



Running an Apocalypse Novel book club (2hrs)

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This Book Club was run on Monday 24th July 2017: All the Pretty Horses by Cormac McCarthy

Materials needed

- ☐ A copy of "All the Pretty Horses"
- ☐ Small excerpts of the book on multiple pieces of paper
- ☐ Something to play music on (An ipad with lead and PA)
- ☐ Objects to make a cozy space - cushions, rug, dim lighting
- ☐ Informal seating for participants
- ☐ Photocopies of character lines
- ☐ A box with objects from the novel
- ☐ Snacks
- ☐ Drinks
- ☐ Spyder board in the space to add apocalypse ideas
- ☐ Pens and paper

Preparation

Research Apocalypse (Looking at Apocalypse as identity construction)

[apocalypse_research](#)

Choose some key talking points from "All the Pretty Horses"

intro_housekeeping_notes.docx

Recommendations

Keep the pace up but not rushed.

Communicate through playing music and both your body and your words (body language)

Keep playful. The point of the workshop is for people to communicate with each other and to enjoy the experience of discussing ideas.

Be sure to get a photo of the group and to see if anyone wants to write a blog post about their experience or to point them to where they can see yours and comment.

Further Learning

Diverging equity: The nature of existence in All the Pretty Horses. Available as a [PDF](#)

INTRODUCTION

Give people time to arrive. Socialise. Grab a drink (water, juice etc) and snack. Have the soundtrack playing.

Get started.

Welcome everyone to the book club session - not your ordinary one (housekeeping notes)

Introduce yourself.

Ask participants to share their names and past book club experiences.

Introduce the theme of Apocalypse (refer to the spyder board that can be added to) and the book (it is OK if you have not read the book)

DISCUSSION

A box with objects from the novel (horse, colour red, picture of a girl and so on) Have everyone pull out an object and discuss the symbology.

Break off into pairs with a piece of text per pair. Discuss the content of it.

Come back as a group and discuss

Break for pizza

Choose someone to read short quotes by or about various characters — from the current book or past book selections. Members try to guess who said what and when. If you want, divide into groups.

Have you also seen the film version. Comparison?

Have you read any other books by the author? Can you discern a similarity - in theme, writing style- between them? Or are they completely different?

If you were to talk to the author, what would you want to know?

SHARE

Anything else anyone wants to discuss or share?

Post Event Reflection

It was lovely to be back in the foyer space with no other events on in the space. There were 3 attendees. All had read the novel and were interested in chatting about it. All had some strong views about the novel as well. Two were frustrated by the book and that it took 200 pages to get into a rhythm of reading. Had faced moments of wanting to throw the book at the wall. Then in the next breath shared that this is why they are coming along to these book clubs - to be challenged and to experience things outside of what they would normally choose for themselves.

This week we took a moment to chat about Apocalypse as well and the larger project which was great and felt like the group were now more inclined to sign up for the game night series as well.

It is still emerging that attendees are seeing the facilitator as being an 'expert' in the genre and content that is being explored. This highlights even more that the book club plans/notes (package) need to be extensive.

Additional notes that were covered on the evening:

Myth/dreams- Joseph Campbell (writing on myths)

Unpacking 'the western' (period of time, what it was like and how it relates to this novel)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_American_Old_West

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_\(genre\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_(genre))

The parallel of the landscape described in this to Australia - the vastness and the colour red. An Australian western film (the proposition)

The novel assumes an understanding of religion.

The age of the main characters being 16 and 14. How the ages impacted the lens of seeing why actions were chosen by characters.

The novel is challenging to read - how it is written, how slow it is.

Maybe a mention of sticking it out to get through the first 200 pages and then you will get into a rhythm

Evaluation

pre

post

50% this is my first time

50% I have been coming over 12 months to The Edge

Community Development

Do you feel connected to The Edge community?

100% not sure

Cultural participation

Did you feel engaged by the book club night?

50% somewhat yes

50% very much so

Community Development

Did you have a conversation with someone new?

100% somewhat yes

Accessing Resources

50% somewhat yes

50% very much so

Idea building

100% Somewhat yes

Other

1. The locked front door was a bit daunting last night

2. To broaden the definition of literature to include other mediums of art, music, films, games, etc