

## Synopsis:

Taha and his mum, a new Australian citizen, are travelling around Australia. After their stay in Alice Springs, they turn their campervan, the Southern Cross, towards the 'last frontier' in the west – Kununurra. When they reach their destination, they meet the local ranger, 'Crocodile Cate'. They explore the Kimberley on horseback and from a helicopter, taking in the scenic wonders of the area. Taha records his travels with photographs and notes in the journal that he was given by his teacher, Mrs Zimmerman. He also writes letters to his neighbour back home, Mr Wilson, and emails his best friend, Joel.

## Before Reading

Discuss the following:

- The book format – Students can read the blurb, the table of contents and skim additional features such as the Aussie Jokes, Slang and Facts. Note the mix of photography and illustrations. Discuss design features.
- Citizenship and immigration – Review the citizenship ceremony (pp6-9) and discuss the importance placed on this ceremonial event. Talk about why, and from where, people migrate to Australia and then become Australian citizens. Locate the islands of Fiji on a world map. Ask: When did Mena first think Australia would be a good place to live? Explain the work of missionaries. Why would a 'multicultural society' be a factor in selecting Australia as a good place to live?
- Campervans – Taha and Mum continue to travel through isolated country on this trip. Discuss the importance of travelling in such conditions and the steps required to ensure safety and roadworthiness.
- Indigenous Australians – Do students know about the indigenous Australians or traditional owners of the land in their local area or the Kimberley? Do students know about some of the Aboriginal dreamtime stories and legends that explain the natural features of the Kimberley region? (It is

important to acknowledge the role of indigenous Australians and explore Australia's indigenous history prior to European settlement.)

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

## Language Features and Activities

### First person narrative:

- The author engages the reader by using a character, Taha, to tell the story. This makes the narrative very personal. Taha's conversations with his mum and the people he meets give us an insight into their personalities and characters. (For example, in Taha's email to Joel, he mentions their guide CC, or 'Crocodile Cate', but then leaves Joel in suspense about why Cate has this nickname. Ask students if this is because Taha is deliberately making a 'mystery' about his travels, or due to the features of an email – short sentences and brief descriptions.)

### Journals:

- Taha uses his journal to keep photographs and record written information about his trip. Re-read Taha's journal entries (pp72-79). How did Taha describe the Bungle Bungles? Which traditional tale can you think of that relates to the story of the first person to drive into the Bungle Bungles? (Hansel

and Gretel). What birds of prey might Taha have seen? Why did he include exclamation marks in his journal? What do you think about the way Taha presents information? (For example, he includes photographs, notes on how he feels, details of places he sees, and so on.)

### **Emails and letters:**

- Talk about both formats in terms of language, forms of address, use of images, intended reader and reading/writing equipment required. Explore similarities and differences between the forms. Re-read Taha's email to Joel (pp63-67). Would Joel be able to picture a pink diamond? Draw up an email layout with Joel's address. Write a response from Joel. Alternatively, use the class computers to send emails within your class. Students can write about an interesting weekend activity.

### **Factual writing:**

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

### **Vocabulary:**

- Re-read Taha's response to CC when he assures her that he is ready for a day out (p48). Discuss what equipment is needed when going on a trip such as a school excursion. List a range of destinations such as beach, fun-park, farm and mountain range. Students can discuss and record important items to take on these trips.
- Write a list of all the indigenous words and their meanings that can be found throughout the text. Visit the school and local library for books based on Aboriginal legends. Explain 'legend' in this context and compare Aboriginal legends with the legends of other indigenous peoples.
- Use a dictionary to find meanings for words and phrases such as 'alternative', 'flee', 'gullies', 'nutritious', 'last frontier', 'modern town', 'scenic flight', 'limited access' and 'house guest'.

- Ask students to make a list of bold or coloured words and explain why these are used in the text (for example, as sound effects or to describe and emphasise feelings, reactions or physical features).
- Re-read Taha's reference to Mr Wilson's response when his football broke Mr Wilson's window (p41). Ask students to find similar comments that help the reader build up a picture of Taha's character – cheeky but well meaning!
- Re-read the dream sequence (pp84-95). Students can role-play the cattle muster. Check the terminology such as 'doggies' and also the humour expressed by Taha. The action could also be written as a report on how cattle are herded to market and the dangers that may arise.

### **Grammar:**

- Use Blackline Master 4 to review the use of contractions. Make a class list and add examples as students find them in the text. Explain the use of the apostrophe in contractions to show missing letters as opposed to its use in showing possession (it's – it is/Taha's horse).
- The title, *Kununurra*, is a good starting point to look at syllabification. Check the syllables in each student's name then try to find more examples of names with several syllables (for example, place names in the Kimberley, indigenous names, local area names, students' second names). Show how place names can be broken into their syllables (Kun/un/ur/ra, Wu/num/bal, Kim/ber/ley) and help students make and sort a list according to number of syllables.

### **Comprehension:**

- To maintain an awareness of students' understanding throughout the text, use the chapter headings to ask questions about the content. Use a variety of question types as well as asking for opinions ('How would you feel if you were offered crocodile steak for dinner?', 'Have you ever flown in a helicopter?') and inference ('What impact might the introduction of cattle have had on the Kimberley region?'). Students can complete Blackline Master 5.

## Maps and Markers

- Use a map of Australia to estimate distances between the places that Mum and Taha visit and discuss map features such as keys, legends, grids and scale.
- Discuss the use of different maps (a street map for tourist attractions, a local area map for national parks, an atlas of Australia to show river systems and borders).
- Estimate the number of days Taha and his mum spend in the Kimberley.
- How long can crocodiles grow? What is their mass? How deep is the Argyle Mine?

## Characters

Taha remains keen to travel and seek out new places and people. He is committed to staying in touch with his neighbour, his teacher and his best friend, Joel. Re-read Taha's response to crocodile steak (pp44-45). His reply is witty and shows his sense of humour. Meanwhile, Mum studies the places to visit in each town and is a careful and reliable parent. In this book, Mum decides to 'take a day off'. What does this mean? (For example, taking some personal time, very tired, giving Taha an opportunity for independent activity.) Taha interviews a local boy, Sam. Discuss similarities or differences between the daily life of Sam and the students.



Our Australia series by Phil Kettle  
Illustrations by David Dunstan  
Teacher notes by Judi Champion  
Edited by Emma Short  
Design by Goanna Graphics (Vic) Pty Ltd

## Research Topics

- citizenship and immigration
- the Miriwung people, the Wunumbal people
- the history of mining in the Kimberley
- time zones and borders within states and territories
- national parks in the Kimberley
- the history of cattle stations in the Kimberley
- crocodiles, bird species, barramundi
- the Livistona palm
- helicopters and their uses
- the history of Australian stock horses

## Useful References

- Tourism agencies
- Local councils, libraries, historical societies
- State automobile clubs – maps and trip planners
- <http://www.pleasetakemeto.com/australia/el-questro/videos> (fly-over videos)
- <http://www.pleasetakemeto.com/australia/derby-western-australia/information>
- <http://www.kimberleyaustralia.com/bungle-bungles.html> (photographs)
- [http://www.discoverwest.com.au/western\\_australia/kununurra](http://www.discoverwest.com.au/western_australia/kununurra) (summary)
- <http://www.kununurra.com> (summary)
- [http://www.argylediamonds.com.au/photo\\_library.html](http://www.argylediamonds.com.au/photo_library.html) (photographs)
- <http://www.rkm.com.au/PHOTOS/AUSTRALIAN-NATIVE-PLANTS/Livistona-australis> (photographs)
- *Outback Odysseys* by Anna Huigan, Chatterbox Upper Primary, Pearson Education 2005
- 'Purnululu: A fragile icon' *Australian Geographic* magazine, April-June 2007

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

Draw a map of Taha's trip. Add pictures, captions or labels.



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

Write a review about this book.

Title:

\_\_\_\_\_

Author:

\_\_\_\_\_

What happens:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My opinion of this book:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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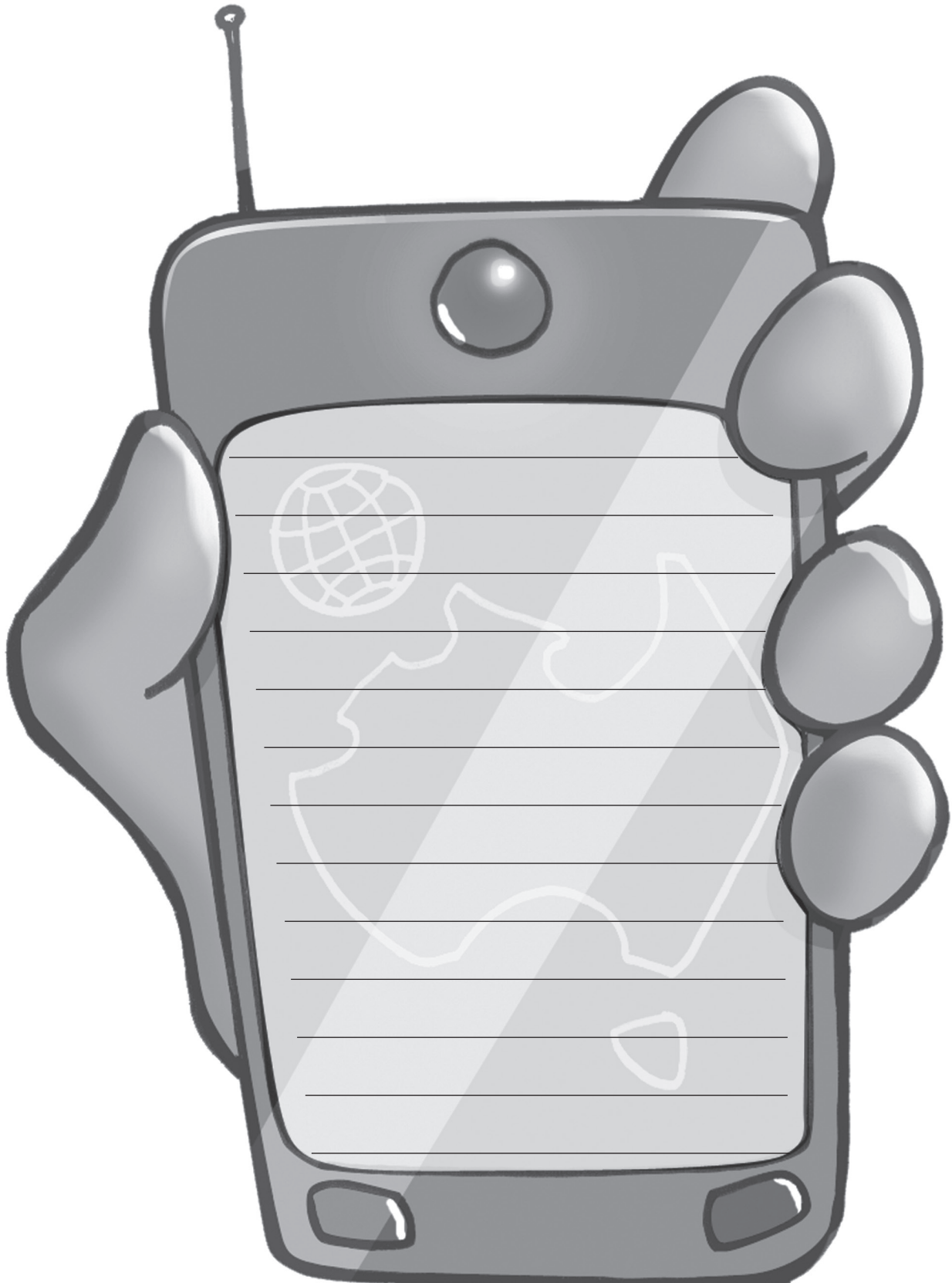
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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



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

When we speak and write, we often shorten words by using contractions. For example, "So now we're in the wild west!" I said. The word *we're* has been shortened from *we are*; an apostrophe takes the place of the missing letter (*a*).

1. Write the missing words for these contractions.

couldn't = could + \_\_\_\_\_

hasn't = has + \_\_\_\_\_

wouldn't = would + \_\_\_\_\_

haven't = have + \_\_\_\_\_

I'm = I + \_\_\_\_\_

2. Write the contractions for these words.

that is \_\_\_\_\_

he is \_\_\_\_\_

do not \_\_\_\_\_

we are \_\_\_\_\_

what is \_\_\_\_\_

3. Choose a contraction from the box to finish the sentences below.

That's	It's	I'd	don't	didn't
we're	I'm	You're		

"I hope you \_\_\_\_\_ fall off," said CC...I hoped I \_\_\_\_\_ fall off too!

But I really hope \_\_\_\_\_ going in a car this time!

I told her that one day \_\_\_\_\_ buy her the biggest pink diamond in the whole world.

"\_\_\_\_\_ not chicken," said Mum. "\_\_\_\_\_ a crocodile steak!"

"\_\_\_\_\_ pretty sure Wild Thing could win the Melbourne Cup!"

"\_\_\_\_\_ not wrong, Taha," CC shouted back.

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

Look at each picture and follow the instructions.

1. Write four words to describe what Taha might be thinking when he lands in the water.

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2. Write a description of Mum's diamond. What is special about it?

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*Kununurra bush land*

*Argyle Diamond Mine*

*The Bungle Bungles*

*Hidden Valley*

*Mount Elizabeth Station*

*Mitchell Falls*

*Chamberlain Gorge*



3. Read the list of places Taha and Mum will visit. What are the objects in the pictures for?

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4. Look at the signpost. What is its purpose?

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