



Synopsis

Taha's mum becomes a proud Australian citizen. She decides to celebrate by taking a trip around Australia with Taha – in school time! The trip requires careful planning and a new campervan. There are special people to farewell – Taha's teacher, Mrs Zimmerman; his best friend, Joel; and his neighbour, Mr Wilson. On this section of the trip, Mum and Taha leave Mildura and travel north through New South Wales to the mining town of Broken Hill. The trip is both exciting and informative. Taha records his travels with photographs, journal entries, letters and emails.

Before Reading

Discuss the following:

- Immigration – Mr Alberto Marino came from Italy to settle in Australia. Locate the town of Castel Gandolfo on a map of Italy. Why do immigrants want to settle in Australia? How would they feel about leaving their homeland?
- Campervans – What would Mum and Taha have to do to the campervan before they set off? How would they pack up their site? (Unplug electricity, re-stack and secure belongings for safe travel, fill with fuel, pay for the campsite, dispose of rubbish, and so on.)
- Indigenous Australians – Do students know about the indigenous Australians or traditional owners of the land in their local area or in the Broken Hill area? The Wiljakali people met for ceremonies and story telling. How did the elders pass on information to the younger generations? They had no written language and used artwork and symbols to tell stories and show information about history, food and water. How would the establishment of mining towns impact on this heritage? (More information can be obtained from the Australian Indigenous Council. 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.

Our Australia BROKEN HILL

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. Read the paragraph where Taha is asking Mr Marino about his homeland (p8).

Journals:

- Taha uses his journal to keep photographs and record written information about his trip. Ask the students if they think there are any differences between journals and diaries. Re-read Taha's journal entries (pp91-95). Re-write the information in list form. Can the students add a few more facts that Taha left out?

Emails and letters:

- Talk about both formats in terms of language, forms of address, use of images, intended reader and reading/writing equipment required. Explore similarities and differences between the formats. Re-read the letter Taha wrote to Mr Wilson (pp34-39). Model how to set out a letter. Students can write a letter to someone living in another town, state or country. List some facts about your local area to help students in their writing. If possible, take some photographs of your local area for students to enclose in their letters. Students can share their letters with the class prior to posting.

Factual writing:

- Most of the factual information in the text is presented using the device of the Oracle Pod. However, there are some occasions when Mum and Taha give information to the reader. Students can use Blackline Master 3 to investigate and research topics referred to in the text.

Reports:

- Students can write a report of Taha's dream sequence (pp72-79). They should begin with a general introduction about Silverton then follow up with the facts that Taha 'experienced'.

Vocabulary:

- The text offers many opportunities for working with words. Show the students an example of a simile ('this city is like a living museum' – p88). Search the text for more examples and make a class list.
- Use a dictionary to find meanings for words such as gelati, awesome, unsealed, junction, shackled, loped, specimen, prospector, metal detector.
- 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 size or other physical features).
- Ask students to find descriptive phrases such as '...and she knew something about everything!' (p18)
- Explore the list of Australian slang (p122).

Debate:

- Use the information about mining towns such as Silverton and Broken Hill to debate whether mines should be developed. (The affirmative team might argue that mining generates national wealth and the negative team might argue that mining destroys traditional indigenous land and heritage.)

Comprehension:

- Use the chapter headings to ask questions and check the students' understanding of the content. Use literal questions ('What impact did mining have on the town of Silverton?') and inferential questions ('How did Silverton become a 'ghost town'?'). Ask for the students' opinions ('How would you feel if you had a dream like Taha?').

Maps:

- Use a map of Australia to estimate distances between the places that Mum and Taha visit and discuss map features such as keys, legends, grids and scale. Discuss the use of different maps (a local street map for tourist attractions, a local area map for national parks, an atlas of Australia to show river systems and borders). Students could check the distances covered on Charles Sturt's expeditions.

Characters

Taha is exuberant and self-confident. Even in his dreams he is 'King of the Desert'! Discuss the interaction between Mum and Taha. Mum suggests they play 'I spy', to keep Taha interested and alert on the road. Taha takes the game so seriously that he yells if he sees anything. Mum gets a headache but she continues to show kindness and patience to her over-excited son.

Research Topics

- immigration
- Wentworth, Silverton and Broken Hill
- time zones and/or state and territory borders
- the mining industry and its history
- national parks
- indigenous Australians

Useful References

- www.citizenship.gov.au
- <http://www.wentworth.nsw.gov.au/tourism>
- www.visitbrokenhill.com.au
- <http://www.visitoutbacknsw.com.au>
- www.cap.nsw.edu.au/bb_site_intro/specialplaces/special_places_st3/LakeMungo/lake_mungo
- CD 'Windows to Australia's Past', J.M. Bowler – teachers' resource
- Local councils, libraries, historical societies
- State automobile clubs (RACV/NRMA) – maps and trip planners

Name: _____ Date: _____

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



Name: _____ Date: _____

Write a review about this book.

Title:

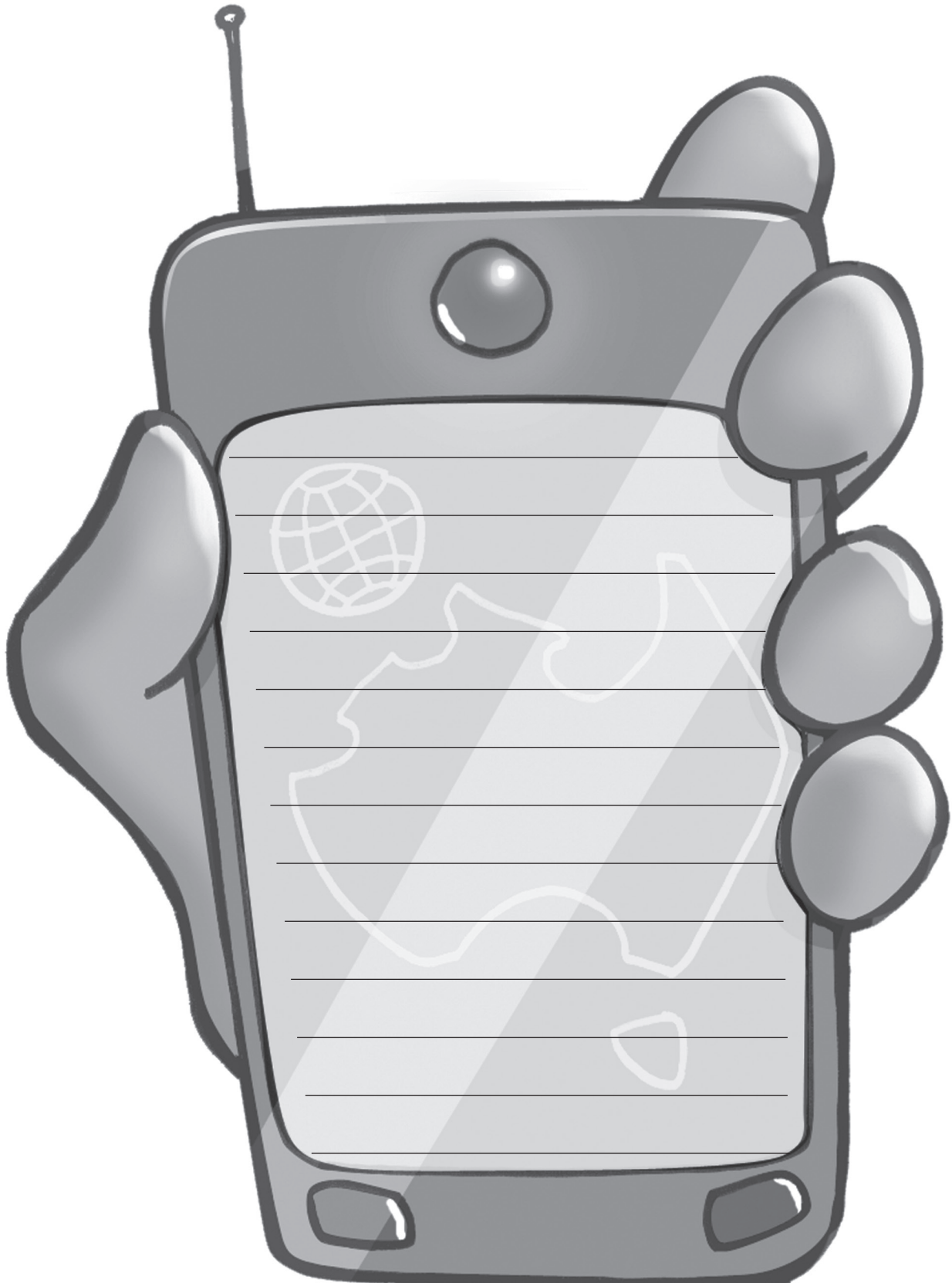
Author:

What happens:

My opinion of this book:

Name: _____ Date: _____

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



BLM 4

Hop to It!



Name: _____

Date: _____

Use the text, other books and the Internet to find information about the three types of kangaroos mentioned in *Our Australia Broken Hill*.

	Red	Eastern grey	Western grey
Description			
Location			
Interesting facts			

Name: _____ Date: _____

Read about the two explorers mentioned in *Our Australia Broken Hill*. Use the text, other books and the Internet to list the most important facts about each one.

William Charles Wentworth

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Charles Sturt

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____