

Magabala Books • Teacher Notes

The Toast Tree

Written by Corina Martin

Illustrated by Fern Martins

Teacher Notes prepared by Christina Wheeler

OVERVIEW

Every afternoon, Ella and Mia's grandfather brings them a special treat from a magical tree. When the girls try to locate the tree for themselves, Grandpa explains that its magic will stop if they find it. *The Toast Tree* is a delightful story about the special bond between grandparents and their grandchildren and the magic that only childhood can bring.

THEMES

- Relationships
- Grandparents
- Magic

AUDIENCE AND WRITING STYLE

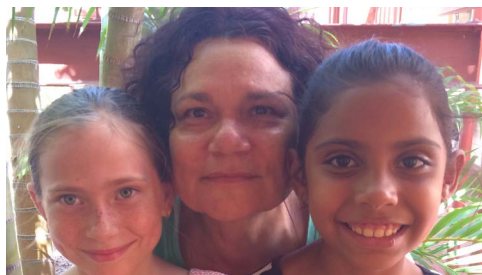
The Toast Tree is written in third person, past tense. The narrative is easily accessible to early childhood and younger readers. The illustrations add another layer of meaning to the text.

LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

This book and the classroom activities provided are primarily relevant to English at year levels F-2. The appendix highlights relevant content descriptions, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.

CULTURAL NOTES

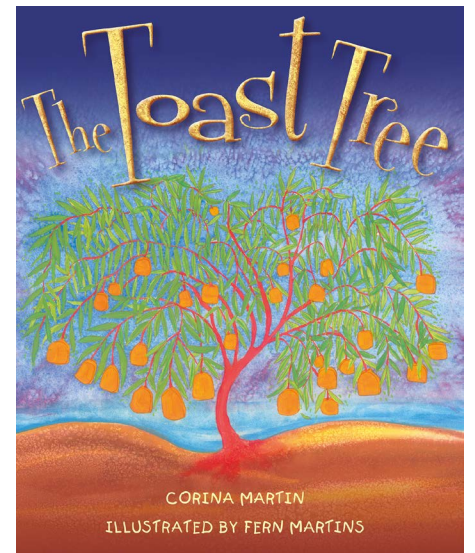
The Toast Tree explores themes that may be relevant to discussions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. It emphasises the importance of storytelling and respect for nature, and depicts the importance of families and elders as custodians of story. For information about teaching Australian Indigenous content see Teaching Indigenous content with Magabala Books.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

Corina Martin is a Kija, Jaru and Gooniyandi woman who grew up in Broome, Western Australia. She has a Bachelor of Marketing and Media and a Bachelor of Law, and works at the Aboriginal Family Law Services of WA. *The Toast Tree* is her first book.

Fern Martins is a Ngarabul woman from New South Wales. She works as a sculptor, printmaker and artist and has exhibited at the National Gallery and lectured at the University of Adelaide.



CLASSROOM IDEAS

- After reading *The Toast Tree*, discuss the relationship that Mia and Ella have with their grandparents.
- The story tells us a lot about Grandpa, but less about their grandmother. By using the illustrations as a guide, discuss the important role she plays in the girls' lives.
- The coastal town is described as a, 'small dusty town surrounded by the sea.' After reading the information about the author at the back of the book, locate Broome on a map of Australia.
- View photos of Broome on the internet. Compare these photos with the illustrations in *The Toast Tree*. Discuss the illustrator's use of colour to contrast the water with the dust. Create your own coastal paintings to display around the classroom.
- Write a poem about the beach. Brainstorm its unique features to help with your imagery.
- Describe the relationship you have with your grandparents or an elderly relative. How is it similar or different to your relationship with your parents?
- Compare *The Toast Tree* with other picture books about children and their grandparents such as *The Potato People* by Pamela Allen, *Dan's Grandpa* by Sally Morgan or *My Pop is a Pirate* by Damon Young.
- Rewrite the story of *The Toast Tree* in the role of Grandpa.
- Why is Grandpa sad when the girls eat the honey from the tree they've found? What does this tell us about the respect that he and other Aboriginal people may have for nature?
- Examine the page opening in which the girls' grandparents are fishing. Find out more about the spear that Grandpa is using and the reel that Grandma is using. Why aren't they using fishing rods? What other tools do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people use to fish?
- What sort of relationship do Ella and Mia share? How do you know this? How do the illustrations tell us more about their relationship than the written text alone?
- How important is it that children have magical stories in their lives? Discuss some magic that you believed in when you were younger.
- Why is Grandpa the only one who can pick the toast from the tree?
- Find out more about the flowers and trees that native birds use for nectar. In a diagram, explain the interdependence between plants and birds for survival.
- Consider hosting a Grandparents' Day, inviting grandparents to share in some activities and storytelling with the students.
- Create a recipe for 'Honey Toast', listing the ingredients, utensils and method used.
- Do you have special stories or games that you share with your grandparents? Write a reflection that shares these stories.
- Create a toast tree for your classroom. Have students write their own messages about their grandparents on individual pieces of toast.



APPENDIX - LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM F-10 (VERSION 8.1)

Year	English
Foundation	<p>Explore the different contribution of words and images to meaning in stories and informative texts (ACELA1786)</p> <p>Recognise that texts are created by authors who tell stories and share experiences that may be similar or different to students' own experiences (ACELT1575)</p> <p>Share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts (ACELT1783)</p> <p>Identify some features of texts including events and characters and retell events from a text (ACELT1578)</p> <p>Use comprehension strategies to understand and discuss texts listened to, viewed or read independently (ACELY1650)</p>
1	<p>Discuss how authors create characters using language and images (ACELT1581)</p> <p>Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts and share personal responses to these texts, making connections with students' own experiences (ACELT1582)</p> <p>Discuss features of plot, character and setting in different types of literature and explore some features of characters in different texts (ACELT1584)</p> <p>Recreate texts imaginatively using drawing, writing, performance and digital forms of communication (ACELT1586)</p> <p>Respond to texts drawn from a range of cultures and experiences (ACELY1655)</p>
2	<p>Identify visual representations of characters' actions, reactions, speech and thought processes in narratives, and consider how these images add to or contradict or multiply the meaning of accompanying words (ACELA1469)</p> <p>Discuss how depictions of characters in print, sound and images reflect the contexts in which they were created (ACELT1587)</p> <p>Discuss the characters and settings of different texts and explore how language is used to present these features in different ways (ACELT1591)</p> <p>Create events and characters using different media that develop key events and characters from literary texts (ACELT1593)</p> <p>Innovate on familiar texts by experimenting with character, setting or plot (ACELT1833)</p>
<p>Cross curriculum priorities Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Sustainability</p>	
<p>General capabilities Literacy, Personal and social capability, Ethical understanding, Intercultural understanding</p>	

