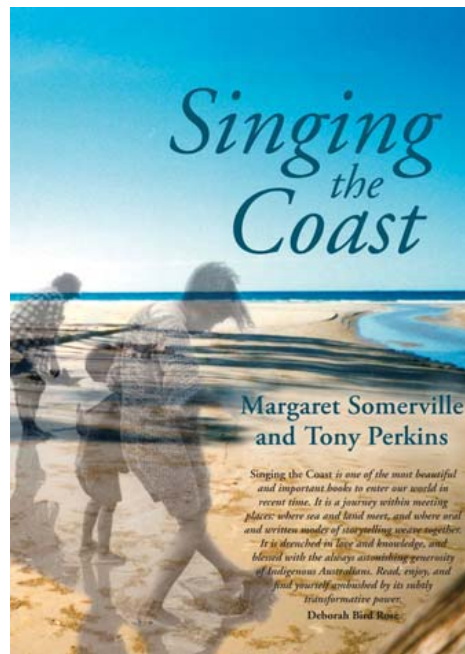


# Teachers' Notes: *Singing the Coast* by Margaret Somerville and Tony Perkins

Aboriginal Studies Press



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## **SINGING THE COAST** **Margaret Somerville and Tony Perkins**

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## Introduction to the teachers' notes

### The text: *Singing the coast*

In Aboriginal creation rituals, places are sung into being. To 'sing' one's country is to nurture it, to revitalise it and to assert your 'knowing' of that place in every sense – physically, emotionally and spiritually. In making connections between people and places, songlines are made across the landscape. More than ever, contemporary Aboriginal people need this means of connection with their country. Songs of joy, songs of sadness and pain, songs of loss, songs of hope and survival, songs of rebirth and of love for the land combine to produce an 'emergent narrative' intertwining people and place. As well as singers to recreate the country, there must be listeners who are prepared to hear and respond. The study of *Singing the coast* provides opportunities for Australian students of all cultural backgrounds to come to a greater understanding of how to respond, as well as how to value and transmit their own traditional stories and heritage.

### How to use these notes

Teachers are encouraged to use this program as a thematic study in English or Aboriginal Studies. Rather than focusing on the structure and metalanguage of English, this program is essentially a study of non-fiction. It could also be used in Preliminary HSC English as an Area of Study. The notes present a guided study of the text in 24 lessons. Teachers are provided with the option of extending the program to 46 lessons if they require more depth. A combination of resource and activity sheets guide students through a detailed study of each chapter. They are composed of useful commentaries, close analysis, supplementary information and a wide range of activities including group projects, oral tasks, creative work, ICT tasks and independent research. The sheets are fully reproducible and are designed for students to complete in class time. Some are suitable for homework or extension work. Teachers are invited to photocopy the sheets for use by individual students in the classroom. Some tasks may be completed on the worksheet while others are provided for completion in students' work books or on loose paper. The resource and activity sheets can be used as individual studies or together in an extended program of study. Two assignment guide sheets are also included in the program for use in the classroom. These detail instructions and marking criteria for two assessment tasks.

### Links to syllabus learning outcomes

This document includes tables providing teachers with specific links to NSW Board of Studies syllabus outcomes for Stage 5 English and the Stage 5 Aboriginal Studies elective. The worksheets can be adapted to suit the syllabus requirements for equivalent year levels

in the other Australian states. As well as meeting the specific outcomes listed in the Stage 5 syllabuses mentioned above, the program is also useful for teachers implementing the new Australian Curriculum, which has as a cross-curriculum priority the aim of exploring Aboriginal Australians' perspectives throughout various courses. The introductory pages present a summary of the learning activities of the program. Two tables present syllabus outcomes statements for each lesson in a simple format.

### **Provisions for extension work**

To supplement this program, suggestions are provided for extension tasks that will challenge students with more advanced reading and comprehension skills. A useful strategy for extending the more capable students is to convert group-assigned activities to individual tasks.

### **Provisions for students with learning difficulties**

The structured worksheet-based lessons are ideal for teaching students with learning difficulties, as they offer concrete guidance through the tasks. Students with special learning needs may be assigned more reading and responding time. They may elect to work in partnerships with peers or a learning support teacher. The more challenging lessons can be broken down into simpler steps, and can be refocused on the development of oral responses rather than formal writing tasks. This will help enable students with learning difficulties to achieve the learning outcomes of the program.

### **Specific language considerations**

Indigenous Australians prefer to be identified by a language label. For example, using the expression 'Gumbaynggirr woman' makes it clear to which specific language group the person belongs. The name *Gumbaynggirr* is pronounced 'Gum-bain-gee-ar'. The terms 'Aboriginal people' and 'Indigenous people' have passed into accepted usage despite their originally generic meanings. To distinguish these terms as proper nouns naming cultural groups, it is important that they are capitalised when they appear in written language. It is appropriate to seek to properly define distinct and individual nations and peoples when making reference to Indigenous Australians.

It is important that teachers deal authentically with topics relying on the life experiences of Indigenous Australians. The intensely personal and emotive topics that dominate Aboriginal literature call for sensitivity and cross-cultural empathy. Subconscious deference to stereotypes and misconceptions can be avoided through proper listening to and contextualising of Aboriginal writing and storytelling.

### Using supporting texts and resources

When consulting other resource material, it's important to keep in mind that natural variance between spoken and written Aboriginal languages. Variance also exists *within* the written forms of some languages. The difficulties presented by these idiosyncrasies can be streamlined with the help of Aboriginal language specialists. Teachers are encouraged, wherever practicable, to engage the assistance of such people.

### Preparation

Teachers will need to provide sufficient copies of the book, *Singing the coast* for each student to have their own copy if reading is to be assigned for homework (as prescribed in the 24 lesson program). For the longer program which involves in-class reading sessions, it may be sufficient for two students to share one book. Teachers should also photocopy the required worksheets from the teachers' notes document before each lesson.

### Some ideas to assist students with their reading

When directing students in their reading of *Singing the coast*, teachers may offer these activities to provide some variation.

- read aloud to the class
- nominate students to take turns reading aloud
- use either of the first two methods in small reading circles (in different learning spaces)
- assign periods of silent reading
- assign short (ten minute) intervals interspersed with other activities
- assign reading for homework

During group reading sessions, encourage students to:

- pause at times to discuss issues arising in the text
- pause to make predictions and reflections
- visualise specific settings, people and incidents described in the text
- use visualisation techniques to help students imagine characters and events
- note unfamiliar language, particularly Gumbaynggirr words, and find out their meanings

**Assessment plan**

There are two assignments in this unit – one written task and one oral presentation. The individual worksheet activities may also be used for assessment purposes.

**Unit summary table**

This table provides an overview of the twenty-four lessons in this unit. A reading plan with a recommended schedule for completing *Singing the coast* is provided. The activity sheets and other documents designed for use in each lesson are also listed to assist teachers in programming. Additional lessons could be added to this schedule to enable slower readers to cope with the reading demands of the program, or to make this a more extended program of study of 36 lessons. These have been noted in the 'Lessons' column of the table. Full descriptions of the individual lesson ideas begin on page 15.



Lessons	Topics	Page refs	Activities	Documents
Lesson 1	Introducing the book: <i>Singing the coast</i> <b>Prologue: Preliminary analysis</b>	Prologue and front cover	Read the prologue and study the book's front cover; complete activities 1-4.	Sheets 1 & 2
Lesson 2	<b>Chapter 1: Singing differently</b> Re-creating through story and song	pp 1-2	Read pages 1-2 of the book; complete activities 1-2.	Sheet 3
Lesson 3	<b>Chapter 1: Singing differently</b> Mapping the coast Ways of seeing the land and waters of the coast	pp 3-12	Read pages 3-12; refer to the map on Sheet 4 and complete map labelling activity 1 on Sheet 5.	Sheets 4 & 5
Lesson 4	<b>Chapter 1: Singing differently</b> Ways of seeing the land and waters of the coast	pp 13-23	Read <i>The symbolism of fences</i> (Sheet 5) and discuss. Then complete activities 3-4. Continue reading from p 13-23.	Sheet 5
Lesson 5	<b>Chapter 1: Singing differently</b> Preserving and passing on knowledge	Revise pp 8-12	Discuss the questions then complete activities 1-7.	Sheet 6
Lesson 6	<b>Chapter 2: Crying songs to remember</b> Remembering Red Rock	pp 24-32	Continue reading Chapter 2 of the book.	n/a
Lesson 7 <b>Could be extended to two lessons.</b>	<b>Chapter 2: Crying songs to remember</b> Remembering Red Rock	pp 24-32 Skip to pp 126, 134-5	Have students work in pairs or small groups. Complete the suggested readings then complete activities 1-7.	Sheet 7
Lesson 8 <b>Could be extended to two lessons.</b>	<b>Chapter 2: Crying songs to remember</b> 'Feeling' the land	pp 32-53	Read further into Chapter 2, then assign reading up to p 53 for homework.	n/a
Lesson 9	<b>Chapter 2: Crying songs to remember</b> 'Feeling' the land	pp 54-56 Revise pp 4-5	Read pp 54-6, revise pp 4-5, then complete activities 1-2.	Sheet 8

Lesson 10  <b>Could be extended to two or three lessons.</b>	<b>Chapter 2: Crying songs to remember</b> 'Feeling' the land	pp 56-69	Assign (and discuss the requirements of) activity 3. This may be completed outside of class time, or may require one to two lessons in the computer lab. Read or assign homework reading of pp 56-9.	Sheet 8
Lesson 11	<b>Chapter 3: Making home in No Man's Land</b> No Man's Land	Revise pp 6-11 (skim to locate key words)	Read the resource material on Sheet 9 and discuss the meanings associated with 'no man's land'. Complete the readings and work on activities 1-3.	Sheet 9
Lesson 12  <b>Could be extended to two lessons.</b>	<b>Chapter 3: Making home in No Man's Land</b> No Man's Land	pp 70-86	Assign the lesson for silent or whole group reading of Chapter 3.	n/a
Lesson 13  <b>Could be extended to enable the assignment to be done in lesson time.</b>	<b>Chapter 3: Making home in No Man's Land</b> People (Assignment 1)	Chapter 3 (pp 54-86)	Introduce Assignment 1 – discuss requirements and allocate class time for preliminary work. This assignment may be completed in class time or at home at the teacher's discretion.	Sheet 10 (Assignment 1 guide sheet)
Lesson 14	<b>Chapter 4: Eating place</b> Life on the coast	pp 87-8	Complete the readings and activities 1-2.	Sheet 11
Lesson 15	<b>Chapter 4: Eating place</b> Rhythms of the coast	pp 89-90	Discuss the concept 'Rhythms of the coast' and what it means to individual students. Then complete activities 1-2.	Sheet 12
Lesson 16  <b>Could be extended to enable the assignment to be done in lesson time.</b>	<b>Chapter 4: Eating place</b> Rhythms of the coast	Revision: Chapters 1,2 3 & 4	Introduce the collage activity (3) and assign class time to complete it (or allocate it as homework).	Sheet 12
Lesson 17  <b>Could be extended to two lessons.</b>	<b>Chapter 4: Eating place</b> Gathering food	pp 90-100; 100-20	Complete the readings (pp 90-100) then work on activities 1-2. Assign additional reading (pp 100-20) for homework.	Sheet 13

Lesson 18	<b>Chapter 5: Spirits in places</b> Respecting the spirits	p 121	Read page 121 then complete activities 1-5.	Sheet 14
Lesson 19 <b>Could be extended to two or three lessons, including a discussion lesson.</b>	<b>Chapter 5: Spirits in places</b> Grasping the spiritual	Individually selected sections of Chapter 5	Separate the class into small groups. Have them choose their topics and locate information from Chapter 5. Discuss, and allocate additional time for discussion in a subsequent lesson if required.	Sheet 15
Lesson 20 <b>Could be extended to two lessons.</b>	<b>Chapter 6: A language of landscape</b> The last of the storymen	pp 153-67	As a group, read the resource material on Sheet 16. Then complete the readings on pp 153-67 about Tiger Buchannan and complete activities 1-4.	Sheet 16
Lesson 21 <b>Could be extended to two lessons.</b>	<b>Chapter 6: A language of landscape</b> Transmitting truth	pp 167-87	Continue reading through Chapter 6. Assign additional reading for homework to complete Chapter 6 if required.	n/a
Lesson 22	<b>Chapter 6: A language of landscape</b> Transmitting truth	Revise pp 12, 43-5 and 49.	Complete the revision readings, then work on activities 1-3.	Sheet 17
Lesson 23 <b>Could be extended to two or three lessons.</b>	<b>Chapter 7: Connecting the dots</b> Transcending time	pp 188-90	Complete the readings, then work on activities 1-2. Assign and discuss Assignment 2, the oral presentation. Allocate additional reading for homework to complete the book.	Sheet 18 Sheet 19 (Assignment 2 guide sheet)
Lesson 24 <b>Could be extended to two lessons.</b>	<b>Chapter 7: Connecting the dots</b> Storytelling (Assignment 2)	Revision: Chapters 1-7	Allocate lesson time in which students can deliver their oral presentations.	Sheet 19 (Assignment 2 guide sheet)

**Learning outcomes table****Stage 5 English**

<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Learning outcomes (NSW Board of Studies Stage 5 English syllabus)</b>
Lesson 1	4.1 identify, describe and explain the purpose of texts in personal, historical, cultural, social, technological and workplace contexts 4.12 identify the significance of the relationship between purpose, audience and context 8.7 identify the ways content, form and ideas of texts can be related
Lesson 2	4.1 identify, describe and explain the purpose of texts in personal, historical, cultural, social, technological and workplace contexts 9.4 identify different reading positions and interpretations of particular texts and appreciate distinctions in meaning 9.9 identify aspects of their own context that influence their responses and compositions
Lesson 3	9.6 identify the ways different and changing views of the world shape meaning 9.10 understand how alternative readings of texts reflect responders' personal and public worlds and what they value in the text 10.12 explain how texts sustain or challenge established cultural attitudes
Lesson 4	9.6 identify the ways different and changing views of the world shape meaning 9.9 evaluate aspects of their own context that influence their responses and compositions 9.10 explain how alternative readings of texts reflect responders' personal and public worlds and what they value in the text
Lesson 5	1.1 respond to and compose a range of imaginative, factual and critical texts which are increasingly demanding in terms of their linguistic, structural, cognitive, emotional and moral complexity 1.5 respond to texts from different reading positions as an aspect of their developing moral and ethical stances on issues 9.4 identify different reading positions and interpretations of particular texts and appreciate distinctions in meaning 11.5 use individual and group processes to generate, investigate, document, clarify, refine, critically evaluate and present ideas and information drawn from books, the internet and other sources of information
Lesson 6	4.6 adapt and justify language use appropriate to spoken, written and visual texts 9.5 draw conclusions about their own values in relation to the values expressed and reflected by texts, and their responses to them 10.3 interpret texts from a range of perspectives and justify the interpretations
Lesson 7	9.4 identify different reading positions and interpretations of particular texts and appreciate distinctions in meaning 10.4 engage with details of texts to respond and compose from a range of social and critical perspectives 10.8 identify the effects of personal, social, historical and technological perspectives on language and communication
Lesson 8	7.3 infer from and interpret texts 9.6 identify the ways different and changing views of the world shape meaning 11.5 use individual and group processes to generate, investigate, document, clarify, refine, critically evaluate and present ideas and information drawn from books, the internet and other sources of information

Lesson 9	7.7 explore and develop arguments in a range of modes and media and in imaginative, interpretive and critical compositions 10.4 engage with details of texts to respond and compose from a range of social and critical perspectives 11.5 use individual and group processes to generate, investigate, document, clarify, refine, critically evaluate and present ideas and information drawn from books, the internet and other sources of information
Lesson 10	2.3 vary their use of the processes of planning, drafting, rehearsing, editing and publishing to compose appropriately and effectively crafted and sustained texts in a range of modes and media 3.1 respond to and compose increasingly complex texts in different technologies considering the effects of the technology including layout and design on meaning 10.3 interpret texts from a range of perspectives and justify the interpretations
Lesson 11	7.2 trace ideas and images through extended texts 7.3 infer from and interpret texts 9.3 describe ways in which their own responses to texts are personal and reflect their own context 10.9 identify the ways in which particular texts relate to their cultural experiences and the culture of others
Lesson 12	7.2 trace ideas and images through extended texts 7.3 infer from and interpret texts 10.9 identify the ways in which particular texts relate to their cultural experiences and the culture of others
Lesson 13	2.1 produce sustained spoken and written texts in rehearsed, unrehearsed and impromptu situations 2.2 use writing and representing as an aid to research, planning, classifying information and learning 2.3 vary their use of the processes of planning, drafting, rehearsing, editing and publishing to compose appropriately and effectively crafted and sustained texts in a range of modes and media 5.9 assess the selection, organisation and coherence of information and ideas in texts
Lesson 14	9.5 draw conclusions about their own values in relation to the values expressed and reflected by texts, and their responses to them 9.6 identify the ways different and changing views of the world shape meaning 10.9 identify the ways in which particular texts relate to their cultural experiences and the culture of others
Lesson 15	1.1 respond to and compose a range of imaginative, factual and critical texts which are increasingly demanding in terms of their linguistic, structural, cognitive, emotional and moral complexity 9.3 describe ways in which their own responses to texts are personal and reflect their own context 10.3 interpret texts from a range of perspectives and justify the interpretations 10.4 engage with details of texts to respond and compose from a range of social and critical perspectives 10.9 identify the ways in which particular texts relate to their cultural experiences and the culture of others
Lesson 16	2.9 processes of representation including use of symbols, images, icons, stereotypes, connotations, inference, and particular visual and aural techniques including those of camera, design and sound, to create cohesive texts 2.12 identify the ways different modes, subject areas, media and cultural representation affect their personal and critical responses to texts 9.2 relate the content and ideas in texts to the world beyond the texts

Lesson 17	7.2 trace ideas and images through extended texts 9.5 draw conclusions about their own values in relation to the values expressed and reflected by texts, and their responses to them 10.8 the effects of personal, social, historical and technological perspectives on language and communication 10.11 explain the beliefs and value systems underpinning texts from different cultures
Lesson 18	7.2 trace ideas and images through extended texts 7.7 explore and develop arguments in a range of modes and media and in imaginative, interpretive and critical compositions 10.11 explain the beliefs and value systems underpinning texts from different cultures
Lesson 19	2.3 vary their use of the processes of planning, drafting, rehearsing, editing and publishing to compose appropriately and effectively crafted and sustained texts in a range of modes and media 10.6 compose texts that reflect cultural attitudes other than their own 11.5 use individual and group processes to generate, investigate, document, clarify, refine, critically evaluate and present ideas and information drawn from books, the internet and other sources of information
Lesson 20	8.4 track and explain the treatment of a common theme or idea in a range of texts in different modes and media 9.2 relate the content and ideas in texts to the world beyond the texts 10.6 compose texts that reflect cultural attitudes other than their own
Lesson 21	9.6 identify the ways different and changing views of the world shape meaning 9.8 identify the ways personal perspective shapes meaning 10.1 identify cultural elements expressed in the language, structure and content of texts drawn from popular culture, youth cultures, cultural heritages and the workplace
Lesson 22	1.1 respond to and compose a range of imaginative, factual and critical texts which are increasingly demanding in terms of their linguistic, structural, cognitive, emotional and moral complexity 10.3 interpret texts from a range of perspectives and justify the interpretations 10.4 engage with details of texts to respond and compose from a range of social and critical perspectives 10.9 identify the ways in which particular texts relate to their cultural experiences and the culture of others
Lesson 23	1.2 respond to and compose more sustained texts in a range of contexts 10.3 interpret texts from a range of perspectives and justify the interpretations 10.5 respond to and compose texts to demonstrate their view of the world by drawing on the texts of other cultures (for ESL students, this might include drawing on texts in their first language)
Lesson 24	1.2 respond to and compose more sustained texts in a range of contexts 2.1 produce sustained spoken and written texts in rehearsed, unrehearsed and impromptu situations 10.3 interpret texts from a range of perspectives and justify the interpretations 10.5 respond to and compose texts to demonstrate their view of the world by drawing on the texts of other cultures (for ESL students, this might include drawing on texts in their first language)

**Learning outcomes table****Stage 5 Aboriginal Studies**

<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Learning outcomes (NSW Board of Studies Stage 5 Aboriginal Studies syllabus)</b>	
Lesson 1	5.5 5.8 5.9	explains the importance of families and communities to Aboriginal Peoples analyses the interaction of the wider Australian community with Aboriginal Peoples and cultures analyses how personal beliefs and political, economic, media and social factors influence attitudes towards Aboriginal Peoples and their cultures
Lesson 2	5.2 5.3	explains ways in which Aboriginal Peoples maintain their identity describes the dynamic nature of Aboriginal cultures
Lesson 3	5.8 5.9	analyses the interaction of the wider Australian community with Aboriginal Peoples and cultures analyses how personal beliefs and political, economic, media and social factors influence attitudes towards Aboriginal Peoples and their cultures
Lesson 4	5.8 5.9	analyses the interaction of the wider Australian community with Aboriginal Peoples and cultures analyses how personal beliefs and political, economic, media and social factors influence attitudes towards Aboriginal Peoples and their cultures
Lesson 5	5.1 5.2 5.3 5.4	describes the factors that contribute to an Aboriginal person's identity explains ways in which Aboriginal Peoples maintain their identity describes the dynamic nature of Aboriginal cultures explains adaptations in, and the changing nature of, Aboriginal cultural expression across time and location
Lesson 6	5.4 5.5	explains adaptations in, and the changing nature of, Aboriginal cultural expression across time and location explains the importance of families and communities to Aboriginal Peoples
Lesson 7	5.8	analyses the interaction of the wider Australian community with Aboriginal Peoples and cultures
Lesson 8	5.1 5.2	describes the factors that contribute to an Aboriginal person's identity explains ways in which Aboriginal Peoples maintain their identity
Lesson 9	5.1 5.2 5.5	describes the factors that contribute to an Aboriginal person's identity explains ways in which Aboriginal Peoples maintain their identity explains the importance of families and communities to Aboriginal Peoples
Lesson 10	5.3	describes the dynamic nature of Aboriginal cultures
Lesson 11	5.3 5.6	describes the dynamic nature of Aboriginal cultures explains the importance of self-determination and autonomy to all aspects of Aboriginal Peoples' participation nationally and internationally
Lesson 12	5.5	explains the importance of families and communities to Aboriginal Peoples



	5.6	explains the importance of self-determination and autonomy to all aspects of Aboriginal Peoples' participation nationally and internationally
Lesson 13	5.1 5.5 5.7	describes the factors that contribute to an Aboriginal person's identity explains the importance of families and communities to Aboriginal Peoples assesses the significance of contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Australian society
Lesson 14	5.1 5.2	describes the factors that contribute to an Aboriginal person's identity explains ways in which Aboriginal Peoples maintain their identity
Lesson 15	5.2 5.4	explains ways in which Aboriginal Peoples maintain their identity explains adaptations in, and the changing nature of, Aboriginal cultural expression across time and location
Lesson 16	5.3 5.11	describes the dynamic nature of Aboriginal cultures independently uses a range of research techniques and technologies to locate, select, organise and communicate information and findings
Lesson 17	5.1 5.2	describes the factors that contribute to an Aboriginal person's identity explains ways in which Aboriginal Peoples maintain their identity
Lesson 18	5.4 5.9	explains adaptations in, and the changing nature of, Aboriginal cultural expression across time and location analyses how personal beliefs and political, economic, media and social factors influence attitudes towards Aboriginal Peoples and their cultures
Lesson 19	5.6	explains the importance of self-determination and autonomy to all aspects of Aboriginal Peoples' participation nationally and internationally
Lesson 20	5.3	describes the dynamic nature of Aboriginal cultures
Lesson 21	5.8 5.9 5.11	analyses the interaction of the wider Australian community with Aboriginal Peoples and cultures analyses how personal beliefs and political, economic, media and social factors influence attitudes towards Aboriginal Peoples and their cultures independently uses a range of research techniques and technologies to locate, select, organise and communicate information and findings
Lesson 22	5.8 5.9	analyses the interaction of the wider Australian community with Aboriginal Peoples and cultures analyses how personal beliefs and political, economic, media and social factors influence attitudes towards Aboriginal Peoples and their cultures
Lesson 23	5.4 5.6 5.7 5.9 5.10 5.11	explains adaptations in, and the changing nature of, Aboriginal cultural expression across time and location explains the importance of self-determination and autonomy to all aspects of Aboriginal Peoples' participation nationally and internationally assesses the significance of contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Australian society analyses how personal beliefs and political, economic, media and social factors influence attitudes towards Aboriginal Peoples and their cultures independently identifies and applies appropriate community consultation protocols and ethical research practices to gather and interpret data independently uses a range of research techniques and technologies to locate, select, organise and communicate information and findings



Lesson 24	5.2 explains ways in which Aboriginal Peoples maintain their identity 5.7 assesses the significance of contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Australian society 5.9 analyses how personal beliefs and political, economic, media and social factors influence attitudes towards Aboriginal Peoples and their cultures 5.10 independently identifies and applies appropriate community consultation protocols and ethical research practices to gather and interpret data
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## Lesson outline

*This lesson outline follows the shorter 24 lesson program. Suggestions for additional lessons are made throughout the outline if teachers prefer to use the 46 lesson extension.*

### Lesson 1 Introducing the book: *Singing the coast*

#### Prologue: Preliminary analysis

This is a single lesson activity. Distribute copies of the book. Read the prologue aloud to the class. Ask students to examine the book's front cover. Discuss the images and their connotations. Then ask students to complete activities 1-4.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, pp 1-2  
Sheets 1 & 2

### Lesson 2 Chapter 1: Singing differently

#### Re-creating through story and song

This is a single lesson activity. Read pages 1-2 of the book and discuss the meaning of 'singing' to create and recreate meaning. Direct students to complete activities 1 & 2. Work through students' responses to these activities if time permits.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, pp 1-2  
Sheet 3

### Lesson 3 Chapter 1: Singing differently

#### Mapping the coast

#### Ways of seeing the land and waters of the coast

This is a single lesson activity. Read pages 3-12. Show students a map of Australia (a wall map or atlas) and ensure they understand the location of the coastal region being studied. Refer to the map in the book, then using the map shown on Sheet 4, have them complete the labelling activity 1 on Sheet 5. Collect the sheets for marking.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, pp 3-12  
Sheets 4 & 5  
Map of Australia (wall map or atlases)

**Lesson 4 Chapter 1: Singing differently****Ways of seeing the land and waters of the coast**

This is a single lesson activity. Read aloud from Sheet 5 the resource material headed *The symbolism of fences* and discuss students' ideas about what fences mean in Anglo-Australian (and generally in western, capitalist cultures). Compare this to their meaning (or lack of meaning) in Aboriginal cultures. Then complete activities 3-4. Continue reading the book if time permits.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, pp 13-23  
Sheet 5

**Lesson 5 Chapter 1: Singing differently****Preserving and passing on knowledge**

This is a single lesson activity. Discuss the questions as a group or in pairs, then complete activities 1-7.

Work through the suggested responses if time permits.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, revise pp 8-12  
Sheet 6

**Lesson 6 Chapter 2: Crying songs to remember****Remembering Red Rock**

This is a single lesson activity. Continue reading Chapter 2 of the book.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, pp 24-32

**Lesson 7 Chapter 2: Crying songs to remember****Remembering Red Rock**

This could be completed in a single lesson, but would yield a deeper study if expanded to two lessons.

Have the class break up into pairs or small groups to complete the suggested readings then individually complete activities 1-7. If time permits, discuss the answers as a group.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, pp 24-32. Skip to pp 126, 134-5.  
Sheet 7

**Lesson 8 Chapter 2: Crying songs to remember****'Feeling' the land**

This activity could be extended to two lessons to enable less proficient readers more time to complete their reading. Have students read further into Chapter 2, then assign reading up to p 53 for homework. Alternatively, reading could be completed in a group setting or with peer support partners if desired.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, pp 32-53

### **Lesson 9 Chapter 2: Crying songs to remember**

#### **'Feeling' the land**

This activity is designed for a single lesson. Have students read pp 54-6, revise pp 4-5, then complete the first language activity individually. When students have completed this activity, hold a class discussion based on activity 2.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, pp 54-56. Revise pp 4-5.

Sheet 8

### **Lesson 10 Chapter 2: Crying songs to remember**

#### **'Feeling' the land**

A study of this material could be extended to two or three lessons. Assign (and discuss the requirements of) activity 3. This ICT activity may be completed outside of class time, or may require one to two lessons in the computer lab. Read or assign reading of pp 56-9 for homework.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, pp 56-69

Sheet 8

Computer lab resources

### **Lesson 11 Chapter 3: Making home in No Man's Land**

#### **No Man's Land**

This is a single lesson activity. Read the resource material on Sheet 9 and discuss the meanings associated with 'no man's land'. If possible refer to illustrated history books or source materials to show students images of 'no man's land' in World Wars I and II. Have students skim through the revision readings to locate key words that will enable them to complete activities 1-3. Revise the skim reading (or scanning) technique if required. Work through the suggested responses to these activities if time permits.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, revise pp 6-11.

Sheet 9

History books and other source materials that provide images of 'no man's land'

**Lesson 12 Chapter 3: Making home in No Man's Land****No Man's Land**

A study of this material could be extended to two lessons. Assign the lesson for silent or whole group reading of Chapter 3. A string of silent reading sessions (of 10 minutes duration) could be scheduled, interspersed with group discussions or summary note-making.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, pp 70-86

**Lesson 13 Chapter 3: Making home in No Man's Land****People (Assignment 1 guide sheet)**

This assignment activity could be extended to enable the work to be completed in lesson time. If the in-class model were followed, it would require two to three additional lessons to complete. Introduce Assignment 1 – discuss the assessment requirements, including the marking criteria and allocate class time for preliminary work.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, Chapter 3 (pp 54-86).

Sheet 10 (Assignment 1 guide sheet)

**Lesson 14 Chapter 4: Eating place****Life on the coast**

This is a single lesson activity. Discuss with students their ideas about living off the land. What types of foods would they be able to find in their local area? After a preliminary discussion, direct students to complete the readings and work on activities 1-2. Work through the suggested responses to these activities if time permits.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, pp 87-8

Sheet 11

**Lesson 15 Chapter 4: Eating place****Rhythms of the coast**

This is a single lesson activity. Discuss the theme *Rhythms of the coast* and what it means to individual students. Ask them to think about the various cycles in the natural world where they live. If they do not live near the coast, ask students to consider how these compare to life in a coastal environment. Note down some key points raised in the discussion for students to copy into their books, then have them complete activities 1-2. Discuss students' responses to these activities if time permits.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, pp 89-90

Sheet 12

whiteboard and markers

**Lesson 16 Chapter 4: Eating place****Rhythms of the coast**

This activity could be extended to enable the assignment to be done in lesson time. Introduce the collage activity (3) and assign two lessons of class time to complete it. Alternatively, it could be allocated as homework. Distribute magazines, A3 sheets and other materials. Ask students to briefly revise their previous work – particularly those activities related to natural imagery – and explain the requirements of the task by presenting the content on Sheet 12. If no collected magazine resources are available, students may use resources from home.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, revision of Chapters 1,2 3 & 4

Sheet 12

A range of colourful magazines with images of natural scenery, flora and fauna

Scissors, glue and A3 paper

**Lesson 17 Chapter 4: Eating place****Gathering food**

This activity could be extended to two lessons. Complete the readings as a group (pp 90-100) then have students work on activities 1-2. Assign additional reading (pp 100-20) for homework. Work through the suggested responses to these activities if time permits.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, pp 90-100; 100-20

Sheet 13

**Lesson 18 Chapter 5: Spirits in places****Respecting the spirits**

This is a single lesson activity. Read page 121 then ask students to complete activities 1-5. Collect the sheets for marking or work through the suggested responses to these activities if time permits.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, p 121

Sheet 14

**Lesson 19 Chapter 5: Spirits in places****Grasping the spiritual**

This content could be extended to two or three lessons, including a discussion lesson. Separate the class into small groups. Have them choose topics. Revise skim reading strategies, and give additional advice for locating information using keywords (in Chapter 5). Discuss the findings of the small groups (preferably in a subsequent lesson), using a whiteboard to list key points under each topic. Ask students to copy these points into their books as summary notes.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, Individually selected sections of Chapter 5  
Sheet 15  
whiteboard and markers

### **Lesson 20 Chapter 6: A language of landscape**

#### **The last of the storymen**

This material could be covered in two lessons. As a group, read the resource material on Sheet 16. Then complete the readings on pp 153-67 about Tiger Buchannan and complete activities 1-4. Discuss students' responses to these activities if time permits.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, pp 153-67  
Sheet 16

### **Lesson 21 Chapter 6: A language of landscape**

#### **Transmitting truth**

This content could be covered in one to two lessons. Have students continue reading through Chapter 6 as a group or individually. Assign additional reading for homework to complete the reading of Chapter 6 if required.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, pp 167-87

### **Lesson 22 Chapter 6: A language of landscape**

#### **Transmitting truth**

This is a single lesson activity. Complete the revision readings, then work on activities 1-3. Work through the suggested responses to these activities if time permits.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, Revise pp 12, 43-5 and 49.  
Sheet 17

### **Lesson 23 Chapter 7: Connecting the dots**

#### **Transcending time**

This topic could be explored in two or three lessons. Complete the readings, then work on activities 1-2 on Sheet 18. Assign and discuss Assignment 2, the oral presentation. Work

through the requirements of the task, emphasising the marking criteria. Ask students to use the lesson time to prepare point form notes for one member to present orally in the next lesson. Allocate additional reading for homework to complete the book. If this assignment activity is extended to enable the work to be done in lesson time, it will require two to three additional lessons to complete.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, pp 188-90  
Sheet 18  
Sheet 19 (Assignment 2 guide sheet)

**Lesson 24 Chapter 7: Connecting the dots**  
**Storytelling (Assignment 2)**

Depending upon the size of the class, this presentation time could be extended to two lessons. Allocate lesson time in which students can deliver their oral presentations.

Resources: *Singing the coast*, revision of Chapters 1-7  
Sheet 19 (Assignment 2 guide sheet)

**Sheet 1****Introducing the book: *Singing the coast***

*Singing the coast* is a unique book that presents all Australians with ways to share the land, its stories and songs. For Aboriginal people, the land is recreated and cared for as stories and songs are expressed. This 'singing' process now embraces new generations of people, teaching them about openness, understanding and respect for a reshaped land. In seeking to maintain the stories and songs of their country, the Gumbaynggirr people invite us to share their unique life experiences on the New South Wales mid-north coast. The country of the Gumbaynggirr people is a region extending from just south of Nambucca Heads, northwards beyond Coffs Harbour, to Corindi and Red Rock. In our combined singing of this coastal haven, we communicate universal truths about the ongoing interaction of humans with the natural world and with each other.

Note: The name *Gumbaynggirr* is pronounced 'Gum-bain-gee-ar'.

**Introducing the authors**

*Singing the coast* is a joint project of Margaret Somerville and Tony Perkins. Margaret transcribed the stories told by Tony, through a painstaking process that took over ten years to complete. Speaking about her writing process, Margaret Somerville explains that Australian English had to be 'bent' in order to convey the Gumbaynggirr meanings preserved in the oral stories presented. It's therefore important that readers take the time to really *listen* to the language, as it breaks the conventions of formal written English, to gain a sense of the true voice of the storyteller. As we read the stories, it's clear that Margaret Somerville has succeeded in retaining the original voice of the storytellers as much as possible. This was achieved by keeping the grammatical imperfections which are characteristic of the way people really speak – as opposed to the more formal manner in which we write.

**Margaret Somerville**

Margaret Somerville is Professor of Education at Monash University. She has worked with Aboriginal communities for two decades, and has published a number of books that explore ideas of place, identity and belonging. Margaret has also written lyrical prose celebrating the Australian landscape.

**Tony Perkins**

Tony Perkins is CEO of ACET (Aboriginal Corporation for Employment and Training). He received instruction under a Garby Elder of Corindi Beach as a young man, and has been instrumental in reviving the Yarrawarra Aboriginal Corporation's work in guiding young Aboriginal people to rediscover their culture.



**Sheet 2**

**Prologue: Preliminary analysis**

The cover of *Singing the coast* features images of curves, including the stretch of beach, the incoming tide and the body positions of the people. In the book Margaret Somerville presents a prologue and epilogue that also follow a 'circle' theme - emphasising the cyclical nature of life. She describes her view over the estuary at Moonee Beach using language that depicts roundness and curves.

1. Look at the front cover image of *Singing the coast*. What feelings does the image evoke? Discuss your ideas with a partner, then write a point form summary of your thoughts.

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2. Read the prologue and make a list of all the circle imagery and other references to curving or round shapes.

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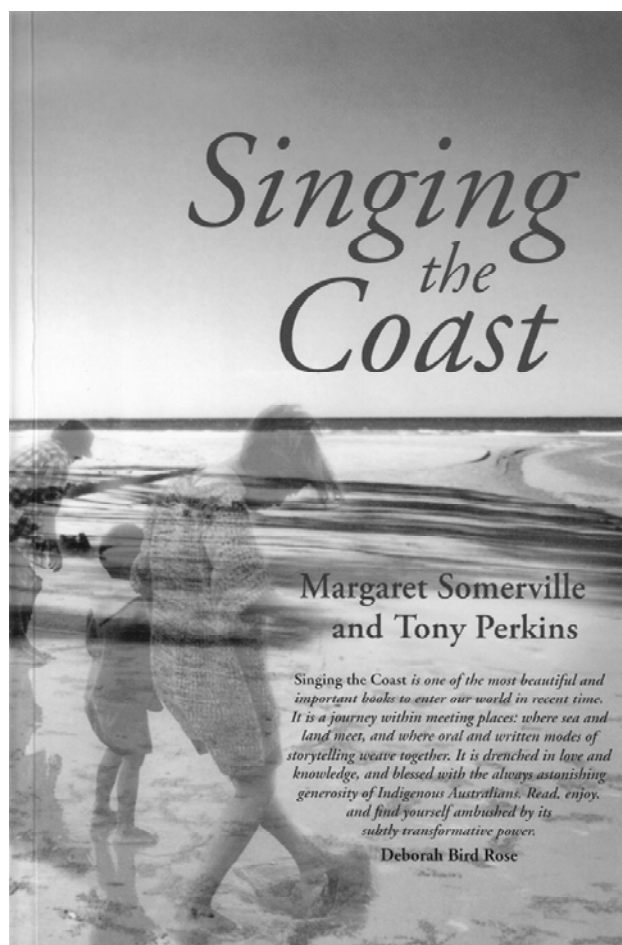


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3. How does Margaret know that wading across the channel 'will be safe, for a while.' (p xiii)?



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4. Margaret Somerville notes that she feels 'a sort of pressure to find a special meaning in this place' (p xiv). But this soon gives way to a true recognition of the place's significance - as a location to *experience*, not to analyse in an academic way. What aspects of the place convey the idea that it is 'a place of play, rich with life'? (p xiv) Discuss with a partner and write your ideas in your work book.

**Sheet 3****Chapter 1 *Singing differently*****Re-creating through story and song**

On pages 1-2 of *Singing the coast* we find a creation story called 'The Women Who Made the Sea', told by Gumbaynggirr man, Ken Walker. Connections to country are reinforced each time this story is shared. Today, stories like these are 'told' or even audio-recorded and then written down. In the past though, such stories were 'sung', with each singing helping to renew the connections between the past and the present, the people and the land and waters. The explanations the story carries of the origins of particular landforms and natural features become part of the education and enculturation of subsequent generations of listeners. Read pages 1 and 2, then complete the activities.

1. In what ways can you 'hear' Ken Walker's voice as he conveys the story? Select and write down specific words and phrases that are distinctive to Ken as a storyteller.

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2. In point form, summarise how these natural features are explained by the story.

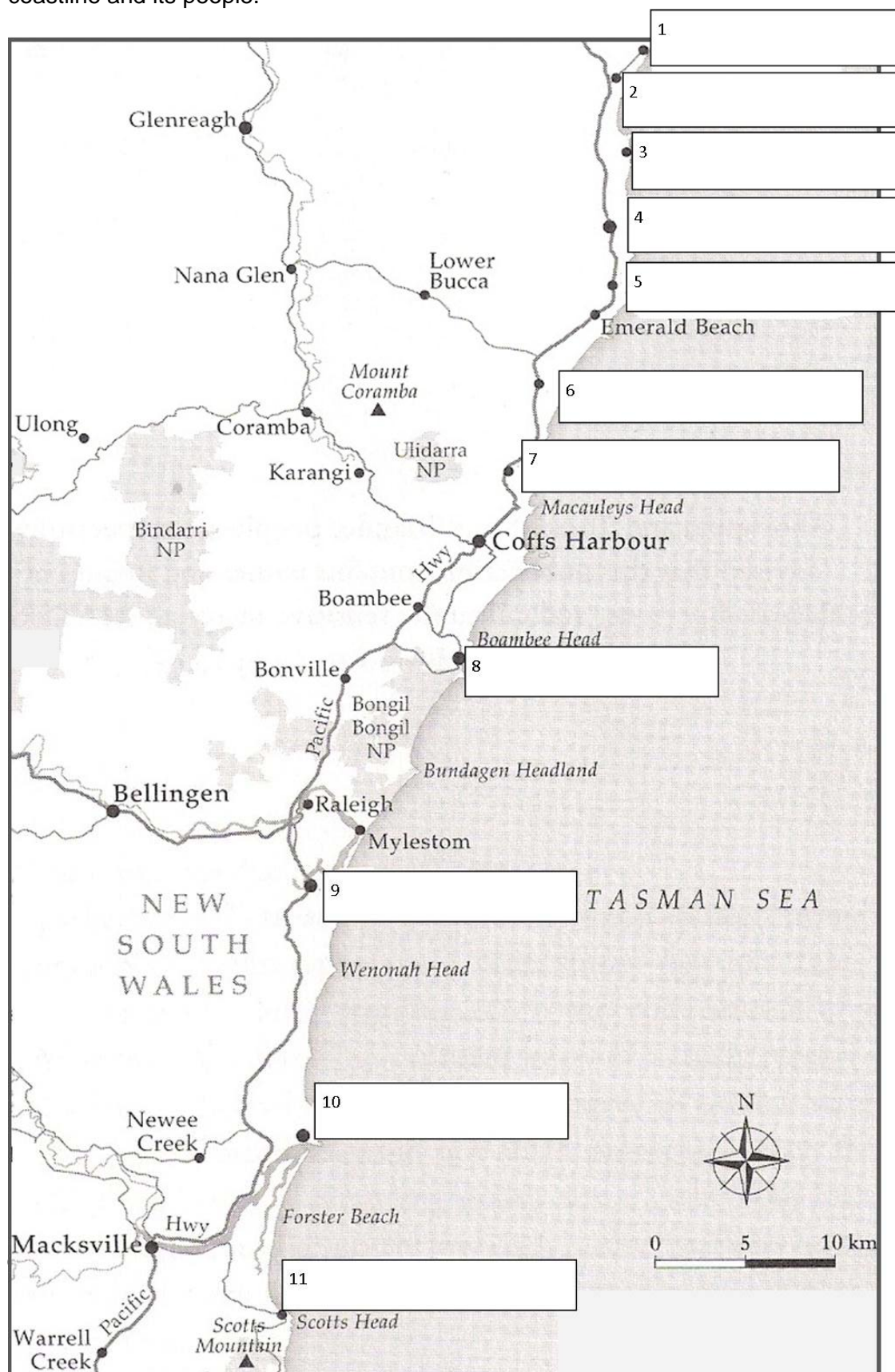
<b>Physical description of feature</b>	<b>How it was created</b>
The Australian coastline:	
Split Solitary Island:	

Sheet 4

Chapter 1 *Singing differently*

Mapping the coast

Margaret Somerville notes that development of places on the New South Wales coast is leading to changes in the landscape of Australia. This calls for new ways for us to 'sing' our coastline and its people.



**Sheet 5****Chapter 1 Singing differently****Ways of seeing the land and waters of the coast**

*Singing the coast* occupies the space between the different modes of storytelling of two cultures over a vast period of time. The way that the Gumbaynggirr people 'map' their country is very different to the traditional Western concept of mapping. Deep mapping in the *Singing the coast* project crosses all boundaries – fences, natural features, time and human experience.

*They made the difficult decision to pass on the stories and knowledge of these coastal landscapes in a different way. There was an imperative to get the message out so that others could learn about how to know and protect this country. In the space of just over a generation they had moved from transmitting cultural knowledge about country through initiation, to passing on selected aspects of knowledge to particular individuals, to recording oral stories and places using modern technological equipment.*

***Singing  
the coast, p 12.***

1. Look closely at the map of the northern New South Wales coast on page xi of *Singing the coast*.

On the Resource sheet, label the places marked by dots on the coastline in order from north to south, as follows.

- |                   |                 |                |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1 Red Rock        | 2 Corindi Beach | 3 Mullaway     |
| 4 Woolgoolga      | 5 Sandy Beach   | 6 Moonee Beach |
| 7 Korora          | 8 Sawtell       | 9 Urunga       |
| 10 Nambucca Heads | 11 Scotts Head  |                |

2. Note the positions of capes and headlands, sheltered bays, fresh water rivers, bush hunting grounds and mountains. What problems would the Gumbaynggirr people have faced when their movements were restricted by the building of fences? Discuss. After your discussion, read Chapter 1.

**The symbolism of fences**

Fences symbolise colonisation to the Gumbaynggirr people. A fence is a physical barrier, the tangible expression of what officials in distant places decide about how the land will be allocated. Western methods of enclosing sections of land have no equivalent meaning in Gumbaynggirr culture.

3. Think about the reasons people use fences in Australia and the view of the land that building fences represents among Anglo-Europeans. Summarise your ideas.

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4. How does this view differ from the perceptions of the Gumbaynggirr people, who freely moved from place to place prior to the installation of fences? Discuss.

**Sheet 6**

**Chapter 1 Singing differently**

**Preserving and passing on knowledge**

Complete your reading of Chapter 1, then make responses to these questions.

1. In what ways might the Gumbaynggirr people feel that they are 'outside the fence'? Discuss.

2. Read page 12, then discuss the decision the Elders made to change the way they passed on knowledge. Do you think they would have had the support of the Old People, had they been able to see what would happen in the future?

3. How are body scars significant to the Gumbaynggirr people? (p 8)

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4. How are Elders chosen among the Gumbaynggirr people? (p 9)

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5. What is the main function of Yarrawarra Aboriginal Cultural Centre? (p 11)

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6. To which animal does the word *gaabi* in the name Garby Elders refer? (p 11)

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7. The Garby Elders accepted that to give away their precious knowledge would also give away power to some degree. Why did they make this difficult decision to share their knowledge regardless? (pp 11-12)

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**Sheet 7**

**Chapter 2 Crying songs to remember**

**Remembering Red Rock**

Work with a partner for these activities. Ensure that you and your partner have read pages 24 to 32. Discuss your ideas before you write responses to the questions.

1. What naturalistic explanation is given for the naming of the headland as 'Red Rock'?

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2. When the colour red is next mentioned, to what is it referring?

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3. What alternative name does Tony Perkins say the people gave the site?

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4. Who first told Tony Perkins this story?

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5. Tony explains why he was told this story when he was young. What was the reason?

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6. How does Tony's memory of Red Rock contrast with Margaret Somerville's first impressions of the place, described on page 26?

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7. Skip forward in the book and read pages 126 and 134-5 to see how the Red Rock story is connected to the spirits as Margaret Somerville finds out more information from the Gumbaynggirr people.

**Sheet 8****Chapter 2 Crying songs to remember****'Feeling' the land**

The invitation of the Gumbaynggirr Elders to enjoy the landscape of the Corindi Beach area enables visitors to 'cross over' by seeing and experiencing the land and waters of the coast in new ways.

Re-read the image-rich descriptions of the place on page 5 of *Singing the coast*, then complete the following activities.

**Natural imagery**

1 Insert the missing letters to complete these lists of sight and taste images presented on page 5.

**Sight images**

r \_ s \_ l l \_ s

s w \_ m \_ m \_ \_ \_ g \_ n i e s

p \_ \_ \_ r \_ a \_ k s

p \_ n k p i \_ f \_ c \_ s

t \_ e h \_ l \_ s i n t r \_ \_ s  
p \_ g \_ \_ c e

s c \_ r s o n \_ r e \_ s

b r \_ g \_ t b \_ \_ e l a \_ o \_ n

w \_ \_ t e e \_ r \_ t s

m \_ n \_ r o \_ e s

b \_ u e - g r \_ \_ n s \_ a

**Taste images**

s w e e t b \_ n \_ s \_ \_ s

g \_ \_ b \_ n g s

s \_ r s p \_ r \_ l l \_

l i \_ \_ y p i \_ \_ i e s

f r u i t o f t h e

b \_ s \_ h \_ n \_ \_

2. Margaret Somerville notes that natural features of the land and waters of 'country' serve as markers of special places. Re-read page 4 and discuss the ways in which the physical senses are involved in helping people to 'know' their local places. Share your ideas with the group.

3. Design a computer generated collage that features some of the images listed above. Use an internet search engine for images to help you complete this activity. You may like to work with a partner.

**Sheet 9****Chapter 3 Making home in No Man's Land****No Man's Land**

The term 'No Man's Land' literally means an area of land controlled by no one. Such areas exist between two zones where ownership is unclear or not claimed by anyone. The term was popularised during World War I, to describe areas between trenches or battle lines during a military conflict. To stray across your own lines and into No Man's Land in wartime was to put yourself in mortal danger. The only safe place to be was behind the defensive lines of your own side. No Man's Land was a small buffer zone that separated you from the enemy – but if you were found to be in it, you were exposed to fire from the enemy and faced certain death.

In *Singing the coast*, a very different kind of No Man's Land is presented in Chapter 3. Read the chapter, then re-read pages 6-11 of Chapter 1 and complete the following activities.

1. Some vivid descriptions of life in No Man's Land are provided in Chapter 3. Write a list of all the natural resources mentioned and the uses the people made of them as they lived in No Man's Land. On a sheet of A3 paper, create a detailed mind map featuring these resources. Design the mind map to illustrate the Gumbaynggirr people's dependence on resources drawn from the land and water for survival.
2. Read pages 6-9 of the book then write a paragraph contrasting the World War I concept of No Man's Land with that of the Gumbaynggirr people at Corindi Lake.

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3. Read pages 10-11. After Tony Perkins returned to the Lake in the 1980s, how had life changed for the people of the area? Discuss your ideas with the group, then make point form summary notes here.

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**Sheet 10**

**Chapter 3 Making home in No Man's Land**

**Assignment 1 guide sheet**

**People**

**Task 1:** Read Chapter 3 to find out more about the life of Auntie Marie Edwards.

**Task 2:** Write a paragraph describing the contribution she made to Tony Perkins' knowledge of his country and his past.

**Task 3:** Write a two-page biography of Auntie Marie Edwards. In your writing, include some details about THREE of the following topics:

- bough shelters (p 13)
- Clarrie Skinner fishing (pp 58-9)
- cooking shellfish (pp 96-8)
- dolphins (p 101)
- fig tree markers (p 67)
- life at the Old Farm/Red Rock (pp 36-41, 49)
- the Red Rock massacre (p 29, 48)

Present your work on A4 sheets.

**Marking criteria**

- thoroughness in describing Marie Edwards' contribution to Tony Perkins' knowledge
- structure of the biography
- detailed accounts of the three specific topics
- appropriate use of language
- demonstrated mastery of the biographical form
- presentation and attention to detail in spelling, grammar and punctuation



**Sheet 11****Chapter 4 Eating place****Life on the coast**

*'Welcoming people to eat in one's country is an important way to share what it means to live in that place.'*

*Singing the  
coast, p 88.*

**Local food ecologies**

1 Read pages 87-8 of Chapter 4, then organise these foods into the correct columns to show their places of origin. Refer back to the text to check your answers.

<i>abalone</i>	<i>breem</i>	<i>cobra</i>	<i>crabs</i>	<i>eels</i>
<i>estuary fish</i>	<i>gugumbals</i>	<i>jewfish</i>	<i>kangaroos</i>	<i>lilly pilly</i>
<i>mackerel</i>	<i>mullet</i>	<i>nyum nyums</i>	<i>pigface</i>	<i>pipis</i>
<i>porcupines</i>	<i>possum</i>	<i>prawns</i>	<i>swamp hens</i>	<i>tailor</i>
<i>trevally</i>	<i>turtles</i>	<i>whiting</i>	<i>wild cherries</i>	

estuary	river & swamp	sea	beach	dunes & heath	bushland

2. Choose ONE of the foods listed in the table and explain the method people used to catch and prepare it for eating.

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**Sheet 12**

**Chapter 4 *Eating place***

**Rhythms of the coast**

The Lake and the sea are presented as quite different in terms of how people sourced their food. It was easier to obtain food from the Lake because they lived with its rhythms so closely. It provided safety, familiarity and comfort, offering supplies of food in predictable ways. The sea, in contrast, was more volatile and conditions had to be read. Younger people needed to learn how to read the signs. Physically, the sea presented a more challenging environment and took longer to give up its resources.

1. Read the description of how Bruce Laurie used to catch prawns in the Lake (pp 89-90). Describe the ways in which various aspects of the natural world were understood and manipulated in order to make a successful catch of prawns.

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**Cycles affecting the food supply**

2. The theme of cycles and rhythms comes through strongly in Chapter 4. In point form, list the various forms in which these ideas appear and reappear throughout the chapter. An example has been done for you. *Example: the cycle of sunrise and sunset*

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- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---

3. Create a collage using pictures cut out from magazines, photos or other media of your choice. Illustrate the theme *Rhythms of the coast*. Think about the colours you will include and the shapes that best indicate the cyclic nature of life on the coast.

**Sheet 13****Chapter 4 Eating place****Gathering food**

The physical demands of learning to adapt one's body and senses to the land and water are powerful means of connecting the Gumbaynggirr people to their country. These skills go hand in hand with the knowledge transmitted through each generation that enables them to live off the abundance of the land and waters of the coast. For example, when catching pipis, people have to alter the physical way they use their eyes. Margaret Somerville describes it as 'a sort of soft vision' – a way of slightly unfocusing the eyes so the person can concentrate on the patterns made by the retreating wave on the sand. The water flowing over the shell's air hole makes a tiny, triangular shaped pattern that is virtually invisible to the unpractised eye. The tip of the shell can be seen for only an instant before the pipi disappears below the sand.

As with many communities globally, obtaining and preparing food and sharing meals present opportunities for fellowship, strengthening ties among families and friends. In Gumbaynggirr culture, sharing and seeking news about pipis is an important element of community life. Information about where the biggest pipis can be found, where a new batch have recently washed up, and when to harvest them provides ways to share knowledge and perpetuate a sense of community.

1. Read pages 90-100. What other food sources are the objects of community discussion and shared information?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

2. What story is told about dolphins and how they helped the Gumbaynggirr people gather fish in the past?

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**Sheet 14**

**Chapter 5 Spirits in places**

**Respecting the spirits**

Read page 121 and answer these questions.

It is interesting to note the way Margaret Somerville moves from literary description of places to a new kind of knowing about them. People and their spirits become linked with the sights and sound of a location.

1. Identify TWO 'place markers' that the author uses to connect to people of the past that help portray this setting to the reader. Write out the sentences in full and present them in quotation marks.

**(i)**

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**(ii)**

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2. Why is the presence of the spirits intensified around the Corindi Lake region?

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3. What effect do the spirits have on Robyn Duroux? (p 124)

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4. Describe the spiritual experiences of Margie Lardner when she was in foster homes around Sydney.

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5. What sounds do the Gumbaynggirr people think of as the spirits of the Old People?

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## Sheet 15

## Chapter 5 *Spirits in places*

### Grasping the spiritual

1. Form a group with two or three other students.
2. Choose ONE of the topics below to discuss as a group.
  - Bing Laurie's inherited responsibility for a protector spirit – the Gumburr.
  - The power of white ochre to protect children from powerful spirits.
  - Bing Laurie's calling upon the Gumburr to heal people.
  - The spirit places at Red Rock.
  - Jimmy Runner's ability to make rain.
  - The Elders waving the clothes of the Old People to ward off approaching storms.
  - Clarrie Skinner's powerful, secret 'property' (sacred objects) and the death of the tree.
  - The mysterious, bat-like creature.
  - The use of taboos to help protect people from powerful spirits.
  - Feeding a slow speaker the tongue of a blue-tongue lizard.
3. Use the index to help you locate references to these topics and read the relevant sections of Chapter 5.
4. As a group, craft answers to these questions:
  - (i) This belief has persisted because events and people have aligned to reinforce them over the years. How might this have occurred?

- (ii) How can we resolve the tension between these spiritual stories and the 'rationalism' of contemporary society?
- (iii) In what ways are physical and spiritual realities inseparable in your own cultures?

5. Submit your group's answers for marking.

**Sheet 16****Chapter 6 A language of landscape****The last of the storymen**

In Chapter 6, we read about the critical roles of storymen like Tiger Buchannan in transmitting knowledge of the Old People and Gumbaynggirr language. Tiger Buchannan was born in 1898. His Gumbaynggirr name was Maruwanba Maruungga. *Maruwanba* was his initiation name and *Maruungga* his clan name. Tiger Buchannan's knowledge was held in oral stories. He initiated young people into these stories at Stuart Island and at the Mission. Knowledge among the Gumbaynggirr people is held collectively – with various Elders responsible for transmitting a portion of the whole to young initiates. Different versions of Dreaming stories appear because of the fragmented way in which initiation began to occur as people were forced off their traditional lands and the collective influence of the Elders was altered. Disconnecting people from the land engendered a certain disconnection from their stories and therefore from their shared cultural identity.

*'A lot of the stories here were held by old Tiger Buchannan, he was the fella who knew them all. He was the last of the storymen that was here in Nambucca. He believed knowledge was to be shared, had the foresight to look into the future and realise that one day people will want their language back.'*

**The Dreaming**

1. Read pages 163-4, then discuss the explanation of the Dreaming. How does this explanation differ from the popular concept of the 'Dreamtime' that has been taught by the mass media in Australia?

**The Island**

2. List the Gumbaynggir names for each of these areas in the Nambucca estuary:

the Egg island \_\_\_\_\_

the Blue-Tongue place \_\_\_\_\_

the Plover island \_\_\_\_\_

3 Which of the islands was re-named Stuart's Island in 1883?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Each time the government decided to re-zone an area, the Lands Department would simply 'move' the Gumbaynggirr people. Trace the forced relocations Tiger Buchannan made between 1898 and 1952.

Born: \_\_\_\_\_ Moved to: \_\_\_\_\_

Moved to: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sheet 17**

**Chapter 6 A language of landscape**

**Transmitting truth**

In telling their stories and singing their country, the Gumbaynggirr people preserve truth by reliving emotions, not just memories. In Margaret Somerville's interview process, we find that people open up more and more as Margaret gains their trust. They then begin to flesh out simple, bland statements of facts to include details about raw emotion that tells us more than any straightforward, factual account could.

Complete your reading of Chapter 6, then go back and re-read page 12 and pages 43-5.

**Barriers to communication**

1. From those pages, what are some key problems the Gumbaynggirr people have faced in transmitting their knowledge, according to the quotes from Tony Perkins?

Page 12

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Pages 43-5

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2. Faced with the prospect of losing your own cultural knowledge within one generation, discuss how you would respond to the choice of changing the way you preserve and share knowledge about your heritage.

Write down some ideas on the lines provided.

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3. On page 49, we encounter a quote from Mark McKenna about Australians' 'preference for forgetting.'

Discuss ways in which all Australians can learn to purposefully remember their past, know their history and work by deliberate acts of the will toward reconciliation. Focus on the importance of language to this process.

**Sheet 18****Chapter 7 Connecting the dots****Transcending time**

1. Early in the final chapter, Margaret Somerville points out the discovery that there are seven types of place knowledge that transcend the local area. They are listed on this worksheet. Go back through *Singing the coast* and locate examples of these different 'categories of place knowledge'.

**boundaries**

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**language**

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**movement**

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**kinship**

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**exchange**

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**storylines**

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**ceremony**

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2. On page 190, these ways of knowing a place are categorised into three broad groups. What are they?

(i) \_\_\_\_\_

(ii) \_\_\_\_\_

(iii) \_\_\_\_\_



**Sheet 19****Chapter 7 Connecting the dots****Assignment 2 guide sheet****Storytelling****Individual oral presentation**

**Task 1** Choose ONE story drawn from your own cultural and family background that serves the purpose of passing memories down from one generation to the next. Write out the key details of this story in point form. Make an effort to include lyrical and descriptive qualities that will help to engage the listener. Use language that implies that the presenter is speaking, rather than reading a text that has been formally written.

**Task 2** Choose ONE story or song from *Singing the coast* that your story most closely parallels – in terms of its purpose. Explain characteristics that the two share.

**Task 3** Present your story (Task 1) and explanation of its parallel (Task 2) to the group. Remember – you are not to write out a story in full sentence form to be read aloud. You must *present* the story, as a storyteller. A good way to do this is to learn a series of key points, then present them without notes or from a simple list of prompts.

You will have two lessons in which to develop your work, and you will be assigned some time in another lesson in which to deliver your oral presentation. Remember to complete the self-assessment at the bottom of this sheet when you have presented the material.

**Marking criteria**

- choice of story with a clear theme
- choice of story that serves the purpose of passing memories down through generations
- clear coverage of the key details of the story
- lyrical and descriptive qualities of the storytelling
- efforts to engage listeners through voice modulation, gestures and eye contact
- appropriate use of language suitable to the spoken word
- linkage of the story with a selection from the text

**Self-assessment**

How do you feel your oral presentation went?

Circle **VERY WELL**                      **OKAY**                      **POORLY**

Were you able to engage your listeners?

Circle **YES** or **NO**

Are you satisfied that you conveyed the links between the stories clearly?

Circle **YES** or **NO**

**Extension activities****Colour wheel**

Think about the colours that have been encountered in the traditional country of the Gumbaynggirr people. Some of them have become symbolic, such as the colour of 'Red Rock'. On a sheet of blank paper, draw a colour wheel like the example below. Ensure that your colour wheel diagram is bigger, filling up most of an A4 page. Use art paper or card for best results. Colour the wheel with coloured pencils, textas or paints.

**KEY:**

Outside ring = lighter colours (tints)                      e.g. pale blue

Centre ring = brightest colours (base colour)                      e.g. sky blue

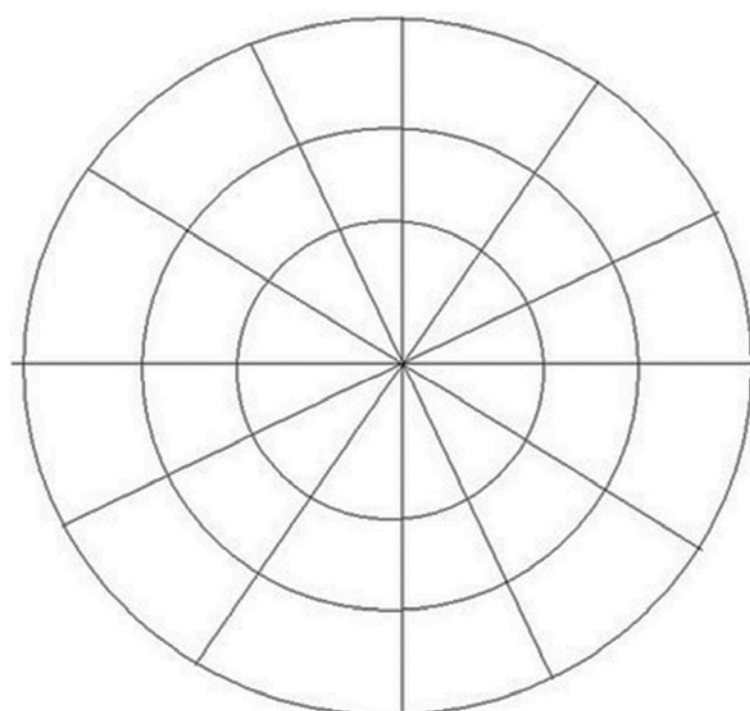
Inside ring = darker colours (hues)                      e.g. dark blue

Go back through the early chapters of *Singing the coast* and list the colours that are described. Then colour each segment of the wheel, positioning the colours near ones that are their natural neighbours – for example, white sand and bright azure (blue) sea.

**Community newsletter**

In a small group, create an A4 size community newsletter for the Yarrawarra Aboriginal Corporation. Include the following elements:

- a masthead (heading of the newsletter)
- a feature article about steps that local people can take to help promote reconciliation
- a news article about one historical incident told in story form in the book



- a weather report for the local area
- a community announcement
- photographs or illustrations

### **Extended descriptive writing**

Study and discuss the imagery used in the readings, then write a descriptive text that tells us about ONE incident from the past and how it is related to the continuing culture described by Tony Perkins

### **Recount**

Refer to the information in the text to write a recount of the creation story of the two sisters (in your own words).

### **Visual representation**

Think of a way that you could visually represent the idea that a person is shaped by their past and their present context. Sketch your ideas on spare paper, then complete a final drawing or multi-media piece that shows how this is true for Tony Perkins.

### **Web page**

Design a website homepage that provides an introduction to the Nambucca Heads area for people interested in the culture of the Gumbaynggirr people. Sketch a layout and design a wallpaper, headers and a menu of links. Ensure that the web page conveys the message that Gumbaynggirr people welcome newcomers to their country, to experience their stories and their ongoing relationship with this region of the New South Wales coast.

### **Family tree**

On pages 190-1, Tony Perkins talks about his family tree. Draw a diagram representing Tony's immediate family connections, including the following people:

- Tony Perkins
- Clarice Skinner
- William Henry Perkins
- Grandmother Celia Harvey
- Grandfather Clarrie Skinner
- Grandmother Jarrett
- Grandfather Perkins

### **Research project**

Use the book's index to locate all available information about the incident at Red Rock. Write a summary of the historical event and its continuing impact upon the people and the site.

### **Locating facts in the text**

Locate and compile information about the activities people did in No Man's Land that enabled them to live off the resources of the area. Present this material in written and graphic form, using a medium of your choice.

### **Discussion**

Participate in a class discussion about the significance of oral tradition and physical behaviours in remembering Red Rock.

### **Journal**

Write a personal journal entry in which you respond to the spiritual story of the Gumburr. How do these spiritual beliefs align with your own?

## Suggested Responses

### Sheet 2

1 Answers will vary.

2 curved branch of a eucalypt, blue-green water winding, all is rounded here, rounded knoll, a sweeping curve of golden sand, curved channels of water, grassy dome, curve of sand, two curves of an island, ripples, winding channels, tiny balls of sand, thumb-sized crab holes, worm trails, broad curve of the estuary, human footprints, round and round, a young mother with a baby in her belly.

3 She watches as a mother takes her three children across and lies down on the sand. This tells her that she acknowledges and trusts in the mother's intuition and sensitivity to safety.

4 Crab holes, worm trails, bird prints, markings on the sand left by the rain and tide, driftwood and debris, human footprints, including those of children and dogs running around and playing.

### Sheet 3

1 Answers will vary. Could include use of slang, truncated (shortened) versions of words and phrases, logical sequence, colloquial expressions, Gumbaynggirr words, conversational language, swearing.

2 Answers will vary. Could include the use of sticks to dig for yams that grew in the area, the presence of the ganayga tree, the coastal location of the place, the prevalence of strong southerly winds, the comparative weakness of the north winds, the fact that Australia is an island, the shape of Split Solitary Island.

### Sheet 5

1 Refer to the map on p xi of *Singing the coast*

2 Restricted (or no) access to fresh water supplies, hunting grounds, special places; restricted ability to move freely around the area; reduced food supply; smaller hunting grounds; encroachment of other people and groups into their way of life; physical hazards presented by walking into fences, being cut by wire; land clearing and other changes to the landscape to build fences; changes in the food chain because of disruptions to natural predatory habits of dingoes and other creatures; cut off from initiation centres; possibly from other relatives; changes to traditional, known travel routes.

3 & 4 Answers will vary. Students should focus on the idea that a fence is a barrier that allows one person or group to claim 'exclusive ownership' of land for their own profit; fences are seen to 'protect' by shutting people out; fences make separations between people and groups, rather than encouraging a sense of community; this represents a very strange attitude toward the land in Gumbaynggirr culture.

### Sheet 6

1 Physically cut off from their traditional lands; spiritually cut off from their ways of knowing the land and their heritage; emotionally cut off from wider society through difference; socially cut off from their own people and region; economically cut off from their livelihoods/means of providing for themselves and their families.

2 Answers will vary.

3 They are the marks of initiation that provide evidence of their authority (as initiated men) to tell their stories and pass laws, knowledge and skills on to the next generation.

4 The existing Elders watch the young children growing up and work out which ones to tell certain things to by how they conduct themselves – those that can be trusted.

5 To provide a contemporary meeting place from which outsiders can 'cross over' into country and be shown the true value of Aboriginal culture and history on the NSW coast.

6 The swamp wallaby from the Corindi wetlands area.

7 It was a necessary step in protecting their identity and places. If this knowledge is not researched, recorded and written, it will be lost. Because of the pressure exerted by contemporary Western culture, young people move away seeking different lifestyles. Therefore it is no longer possible to follow the old tradition of waiting for the right person to pass this heritage onto, as the Old People would have done through the initiation system.

### Sheet 7

1 The reddish (liver) colour of the rocky headland in the morning light.

2 The blood of the people who were shot.

3 Blood Rock

4 His grandmother.

5 So that they could learn about the bad things that happened and learn to respect those who were left behind by listening to them.

6 Margaret describes the natural beauty of the place, the sights, sounds and smells. She has an awareness of the danger of rips and strong tides. She is struck by the red colour of the rock, and wonders what human stories wash in with the waves. Tony remembers the spiritual significance of the place – the tragic toll of human lives that were lost during the massacre there. As a result of the place's association with death, Tony sees it as a place he doesn't feel comfortable visiting. Throughout his childhood, it was also a place of taboo.

**Sheet 8****1 Sight images**

rosellas  
swamp mahoganies  
paperbarks  
pigfaces/pink dunes  
toe holes in trees  
scars on trees  
bright blue lagoon  
white egrets  
mangroves  
blue-green sea

**Taste images**

sweet banksias  
geebungs  
sarsaparilla  
lilly pillies  
fruit of the pigface  
bush honey

2 Answers will vary. Focus on the idea that people physically react to and sense aspects of the world around them, which triggers memories, emotional responses and practical activities. In this way, they 'know' their places. A spiritual knowledge of place begins in the physical realm.

**Sheet 9**

1 Answers will be individual.

2 Instead of being an exposed region, it was hidden (p 6). It was a place where peace could be found - a place of refuge (p 6). It gave the people a kind of freedom from the authorities that threatened them and their way of life (p 6). It (the Lake) helped enable their survival (p 6). It became a place of learning when access to the traditional teaching places was cut off. (p 8).

3 They lived in brick houses instead of rough camps, they got their food from the shops, rather than getting it out of the Lake and the bush. Sewerage polluted the Lake and began to kill it.

**Sheet 11**

1 **estuary:** prawns, crabs, estuary fish **river & swamp:** turtles, swamp hens, eels, cobra **sea:** mullet, tailor, mackerel, whiting, jewfish, bream, trevally **beach:** pipis, gugumbals, abalone **dunes and heath:** pigface, lilly pillie, wild cherries, nyum nyums **bushland:** kangaroos, possum, porcupines

2 Answers will vary.

**Sheet 12**

1 Answers will vary.

2 high and low tide; the phases of the moon; the rising and falling action of the waves; the birth, life and death of creatures and plants; the seasons; the weather; the law of cause and effect (such as flooding that followed heavy rain); the regularity of meals; the breeding cycles of fish and other creatures; the climate – air and water temperature; the feeding patterns of fish and other creatures.

**Sheet 13**

1 prawns, jewfish, bream, crabs, sea mullet, turtles and eels

2 The Old People sang out to a pod of passing dolphins in lingo to get them to herd the fish into the shore so they could be caught.

**Sheet 14**

1 (i) 'On the gnarly trunk of a swamp mahogany tree I run my hands down the smooth scar where Old Tom Flanders cut the bark for his hut.'

(ii) 'My big toes wriggle into the toe holes as I haul myself up the tree where Jimmy Runner collected honey from the wild bees

2 Because this is where most of the Old People lived.

3 She believes they help to relieve her stress and help her sort her problems out. She dreams of them and is comforted by her sense of their closeness.

4 Margie was visited by Clarrie Skinner's spirit, who came holding pigface flowers to symbolise his (and her) connection with Corindi Beach. She was thus reconnected with her people and place of belonging.

5 Birds singing

**Sheet 16**

1 It is understood among non-Aboriginal Australians that the Dreamtime was a mythological era in the distant past, when the Rainbow Serpent created the world and other god-like beings exerted influence over human beings. But few understand the ongoing nature of this concept. The view explained on pages 163-4 emphasises the cyclic nature of the Dreaming; the ability of storytelling and singing to recreate places. The Dreaming is about the transformative power of language in an ongoing sense – and is not simply about the ancient past. The deep time of the ancient past returns in the present and becomes the future.

2 the Egg island = Mirubay; the Blue-tongue place = Wandarrga; the Plover island = Girr Girr

3 the Plover island

4 **Born:** Cow Creek; **Moved to:** Stuart Island; **Moved to:** The Mission.

**Sheet 17**

1 Page 12 - They had to make the difficult decision to do things differently – rather than keeping the knowledge in their heads, they needed to research and record everything for future generations.

Pages 43-5 – Sometimes their message hasn't come across very strongly with white people because no one was interested in listening. People who are uninformed have preconceptions that Aboriginal people 'want this and that', so they dispute the historical facts (for example, the Red Rock massacre). Being in a minority of 500 to 1, the denials of the majority (in the past supported by officials) have silenced people.

2 Answers will be individual.

3 Answers will vary. Emphasise the need to truly listen and realise that we are all starting the process from different positions (worldviews) which affect our understanding of the key issues.

**Sheet 18**

1 Answers will vary.

2 boundaries and identity; linking trails and storylines; special places of gathering and ceremony

**Extension activities**

Family tree

First tier (left): Grandfather Clarrie Skinner and Grandmother Celia Harvey

First tier (right): Grandfather Perkins and Grandmother Jarrett

Second tier: Clarice Skinner and William Henry Perkins

Third tier: Tony Perkins

## Additional resources

Charlesworth, M. J., Dussart, F., and Morphy, H. *Aboriginal religions in Australia: an anthology of recent writings*, Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2005.

Clarke, P. A., *Where the ancestors walked: Australia as an Aboriginal landscape*, Allen & Unwin, 2003.

Jupp, J. *The Australian people: an encyclopedia of the nation, its people and their origins*, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Muir, H.J. *My Very Big Journey: My life as I remember it*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2004.

NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs, *Aboriginal Affairs in NSW: A short history*, NSW Government. <<http://www.daa.nsw.gov.au/about/history.html>>

Pascoe, B. and AIATSIS, 2008, *The Little Red Yellow Black Book: An introduction to Indigenous Australia*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2001.

Shannon, P. *Dulaybam Dunggirr: Grey-Faced Wallaby and Koala : a Gumbaynggirr dreaming story*, Trafford, 2007.