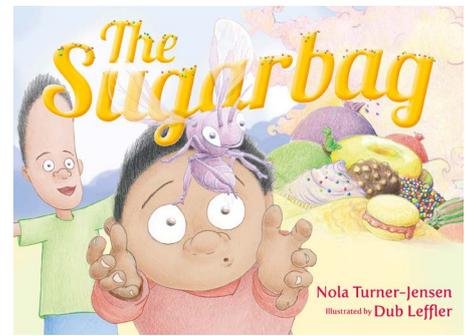


# Magabala Books • Teacher Notes

## The Sugarbag

Written by Nola Turner-Jensen

Illustrated by Dub Leffler



Teacher Notes prepared by Christina Wheeler

### OVERVIEW

*The Sugarbag* shares the story of Jimmy and Max, who on their way to visit their grandfather encounter a stingless native bee. Jimmy has learnt about this type of bee and how to hunt for its 'sugarbag' – honey! He takes this opportunity to teach his younger brother how to find this hidden treasure.

### THEMES

- Aboriginal culture and customs
- Adventure
- Native bees and their 'sugarbag' honey

### AUDIENCE AND WRITING STYLE

Suitable for lower primary students, *The Sugarbag* is a narrative told simply and effectively. The words are at times written in shapes to depict the movement of the bee and the boys. Some Wiradjuri language words are included.

### LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

This book and the classroom activities provided are primarily relevant to English, Science, and Humanities and Social Sciences for year levels 1-2. The appendix highlights relevant content descriptions, cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities.

### CULTURAL NOTES

*The Sugarbag* explores food gathering techniques used by many Aboriginal groups and demonstrates how cultural knowledge is passed through generations. It is recommended that teachers practise the two Wiradjuri language words included in the text with their students. For information about teaching Australian Indigenous content see [Teaching Indigenous content with Magabala Books](#).



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

Nola Turner-Jensen is a Wiradjuri woman from the river country in Central West New South Wales. In 2004, Nola established a company that produced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational resources and toys, and has since developed an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander website for primary schools. Nola also writes for the Indigenous Literacy Readers Project.



Dub Leffler is descended from the Bigambul and Mandandanji people of South West Queensland and grew up in Quirindi, New South Wales. Dub has illustrated several children's books and has collaborated with internationally recognised illustrators.



## CLASSROOM IDEAS

- Before reading the story, discuss what a 'sugarbag' might be. What clues are there on the front cover?
- Compare the taste of 'sugarbag' made by native stingless bees and honey made by non-native bees.
- Research and create a poster to explain the process that bees use to make honey.
- Invite a beekeeper to speak with students about the keeping of bees and the making of honey.
- Watch YouTube clips that show how honey is harvested from native bees. There are many available.
- Identify all the tools used by Jimmy, and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, to collect sugarbag. Where did these tools come from?
- Do some cooking using honey as a key ingredient, for example, honey biscuits.
- With a partner, recreate *The Sugarbag* in a dramatic performance.
- Explore the layout of the text throughout the book. Why are some lines curved? Why are different font sizes and colours used? How does this add to the story?
- Write a poem about native stingless bees. Use similes and onomatopoeia to help bring the poem to life. Share these poems with your class.
- Create bees and a sugarbag to display in the classroom.
- Discuss the importance of the passing down of skills from one generation to the next. What skills have you learnt from your parents or grandparents?
- Reflecting on the text and the illustrations, brainstorm words to describe the relationship between the two brothers.
- What emotions did Max experience as he was taught about collecting sugarbag? Graph his different feelings throughout the story.
- There are puns in the text. Find these and discuss what effect these puns have to the story.
- Create a comic strip version of *The Sugarbag*.
- Research other 'treasures' Aboriginal people find for food in the bush. Create an information report or brochure about 'bush tucker'.
- Use pastels to create your own illustrations to complement *The Sugarbag*.



**APPENDIX – LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM F-10 (VERSION 8.1)**

Year	English	Humanities and Social Sciences	Science
1	<p>Recognise that different types of punctuation, including full stops, question marks and exclamation marks, signal sentences that make statements, ask questions, express emotion or give commands (ACELA1449)</p> <p>Compare different kinds of images in narrative and informative texts and discuss how they contribute to meaning (ACELA1453)</p> <p>Discuss how authors create characters using language and images (ACELT1581)</p> <p>Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts and share personal responses to these texts, making connections with students’ own experiences (ACELT1582)</p> <p>Respond to texts drawn from a range of cultures and experiences (ACELY1655)</p>	<p><b>History</b></p> <p>Differences and similarities between students’ daily lives and life during their parents’ and grandparents’ childhoods (ACHASSK030)</p>	<p>Living things have a variety of external features (ACSSU017)</p> <p>Living things live in different places where their needs are met (ACSSU211)</p> <p>People use science in their daily lives, including when caring for their environment and living things (ACSHE022)</p>
2	<p>Identify visual representations of characters’ actions, reactions, speech and thought processes in narratives, and consider how these images add to or contradict or multiply the meaning of accompanying words (ACELA1469)</p> <p>Discuss how depictions of characters in print, sound and images reflect the contexts in which they were created (ACELT1587)</p> <p>Discuss the characters and settings of different texts and explore how language is used to present these features in different ways (ACELT1591)</p>	<p><b>History</b></p> <p>How changing technology affected people’s lives (at home and in the ways they worked, travelled, communicated and played in the past) (ACHASSK046)</p> <p><b>Geography</b></p> <p>The ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples maintain special connections to particular Country/Place (ACHASSK049)</p>	<p>People use science in their daily lives, including when caring for their environment and living things (ACSHE035)</p>
<p><b>Cross curriculum priorities</b></p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Sustainability</p>			
<p><b>General capabilities</b></p> <p>Literacy, Personal and social capability, Intercultural understanding</p>			

