

12.

Is that you Ruthie?

Predictions, reading, discussions activity sheet

1. Examine *Is that you Ruthie?* by Ruth Hegarty. Don't start reading yet – just look at the cover, read the information about the author on the title page and explore the text on the cover. Check out the images and illustrations included throughout the text.

Complete the following table:

Author:	
Publisher:	Publication date:
No of pages:	No of chapters:
Setting:	
Where is the story set? What period in history?	
Note the photos and illustrations included: <i>What do they tell you about the story?</i>	
Other details: <i>Note any other information you have discovered</i>	
Rate your interest in this text	
Summary: <i>Write three sentences describing what you think this book is about</i>	

2. Use the following table to write down three issues/ideas/events you expect to read about. What predictions do you make about this book?

Predictions	What do you know?	Assessing your predictions
Write down an idea/issue/event you expect to read about in <i>Is that you Ruthie?</i>	Note anything you already know about the ideas/issues/events you have identified	Was your prediction correct? Note any new information you gathered from <i>Is that you Ruthie?</i>
1.		
2.		
3.		

3. After completing your predictions, read the rest of the text. While you are reading work with your classmates to consider the following discussion questions:

Chapter 2: In the Dormitory

- Discuss the characters you have identified during your reading. What are their relationships to each other?
- Discuss the living arrangement Ruby and Ruthie experience when they arrived at the dormitory. What were some of the reasons for segregating children and young women from their families at the camp?
- Discuss what happened to the rest of Ruthie's family. How did life on Cherbourg Mission affect them?

Chapter 3: The Little Girl's Dorm – School and Separation

- Ruby and Ruthie were both separated from their families. Discuss how separations affected each individual family member. For further information refer to the *Effects across generations* resource sheet.
- Think about the personal stories you have read from the *Bringing them home* report. Discuss the similarities and differences between those stories and Ruthie's experiences.
- Discuss life in the dormitory. What were the conditions like? What were some of the punishments Ruthie and the other girls experienced? Were there any good things about living in the dormitory?

Chapter 4: Into the Big Girl's Dorm

- Discuss how the dormitories were run. Who had authority?
- Compare Ruthie's experiences with yours – think about school, family life, friendships. Imagine yourself in Ruthie's place – what is the hardest thing about living in the 'big girl's dorm'? And the best thing?
- Discuss some of the other girls living in the dormitory with Ruthie. What happens to them?
- What did Ruthie and the other children in the dormitory do for fun?

Chapter 5: Domestic Service

- Discuss the training the children in the dormitory received. How does it differ from your own experiences at school?
- Imagine yourself in Ruthie's place – discuss what it would be like to travel to a place you've never heard of, far from your family, to work for a new employer.
- Ruthie was required to go out and take on domestic work. She was paid a low wage, part of which went back to the government. Discuss the legal system in place at the time. Refer to the *Laws: Queensland* for further information.
- Discuss Ruthie's experiences at the station at Jandowae. Refer to the letters from the Superintendent, the Mistress and Ruthie included in the text for evidence.

Chapter 6: Leaving the Dormitory

- Discuss Ruthie's experiences after leaving the dormitory. What happens to her? How does her experience of separation affect the rest of her life?
- Although the historical records are limited, the government kept files on the Indigenous children who were separated from their families. Discuss Ruthie's feelings when she discovers her own records at the Department of Family Services.