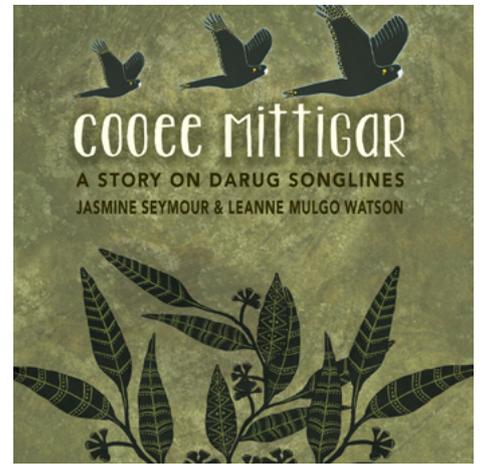


Magabala Books Teacher Notes

Cooee Mittigar

Written by Jasmine Seymour; Illustrated by Leanne Mulgo Watson

Teacher Notes prepared by Christina Wheeler



OVERVIEW

Cooee Mittigar, meaning *Come Here Friend*, is an invitation to *yana* (walk), on Darug Country. In this stunning picture book, Darug creators Jasmine Seymour and Leanne Mulgo Watson tell a story on Darug Songlines, introducing children and adults-alike to Darug *Nura* (Country) and language.

Greeted by Mulgo, the black swan, readers are welcomed to *Nura*. Journeying through the seasons, Mulgo describes the land, skyscape, birds, animals and totems. It is a gentle guide to how Darug people read the seasons, knowing when it is time to hunt and time to rest. It is also an appeal to remember, offering new ways of seeing and reading the lands of the surrounding Sydney region.

With Darug language interspersed with English and an extensive glossary throughout, *Cooee Mittigar* presents an important tool for learning, told as a tender story with exquisite illustrations. It is Jasmine and Leanne's wish that with this book, everyone will know that the Darug mob are still here and still strong.

Cooee mittigar. Tread softly on our lands. Know that this dreaming was here. Is still here. Will be forever.

NOTES

- Timely and relevant, this book is a beautiful introduction to Aboriginal people's continuing connection with land, culture and songlines. Translatable to regions throughout Australia.
- Published in 2019, the UN Year of Indigenous Languages, *Cooee Mittigar* introduces readers to Darug language in context. The end papers contain a glossary.
- Exquisite production values – cloth, embossed hardcover.
- Will appeal to every market – trade, educational, tourist, gallery, gift.

THEMES

- Aboriginal Australians - Social Life and Customs
- Dreaming
- Language (Darug)
- Country
- Ceremonies
- Law
- Seasons
- Storytelling and songlines

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

Jasmine Seymour is a Darug writer, artist and primary school teacher. She lives with her family on Country near the Dyarubbin (Hawkesbury) River in New South Wales. She is a member of the Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation. Her first book, *Baby Business* was published by Magabala Books in 2019.

Leanne Mulgo Watson is a Darug artist-educator and is the daughter of Aunty Edna Watson. She has been a director of the Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation for many years. *Cooee Mittigar* is her first book. She says "I had always wanted to create books to share our knowledge, as education is the key to our culture staying strong".

AUDIENCE AND WRITING STYLE

Cooee Mittigar invites readers to share in the language and customs of the Darug people from the Sydney area of New South Wales. Aspects of Aboriginal culture such as totems, connection to land and songlines are beautifully shared through evocative illustrations and descriptive text. *Cooee Mittigar* also shows how weather patterns, the night sky, flora and fauna are cleverly used to identify the six seasons of the year. The seamless integration of Darug language into the text gives the book a timeless and literary quality, reflecting its welcoming and inclusive message. It is appropriate for a range of year levels in the primary years ranging from Prep-Year 4, although could also be used with older grades exploring Aboriginal spirituality.



LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

This book and the classroom activities provided are primarily relevant to the following areas of the Australian Curriculum:

Learning area	Year level
English	Years F-4
Science	Years F-1
HASS (Geography)	Years 1-4

The appendix highlights relevant content descriptors and cross-curriculum priorities that relate to the text and classroom ideas provided.

CLASSROOM IDEAS

- Before reading, examine the cover and title of the book. Make predictions about the story, giving reasons for your ideas.
- Discuss the longevity of Aboriginal culture, stemming back over 60 000 years ago. The histories and cultures of the different nations have been handed down orally and withstood the test of time. How has this been achieved so successfully?
- Cooee is a call used all over Australia by both indigenous and non-indigenous people. What other Aboriginal language is frequently used across the nation? What do these words mean?
- Familiarise yourself with the Darug language used throughout *Cooee Mittigar* by using the glossary at the back of the text. Create a class word wall of Darug language featured in *Cooee Mittigar*, together with their English meanings. Refer to this display as you read the text.
- The voice in *Cooee Mittigar* is very welcoming and friendly. How and why have readers been so openly invited onto Darug Country through this text? Why has the author chosen the black swan, Mulgo, to share this story?
- Locate Darug Country on the map found at the link below. Locate your local country. What are the geographical features of your local area that could feature in songlines of your region? <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia>
- What is meant by the term Country? Why is connection to Country such an important component of Aboriginal culture?
- Why are the people of the Sydney area referred to as Grey Kangaroo people? Discuss this in context with the Aboriginal concept of totems. For more information, view the following clip: <https://sydney.edu.au/about-us/vision-and-values/our-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-community/kinship-module/learning-module/totems.html>
- What place do storytelling and songlines play in ensuring Darug culture is kept strong?
- How is rhythm and music able to be 'heard' in *Cooee Mittigar*.
- What do you understand about Darug country from reading *Cooee Mittigar*? Give examples from the text to support your ideas. Create a short presentation that shares what you have learnt about this culture.
- Discuss how the Dreaming contributes so significantly to Aboriginal beliefs. How does *Cooee Mittigar* share this with readers? In your own words, explain what the Dreaming is. How does this compare with your own beliefs about creation? For further information about Dreaming, see the following site: <https://www.aboriginal-art-australia.com/aboriginal-art-library/aboriginal-dreamtime/>
- How do the Darug people differentiate between seasons? Create an illustrated calendar that shares the individual characteristics of each of the six seasons featured in *Cooee Mittigar*.
- Why do the Darug people refrain from hunting kangaroo at certain times? What does this tell us about the Aboriginal approach to respect, stewardship and sustainability?
- How are skylines explored in *Cooee Mittigar*? How important is the sky to Dreaming stories and songlines?
- How are flora and fauna used to guide the Darug people through their yearly routines?
- What is fire stick farming? How did this help to preserve Earth Mother?
- How is respect for Earth Mother expressed throughout *Cooee Mittigar*?
- In small groups, discuss the symbolism of the artwork on the first page opening. Share your ideas with another group.
- What role do ceremonies play in Aboriginal culture? Use texts such as Bronwyn Bancroft's *Why I Love Australia*, Gregg Dreise's *My Culture and Me* and Jasmine Seymour's *Baby Business* to explore ceremonies further.



- How is connection to Country explored through *Cooee Mittigar*?
- Use the following websites to take basic notes about the Wet and Dry seasons.
<https://www.questacon.edu.au/burarra-gathering/extra-information/wet-and-dry-seasons>
<http://academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Monsoon>
- Teachers can read more in-depth information about the Wet and Dry seasons at the following site
<http://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2005/11/17/2043065.htm>.
- What is the connection between indigenous culture and Earth Mother?
- Compare *Cooee Mittigar* with other indigenous works such as *Big Fella Rain* by Beryl Webber and Fern Martins, *Welcome to Country* by Aunty Joy Murphy and Lisa Kennedy or Jasmine Seymour's *Baby Business*. Discuss the way in which these texts explore similar themes to those in *Cooee Mittigar*.
- Invite a guest speaker from your local Country to speak about Aboriginal culture and beliefs. Using this information, create your own songline to share these rich stories.

APPENDIX – LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

Year	Curriculum Area
F	<p>English Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise that texts are created by authors who tell stories and share experiences that may be similar or different to students' own experiences (ACELT1575) • Identify some features of texts including events and characters and retell events from a text (ACELT1578) <p>Science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily and seasonal changes in our environment affect everyday life (ACSSU004)
1	<p>Science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observable changes occur in the sky and landscape (ACSSU019) <p>HASS (Geography)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The weather and seasons of places and the ways in which different cultural groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, describe them (ACHASSK032)
2	<p>English Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the characters and settings of different texts and explore how language is used to present these features in different ways (ACELT1591) • Innovate on familiar texts by experimenting with character, setting or plot (ACELT1833) <p>Hass Geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples maintain special connections to particular Country/Place (ACHASSK049)
3	<p>English Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how language is used to describe the settings in texts, and explore how the settings shape the events and influence the mood of the narrative (ACELT1599) <p>Hass History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of Country/Place to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples who belong to a local area (ACHASSK062)



APPENDIX – LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM CONT.

Year	Curriculum Area
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4	English Literature
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- Make connections between the ways different authors may represent similar storylines, ideas and relationships ([ACELT1602](#))

	Hass
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	History
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- The diversity of Australia's first peoples and the long and continuous connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to Country/Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) ([ACHASSK083](#))
 - Geography
 - The custodial responsibility Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have for Country/Place, and how this influences views about sustainability ([ACHASSK089](#))
 - Civics and Citizenship
 - The differences between 'rules' and 'laws', why laws are important and how they affect the lives of people, including experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples ([ACHASSK092](#))
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