

## These notes are for:

- Primary / Secondary
- 8+yrs old

## Key Learning Areas:

- English
- Poetry

## Example of:

- Poetry
- Verse
- Australian author

## Experience of:

- Reading
- Writing
- Listening & Speaking
- Viewing

## Themes:

- Survival
- Courage
- Environment
- Farms
- Drought
- Australia
- Animals
- Family

\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

Walker Books Australia      Ph +61 2 9517 9577  
 Locked Bag 22                      Fax +61 2 9517 9997  
 Newtown, N.S.W., 2042

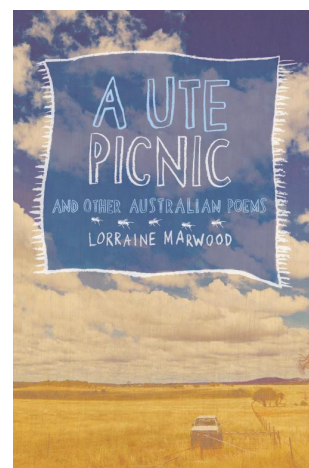
For enquiries please contact Melissa Hamilton:  
 mhamilton@walkerbooks.com.au

Notes © 2010 Walker Books Australia Pty. Ltd.  
 All Rights Reserved

## A Ute Picnic - Overview

### A Ute Picnic and Other Australian Poems

By: Lorraine Marwood  
 ISBN: 9781921529771  
 ARRP: \$14.95  
 NZRRP: \$16.99  
 No. of Pages: 112  
 August 2010



## Outline:

This collection of poetry by Lorraine Marwood shows the essence of Australian life on the land. Containing strong themes of farming and rural living and covering topics such as drought, cattle, rodeos, the working day and beloved pets. Also featuring a special heartfelt poem called *Black Saturday* which touches on the tragic bushfires which devastated rural Victoria in 2009. This beautifully designed collection, with interspersed images and drawings immerses the reader in the harsh realities and inspiring moments of living on a farm in Australia. A perfect addition to the classroom or school library.

## Author / Illustrator Information:

**Lorraine Marwood** was born and raised in rural Victoria and has lived for most of her married life on a dairy farm with her husband and their six children. Lorraine is an award-winning poet who has been widely published in literary magazines across Australia, as well as magazines in the UK, USA, New Zealand and Canada. She has also published several children's novels and collections of poetry. Lorraine was the Australian editor of the UK literary magazine *Tears in the Fence* and was a writer of poetry ideas and teaching plans for *The Literature Base*. Lorraine was also the recipient of two May Gibbs fellowships in children's writing.

Her titles with Walker Books Australia include *A Ute Picnic and Other Australian Poems*, *Ratwhiskers and Me*, published in 2008 and *Star Jumps* which was short-listed for the Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year Awards 2010, Lower Primary Category; received a Notable mention in the Children's Book Council of Australia Awards, 2010; and was short-listed for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards, Children's Fiction, 2010. For more information about the author, please visit her website: [www.lorrainemarwood.com](http://www.lorrainemarwood.com)

## How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

[www.walkerbooks.com.au](http://www.walkerbooks.com.au)



### Classroom Ideas for *A Ute Picnic*:

#### General Questions: Australian History & Geography

- Before reading *A Ute Picnic and Other Australian Poems* ask students to create a fact sheet about Australia. Students can research and provide answers to the following questions/tasks:
  - Identify where Australia is on the globe. Provide a picture of its position also identifying where your town/city is in relation to it.
  - List 5 different types of native Australian fauna.
  - List 5 different types of native Australian flora.
  - Who is Australia's Prime Minister?
  - Draw a picture of the Australian and Aboriginal flags.
  - What different types of environments does Australia have e.g. coastal, city, desert etc
  - What type of things are farmed in Australia?
- Ask students in groups to discuss what they like about Australia. Create a class list of these points.
- Have students create their own postcard for Australia with an image on the front and a letter about Australia on the back.

#### General Questions: Poetry

- Ask students to visit the school library and find a short poem that they like. Have students write this poem on a piece of paper and then fold it in half (make sure that they record the title of the poem and the book that they found it in). Then ask students to put their chosen poems into a hat or box at the front of the classroom. Throughout the week select random poems from the box and read aloud. Ask students to discuss why they like/dislike this poem and what type of poem it is. Choose interesting words from the poem for further discussion.
- Discuss different forms of poetry with students. What style of poetry is used in *A Ute Picnic and Other Australian Poems*? Look at Lorraine Marwood's other titles, *Ratwhiskers and Me* and *Star Jumps*. How does this book differ?

#### General Questions: Imagery

- Lorraine Marwood paints a vivid picture of farm life in her book *A Ute Picnic and Other Australian Poems*. Ask students to draw/illustrate one of these poems.
- What smells, colours and sounds do you associate with these poems. Ask each student to choose one poem from the book and answer this question. E.g. if it is a poem about cattle would they hear cows mooing? Hooves stamping?

#### General Questions: Reading Aloud

- Ask students to choose a poem from *A Ute Picnic and Other Australian Poems* to recite to the class. After they have recited the poem ask them to share why they chose this particular poem.
- Ask groups of students, 3 or 4, to take turns reading a line each of a particular poem. When they have practised a few times ask the group to perform their poem to the class. How does a poem change with different voices reading it?

**Discussing the book:**

- Below are some starter questions for each section of the book. Different poems have been selected for further in-depth discussion.

**Section 1:**

- Identify the title of the first section of poems. In this context what does it mean to “live on the land”? Where do students think these poems will be set?
- Read the poem *Cattle Boys*. Ask students to describe what they think a “traditional” cowboy might look like. What would they expect them to wear and do? What differences does the author show between “cowboys” and “cattle boys”? Discuss the difference between realism and stereotyping. How has the author opted for realism?
- Read the poem *Tractor*. Discuss the meaning of anthropomorphism. How does the tractor have human characteristics? Ask students to think of another machine/object and apply human characteristics to it using Lorraine Marwood’s poetic style.
- Read the poem *From the Air*. View Australian farmland on Google Earth. Can you find images that this poem describes? Afterwards, look at images of cities or seascapes. Mimicking Lorraine Marwood’s poem, how could you describe these views? E.g. the city skyscrapers are like jagged shark teeth waiting to snap up coming traffic.
- Read aloud in class the poem *A Ute Picnic*. After you have read this poem ask students to describe an activity they do with their family. Ask students to start with the phrase “One late \_\_\_\_\_ day, \_\_\_\_\_ says, “\_\_\_\_\_”.
- Read the poem *Target*. What species of birds live in your area? As a class make a list of the different birds in your area.
- Read the poem *Clover*. What does a clover mean to the different people? Divide the class into small groups and give each group a different object. Ask each student in the group to write down what this object means to them. Share the thoughts with the class.

**Section 2:**

- Read the poem *Tree, a Portrait*. Ask students, using this poem as a guide, to create their own poem about themselves entitled “[name], a Portrait”.
- Read the poem *Cow Tracks and Facts*. What are the different “facts” that Lorraine Marwood focuses on in this poem? Ask students to find further facts about cows and write about these in the same style as this poem.
- Ask students to read aloud the poem *Screech Tree*. Ask students to identify which parts of the poem rhyme. Re-read the poem tapping out the rhythm as you go.
- Ask students to read the poem *My Dog*. Then have students write their own poem about their pet (if they don’t have a pet, they could write about something they own, or a favourite object). What special relationship do they share with it?
- Read aloud the poem *Quiet*. Ask students to listen to their surroundings. What can they hear? Have students write a poem about what they hear.

**Section 3:**

- Why is this section of poetry titled *The Front Line*? What does it mean to be on the front line and in what situations would you usually use this term? Ask students to think about the hardships or difficulties they have experienced. Have they ever felt that they were on “the front line”?
- Read the poem *Drought Survivors*. As a class, research the effect that the drought has had on farming in Australia. Ask students to visit the Australian Bureau of Meteorology; <http://www.bom.gov.au> and research the last month’s rainfall in Australia. They can then create their own map of Australia and colour the areas where rain has recently fallen.
- Read the poem *Newspaper Photo*. What is this poem about? What is anthrax? Research the different diseases that can affect livestock. Why is anthrax so dangerous?
- Read the poem *Black Saturday*. What event is this poem about? How does Lorraine Marwood’s poem help you to understand the personal effect that this event had on people? Discuss. Research this event and also discuss bushfires and what to do in the event of one.

**Section 4:**

- Discuss how section 3 of the book strongly contrasts with section 4. Ask students to write a list of words that summarise the different emotions conveyed in each of these sections. How do these two word lists contrast?
- Read the poem *Birthday List*. Ask students to draw an “ant-nest cake”, “gumnut lollies” and “dragon-fly kites”. Discuss what the author is referring to with these words. What type of “birthday list” is she describing? Ask students to think about their own backyard or surroundings at home. What sort of “birthday list” would they create? E.g. if they had a pet cat would there be “whisker ribbons” and “meow music”?
- Read the poem *Skimming Tricks*. Discuss how this poem is instructional. Ask students to write down the instructions for a game or something that they like to do. Then, have a go at re-writing these as a poem.
- Read the poem *Words from an Advertisement*. Ask students to find an advertisement in a magazine or newspaper. What sort of words does it use? Do you agree with the language? Are they using advertising “jargon”?

**After reading the book**

- Write a review of the book.
- Research Lorraine Marwood and create a PowerPoint presentation about her.
- Research and write about another Australian poet.
- Create a display in your school library of poetry books.

**Lorraine Marwood’s inspiration for *A Ute Picnic and Other Australian Poems***

“The ute picnic did happen, in fact does continue to happen on a farm right now – especially at peak busy times in a farming calendar like hay harvest. Our farm was a long, long way from any shops, so a picnic had to be prepared from whatever I had on hand. The farm dog came too and there is always plenty to watch in a paddock – insects, animals and if you’re really lucky a goanna!

All the poems in this collection are based on incidents or observations over the growing up years of my big family. Out of little happenings grows a poem full of drama and layers of meaning, that hooks onto other known happenings. Take for example the *Circus* poem – our second eldest son can only just remember it – yet there was such excitement, such anticipation, that many of the community’s gestures were just like the circus animals’. Of course on a farm there is a closer affinity with animals and with the weather. You become a weather watcher, looking for signs of change that will affect the growth of grass or the production of milk. A farm is also full of sensory experiences – like smell. I hope my poems bring this into full blast for the reader. I also hope that you will walk the pages and see the world of farm life like you’ve never seen it before. This is the secret of poetry writing: to present it in a different slant or angle and surprise the reader.”

## *Two-Word Poems – a classroom task by Lorraine Marwood*

In the collection *A Ute Picnic and Other Australian Poems* I have used a writing technique that is quick and disciplined, yet provides rhythm and cuts out unnecessary words.

When students are writing, sometimes it's good to limit their words per line. This helps to establish the format for writing poetry – short lines, one under the other.

Check out the poems written using this technique in *A Ute Picnic and Other Australian Poems – Bike Ride* is a good example.

### *Technique*

- Start with a class example first before each student writes their own two-word poem
- Choose a topic like coming to school, a special event in the school calendar or a season topic, such as summer or winter
- Then brainstorm for ideas

Here's an example on the topic coming to school:

Quick hurry  
 bus coming  
 swallow toast  
 grab bag  
 kiss goodbye  
 tie lace  
 comb hair  
 gulp juice  
 toot toot  
 quick hurry  
 bus coming

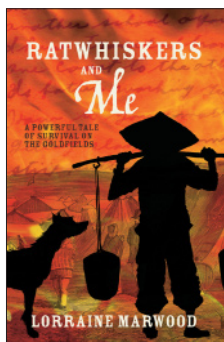
### *Benefits*

There is immediacy in this type of poem. We can feel the concrete examples of food, hurrying, sound. This type of poem lends itself greatly to sensory images and the bare important essentials of poetry: less words, more action, emotion.

There is also another benefit; we can rearrange and repeat lines for impact as these two-word poems are great to read aloud.

– Lorraine Marwood

## More titles from Lorraine Marwood



***Ratwhiskers and Me***  
 by Lorraine Marwood

A powerful atmospheric verse novel set in the Victorian goldfields in the 1800s.

ISBN: 9781921150395  
 Arrp: \$14.95  
 NZrrp: \$16.99  
 Ext: 128pp  
 Published July 2008  
 Teachers' Resources Available



***Star Jumps***  
 by Lorraine Marwood

A warm narrative verse novel about a family's life on the farm during harsh times.

ISBN: 9781921150722  
 Arrp: \$14.95  
 NZrrp: \$16.99  
 Ext: 128pp  
 Published June 2009  
 Teachers' Resources Available