



Synopsis:

Taha, Mum and Joel had a wonderful time in 'the top end' of Australia. Now Mum has organised a very long journey from Darwin all the way south down to Esperance on the south coast of Western Australia! Their campervan, the Southern Cross, will take them to mining areas and ports, unique wildlife reserves, and areas where the first European explorers landed on the Australian mainland. Taha and Joel record their travels with photographs and notes in the journals that they were given by their teacher, Mrs Zimmerman. Taha also uses the Oracle Pod that was given to him by his neighbour, Mr Wilson, to find out interesting facts on their trip.

Before Reading

Discuss the following:

- The book format – Students can read the blurb, the table of contents and skim additional features such as the Aussie Jokes, Slang and Facts. Note the mix of photography and illustrations. Discuss design features.
- Citizenship and immigration – Review the citizenship ceremony (pp6-9) and discuss the importance placed on this ceremonial event. Talk about why, and from where, people migrate to Australia and then become Australian citizens. Locate South Africa on a world map. Ask students what Kagiso enjoys in Australia and what his name means. Students can discuss whether any of their names have a special meaning (for example, Emily means 'admiring' and William means 'protector').
- Campervans – Taha, Mum and Joel travel in their campervan, the Southern Cross. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of these 'homes on wheels' and the kinds of travelling games that can be played on long journeys.
- Indigenous Australians – Do students know about the indigenous Australians or traditional owners of the land in their local area or on the east coast of Australia? Discuss the references to indigenous culture on pages 16, 36 and 42. (It is important to

acknowledge the role of indigenous Australians and explore Australia's indigenous history prior to European settlement.)

Build up a collection of resources such as books, travel magazines, maps, street directories and websites.

Language Features and Activities

First person narrative:

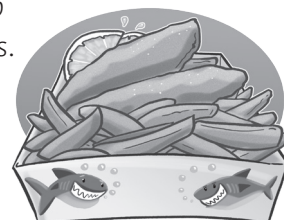
- The author engages the reader by using a character, Taha, to tell the story. This makes the narrative very personal. Taha's conversations with his mum, Joel and the people he meets give us an insight into their personalities and characters. (For example, Taha has great self-confidence and enthusiasm for life and often imagines himself as a high achiever or adventurer such as a buccaneer [p41].) Joel's character is a foil for the overtly confident Taha.

Journals:

- Taha and Joel use their journals to keep photographs and record written information about the trip. Discuss whether students keep journals on their holiday travels.

Letter writing:

- Taha writes to his neighbor, Mr Wilson. He is keen to tell



Mr Wilson details of his trip. The author has used this format, instead of a straight narrative, to change the way that the reader receives information. Demonstrate the correct format for writing a letter. Ask students to use correct letter writing techniques to request further information from the Western Australian Tourism industry about interesting locations or topics from the text.

Factual writing:

- Most of the factual information in the text is presented using the device of the Oracle Pod. However, there are other occasions when Mum and Taha give information to the reader. Use the shape of an oracle pod, cut out of card, to record research information about topics or places in this book that the students are interested in. Students can use Blackline Master 3 to investigate and research topics referred to in the text or the map of Australia to identify specific locations from the text.

Vocabulary:

- Use a dictionary to find meanings for words and phrases such as 'circumnavigated', 'raided', 'gentle giants', 'viewing platform', 'roadhouses', 'unique' and 'chill out'. Investigate the meanings of sayings such as 'the first leg of our long journey' (p18), 'monkeying around' (p60) and 'soak up its history' (p76).
- Ask students to make a list of bold or coloured words and explain why these are used in the text (for example, as sound effects or to describe and emphasise feelings, reactions or other physical features).
- There are several double-page illustrations in this book (pp40-41, 48-49, 82-83, 92-93 and 108-109). Consider the links that the illustrations provide to the text, especially to express feelings such as exhaustion and surprise, and so on. Also look at the illustrations on pages 87 and 115 and discuss how they work with the text.

Grammar/Punctuation:

- Hybrid languages are of mixed origin or composition, with elements derived from different languages. (For example, pidgin English is spoken

in parts of Papua New Guinea.) Discuss how hybrid languages may come about. What advantages would there be for a hybrid language?

- Discuss geographical terms such as 'archipelago' and 'peninsular' (p36). Ask students if they know any other geographical words (for example, 'terrain', 'valley', 'island' and so on).
- Alliteration describes the use of successive words beginning with the same letter. Have students read the contents page to find examples of alliteration, such as in the headings for Chapters 3 and 5.

Comprehension:

- To maintain an awareness of students' understanding of the text, use the chapter headings to ask questions about their content. (For example, ask why the author chose the title 'Monkeying Around in Monkey Mia' for Chapter 5 [p59].)
- Use Blackline Master 4 to check that students can give appropriate answers for questions.

Activities

- Students can use Blackline Master 4 as a cloze activity. The sentences review details within the narrative as well as facts from the Oracle Pod.
- Students can use Blackline Master 5 to record information about the life of William Dampier.
- Discuss the pirate language used by Taha (p41). Introduce sea shanties (examples are available at <http://www.talklikeapirate.com/juniorpirates.html>).
- Discuss (and if possible, display) pearls and the modern process of pearl making.
- Re-visit the coloured print on pages 90 to 91. Ask the students how the illustrator is trying to convey meaning to the reader. For example, 'massive' is written in large, red letters. List words that could be written in such a way so as to suggest their meaning (for example, 'narrow', 'hot'.) Students could use colours and/or different sized letters to illustrate them.
- Ask students to imagine that they are returning home after a long trip and write about how they would feel.

Maps and Maths

- Calculate the distances travelled between Katherine and Broome.
- Discuss directions and the terms 'north', 'south', 'east' and 'west' to indicate sunrise/sunset, wind direction, road and town locations.
- Use a map of Australia to trace the route that the Southern Cross took from Darwin to Esperance. Locate and identify the major towns. How many days did it take?
- Locate the North West Coastal Highway (p64) on a map of Australia.

Characters

Taha and his best friend Joel continue to enjoy travelling together while Mum drives from Darwin to Esperance in the Southern Cross. Taha is very confident and adventurous, and often cheeky (especially in his letters to Mr Wilson). Joel is quieter, yet often demonstrates his keener knowledge and understandings about Australia. In this title, Joel becomes more involved in conversations and expresses his feelings; we find out more about Joel as the journey comes to an end. He is very fond of food and is tolerant of Taha's singing and jokes. Re-visit the reactions of Mum and Joel to Taha's antics (pp86-87).



Our Australia series by Phil Kettle
Illustrations by David Dunstan
Teacher notes by Judi Champion
Edited by Emma Short
Design by Goanna Graphics (Vic) Pty Ltd

Research Topics

- citizenship and immigration
- iron ore mining
- quokkas, whale sharks, dolphins
- Australian shipwrecks and dive locations
- pearling – past and present
- Pink Lake – salt production
- Edith Cowen, William Dampier

Useful References

- Tourism agencies
- Local councils, libraries, historical societies
- State automobile clubs – maps and trip planners
- <http://www.esperance.wa.gov.au/>
- http://www.westernaustralia.com/en/Destinations/Australias_Coral_Coast/Ningaloo/Pages/Ningaloo.aspx
- <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/dampier-william-1951>
- <http://www.rotnestisland.com/>
- <http://www.rba.gov.au/banknotes/types/bio-cowan.html>
- <http://www.arkive.org/quokka/setonix-brachyurus/>
- <http://library.thinkquest.org/10236/>
- Australian Geographic articles relating to Canberra:
Whale sharks/National Geographic Crittercam (Brian Kelley and Lara Aqel) 2010
Hundreds of New Reef Creatures Found in Australia (James Owen), 18 September 2008
Ten great shipwreck dives around Australia (Aaron Smith) 20 January 2011
Aboriginal rock art site vandalized (Victoria Laurie) 2 March 2011

Name: _____ Date: _____

Draw a map of Taha's trip. Add pictures, captions or labels.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Write a review about this book.

Title:

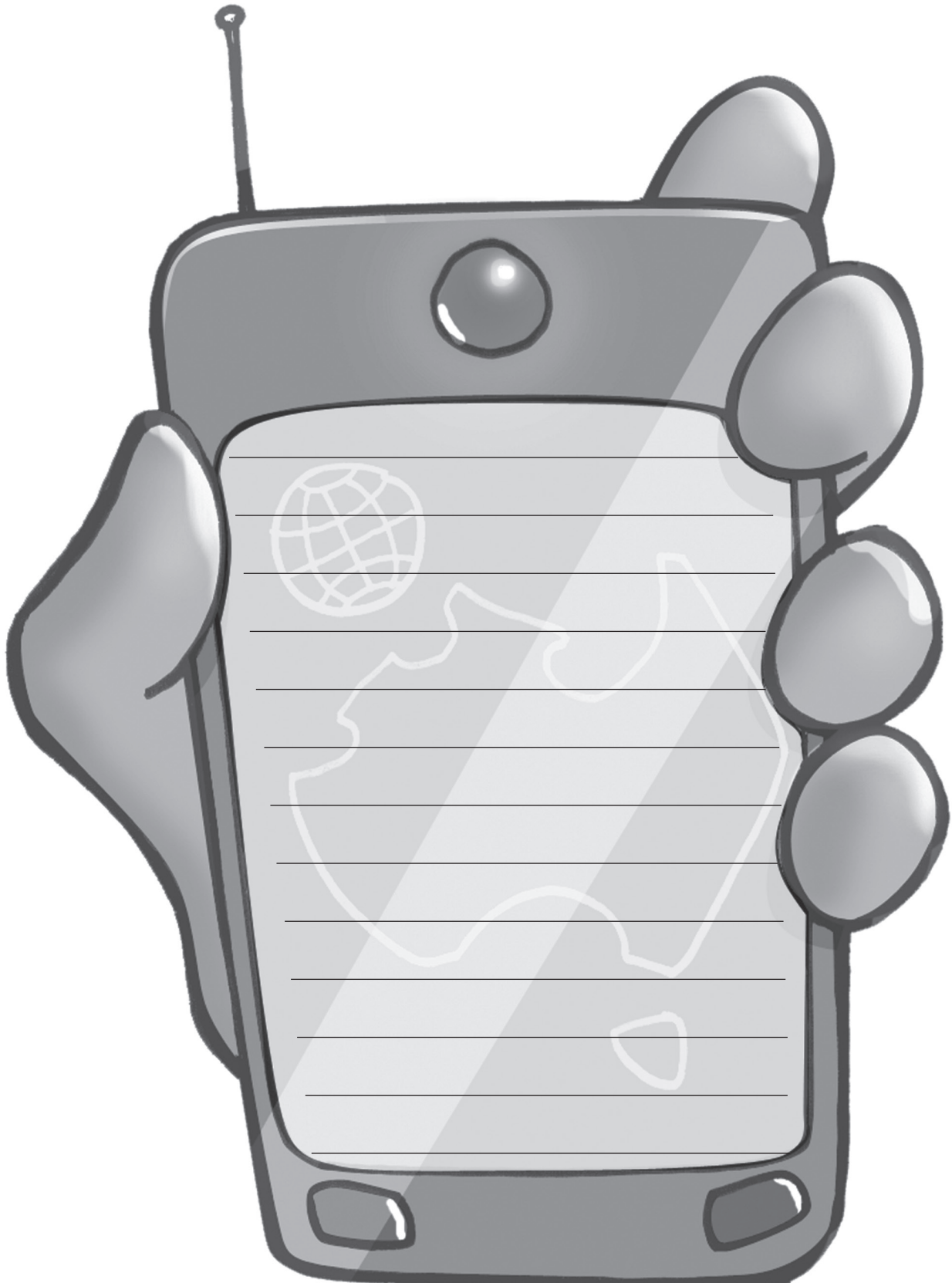
Author:

What happens:

My opinion of this book:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Choose a topic or idea from *Our Australia Esperance*. Use the Internet, books or other resources to research this topic. Record the information you find on the Oracle Pod below.



BLM 4

Something's Missing!

Name: _____ Date: _____

Read the sentences below. Some information is missing. Use the words from the box to complete each sentence.

Cable Beach was named after an _____ .

Port Hedland is a major _____ of iron ore.

In the 1600s, Australia was called _____ .

Ningaloo Reef can be described as _____ .

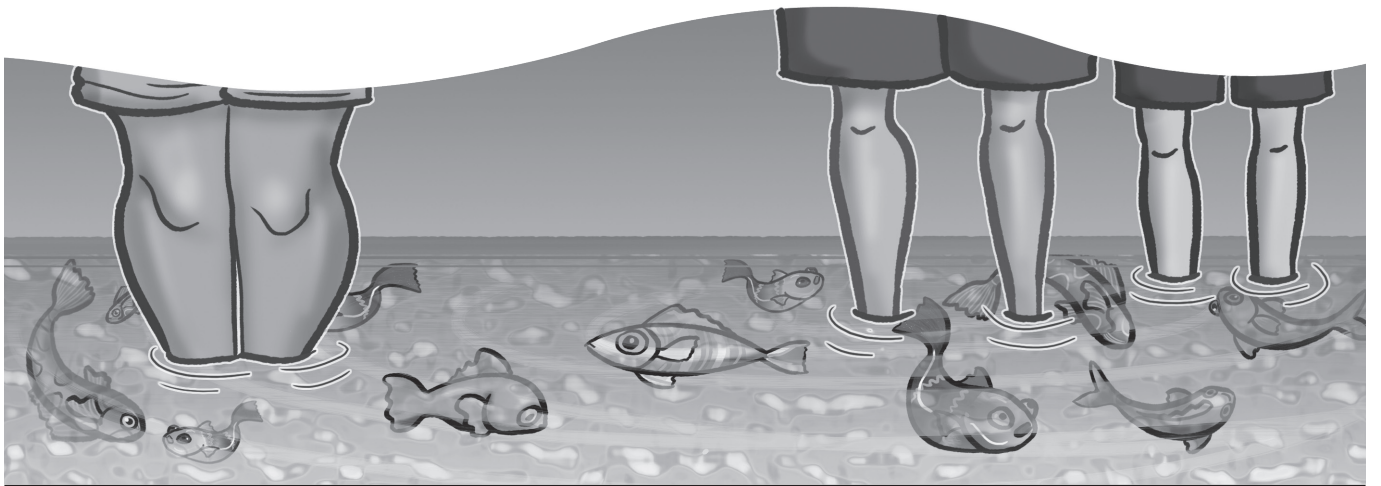
Monkey Mia is famous for _____ .

Mum, Taha and Joel rode bikes around Rottnest Island to see the _____ .

Esperance is famous for its white _____ beaches.

The *Sanko Harvest* is a _____ . It hit _____ .

Taha had dreams about all the _____ things he has done.



quokkas	sandy	rocks
New Holland	exporter	bottle-nosed dolphins
pristine	underwater telegraph line	
fantastic	shipwreck	

Name: _____ Date: _____

Use information from the text, non-fiction books or the internet to record information about William Dampier in the boxes below.

Born: _____ Died: _____

Place of birth: _____ Lived in: _____

Best known for:

As a buccaneer, William Dampier...

William Dampier travelled on many expeditions. The main ones were:

