

TSSMTM
Creating VCE Success

ENGLISH TEXT SUMMARY NOTES
Island: Collected stories

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SAMPLE

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AUTHOR NOTES

Alistair MacLeod was born on July 20, 1936, in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada. He died on April 20, 2014, at the age of 77. He was born from Scottish ancestors who immigrated to Nova Scotia in the late 1700s. His own parents spoke Gaelic as their first language and returned to Cape Breton when Alistair was 10, after having migrated to Saskatchewan, where Alistair was born.

MacLeod was a good student in school and particularly enjoyed English, loving both reading and writing. He attended the Nova Scotia Teachers College and taught for a year on Port Hood Island. He also worked in mines during the summers to pay his way through university, where he eventually studied for a PhD.

He taught English and creative writing at Indiana University and the University of Windsor publishing two books of short stories, which were combined with two new stories into *Island*, as well as a novel called *No Great Mischief*. His books have been translated into seventeen languages.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The stories in *Island: Collected Stories* are set on Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada. Many are based around characters of Scottish descent; descendants of the Clearances which occurred in the Scottish Highlands during the late 1700s to the mid-1800s. Many of the families depicted still hold onto remnants of their heritage: including the language and music, although most speak English fluently and some of the families are struggling with the idea of their children moving even further away from their heritage.

The stories detail individuals who are involved in the traditional industries, particularly mining and fishing, on the island and the strong traditions of these professions which are passed through families. The times in which the stories are set range from the time of writing into the past, as they are based not only on present time