

## Synopsis:

Taha and his mum, a new Australian citizen, are travelling around Australia. They left the Kimberley region of Western Australia with some amazing memories, and now they are heading south across the Australian mainland and sailing over to Kangaroo Island. Taha and his mum will discover a variety of land formations, flora and fauna as well as insights into the island's unique history. Taha records his travels with photographs and notes in the journal that he was given by his teacher, Mrs Zimmerman. He also writes letters to his neighbour back home, Mr Wilson, and emails his best friend, Joel.

## Before Reading

Discuss the following:

- The book format – Students can read the blurb, the table of contents and skim additional features such as the Aussie Jokes, Slang and Facts. Note the mix of photography and illustrations. Discuss design features.
- Citizenship and immigration – Review the citizenship ceremony (pp6-9) and discuss the importance placed on this ceremonial event. Talk about why, and from where, people migrate to Australia and then become Australian citizens. Locate Poland on a world map. Ask: Why did Anna think Australia would be a good place to live?
- Campervans – Taha and Mum take their campervan, the Southern Cross, on a ferry. Ask: What special features would the ferry need to secure cars and campervans? How would the cars come aboard and disembark? Are there other ferries for people and cars travelling in Australian waters? (For example, across Bass Strait from Melbourne to Tasmania.)
- Indigenous Australians – Do students know about the indigenous Australians or traditional owners of the land in their local area or in South Australia? Do students know why indigenous Australians might have left Kangaroo Island? (It is important to acknowledge the role of indigenous Australians and

explore Australia's indigenous history prior to European settlement.)

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



## Language Features and Activities

**First person narrative:**

- The author engages the reader by using a character, Taha, to tell the story. This makes the narrative very personal. Taha's conversations with his mum and the people he meets give us an insight into their personalities and characters. (For example, Mum having to put up with Taha singing every song he knew between Kununurra and Kangaroo Island!)

### **Journals:**

- Taha uses his journal to keep photographs and record written information about his trip. Re-read Taha's journal entries (pp30-35). Where did Taha read the history of Kangaroo Island? What would you write about the island's history? What do you think about the way Taha presents information? (For example, he includes photographs, notes on how he feels, details of places he sees, and so on.)

### **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 forms. Re-read Taha's email to Joel (pp55-60). Would Joel be able to select the correct answer to Taha's question? What do you think about Joel's response? Why do you think Joel made the remark to Taha about all the schoolwork he is missing? (For example, he is jealous, teasing, making a joke just for fun.)

### **Factual writing:**

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

### **Vocabulary:**

- Re-read Mum's list of places to visit (p69). Discuss what equipment is needed when going on a trip such as a school excursion. List a range of destinations such as beach, fun-park, farm and mountain range. Students can discuss and record important items to take on these trips.
- Use a dictionary to find meanings for words and phrases such as 'livestock', 'mainland', 'lawless', 'populated', 'moored', 'jetty', 'ahoy there', 'sanctuary', 'sinkholes' and 'vegetation'.
- Ask students to make a list of bold or coloured words and explain why these are used in the text (for example, as sound effects or to describe and



emphasise feelings, reactions or physical features). Refer to 'Ahoy there, Captain' (p40), 'rumble' (p54) and 'hop, skip and a jump' (p12).

- Re-read Taha's reference to Jack being a dull boy (p94). Ask students if they know any other proverbs and make a class list. Discuss the literal meanings and colloquial meanings of the proverbs. (For example, 'a stitch in time saves nine', 'look before you leap' and 'the early bird catches the worm'.)

### **Grammar:**

- Use Blackline Master 4 to discuss the use of quotation marks in direct speech. Find some examples from the text to model correct punctuation.

### **Comprehension:**

- To maintain an awareness of students' understanding throughout the text, use the chapter headings to ask questions about the content. Use a variety of question types as well as asking for opinions ('What do you think about the rabbit population in Australia and the damage caused?') and inference ('Why is it necessary to have a permit system for camping on Kangaroo Island?') Use Blackline Master 5 to check that students can identify facts from the Oracle Pod text and show how information can be presented in point form.

## Maps and Markers

- Divide the class into groups to find Kununurra and Kangaroo Island in an atlas or on a map. Groups can use Blackline Master 1 to come up with a route for Taha and his mum that matches the 3,259 kilometres that they travelled. (For example, a coastal or inland route.) Which towns might they pass through for food, fuel and water? Groups can explain the reasons for the route they select.
- Estimate the number of days Taha and his mum spend on Kangaroo Island.
- How far is Kangaroo Island from the mainland? How fast does the ferry travel if it takes 45 minutes to get there? Which processes are needed to calculate the answer?
- Review the length and width of Kangaroo Island (pp28-29). Devise a scale and use this to draw a map of the island.

## Characters

Taha remains keen to travel and seek out new places and people. He is committed to staying in touch with his neighbour, his teacher and his best friend, Joel. Taha meets characters such as the ferry captain, Adam Arnold and a local girl, Louise. Re-read Taha's comment about 'hopping about just like one of the locals' (p70). This shows his quirky nature and sense of humour. Mum shows her sense of humour with her comments about Taha's singing ability (p13).



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## Research Topics

- citizenship and immigration
- the history of Aboriginal people on Kangaroo Island
- the history of Kangaroo Island
- the introduction and effect of rabbits and foxes on the Australian landscape
- time zones and borders within states and territories
- national parks on Kangaroo Island
- types and habitats of echidna, possum, wombat, kangaroo, wallaby, koala
- glossy black cockatoo
- great white shark, sea lion, fur seal, little penguin
- the Ligurian bee and honey production on Kangaroo Island
- the voyages of Matthew Flinders
- the voyages of Captain Bligh
- lighthouses of the Australian coast
- cave systems in Australia and cave terminology
- sea shanties and the role they played in a sailor's life

## Useful References

- Tourism agencies
- Local councils, libraries, historical societies
- State automobile clubs – maps and trip planners
- [www.tourkangarooisland.com.au](http://www.tourkangarooisland.com.au)
- <http://www.island-beehive.com.au/>
- *Kangaroo Island* by Peter Dobre (see [www.petedobre.com.au](http://www.petedobre.com.au))
- 'Kangaroo Island: Where the wild things are' by Kris Madden, *Australian Geographic* magazine, April 2010
- 'Kangaroo Island SA: Pelican Lagoon Research Centre' by Conservation Volunteers Australia, *Australian Geographic* magazine, March 2010

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:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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My opinion of this book:

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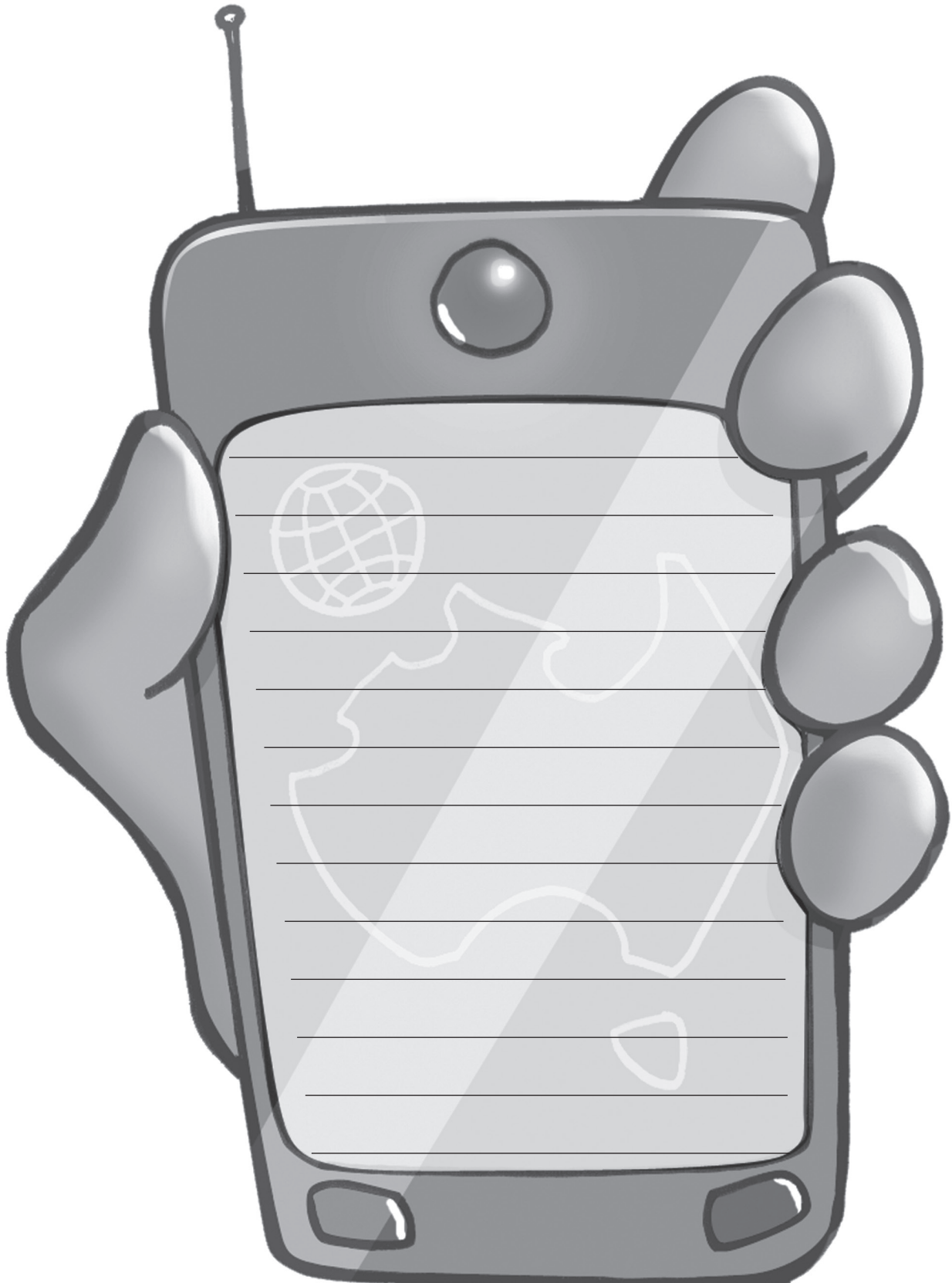
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Direct speech means the words that someone says. Quotation marks are used to show direct speech. For example, "Kangaroo Island!" I shouted. "Just a hop, skip and a jump from here..."

1. Draw a line to the person who says the words below.

"We'd better get going as soon as we can. There's a lot to see and do. Let's get started!"

"One day you'll make a pretty good Junior Ranger yourself, Taha!"

"Everybody who comes to Kangaroo Island eventually comes back. It's that sort of place."

"Why don't you write about the history of the island in your journal?"



2. Write the quotation marks and the speaking words to make direct speech.

I decided to ask the Oracle about the history of Kangaroo Island \_\_\_\_\_ Taha.

Over 100 native birds can be found here, including the glossy black cockatoo \_\_\_\_\_ Mum.

I'm so pleased that you're having a really good time \_\_\_\_\_ Joel.

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy \_\_\_\_\_ Mr Wilson.

Kangaroo Island is one of the best places in Australia to live \_\_\_\_\_ Louise.

# BLM 5

# Write the Facts

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

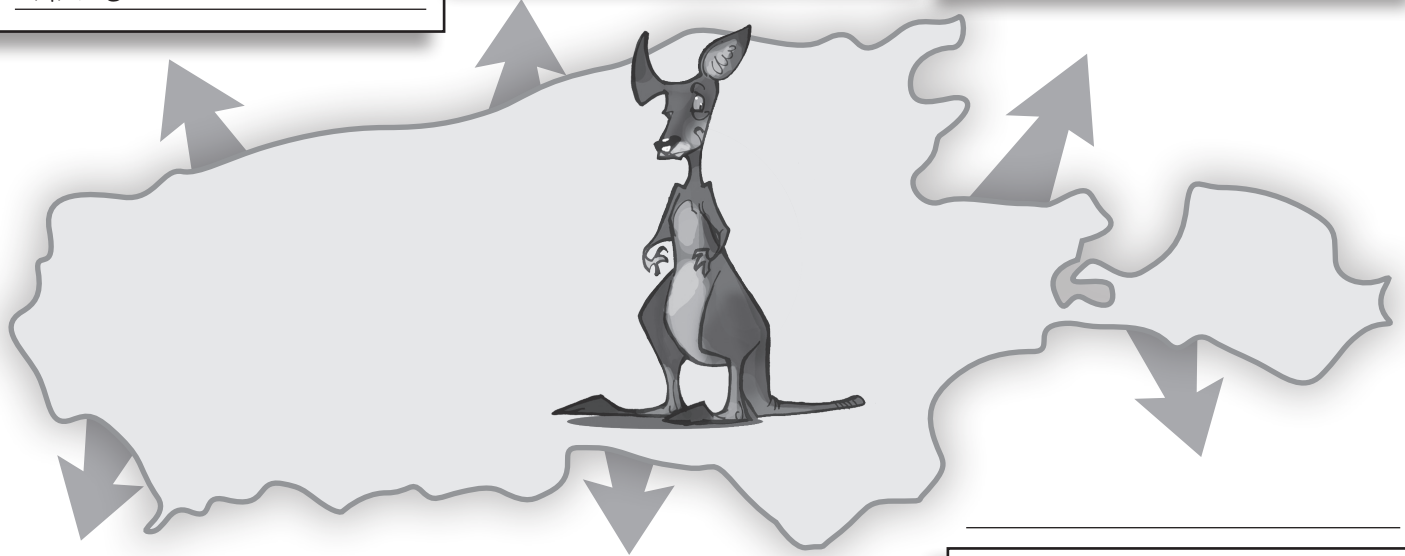
Choose two interesting places and three animals on Kangaroo Island. Write four facts about each one. One example has been done for you.

## Flinders Chase National Park

- amazing scenery
- wind-sculpted rocks
- park created in 1919
- sanctuary for native animals

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