

These notes are for:

- Primary years 3-6
- Ages 8-12

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Novel
- Illustrated fiction
- Fantasy
- Horror
- Japanese folklore

National Curriculum Focus*:

English content descriptions include:

Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ACELA1475	ACELA1488	ACELA1501	ACELA1516
ACELA1476	ACELA1492	ACELA1504	ACELA1523
ACELA1478	ACELA1793	ACELA1797	ACELA1525
ACELA1479	ACELA1498	ACLET1608	ACELT1613
ACELT1594	ACELT1602	ACELT1609	ACELT1614
ACELT1596	ACELT1603	ACELT1795	ACELT1800
ACELT1598	ACELT1604	ACELT1610	ACELY1708
ACELT1599	ACELT1605	ACELT1612	ACELY1709
ACELT1601	ACELT1607	ACELT1798	ACELY1710
ACELT1791	ACELY1688	ACELY1698	ACELY1714
ACELY1675	ACELT1794	ACELY1700	ACELY1717
ACELY1792	ACELY1689	ACELY1704	
ACELY1677	ACELY1690	ACELY1707	
	ACELY1692		
	ACELY1694		
	ACELY1695		
	ACELY1697		

*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.

Themes:

- Japanese folklore
- Adventure
- Courage
- Responsibility
- Family
- Cultural displacement

*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Takeshita Demons series

Takeshita Demons series

Author: Cristy Burne
 Illustrator: Siku

Book 1: Takeshita Demons
 ISBN: 9781847801159
 ARRP: \$14.95
 NZRRP: \$17.99

Book 2: The Filth Licker
 ISBN: 9781847801364
 ARRP: \$14.95
 NZRRP: \$17.99

Book 3: Monster Matsuri
 ISBN: 9781847801371
 ARRP: \$14.95
 NZRRP: \$17.99



Synopsis

Takeshita Demons (pronounced Ta-kesh-ta and meaning 'under the bamboo') is an action-packed adventure series featuring demons from Japanese folklore.

The series protagonist, Miku Takeshita, is a Japanese girl whose family has moved to the UK, but the supernatural yōkai (Japanese demons) have followed them there to wreak havoc.

Author/Illustrator Information

Cristy Burne has joint New Zealand and Australian citizenship, has travelled widely and lived for several years in Japan as a teacher and editor. It was during this time that she became fascinated with Japanese folklore and the supernatural yōkai - demons - which are very much a part of Japanese culture, but little known outside Japan. Cristy is an editor and science writer who thinks fact is often stranger than fiction. *Takeshita Demons* won the Frances Lincoln Diverse Voices Children's Book Award for multicultural writing. Cristy and her husband live in Perth, Western Australia.

Siku is a well-known illustrator for comic books and graphic novels, working for the major companies in the field, including 2000AD Magazine and Marvel Comics. His best-known book is *The Manga Bible*. Siku lives and works in London and Essex.

How To Use These Notes

These notes provide a variety of discussion questions and activities that can be used with the *Takeshita Demons* series. Please select according to the level, learning style and targeted outcomes of your students.

Cristy Burne on writing the *Takeshita Demons* series

I was inspired to write *Takeshita Demons* (pronounced ta-kesh-ta and meaning ‘under the bamboo’) to encourage diversity in children’s fiction; I believe anyone can be a hero, and that our world is a wonderful, colourful, multicultural place. All children deserve to be part of it.

My interest in Japanese folklore sparked when I was working in Japan as a teacher and editor. My students shared fairytales, my colleagues told ghost stories, and I began to ask questions. I discovered the world of Japanese yōkai.

Yōkai are Japan’s strange and supernatural creatures. They appear in folk tales, artwork and oral stories passed from generation to generation. In Japan, yōkai have restaurants named after them, statues sold of them, anime and manga made about them. But outside of Japan, their stories are largely undiscovered. I wanted to change that. Kids everywhere should be able to laugh and marvel and wonder at the strange and spooky world of Japanese demons.



Classroom Ideas

- Before reading the *Takeshita Demons* series, view the cover and title of each book. Identify the following:
 - The title of the book
 - The author
 - The illustrator
 - The publisher
 - The blurb
- Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end?
- After reading, examine the structure and features of the book. Identify the following:
 - Chapter headings
 - Title page
 - Dedication
 - Page numbers
 - Paragraphs
 - Illustrations
 - Quotation marks
- What are the themes in these novels? Are they different or the same in each novel? As a class or in small groups identify and list the themes. Individually write a statement of belief about each theme.
- Fill out the following grid by identifying the orientation, complication and resolution of the story. Ask students to try to identify this structure in other books or movies. As a class, discuss how these narrative features give meaning to stories.

Orientation	Complication	Resolution

- Keep a “Vocab Journal” while reading the novel. Make a note of any words you come across that you don’t know 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.
- Make a list of items/food/furniture etc that Miku mentions from Japanese culture. Research what these items are and record them in a table.

Word	Page	Definition
tatami mat	10	mat used as a flooring material in traditional Japanese-style rooms

- Miku gets singled out in class based on her race when Alex asks her if Mrs Okuda is her mum (page 21) and Mrs Okuda speaks to her in Japanese (page 26). How does Miku feel about this? Why might she feel this way? Write a short story about your first day at a new school in a different country.
 - Miku grew up in Japan and moved to England shortly before the beginning of the first novel. Write a list of similarities and differences you have with Miku based on where you grew up, your family structure, your culture and traditions. Share your ideas with the class.
 - Many Japanese yōkai were invented to encourage a certain behaviour (e.g. The Filth Licker is a spooky yōkai grandmothers spoke about to encourage children to clean the bathroom; the mikoshi-nyū-dō is a scary yōkai that serves to warn children not to stare; the kara-kasa haunted umbrella is a yōkai that encourages people to look after their belongings). Ask the class if they can think of stories that parents/grandparents have passed on where the main aim is to educate/scare (e.g. if you make a face and the wind changes, you’ll be stuck like that forever OR if you don’t eat your crusts, your hair won’t curl).
 - Pick an action or horror sequence from one of the books and identify the emotive language used to build tension and create an action or horror atmosphere. Why has the author used these words? What are some other words that could have been used as well?
- “What.Was.That?” page 53
- How does this punctuation affect how you read the sentence? How would you interpret the sentence differently if it were written “What was that?”
 - The *Takeshita Demons* series is told through Miku’s eyes. Rewrite a scene from one of the novels through Cait or Alex’s eyes. How is Cait or Alex’s point of view different to Miku’s? Why would Cait or Alex think of things differently to Miku?
 - Write an extra chapter for one of the books in which Miku, Cait and Alex encounter another demon. Identify where this chapter fits in the series. The demon could be one mentioned in the glossary, another demon you have researched or one you have made up. Illustrate your chapter.
 - Write character reports on Miku, Cait and Alex that describe their personality and appearance. Use evidence from the text such as descriptive text and illustrations.

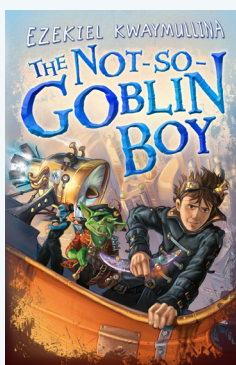


- Write a book report on the *Takeshita Demons* series. Did you like the books? What was your favourite part? Who was your favourite character? Are they similar to any other books you've read or movies you've seen? At the end of your report, rate each book out of 10 and then tally the class's scores. As a class, discuss the results of this tally and how everyone might have a different interpretation and opinion of the material.
- How do the relationships between Miku, Cait and Alex change over the series? What are the pivotal scenes in the novels that change the relationships?
- What effect do the illustrations have on the story? How would the story be different if there were no illustrations?
- In Book 1, Chapter Eight, Miku and Cait decide to go to the school late at night to hunt the nukekubi demon. Should Miku and Cait have gone to the school alone? What else could they have done in this situation? What would you do in this situation?
- Compare *Takeshita Demons* to another novel/series you have read as a class. Identify the genre of *Takeshita Demons* and the other novel. How can you tell the difference?
- In pairs, research a Japanese demon (yōkai). Give a presentation to the class covering what the demon's name is, what it looks like and what it does. Use PowerPoint, Keynote or an online presentation website (such as <http://prezi.com/>) to make your presentation fun and interesting. A good starting place is <http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/folk> and Cristy Burne's blog <http://bit.ly/Nomzbe>.
- Multicultural spooks: Encourage students to think about/share/research stories of demons/monsters from their own culture as well as more exotic creatures from non-European cultures (e.g. vampires, werewolves, pixies, etc).

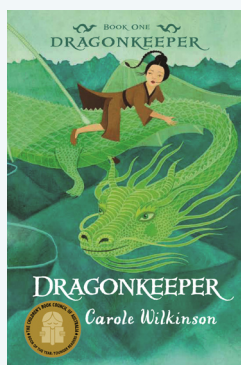
Visit <http://cristyburne.wordpress.com/free-stuff> for fantastic yōkai-themed games, activities and further teaching resources.

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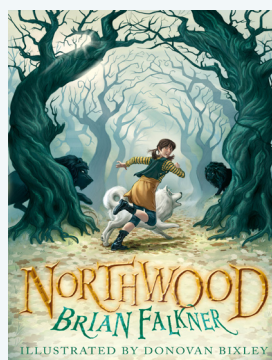
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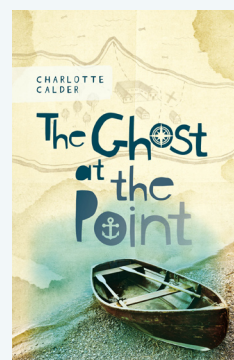
The Not-So Goblin Boy
Author: Ezekiel Kwaymullina
ISBN: 9781921720154
ARRP: \$16.95
NZRRP: \$18.99



Dragonkeeper
Author: Carole Wilkinson
ISBN: 9781742032450
ARRP: \$19.95
NZRRP: \$21.99



Northwood
Author: Brian Falkner
Illustrator: Donovan Bixley
ISBN: 9781921529801
ARRP: \$19.95
NZRRP: \$22.99



The Ghost at the Point
Author: Charlotte Calder
ISBN: 9781921977732
ARRP: \$16.95
NZRRP: \$18.99



TAKESHITA DEMONS

INVENT YOUR OWN DEMON

You don't have to answer all these questions, but here are some ideas to get your imaginations going ...

What does your demon like to eat? What does it look like? Where does it live? Is it an evil demon? A love-sick demon? A demon who likes to eat cold toast and juggle glass eyeballs? What secret powers does it have? What is its secret weakness? Why does it always carry a dirty sock in its pocket?

Name: _____

About my demon: _____

My demon looks like: