

Discovering Australia Dreaming Stories & Beyond

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

DREAMING STORIES
TEACHING NOTES
CROSS-CURRICULAR LEARNING



ABOUT THESE BOOKS

The books in this series use stories of the Dreaming and traditional stories as the focus text. This focus text provides topics that are explored throughout the rest of the book. The range of traditional, historical and contemporary texts in each book allows students to discover the beauty and richness of the peoples and places, flora and fauna of Australia, past and present and of the islands of the Torres Strait.

The original works of art by Aboriginal artist Michael J. Connolly demonstrate his interpretation of Dreaming stories. He combines modern art materials and techniques with traditional patterns, styles and subject matter.

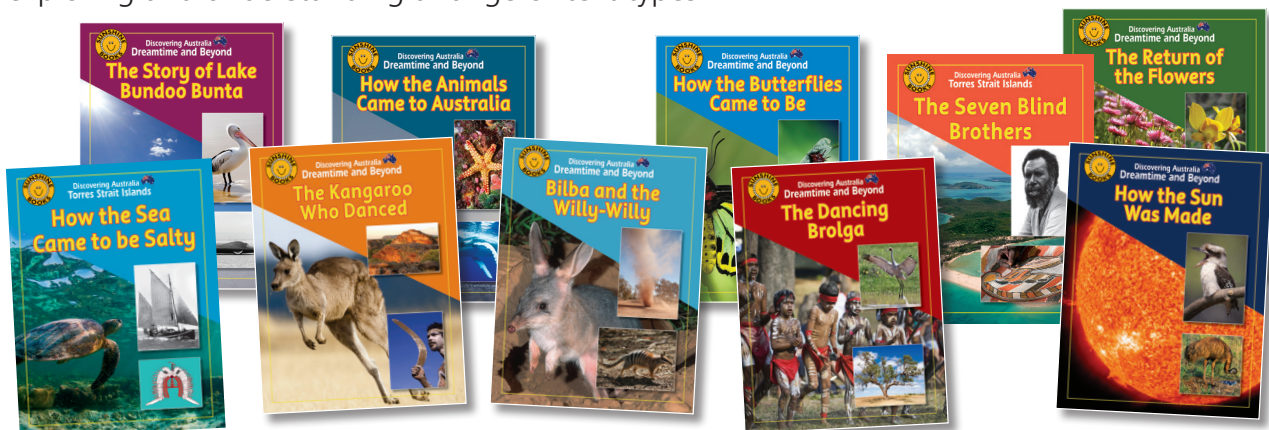
AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

This series supports the cross-curriculum priority to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures within the curriculum.

USING THESE BOOKS

Dreaming stories can be used to help students explore and understand Indigenous concepts of country and place, people, culture and identity. Students can listen to, read and view the traditional narratives of Australia's Indigenous peoples in both written and multimodal texts. Along with the related texts throughout each book, there are many opportunities for students to learn about a range of topics and use these as a springboard for further cross-curricular study.

The books can be used for shared, guided and independent reading and as models for exploring and understanding a range of text types.



DREAMING STORIES

How the Butterflies Came to Be

(Level 25)

The Dreaming story major theme:

This story explains death in a positive way within a wider context of the cycle of life. Seasonal changes and the life cycle of the butterfly are used to explain concepts of birth, growth, transformation, death and new life.

Text types:

Report, Explanation, Recount

Cross-Curricular Topics:

Butterflies, Life cycles, Native animals

The Story of Lake Bundoobunta

(Level 26)

The Dreaming story major theme:

This story explains the formation of Lake Bundoobunta that replaced the huge inland sea that had existed before. It emphasises the importance of observing traditions that have been handed down from generation to generation.

Text types:

Report, Recount, Song

Cross-Curricular Topics:

Lake Eyre, Weather, Explorers

How the Sun Was Made

(Level 26)

The Dreaming story major theme:

This story explains the coming of day and night, the behaviour of animals such as the brolga and the kookaburra as well as the appearance of the planet Venus in the night sky. It also reflects Indigenous beliefs about the beauty of the environment and the importance of everything that is part of it.

Text types:

Report, Explanation, Poetry

Cross-Curricular Topics:

Solar System, Native birds, Aboriginal navigation,

The Dancing Brolga

(Level 26)

The Dreaming story major theme:

This story of the dancing brolga reinforces the value and beauty of traditional dance in Indigenous communities. It also demonstrates the importance of women and the close relationship that Indigenous communities have with the natural environment.

Text types:

Report, Exposition, Poetry

Cross-Curricular Topics:

Brolgas, Wetlands, Aboriginal dance

How the Animals Came to Australia

(Level 26)

The Dreaming story major theme:

As well as explaining the annual migrations of birds and whales to and from Australia, this story shows the negative consequences for an individual (the sea star) when the trust of a friend (the whale) is abused.

Text types:

Report, Recount, Procedural

Cross-Curricular Topics:

Migrating animals, Whales, Sea stars

Bilba and the Willy-Willy

(Level 26)

The Dreaming story major theme:

This story explains why bilbies live underground and some of the other mysteries about the natural environment that people cannot explain.

Text types:

Report, Explanation, Poetry

Cross-Curricular Topics:

Endangered species, Bilbies, Weather, Willy-Willy

The Kangaroo Who Danced

(Level 27)

The Dreaming story major theme:

This story explains why the kangaroo, which once walked on four legs and had canine teeth like a dog, lost its canine teeth and now stands on two legs. The story also stresses the importance of observing the secret traditions of Indigenous ceremonies and dance.

Text types:

Report, Explanation, Recount

Cross-Curricular Topics:

Kangaroos, Aboriginal art, Explorers, Logos

The Return of the Flowers

(Level 27)

The Dreaming story major theme:

This story affirms the importance of the colours and beauty of flowers in lifting the human spirit. It also demonstrates how those who respect nature will be rewarded by its beauty.

Text types:

Report, Procedural, Transactional

Cross-Curricular Topics:

Native bees, Native plants, Aboriginal use of plants

How the Sea Came to be Salty

(Level 30+)

The Traditional story major theme:

This story explains the reason the sea is salty and therefore undrinkable.

Text types:

Report, Exposition, Recount, Explanation

Cross-Curricular Topics:

Deep-sea diving and the dangers, Tropical cyclones, Pearl shells and their uses, Oral tradition as a way of keeping stories alive

The Seven Blind Brothers

(Level 30+)

The Traditional story major theme:

This story describes how a prominent landmark came to be through a story of good and evil.

Text types:

Report, Instruction, Recount, Explanation

Cross-Curricular Topics:

Climate change and changing sea levels and how this affects island nations; Major weather events such as king tides, Fish as a source of food for island nations, Land rights for indigenous people, Sea mammals, The influence of local animals on art

TEACHING NOTES

BEFORE READING

Cultural Context: Dreaming Stories

Before reading the focus text in each book, it is important to explore with students the idea of oral traditions – stories that have been told and passed down through the ages. Discuss traditional stories they know, how they heard about them and identify any themes or messages in them.

What do students understand about Dreaming Stories?

Explain that stories of The Dreaming refer to the time before the time of creation. This was when ancestor spirits came to earth and created the plants, animals, land, people and the relationships between them. When the spirits had finished, some became part of the land or changed into an animal or remained as a spiritual being. Stories from The Dreaming and the traditional stories from the Torres Strait Islands cover many themes and topics that laid down the patterns of life for indigenous people, providing knowledge, faith and practices that continue to inform and encompass them in the present and into the future.

Questions

- What do students know about Indigenous Australians and the people of the Torres Strait Islands?
- Discuss how traditional stories were not written down but were part of an oral tradition. What does this mean?
- Students can brainstorm Aboriginal words they know.

- Students can talk about their own cultural group and the customs, beliefs and words associated with these cultures.
- Why do students think different cultures have different stories?

Tuning In

After reading the title of the story, ask students to look carefully at the artwork on page 4. What shapes or things can they identify that may feature in this story?

READING THE STORY

Modelled/Shared Reading:

Read the story to the students.

Guided Reading:

You may decide to use the story for guided reading with a group of students at a similar instructional reading level to this text.

Independent Reading:

Students can read the story independently or in pairs. The books are online at sunshineonline.com.au, although they have been reformatted with changed layouts.

AFTER READING

Understanding the story and its theme

- Ask students to identify the main characters and events of the story. (You may like to record these and create a sequencing activity).
- Re-tell the story in pairs or as a group with each student taking turns to re-tell part of the story.
- Ask students if they can identify the major theme of this story. What insights does this story give us into understanding traditional indigenous culture or beliefs?
- Can they identify the voice of the story by asking, Who is the storyteller?
- Can students see any connections between this story and their own lives?

Creative Interpretation

- Draw part of the story and write a description.
- Write down the main events in sequence.
- Create a dance or role-play depicting part of the story.

FOCUSING ON TEXT TYPES

Each book offers a range of text types that can be used for focussed teaching:

Explore the Text

Select the particular text and text type you wish to focus on and use this as a model in whole class or small group teaching. You may wish to use the piece for guided reading.

Identify the Common Features

Ask if students can name the text type and give other examples they have seen or read. Brainstorm with the students the common structural and language features you would usually expect to see with this text type.

Shared/Modelled Writing

Either create an example of this text type with your students or model writing a piece for your students. Brainstorm the key information first and then sort this information.

Independent Writing

Allow students time to demonstrate their understanding of this particular text type by creating their own. Share the results in pairs and with the whole class.

CROSS-CURRICULAR LEARNING

While these books support student achievement of learning outcomes in the English Curriculum, they also feature a range of interesting topics that have relevance across other curriculum areas such as Science, Geography, History and the Arts.