SYNOPSIS

*Marngrook: The Long Ago Story of Aussie Rules* is a picture book that shares the story of how the Indigenous game of ‘marngrook’ helped to inspire the development of Australian Rules football. This game was played by the Aboriginal people of north-west Victoria over 150 years ago.

When one of the tribe’s elders makes a toy from a possum’s skin, Jaara creates a wonderful game that transcends time and place.

THEMES

*Indigenous culture, including games*

- This story is set in the Grampians region of Victoria, home to the Djab-Wurrung and Jardwadjali people. They have lived in this area for thousands of years
- Some Jardwadjali language is used in the text
- The illustrations include traditional Aboriginal artwork and tools
- Wawi, the Elder, uses his hunting skills to create the marngrook

*Australian Rules Football*

- The origins of Australian Rules Football are linked to the game of marngrook

WRITING STYLE

Written in third person, past tense, *Marngrook: The Long Ago Story of Aussie Rules* is a celebration of a popular Australian sport that combines Indigenous culture with a nation’s love for football.
Study Questions

- Before reading, consider the title and cover of the text. What might a 'marngrook' be? What clues does the reader get about the text from the cover?
- Jardwadjali language is used throughout the text. Keep a journal of these words and their meanings. Use the introduction to help pronounce these words. Why has the author chosen to include the Jardwadjali language in the telling of this story?
- Research the history of Australian Rules Football. Create a poster to explain the link between marngrook and the modern game.
- Tom Wills is an interesting figure to research with regards to the evolution of Australian Rules Football. Create an information report about Tom Wills, marngrook and Australian Rules Football.
- Why does Jaara begin to cry when he is lost in the bush?
- Compare *Marngrook: The Long Ago Story of Aussie Rules* with the picture book *Kick it to Me* which also traces the history of marngrook and Aussie Rules. Create a table to show the similarities and differences in these texts.
- What aspects of Indigenous culture are evident in *Marngrook: The Long Ago Story of Aussie Rules*? Keep a journal of these as the book is read.
- Try illustrating the history of another sport using a style similar to that of Grace fielding. Take note of the Aboriginal style of artwork in the illustrations.
- Investigate other Indigenous pastimes. A free cd-rom, Yulunga, is available from the Australian Sports Commission. The link below also has PDFs of games to play
- Create your own picture book to retell the story of another indigenous game. Choose one from the above link.
- Invite a local Indigenous guest speaker to speak about pastimes of traditional Aboriginal people.
- Wawi uses all parts of the possum. Nothing goes to waste. Discuss the connection and respect between the Aboriginal people and nature.
- Learn the game of Australian Rules Football. Practise kicking and bouncing like Jaara would have done.
- Read the quote from Adam Goodes on the back cover. Research and present a report or talk on a famous indigenous sports person.
- Choose your favourite page opening from the book. Share with the class why you like this page, discussing both the text and the illustrations.
- Write a reflection about a pastime you enjoy. This could be a sport or another hobby such as a craft. Illustrate this reflection.