

Teacher's Notes for Outback Wonder



Book: Outback Wonder

Author: Juliet M Sampson

Publisher: Brolga Publishing

Novel: Young Adult

Answers aren't always in obvious places.

Inspiration from the author Juliet M Sampson:



Outback Wonder was inspired by my love of travelling. I've visited all the continents in the world except Antarctica. Born in suburban Melbourne, I've always been a city girl. However I like to see and experience new places. I've travelled to many parts of Australia and one of my trips was to the Outback. This is where the inspiration started for the book. Set in South Australia, Hannah is left with no choice but to visit her father in the Flinders Ranges when circumstances arise that are out of her control. She searches for answers.

Outback Wonder allows readers to find out more about this remote area in Australia. I love Australia and in my opinion the outback has much to offer.

Being a teacher, I know how important it is for students to learn about different areas and environments. *Outback Wonder* takes readers to places such as the Flinders Ranges, Wilpena Pound, Arkaroola and Coober Pedy.

The story offers insights into lifestyle, environment, Australian flora and fauna. Also there are references to mining and opals, Lake Eyre, the Dog Fence, the Sturt Desert Pea, Hans Heysen, the Royal flying Doctor service and war.

Outback Wonder is more than just travelling to an area. The story allows readers to be reminded that *Answers aren't always in obvious places.*

Juliet M Sampson

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Themes: self-discovery, environment, relationships, adventure, travel, friendship, trust and romance.

Age range: 12 +

The teacher's notes are appropriate for Year 9 and 10

Curriculum Area: English

Additional notes from the author: *Outback Wonder*

Outback Wonder can be studied in Year 9 and 10, a match for the English curriculum. The story can be linked to the environment in regard to regions, land use, flora and fauna. Later in the notes, there are suggested questions and activities linked to the Australian Curriculum.

When teaching, I understand it's important for students to learn about different ways text can be used. This can be achieved through characters' voices and using various forms of communication, for example, letter writing.

Outback Wonder is suitable for 12 +. The suggested questions and activities can be adapted to cater for the appropriate age group.

However, the teacher's notes have been set for Year 9 and 10.

Outback Wonder is also a book for anyone who loves to travel and learn something new.

I hope you enjoy the story and find some wonder in the pages.

General questions for Outback Wonder.

For everyone to use:

(Readers, book clubs, librarians, parents, grandparents, teachers and anyone who loves books.)

Further in the notes, there will be questions and activities linked to the Australian Curriculum for teachers to use.

Question 1: At the beginning of the book, how does Hannah seem to feel about her parents' separation?

Question 2: In what ways does Hannah deal with her parents' separation?

Question 3: What does Hannah's mother do to help Hannah cope with the separation?

Question 4: How has Hannah and her father Jake's relationship been challenged/affected when he moves to the Outback?

Question 5: How is city life different from Outback living?

Question 6: Do you think Hannah has developed trust issues? If so, why?

Question 7: Do you think Hannah has lost her sense of belonging? If so, why?

Question 8: Why is it important to conserve water especially in areas like the Outback?

Question 9: In what ways can people conserve water?

Question 10: What is the purpose of the Dog Fence?

Question 11: What is the name of the place where they mine for opals?

Question 12: What is the name of the flower that represents South Australia? What does it look like?

Question 13: What service does the Royal Flying Doctors provide?

Question 14: What happens to opals?

Question 15: Name some animals that are listed in the book.

Question 16: Do you think Sam has been a good influence on Hannah? If so, why?

Question 17: What has Hannah learnt about the Outback that she did not know at the start of the story?

Question 18: How does Hannah's initial reaction to her parents separation at the beginning of the story change by the end of the book?

Question 19: How can the Outback be seen to have wonder?

Question 20: What lessons have you learnt from the book?

Question 21: Did you learn something new about Australia from reading *Outback Wonder*? If so, what?

Related to text

Question 1: How has the author played with text structure in the book?

Question 2: What language has the author used to develop character? Study each character's language.

Question 3: How has the author conveyed emotion in her characters?

General Activities for teachers to use with students for Outback Wonder

Activity 1: Compare the difference between city life and life in the outback.

Activity 2: Discuss how situations can impact on families for example, divorce, or changing jobs.

Activity 3: Discuss how you could support someone who is going through a bad time.

Activity 4: Find out about and discuss flora and fauna native to Australia.

Activity 5: Conduct a class debate about conserving water.

Activity 6: Study a map of the Outback and look at distances between places. Discuss the difficulties that may be encountered by living in remote areas.

Activity 7: As a class discuss what new facts and information students have learnt from reading *Outback Wonder*.

Activity 8: As a class discuss ways people can conserve water, be prepared for bushfires and know what to do to survive in the Outback.

Activity 9: In small groups, write a play based on living in Coober Pedy.

Activity 10: In small groups, find out about the flowers that represent each state of Australia. For example: What they look like.

English

Outback Wonder is founded in language, literature and literacy.

Year: Year 9 and Year 10

LINKING TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM FOR ENGLISH

QUESTIONS:

Question 1: How has Hannah and her Father Jake's relationship been challenged/affected when he moves to the Outback? (ACELA 1551) = roles and relationships

Activity: Discuss with the students how Hannah may feel about her parents' separation.

Question: What does Hannah's mother do to help Hannah cope with the separation?

For example, discuss seeing a psychologist.

Reference: *Outback Wonder*: Page 3

Question 2: How has the author played with text structure in the book?

Text structure and organisation (ACELA 1553)

Text can be used in different ways and formats. There are many examples of this in *Outback Wonder*. For example: questionnaire sheet, memories, text messages, emails and letters.

Punctuation is used with layout and font variations in constructing texts for different audiences and purposes. (ACELA1556)

Question 2a: How has the author played with text structure in the book?

Questionnaire

Activity: Study the text used when Hannah is answering questions for the psychologist on how she is feeling.

Reference: *Outback Wonder*: Page 3

Example:

Hannah grabbed a pen and paper.

Are you in a happy mood?

No, she scribbled on the paper.

Are you sleeping well?

Not really

Text is in bold for questions and italics for answers.

Question: Why has the author used this format?

Question 2b: How has the author played with text structure in the book?

Text structure and organisation (ACELA 1553)

Punctuation is used with layout and font variations in constructing texts for different audiences and purposes. (ACELA1556)

Memory

Activity: Study the text used to show Hannah's bitter memory of the morning her father left.

Reference: *Outback Wonder*: Page 4

Example:

'Dad, where are you going?

'We'll talk about this later.'

'Where's Mum?'

'She's gone to work.'

'I didn't hear her leave.'

'Can't talk now. I'm in a hurry.'

Question: Why has the author used this format?

Study the characters of Hannah and Jake. What emotions are shown?

Question 2c: How has the author played with text structure in the book?

Text structure and organisation (ACELA 1553)

Punctuation is used with layout and font variations in constructing texts for different audiences and purposes. (ACELA1556)

Text Message

Activity: Study the text used to show a text message sent to Maria.

Reference: *Outback Wonder*: Page 18

Example:

Hi Maria, there's something I need to tell you. I've been struggling with this for a while now.

Question: Why has the author used this format?

Question: Why do you think Hannah decided to send Maria a text instead of speaking to her face to face?

Question 2d: How has the author played with text structure in the book?

Text structure and organisation (ACELA 1553)

Punctuation is used with layout and font variations in constructing texts for different audiences and purposes. (ACELA1556)

Email

Activity: Study the text used to show an email sent to Hannah from her father.

Reference: *Outback Wonder*: Page 19

Example:

Hey Hannah,
Sorry I've not been in touch. I've got a job and I'm working in the Flinders Ranges.

Question: Why has the author used this format?

Question 2e: How has the author played with text structure in the book?

Text structure and organisation (ACELA 1553)

Punctuation is used with layout and font variations in constructing texts for different audiences and purposes. (ACELA1556)

Letter

Activity: Study the text used to show a letter written by Hannah to her father.

Reference: *Outback Wonder*: Page 197

Example:

Dear Dad,

Were the first words that appeared on the page.

I never really understood why you walked out that day.

Question: Why has the author used this format?

Question 3: What language has been used by the author to develop character? Study each character's language.

For example:

Jake's vocabulary

Cherub when referring to Hannah

Righty-o

Question 4: How has the author conveyed emotion in her characters?

Activities: Look at different dialogues. Study the words and punctuation.

(ACELA1556) punctuation for audiences and purposes

Reference: *Outback Wonder*: Page 49 Discussion between Hannah and Jake

Example:

‘That’s a big step.’

‘I forgot how short you are.’

‘Ha, ha, Dad.’

‘Just kidding. I’ve missed you Hannah.’

‘Missed you too Dad. Mum’s been so stressed with her new job.’ Hannah gazed out the window. Her eyes began to water.

‘New job!’ her dad inquired.’

Question: Why has an explanation mark been used?

Question: What words have been used to stir emotion in the dialogue?

Question 5: How is city life different from outback living? Look at lifestyle. (ACELT 1639) Compare and Evaluate.

Activity: Students discuss and write about the difference between city and outback life linked to *Outback Wonder* and what they have learnt.

For example: The difference in travel. Small planes.

City= Hospital easy access

Outback= Royal Flying Doctors

Activity: Students are split into small groups with either city life or country life as the topic. They discuss the benefits of the topic they have been allocated. Then they plan, rehearse and deliver presentations to the class about their ideas. The most convincing groups are selected and then a class debate is organised by the teacher. (ACELY1741)

Activity: Discuss what Hannah learnt about the Outback that she did not know at the start of the story. Identify in the text where these moments happened. What or who may have influenced her.

Question 6: What is your personal opinion about conserving water? (ACELT1640) Personal responses to ideas. (Year 10)

Activity: Student’s discuss and write about their personal opinions related to conserving water.

Question 7: At the beginning of the book, how does Hannah seem to feel about her parents’ separation?

Activity: Compare Hannah’s initial reaction to her parents’ separation at the beginning of the story and then how her ideas, opinions and thoughts change about her situation at the end of the book.

Question 8: What have you learned about one of the following topics mentioned in *Outback Wonder*?

Activity: Students choose from the following list

- Coober Pedy
- Mining
- Opals
- Dog Fence
- Sturt Desert Pea
- Lake Eyre
- Royal Flying Doctor Service

They create pieces of writing related to the topic they have chosen. In this piece, they need to consider the audience they are writing for and what way they will present the writing. For example, as a report, project, display poster, newspaper or magazine article. (ACELT1815) Creating literary texts (ACELY 1776) use range of software to create, edit and publish text.

Question 9: *Outback Wonder* is a fiction book. Can the book be considered as an educational text as well? (ACELY1749)Text in content

Activity: As a class identify references to education and further learning.

For example

Places: Coober Pedy, Lake Eyre, Flinders Ranges, Wilpena Pound, Arkaroola

Studying: Opals, Mining, Sturt Desert Pea, Kangaroos, Dog Fence, artist (Hans Heysen), Royal Flying Doctor Service

Questions 10: What is the purpose of writing a book review?

Question 11: What should be included when writing a book review? And what makes a good review?

Activity: Discuss what should be included when writing a book review? Look at different examples of book reviews in newspapers and online. Each student writes a book review for *Outback Wonder*. (ACELT1643)

Activity: Write a creative piece about the Outback from the viewpoint of an animal that lives there. Then type it in a word document or turn it into a slide show. Use pictures from clip art or the Internet to complete the work. (ACELY 1748)

Another note from the author:

Thank you for your interest in *Outback Wonder*.

Keep spreading sunshine and inspiration.

Best wishes,

Juliet

