

explore

THE LOADED DOG

by Henry Lawson

Adapted by R. T. Watts

WATERLOO BOOKS

KNOWLEDGE
BOOKS

30

Reading Recovery Level: 18

Word Count: 2710

Content: Story-telling with humour.

ACARA F-10 References:

Learning Areas:

English; History; Australian studies.

General Capabilities:

Literacy; Critical and Creative Thinking; Historical and Indigenous perspectives.

Author Bio:

Rob Watts has adapted Henry Lawson's original text to simplify for literacy purposes. Rob has written in journals, texts, workbooks and online content. Rob has a science degree from Macquarie University, Sydney, an MBA from The University of Queensland, Brisbane, and a teaching diploma from Sturt University, Bathurst.

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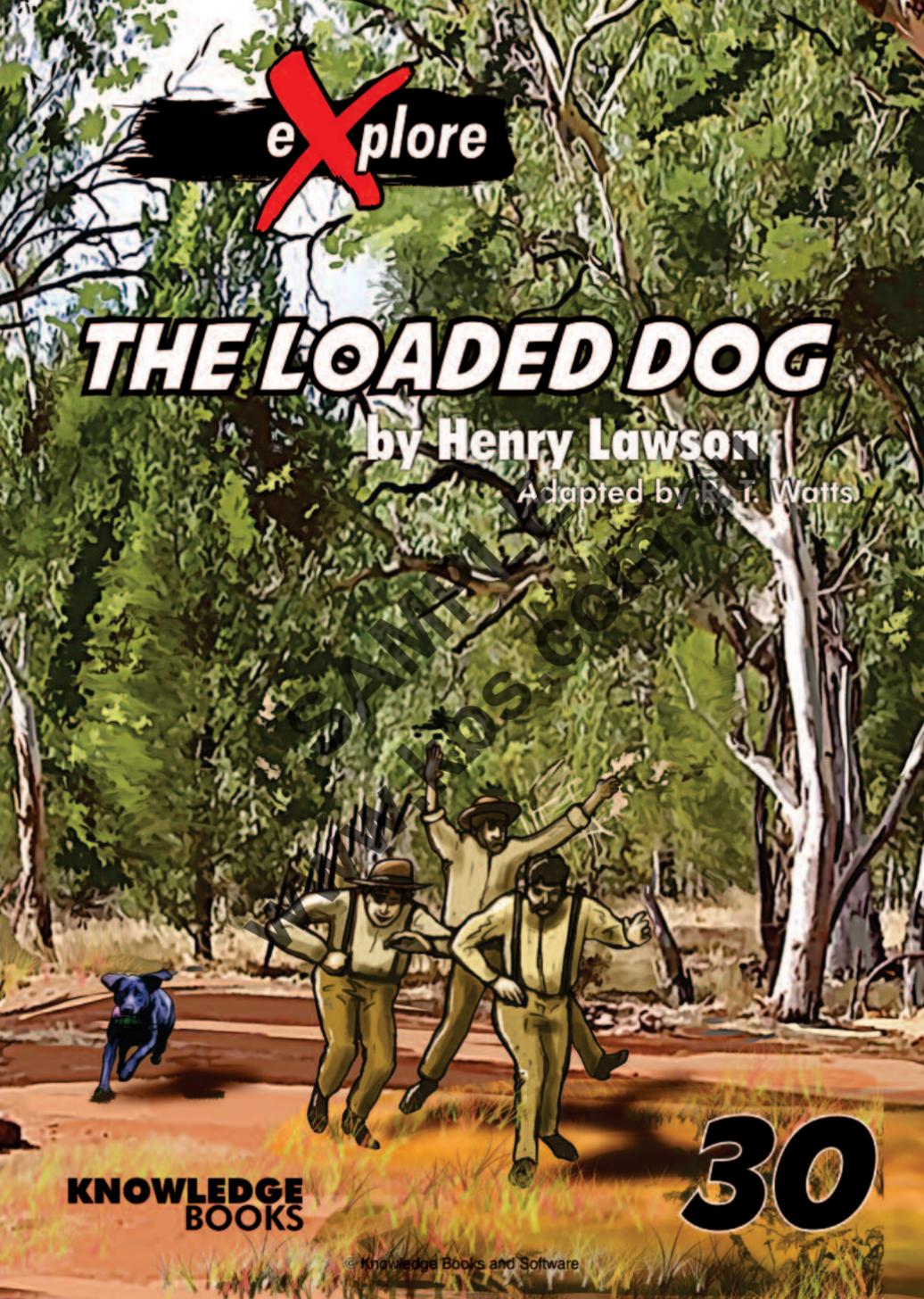


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Teacher Notes:

Today Henry Lawson's writings are broadly known in Australia. He is one of the great 'bush poets and writers'. Australia was in Lawson's early times, a group of British colonies. Many Australians were British and did not identify with the emerging unique character of Australian people. The colonialists wrote in terms of a colony of the motherland. This perspective dominated the growing middle and upper classes in Australia. Lawson's writings were about the peoples and the conditions in Sydney, on the goldfields and on farms. It was the formative period of an Australian nationalist sentiment. This led directly to Federation and the forming of labour movements that sought better conditions for working peoples. These early foundations that saw the new country and conceded improvements to workers led to Australia becoming a united, fair and prosperous nation. Lawson's life was tragic from start to end. He had a dysfunctional and deprived childhood on the NSW's goldfields. This was followed by a continual search for stability in work and love. He was a chronic alcoholic and died early from associated afflictions. Lawson like the society of that time, did not look beyond the hills of gold diggings, to see the suffering of the Indigenous peoples! The readings of Lawson's works offers many opportunities for historical perspectives and subsequent discussions.

Discussion points for consideration:

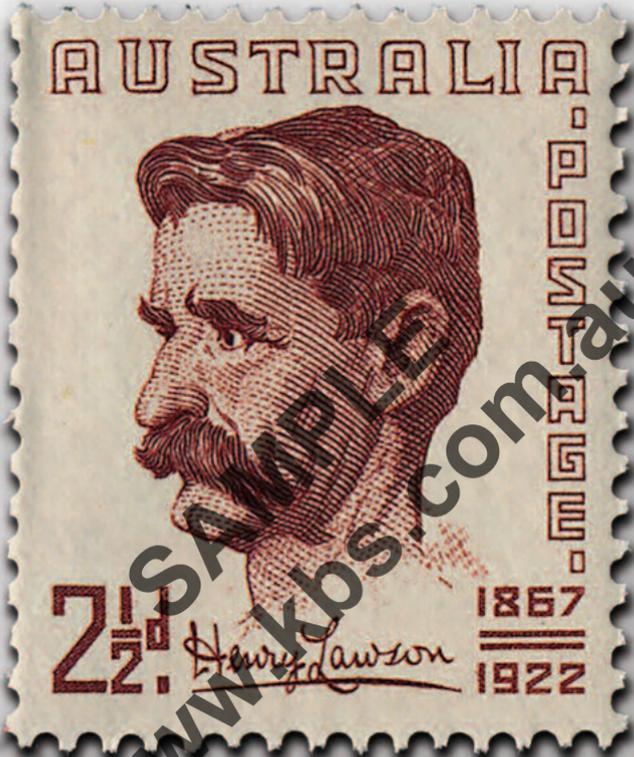
1. When did Australia become a nation? What was Australia when Henry Lawson was writing?
2. How did Australia make money in those early days of formation? What was produced and found to make money?
3. Australia grew from migrants coming to start a new life. Where were the migrants from and how is this different to today's migration?
4. What do you think happened to the Indigenous peoples during these early times of the colonies?

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

afterwards, apologise, Australian, goldfields, authors, regarded, trouble, together, sausage, butcher, surprise, horrible, dangerous, screamed, curious, delicious, leash, explosion, interested, disappeared, funniest.

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1867-1922
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1. About Henry Lawson 1867-1922

This is a short story written by Henry Lawson. It is a very funny story written about a place called Stony Creek. This was on the New South Wales goldfields. Henry Lawson spent his childhood with his parents in the goldfields of NSW. He knew the people and the very hard life that they lived. Things were tough and the work was dangerous and hard. He was one of the first Australian authors to tell stories about the ordinary people of the colony. He wasn't writing to impress British people, he simply wrote for the people of Australia. He was regarded very highly for his writings and poetry. He would go to the pubs in Sydney and recite his poetry in return for a free beer. He died in Sydney in 1922. The *Loaded Dog* is a funny story of a silly dog who makes a lot of trouble.



2. Working on the Goldfields

Dave, Jim and Andy were mates who worked together looking for gold. They dug a deep hole going down to the hard rock. In the hard rock they hoped to find gold. The rock was so hard their picks would bounce off when it was struck.

The only way to break the rock was to make a big blast. The blast would crack the rocks open. The hole was always filling with water so the blast powder could not get wet. They made a long sausage filled with gun powder. This was a sausage made of strong canvas. To stop it getting wet they covered the sausage in fat. They would push the sausage into a hole in the rock. The fuse would be lit, and they would jump out of the hole before the bang.



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Getting food meant buying it or finding it. Fish and meat are what Dave, Jim and Andy loved eating. They would cook the meat over the wood fire.

There was plenty of fish in the muddy ponds. It was not easy catching the fish as it was winter, when fish are not hungry. If they could catch some fish, then the butcher would swap for some meat. Eating meat is the way to go but when you don't have money you either eat something or find another way.

Dave went into the pond and tried to grab a catfish. Its long nasty spines stuck in his hand. He yelled and jumped out of the mud. Dave's arm was swollen and ached for two days. 'I am not trying that again!' said Dave.



3. Fishing in the Goldfields

Dave got a new idea, 'Why not blow up the pond and stun the fish?'

Andy started thinking about this idea. He would make a giant gunpowder sausage. This sausage would be three times the normal size. 'It will blast every fish out of that pond!' said Andy. 'We will get a lot of meat for all these fish to swap.' said Dave.

Andy worked quickly thinking of all the meat he was going to eat. To waterproof the blasting powder was a lot of work. They started with strong canvas and then waterproof brown paper and then covered it in fat. They covered this in bees' wax. They wanted to make sure it worked, and tied wire around the sausage and coated it in fat again. They would need a very long fuse which was waterproof. The fuse would take 10 minutes to burn to the gunpowder.



4. Tommy

The three miners had a big black labrador called Tommy. He was a young silly dog and always ready for a game. Tommy would fetch sticks and chase balls. He would chase rabbits and dive into the creek whenever it was too hot. Tommy's best mates were Andy, Dave and Jim, and he would follow them around as part of the mining team. He would look down the holes and sniff around everywhere. Tommy would bring all the rubbish he found back to the camp as gifts for the men.

The big silly lab was very interested in Andy's work on the giant sausage. He stayed with Andy all morning and watched carefully how it was made. At the end of the day, Dave and Jim left the deep mine hole to come back to the camp. Andy started the fire to cook dinner.