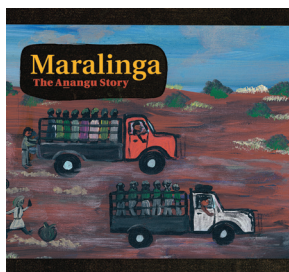


## *Maralinga: The Anangu Story*, by the Oak Valley and Yalata communities, with Christobel Mattingley



**TYPE OF TEXT:** NON-FICTION, PICTURE BOOK

**ORIGIN:** AUSTRALIA

**PUBLICATION DETAILS:** ALLEN AND UNWIN, 2009

**UNIT WRITTEN BY:** DEB MCPHERSON

### Text synopsis

*Maralinga: The Anangu Story* is a non-fiction picture book that is the result of a collaboration between two closely linked South Australian Aboriginal communities, Oak Valley and Yalata, and a popular children's author, Christobel Mattingley.

The story is about the Anangu—their history, their culture and the effects of nuclear weapons testing on their lands.

The Indigenous people of north-western South Australia call themselves 'Anangu', which simply means 'people'. European settlers called them the Pitjantjatjara, which is the name of the language they speak.

*Maralinga: The Anangu Story* begins with an Anangu account of the land, revealing their custodianship of and connection to it. Water (kapi) and food (kuka) were essential for their survival. They were experts at finding water and conserving food in a sometimes inhospitable land, and their survival depended on a willingness to share food and resources with each other.

The following chapters look at the invasion by European settlers, which is likened to a trail of termites that undermine the traditional Aboriginal lifestyle, and the coming of the railway. In these chapters, photographs and illustrations are used to augment the written text.

In 1918, Daisy Bates, an Irish-Australian woman who spent many years living with Indigenous communities, set up camp at Ooldea hoping to help the Anangu maintain their traditional way of life. However, by the 1930s she had concluded that most people were incapable of returning to their traditional lives as too much knowledge had been lost because of the disruption in lifestyles caused by European settlement.

In 1938, the United Aborigines Mission took over running the small existing mission at Ooldea and built a children's home to provide food and shelter to Aboriginal children. Individual people's stories are told against the backdrop of the establishment of the mission and the damaging environmental effects of the railway. The railway's steam engines used water from the Ooldea Soak, a natural water source. The Ooldea Soak was further depleted by the needs of the increasing mission population and railway staff along the line. Black oaks, which stabilised the dunes and provided shelter, were cut down to provide firewood, and introduced camels stripped the area around the soak.

In 1952, the United Aborigines Mission at Ooldea closed down. Lutheran missionaries went to Ooldea and moved most of the people to a new reserve and mission at Yalata. The closure coincided with the government's decision to revoke Ooldea's status as an Aboriginal reserve because of plans to allow British atomic weapons testing at Maralinga. Anangu were forced south to areas outside of their traditional lands.

In the 1950s, the British and Australian governments organised nuclear weapons testing in Maralinga, which is part of the Anangu's traditional lands. From 1955, the British conducted nuclear tests at Maralinga. The Anangu called fallout from the tests the 'black mist'. Not all of the people were moved to the safety of the new mission. Some Anangu families travelling through their land were unaware that the tests were taking place and were exposed to the radioactive fallout, which caused serious health problems. Many of the Anangu who were sent away to Yalata mission suffered homesickness for their tribal lands.

In 1984, a royal commission was set up to investigate the British nuclear tests in Australia. Many Anangu, who had suffered from the fallout and contamination and whose voices had not been heard before, gave compelling testimony. Anangu land was finally returned to the original owners, and some people could return to Oak Valley. They could finally resume the cycle of ceremonies that had been disrupted for thirty years.

The final chapter 'We Have Survived' ends with an optimistic message for the future, a message that is reinforced in the photograph of a rainbow stretching over the page. The words of Mr Minning, a respected elder, urge the Anangu to look ahead to better days: 'Don't look back or take wrong ways. Look forward. Teach the children. Teach the young fellas. Look and listen and learn. Be happy' (p. 66).

The Children's Book Council of Australia made *Maralinga: The Anangu Story* an Honour Book in 2010. *Maralinga: The Anangu Story* also won the NSW Premier's History Award (the Young People's History Prize) in 2010.

# Links to Australian Curriculum: English at Years 7/8

This unit covers the following strands and sub-strands of the *Australian Curriculum: English*.

The unit aims to enrich students' understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, and incorporates some of the general capabilities.

Language	Literature	Literacy
Language variation and change Language for interaction Text structure and organisation	Literature and context Responding to literature Examining literature Creating literature	Texts in context Interpreting, analysing and evaluating

Cross-curriculum priority links	General capability links
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures Sustainability	Literacy Critical and creative thinking Personal and social capability Ethical behaviour Intercultural understanding



# Features to consider

When you read or view a text, it is important to consider when and where the text was created (its background and context), and how the text is structured. These features help your understanding and analysis, and lead to a more informed evaluation and response.

## Background and context

To understand *Maralinga: The Anangu Story*, it helps to understand some of the history of Indigenous Australians. It is also beneficial to consider the collaborative way in which the book was created.

## History

*Maralinga: The Anangu Story* has to be read as part of the broader history of Indigenous Australians. Indigenous Australians have lived on the continent for at least 45 000 years and have strong associations with the land. The British settlers arrived in the 1770s and began the colonisation (through European eyes) or invasion (through Aboriginal eyes) of the continent.

Soon after settlement, Indigenous people started to lose traditional lands as British settlers seized land and water sources. Historical records show that the settlers even poisoned food and wells, and massacred Indigenous people. Conflict between the Aboriginal custodians of the land and the settlers increased. Aboriginal people were forced to flee to other lands or risk being murdered.



The Anangu's traditional lands cover much of north-western South Australia.



The Anangu land was an important part of the people's identity and rich with their stories and history. Their lands included most of the western third of South Australia, and extended across the border into the Northern Territory and west into Western Australia. As more settlers moved into their tribal lands, their waterholes were taken over and their way of life was undermined. As they were dispossessed of their traditional lands, the cultural and spiritual connections that they had with the land began to be severed.

In 1912, the construction of a railway linking Port Augusta, in South Australia, with Kalgoorlie, in Western Australia, began. As settlements sprang up along the route of the new railway, Indigenous communities across the Nullarbor Plain gradually became more reliant on the White population's commerce and charity.

Worse was to come. Between 1955 and 1963 the British government, with the permission of the Australian government, conducted secret nuclear tests on Anangu lands. For the Anangu, this meant that their lands were declared a prohibited area and they were forbidden from travelling across them. With such a vast area, not everyone was adequately warned to stay away, and Aboriginal people travelling through the desert lands were caught in the after-effects of the explosions. Aboriginal people were not the only people affected; the authorities underestimated the range and effects of the Maralinga fallout, and Australian and British service people and their families were contaminated by radiation.



Signs at the entrance to the Maralinga area warn of the radioactive contamination.

The McClelland Royal Commission in 1984–5 found that the British nuclear tests significantly contaminated the Anangu lands. In 1985 the land was handed back to the Anangu, and in 1995 the British government paid some compensation to the Anangu for the contamination of the land. Both the British and Australian governments made efforts to clean up the contaminated sites before the people were resettled there in 1995; however, the effectiveness of the clean-up is still a matter of debate.

Today about 4000 Anangu live scattered across their traditional lands in outstations and communities like Yalata and Oak Valley.

## Collaboration

Collaborations between writers, and between writers and illustrators, are nothing new; however, the scale of the collaboration in *Maralinga: The Anangu Story* makes it an impressive achievement. A whole Aboriginal community collaborated with one writer.

Christobel Mattingley is a well-known and respected author of more than forty children's books. She has also edited, researched and written books for adults, including *Survival in Our Own Land*, a history of the Aboriginal people of South Australia. Her work has earned her the trust and friendship of many in Indigenous communities.

Mattingley has always been interested in Aboriginal culture. In a 2009 interview with Tania McCartney for Australian Women Online, Mattingley said:

Since I was a child, I have always been interested in the Aboriginal people. I have always had a very strong sense about people in the landscape, and when my family moved near the Hawkesbury River, there were a lot of caves and Aboriginal rock art that caught my imagination. As a child, I used to spend all my pocket money on books about Aboriginal culture.



Christobel Mattingley



Members of the Oak Valley and Yalata communities—including Alice Cox, Margaret May, Pansy Woods, Mabel Queama, Marjorie Sandimar, Yvonne Edwards, Mima Smart and Janet May—worked as storytellers or translators. Groups of people from the Anangu communities met to plan, discuss and review the book's progress, and workshops were held to create the artworks.

As part of this democratic and collaborative process, the cover was decided through a vote by staff and students at the Yalata school. The dust jacket flaps show photographs of members from the Yalata and Oak Valley communities painting, discussing and voting on the cover to be chosen for the book. The caption says, 'We made this book together'.

Many voices tell this illustrated history of the Anangu: '*Maralinga: The Anangu Story* is our story. We have told it for our children, our grandchildren and their children. We have told it for you' (p. 66).

Some of the people involved in the creation of *Maralinga: The Anangu Story* appeared in an episode of *Message Stick*, an ABC television program that went to air on Sunday 18 October 2009. You can read a transcript of that program online.



Alice Cox is one member of the Yalata and Oak Valley communities who contributed to the stories in the book.

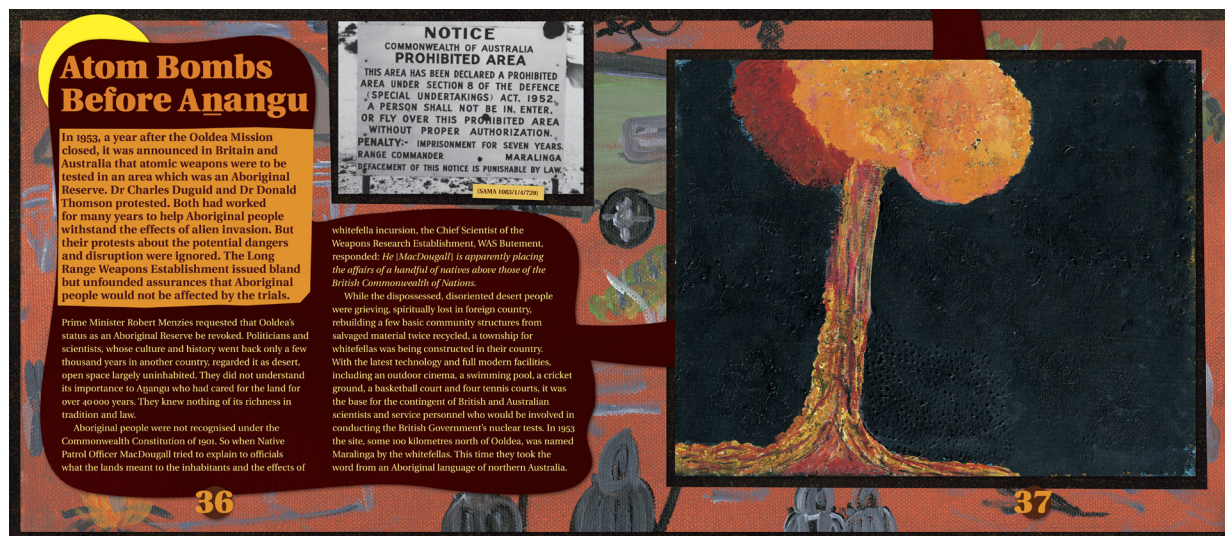
## Text structure

*Maralinga: The Anangu Story* is a picture book divided into nineteen chapters. The story of the Anangu is told chronologically—events are told in the order in which they happened. It begins with the story of the land and ends with the chapter ‘We Have Survived’, which tells of the survival of the people.

The last chapter is followed by a map of Aboriginal lands and a glossary. The glossary will help you to pronounce some of the Pitjantjatjara words used in the story. Pitjantjatjara is one of the dialects of the Western Desert Language, which is spoken by the Western Desert peoples, including the Anangu, and is the largest language group of Aboriginal Australia.

Each chapter has a heading and an introduction paragraph, which is made to stand out from the main text because it is written in brown text on a yellow-ochre background. This colour scheme is reversed in the main text. Quotations from Aboriginal community members are highlighted in vivid yellow. These earthy, natural colours reflect the palette of the desert land in which the Anangu live and are used to draw readers’ attention to important parts of the text.

The text is surrounded and illustrated by colourful images, paintings and drawings, as well as historical and contemporary photographs.



This example of a double-page spread from the book shows many features of the text’s structure.

In the double-page spread pictured above, you can see the structure of each chapter, with its heading, introduction, text and illustrations. The heading ‘Atom Bombs Before Anangu’ mostly covers and obscures a bright yellow sun, which represents the Anangu. A black-and-white photograph of a sign shows how the Commonwealth of Australia declared the Anangu tribal lands a prohibited area. The fiery illustration of a nuclear explosion is set against a dramatic black background. Framing the text and the illustration are figures of Aboriginal people grouped around a campfire, as if watching the explosion.

The heading text, ‘Atom Bombs Before Anangu’, implies the government of the day put the British and the Cold War weapons-testing program before the needs of the Aboriginal people.



## Interpreting, analysing, evaluating

Picture books are rich multimodal texts, combining words and images to convey a story. Picture books contain more than just text to interpret and evaluate.

When studying *Maralinga: The Anangu Story*, it is worth considering the point of view and the themes or messages that are being communicated through the words and images.

### Point of view

The narrative voice of a text is the point of view from which the story is told. Sometimes, more than one narrative voice or narrator tells a story, as in *Maralinga: The Anangu Story*, which is told from the perspective of a community of Aboriginal people. Many Anangu voices tell the tale, through documents, oral testimony, drawings and paintings.



Maralinga was the site of atomic bomb blasts in 1950s.



As the title indicates, this is the story of the Anangu's experiences of Maralinga. The events of Maralinga are seen through their eyes and not through the eyes of the government officials, scientists and soldiers who had parts to play in the nuclear tests. Even so, some non-Indigenous voices are heard, through memos, photographs and official statements. For example, in the chapter 'Fallout: The Black Mist', the text refers to a memo senior scientists sent to Robert Menzies, who was prime minister of Australia in 1952. In the memo, the scientists state that 'no habitations or living beings will suffer injury to health from the effects of the atomic explosions' (p. 39). This statement is proven false by the subsequent explanation of the effects of the atomic explosions' fallout—or 'black mist'—on Indigenous people in the fallout area.

The general description of the effects of the fallout—the illness and deaths—is then further corroborated by first-hand accounts from individual Anangu of their personal experiences of the deadly contamination. The Anangu Eileen Brown, Kukika and Kanginy were interviewed by anthropologists, and they recalled the deaths of family members after the explosions. Many Anangu gave testimony at the McClelland Royal Commission.

Yami Lester, a ten-year-old boy at the time of the explosions, recalls in his autobiography the time 'the ground shook and a black mist came up from the south and covered our camp' (p. 39), and he tells of his blindness and others' sight problems that followed their exposure.

The cumulative effect of individual people's stories and voices, raised in outcry against injustice, is powerful.

## Themes

The themes of a text are the text's big ideas, such as justice, love or betrayal. Sometimes such themes are obvious. In other texts, they are more subtle or understated. In *Maralinga: The Anangu Story*, the central themes are clearly evident: injustice and survival.

Injustice is shown in the authorities' failure to consider the wellbeing of the Indigenous people, the poor treatment of the Anangu who were caught in the fallout, the expulsion of the Anangu from their traditional lands, and the damage to people's health and to the land.

The theme of survival is shown through the inspiring stories of how the Anangu proved resilient and fought for acknowledgement of the wrongs suffered. They fought for the return of ownership of their traditional lands and to be able to live at Oak Valley again. The penultimate (second to last) paragraph and accompanying picture of a rainbow arching over the lands send a message of survival and hope: 'Don't look back or take wrong ways. Look forward. Teach the children. Teach the young fellas. Look and listen and learn. Be happy' (p. 66).

In a 2009 interview with Tania McCartney for Australian Women Online, co-author Mattingley said:

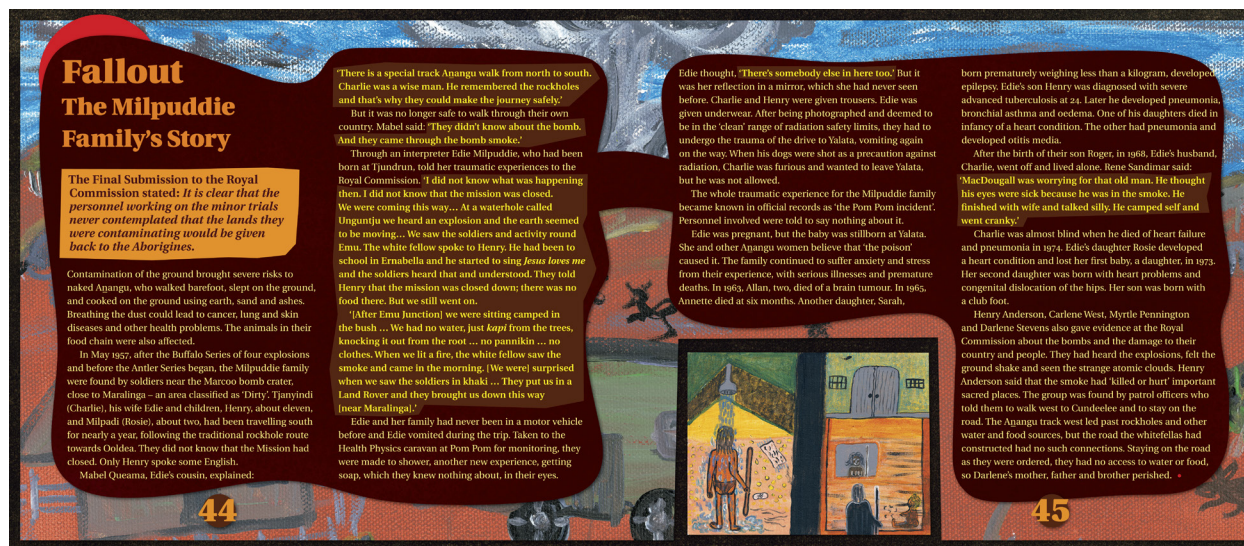
I hope [the book] brings into recognition the terrible injustices against these people. The Maralinga land is a poison chalice and they are still suffering. The land is heavily contaminated and the health of the Aboriginal people both in and around Maralinga is still very badly affected.

Until people understand the deep spiritual relationship that Aboriginal people have with their land, we can never understand the pain and the suffering that our occupation of this land has caused.

# Text extract

Considering a selected extract of a text in more detail can assist you to better understand the text as a whole.

The following extract is just after the chapter about the explosion of the atomic bombs and the appearance of the black mist. Here, readers learn about the fate of the Anangu who are caught in the fallout. The Milpuddie family unknowingly walked into a nuclear zone. They were following the traditional journeys of their tribe. They were unaware of the tests and did not know that their traditional lands had been proclaimed prohibited areas.



## Fallout: The Milpuddie family's story

The Final Submission to the Royal Commission stated: 'It is clear that the personnel working on the minor trials never contemplated that the lands they were contaminating would be given back to the Aborigines.'

*Contamination of the ground brought severe risks to naked Anangu, who walked barefoot, slept on the ground, and cooked on the ground using earth, sand and ashes. Breathing the dust could lead to cancer, lung and skin diseases and other health problems. The animals in their food chain were also affected.*

In May 1957, after the Buffalo Series of four explosions and before the Antler Series began, the Milpuddie family were found by soldiers near the Marcoo bomb crater, close to Maralinga—an area classified as 'Dirty'. Tjanyindi (Charlie), his wife Edie and children, Henry, about eleven, and Milpadi (Rosie), about two, had been travelling south for nearly a year, following the traditional rockhole route towards Ooldea. They did not know that the Mission had closed. Only Henry spoke some English.

Mabel Queama, Edie's cousin, explained: 'There is a special track Anangu walk from north to south. Charlie was a wise man. He remembered the rockholes and that's why they could make the journey safely.'

But it was no longer safe to walk through their own country. Mabel said: 'They didn't know about the bomb. And they came through the bomb smoke.'

Through an interpreter Edie Milpuddie, who had been born at Tjundrun, told her traumatic experiences to the Royal Commission. 'I did not know what was happening then. I did not know that the mission was closed. We were coming this way ... At a waterhole called Unguntju we heard an explosion and the earth seemed to be moving ... We saw the soldiers and activity round Emu. The white fellow spoke to Henry. He had been to school in Ernabella and he started to sing *Jesus loves me* and the soldiers heard that and understood. They told Henry that the mission was closed down; there was no food there. But we still went on.

'[After Emu Junction] we were sitting camped in the bush ... We had no water, just *kapi* from the trees, knocking it out from the root ... no pannikin ... no clothes. When we lit a fire the white fellow saw the smoke and came in the morning. [We were] surprised when we saw the soldiers in khaki ... They put us in a Land Rover and they brought us down this way [near Maralinga].'

Edie and her family had never been in a motor vehicle before and Edie vomited during the trip. Taken to the Health Physics caravan at Pom Pom for monitoring, they were made to shower, another new experience, getting soap, which they knew nothing about, in their eyes.

Edie thought, 'There's somebody else in here too.' But it was her reflection in a mirror, which she had never seen before. Charlie and Henry were given trousers. Edie was given underwear. After being photographed and deemed to be in the 'clean' range of radiation safety limits, they had to undergo the trauma of the drive to Yalata, vomiting again on the way. When his dogs were shot as a precaution against radiation, Charlie was furious and wanted to leave Yalata, but he was not allowed.

The whole traumatic experience for the Milpuddie family became known in official records as 'the Pom Pom incident'. Personnel involved were told to say nothing about it.

Edie was pregnant, but the baby was stillborn at Yalata. She and other Anangu women believe that 'the poison' caused it. The family continued to suffer anxiety and stress from their experience, with serious illnesses and premature deaths. In 1963, Allan, two, died of a brain tumour. In 1965, Annette died at six months. Another daughter, Sarah, born prematurely weighing less than a kilogram, developed epilepsy. Edie's son Henry was diagnosed with severe advanced tuberculosis at 24. Later he developed pneumonia, bronchial asthma and oedema. One of his daughters died in infancy of a heart condition. The other had pneumonia and developed otitis media.

After the birth of their son Roger in 1968, Edie's husband, Charlie, went off and lived alone. Rene Sandimar said: 'MacDougall was worrying for that old man. He thought his eyes were sick because he was in the smoke. He finished with wife and talked silly. He camped self and went cranky.'

Charlie was almost blind when he died of heart failure and pneumonia in 1974. Edie's daughter Rosie developed a heart condition and lost her first baby, a daughter, in 1973. Her second daughter was born with heart problems and congenital dislocation of the hips. Her son was born with a club foot.

Henry Anderson, Carlene West, Myrtle Pennington and Darlene Stevens also gave evidence at the Royal Commission about the bombs and the damage to their country and people. They had heard the explosions, felt the ground shake and seen the strange atomic clouds. Henry Anderson said the smoke had 'killed or hurt' important sacred places. The group was found by the patrol officers who told them to walk west to Cundeelee and to stay on the road. The Anangu track west led past rockholes and other water and food sources, but the road the whitefellas had constructed had no such connections. Staying on the road as they were ordered, they had no access to water or food, so Darlene's mother, father and brother perished. (pp. 44-5)

## Features to consider in this extract

The extract's blend of images and text, including quotations, shows the cultural ignorance and attitudes to Indigenous Australians in the 1950s. Eyewitness accounts, many of them given during the McClelland Royal Commission, tell the individual stories of Indigenous people.

### Cultural ignorance

'I did not know what was happening then' (p. 44), Edie told the Royal Commission. In May 1957, the Milpuddie family had been travelling south across their tribal lands for nearly a year when they unknowingly walked through the atomic test site. Edie and Charlie speak no English; the family has had almost no exposure to non-Indigenous Australian culture. The family had never been in a motor vehicle, an experience Edie finds overwhelming and physically sickening.

The childlike drawings of the shower and bathroom mirror reflect the huge cultural gap between the Anangu and the non-Indigenous soldiers. Edie's belief that someone else is in the bathroom—'There's somebody else in here too' (p. 45)—is captured in the illustration that shows her staring at her own reflection for the first time. The family is forced to shower with soap, something they have never seen or used before, and it stings their eyes. In the illustration, one of the Milpuddie family is shown standing with walking stick in hand near the discarded soap as the unfamiliar shower rains down.

The family has no say in what happens to them as they are taken for health checks, photographed and moved far away. For a family unfamiliar with the soldiers' ways, being picked up and taken for health checks, before being taken far from their traditional lands to Yalata and watching their dogs shot, would have been confronting and frightening. Unless an interpreter was there to help, the soldiers might not even have been able to explain all the Milpuddie family's new and traumatic experiences.

The non-Indigenous soldiers would have had little knowledge of Aboriginal ways or language. Not knowing that the family were unused to them, they might not have thought to explain simple things like soap.

The military personnel's ignorance of Aboriginal culture is also shown in the soldiers' order to the group that includes Henry Anderson. When the soldiers tell the group to keep to the road as they walk west, they would not have known that these instructions would keep the group from their traditional sources of food and water, and lead to the deaths of several of the group.

Consider what would happen if non-Indigenous people were placed in the Anangu world. It would be interesting to see how well they would survive in an inhospitable terrain that requires expert survival skills and knowledge of the land.

## Eyewitness accounts and individual stories

More than twenty-five years after the Milpuddie family's traumatic experiences, Edie gave evidence at the McClelland Royal Commission. Her experiences and those of other Anangu caught in the fallout were part of the commission's witness testimony.

The royal commission, named for James McClelland who led the investigations, was set up to investigate the British government's use of Australian territory and personnel for the testing of nuclear weapons. The royal commission's investigation took place decades after the testing, a delay that could have been because of the government's desire to cover up evidence of incompetence. Or, the delay might have been because of changing attitudes towards the British–Australian relationship, and towards the rights of the Aboriginal and ex-service people who were exposed to the fallout as the effects became clearer over time.

The Milpuddie family's litany of diseases, defects and deaths might have remained unexamined if not for the royal commission. Through an interpreter, Edie Milpuddie tells the story of her family's year-long journey along the traditional rockhole route from the north to an area near the site of an atomic test explosion. Edie's testimony, originally in her language, conveys her incomprehension: 'We heard an explosion and the earth seemed to be moving' (p. 44). Edie remembers they were bewildered and overcome by the experiences of being in a motor vehicle and having their health checked. Rene Sandimar, another Anangu, recalls how Charlie Milpuddie's 'eyes were sick because he was in the smoke' (p. 45).

The direct testimony, coloured bright yellow in the text, is interspersed with details supplied from other people's testimony, including comments on the effects of the contaminated ground on the barefoot Anangu and on the animals in their food chain.

The first-hand accounts from people directly affected by the atomic fallout provide powerful descriptions. Part of the success of this book is because people tell their own stories in their own words. The injustice they experienced is communicated directly to readers.



# OVER TO YOU

## 1 Collage

*Maralinga: The Anangu Story* contains beautiful artwork, all created by members of the Yalata and Oak Valley communities.

Working in small groups, look at the images in the text. Using the text's images as inspiration, create a collage that reflects the book's themes and your response to the text.

You could use digital images or collect and cut out pictures from magazines, newspapers and advertising material. Consider adding relevant written text to the collage.

The results can be posted on the school's intranet or displayed in the classroom.

## 2 Timeline and map

Working in groups, create a timeline that shows the main events mentioned in *Maralinga: The Anangu Story*.

To accompany the timeline, create a map of the area. Annotate all the places mentioned in the text. Your annotations should state when the Indigenous people were there and the length of time they stayed.

## 3 Symbols

Eleanor Coerr's book *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* is the true story of a young girl who lived in Hiroshima when the United States of America exploded an atomic bomb over the city towards the end of World War II. Sadako Sasaki was two years old on 6 August 1945 when the bomb exploded. Ten years later, she died, aged twelve, from leukaemia caused by radiation exposure.

An old Japanese story tells how anyone who folds a thousand origami paper cranes can ask for a gift from the gods. Paper cranes became a symbol of peace in Japan and around the world, and Sadako and her friends folded them in hospital. The Children's Peace Monument in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park is a statue of Sadako holding a golden crane, and the plaque at the foot of the statue reads: 'This is our cry. This is our prayer. Peace in the world.'

- a Like Sadako, Aboriginal people in South Australia suffered from radiation contamination. Read Sadako's story and compare it to that of the Aboriginal people near Maralinga.
- b What symbol would you use to represent the suffering and struggle of the Aboriginal people? Consider the Japanese paper crane symbol and the wording of the plaque, and look at examples of Aboriginal art. Then, create an appropriate symbol and a short statement to represent the events of Maralinga.

## 4 Digital story

Imagine that you are an Anangu artist, dancer, storyteller, hunter or gatherer, and tell a story about a day in your life.

Make your story into a digital story by combining written text, images, voice-over and sound effects. Limit your text to 250 words, 10–15 images and a viewing time of three minutes.

To help you write your story, you may need to do some research to add to the information from *Maralinga: The Anangu Story*.

Alternatively, create an illustrated story using hand-drawn images, and read out your text to the class.

## 5 Imaginative re-creation

Imagine that the government of the United States of America approached our government, asking to conduct nuclear tests on Australian soil in **2020**.

Working with a partner, answer the following questions:

- a** What sort of media reaction would you expect? Would you expect the reaction today to be different from when the British government proposed nuclear testing in the 1950s?
- b** Write a for-and-against list of reasons why the Australian government should and should not agree to the proposal. Be prepared to share your list with the class.

## 6 Comic book adaptation

Sometimes you can gain more insight into a text if you transform its message into another medium. Select a section of text from *Maralinga: The Anangu Story* and adapt it into a comic book.

You can use an iPhone or iPad app like Comic Book for this task. Comic Book is a simple app that allows you to use images to create a comic strip or graphic novel, and you can add special effects, captions and stickers.



# Texts to take you further: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

All Australians can benefit from learning more about the cultures that existed on this continent thousands of years before European settlement. It is pleasing to see the wide and increasing range of Indigenous literature available today—from songs and poetry, to novels and memoirs.

*Maralinga: The Anangu Story* tells a story of Aboriginal people's endurance in the face of devastating nuclear explosions and indifferent reactions from the Australian and British governments.

*The Binna Binna Man*, by Meme McDonald and Boori Monty Pryor, paints a rich picture of Aboriginal culture and experience, and explores the topics of adolescence, ancestors, families and identity.

To explore Aboriginal history and investigate how that history has been represented, you could consider well-researched fictional accounts, like Jackie French's *Nanberry: Black Brother White*, or films based on true stories, like Phillip Noyce's *Rabbit-Proof Fence*. *Rabbit-Proof Fence* tells of the epic 1500-mile journey through unfamiliar land made by three Stolen Generations children who want to return home.

The picture book *Shake a Leg*, by Boori Monty Pryor and Jan Ormerod, is a contemporary celebration of Aboriginal culture and dance.

Nadia Wheatley's *Playground: Listening to Stories from Country and from Inside the Heart* is a wonderful collection of stories that provide insights into a range of Indigenous topics, such as homes, first lessons, journeying, playing sport and growing up.

## Fiction

- Jackie French, *Nanberry: Black Brother White*
- Meme McDonald and Boori Monty Pryor, *The Binna Binna Man*

## Non-fiction

- Cathy Freeman, *Born to Run*
- Sally Morgan, *Sally's Story: My Place for Young Readers*

## Speeches

- Linda Burney, 'Maiden Speech in New South Wales Parliament', 6 May 2003
- Paul Keating, 'Redfern Speech', 10 December 1992
- Kevin Rudd, 'Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples', 13 February 2008

## Drama

- Jack Davis, *Honey Spot*

## Film

- *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, directed by Phillip Noyce

## Television series

- *First Australians*, directed by Rachel Perkins

### Poetry

- Margaret Bradstock (ed.), *Antipodes: Poetic Responses*

### Song

- Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody, 'From Little Things Big Things Grow'

### Picture books

- Anthony Hill, *The Burnt Stick* (Mark Sofilas, illustrator)
- John Marsden, *The Rabbits* (Shaun Tan, illustrator)
- Papunya School, *Papunya School Book of Country and History*
- Boori Monty Pryor and Jan Ormerod, *Shake a Leg*
- Nadia Wheatley, *Playground: Listening to Stories from Country and from inside the Heart* (Ken Searle, illustrator)

### Digital

- *Dust Echoes*, ABC website for Aboriginal Dreamtime stories