

Nim's Island: Who is the bravest of them all?

Nim's Island is a fantastic adventure book, rich with philosophical concepts. It also has a fearless young girl as the main character. However, is she the bravest?



First, ask pupils to stand up, face each other in pairs and each argue for one point of view:

It would be much better to live on an exotic island like Nim's, rather than where we live now. Do you agree?

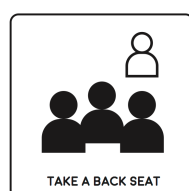
If you had to travel to an exotic island, would it be more fun to travel by boat or plane?

Once they are warmed up, place 3 pieces of paper around the room, each with the name of one of Nim's animal friends: Galileo, Selkie and Fred. If pupils could only have one as a friend on a deserted island, who would they go for? When pupils are stood next to a character, encourage them to persuade others to come and join them by giving reasons.



Ask for the names of other characters, adding each to an A3 piece of paper as they are called: Nim, Jack, Alexandra, and possibly Alexander Rover (this could lead to a whole new debate on whether he is an actual character – see 'Next Steps') Play *who is your favourite character and why?* to provide a reminder about each one.

Which of these characters is the bravest? Pupils can stand/sit knees together in small groups and discuss. The interesting tension that Nim is naturally fearless in the book whereas Alexandra overcomes her neuroticism and phobias to travel to the island. Who is braver – someone who overcomes a fear, or she who does not fear?



Pupils may go down the route of defining bravery. They might move on to investigate the character of Alexander Rover, especially if some voted for him as their favourite/most brave. He is an invention of Alexandra, but does have dialogue, and for a while is real in the mind of Nim. *Is Alexander Rover a real character?*

NEXT STEPS

Nim's Island is rich with questions. To continue exploring this book, ask pupils for other questions that could be discussed home. Here's some examples:

- *Was Jack right to leave Nim on the island?*
- *Should children have more wild experiences?*
- *Why do we do things that are dangerous?*
- *Are fictional heroes better than real ones?*