



eXplore

# **BUSHRANGERS!**

**Captain Thunderbolt**

Sharlene G Coombs

**KNOWLEDGE  
BOOKS**

**22**

**Reading Recovery Level:** 19

**Word Count:** 1948

**Content:** Historical Recount, Description, Explanation.

**ACARA F-10 References:**

**Learning Areas:**

English; Humanities and Social Sciences; Science; Health and Physical Education.

**General Capabilities:**

Literacy; Critical and Creative Thinking; Personal and Social Capability.

**Cross Curriculum Priorities:**

Sustainability

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**Teacher Notes:**

Bushrangers played a big part in Australia's early colonial history. They caused chaos on quiet country roads, often robbing the mail coaches as they travelled between towns. However, not all bushrangers were the same. One was called the "gentleman's bushranger". Join the author on a journey as she explores the life and death of Captain Thunderbolt, including the amazing places of the New England tablelands where his life and history is celebrated.

**Discussion points for consideration:**

1. Discuss why some convicts and other free settlers decided to become bushrangers.
2. What do you think the old phrase, "the long arm of the law" means?
3. Why do you think Thunderbolt has become such a popular historical figure?

**Difficult words to be introduced and practised before reading this book:**

bushranger, criminal, Australia, settlements, Governor, protected, outlaws, horse-drawn, policemen, armour, captured, Melbourne, Thunderbolt, excellent, discovered, tollbars, popular, tourist, disappeared, constable, exhausted, surrender, cemetery, community, plaque, celebrate, museum, respects.

**Acknowledgement of the First Nations' People:**

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging.

**Sensitivity Notice:**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that the following series may contain images – photographs and illustrations and text about deceased persons.

## Contents

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1. The First Bushrangers
2. Famous Bushrangers – Ned Kelly
3. Captain Thunderbolt's Beginnings
4. Trouble With the Law!
5. Escape!
6. Hands Up!
7. The Gentleman Bushranger
8. Thunderbolt's Hideouts
9. Thunderbolt's Death
10. Thunderbolt's Grave
11. Thunderbolt – the Legend





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## 1. The First Bushrangers

When you hear the word “bushranger”, what do you think of? A bushranger was a criminal who lived in the Australian bush. Australia used to have many bushrangers.

The first bushrangers were convicts who escaped from convict settlements. They hid in the Australian bush and lived off the land. Sometimes they stole from people.

Free settlers were also sent to Australia from places like Ireland. The Governor used them for cheap labour.



no 84

84



Life was hard, even if you were not a convict. The British law was very harsh. Some free settlers felt like they were being treated unfairly.

Some of these people became bushrangers to get away from British law. The Australian bush protected them. It gave them a place to hide and food to eat.

These bushrangers could travel across the country without being seen. They robbed people on the roads between towns. They became outlaws.



The Gold Rush made some gold miners very rich. The miners travelled from the goldfields to the cities with their gold and money. They were an easy target for bushrangers.

Gold miners often travelled on the mail coaches. These horse-drawn coaches delivered the mail between towns. Bushrangers found them easy to rob.

Bushrangers also robbed banks and inns in small towns. These hold-ups were not as easy. They were more likely to get caught.





## 2. Famous Bushrangers – Ned Kelly

Ned Kelly was Australia's most famous bushranger. He was also the leader of the Kelly gang. They robbed mail coaches and banks. They also shot and killed policemen.

Ned Kelly and his gang went into hiding near a small town called Glenrowan. They made suits of armour out of old farm parts. Once the police found out where they were hiding, they attacked.

The Kelly gang were captured in a shootout. Ned Kelly was taken to the Old Melbourne Gaol for his trial. On 11th November 1880, he was hanged.



