the entire article, have them answer the same questions but now using the second column.  
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-12-17/queensland-drought-photos-before-after/7035610>

### **ACTIVITY: Drought overview**

- Using Wordle, create a word cloud around the theme of DROUGHT. Place the completed word clouds on display.
- Students create a news segment on drought in Australia. They can use images and information from  
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-12-17/queensland-drought-photos-before-after/7035610>

### **ACTIVITY: Drought in China overview**

#### **Using Google Maps or Google Earth**

- Locate China, and then find Henan Province.
- Look at the satellite photos to discover the geographical make up of the area
- Look at the drought map in the front of *Shaozhen*. See how widespread the drought was in 2014 by comparing it to the map on Google Maps.

## **EXAMING THE COVER**

### **ACTIVITY**

- Describe Shaozhen's physical appearance and facial expression: How do you think he is feeling? Why?
- Look at the images below the title. Why were these images chosen?
- How does the cover make you feel?
- Read the blurb on the back cover:
  - list the words that describe the climate setting
  - list the words that describe the setting's hopelessness
  - list the words that describe some hope.
- From reading the blurb, create your own book cover. Students can use the following websites:
  - <https://www.canva.com/create/book-covers/>
  - <https://spark.adobe.com/make/book-cover-maker>

## **GENRE**

### **ACTIVITY**

*Shaozhen* is an example of the contemporary realistic fiction genre.

- **Discuss:**
  - What is realistic fiction?
  - What other books of this genre have you read?
  - Why are books such as *Shaozhen* important?

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## DURING READING

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### READ ALOUD

Suitable read aloud sections in *Shaozhen*:

- *They followed the road until they came to a bridge...the boys retrieved their water haul, careful not to spill a drop.* (pp. 39-41)
- The landslide, Chapter Nine, (pp. 74-79)
- *Finally, they reached the front.....it somehow felt like a fortune.* (pp. 102-107)

### Read Aloud Activities

Have a **RALFF Performance** (Read Aloud For Fun) using the sections above. Students could choose their favourite text and read aloud to the class.

If the school has Chinese as an additional language, the Chinese teacher could translate a paragraph from *Shaozhen* in Cantonese or Mandarin. Students can practice reciting the passage for the class.

### CHAPTER DISCUSSION POINTS

The following chapter breakdown and suggested discussion points may be useful in guiding students' initial responses to *Shaozhen*.

#### Chapter One

1. Describe how the author conveys the differences between Shaozhen's village of Hongsha and the township of Xifeng.
2. Is Shaozhen pleased to be home? How do you know?
3. What themes have been introduced in the first chapter?

#### Chapter Two

1. Yangyang is referred to throughout the story as Yangyang but is introduced as Ting Yangyang. Why?
2. How does the author create tension when Ma reveals her news?
3. What cultural issues were raised in this chapter?

#### Chapter Three

1. Nainai 'stayed up all night preparing her son's favourite foods'. Why didn't she cook something for Ma?
2. Why are Kang and Shaozhen so eager to leave the village?
3. What did Nainai mean when she said 'I've already lost my only son to the city'?

#### Chapter Four

1. Ma always made sure Shaozhen had time to study. If Hongsha was a farming village, why did she encourage her son's education?
2. Shaozhen had to carry water from a well. Compare how Australians irrigate their vegetable patches with methods used by Shaozhen's family.
3. What is meant by Party leaders? To what does the term 'Party' refer?
4. Who are the ancestors that Headmaster Song will be praying to?

## **Chapter Five**

1. What was Shaozhen scared of as he walked along the dry riverbed?
2. What was it that turned the muddy water into something drinkable?

## **3. Chapter Six**

4. Why was Luqiao eager to coach the young boys? Why did he play a 'revolutionary song' during practice?
5. Why didn't the villagers like Luqiao?
6. Why do you think a young person was chosen for Village Secretary?
7. Was Xian pleased with his new appointment? How does the author reveal Xian's feelings?
8. Why was Yangyang so suspicious of a new leader coming from the city?
9. Nainai and the other older villagers have one idea about how life should be in the village, Shaozhen has a more modern idea. Which idea would be more useful for Hongsha?
10. Why was Nainai so suspicious of the Party?

## **Chapter Seven**

1. Xian introduces himself by explaining where his grandfather comes from. Why?
2. Explain how the three-on-three basketball game played with Xian and the village boys could be viewed as a metaphor for the problems faced by the village.
3. How different is Xian's new home compared to the home that Shaozhen now lives in?

## **Chapter Eight**

1. Why did Shaozhen release his father's birds on the mountain the day after his father left for the city?
2. How did Yangyang know to find water in the mountains?

## **Chapter Nine**

1. What do you think caused the landslide?
2. Why does Xian refer to the villagers as 'comrades'?
3. Why are the villagers questioning the Party about stopping the landslides? Can a government stop nature?

## **Chapter Ten**

1. How does the author create tension when describing the search for Xiaoping?
2. Who is the 'mountain man' that Xiaoping talks about?
3. What was Hongsha's 'biggest fear'?

## **Chapter Eleven**

1. One of the villagers commented that the government 'moved clouds away from Beijing for the Olympics'. Is this true? If so, how could they do that?
2. Why would Kang's grandfather burn his books if Kang doesn't bring back more water?

## **Chapter Twelve**

1. The trucks carried barrels of water for the villagers. Where do you think this water came from?
2. Shaozhen almost lost his buckets of water and his nainai was ill. Why did the author describe him walking home whistling and cheerful?

## **Chapter Thirteen**

1. The villagers were complaining about Secretary Xian not helping them. What could he have done?
2. "That good-for-nothing child is just a pawn of Lam" This sentence is used to describe Xian. Discuss it.
3. Did Xian ignore Shaozhen's attention on purpose? Why?
4. Discuss the reason behind Xian not being able to use the truck to transport Nainai to hospital.

## **Chapter Fourteen**

1. Discuss why the author included the confrontation between Xian and the doctor when Xian came to help Nainai.
2. Discuss the differences between the medical care in Xifeng to the medical care found in a large hospital in Australia.
3. Describe how the author created an atmosphere of loneliness towards the end of the chapter.

## **Chapter Fifteen**

1. 'That's the other thing with boys these days. These ridiculous manners, like we still live under imperial rule.' What does Shen mean by this?
2. The author has once again introduced birds in this chapter. Why are birds used in this chapter as well as chapter eight?
3. Why do you think the famine was called The Three Bitter Years?
4. What lesson was Great Uncle Shen trying to teach Shaozhen?

## **Chapter Sixteen**

1. Why was Great Uncle Shen so afraid of the village?
2. The author refers to Shen as just Shen now and not Great Uncle Shen. Why?
3. Describe how Shaozhen's feelings for Yangyang are changing in this chapter. How does the author make this known?

## **Chapter Seventeen**

1. Why wouldn't Nainai want other villagers to see her being carried in the wheelchair?
2. Why did the bottle of water cost so much?
3. Kang mentioned that everything in the village was dying 'even.....' What is he referring to?

## Chapter Eighteen

### Page 158 – a physics puzzle

*In times of hardship we watch our brothers' backs*

- Discuss how the boys in the village worked together as a team to deliver water to old people in the village.
- Describe how this chapter compares with a game of basketball.

## Chapter Nineteen

1. The Village Secretary's house didn't reflect who Xian wanted to be in his new appointment. From the author's description, what kind of Village Secretary did Xian really want to be?
2. Discuss how the villagers are working together to help each other.
3. If you were Shen, how would you feel about Xian's grandfather's role in the politics of the village?

## Chapter Twenty

1. Why was Shaozhen 'less sad' when he thought of his parents now?
2. Discuss the reasons behind Nainai being upset at the 'new' Hongsha.
3. Why did Aunt Wu welcome Shen 'home'?

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### ACTIVITY: Water carrying puzzle

Read pages 157-158: Shaozhen and Chun have 7 buckets of water and one moped.

- With a partner, work out how the two boys can get the buckets back home. Perhaps experiment with buckets and a bicycle.

### ACTIVITY: Glossary generator

Have the students note the Chinese words described in the text.

- Using <https://chinese.yabla.com/> have the students create the Chinese symbol for each word.

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## AFTER READING

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The MyRead website describes effective strategies for responding to the text:

- <http://www.myread.org/organisation.htm> (page down webpage to select, for example, Jigsaw.

Using the following timeline generators, create a timeline of the 2014 drought in China. The timeline on Pages 191 to 193 of the novel will give students an overview to work from. Students can also add photographs and captions to their timeline.

- <https://elearningindustry.com/top-10-free-timeline-creation-tools-for-teachers>

## CHARACTERS

### ACTIVITY: Character Grid

After reading *Shaozhen*, have students in groups find instances in the text that detail the effects of the drought on the child characters and their individual responses, using the following table:

CHARACTER	AREA AFFECTED	DETAILS
Shaozhen	Education	Shaozhen must remain at home to help on the farm
	Family	He is growing up without his mother and father.
	Friendships	Shaozhen's best friend Kang is sent to the city
Xiaoping		
Yangyang		

### ACTIVITY: Acrostic Poem

- Create an **Acrostic poem** for a selection of characters describing their characteristics

## RESILIENCE

### ACTIVITY: Comic Strips

- The characters in *Shaozhen* have shown great 'resilience'. Discuss what this term means. Have students create a poem or a cartoon strip using <https://www.canva.com/create/comic-strips/> or <http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2013/11/7-great-ipad-apps-for-creating-comic.html> to describe one situation where they have shown resilience.
- Using one of the cartoon strip generators above, students can re-create one of the situations in the text where one character from *Shaozhen* has shown resilience.

## THE AUTHOR

Wai Chim is a first-generation Chinese-American from New York City. She grew up speaking Cantonese at home but absorbing Western culture through books, television and school.

Wai's parents are Chinese immigrants. Her mother is from Hong Kong and her father is from a small fishing village in Shenzhen in China. They met when they were both in New York. They married and worked hard to instil a deep appreciation of Chinese culture and ideals whilst raising their only daughter. Wai attended Stuyvesant High School in New York and completed a degree at Duke University.

Wai went on to teach English in Japan before moving to Australia in 2006. In 2007 she completed a qualification in Creative Writing from the University of Sydney.

Wai has always loved words and technology. She has worked in web copywriting, is a digital content strategist as well as a digital producer working with website and game developers.

### ACTIVITY: Classroom Display

- Create a **classroom display** of the author Wai Chim featuring photos and information sourced from her website and her books.

### ACTIVITY: Author Article

- Based on their research of Wai Chim, students can create a series of questions for the author. These questions can be posted on her website: <http://www.waichim.com/>. The students can create an information text, newspaper article or class blog from the information they discover.

## RESEARCHING THE BOOK

Whilst researching the background to *Shaozhen*, Wai became engrossed with stories of 'left-behind children', the sons and daughters of migrant workers left in their rural homes to be cared for by elderly grandparents or forced to fend for themselves.

Wai Chim wanted to show the human side of China's rapid modernization – the social impact on families and individuals. China's history is already tumultuous, political assertions such as the Cultural Revolution and The Great Leap Forward still resonating with older Chinese. Now the world is seeing the opposite taking place, the potential for a generation to be lost to economic fervour and rapid growth.

### ACTIVITY: Book Trailer

- Create a book trailer for *Shaozhen* showing the main plot events. This website provides good ideas: <http://www.booktrailersforreaders.com/>

### ACTIVITY: Book Reviews

- Write a book review for *Shaozhen*. The following website has helpful hints: <http://www.booktrust.org.uk/books/teenagers/writing-tips/tips-for-writing-book-reviews/>
- Create a book review trailer for *Shaozhen* to be displayed on screen in the school library



## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

After reading *Shaozhen* and researching the issues facing communities in drought, students may want to know how they can help.

### ACTIVITY: Taking Action

- **Discuss** how Shaozhen and his friends helped overcome the adversities faced when their community faced drought conditions.
- **Research** how organisations and individuals are helping communities in Australia and overseas who are in drought. By being more aware of the issues students can make a difference. One example is the Burrumbuttock Hay Runners <http://hayrunners.com/>
- Have students **email local newspapers** about the issues faced by communities in drought. Have them create posters, classroom or library displays or performances for a school assembly to raise awareness. Invite guest speakers from farming communities who are affected by drought.
- There are many ways that students can **raise funds** for an aid organisation or project. It doesn't have to be money – books, toothbrushes, pencils, soap are easily collected and passed onto organisations that can help.
- Explore how aid agencies such as Save the Children, RedR and UNICEF provide on the ground relief for families stricken by drought throughout the Asia Pacific region.  
<https://www.redr.org.au/>  
<https://www.unicef.org.au/>  
<https://www.savethechildren.org.au/>

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## ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

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### ACTIVITY: Story building

- **Read** through the comments found in the following resource: ABC interactive – Living through drought <http://www.abc.net.au/news/interactives/your-say-living-through-drought/>,
  - Choose one of the people interviewed and **create a character profile** of that person.
  - Use this character profile to **build a story** about drought around the character.
    - Does this character survive?
    - What did they do during the drought?

### ACTIVITY: Reading and creating images

- Listen to the description of Charles Conder's painting 'Hot Wind' in <http://splash.abc.net.au/home?sf99350856=1#!/media/1979487/charles-conder-hot-wind-1889>
  - Discuss how the painter creates an atmosphere of drought and hopelessness.
  - How do we know the painting is set in Australia?
  - Create a similar painting but set it in China.
    - What would you change?
    - What colours would you use?

### ACTIVITY: Chinese craft

- Create a Chinese paper cut: <http://www.instructables.com/id/How-to-make-a-chinese-paper-cut-art/>

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## FURTHER READING

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### INFORMATION ABOUT WAI CHIM

- <http://www.waichim.com/>
- <https://blog.booktopia.com.au/2016/08/31/wai-chim-freedom-swimmer-greatest-hope-will-start-conversation-maos-tumultuous-cultural-revolution/>
- <https://www.allenandunwin.com/authors/c/wai-chim>

### BOOKS BY WAI CHIM

***Freedom Swimmer*** by Wai Chim. Allen & Unwin 2016. 252 pp. For 11-14 yr olds.

Based on the experience of the author's father, the extraordinary deprivations of the Chinese people during the 1960s and early 1970s is the background to this story of friendship between a country boy, Ming, and a city boy with movie star looks, Li, sent with others to Ming's village on a re-education program.

\*Also highly recommended is Chim's series of short novels set in China, beginning with ***Chook Chook***, intended for mid primary aged children but likely to delight readers of any age. Published by University of Queensland Press.

### OTHER BOOKS IN THE SERIES, 'THROUGH MY EYES: NATURAL DISASTER ZONES'

*Hotaka* (2011 Tsunami in Japan) by John Heffernan, March 2017

*Lyla* (2011 Christchurch earthquake in New Zealand) by Fleur Beale, March, 2018

*Angel* (Cyclone Haiyan in the Philippines) by Zoe Daniel August, 2018

### OTHER BOOKS ABOUT NATURAL DISASTERS

*Ash Road* by Ivan Southall [The classic Australian story of a bushfire accidentally set by three teenage boys.]

*Two Summers* by John Heffernan. Illustrator: Freya Blackwood. 2003. Lindfield, NSW by Scholastic Australia. 32 pp. For 7-13 yr olds. [The difficulties of country life in a country prone to drought.]

*Where There's Smoke* by John Heffernan Omnibus 2010 [A fictional story about Black Saturday.]

### OTHER BOOKS ABOUT OR SET IN CHINA

*The China Book: A People, a Place, a Culture* by Li-Yu Hung, Walker Books Australia 2008

*Not for Parents: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know* by Lonely Planet Publications, Australia 2013

*Multicultural Stories from China* by Saviour Pirotta, Hachette Australia 2017

*Spilled Water* by Sally Grindley, Bloomsbury, UK 2004

*The China Garden* by Kristina Olsson, UQP, 2011

The Dragonkeeper series by Carole Wilkinson, beginning with *Dragonkeeper*, Black Dog Books 2003.

*A Ghost in my Suitcase* by Gabrielle Wang, Penguin Books Australia 2009.

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## ABOUT THE WRITERS AND SERIES EDITOR

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### WAI CHIM

Wai Chim is a first-generation Chinese-American from New York City. She grew up speaking Cantonese at home and absorbing Western culture through books, TV and school. She spent some time living in Japan before making Sydney, Australia her permanent home. Her previous books include the *Chook Chook* series for middle-grade readers and *Freedom Swimmer*, inspired by her father's experiences growing up in rural China. In addition to writing, Wai works in digital marketing and website production and enjoys fine dining, pretending to do yoga and ogling puppies.

### LYN WHITE

Series editor and series creator Lyn White has extensive experience as a primary school teacher-librarian and EAL teacher and in 2010 completed postgraduate studies in Editing and Communications at the University of Melbourne. Lyn is passionate about children's literature and has great expertise in engaging students with quality texts. Her work with refugee children motivated her to create the acclaimed Through My Eyes series of books set in contemporary war zones. Lyn created and edited the Through My Eyes - Natural Disaster Zones series to pay tribute to the courage and resilience of children who are often the most vulnerable in post-disaster situations. Lyn continues to teach EAL and is an education consultant and conference presenter.

### HEATHER ZUBEK

Heather Zubek has been a primary school teacher, library teacher, freelance writer and storyteller for many years. Heather believes in the transformative power of story. She believes that one book has the power to help change the world by confronting and enraging its reader without them ever having to leave the safety of their comfort zone. At present Heather is a freelance writer specialising in children's literature, travel and community development and is a regular contributor to several local and national magazines and newspapers including *Crinkling News*. Heather wrote Teachers' Notes for *Naveed: Through My Eyes* and co-authored Teacher's Notes for *Emilio: Through My Eyes* published by Allen & Unwin. As a committee member for the One World Centre in Perth, Western Australia, Heather spent time creating teacher resources on the topic of Islam. She has published two teacher resource books through Ready-Ed Publications: *Global Focus: Making a Difference in the World* and *Cultures, Places and Resources in Developing Countries*.