

# Noorn

Retold by Kim Scott, Ryan Brown and the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project Illustrated by Alta Winmar

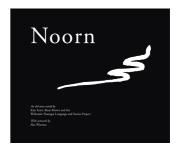
# **Synopsis**

Noorn tells the story of the special connection between a man and a snake. Close companions, they protect one another and treat each other with care and respect. This story also reveals the importance of snakes to the entire family.

Recounted by the great-grandson of a Noongar man, *Noorn* is part of an Indigenous language recovery program undertaken with the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project.



Year level
2-4
2-4



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#### **Themes**

- First Nations Culture
  - Language Noongar
  - Stories
  - Artwork
  - Country
  - Nature
- Language Revival
- Care
- Respect
- Snakes

# **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.

# **Writing Style**

Noorn 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. *Noorn* is a story about the reciprocal and protective relationship between humans and other living creatures. In this way, it showcases the importance of stories to the understanding of Country and connections with nature. 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 the text explains the origins of the Wirlomin Noongar people and their connection to Country, ceremony, and the local curlews. 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. What role might the snake play in this 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.
- Describe the relationship between the young man and the snake. Why does he take such good care of the snake, even before it hatches?
- With reference to the illustration below, describe the nature of the Noongar man. How do the other illustrations and help portray this?



• What do you think happens to the snake when it becomes invisible to others? Why does it do this? Is it invisible? How is the presence of snakes still apparent in the illustrations like those below? Why does the text say, 'My old people...you might see them walking around. Most of the time they'll have a snake with them, but you won't even see it'?

# Study notes continued





- In the role of the young man, write a journal to share your experiences in Noorn.
- Which is your favourite illustration in Noorn? Why? Share with a friend.
- What does this story share about the connection between the Noongar people and their totems?
- 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 Noorn reveal the importance of connections to living things?
- Summarise Noorn into a six-word story.
- Retell this story from the snake's point of view.
- Using just the illustrations, share with a partner what is happening in this story.
- Why does the snake protect the man when he is attacked by the stranger?
- Why is the stranger frightened by the snake, while the Noongar man and his family are not?
- How do projects such as Noorn 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 <a href="https://gambay.com.au/">https://gambay.com.au/</a>, find out more about the Noongar area, as well as information about your local area.
- After reading *Noorn*, 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.

# Study notes continued

- 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 *Noorn* allow First Nations Peoples to 'claim, control and enhance' their heritage?
- Read the additional text at the end of *Noorn* that discusses the importance of Country and the curlews to the Wirloman Noongar people. How does this help you better appreciate the story being told in Noorn?
- A reading of *Noorn* is currently in development. When completed, it will be available to download in Noongar and English using the following link:
   <a href="https://www.wirlomin.com.au/stories/books/">https://www.wirlomin.com.au/stories/books/</a>. 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 *Noom*, 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

• 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
- Ngaawily Nop
- Noongar Mambara Bakitj
- Yira Boornak Nyininy

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