

# BOOK KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER – THE EXPLORER BY KATHERINE RUNDELL

## Important Information

### Plot

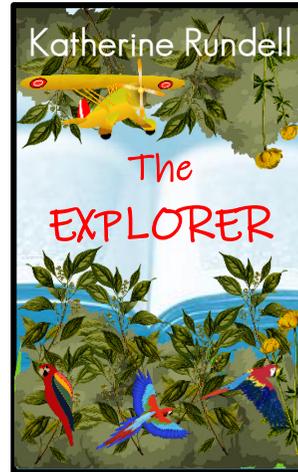
When a plane crashes in the Amazon Rainforest, the group of survivors try to work their way out of the treacherous conditions and back to Manaus. Battling encounters with deadly creatures, plants, insects, rain and constant hunger, they stumble across a map which leads them to a secret they must hold onto forever.

### Themes

Environment, Conservation, Friendship, Family, Loyalty, Survival, Trust and Honesty.

### Setting

The entire story is set in the Amazon rainforest, the biggest rainforest in the entire world, spanning the northwest of Brazil, Colombia and Peru. It is 5.5million km<sup>2</sup> and contains the longest river in the world, the Amazon River. The story contains vivid descriptions of the dense forest and the creatures and plants within it. The story itself seems to be set in the 20<sup>th</sup> century but it has a timeless feel and, therefore, is empty from the interference of technology.



Name of Book: The Explorer  
Date Published: 2017  
Author: Katherine Rundell  
Reading 'Reconsidered' Spine:  
Year 5/6 appropriate  
Genre: Adventure



## Characters

pilot	man who piloted the six-seater plan and crashed it
Fred	young, aspiring explorer with scientist parents
Con	young girl who was orphaned as a young child, raised by her great-aunt and sent to live with nuns each summer
Lila	Brazilian older sister of Max
Max	naïve but loveable Brazilian five-year-old boy who is the brother of Lila
Explorer	mysterious person living in the Amazon
Baca	an orphaned sloth who is rescued and cared for by Lila

### What Can the Book Teach Us?

Some things are better left undiscovered.

Finding ourselves is the greatest exploration of them all.

### Quotes

*"Heroes don't exist, boy - they're inventions made up of newsprint and quotable lines and photogenic moustaches."*

*"People think it means brave - and it does - but it also means a heart with claws. That's you. Con the Lion Heart."*

## Key Vocabulary

throttle	device controlling the flow of fuel or power to an engine
grimacing	to frown or sneer in disagreement or pain
luminous	giving off light; bright or shining
devoured	eat (food/prey) hungrily or quickly / destroy completely
brusquely	abrupt or curt in manner, seeming rude and rather blunt
indignantly	a manner indicating annoyance at something unfair
psychoanalyse	to analyse someone's thoughts and motives
concussion	a violent shock as from a heavy blow / to knock out
iridescent	luminous colours that seem to change at different angles
impenetrable	impossible to pass through or enter
canopy	uppermost branches of the trees in a forest
tributary	a river or stream flowing into a larger river
altitude	the height of an object in relation to sea/ground level
adrenalin	a hormone released in the body increasing heart rate
topography	the arrangement of physical features of a certain area
indistinguishable	not able to be identified as different or distinct
eavesdropper	listening in on someone else's conversation
ignition	mechanism for starting an engine
scandalising	shock/horrify someone by doing/saying something immoral
gangplank	moveable plank to enter or leave a boat/ship
hesitated	pause in indecision before saying or doing something

Context - Katherine Rundell uses the real explorer Percy Fawcett as inspiration. He spent much of his life searching for the 'City of Z', a city he believed was rich with gold and highly sophisticated. After travelling across the Upper Xingu, a tributary of the Amazon River, he disappeared in 1925, never to be seen again. Many explorers searched for him but to no avail. There are as many as 65 uncontacted, indigenous tribes still left in the Amazon. In the 1500s when Christopher Columbus and the Europeans arrived, there were as many as 2000. Western diseases and the removal of habitats and forest (deforestation) have caused the deaths of most of these indigenous tribes and sadly, few remain. The Mayans were a group of people who formed a large civilisation in Mexico and Central America around 1000 B.C. and built huge temples and cities in the rainforest. Their cities began to decline by 800A.D., possibly due to clearing of the rainforest which led to desertification (when fertile land turns to desert). War or shifting trade routes may also have contributed and, when Europeans arrived in the 1500s, disease spread and killed many more. The idea that people are now clearing the forests at an alarming rate plays an important role in the book too and Katherine Rundell points out that 600,000km<sup>2</sup> of the Amazon has been destroyed so far.