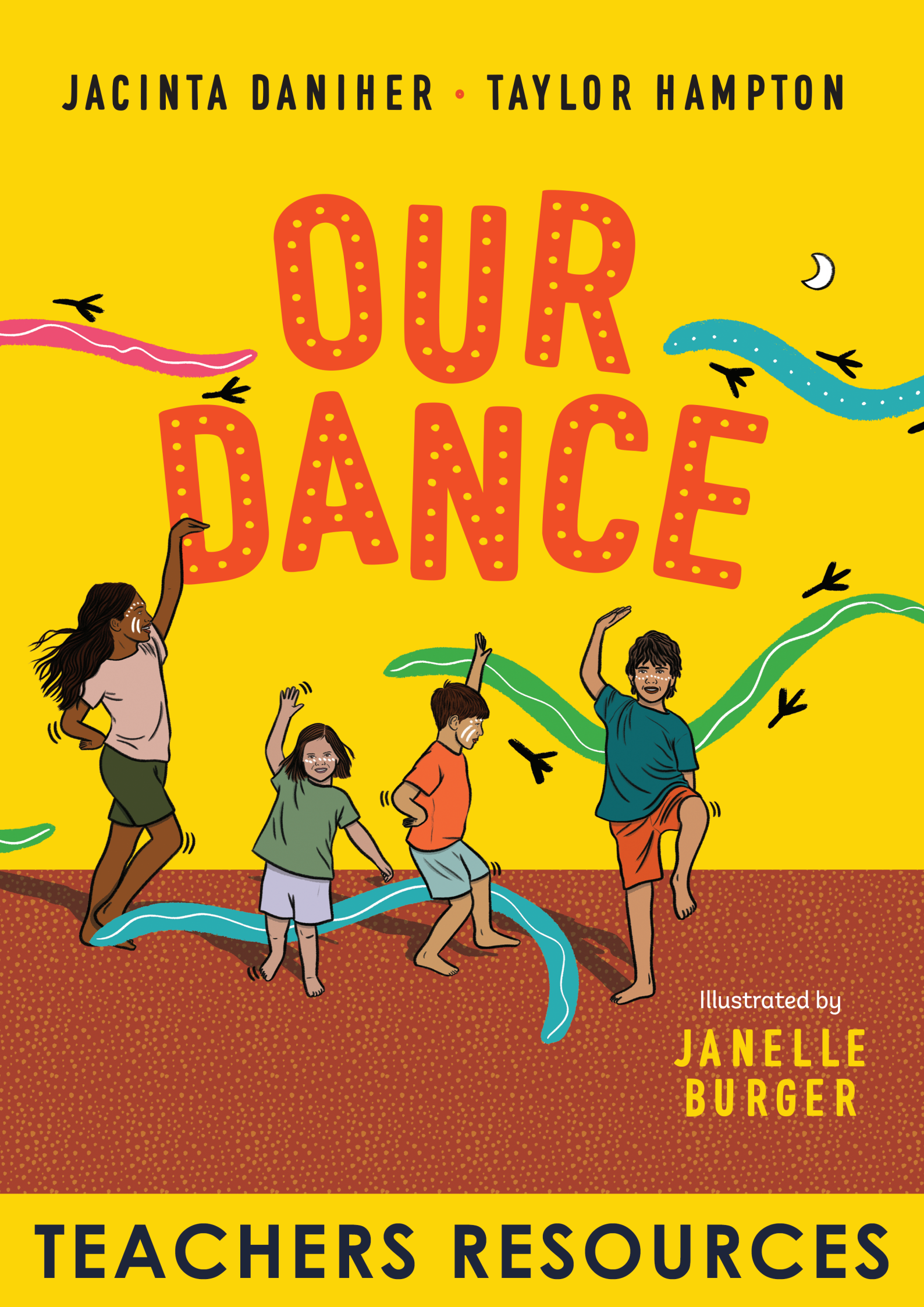


JACINTA DANIHER • TAYLOR HAMPTON

OUR DANCE



Illustrated by

**JANELLE
BURGER**

TEACHERS RESOURCES

OUR DANCE

JACINTA DANIHER • TAYLOR HAMPTON

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Teachers Resources by Cara Shipp

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INTRODUCTION

*Under the moon, by the big gum tree,
let's dance and sing in the corroboree.*

*With ochre on our bodies, Our dance awaits,
Our mob, Our culture, let's celebrate.*

Join in the fun as we come together and dance in the corroboree! Learn how to slither like a snake, jump like a kangaroo, crawl like a goanna, run like an emu and fly like an eagle.

A joyful celebration of First Nations culture and Australia's unique animals through dance and music, with rhyming actions to get young readers moving and vibrant illustrations from Noongar illustrator Janelle Burger.

Highly recommended for 3–7-year-olds, preschool to Grade 1.

BEFORE READING THE NOVEL

UNDERSTANDING CONNECTION TO COUNTRY

ACTIVITY: Introduce students to the AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>

Locate the Countries connected to this story:

- Ngiyampaa/Wiradjuri, NSW – where one of the authors is from
- Noongar, Perth, WA – where the illustrator is from
- The region where your school is located
- If relevant and appropriate (e.g. the students or their families identify as Indigenous and voluntarily share this information with you), locate and celebrate the First Nations Countries and languages in your students' family connections.

ACTIVITY: Look more closely at your school's location on the Gambay map: <https://gambay.com.au/>

- Use the Gambay map to look up place names of interest. Discuss why it would be good to acknowledge the Aboriginal place names as well as the English names.
- Are there any local language words and videos provided on the Gambay map?

Considerations for educators: Is there a local Elders council, cultural centre or group of Indigenous rangers who you could contact to speak with the students? If you are able to take students out to meet with local First Nations people in the local landscape, that would be even better. This is further explored in the Curriculum Activities section.

ACTIVITY: Junior Landcare has provided some learning activities around exploring Connection to Country for children aged 0–7 years: https://juniorlandcare.org.au/learning_activity/whose-country-exploring-first-nations-peoples-languages-map-0-7yrs/

CULTURAL NOTES

Most state government education departments have some guidelines and protocols for teachers working with First Nations students and classroom content. Here is a good example from the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority:

<https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/about/k-12-policies/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-perspectives/protocols>

You can also find information about culturally sensitive teaching on the 'Miss Shipp' blog:

<https://missshipp.wordpress.com/five-foundations-of-first-nations-focussed-teaching/>

<https://missshipp.wordpress.com/culturally-sensitive-teaching/>

Best practice is to find ways to connect your unit of work with a real-world experience, meeting local First Nations people via incursions and excursions. Cultural knowledge specific to a local area should be taught directly by the local traditional custodians or their nominated representatives. This is explained clearly in the Ngarrngga curriculum model, which outlines that showcasing and celebrating general knowledge about Indigenous peoples can be undertaken by any educator, while certain specific knowledges should be taught by local Indigenous community members:

<https://www.ngarrngga.org/stories-news/building-a-ngarrngga-curriculum>

Such specific cultural knowledges include dances, songs, stories and painting artworks representing local stories, sacred places and Dreaming stories. Because the dance in this text is shared freely by its authors for you and your students to enjoy, it is acceptable to learn and practise. However, it would not be appropriate to try to find and copy other ceremonial dances; rather, you need to invite Indigenous dancers, Elders and custodians into your school to do this. The preference is always for local providers, but you can engage performers and presenters who tour nationally if you are unable to engage local people (as long as they identify where they are from and do not teach culturally specific knowledges of your school's area if they do not have permission).

A common challenge for educators is locating, contacting and receiving responses from local First Nations community members. This takes time and perseverance and becomes easier once you are known and trusted by the community. Remember that government institutions and institutions representing British authority are not safe or happy places for many First Nations people. Here are some tips:

- Start within your school with any identified First Nations roles, parents or Elder/advisory groups. Ask if the school has a Reconciliation Action Plan and any committees or groups who work with First Nations people. Don't place students in a place of responsibility or speaking for First Nations people until you know them and their families – start by getting to know the parents and what they want/expect from the school for their young person.
- Contact local Aboriginal land councils, local Indigenous rangers, Aboriginal medical services or cultural centres.
- Attend bookshop, library, art gallery and museum events on First Nations topics, as they will have authors, artists, guest speakers and community members you can talk to.
- Attend local NAIDOC events and be seen around the community.
- Be aware that some people may be the only First Nations representative or the only person in that liaison role, so could be inundated with community work and slow to respond to you.
- Seek opportunities to be introduced to people in person via networks and community activities rather than emails and phone calls.
- Persist – don't leave a message or write one email, then give up and say no-one is interested in working with you. It's about finding the right moment to connect and building trust.
- Think holistically – First Nations service providers are likely to be keen to develop an ongoing relationship with the school and return for different events throughout the year. Your school may have a Reconciliation Action Plan and some funds set aside for RAP actions to support ongoing relationships.
- Create a culturally safe space for visitors – be welcoming of more than one guest, as they may prefer to attend the school with colleagues, friends and family. Initial meetings may need to take place away from school, in a neutral location or somewhere of their choice. Ask guests how they want to be introduced and plan with them how a session/workshop/meeting will run so that everyone is clear on what is expected. Check what location they would prefer and how they want the space set up (sitting in circle, sitting outside, walking through bush, etc.). Remunerate appropriately with a pre-agreed fee and present a small thank you gift. Ensure that there is time for yarning when you meet with them and after they deliver a workshop (book relief time for yourself to host them attentively or arrange for someone off class to assist).

THEMES AND CURRICULUM LINKS

Themes in this book include:

- Celebration of and pride in First Nations cultures
- Celebration of Australian native animals
- Connection to Country and how all Australians can feel this connection and care for our land
- The importance of culture, language, connection to place and family to one's identity and sense of self

The curriculum links for this novel are outlined below.

It fits well in the Foundation curriculum, allowing exploration of families, identities, communities and places of significance, and observation skills for learning about animals (Biological Sciences).

Year level	Curriculum area
Foundation	HASS History • AC9HSFK01: The people in their family, where they were born and raised, and how they are related to each other • AC9HSFK02: The celebrations and commemorations of significant events shared with their families and others HASS Geography • AC9HSFK03: The features of familiar places they belong to, why some places are special and how places can be looked after • AC9HSFK04: The importance of Country/Place to First Nations Australians and the Country/Place on which the school is located • AC9HSFS03: Share a perspective on information, such as stories about significant events and special places English Language • AC9EFLA03: Understand that texts can take many forms such as signs, books and digital texts • AC9EFLA04: Understand conventions of print and screen, including how books and simple digital texts are usually organised English Literature • AC9EFLE01: Share ideas about stories, poems and images in literature, reflecting on experiences that are similar or different to their own by engaging with texts by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors and illustrators • AC9EFLE02: Respond to stories and share feelings and thoughts about their events and characters • AC9EFLE04: Explore and replicate the rhythms and sound patterns of literary texts such as poems, rhymes and songs English Literacy • AC9EFLY05: Use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising and questioning to understand and discuss texts listened to, viewed or read independently • AC9EFLY06: Create and participate in shared editing of short written texts to record and report ideas and events using some learnt vocabulary, basic sentence boundary punctuation and spelling some consonant–vowel–consonant words correctly

Foundation	Health and Physical Education - AC9HPFP01: Investigate who they are and the people in their world - AC9HPFP02: Practise personal and social skills to interact respectfully with others - AC9HPFM01: Practise fundamental movement skills in minor game and play situations - AC9HPFM02: Experiment with different ways of moving their body safely and manipulating objects and space - AC9HPFM03: Participate in a range of activities in natural and outdoor settings and explore the benefits of being physically active - AC9HPFM04: Follow rules to promote fair play in a range of physical activities Science Biological Sciences - AC9SFU01: Observe external features of plants and animals and describe ways they can be grouped based on these features - AC9SFH01: Explore the ways people make and use observations and questions to learn about the natural world The Arts Dance Drama Visual Arts Music - AC9ADAFD01: Use play, imagination, arts knowledge, processes and/or skills to discover possibilities and develop ideas - AC9ADAFD01: Create arts works that communicate ideas
Year 1	HASS Geography - AC9HS1K03: The natural, managed and constructed features of local places, and their location - AC9HS1K04: How places change and how they can be cared for by different groups including First Nations Australians English Language - AC9E1LA04: Explore how repetition, rhyme and rhythm create cohesion in simple poems, chants and songs English Literature - AC9E1LE01: Discuss how language and images are used to create characters, settings and events in literature by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors and illustrators - AC9E1LE02: Discuss literary texts and share responses by making connections with students' own experiences English Literacy - AC9E1LY05: Use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising and questioning when listening, viewing and reading to build literal and inferred meaning by drawing on vocabulary and growing knowledge of context and text structures - AC9E1LY06: Create and re-read to edit short written and/or multimodal texts to report on a topic, express an opinion or recount a real or imagined event, using grammatically correct simple sentences, some topic-specific vocabulary, sentence boundary punctuation and correct spelling of some one- and two-syllable words

Year 1	Health and Physical Education - AC9HP2M01: Practise fundamental movement skills and apply them in a variety of movement situations - AC9HP2M04: Co-construct and apply rules to promote fair play in a range of physical activities - AC9HP2M05: Apply strategies to work collaboratively when participating in physical activities Science - AC9S1U01: Identify the basic needs of plants and animals, including air, water, food or shelter, and describe how the places they live meet those needs - AC9S1U02: Describe daily and seasonal changes in the environment and explore how these changes affect everyday life - AC9S1H01: Describe how people use science in their daily lives, including using patterns to make scientific predictions The Arts Dance - AC9ADA2E01: Explore where, why and how people across cultures, communities and/or other contexts experience dance - AC9ADA2E02: Explore examples of dance choreographed and/or performed by First Nations Australians - AC9ADA2D01: Experiment with ways to move safely and expressively using fundamental movement skills and the elements of dance - AC9ADA2C01: Use the elements of dance to choreograph dance sequences - AC9ADA2P01: Share dance sequences in informal settings The Arts Visual Arts - AC9AVA2D01: Experiment and play with visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials - AC9AVA2C01: Use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to create artworks
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Cross-curriculum Priorities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures; Sustainability

CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

CLASSROOM IDEAS IN ENGLISH

Pre-reading/Book Orientation

- Discuss the features of the book cover, front and back:
 - What do the tracks and coloured lines represent? (animals, animal feet, snakes)
 - Is it night-time or daytime? (the moon is present)
 - What are the children doing? What kind of dancing might they be doing? (imitating animals)
 - What is on the children's faces? Lead into a discussion about ochre – what is it, and have they heard of it or experienced it before?

For support with explaining ochre, use the following article from Bangarra Dance Theatre as a teacher resource: 'Ochre is of the Earth' by Shane Carroll, <https://bangarra-knowledgeground.com.au/productions/ochres/ochre-is-of-the-earth>

Summarise key information from the article and use some of the images to discuss the cultural significance of ochre and how it is used in dance with the students.

If you have connections with local traditional custodians or Indigenous rangers, they may be able to present a workshop on ochre and allow the students to make and experiment with ochre paint.

Introduce the word 'corroboree'. Discuss its meaning. Evolve Communities provides this definition: 'An Eora [Sydney] word that refers to a cultural gathering of dance and music. Although individual nations have their own local terms, this is commonly used and understood by all Aboriginals across the country. It is not used however to describe a Torres Strait Islander cultural event.' (<https://www.evolve.com.au/respectful-terminology/>)

During Reading

- If appropriate and safe, consider using an outdoor location such as a yarnning circle or a cleared area under gum trees.
- Ensure there is space for students to get up and try the dance moves that are being shared in the story.

After Reading

Literary Devices and Writers' Style

- Discuss and identify the rhyming words in the text.
- Notice that a lot of the words in bold and large text are action words (verbs).

General Discussion Points

- Discuss some of the key repeated words: *Our mob, Our culture, Our dance, proud and strong, pride, let's, join in, thanks for joining us*. Notice how the language includes everyone and invites us all to join together and celebrate. Discuss how proud the children in the story are to share their culture. If appropriate, explore with your students what they would be proud to share about their family's traditions and cultures.
- Discuss the purpose of books in general – why do authors write? Why did these authors write *Our Dance*?
- Invite students to identify their favourite pages and why they like them.
- Discuss why it is important for First Nations people to have corroborees and gatherings where they dance and sing (family connection, learning about animals and the land, learning Dreaming stories, and learning culture and heritage).
- Discuss why it is important or useful for First Nations children to learn how animals move. What can they learn from these dances?

Text-to-self and Text-to-world Connections

- Introduce the concept of things that are the same and things that are different. Can students notice the different colours of the kangaroos on spread #8? Are they different types of kangaroos? How are they similar and different? (They each still hop like a kangaroo, travel with other kangaroos, live where kangaroos live, but have different fur colours.) What other animals do we know that have different fur colours?
- Continuing with similarities and differences, ask students to find who in the class has the same hair colour as them. Then have them move and stand together. Who in the class has brothers? (Stand together.) Who in the class has sisters? (Stand together.) Repeat and make up new categories to suit your class group.
- Ask students if they share any of the same qualities as any of the children in the story. Who likes to dance? Who is tall like some of the girls in the book? Who is short? Who likes to be around a campfire?
- Can you notice the different skin colours of the children in the story? Spread #7 shows their different hands as they make the snake actions. The other spreads show them dancing as a group. Discuss how the children in the story are like the kangaroos we noticed earlier – they might be different skin colours, but they are part of the same mob and they all live and dance and learn their culture together. Explain that this can happen in a family where the parents are from different places and different nations. Their children could have different skin colours, but they are still one family, and they belong to that culture and community.

ACTIVITY:

Display enlarged copies of the five sections of the book that depict the kangaroo, emu, snake, goanna or eagle dances. Practise, repeat and discuss the features of the rhymes for each animal.

Brainstorm other Australian animals that are not in this book. Consider animals such as koalas, platypuses, kookaburras, echidnas and turtles. Brainstorm some words and actions for each of these new animals. Invite

students to work in small groups and make up their own rhyme/story about one of these new animals. It may help each group to use the enlarged copy of one of the animals from the book to spark their ideas for their own rhyme/story.

Have students draw their new animal and, where appropriate, assist them to write their story or rhyme to go with the drawing. You may wish to create a scaffold or cloze worksheet to assist. You may like to send the students' artworks to the authors at birrangculturalconnections@outlook.com or via their website: <https://birrang-cultural-connections.square.site/>.

CLASSROOM IDEAS IN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

- Discuss and have students draw the people in their family, where they were born and places they travel often, and how they are related to each other. Draw celebrations and special events that they share with their family. You may like to pre-empt and support this by inviting families to send in some annotated photos that would help their student with the task. This also connects with Foundation Health and PE (investigate who they are and the people in their world).
- Invite students to talk about their special places. What is their favourite place to go on holiday? Is there a tree, park or other special place they like to go to with their family? Look at some of the special natural places in your school's region. If possible, arrange an excursion with some local traditional custodians or Indigenous ranger groups to learn about these places. If not, share photos and discuss why they are special places. Discuss geographical features and talk about which animals might use this place as their habitat.
- Have students draw their favourite place in nature. If possible, take them out on a bushwalk, to a local park or out into your playground for them to 'tune in' to nature as they draw. Discuss why it is important that we care for the environment so that these places continue to be here for us and for the animals that use them.

For older students, read the picture book [*Looking After Country with Fire*](#) by Victor Steffensen, which has a song at the back and QR code to listen to it. Discuss why Indigenous knowledges might help us care for our land and animals. Discuss how Indigenous knowledges and culture can be transmitted through song and how effective this can be for young people learning about traditional practices.

If you are able to, engage local Indigenous rangers or custodians to work with your students. They may be willing and able to share stories about their totems. They may be able to talk about the cultural significance of some of the animals in the book to them and their local community.

CLASSROOM IDEAS IN SCIENCE

ACTIVITIES:

- Divide students into five groups and provide each group with copies of one section of the text (either the kangaroo, emu, snake, goanna or eagle sections). Have the groups perform their animal's dance to the class. Discuss the features of each animal: Do they have fur, scales or feathers? Do they fly? Where do they live? What do they eat? Go around the room with each group discussing what other group's animal they are similar to. Discuss as a class how we might group the animals – e.g. kangaroo and emu, emu and eagle, and snake and goanna.
- Visit a local zoo or reptile or wildlife centre and engage in educational programs around the animals named in the book: snake, emu, kangaroo, goanna and eagle. Some cities have local rangers and Indigenous ranger programs for schools where students can go out on Country or participate in immersive incursions with rangers who teach them about native plants and animals. Search for *Caring for Country*, *Indigenous Ranger* or *Aboriginal Natural Resource Management* resources in your local area.

View educational videos about the animals named in the book. Again, try to search for local Indigenous knowledge using the search terms *Caring for Country*, *Indigenous Ranger*, *Aboriginal Natural Resource Management* and/or the name of your local traditional custodians. For example, here is a video from Adelaide

about the local Kurna words for native animals: Kurna for Kids – Animals by Kurna Warra Pintyanthi, <https://ictv.com.au/video/item/5461>

Discuss how we learn about animals and landscapes through observation and asking questions.

Activity Focus: The Emu

The back cover illustration of *Our Dance* (also on page 24) depicts one child carrying an emu caller. This is an important instrument used by many First Nations people in hunting emu and emu eggs. To learn more, view the video 'Indigenous Emu Caller' by the Australian Museum: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPrPs-wTg5c>

The emu is a very important animal that appears in many Dreaming stories and in First Nations astronomy. The Emu in the Sky constellation is known in many First Nations groups across Australia. In this film project published by Common Ground, Gamilaraay astrophysicist Karlie Noon and Gomeroi/Tongan dancer Daniel Mateo explain the significance of the Emu in the Sky constellation from the perspective of the Gamilaraay people of NSW (Tamworth/Gunnedah region). They explain the seasonal phases of the constellation and how it guides Aboriginal people to know when to hunt, when to stop hunting and preserve resources, and when to move to a different part of their Country.

<https://www.commonground.org.au/article/celestial-emu>

ABC TV's *Play School* episode 'The Emu Constellation Adventure' explains more broadly about astronomy, the earth's rotation around the sun and the Emu in the Sky, with Wiradjuri astronomer Kirsten Banks: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlrZx9ZMbXk>

- View and discuss the above resources. Discuss why Aboriginal people follow seasonal cycles, not hunting all year round but only certain times, and moving around the landscape (so that animals have a chance to breed, numbers are not depleted, and food sources and plants can regenerate). Discuss how useful it is to have signals such as the Emu in the Sky to guide people through the seasons and teach them what to do when. Have students create a collage, artwork or diorama using natural materials (leaves, straw, bark, feathers, etc.) to demonstrate their learning. This also connects with the Visual Arts curriculum.

Discussion Point

- Discuss the artefacts depicted in the book: the coolamon, hunting boomerang and emu caller. Ideally, invite a local traditional custodian or ranger in to share and discuss these artefacts in a hands-on session. There are often artefact workshops at museums, such as the Australian Museum in Sydney. Teacher resources to assist are below:
 - This website by students at Jimboomba State School, QLD, outlines some of the common artefacts known and used across most Aboriginal groups:
<https://jimboombass.eq.edu.au/ourcurriculum/AboriginalAndTorresStraitIslanderHistoriesAndCulture/Pages/Artefacts.aspx>
 - For further information on the yidaki (English word: didgeridoo), see the 2017 article 'The Remarkable Yidaki (and no, it's not a 'didge')' in *The Conversation*, with videos by Christine Judith Nicholls, '': <https://theconversation.com/friday-essay-the-remarkable-yidaki-and-no-its-not-a-didge->

CLASSROOM IDEAS IN HEALTH AND PE

- The Australian Sports Commission's Yulunga Traditional Indigenous Games series includes games connecting to some of the animals in *Our Dance*:

The kangaroo game, available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AheJHq-4-WY>

The emu game, available as a lesson plan at: <https://www.sportaus.gov.au/yulunga>

The Wanambi game ('snake' in the Pitjantjatjara language of the Central Australian desert near Uluru, NT), available as a lesson plan at: <https://www.sportaus.gov.au/yulunga>

- Play the above games and discuss how they help us to learn about important Australian native animals, especially how to be careful and wary around snakes. Discuss how physical activities such as the Yulunga games and the dance learned in *Our Dance* are fun ways to learn about and connect with our Country. These are traditional ways of teaching and learning that Aboriginal people have conducted for many thousands of years.

CLASSROOM IDEAS IN THE ARTS

The Arts curriculum has been addressed in these previous activities:

- Asking students to draw their family, their family's 'special places' and celebrations, and notable geographical features of their local landscape (in HASS activities).
- Having students create a collage with natural materials to represent their learnings about the emu (in Science activities).
- Asking students to draw their own artwork and create their own to represent other Australian animals (in English activities).

There are many other opportunities to inspire students' own original artworks, especially if you are able to engage local traditional custodians or rangers to take you out on Country or come into the classroom with artefacts, stories and dances to share. Students can draw or paint representations of their learnings in these activities.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATOR

Taylor Hampton is a proud Ngilyampaa/Wiradjuri man and Jacinta Daniher is an early childhood educator. Taylor and Jacinta have a passion for educating young people about Aboriginal culture. In 2019, they established Birrang Cultural Connections to offer cultural workshops in education settings, with the vision of creating content that is educational, interactive and exciting. They have two children, Ella and Arlo, who have inspired them to create picture books that reflect their culture and experiences as young Aboriginal children growing up in Australia today.

Janelle Burger is an Indigenous Australian (Noongar) and Italian illustrator based in Paris, France. Her work is influenced by pop culture, fashion, video games and food. She has worked for a variety of clients, including creating gift cards for Papyrus, fine art prints for Rosenstiels, online illustrations for Tamu McPherson's website All the Pretty Birds, and illustrating the book *Get Changed* by fashion stylist Kat Farmer. When she's not drawing, Janelle likes to ride her bike around Paris, taking photos of cats and old men wearing berets whilst holding a baguette in their hands.

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Cara Shipp is a Wiradjuri/Welsh woman (descending from the Lamb and Shipp families in Central Western NSW, around Dubbo, Parkes and Trangi) and was recently Head of Senior School at Silkwood School on the Gold Coast. As part of the Big Picture Learning Australia network of schools, Cara is now a National School Coach at Silkwood School and other schools across SE QLD and Northern NSW, leading professional development for teachers in this network. Cara has previously run alternative educational programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, held Head Teacher English/HASS/Languages positions and served as President, Vice President and Editor with the ACT Association for the Teaching of English (ACTATE). She is currently the National Fellow with the Australian Association for the Teaching of English. Cara is an Alumnus and trained facilitator of the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program. Cara completed a Master of Education focusing on Aboriginal literacy and regularly presents cultural competence training at local and national conferences, particularly within the context of incorporating First Nations perspectives into the English curriculum. Her recent AATE publication, *Listening from the Heart: Re-writing the Teaching of English with First Nations Voices*, documents this work. Cara writes teachers notes for a range of First Nations authors and publishers, and she has a blog on Aboriginal perspectives in English teaching at <https://missshipp.wordpress.com/>.