Ngaawily Nop

Retold by Kim Scott, Joyce Cockles, Roma Winmar and the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project

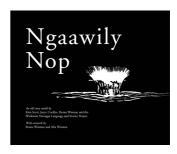
Illustrated by Roma Winmar and Alta Winmar

Synopsis

When a Noongar man goes searching for his uncle, he finds himself at the ocean and immediately feels connected to the water. He sees a man standing where a wave has just crashed, but after introducing himself, the stranger declares they are not related. The Noongar man then transforms into a groper, at one with the sea. It is then that the uncle understands they are related.

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.

Ngaawily Nop is part of an Indigenous language recovery program undertaken with the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project.



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Themes

- First Nations Culture
 - Language Noongar
 - Stories
 - Artwork
 - Country
 - Kin
- Language Revival
- Belonging
- Ancestors

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 <u>website</u>.

Links to the Australian Curriculum

Learning Area	Year level
English	2-4
Hass	2-4

Writing Style

Ngaawily Nop 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. Ngaawily Nop is a story about kin, belonging and Country. It also showcases the importance of stories to the understanding of Country and identity. 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 Bakitj* 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 boy decide to look for his uncle? Why do you think his parents encourage him to go?
- With reference to the illustration below, what do you think has happened to the boy's uncle? Use evidence from the text to support your thinking.



Study notes continued

 How do we know the connection the Noongar boy feels with the ocean from the illustration below? Why, even though he's never been there before, does he feel 'he was coming home'?



- What do you think would have been the boy's reaction upon seeing his uncle 'standing right there where the wave had been'?
- Why are both the boy and uncle drawn in blue when at the ocean?
- How might the boy have felt when the uncle says they're not family?
- In the role of the Noongar man, write a journal to share your experiences in *Ngaawily Nop*.
- Which is your favourite illustration in Ngaawily Nop? Why? Share with a friend.
- What does this story share about the connection between the Noongar people and Country?
- Discuss the use of figurative language in the text, such as, 'calm and peaceful, it lifted its head from the water and its eyes were like the sky at sunset when the first stars begin to shine.' What other examples can you find? How do these language features contribute to the story?
- How does Ngaawily Nop reveal the difference the importance of belonging?
- Summarise *Ngaawily Nop* into a six-word story.
- Retell this story from the uncle's point of view.
- Using just the illustrations, share with a partner what is happening in this story.
- In what ways is *Ngaawily Nop* a story about belonging?
- Why do you think the uncle changes his mind about being the boy's uncle?
- Using the series of images below, as well as details from the story, discuss how the boy feels about his new ocean home.









Study notes continued

- View an early draft with commentary of Ngaawily Nop at the following link: https://www.wirlomin.com.au/stories/books/ngaawily-nop/. How does it differ from the published version?
- How do projects such as *Ngaawily Nop* 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.
- 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 *Ngaawily Nop*, 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 *Ngaawily Nop* allow First Nations Peoples to 'claim, control and enhance' their heritage?
- Read the additional text at the end of *Ngaawily Nop* that discusses the importance of Country and the curlews to the Wirloman Noongar people. How does this help to better appreciate the story being shared in *Ngaawily Nop*?
- 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 *Ngaawily Nop*, 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

Study notes continued

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)

Links to the Australian Curriculum continued

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)

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

History

• Exploring the connection of First Nations Australians to the land and water and how they manage these resources (AC9HS4K01)

Geography

• Explaining how people's connections with their environment can also be aesthetic, emotional and spiritual (AC9HS4K05)

Civics and Citizenship

• recognising that the identity of First Nations Australians is shaped by Country/Place, language and knowledge traditions (AC9HS4K09)

Other books in the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project series

- Dwoort Baal Kaat
- Mamang
- Noongar Mambara Bakitj
- Noorn
- Yira Boornak Nyininy

All books are available to purchase online: <u>uwap.uwa.edu.au/collections/wirlomin-noongar-language-and-stories-project</u>