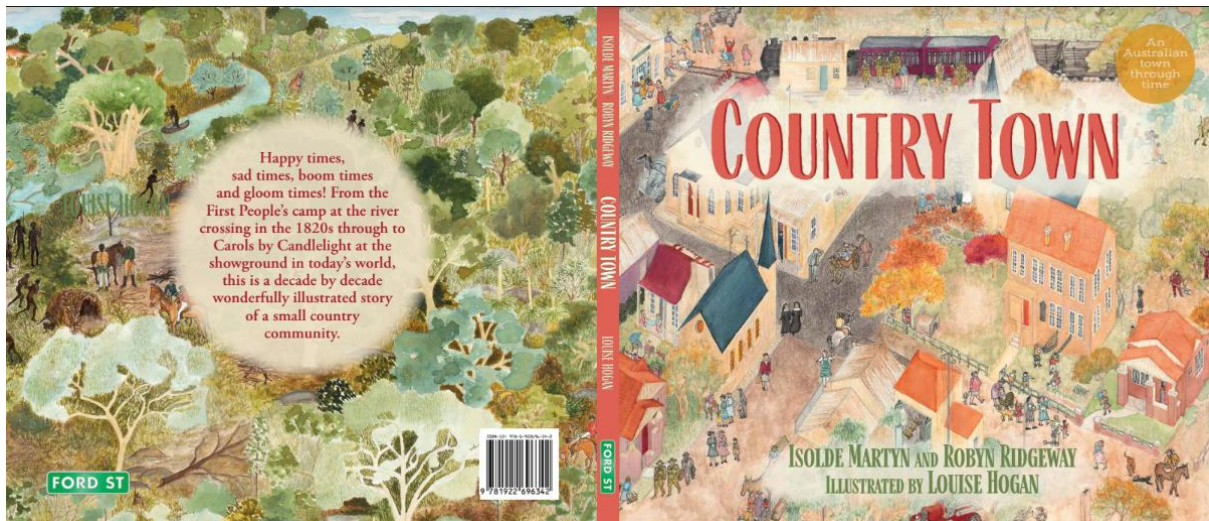


COUNTRY TOWN

WRITTEN BY ISOLDE MARTYN AND ROBYN RIDGEWAY
ILLUSTRATED BY LOUISE HOGAN



Teacher Notes

Written to provide teachers with Australian Curriculum linked lesson plans that are related to the text, Country Town.



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SUMMARY

The decade-by-decade story of an inland town in Australia as it grows from a river crossing with a First Nations camp to the present day. Each page includes beautiful artwork with meticulous detail for students to enjoy. The town itself is imaginary, but it reflects the experience of many Australian towns over the last 200 years. This ensures that students all over the country are able to relate to the people and events that occur in the town.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Isolde Martyn and Robyn Ridgeway co-authored Country Town, each providing a unique perspective of Australian history.

Isolde Martyn's earlier career was in academia and publishing. She has edited local histories, researched every town in Australia for the Bicentenary volume Events and Places and she was the editor of The Reader's Digest Motoring Guide to Australia. She is also the author of nine historical novels and her debut novel won a top award in the USA and Australia. Country Town has been a long-term project and she hopes it encourages young readers and their families to enjoy history in a really fun way.

Robyn's ancestry is from the NSW North coast. Her mother was a Thungutti woman, her father a Worimi man. Robyn teaches Aboriginal Studies at both a Diploma and HSC level for TAFE. She is involved with several Aboriginal Committees with TAFE as well as the local Community.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Louise Hogan is best known for *When a Goose meets a Moose* and *Apples for Hurricane Street*, which was shortlisted for the Australian Children's Book of the Year Award. Although she graduated from the National Art School with a Diploma in Interior Design, illustrating children's books was her real ambition. She even worked at Taronga Zoo art department to practise drawing animals. Louise has also done school visits to talk about her books.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The below lesson plans provide an opportunity to explore the text 'Country Town' through the lens of various learning areas; Literacy, Literature, Language, Geography and History. The text invites rich classroom conversations surrounding the cross-curricular priority of 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures'. Country Town provides an opportunity for First Nations learning to be ingrained in lessons in an authentic and meaningful way. The lessons can be completed as a unit, or used individually to fit into an existing unit.

LESSON 1 (EXTENDED LESSON)

This lesson would be best suited to occur over two lessons on consecutive days. The first day, students create their summaries of their allocated pages. On the second day students meet in their new groups to share their summaries.

Learning Intention: To summarise a passage of text for other students to be able to learn from.

Success Criteria:

- ★ I can summarise a passage of text and identify 4 main events and/or facts
- ★ I can present clearly and confidently to a group
- ★ I can listen and learn from my peers

Consideration: Since this text is too long to read in a single lesson, it is recommended to complete this activity first before other activities, then read the full text in small chunks during shared reading time.

Tune In: Prime students' thinking by using Think-Pair-Share to discuss what they already know about Australian History. Introduce the text by reading the first page 'Which Town Is This?' as a class to provide context. Quickly show students what the pages look like, in terms of having a descriptive illustration and either a fictional story, or factual information.

Class Activity: Describe to students that they will be summarising a piece of the text in groups, then sharing their summary with students who have summarised the other pages. Explain that this way everyone will have the knowledge of the text without having to read it themselves. Complete an example as a class using the first page 'River Camp 1822'. Read the text and show the illustration and invite students to suggest important details to include in a summary.

Example summary: This page is told from an Indigenous child's perspective, as he talks about his connection with the land and his culture. He talks about Old Uncle telling stories about the past and teaching the next generation how to take care of the land. He talks about how he is scared that change is coming and how he will no longer be free. The image shows a peaceful place with people hunting, gathering, living in huts, canoeing and playing.

Group Activity: There are 14 'event' pages in the text. If you use the below guide, each student will have 3 event pages to summarise. Students can summarise the pages in a group with other students summarising the same pages, or they can complete this task individually. Give students the remainder of the lesson to read their allocated pages to form a summary that includes 4 main events or facts of each page. It would be helpful to photocopy the pages relevant for each student so they can highlight the text.

Suggested page allocations:

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Coming of Strangers 1833• Gloom Time 1893• The Queen's Visit 1954	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First European Settlement 1843• The Town Gets a Railway 1905• Show Day 1969	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gold Rush 1855• 1918 Armistice Night – The War is Over• Bushfire Summer 1983	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boom Time 1866• The Great Depression• Christmas Time 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flood 1870• Wartime 1939-45

Group Activity: Next lesson, students will join a new group to share their summaries. The new groups should contain one student from each previous group so they are all sharing summaries on different pages. Give

groups time to go through the 14 pages in historical order, with each student sharing the summary that they wrote for their allocated page.

Reflection: Put the pages up in chronological order on the classroom wall. You might like to choose one summary to display with each page, use all students' summaries, or only include key words below each page.

LESSON 2

Learning Intention: To identify the purpose and genre of the text, *Country Town*.

Success Criteria:

- ★ I can provide an opinion of the author's purpose and support my opinion using evidence from the text
- ★ I can use characteristic features from the text to determine its genre
- ★ I can acknowledge another's point of view and form a discussion around the topic

Tune In: Play a quick game of stand up, sit down. Flick through the book to a random page and ask students to stand up when a page is shown that they were allocated last lesson. Ask students to pair up and take turns explaining what the text is about in under 1 minute.

Class activity: Revise the different reasons an author may write a book; to entertain, inform or persuade. Ask students to think about an example of a text from each category. Then pose the question; what was the author's purpose for this text? Give students time to think before asking them to put their hand up to signify which purpose they chose. Allow students time to debate with others that think differently. Encourage students to use evidence from the text in their argument.

For example: Students may argue the text aims to entertain as it is an imaginary town that tells the story of characters and their experiences. They may also argue the text wants to inform the reader of the history of Australia due to the number of factual events included. Some students may even argue that it is a tool to persuade readers to sympathise and understand the experiences of Aboriginal Australians.

Repeat this activity, but debating if the text is a fiction or non-fiction text.

Reflection: Students to write their final thoughts as a paragraph in their workbook. Outlining their opinion of the author's purpose and the text genre, providing evidence from the text.

LESSON 3

Learning Intention: To compare and contrast this text, *Country Town*, with *Window* by Jeanie Baker.

Success Criteria:

- ★ I can compare and contrast texts by analysing the use of illustrations
- ★ I can compare and contrast texts by identifying similar storylines and ideas
- ★ I can compare and contrast texts by identifying the author's purpose

Tune In: Ask the class if you can tell a story without using any words? Let the students discuss before reading *Window* by Jeanie Baker.

Class Activity: What did the students notice? What was the story about? Prompt the students to see the story as a timeline throughout someone's life and predict what is happening at the end of the story with the 'for sale' sign in the distance. Create a conversation in the classroom with the prompt; How is this book similar and different to *Country Town*? Give students time to discuss amongst themselves. Take a few answers and model how to put them into a Venn diagram on the board. *Window* on one side, *Country Town* on the other, with the similarities in the cross section.

Individual Activity: Students spend time individually or in pairs using the prior discussion to springboard ideas to fill in their own Venn diagram with the similarities and differences in the text. Prompt the students to consider the author's purposes, the genre, the message, the illustrations, and the effect on the land.

Reflection: Students can put one of their similarities or differences onto a sticky note and add it to the class Venn diagram on the board from the beginning of the lesson.

LESSON 4

Learning Intention: To create an innovation on the text Country Town from a student's own perspective.

Success Criteria:

- ★ I can create an innovation on text from my own perspective
- ★ I can consider others perspectives through my storytelling
- ★ I can write a meaningful text that I can share with others to help enrich their understanding

Tune In: Get students engaged by posing these questions and giving them time to ponder and discuss. Ask the students if they know anyone who was in this classroom last year? What about the year before? 10 years ago? Before this classroom was here, what did it look like? What did this very spot look like before the school was here? What about before the suburb was here? What about before British Colonists were here?

Class Activity: Go back in time with your students. You can either prepare information beforehand, let the students research set questions, or even have guests come in to speak about milestones they have witnessed in the history of the suburb. Ensure you learn which Indigenous land the school is built on and the name of the people who live/lived on the land.

Individual Activity: Once you have looked at the history of the school and the land, give students prepared prompts and years for each page and have them create an innovation on text of Country Town. Authoring and illustrating pages from key years in history from the place your classroom is set.

Reflection: You may like to bind the pages as a book for the students to take home and share with their family, or share the history of the school and the student's texts at an assembly.

GEOGRAPHY LESSON

Learning Intention: Analyse the effects of British settlement on the natural resources in Australia.

Success Criteria:

- ★ I understand that vegetation plays a vital role for animals and people
- ★ I can explain the impact European settlement had on the land and natural resources
- ★ I can compare the landscapes before and after European settlement

Tune In: Go for a walk around the school, looking for ways that natural resources are being utilised. You might see trees being used for shade, a cubby house made out of branches, a vegetable patch, birds maintaining the grass. When you get back to the classroom ask students if they could live off the land the school is located on. Why? Why not?

Class Activity: Together, look at the first image in the book and spot all of the ways that the Indigenous people are living off the land's natural resources. Point out the wood being carved to use as a boat, wood being used for shelter, fire wood, animals being hunted for food and their skins being used as clothing, the stream providing a place to wash, water to drink and fish to eat, as well as plants being used a medicine.

Individual Activity: Pose questions to students and ask them to provide a written response, then give them time to share in pairs, small groups or together as a class.

- If European settlers hadn't arrived on this land, would it look any different over time?
- Why do you think British settlers chose to place a town on this land?
- In the images we see many trees being cut down. What do you think the effect of that is?
- Do you think the land could ever go back to how it was at the start of the book?

Allow students time to pose any further questions to the class to ponder.

Reflection: Ask students to look out the window and imagine what this land would have looked like before European settlers arrived.

HISTORY LESSON 1

Learning Intention: We are learning to be mindful that history is told from perspectives.

Success Criteria:

- ★ I can understand historical events from a range of perspectives
- ★ I can compare and contrast different perspectives of an event
- ★ I can see how the country town has been affected over time by various events

Tune In: Read [ABC News article](#) regarding Captain James Cook's landing journals being contested by Aboriginal leaders.

Class Activity: Most of the history we know is written from a European perspective, and it is only recently that we have realised how important it is to hear Australian history from First Nations people.

Discuss these passages from various European explorer/settler's journals. You may need to rewrite them as a class in simpler language.

Individual Activity: Challenge the students to write a journal entry of each event from an Indigenous perspective.

Entry 1: 30 April, 1770 Captain Cook's Journal

As Soon as the Wooders and Waterers were come on board to Dinner 10 or 12 of the Natives came to the watering place, and took away their Canoes that lay there, but did not offer to touch any one of our Casks that had been left ashore; and in the afternoon 16 or 18 of them came boldly up to within 100 yards of our people at the watering place, and there made a stand. Mr. Hicks, who was the Officer ashore, did all in his power to intice them to him by offering them presents; but it was to no purpose, all they seem'd to want was for us to be gone. After staying a Short time they went away. They were all Arm'd with Darts and wooden Swords; the darts have each 4 prongs, and pointed with fish bones. Those we have seen seem to be intended more for striking fish than offensive Weapons; neither are they poisoned, as we at first thought.

Entry 2: Explorers Hovell and Hume tell of meeting a group of women and children:

The children were engaged in play, throwing small spears, formed of reeds, at a circular piece of bark, about a foot in diameter, while it was rolling along the ground; and the women were employed in spinning the native flax, one of whom, (an old woman,) gave immediate notice of their approach, crying out white man! white man! minija! minija! which in the language of the natives of the Murrumbidgee, would imply "make haste, make haste" when the whole party rose, and in a few minutes disappeared.

Entry 3: 23rd August, 1770 Captain Cook's Journal:

From what I have said of the Natives of New Holland they may appear to some to be the most wretched people upon earth, but in reality they are far more happier than we Europeans; being wholly unacquainted not only with the superfluous but the necessary conveniencies so much sought after in Europe, they are happy in not knowing the use of them. They live in a Tranquillity which is not disturb'd by the Inequality of the Condition

Reflection: Ask students to share their journal entries with the class.

HISTORY LESSON 2

Learning Intention: We are learning about historical dates and events that are significant to Indigenous Australians.

Success Criteria:

- ★ I can recall significant events from Australian history
- ★ I understand how major Australian events impacted Indigenous Australians
- ★ I can research a historical event using technology

Tune In: Ask students what is a significant event in their year? Does everyone have the same significant events or celebrate them the same way?

Class Activity: As a class, look through the text again, but only reading the passages that relate to the Aboriginal Australians perspective during each historical event. As you read through, students take turns to write a summary of each passage. The summaries can be placed below the timeline of events on your classroom wall.

Passages to read: All of River Camp 1822, All of The Coming of Strangers 1833, 'An explorers' tree' and 'A different attitude to Country' page 10, 'Who owns the land?' First European Settlement 1843, 'What about the rest of the mob?' Gold Rush 1855, first paragraph Flood 1870, 'Missions and reserves' page 21, 'The stolen generations' page 35, 'Boxer Muir' and 'Rosie's little girl' The Queen's Visit 1954, 'First Nation People's rights' Show Day 1969, 'First Nations People back in town' Christmas Time 2018.

Individual Activity: Students can research other historical events that are significant to Indigenous Australians. It would be appropriate to add these to your classroom timeline. Students may research dates or events such as Mabo Day, 1967 Referendum, Anniversary of National Apology Day etc.

Reflection: Students share the date or event they researched with a small group or pair.

CURRICULUM LINKS

The curriculum links below are taken from the Australian Curriculum version 8.4 and are included to inform teachers' planning and reporting.

Year Level	Strand	Content Descriptor
Year 4	Language	Explore the effect of choices when framing an image, placement of elements in the image, and salience on composition of still and moving images in a range of types of texts (ACELA1496)
Year 4	Literacy	Identify characteristic features used in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to meet the purpose of the text (ACELY1690)
Year 4	Literacy	Identify characteristic features used in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to meet the purpose of the text (ACELY1690 - Scootle)
Year 4	Literature	Discuss literary experiences with others, sharing responses and expressing a point of view (ACELT1603)
Year 4	Literature	Make connections between the ways different authors may represent similar storylines, ideas and relationships (ACELT1602)
Year 4	Literature	Discuss literary experiences with others, sharing responses and expressing a point of view (ACELT1603)
Year 4	Geography	The importance of environments, including natural vegetation, to animals and people (ACHASSK088)
Year 4	History	The nature of contact between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and others, for example, the Macassans and the Europeans, and the effects of these interactions on, for example, people and environments (ACHASSK086)
Year 5	Literacy	Use comprehension strategies to analyse information, integrating and linking ideas from a variety of print and digital sources (ACELY1703)

Year 5	Literacy	Navigate and read texts for specific purposes applying appropriate text processing strategies, for example predicting and confirming, monitoring meaning, skimming and scanning (ACELY1702)
Year 5	Literacy	Identify and explain characteristic text structures and language features used in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to meet the purpose of the text (ACELY1701)
Year 5	Literature	Create literary texts that experiment with structures, ideas and stylistic features of selected authors (ACELT1798)
Year 5	Geography	The influence of people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, on the environmental characteristics of Australian places (ACHASSK112)
Year 5	History	The impact of a significant development or event on an Australian colony (ACHASSK108)
Year 6	Literature	Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1613)
Year 6	Literature	Analyse and evaluate similarities and differences in texts on similar topics, themes or plots (ACELT1614)
Year 6	Literature	Identify, describe, and discuss similarities and differences between texts, including those by the same author or illustrator, and evaluate characteristics that define an author's individual style (ACELT1616)
Year 6	Literature	Create literary texts that adapt or combine aspects of texts students have experienced in innovative ways (ACELT1618)
Year 6	Literacy	Use interaction skills, varying conventions of spoken interactions such as voice volume, tone, pitch and pace, according to group size, formality of interaction and needs and expertise of the audience (ACELY1816)
Year 6	Literacy	Analyse how text structures and language features work together to meet the purpose of a text (ACELY1711)