Black Cockatoo
Learning Resource Pack

Australian Curriculum linked for grades 5-9
Differentiated abilities (Low Literacy- L, Medium Literacy- M, Higher Ability- H and A- Aboriginal Students)
Worksheet templates allow flexible delivery of content to match your students’ needs
Special Considerations

It is important to be aware of the context of your students, your students’ heritage and class cultural mix. You may need to spend time setting up your learning environment prior to study to ensure that Aboriginal students feel safe and valued, prejudice opinions are discouraged and the whole class is aware that some sensitive issues may be raised or discussed.

It is highly recommended that you contact and involve local Aboriginal language centre in addition to the study of this book- the local, specific Aboriginal language and stories can enhance this book study- compare and contrast your local Aboriginal experience, find out the local words for the Jaru words in the book, guest speakers to talk about their experience growing up etc, allow opportunity to discuss the diverse face of Aboriginal Australia including different nations, languages, cultures and traditions.

Curriculum Links

Worksheets in this Learning Resource Pack are closely aligned to the Australian Curriculum Learning Areas English and HASS as well as Cross Curricular Priorities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures and Sustainability - as an educator you will decide on the most appropriate worksheets from this pack to cover the required Australian Curriculum Outcomes for your students.

Planning to Study the Text

Often classes in schools are combinations of two such as 5/6, 7/8 and sometimes 9/10- this often means that texts can not be studied annually as one cohort has already completed the novel study. Another issue for a popular text (such as Jandamarra in the Kimberleys) is that teachers from different years plan to study it without consultation to see if it has been studied previously.

A school Scope and Sequence document might work to overcome this issue - staff may plan a bi-annual study of the text in one class combination- such as 7/8. Alternatively, teachers of the different years could discuss the depth at which the study will take place- a surface introduction to the text as part of a theme study (maybe linked to HASS Australian communities - their past, present and possible futures or Australia in the past and present and its connections with a diverse world) in year 5/6, a detailed novel study in year 7/8 and then use the text as a reference point to investigate the deeper issues connected to the text in 9/10 (such as HASS linked Place and liveability, Landforms and landscapes, Geographies of interconnections).

Using the worksheet

This Learning Resource Package is made to be flexible- print the worksheets in booklets (covers at the end), print as you go individual sheets, save the worksheets on school shared drive, project the worksheets on the board for students to copy or to work on together on interactive whiteboard.
Tuning In Activities

Pre-Reading Hook Suggestions

- At the start of the day leave some feathers scattered (and maybe an empty cage with the door open or tipped over) around the classroom front door. When students come in discuss what they think happened and discuss their preconceptions about birds, cages, freedom etc.

- At the start of the day leave some black and red feathers, a slingshot and rocks scattered around the classroom front door. Students have to work in groups to create a hypothesis for what they think happened.

- Have some objects or pictures from Aboriginal culture (spear head, bush honey, pictures of bush turkeys, red dirt etc) and black cockatoos on a table at the front of class. Students must guess what they are and how they think all the objects are connected.
Pre-Reading Predictions

What do you think this book will be about? Look for clues on and in the text. Draw what you think the characters, setting and plot might be.
Pre-Reading Predictions

What do you think this book will be about? Draw what you think the characters, setting and plot might be and annotate with the words that gave you these clues.

I'm switching on my brain for reading!
Pre-Reading Predictions

What do you think this book will be about? Look for clues on and in the text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Front Cover</th>
<th>Back Cover</th>
<th>Flick through the inside</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What clues can you see on the front cover to give you a hint about what the text might be about? What is the title? What is the picture? Do the colours give you a clue? Does the font give you a clue?</td>
<td>What does the blurb say? What predictions can you make from the blurb? Are there any pictures, colours or symbols? Does the publisher logo give you a clue?</td>
<td>Quickly flick through some of the pages. Are there title headings? Repeated words? Any illustrations? What ideas does this give you about the text?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I’m switching on my brain for reading!
Author Investigation

Understanding the authors can sometimes help you understand their motivations and the experiences that they recreate in their books. Draw what you think life was like for both authors growing up.

**Carl Merrison**

- swimming
- hunting
- fishing
- camping
- gold detecting
- basketball
- football
- friends
- family

**Hakea Hustler**

- bush walking
- beaches
- pets
- reading
- writing
- playing computers
- art
- family
- friends
- music
Author Investigation

Understanding the authors can sometimes help you understand their motivations and the experiences that they recreate in their books. Underline key words. Draw what you think life was like for both authors growing up.

Author, Carl Merrison, is a Jaru/Kija man who grew up in and around Halls Creek in the Kimberley. His grandmother was a victim of the Stolen Generation. When he was young Carl would love swimming in waterholes, hunting, fishing, camping out with friends. He moved out of home when he was sixteen and lived with friends. Carl still enjoys gold detecting, hunting, gatherings with friends and family, football, basketball and mentoring youth.

Co-author, Hakea Hustler, has taught and travelled in many remote areas of Australia including Areyonga, Papunya, Halls Creek and One Arm Point. She grew up mainly in the Geelong region but also spent some time in the Northern Rivers NSW. Hakea’s parents broke up when she was six and she spent a short time in foster care then 10 years living with her grandparents before moving back in with her father. She studied to be a teacher specialising in English and Humanities. She is interested in human and animal rights, education and travel.
Author Investigation

Understanding the authors can sometimes help you understand their motivations and the experiences that they recreate in their books.

Author, Carl Merrison, is a Jaru/Kija man who grew up in and around Halls Creek in the Kimberley. His grandmother was a victim of the Stolen Generation. Carl enjoys gold detecting, hunting, gatherings with friends and family, football, basketball and mentoring youth.

1. Search ‘Halls Creek’ up in a search engine- What kind of news stories come up? Make a tally of the first ten you read- positive and negative. What impact do you think that those news stories have on the self-perception of Halls Creek people? What challenges do young people in Halls Creek face?
2. Look up the Clontarf Foundation- Halls Creek or the Halls Creek District High School websites. What kind of activities do students in Halls Creek do at school or with Clontarf?
3. Research what other recreational activities people in Halls Creek might enjoy- rodeo, basketball competitions, Halls Creek Hawks and Yardgee Dockers football teams, Rungala Horse Riding, Sawpit Gorge, Caroline Springs etc.
4. Look up Carl Merrison on the internet. What things has Carl been in the news for?

Co-author, Hakea Hustler, has taught and travelled in many remote areas of Australia including Areyonga, Papunya, Halls Creek and One Arm Point. She grew up mainly in the Geelong region but also spent some time in the Northern Rivers NSW. Hakea’s parents broke up when she was six and she spent a short time in foster care then 10 years living with her grandparents before moving back in with her father. She studied to be a teacher specialising in English and Humanities. She is interested in human and animal rights, education and travel.

1. Look up some of the remote communities that Hakea has worked and volunteered in. Do these communities share anything in common together?
2. Compare and contrast Hakea’s home town with Carl’s.
3. What elements of the story do you think Hakea would have shaped around her experiences?
Author Investigation

Understanding the authors can sometimes help you understand their motivations and the experiences that they recreate in their books. Underline key words. Compare and contrast Carl's childhood to yours in the Venn Diagram below.

Author, Carl Merrison, is a Jaru/Kija man who grew up in and around Halls Creek in the Kimberley. His grandmother was a victim of the Stolen Generation. When he was young Carl would love swimming in waterholes, hunting, fishing, camping out with friends. He moved out of home when he was sixteen and lived with friends. Carl still enjoys gold detecting, hunting, gatherings with friends and family, football, basketball and mentoring youth.
Publisher Investigation

Look up the publisher website https://www.magabala.com/ and explore some of the information on the site.

EXPLORE

1. Have you read another book from this publishing house?
2. What other books from the website would you like to read and why?
3. What common themes can you see in the books?

ANSWER

4. What is unique about this publishing house?
5. Why is it important to have a publishing house just dedicated to this?
6. What is the history of Magabala Books?
7. What role does Magabala Books play in preserving language, culture and history?
8. What role do you think Magabala Books plays in promoting important Australian issues such as reconciliation and breaking down negative stereotypes?
Mia and her family live in Jaru country in the Kimberley in Western Australia. Write three investigation questions to help guide your study of Mia’s country or answer the questions set below. Make notes on this sheet and present your answers in a presentation of your choice - poster, powerpoint, illustration, map.

1. What was life like for Aboriginal people in the Kimberley before invasion/colonisation?

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2. Who were the first invaders/settlers to the Kimberley? Why were they there?

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3. What impact did invasion/settlement have on the people of the Kimberley? What happened to their land? What happened to their rights?

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4. Research the Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing or Warmun floods- or the impact of flooding ‘wet season’ in the Kimberley.

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*Remember to write the details of the websites that you use at the end of your investigation.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Year 5 HASS
The nature of convict or colonial presence, including the factors that influenced patterns of development, aspects of the daily life of the inhabitants (including Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples) and how the environment changed (ACHASSK107)

he influence of people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, on the environmental characteristics of Australian places (ACHASSK112 - Scootle )

The impact of bushfires or floods on environments and communities, and how people can respond(ACHASSK114 - Scootle )
Year 6 Setting Investigation

Mia and her family live in Jaru country in the Kimberley in Western Australia. Write three investigation questions to help guide your study of Mia’s country or answer the questions set below. Make notes on this sheet and present your answers in a presentation of your choice - poster, powerpoint, illustration, map.

1. Using the Indigenous Australia map (https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia) count how many Aboriginal nations existed in the Kimberley. Who are the neighbouring Aboriginal tribes to the Jaru people?
2. What information can you find about Jaru culture? What are some of the important Jaru landmarks or sacred places?
3. What was society like for Kimberley Aboriginal people before invasion/settlement? What was their society and law structure?
4. How did society change for Aboriginal people after invasion/settlement? When did Aboriginal people gain citizenship? When did Aboriginal people gain the right to vote?
5. Research famous Jaru/Kimberley people and discuss how they are contributing to society or democracy.

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*Remember to write the details of the websites that you use at the end of your investigation.

Year 6 HASS
Experiences of Australian democracy and citizenship, including the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, migrants, women and children (ACHASSK135 - Scootle)
The world’s cultural diversity, including that of its indigenous peoples (ACHASSK140 - Scootle)
Mia and her family live in Jaru country in the Kimberley in Western Australia. Write three investigation questions to help guide your study of Mia’s country or answer the questions set below. Make notes on this sheet and present your answers in a presentation of your choice - poster, powerpoint, illustration, map.

1. What factors make Jaru country a good place to live for the Jaru people?
2. How could people access Jaru land? Are tourists allowed everywhere? Can Jaru country be accessed all year round? What transport options are there to see Jaru country?
3. What services are there in the towns in Jaru country? What do they have to travel to access?
4. What influence does social and cultural connectedness and community identity have on Jaru people choosing their country to live and stay?

Year 7 Geography Links
Factors that influence the decisions people make about where to live and their perceptions of the liveability of places (ACHGK043 - Scootle)
The influence of accessibility to services and facilities on the liveability of places (ACHGK044 - Scootle)
The influence of social connectedness and community identity on the liveability of place (ACHGK046 - Scootle)
Year 8 Setting Investigation

Mia and her family live in Jaru country in the Kimberley in Western Australia. Write three investigation questions to help guide your study of Mia’s country or answer the questions set below. Make notes on this sheet and present your answers in a presentation of your choice- poster, powerpoint, illustration, map.

1. Describe the Jaru landscape- are there any distinctive landform features? You may need to research how the Bungle Bungles were made, iron ore in dirt (red colour) or 'Kimberley landforms' to get more information.

2. Research the spiritual and cultural value of Jaru/Kimberley landforms for the Aboriginal people there (Bungle Bungles, Geikie Gorge, Cathedral Gorge etc)

3. Describe what you think the landscape around Mia’s small town might be like? What might a trip out bush look like for Mia? How would they use the landforms and sacred places?

Year 8- Geography
Different types of landscapes and their distinctive landform features (ACHGK048 - Scootle )
Spiritual, aesthetic and cultural value of landscapes and landforms for people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACHGK049 - Scootle )
Year 9 Setting Investigation

Mia and her family live in Jaru country in the Kimberley in Western Australia. Write three investigation questions to help guide your study of Mia’s country or answer the questions set below. Make notes on this sheet and present your answers in a presentation of your choice- poster, powerpoint, illustration, map.

1. What kind of bush food would Jaru people eat? How would/do they use fibres?
2. Did Jaru/Kimberley people alter their environment to produce/find food- ie. spreading seeds, permanent traps, burning, changing flow of rivers etc.
3. What connections do Jaru people have to their land?
4. What forms of communication and transportation do people in the Kimberley have? What access to services and information do they have? Research the Royal Flying Doctor Service, School of the Air and other remote services designed to overcome some of the disadvantage.
5. What positive and negative impact do tourists have on the Jaru people and their land?

Year 9 Geography
Human alteration of biomes to produce food, industrial materials and fibres, and the use of systems thinking to analyse the environmental effects of these alterations (ACHGK061 - Scootle )
The perceptions people have of place, and how these influence their connections to different places (ACHGK065 - Scootle )
The way transportation and information and communication technologies are used to connect people to services, information and people in other places (ACHGK066 - Scootle)
The effects of people’s travel, recreational, cultural or leisure choices on places, and the implications for the future of these places (ACHGK069 - Scootle )
Setting Reflection

Look at the pictures below of Halls Creek and surrounds. Use adjectives to describe what you think the country feels like, sounds like and looks like.
## Setting Investigation

Look up pictures and news stories about Jaru country (around Halls Creek). Draw and label a picture of your town including landscape, recreation activities and types of buildings. In the other box draw and label Halls Creek WA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My town</th>
<th>Jaru Country- Halls Creek</th>
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</table>

Predict what ways you think your town might be similar or different than town in the story.
Design your Ultimate Kimberley Holiday

You have $10,000 to plan your ultimate Kimberley WA holiday experience. Look up flights (QANTAS and AirNorth may be your only options) from your town to Kununurra or Broome, hire car (4WD if you want to do off road like the Gibb River Road or up the Dampier Peninsular) or Greyhound Bus, and factor in your accommodation (tent, caravan or hotel?). What would you like to see and do? You might use Scribble Maps plot and label, you might glue pics of different places or you may just record your answers below.

Reflect on price of things in Kimberleys compared to your town/state, distance between locations that might add to your travel time or convenience (if you have a medical issue you might even have to stay close to Broome or Kununurra the whole time to access hospitals if an emergency). Consider how these factors would impact the life of people who actually live there.
Design a holiday package for tourists to visit your town

Since the launch of the book 'Black Cockatoo' and other famous Kimberley films and TV shows such as Mystery Road and Wolf Creek tourists have been interested in exploring the Australian outback. Design a brochure selling your town as a tourism destination.

Could you charge to take them on a tag along tour to special places? What would you feed them- would they catch and find for themselves or would you provide? What stories would you tell them? Would you camp out overnight? What traditional survival skills would you show them? How much do you think you could charge for your service?

Represent your ideas in a brochure form, brainstorm or images below.
Aboriginal English, Kriole and Pigeon

Mia and her family speak English, Jaru and Aboriginal English. Many people in the Kimberley speak more than one language and do not speak English as a first language at home. Aboriginal English, Kriole and Pigeon were invented through necessity when interacting with Asian traders before European invasion and then during conflict, trade and occupation after invasion. At some stages in our history, Aboriginal people were forbidden to speak their traditional languages. Aboriginal English and Kriole are now play a vital role in Aboriginal identity and are respected by linguists as unique dialects.

Look up information about Aboriginal English, Kriole and Pigeon in the Kimberley or your local area.

https://www.klrc.org.au/kimberley-kriol/overview
https://open.abc.net.au/explore/1603

Consider the following questions and answer them in your workbook or as a class discussion (teacher direction).

My context

1. How many languages do you speak?
2. Are you expected to learn an additional language at school? How do you find learning another language? Can you empathise with how ESLD students in Aboriginal communities might feel having their classes in all English?
3. How do you think your language shapes your identity?

Research questions

4. Why is language important to Aboriginal people?
5. How was Kriole/Aboriginal English developed?
6. Why do linguists say these are dialects?
7. What similarities and differences can you see between English and kriole/Aboriginal English?
8. Describe how Kriole and Aboriginal English developed over time.

Text Reflection

9. Why do you think that it is important for texts like Black Cockatoo that show traditional languages and dialects to wider Australia?
10. How do you think the text will achieve this balance?
Halls Creek History

Author Carl Merrison grew up in the remote Kimberley town of Halls Creek and this might be the town in which Mia lives in the book (although it could easily be any town in the Kimberley). Understanding the history of a town can sometimes help you understand the people that live in it and the stories that come out of it!


Reflection Questions

1. Why was Halls Creek settled?
2. Why did the influx of people not last very long?
3. What issues existed for the first Halls Creek site?
4. How might the sad history of Kimberley invasion, massacres and tough life out bush have impacted on local people?
5. How do you think Carl’s life growing will impact the story? What elements do you expect to see woven through the story?
6. What is the history of your town? Compare and contrast it to Halls Creek story.
Mulla Bulla Station History

To best understand some of the troubles that Mia and her family face in a remote Kimberley town during the book, it might help to understand the history of Mulla Bulla Station in Halls Creek and to reflect on how the treatment of Aboriginal people there may have left inter-generational trauma. Read the story here: https://open.abc.net.au/explore/17713 and https://ictv.com.au/video/item/179

Comprehension/discussion questions

- Where had the Aboriginal people on the station come from? What issues could have arisen from this mix?
- What was life like for Aboriginal people on Mulla Bulla station between 1910 and 1955? How was this different than that of the European station workers?
- What happened in 1955? What do you think the effect this would have had on the Aboriginal people at the station? How would you have felt if it was your family?
- Why would people want to return to Mulla Bulla?
- In what ways do you think the treatment of Aboriginal people at Mulla Bulla station (the parents, grandparents and great-grandparents of youth living there today) might have contributed to some of the social issues that exist there today? ie. trust of authority, trust of school system, upbringing, child rearing, dealing with trauma and inter-generational trauma, connection to culture etc.

Correlation chart

These website links highlight some of the struggles that Kimberley people face- especially in the town of Halls Creek from which author Carl Merrison comes from.


Can you see any correlations between the treatment of Aboriginal people during 1910-1955 (before and beyond) and the social issues that affect people living in the town today?

Additional reading
http://www.kimberleysociety.org/oldfiles/2003/MOOLA%20BULLA%20Apr%202003.pdf as well as the further suggested reading at the bottom of each)
## Book Inspiration

Authors Carl Merrison and Hakea Hustler used inspiration from around the Kimberleys to shape the book. Read through the inspirations and then as you read through the book see if you can find the parts in the book that they inspired.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSPIRATION</th>
<th>How it was written (quote) or woven (explain) the book</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A student of Hakea’s telling her about how her brother had got in trouble on the weekend because he had shot down heaps of birds in his backyard for target practice with a slingshot (shanghai).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hakea and Carl were out bush with his friend TJ and family. TJ’s boys were enjoying playing in the bush and exploring. They shot down a little honey eater bird and brought it back to show off. TJ and his wife spoke to the boys about how we don’t just kill for fun and how the boys should eat it. The bird was cooked up on the camp fire.</td>
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<td>Two girls at high school were talking casually about a girl that one of them didn’t know. The unknown girl was described as “you know the one wearing my pink top”... The spirit of sharing and communal ownership can be positive and negative.</td>
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<td>It costs a lot to transport anything to the Kimberleys and the rough roads to some communities add another barrier to transporting and building homes. Overcrowding is often an issue in towns in the Kimberleys with many families living in one house.</td>
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<td>Carl’s aunt Karen telling him about some cheeky (means naughty in Aboriginal English) boys who threw rocks at her budgies in the cage in her backyard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carl’s nephew Scotty coming into Hakea’s class with a live tata lizard attached to his ear like an earring... all morning!</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Carl and Hakea enjoyed swimming in the pool at the Kimberley Hotel in Halls Creek – in the yard is a cockatoo that was saved after a road accident that lives in a cage.

Carl remembers chasing big blue grasshoppers as a kid.

Carl and Hakea reflected on the people in town that thought they ‘know what’s best for Aboriginal people’ and this was mirrored in the experience of the black cockatoo. Experiences of the Stolen Generation (Carl's grandmother was a Stolen Generation victim) and assimilation policies.

With low education rates and high suicide in the Kimberley the authors wanted to write a story that acknowledges some of the challenges of remote life and lights some of the paths to young readers.

Mia lives with her grandparents- both Carl and Hakea spent time living with their grandparents as children.

Carl has heaps of stories to tell about going out bush with his family and cousin-brothers and brothers.
General Throughout Reading Activities

General Throughout Reading In class activities

- Allocate the character voices- as you or selected students read the 'character voices' read the speech in the appropriate accent with the right emotion.
- Ask students to reflect on ideas, events and chapters using a thumb-mometer.
- Ask students about their personal experiences that reflect that of the text as you read- such as 'hands up if have ever saved an injured animal' or 'share with a partner a time when you helped your grandparents' etc.
- Students can create their own glossary of new or unfamiliar words.
Unlocking the layers

Throughout the book *Black Cockatoo* the authors make references to Jaru culture that might get missed by readers of other cultures. This document helps to unlock some of these layers of meaning. You may like to reflect on how this changes your understanding of the paragraph, chapter or indeed whole book— you might discuss in pairs, whole class discussion or write a written reflection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote from the book</th>
<th>Layers of meaning</th>
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</table>
| “She wasn’t meant to challenge her brother; she owed him a certain amount of respect” (page 7) | Culturally in Halls Creek girls are meant to ‘respect’ their brothers. The family relationship structure is complex including:  
- sisters should defend their initiated brothers from disrespect by other girls  
- sisters should not disrespect their older brothers  
- brothers and sisters are expected to defend their siblings in fights or disagreements  
- son-in-laws should not talk to or look at their mother-in-laws  
- daughter-in-laws should not talk to or look at their father-in-laws  
- children and grandparents can tease and joke with each other  
- girlfriends and their brother-in-laws have a fun teasing/joking relationship and both are expected to help each other such as men mow the law and the women make food for her brother-in-law etc. |
| “You shouldn’t be saying that bird’s name around the children’ Katherine whispered to her father as the family began choosing their food from the hotplate.” (page 10) | According to Jaru culture uninitiated young people should not look at or say the name of a dirrarn black cockatoo. |
| “This storm is because of you,’ their grandfather said solemnly to Jy. He motioned towards the clouds as a strong wind swirled around the family. ‘It’s because of the jiyirr rainbow bee-eater bird you hunted and the injured dirrarn. You need to respect our past, my jawiji.’” (page 13) | Both animals are connected to the coming of the rains in Jaru culture. |
| “She listened respectfully and allowed a thoughtful silence.” (page 34) | Kimberley mob don’t need to always talk to communicate. Respectful silence is used in conversation. As is body language and hand signals. Staring at the person talking is a sign or arrogance and disrespect— it is respectful to look past or away from the speaker. |
| “Stop! shouted their grandfather. ‘Enough fighting. You should feel shame fighting your sister.’” (page 39) | Shame has a different meaning for Aboriginal people— it is deep embarrassment often from a certain situation and not necessarily from someone’s actions. It can be used in the context of ‘that is a big shame (embarrassment)’ or ‘I feel shame (deep embarrassment)’ or ‘I can’t that’s big shame (that’s really shameful and embarrassing).’ |
Consider what you think characters were thinking or feeling and what they would post to social media at the end of each chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Reflections - Instagram Posts</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Consider what you think characters were thinking or feeling and what they would post to social media at the end of each chapter.</td>
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</table>
Character Reflections - Diary Entries

After reading each chapter write a diary entry as one of the characters.
Chapter Reflections

Summarise each chapter in your own words or in a drawing. What were the key events? What new information do we learn about the characters?

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Character Analysis

Activities

Character in class activities

- Act out a scene from the book.
- Act out a ‘missing scene’- students think about scenes that might have happened between chapters and act them out for the class.
- Pair students up- one student is the interviewer and the other is a character. Students plan and act out a character interview.
- Charades- one student is allocated a character to act out without talking while the rest of the class guess which one.
- Students create a Voki avatar of one of the characters and give it a script as it would speak about an event in the book.
Character Map

In picture or symbol form draw a representation of the relationships between the key characters in the text.

- Mia and Jy
- Mia and Jawii
- Mia and Jaja Rosa
- Jy and Jawii
- Jy and Jaja Rosa
- Jy or Mia and the dirrarn
Character Map

As you read, map characters relationships and connections with each other. Some have been done for you.

- **Mia** misses the connection she once had with her brother. She worries about him.
- **Jy** is losing respect for his grandfather. He feels angry and defiant whenever his grandfather asks him to do something or gives him advice.
- **Jawaijii** is worried for his grandson and feels powerless to help him.

**Characters:**
- Katherine
- Mia
- Jy
- Jawaijii
- Jaja Rosa
- dirrarn
As you read, map characters relationships and connections with each other. Some have been done for you.

- Mia feels awkward in his presence.
- Jyaajii is worried for his grandson and feels powerless to help him.
- Jy is losing respect for his grandfather.
- He feels angry and defiant whenever his grandfather asks him to do something or gives him advice.
Draw your family connections

Mia's family was very close and living in a small town she had lots of relatives. Draw your own family connections. Consider the comparisons with Mia.
Character Timeline

Draw the key scenes where Mia grows as a character. Think about how she is feeling, thinking and worried about in each stage.

Mia: BEGINNING----MIDDLE----END
As you read, map the character's growth. What are their characteristics, motivations, worries/problems/challenges? Draw or write your answers—some have been started for you.

**Mia: BEGINNING---------------------------------------------MIDDLE---------------------------------------------END**

**Jy: BEGINNING---------------------------------------------MIDDLE---------------------------------------------END**

In the beginning Jy is feeling angry and frustrated.

Jy is taking his anger out on the birds in the yard and on his family.
Character Timeline

As you read, map the character's growth. What are their characteristics, motivations, worries/problems/challenges?

Mia: BEGINNING---------------------------------------MIDDLE---------------------------------------END

Jy: BEGINNING---------------------------------------MIDDLE---------------------------------------END

Jawii: BEGINNING---------------------------------------MIDDLE---------------------------------------END

Jaja Rosa: BEGINNING---------------------------------------MIDDLE---------------------------------------END
**Your Timeline**

Draw your life as a timeline. What were the key events? How have you grown and matured over time?

- **When I was a baby/toddler**
  - I...

- **As a child I changed and grew by...**

- **As I got older I...**

- **Now I...**
Character Profile

Choose a character (Mia, Jy or Jawii) and complete the character profile about them.

Draw what you think the character looks like.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: ___________________</th>
<th>Aboriginal group: __________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draw or write some of the things they like or are interested in.</th>
<th>Draw or write some of the things they dislike or make them sad/angry.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Draw or write about what this character is challenged by or worried about.
Character Profile

Choose a character (Mia, Jy or Jawiji) and complete the character profile about them.

Draw what you think the character looks like.

Name: __________________________________

Approx Age:_________________________

Aboriginal group: _______________________

Interests: ________________________________________________

Dislikes: ________________________________________________

Challenges: _____________________________________________
Character Profile

Choose a character (Mia, Jy or Jawiji) and complete the character profile about them.

Name: ____________________________________
Approx Age: ______________________________
Aboriginal group: _________________________

Interests: __________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Dislikes: __________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Challenges: ________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Motivations: ________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Growth throughout the story:___________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
Character Profile

Draw a character profile as if you were one of the characters of the text.

Name: ____________________
Age:_________________________________
Aboriginal group:________________________
Totem:________________________________

Interests: ____________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
Dislikes: ____________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
Challenges: __________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
Motivations: _________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
Character Selfie

Draw a character ‘selfie’ showing the character in front of something or a scene they would enjoy—ie. fishing, hunting, swimming at the pool.
Adjective Brainstorm

Choose a character from the text- write their name or draw them in the middle square. Around the outside brainstorm as many adjectives as you can to describe them.
Draw a cartoon strip about the book from Jy's point of view

Decide on six key events from throughout the book and draw them from Jy perspective. Use thought bubbles to show Jy's thoughts and emotions.
Tell the story from Jy's point of view

Re-write each extract of the book from Jy’s perspective.

Jawiji slowly placed his tea on the back table and collected the dead birds from the ground. All except one he threw to the gunyarr dogs. ‘This one is your dinner,’ he said to his grandson. ‘Pluck and gut him before you bring him in.’

Jy didn’t argue, but when his Jawiji walked inside he aimed his shanghai high and shot down a settled wangura crow from the tree in the neighbour’s yard.

Mia could see Jy’s mouth move to object as his eyes met his grandmother’s and softened. He slumped, bowed his head and walked into his room to pack some clothes in his backpack. Jawiji’s duffel bag was by the door.
Tell the story from Jy's point of view

Choose sections of the story to re-tell from Jy's perspective.
An invitation to Mia

Write a letter to Mia inviting her to stay with you in your home town. What would she see? What would you do? Where would you visit? Would she come to school with you? What could you learn together? What would you hope to learn from her?
Write three key moments from the dirrarn perspective

Re-write these three moments from the dirrarn’s perspective. What would it be thinking, feeling, sensing?

| Getting shot | First night in the box | Other dirrarns flying down outside cage |
Interview a character

Decide on which character you would like to interview. Ask questions that help reveal extra details that you can make up about them based on your understanding of them from the text. You could use quotes and examples from the text to enhance your responses.
The Olden Days

Draw a picture of what you think life was like for Jawiji and Jaja Rosa growing up.

| Jawaiii | Jaja Rosa |

Compare each of Mia’s grandparents’ childhoods.
Character Questions

Chapter 1

1. What does the opening paragraph teach us about Jy?
2. What does the opening paragraph tell us about Mia?
3. What does the opening paragraph tell us about the family dynamics?
4. What clues do you have in the opening paragraph that the characters are Aboriginal?

Chapter 2

5. How would you describe Aunty Diane’s personality?
6. “Mia let her mind wander to all the places she had dreamt of seeing.” How do you think Mia was feeling? What barriers do you think Mia has to her leaving her town?
7. “She looked at the dirrarn’s ruffled but defiant stance in the corner of her room—seeing more of herself in the bird than she dared to admit.” What words in this sentence do you think Mia was seeing as a reflection of herself?

Chapter 3

8. Why did Mia climb out through her window?
9. What does this chapter show us about Mia’s character?

Chapter 4

10. The first paragraph of Chapter 4 an uncle waves as he drove by and Mia expresses her disappointment that another aunty wasn’t at work. This continues to build on our understanding of Mia’s family and her town. What picture are you building about Mia, her town and her family?
11. What type of character do you think Roger is? Is he happy in the Kimberleys? Why doesn’t he leave?
12. How does Mia feel in Roger’s presence? What gives you that understanding?
13. Why were Mia’s brother and cousins ‘pretending not to acknowledge her’?
14. Why did her brother and cousins do it do you think?
15. How had Mia and her brother’s relationship changed?

Chapter 5

16. What do Mia’s grandparent’s think is very important? What tells us that?
17. How is Mia described as she looks in the mirror?

Chapter 6

18. Why does Mia want ‘more’?
19. How would you describe Jy’s game with his friends? What does this reflect in him as a character?

Chapter 7

20. What does Mia’s grandparents actions in the first paragraph show us about their characters? What role do they play in their families?
21. What do we learn about Mia’s father?
22. What does Mia’s grandmother mean when she says ‘You are strong both ways’?
23. Why does Mia’s heart break?
Chapter 8

24. How do we know the dirrarn is "still broken"?
25. What do the 'sometimes...' sentences tell us about Jy and his life at the moment?
26. How would you describe Mia's family and family life from the sentences shared about them in this chapter?
27. "Jy seethed, his anger rippled under his scarred skin—the skin of a fifteen-year-old who had grown up hard in the red-ground country". Do you think is his literally or metaphorically scarred? What do you think 'scarred' him?
28. What does it mean "grown up hard in the red-ground country"?
29. How does Jawiii feel about his grandson?
30. "Jy broke the stand-off, bowed his head and stormed back into the house." Why do you think Jy broke the stand-off? How did he feel?

Chapter 9

31. Why was Mia a "little ashamed"?
32. What do we learn about Jawiii's upbringing?
33. What do we learn about Mia's grandmother's upbringing?
34. How did Mia's jaja feel about her past?
35. How had Mia's grandmother fought to keep her culture alive?
36. What does 'being cheeky' mean in this context?
37. Why did Mia cry herself to sleep?

Chapter 10

38. Can you try to explain the family connections and why Mia's cousin called her 'young mum'?
39. How would you describe her relatives' personalities?
40. How does Jy feel about his jaja Rosa?
41. Why had Jawiii 'forgotten' to tell Jy about the upcoming bush trip?

Chapter 11

42. What do you think Mia's dream taught her?
43. Why did Mia let go the dirrarn even though she thought it would die?
44. What was Mia's cage?
45. What was Mia's revelation?
46. What do you think Mia will do now?

Differentiation:
Select some questions for student- student responds with just answer or in oral or picture form.

Differentiation:
Teacher or student selects set number of questions per chapter- student responds with in full sentence answers or in oral or picture with annotations.

Differentiation:
Students to complete all questions per chapter- student responds with in full sentence answers using evidence and quotes from the text.
Character Essay Topics

Mia’s family are often over at her house. What do we learn about her family and the wider Aboriginal community?

Draw or write a response to each topic.

- Mia’s family are often over at her house. What do we learn about her family and the wider Aboriginal community?
- In what ways can family raise you up and bring you down?
- Trauma can manifest in many ways. In what ways did the characters deal with their challenges?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What does family mean to Mia?</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>How can family hurt you or help you?</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do people deal with challenges in their lives?</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Character Essay Topics**

Mia’s family are often over at her house. What do we learn about her family and the wider Aboriginal community?

Cut and paste the jumbled paragraphs and stick them in the right place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Introduction</strong></th>
<th>Mia’s family support each other. In the book Mia in her grandparents house with her mum and brother. Mia’s grandparents help and support in the raising of Mia and Jy. An example of this is how Mia’s Jaja Rosa brings her lunch to school when she forgets it or as Mia cooks dinner with her Jaja. Or when she remembers back to the days of time out bush as a family with her Elders but worries now that her grandfather is struggling to help his young grandson, Jy. Mia’s grandparents are not her only relatives in town.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paragraph 1</strong></td>
<td>Not many people leave the community. It is clear that Mia is related to a lot of people in the small town. She talks about the distance to the nearest big town with a vet- this distance would also be a restriction on people coming and going or moving away from family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paragraph 2</strong></td>
<td>Mia has a lot of extended family in town. Throughout the book Mia bumps into her extended family. For example her aunt Diane shares dinner with them, Mia borrows the bird cage from another aunty, she waves at the uncle driving through town and she wishes that her other aunt was working at the shop instead of Roger. Mia’s extended family seem to be a consistent and important connection in the town. Not many people leave the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paragraph 3</strong></td>
<td>In the <em>Black Cockatoo</em> by Carl Merrison and Hakea Hustler, we learn about Mia’s family and the wider Aboriginal community. Mia’s family support each other. Mia has a lot of extended family in the town. Not many people in the community leave the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>In conclusion, the <em>Black Cockatoo</em> by Carl Merrison and Hakea Hustler, is about Mia’s family and the wider Aboriginal community. Mia’s family support each other. Mia has a lot of extended family in the town. Not many people in the community leave the town.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Character Essay Topics

Choose one topic from the list below and respond in an essay using examples and quotes from the text, Black Cockatoo.

- Mia’s family are often over at her house. What do we learn about her family and the wider Aboriginal community?
- In what ways can family raise you up and bring you down?
- Trauma can manifest in many ways. In what ways did the characters deal with their challenges?

Fill out the essay planner below before you write your draft.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Essay topic as a statement. Paragraph 1 sentence, paragraph 2 sentence, paragraph 3 sentence.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 1</td>
<td>Topic sentence, example, explanation, link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 2</td>
<td>Topic sentence, example, explanation, link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 3</td>
<td>Topic sentence, example, explanation, link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Reworded essay topic as a statement. Paragraph 1 sentence, paragraph 2 sentence, paragraph 3 sentence.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Character Essay Topics

The characters in the text *Black Cockatoo* are a realistic representation of Aboriginal people and families. Discuss using examples from the text and your personal experience. Extension: Expand your response by using examples and quotes from other texts (such as movies, books or newspapers) that may present more realistic or less realistic representations of Aboriginal people for comparison.

Fill out the essay planner below before you write your draft.

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</table>
In class theme activities

- Line debate:
  - Cruelty to animals is a horrible crime
  - Mia was right to set the dirrarn free
  - Respect is the most important value you can have
  - Respect is more important than (trust, kindness etc).
  - The way you treat animals is a true reflection of your character.
  - Australia shows respect to Aboriginal people.

- Further research the themes on the internet - this might include an investigation into Aboriginal rights and freedoms in the past and present, contemporary issues of freedom today (Manus and Naru, asylum seekers etc), current animal rights issues (live sheep and cattle export, rodeo cruelty<< current controversial issues in the Kimberley, greyhound racing abuses etc)
Theme Activity - Animal Cruelty

Choose two sections of the text that illustrate examples of animal cruelty.

__________

How do these examples of animal cruelty make you feel?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Compare the animal to the human in the situation - size, strength, intelligence/cunning, forewarning, responsibility. Which being had the upper hand?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

What do you think the perpetrator’s motivations were? What need did it meet? How do you think they felt as they were doing it?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

How do you think you would deal with the situation if you were there?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Do you think these kinds of incidents are perceived as animal cruelty by the residents of the town or part of everyday life? In what ways do you think the lifestyle and leisure activities in the Kimberleys make people more aware or desensitised to animals?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
Think about your own experiences of hunting (fishing, crabbing, kangaroo or pig shooting etc).

What do you hunt? Why is hunting important to you?

In what ways are you or can you be more humane (aware of animal cruelty and respect to your catch)? Draw and label or discuss with a partner and share with the class.

For example- stabbing fish through the head instead of leaving them to prolonged 'suffocation' on hot rocks, stabbing crabs between the eyes before boiling as research shows they can feel pain while boiling alive, practicing your shot on targets to ensure you are a shoot to kill person, not beginning to skin animals til they are dead, killing and freezing goanna out bush instead of breaking their legs to transport etc.
Theme Activity – Saving Animals

Elder Stan Brumby stated in 2003 in the *Plants and Animals of Jaru and Kija Country* report "Animals are being taken from the bush and put in zoos in Perth and other parts of southern Australia. This is bad for the country and cruel for the animals being put in cages" [https://library.dbca.wa.gov.au/static/FullTextFiles/070519.pdf](https://library.dbca.wa.gov.au/static/FullTextFiles/070519.pdf).

The Black Cockatoo species across Australia are under threat of extinction due to habitat destruction and fragmentation, introduced species such as foxes and cats, nesting hollow loss and illegal poaching.

Reflecting on Mia's realisation about the cruelty of keeping the dirrarn caged, what do you think about animals being caged for 'protection' or 'breeding programs'?
## Theme Activity - Kimberley Issues

In the Kimberleys contemporary controversial animal rights issues are points of great divide- some of these include dingo baiting, rodeos, animal extinction and live cattle export. State your point of view of the issue, do some research and then state your final position on the issue.

### Baiting of feral animals

Baiting of dingoes is dangerous for children as they could pick up the baits; other animals could also eat the baits. Poisoning dingoes is thought to be cruel and reminds older people of when Aboriginal people were poisoned (*Plants and Animals of Jaru and Kija Country*, Mary Thomas and Eileen Bray 11 June 2002).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Position</th>
<th>Interesting facts found</th>
<th>Final Position</th>
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### Rodeos

For some, Aboriginal involvement in the cattle industry is confusing- stockmen were the invaders, perpetrators of the massacres, enforcers of White man’s law, their cattle degraded and destroyed sacred sites, and there are rumours of destroyed artefacts to prevent land title claims. However, for majority of contemporary Aboriginal people in the Kimberley today rodeos are a important calendar date providing purpose, inspiration and jobs/prize money. Animal rights activists argue that rodeos are dangerous to riders and cruel to animals- they argue if Britain and parts of Europe and US can ban the ‘sport’ then so should we.

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</table>
Live Cattle Export

Cattle stations employ Aboriginal people these days and provide training opportunities—stations and mines are seen as two of the best career options for local people. People in the Kimberley grow up around cattle, stations, rodeos all their lives. Those opposed to live cattle export point out that these farms are being bought up by large companies and foreign investors who have no interest in animal safety but investor profits (https://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/agribusiness/decisionag/china-to-become-biggest-foreign-owner-of-australian-farmland/news-story/ba27742491380f55568bc3d5ada296cb). Multi-million dollar cattle stations encompass the Kimberley—see https://www.visitkununurra.com/images/Documents/Kimberley_Pastoral_Map.pdf. Animal rights activists have released damning videos of the conditions on ships and the treatment of animals in buying companies. The lack of monitoring and prosecution of animal cruelty have alarmed some animal rights activists.

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<tr>
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Animal Extinction

Extracts from the *Plants and Animals of Jaru and Kija Country* report show Elders who have noted the change in animal activity in their country over time. Reasons for animal decline include baiting, land and waterhole degradation by cattle, feral animals such as dogs.

<table>
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</table>
Theme Questions- Respect

The idea of ‘respect’ is held in very high esteem in Aboriginal culture. It is important to respect your Elders, respect your language and culture and respect complex family roles and expectations.

My Context- Draw a picture and label around with your answers.

1. What does ‘respect’ mean to you? Is it an important value for you? Why?
2. In your life, which people are you expected to show respect to? Why? How do you show it?
3. In your life, who do you expect respect from? Why? How do they show it?
4. What issues in our society do you think stem from a lack of respect?

In the text- Write your answers in your book.

5. Who demonstrates respect for culture in the story? How? Use an example or quote from the text.
6. Who demonstrates respect for Elders in the story? Use an example or quote from the text.
7. How is language respected in this story?
8. Give an example of a family role in the story where respect is expected.
Theme Reflection - My Culture

Who do you 'have to' respect in your culture? Draw or write who you must respect in your culture (and/or write about why).

Who owes you respect? Draw or write about who must show you respect in your culture (and/or write about why).

Why is respect important? How does it help people in your culture or keep your culture alive?
### Theme Comparison - Freedom

The theme of freedom runs parallel in the story with Mia and the dirrarn. Use this sheet to investigate further.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In what ways was Mia being 'harmed'?</th>
<th>How was the dirrarn injured?</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>In what ways did Mia feel metaphorically caged?</th>
<th>In what ways was the dirrarn caged?</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In what ways was Mia's metaphorical cage negative to her life?</th>
<th>In what ways was the dirrarn's cage negative to it's health?</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How did Mia find freedom?</th>
<th>How was the dirrarn freed?</th>
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Theme Comprehension Questions

Freedom

Chapter 2

1. How does the quote “…even in her imagination she could not fly out over the waves” set the reader up to understand how Mia might feel about her town?

Chapter 3

2. “No space was really private in her house”- do you think the lack of privacy is restrictive to Mia’s sense of freedom?

Chapter 5

3. “There was so much she loved about her Country. But sometimes she wanted… more.” What do you think this means?

Chapter 11

4. The dirrarn’s natural habitat is out in the Kimberley outback. Mia’s dream lets her understand how freedom is important for the bird. Compare and contrast life in the cage with how Mia dreams about the dirrarn’s freedom.

5. Do you think Mia made the right choice setting the dirrarn free?

6. What is Mia’s cage? How?

7. What do you think Mia will do with her new found freedom?

8. What is your metaphorical cage? What restricts or holds you back?

Animal Rights

Chapter 1

1. “The dirrarn lay sprawled amongst the smaller birds he’d been using as target practice.” What other ways could Jy have been practicing his aim with the slingshot/shanghai? Do you think it was necessary?

2. Why did Mia hope that Jy was “planning to eat that one…”?

3. “We don’t just kill for the fun of it…” What does this quote tell us about Aboriginal hunting?

Chapter 3

4. Why do you think that the ‘cheeky neighbourhood boys’ had killed Mia’s aunty’s gulyulyu budgie? How do you think they were feeling? What need do you think they were trying to fulfil? What consequence do you think the boys should have had, if they had been caught?

Chapter 5

5. Does the short story about the injured dog show animal cruelty or just the harsh reality of country life? What do you think needs to change in small towns to improve animal rights?

6. Describe the grasshopper race from the insect perspective- what do you see, hear, smell, feel?

Chapter 8

7. Australian’s have a certain level of ‘disgust’ or ‘indifference’ to feral animals. How is Jy’s actions towards the cane toads seen as a ‘norm’ in Australia? Do you think people would have the same level of indifference if he had been hitting a frog, dog or child with a golf club?
8. Why do Jy and Tobias let the snake into the cage? What do you think would have happened if Mia had not arrived? How does an act like this compare to feeding crickets or mice to a snake? How does this act compare to a bullfight, cock fight or other act where two animals are put against each other?

Chapter 11

9. How does the dream scene allow the reader to understand why being caged and away from an animal's natural habitat can be cruel?

10. Mia was only trying to help the dirrarn but was being unintentionally cruel keeping it caged up. How?

Respect

Chapter 1

1. How does Jy bowing his head show respect?

2. How does this quote show disrespect? "Jy didn't argue, but when his Jawiji walked inside he aimed his shanghai high and shot down a settled wangura crow from the tree in the neighbour's yard." Why do you think he was being defiant?

3. "She wasn't meant to challenge her brother, as her older brother she owed him a certain amount of respect." What do you think this means? What does it tell you about Aboriginal family relationships? Do you 'owe' your brother respect?

Chapter 2

4. How does Katherine try to show respect to culture by reminding her father that he should not be 'saying that bird's name'?

5. "You need to respect our past, my jawiji." - How does Jy disrespect his past and culture?

Chapter 5

6. How do Mia's grandparents respect her education?

Chapter 9

7. How did Jaja Rosa show respect to her culture and heritage as a young woman who had grown up at a station?

Chapter 10

8. "...before the gardiyas came and rounded 'em up onto reserves." How did the gardiyas disrespect Aboriginal rights, culture, language and connection with land?

Chapter 11

9. How does Mia show respect to the dirrarn by setting it free?

Differentiation:
Select some questions for student- student responds with just answer or in oral or picture form.

Differentiation:
Teacher or student selects set number of questions per chapter- student responds with in full sentence answers or in oral or picture with annotations.

Differentiation:
Students to complete all questions per chapter- student responds with in full sentence answers using evidence and quotes from the text.
Theme Essay Questions

Choose one question to answer in essay form- plan below.

1. In what ways does the treatment of the dirrarn (keeping it caged until it is 'fixed' or 'dies out' and others 'doing what's best for them') mirror the treatment of Aboriginal people?
2. In what ways does the text Black Cockatoo highlight and address animal rights issues?
3. In what ways is Aboriginal Law respected or disrespected in the text?
4. We all have a cage. Discuss.

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<th>Ideas, quotes and examples for argument 1</th>
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After Reading Activities

In class ‘After Reading activities’

- Act out a scene from the book
- Create a book trailer advertising the book
- Values Line- Students consider their position on the statements below and move to the side of the room according to their values. Once there students talk with their group about their reasons. Teacher calls upon random students to share before asking the next statement.
  - Mia is a strong central character
  - There is no hope for Jy
  - Mia’s grandfather should have done more to save Jy
  - The dirrann would have been better being left in the cage
  - There should be better access to veterinary services in remote communities
- Use the StickyMoose website to do a class vote etc.
  - Do you think Mia will leave town? Do you think Mia’s brother will come back changed? Do you think the dirran black cockatoo survives? Would you rather Mia stay or leave town? Would you rather Mia kept the bird caged or let it go? What do you think will happen in the future for Mia and her family?
- Make a stop animation of the story
- Use the Smore website to create a flyer promoting the book for your library
Black Cockatoo- Plot

Orientation
Beginning of the story- introduces the reader to the setting.

Complication
Event or action that happens to create a problem/complication.

Climax
This is the most exciting part, or where the tension has raised the most or the turning part of the story.

Resolution
This is close to the end of the story where the complication is resolved.

The orientation of Black Cockatoo was...

The complication in the Black Cockatoo was...

The climax of Black Cockatoo was...

The resolution of Black Cockatoo was...
Brainstorm the sequel chapter

"Mia realised that freedom was in her, her land and her soul. She understood she could stretch her wings far and still land safely back home whenever she needed. Wherever she went."

Brainstorm using words and drawings what you think happens after the final chapter in the book.
Write the sequel chapter

"Mia realised that freedom was in her, her land and her soul. She understood she could stretch her wings far and still land safely back home whenever she needed. Wherever she went."

Describe/draw what events might happen in the next chapter- where do you think she travelled? How do you think she felt about leaving community?

What do you think happens to Jy when he returns from Law? Do we ever find out what happened to the dirrarn?

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"Mia realised that freedom was in her, her land and her soul. She understood she could stretch her wings far and still land safely back home whenever she needed. Wherever she went."

Write the next chapter - where do you think she travelled? How do you think she felt about leaving community? What do you think happens to Jy when he returns from Law? Do we ever find out what happened to the dirrarn?
Comprehension Questions

• Why would the boy ‘approach cautiously’? Why would Jy need to ‘target practice’? Why would his sister want her brother to ‘eat that one’? Why did the boy shoot down the ‘wangura crow’?

• How does Mia feel about bush animals in general? What is meant by ‘She knew by Law she shouldn’t say its name...’? Why did she ‘risk her brother’s wrath’? What does Mia’s caution about challenging her brother tell us about Aboriginal culture and family structure?

• Why did Mia’s grandfather tell the story in a ‘hushed tone’? What did you learn about totem animals and how Aboriginal people come to have them? Why was the storm coming according to the grandfather?

• Why did Mia wedge her door shut? Why did Mia tie the dirran black cockatoo’s wings to its body?

• Why did Mia’s tears dry by themselves?

• Why do you think it means that the dirran black cockatoo’s mind was ‘still broken’? Why do we get the list of things the brother would ‘sometimes’ do—what does this tell us about the brother? Why do we get the list of things that ‘sometimes’ happen around the family home—what is this meant to tell us about the family?

• What effect do the short sentences have in the snake scene?

• How do you think Jy felt about the standoff with his grandfather when he bowed his head? Why does the grandfather hope the brother will go out to the station?

• What do the authors mean when they write ‘like a physical force’? What does Mia come to realise as she dreams? In what ways might this message apply to our world issues right now? In what ways might this dream mirror the issues that faced Aboriginal people since European invasion? How does Mia feel about her life in town? What does she ultimately realise as she listens to her Dreaming?
Design an alternative cover
Artistic representation of the text
Contact the Authors - Instagram

Choose an Instagram image and hashtags that you would share with the authors.
Reflect on the text

Build a Pinterest board about the themes and characters in the text.
Contact the Author- Write a Tweet

Write a 140 character Tweet to one of the authors. What would you say about the book? What question would you ask?
Contact the Author - Facebook

Write a Facebook post to the author. What would you say? What did you like about the book? What questions were you left with? What do you think a sequel should be?
Contact the Authors - Letter

Write a letter to the author/s. What did you like about the text? What questions do you still have? Tell them a bit about yourself and your experiences.
What if...

As a class discuss how you think the story would have changed if...

- the book had been set in the city
- the dirrarrn had died in the opening chapter
- Mia lived with her parents
- Mia was a boy
- Mia’s father had never accidently speared the dirrarrn before she was born
- Jy didn’t go out bush for Law
- the snake had eaten the dirrarrn
- Mia could access a vet
- Mia’s juddan/totem was another animal
- Mia had a sister instead of a brother
- Jy was the main character

Choose some of the statements to reflect on and write/draw about.
Black Cockatoo - Language and Style

Reflect on the following questions and answer them with reference to the text.

1. The opening sentence of Black Cockatoo is both arresting and engaging. Discuss how the authors have achieved this through their use of language features.
2. Jara language has been integrated into Black Cockatoo. Why have the authors done this?
3. Discuss how the authors have made this story engaging and moving. How have they held the readers’ interest by using various techniques, for example character development, plot tension, imagery and symbolism?
4. How have Carl Merrison and Hakea Hustler used characterisation and imagery to create a vivid and captivating text? In what ways do they 'show not tell'?
5. Why do you think the text is written from third person? Would it have been more effective as a first person narrative?
6. Aboriginal people in the Kimberley use language interactions to signal social roles and relationships - such as by calling both grandmother and granddaughter ‘Jaja’ in Jaru language to show and strengthen the relationship with each interaction. What other relationship language did you notice in the text?

Language Activities

a. Find the meanings of 10 words you don't know in the book- write the meaning in your own words
b. Set the glossary words as your spelling words for the week
c. Write 2 synonyms and 2 antonyms for 10 of the glossary words
d. Write as many words as you can in 1 minute to describe Mia
e. List as many words as you can from the book that start with the letter b
f. Recall as many Aboriginal words as you can from the book
Aboriginal English, Kriole and Pigeon

Mia and her family speak English, Jaru and Aboriginal English. Many people in the Kimberley speak more than one language and do not speak English as a first language at home. Aboriginal English, Kriole and Pigeon were invented through necessity when interacting with Asian traders before European invasion and then during conflict, trade and occupation after invasion. At some stages in our history, Aboriginal people were forbidden to speak their traditional languages. Aboriginal English and Kriole are now play a vital role in Aboriginal identity and are respected by linguists as unique dialects.

Look up information about Aboriginal English, Kriole and Pigeon in the Kimberley or your local area.

https://www.klrc.org.au/kimberley-kriol/overview

https://open.abc.net.au/explore/1603


Consider the following questions and answer them in your workbook or as a class discussion (teacher direction).

My context

11. How many languages do you speak?
12. Are you expected to learn an additional language at school? How do you find learning another language? Can you empathise with how ESLD students in Aboriginal communities might feel having their classes in all English?
13. How do you think your language shapes your identity?

Research questions

14. Why is language important to Aboriginal people?
15. How was Kriole/Aboriginal English developed?
16. Why do linguists say these are dialects?
17. What similarities and differences can you see between English and kriole/Aboriginal English?
18. Describe how Kriole and Aboriginal English developed over time.

Text Reflection

19. Why do you think that it is important for texts like Black Cockatoo that show traditional languages and dialects to wider Australia?
20. Do you think the text achieved this balance?
Reading Jaru Words

Using the pronunciation guide try to say the Jaru words from the Black Cockatoo book. The following information was used from Plants and Animals of Jaru and Kija Country https://library.dbca.wa.gov.au/static/FullTextFiles/070519.pdf

### Pronunciation of Jaru sounds

The list below provides approximate English equivalents of the letters used in the Jaru spelling system.

- **a**: like the u in but
- **aa**: like the a in father
- **b**: like the b in boat and big, but also like the p in spin
- **d**: like the d in dog; sometimes like the t in stun
- **rd**: like the rt sound when an American says card or cart, but the tongue curls back a little more
- **g**: like the g in goat, but also like the k in skite
- **i**: like the i in pit, but also like the ee in feet
- **iyi**: like the ea in easily
- **j**: like the j in jam
- **l**: like the l in lock
- **rl**: like the rl when an American says girl or curl
- **ly**: like the li in million. Not like the ly in happily
- **m**: like the m in meat
- **n**: like the n in nut
- **rn**: like the rn when an American says barn
- **ng**: like the ng in singing and bring
- **ny**: like the ni in onion. Not like the ny sound in many
- **r**: like the r in red and orange
- **rr**: like the Scottish ‘r’ or the tt in butter when spoken very fast
- **u**: like the u in put
- **uwu**: like the oo in pool
- **w**: like the w in wait
- **y**: like the y in yellow

**NOTE:** There are two spelling conventions used when certain sounds come together. These are necessary to distinguish the sequence of sounds from the single sound ng as in bring. The sequences of sounds are:

- **ng**: like the two sounds n plus g when they come together as in engorge.
- **ngg**: like the two sounds ng plus g when they come together as in English finger.

### Jaru words from Black Cockatoo

- **Barranga**: late dry season and build-up to the wet, which is the best time to hunt bush turkey
- **Bin.girrjaru**: bush turkey
- **Birlbirlji**: grasshopper
- **Dirrarn**: red-tailed black cockatoo. When seen in large numbers the cockatoos tell locals the rains are coming.
- **Gulyulyu**: budgerigar
- **Gunyarr**: dog
- **Jaja**: grandmother/granddaughter. A respectful term of address to reinforce relationships and connection.
- **Jawiji**: grandfather/grandchild. A respectful term of address used by both members of the pair.
- **Jarrambayi**: sand goanna
- **Jiyirr**: rainbow bee-eater
- **Jarriny**: conception totem
- **Mangirrigirri**: tata dragon lizard
- **Marlu**: kangaroo
- **Minyan**: nothing
- **Murnduj**: black-headed python
- **Wan.gura**: crow
- **Yidiyidi**: cicada
To be more accessible to a wider audience the authors have given snippets of Jaru and Aboriginal English for the readers. Below are some translations of Standard Australian English to Aboriginal English dialect.

Read together as a class-discuss if students have ever heard an Aboriginal person speaking this way, what preconceived ideas or prejudices does community have around people who speak different languages or dialects, discuss if they can still understand the dialect, discuss if students can see how the words in the dialect may have evolved, discuss the key differences or similarities. Extension: Students may attempt to translate another snippet of the text into Aboriginal English given the words and patterns they have noticed.

How does learning and beginning to appreciate some of the Aboriginal dialect change your perspective of Aboriginal people's language and culture?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard Australian English</th>
<th>Aboriginal English</th>
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<td>“I hope you planning to eat that one, at least,” his sister snarled, looking at the devastation at the bottom of her yard.</td>
<td>“Eat that burd, don’t waste that’un,” his sister snarled, looking at the devastation at the bottom of her yard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We don’t just kill for the fun of it,” said his grandfather as he walked onto the veranda, cup of tea in hand. His calm presence, almost ominous, demanding to be heard.</td>
<td>“Don’t kill’um bud them thing for nothing, Jawijii,” said his grandfather as he walked onto the veranda, cup of tea in hand. His calm presence, almost ominous, demanding to be heard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Nah, I was just practicing,” the young boy said, head bowed respectfully. “It was just some fun.”</td>
<td>“I’m just do’um bud that one for practice, Jawijii,” the young boy said, head bowed respectfully. “Um just doing bud for fun.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His grandfather slowly placed his tea on the back table and collected the dead birds from the ground, all except one he threw to the gunyarr dogs. “This one is your dinner,” he said to the boy, “Pluck and gut him before you bring him in.”</td>
<td>His grandfather slowly placed his tea on the back table and collected the dead birds from the ground, all except one he threw to the gunyarr dogs. “This one here for your supper,” he said to the boy, “Make sure you clean em up this one.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I know why I saved you now, juddun. We are connected, you and I.” She looked at his meek but defiant stance in the corner of her room -- maybe seeing more of herself in him than she dared to admit.</td>
<td>“You know why I’m be saving you? Mebulla, mintoo same one.” She looked at his meek but defiant stance in the corner of her room -- maybe seeing more of herself in him than she dared to admit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Any money, aunty?” she asked casually of one of the ladies inside.</td>
<td>“What na, you gotem any price?” she asked casually of one of the ladies inside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You bring my husband back safe, darling,” said grandmother, “He forgets his body has grown old and frail in town!”</td>
<td>“Bring um back my husband,” said grandmother, “He forget he old man living in town!”</td>
</tr>
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Using Jaru Language Activity

Using page 116 onwards in the *Plants and Animals of Jaru and Kija Country* draw some plants and animals from Jaru country then write the Jaru word and English word for them. [https://library.dbca.wa.gov.au/static/FullTextFiles/070519.pdf](https://library.dbca.wa.gov.au/static/FullTextFiles/070519.pdf)
Using Jaru Language Activity

Using page 116 onwards in the Plants and Animals of Jaru and Kija Country write your own short story in a similar style as Carl Merrison and Hakea Hustler’s Black Cockatoo. Remember to include a glossary so your teacher and readers can learn the new words too. https://library.dbca.wa.gov.au/static/FullTextFiles/070519.pdf
Aboriginal Language

Contact your local Aboriginal centre or Elders to find out your local language words for the Jaru words in the book and other words you are interested in. Write them below.

Ask your local Aboriginal centre or Elders to share with you information about local totem animals and skin names. Write some of them below.

Is there a local Creation story about a bird or animal that they can share with your class? Summarise it below.
Inter-textual Comparison

Read one of the following texts and compare to Black Cockatoo.

- Grace Beside Me, Sue McPherson
- Too Flash, Melissa Lucashenko
- Songs that sound like blood, Jared Thomas
- Or another text you have already read that you feel has links to Black Cockatoo.

What are the similar contexts, themes, characters, issues etc.?
Share your voice

Have your say about Black Cockatoo, and/or the themes and issues in it.

School Action Project

- Decide on a project to increase understanding of your local Aboriginal language group.
- Design a project with your class to promote reconciliation in your school.
- Connect with a Jaru school to become pen pals and share each others experiences and culture (Frog Hollow, Halls Creek DHS, Warmun School, Red Hill Catholic School to name a few).
- Create a school project to protect endangered species in your school ground (ie. nesting boxes).
- Write to your local animal rights group or politician sharing your ideas on the animal rights issues raised here.
- Organise a book collection drive for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation or Aboriginal Literacy Foundation to share books with kids in remote communities like Mia.

Review the book

- Write a book review and post it to the author Facebook site- https://www.facebook.com/hakeahustler/
- Post a review of the book on GoodReads and Amazon.
- Make a Youtube video review of the book.
- Share your feedback with your school librarian and local library.
- Share your Shelfie on the author pages- Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.

Connect with the Authors

- Invite the authors to talk to your class or run a workshop in person or via Skype or internet conference.
Lizard Group
Black Cockatoo
Novel Study Booklet

Student Name__________________

Class:________________________
Marly Group
Black Cockatoo
Novel Study Booklet

Student Name__________________
Class:________________________
Hornet Group
Black Cockatoo
Novel Study Booklet

Student Name__________________

Class:__________________________
Black Cockatoo

Book Club Discussion Points

Ice Breakers

- Work association- cockatoo, Aboriginal, remote, desert, small town, community, family
- Timed-Pair-Share: Member Questions
  - What is your favourite book of all time? What books are on your bedside table at the moment? What is your favourite place to read? What book character would you most like to be?
- ABC- go around in your circle listing as many words associated to the book as your group can in alphabetical order
- Would you rather? Move from one side or the other of the room
  - Read a book or see the movie? Hard cover or soft cover books? Print or online books? Stock your bookshelf or visit a library? Read in short bursts or long periods? Picture book or chapter books?

Reading Experience

1. “The hit came hard, sending the young dirran black cockatoo reeling from his roast in the large gumtree”- what was your response to the hook of the book?
2. What was your initial reaction to the book? Did it hook you in immediately or did it take a while to warm up into?
3. What was your favourite quote or passage? Why?

Personal Experience

4. Have you ever been to a remote Aboriginal community? Do you think the story was an accurate reflection based on your experience?
5. The text touches on issues of domestic violence, substance abuse, dying language and cultures, family breakdown, family roles- Can you relate to any of the struggles faced by the characters in the text?
6. What would you do if you felt free to do or go wherever you wanted?
7. Did the book change your perspective or opinion on anything?

Aboriginal Culture

8. What did you learn about Aboriginal culture from having read this book?
9. Did you feel like this was an authentic representation of Aboriginal culture and life? Why or why not?
10. What elements of Aboriginal culture represented in the text surprised or raised questions for you?

Setting
11. What made the setting unique or important? Could the text have been written somewhere else and have had the same effect?  
12. How does the setting contribute to the story?

Characters
13. Which character do you relate most to and why?  
14. In what ways is the brother a redeemable character?  
15. How do you feel about the grandfather character and his management of the children? In what ways would you act differently? How would you have changed the way this character was written?  
16. Is it significant that the parents do not play a large role in the story? Why do you think this is?  
17. How would you act if you were in Mia’s circumstance?  
18. How did the characters change throughout the story?  
19. What do you think will happen with the characters next?

Theme
20. Animals rights is a subtle theme in the text- in what ways did this text get you to think about animal rights?  
21. The author has linked the treatment of the cockatoo to the treatment of stolen children- in what ways do you think the experiences are mirrored as a jumping point for discussion?

Literary Value
22. Did you like the book or not? Why?  
23. How did you find the ending?  
24. Do you think you might have enjoyed it less or more if you were a different age-younger/older? Why?  
25. Did you have any expectations of the book- did it live up to them?  
26. Did you read any reviews before reading the book- did you find yourself agreeing with the reviews or not as you read?  
27. Would you read the book again? Why or why not?

Thanks for making our book part of your book club!

Visit our website for more books and resources at www.hakeahustler.com.au or continue the discussions on our social media pages!
Important Websites

Author and Publishing
Magabala Books: http://www.magabala.com
Editor- A Worded Life: http://awordedlife.com/

Jaru and Kija Country
Amazing and in depth resource about Jaru and Kija people: https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/b367/1dfa2fddb4a3c0658e0682dac330015cb673.pdf

Aboriginal English and Kriole
https://www.klrc.org.au/kimberley-kriol/overview
https://open.abc.net.au/explore/1603

Programs to support Aboriginal voice in the Kimberleys
Authors Carl Merrison and Hakea Hustler are engaging and interesting guest speakers and workshop presenters. Both authors have over ten years experience presenting to, teaching and mentoring young people.

They can offer presentations together or separately depending on school needs and author availability- Skype or in person.

- Author talks (growing up Aboriginal in remote Australia, our writing and publishing journey)
- Writing workshops
- Young writer mentoring sessions

Carl is also open to temporary contracts to mentor and support Aboriginal youth, plan Aboriginal school engagement programs, Aboriginal sport program coordination and AEIO work.

Contact
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