

## Dwoort Baal Kaat

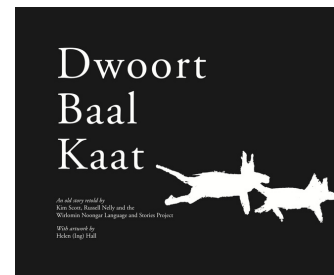
Retold by Kim Scott, Russell Nelly and the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project  
Illustrated by Helen (Ing) Hall

### Synopsis

When a Noongar man goes hunting with a pack of dogs, he doesn't quite get the help he was expecting. Hungry and greedy, the dogs devour their kill before the man can salvage anything for himself. This happens time and again. Eager to remedy the situation, the man sets the pack alight as they sleep. Fleeing to the ocean to put out the flames, the dogs keep barking, even though they have now become seals. Over time, the seals themselves form the rocks that remain part of the landscape forever.

Inspired by a story told in 1931 to an American linguist, this story was returned to the Noongar people in the 1980s and has since been reclaimed and workshopped with the community.

***Dwoort Baal Kaat* is part of an Indigenous language recovery program undertaken with the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project.**



ISBN: 978-1-74258-511-6

### Themes

- First Nations Culture
  - Language - Noongar
  - Stories
  - Artwork
  - Hunting
- Language Revival
- Greed
- Consequences
- Ancestors
- Seals
- Creation Stories

### About the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project

The Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project Incorporated is an association with aims of reclaiming, supporting, promoting and maintaining Wirlomin Noongar cultural heritage. They work to reclaim Wirlomin stories and dialect, in support of the maintenance of Noongar language, and to share them with Noongar families and communities as part of a process to claim, control and enhance Wirlomin Noongar cultural heritage. More information can be found on the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories [website](#).

## Links to the Australian Curriculum

Learning Area	Year level
---------------	------------

English	2-4
Hass (Geography)	2-4

---

## Writing Style

*Dwoort Baal Kaat* is a bilingual text told in both Noongar and English. It includes an extensive glossary to help readers learn more about the Noongar language. Originating from oral storytelling, the written text reflects a combination of old Noongar with more contemporary versions of the language, with a literal English translation beneath. It then retells the story in English prose. *Dwoort Baal Kaat* is a story about greedy dogs that face the consequences of their actions. The Noongar man is an ancestor of the storyteller, and his experiences help explain the connection between dogs and seals, both which bark, and how the seals eventually became the rocks lining the coastline. In this way, it showcases the importance of stories to the understanding of Country and the landscape. The illustrations work seamlessly with the story to engage readers in a powerful story that was almost lost forever. It is suited to mid-upper primary audiences.

An essay at the end of *Noongar Mambara Batijk* not only shares the importance of this story to Wirlomin Noongar people, but the regenerative nature of this project. Beyond the pages of this series lies a community that has reclaimed its lost language and been strengthened by the sharing of stories that 'give voice to the sounds of long ago.'

---

## Study notes

- Before reading, use the cover, blurb, and endpapers to discuss the characters, settings, and possible events of the story.
- Examine the illustrations before reading the written text. Using the illustrations, make predictions about the written story. Compare your predictions with the story after reading.
- Why does the man decide to hunt with a pack of dogs? What regrets might he have about this decision?
- In the role of the Noongar man, write a journal to share your experiences in *Dwoort Baal Kaat*.
- Which is your favourite illustration in *Dwoort Baal Kaat*? Why? Share with a friend.
- What does this story share about the connection between the Noongar people and their ancestors?
- What vocabulary in the text helps describe the actions of the dogs? Make a word wall of these words in both Noongar and English.

## Study notes continued

- Discuss the use of figurative language in the text, such as 'he was so hungry that his belly was bashing his backbone' and 'soon the wind was crying and screaming, and a circle of flames danced higher and higher around the dogs.' What other examples can you find? How do these language features contribute to the story?
- What, if any, regrets might the Noongar man have had about his day hunting with the dogs?
- How does *Dwoort Baal Kaat* reveal the difference between humans and animals?
- Discuss the line, 'it was if they were held by a great, fiery hand.' What might this refer to?
- What do you think is the main message in this story?
- Summarise *Dwoort Baal Kaat* into a six-word story.
- Retell this story from the role of the Noongar man's brother.
- Using just the illustrations, share with a partner what is happening in this story.
- Using the series of illustrations below, explain how the dogs change into seals, and then into rocks. Alternatively, create a short graphic novel to share this part of the story.



- How do projects such as *Dwoort Baal Kaat* show the value of bringing Elders and community together to revive ancestral language and stories?
- Refer to the glossary at the back of the text to further explore Noongar language. Use it in conjunction with the Noongar telling of the story to better understand the richness of the story. Discuss the differences between the language features and sentence structures of Noongar and English.

## Study notes continued

- Using an interactive First Languages map of Australia such as that found at <https://gambay.com.au/> find out more about the Noongar area, as well as information about your local area.
- After reading *Dwoort Baal Kaat* re-read the illustrations in the text. How do they support and extend the storytelling? How do they help you to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the text?
- Retell this story through a dramatic recreation, artwork, or shadow puppet play.
- The team behind this series says that 'stories live longer and stronger by being shared.' Discuss.
- Share the process of how the stories in this series have been brought back to life through the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project (see notes at the back of *Noongar Mambara Bakitj* for more information). How does sharing stories like *Dwoort Baal Kaat* allow First Nations Peoples to 'claim, control and enhance' their cultural heritage?
- Download and listen to readings of this story in Noongar and English using the following link: <https://www.wirlomin.com.au/stories/books/>. When listening in Noongar, take note of the rhythm of the storytelling. Compare the audio with the written language. With a partner, take turns reading parts of the story in language.
- What is the place of stories in First Nations cultures? For additional understanding, use relevant pages from *Come Together* by Isaiah Firebrace (Hardie Grant Explore) as a companion text.
- What stories from your culture have been passed down through generations? What do you like about these stories? What important lessons or messages do they include? Share in a reflection.
- Invite First Nations community members to share language and stories from your local area.
- The process of creating texts like this is quite involved. In the case of reviving *Dwoort Baal Kaat*, it began with storytelling, before paintings and drawings helped to shape the story of so long ago. Elders began speaking about sites and others described places that many had never seen. From here, the story began to grow. The written version could then be completed, first in Noongar, then in English. Compare the Indigenous methodology of storytelling with the more linear approach often used by western societies. (Western: Firstly, the story is recorded in written text. Next, page breaks within the text are determined, breaking the story into its various stages. Illustrations are then created to add elements of visual literacy. These stories tend to have a traditional 'beginning middle and end', as opposed to the more circular nature of First Nations' stories.) To further explore the richness of Indigenous storytelling, share an oral story with the class before creating illustrations, then adding the written text. Write a reflection of telling stories in this way.

## Links to the Australian Curriculum

### Year 2

#### English

##### Language

- Understand that images add to or multiply the meanings of a text (AC9E2LA08)
- Experiment with and begin to make conscious choices of vocabulary to suit the topic (AC9E2LA09)

##### Literature

- Discuss how characters and settings are connected in literature created by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors and illustrators (AC9E2LE01)
- Identify features of literary texts, such as characters and settings, and give reasons for personal preferences (AC9E2LE02)
- Create and edit literary texts by adapting structures and language features of familiar literary texts through drawing, writing, performance and digital tools (AC9E2LE05)

##### Literacy

- Use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning (AC9E2LY05)
- Identifying the purpose of texts written by First Nations Australian authors (AC9E2LY03)

#### Hass

##### Geography

- The interconnections of First Nations Australians to a local Country/Place (AC9HS2K04)

### Year 3

#### English

##### Language

- Identify how images extend the meaning of a text (AC9E3LA09)

##### Literature

- Discuss characters, events and settings in different contexts in literature by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors and illustrators (AC9E3LE01)
- Discuss connections between personal experiences and character experiences in literary texts and share personal preferences (AC9E3LE02)
- Discuss how an author uses language and illustrations to portray characters and settings in texts, and explore how the settings and events influence the mood of the narrative (AC9E3LE03)
- Create and edit imaginative texts, using or adapting language features, characters, settings, plot structures and ideas encountered in literary texts (AC9E3LE05)

##### Literacy

- Identifying the purpose of an imaginative text; for example, identifying the purpose of a fable (AC9E3LY03)
- Using phonic knowledge, word knowledge, vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to read unknown words (AC9E3LY04)
- Use comprehension strategies when listening and viewing to build literal and inferred meaning, and begin to evaluate texts by drawing on a growing knowledge of context, text structures and language features (AC9E3LY05)

#### Hass

##### Geography

- The ways First Nations Australians in different parts of Australia are interconnected with Country/Place (AC9HS3K04)

## Links to the Australian Curriculum continued

### Year 4

#### English

##### Language

- Using words encountered in texts that are formed from a First Nations Australian language (AC9E4LA11)

##### Literature

- Recognise similar storylines, ideas and relationships in different contexts in literary texts by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors (AC9E4LE01)
- Identifying how illustrations contribute to the meaning of stories by First Nations Australian authors AC9E4LE03

##### Literacy

- Identify the characteristic features used in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to meet the purpose of the text (AC9E4LY03)
- Use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning, to expand topic knowledge and ideas, and evaluate texts (AC9E4LY05)

#### Hass

##### Geography

- Investigating how First Nations Australians adapted ways of living using knowledge and practices linked to the sustainable use of resources and environments and how this knowledge can be taught through stories and songs, reflecting their inherent custodial responsibilities (AC9HS4K06)

---

## Other books in the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project series

- *Mamang*
- *Ngaawily Nop*
- *Noongar Mambara Bakitj*
- *Noorn*
- *Yira Boornak Nyininy*

All books are available to purchase online: [uwap.uwa.edu.au/collections/wirlomin-noongar-language-and-stories-project](http://uwap.uwa.edu.au/collections/wirlomin-noongar-language-and-stories-project)