

## Lesson Plan: Literary Analysis using Climate Fiction (Cli-Fi)

Teacher-contributed lesson plan by Bernie McInerney and Emily Haegi, St Mary's College, Adelaide, Australia.

As a **High School** and **Undergraduate** Humanities teacher in **English**, you can use this lesson plan to teach **literary analysis** of a novel (**climate fiction**).

The recently recognized literary genre of 'Cli-Fi' is a valuable means by which students can engage with key concepts of climate change and sustainability. Such texts allow for rich interdisciplinary approaches to learning about the human impacts on the natural environment. This introductory lesson is intended to be part of a senior high school unit of 5-6 weeks, focused on the teaching of the **Australian novel 'Anchor Point' by Alice Robinson** (Affirm Press, 2015). The story, focused on the experiences of the central character Laura, spans a period from 1984 to 2018; a time in which south eastern Australia experiences significant environmental events- floods, bushfires, drought-closely related to **extreme weather events** linked to climate change. While central themes in the novel relate more to family relationships, indigenous connection to land and personal identity, the **impact of climate change** on the natural and built environment in this region of Australia is a constant 'character'.

Thus, the use of this lesson plan allows you to integrate the teaching of a climate science topic with a core topic in **English Literature**.

Use this lesson plan to discuss with your students:

1. What is climate fiction (Cli-Fi)?
2. The literary analysis of a climate fiction novel.
3. In the novel 'Anchor Point', how is climate change portrayed as a character.

### About the Lesson Plan

**Grade Level:** High School, Undergraduate

**Discipline:** Humanities, English Literature

**Topic(s) in Discipline:** Literary Analysis, Character Development, Setting as Character, Creation of Place through Writing, Writing across Time, Visual Representation of the Structure, Climate Fiction.

**Climate Topic:** Introduction to Climate Change

**Location:** Global, Australia

**Access:** Online, Offline

**Language(s):** English

**Approximate Time Required:** 45min + 4-5 class periods

# 1 Contents

## 1. Reading (30 min)

An introduction to the guidelines for reading and analyzing a novel.

This can be accessed at:

<https://www.jmu.edu/uwc/link-library/types-of-writing/literary-analysis.shtml>

## 2. Video (~2.5 min)

A video to introduce climate fiction as a literary genre.

This can be accessed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9XuxHtfOxQ>

## 3. Reading and Discussion (4-5 class periods)

The literary analysis of a Cli-Fi novel- Anchor Point.

**Note:** This activity requires the procurement of the book, 'Anchor Point' by Alice Robinson (Affirm Press, 2015).

An audio file of the author's introduction of the novel can be accessed here: (12.5 min)

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/booksandarts/alice-robinson/6969598>

#### 4. Suggested questions/assignments for learning evaluation

- What are the main points to consider while doing the literary analysis of a novel?
- What is climate fiction (Cli-Fi)?
- How can climate change be a 'character' in a novel?

## 2 Step-by-step User Guide

Here is a step-by-step guide to using this lesson plan in the classroom/laboratory. We have suggested these steps as a possible plan of action. You may customize the lesson plan according to your preferences and requirements.

#### 1. Topic introduction and discussion

Use this comprehensive guide, '[Analyzing Literature: A Guide for Students](#)' by Sharon James McGee, Kansas State University- Salina, to teach your students how to read and analyze a literary text.

- Use pages 1-6 of the guide to give your students an overview of how to read a literary text including 'Strategies for Reading a Work of Literature' and understanding the 'Terms for Analyzing Literature'.
- Use pages 22-24 to explain to your students how to write a literary analysis of a novel.
  - Use the given exercises in the section, 'Exploring Your Topic' as classroom discussion points and/or as topics for writing exercises during the literary analysis of the novel.
  - Use the sections, 'Cultural and Historical Perspectives' and 'Other Perspectives for Analyzing Literature' for explaining the different perspectives in which a literary text can be viewed or analyzed.

This can be accessed at:

<http://wps.ablongman.com/wps/media/objects/327/335558/AnalyzingLit.pdf>

## 2. Introduction to Climate Fiction (Cli-Fi)

Play the video, '[What is Cli-Fi?](#)' by Stephanie LeMenager, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, to explain to your students this new genre of writing- climate fiction (Cli-Fi) which is going to be the subject of literary analysis in this lesson plan.

The video can be accessed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9XuxHtfOxQ>

## 3. Reading and Discussion

Note: This activity requires the procurement of the book, 'Anchor Point' by Alice Robinson (Affirm Press, 2015).

- a) Introduce a Cli-Fi novel to your students by playing the audio interview of the author of the Cli-Fi novel, '[Anchor Point](#)', Alice Robinson by Kate Evans and presented by Michael Cathcart (ABC Radio National). Use this tool to encourage your students to form initial ideas about the book and to bring focus on the characters involved and the setting for the novel.

The audio interview and associated write-up, 'Alice Robinson's Anchor Point' can be accessed here:

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/booksandarts/alice-robinson/6969598>

- b) Ask your students to read the book as a take-home assignment.
- c) Class discussion of the book:
  - In your discussion of 'Anchor Point' by Alice Robinson, focus on the experiences of the central character Laura that spans a period from 1984 to 2018; a time in which south eastern Australia experiences significant environmental events. These include floods, bushfires, drought which are related to extreme weather events linked to climate change.
  - Stress in your discussions that while the central themes in the novel relate more to family relationships, indigenous connections to land and personal identity, the impact of climate change on the natural and built environment in this region of Australia is a constant 'character'.

- d) Direct your students to do a literary analysis of the novel. Remind your students of the guidelines to do this as discussed before (in the first resource).
- Direct your students to use these guidelines to explore different aspects of the novel such as character development, setting as character, creation of a place through writing, writing across time, visual representation of the structure, and as an example of climate fiction.
  - Discuss how 'climate change' is treated as a character in this novel. Finally, comment on how this Cli-Fi novel is a form of climate change communication.

#### 4. Questions/Assignments

Use the tools and the concepts learned so far to discuss and determine answers to the following questions:

- What are the main points to consider while doing the literary analysis of a novel?
- What is climate fiction (Cli-Fi)?
- How can climate change be a 'character' in a novel?

## 3 Learning Outcomes

The tools in this lesson plan will enable students to:

- learn to do a literary analysis of a fictional novel
- know about a new genre in literature- Climate Fiction (Cli-Fi)
- understand the impacts of climate change through a Cli-Fi novel

## 4 Additional Resources

If you or your students would like to explore the topic further, these additional resources will be useful.

### 1. Reading

A reading by Dan Bloom to introduce the term 'Cli-Fi' and outline its rise as a new genre of literary works.

This can be accessed at:

<https://medium.com/@clifcentral/can-cli-fi-help-keep-our-planet-livable-8b053bd4aa35>

### 2. Teaching Module

A unit from a teaching resource by SERC that describes how a Cli-Fi short story may be read and analyzed.

This can be accessed at:

[https://serc.carleton.edu/integrate/teaching\\_materials/climate\\_fact/unit4.html](https://serc.carleton.edu/integrate/teaching_materials/climate_fact/unit4.html)

### 3. Reading

A list of suggested reading of Cli-Fi stories as part of the Brown University syllabus.

This can be accessed at:

<https://www.yaleclimateconnections.org/2018/04/whats-on-your-climate-fiction-syllabus/>

## 5 Credits/Copyrights

All the teaching tools in our collated list are owned by the corresponding creators/authors/organizations as listed on their websites. Please view the individual copyright and ownership details for each tool by following the individual links provided. We have selected and analyzed the tools that align with the overall objective of our project and have provided the corresponding links. We do not claim ownership of or responsibility/liability for any of the listed tools.

### 1. Reading; 'Analyzing Literature: A Guide for Students'

By Sharon James McGee, Kansas State University- Salina. Published by [Longman Publishers](#).

### 2. Video; 'What is Cli-Fi?'

By Stephanie LeMenager, Radcliffe Institute, [Harvard University YouTube Channel](#).

### 3. Reading; 'Anchor Point'

Published by [Affirm Press](#).

### 4. Audio file and Associated Write up; 'Alice Robinson's Anchor Point'

Interview of author [Alice Robinson](#) by Kate Evans and Michael Cathcart on [ABC Radio National](#).

### 5. Additional Resources

[Dan Bloom](#), [Medium.com](#)

[The Science Education Resource Centre at Carleton College \(SERC\)](#)

[Yale Climate Connections](#)