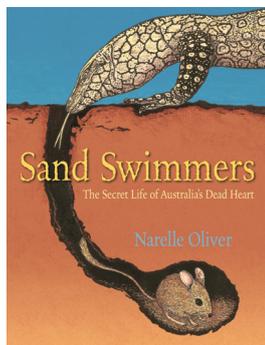


Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Walker Classics: Sand Swimmers

Narelle Oliver
ISBN: 9781922077288
ARRP: \$16.95
NZRRP: \$18.99
February 2013

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

Walker Books Australia
Locked Bag 22
Newtown, N.S.W., 2042

Ph +61 2 9517 9577
Fax +61 2 9517 9997

These notes were created by Steve Spargo.
For enquiries please contact:
educationwba@walkerbooks.com.au

Notes © 2012 Walker Books Australia Pty. Ltd.
All Rights Reserved

Outline:

The Dead Heart is a desert wilderness in the centre of Australia. It is difficult to imagine anything can exist in such a harsh place. But the Dead Heart has a secret. It holds amazing stories of adaptation and survival.

Follow in the footsteps of early explorers like Charles Sturt and learn what the Indigenous people of this land first discovered: not all is quite as it seems.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Narelle Oliver grew up in Queensland, Australia, in a family who spent every spare moment pursuing interests in visual and performing arts. The linocut print medium, often combined with other media, is a special feature of her illustrations. Narelle is the author-illustrator of a number of award-winning children's picture books: *The Hunt* won the 1996 Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Picture Book of the Year Award; *Sand Swimmers* was short-listed for the 2000 CBCA Eve Pownall Award for Information Books and the Queensland Premier's Award for Children's Literature; *Home* was the winner of the 2007 Patricia Wrightson Prize, part of the NSW Premier's Literary Awards; and in 2010 *Fox and Fine Feathers* was a CBCA Honour Book and short-listed for the Picture Book of the Year Award. Narelle currently lives in inner-city Brisbane with her husband and the many birds which visit their overgrown rainforest backyard.

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.

These notes are for:

- Primary years 2-5
- Ages 7+

Key Learning Areas:

- English
- History
- Science

Example of:

- Narrative non-fiction
- Picture book

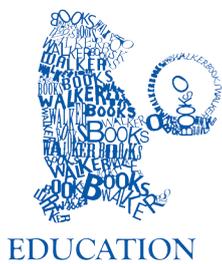
Themes/ Ideas:

- Science
- Conservation
- Animals
- Nature
- Deserts
- Australia

National Curriculum Focus:*

English content descriptions include:

Science	English	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	History	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	
Year 2 ACSSU032 ACSHE034 ACSHE035	Year 2 ACELA1460 ACELA1465 ACELA1466 ACLEA1493 ACELT1593	Year 3 ACELA1475 ACELA1478 ACELT1594 ACELT1596 ACELT1599	Year 4 ACELA1490 ACELA1494 ACELT1602 ACELT1605 ACELT1607	Year 5 ACELA1504 ACELT1608 ACELT1609 ACELT1795 ACELT1612	Year 2 ACHHS047 ACHHS048 ACHHS049 ACHHS050	Year 3 ACHHS065 ACHHS066 ACHHS215 ACHHS068 ACHHS070	Year 4 ACHHK077 ACHHK078 ACHHK079 ACHHK080 ACHHS081	Year 5 ACHHK097 ACHHS098 ACHHS099 ACHHS101	*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.
Year 4 ACSSU073	ACELY1667 ACELY1668 ACELY1671	ACELY1601 ACELY1677 ACELY1678	ACELY1689 ACELY1690	ACELY1700 ACELY1704			ACHHS082 ACHHS216 ACHHS084 ACHHS086		
Year 5 ACSSU043	ACELY1682								



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

Discussion Questions and Activities

Science

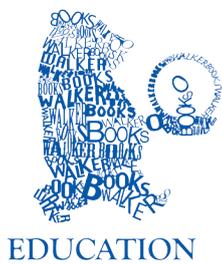
- Why is central Australia referred to as the “Dead Centre”?
- The Dead Centre appears to have no water, yet there are water sources for the plants and wildlife that live there. Where does this water come from?
- How do the Aboriginal People in the Dead Centre use the animal tracks? Why is it important that they understand how to read the tracks?
- What caused “many plants and animals” to die (p8)?
- What is a food chain? What would happen if one link in the food chain were to become extinct?
- Adaptation is the adjustment or changes in behaviour, physiology, and structure of an organism to become more suited to an environment (www.biology-online.org/dictionary/Adaptation). Identify three animals that have adapted to live in this environment. What benefit has this adaptation given them?
- How would humans have to adapt to survive in this environment?

English

- *Sand Swimmers* features many different language types. Identify an example of each of the following from the book:
 - » Poetic description using imagery
 - » Quotes from early explorers
 - » Scientific labelling
 - » Aboriginal names and their English translation
- Why do some words in *Sand Swimmers* begin with a capital letter even though they are not at the beginning of a sentence (i.e. “Charles Sturt” and “Australia”)?
- Look at pages 16-17, 20-21 and 24-25. Why has Narelle Oliver chosen to show these scenes in two ways (i.e. as you would see it in nature and highlighting the wildlife in the scene)?
- Look at page 34. What is a bibliography? Why would the author include this? Would you normally find a bibliography in fiction or non-fiction books? Use the information in the bibliography to find one of the listed books in your school library or on the internet.
- Look at page 35. What is an index? How do you use it? Find another book in your school library that has

an index and use it to quickly jump to the information about a certain topic.

- Write an imaginative story about a character exploring the Dead Heart. Use imagery to describe what your character experiences.
- Pick one of the animals listed in *Sand Swimmers* and research it in your school library and on the internet. Write a one page report or design a poster about the animal, discussing what it looks like, where it lives, what it eats and any other interesting facts you can find. Present your report to the class.
- Is this book imaginative, informative or persuasive? Who is the audience for this book?
- Read a different book on a similar topic. How do these two books deal with the topics differently? Is different language used? Why do you think the authors have chosen to present their work in different ways?
- Design a persuasive poster encouraging people to protect one of the animals in the book. Explain why this animal is important to Australia and how the reader can help protect it.
- Compare *Sand Swimmers* to a fiction picture book. How is the language different in each? Why have the authors of these texts chosen this language?
- *Sand Swimmers* features Charles Sturt and his party. Do you think these are accurate portrayals of what these people were really like? Why or why not?
- Have you ever visited Central Australia? Did you see any of the animals or landscapes shown in *Sand Swimmers*? How do the illustrations compare to the real thing?
- Read pages 4-5. Identify the descriptive adjectives. Rewrite the text from these pages without the descriptive adjectives and then compare the two sets of text. How do the descriptive adjectives affect the way you read the text? Which is more enjoyable to read?
- There is speech at the bottom of pages 14-30 is this quoted or reported speech? How can you tell? Who is the speech coming from? Why has the author included this?
- What techniques has Narelle Oliver used to make this book interesting for the target audience?



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

- Compare Sturt's party's experience exploring the Dead Centre with the Aboriginal tribal group's experience of living there as discussed on pages 10-11.
- Discuss how two cultural groups can have such a different experience from the same setting.
- Write a book review of *Sand Swimmers* stating what you liked and disliked about it, who you think would enjoy it the most and whether you think the information provided is credible. Use persuasive language to make the reader understand your opinion.

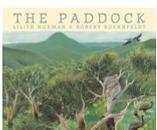
History

- A number of different time periods are mentioned in the book. Draw a timeline of events in the book based on these time periods.
- What was the Dead Centre like millions of years ago? Briefly describe how it has changed since then and what caused the change. Use *Sand Swimmers* and other books about Central Australia as evidence.
- Research Charles Sturt and write a one-page report about his explorations. Include where he came from, why he was an explorer and what important

discoveries he made. Make sure to list sources.

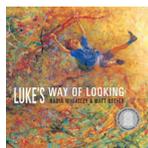
- Write several diary entries from Charles Sturt discussing his plans and expectations before he started his expedition to Central Australia, his observations and initial thoughts while on the expedition and a final entry after the expedition was finished.
- Several Aboriginal languages are used in *Sand Swimmers* (see page 11). Investigate what language local Indigenous people used in your area. Are any local places named using Aboriginal words?
- What would the Aboriginal residents of the Dead Centre have thought about the white settlers? How would their arrival have affected the Aboriginal tribes?
- How did Charles Sturt's exploration shape the colonisation of Australia?

Walker Classics



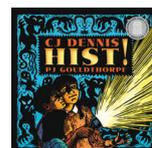
The Paddock

Author: Lilith Norman
Illustrator: Robert Roenfeldt
9781921977701
AU\$16.95/NZ\$18.99



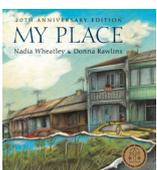
Luke's Way of Looking

Author: Nadia Wheatley
Illustrator: Matt Ottley
9781921977725
AU\$16.95/NZ\$18.99
[Teachers' notes available](#)



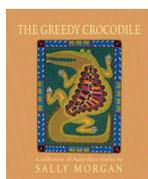
Hist!

Author: C.J. Dennis
Illustrator: Peter Gouldthorpe
9781921977749
AU\$16.95/NZ\$18.99
[Teachers' notes available](#)



My Place

Author: Nadia Wheatley
Illustrator: Donna Rawlins
9781921150654
AU\$19.95/NZ\$27.99
[Teachers' notes available](#)



The Greedy Crocodile

Author: Sally Morgan
9781921720659
AU\$19.95/NZ\$22.99



Dragonquest

Author: Allan Baillie
Illustrator: Wayne Harris
9781921977848
AU\$16.95/NZ\$18.99