

TEACHERS RESOURCES

WANDI

A dingo cub, lost and alone.
Will he ever see his family again?



FAVEL PARRETT

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Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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INTRODUCTION

A young cub is snatched from his family and home by a giant eagle, then dropped, injured and alone, in a suburban garden. This is where he meets his first Human and begins his long journey to becoming the most famous dingo in the world. He will never see his mountain home or his family again. But it is his destiny to save alpine dingoes from extinction, and he dreams of a time when all dingoes can live in the wild in safety, instead of facing poison and bullets and hatred.

This is a children's literary classic in-the-making – in the tradition of *Storm Boy* and *The Call of the Wild* – told with wonder and heart by one of Australia's most-loved authors.

THEMES AND CURRICULUM TOPICS

SCIENCE

'Australian Curriculum: Science' <<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/science/>>

DINGOES

DISCUSSION POINT: This novel reveals many facts about dingoes. On p 45, for example, the vet describes the unique qualities of a dingo. Research their features more carefully.

DISCUSSION POINT: Wandu values the lessons he learned from his mother about finding grubs and other sources of food. The note at the end of the book describes how dingoes help to keep an ecosystem in balance (p 133). Research this aspect of the dingo's influence on nature.

DISCUSSION POINT: Did you know that dingoes can climb? This is referred to in the novel and in the note 'All about the Dingo: Australia's Native Wild Canid' by Kevin D. Newman (p 123) at the end of the novel. What other unusual facts about these animals have you discovered?

DISCUSSION POINT: 'But because they look like dogs, they have been widely misunderstood and persecuted for over 200 years.' (p 134) Dingoes are not popular in some parts of Australia where they are considered pests and where eradication is recommended. 'The world's longest fence, a 5,600km barrier in place since the late 19th century, runs from western SA through the Strzelecki Desert and across southern Queensland in an attempt to keep dingoes away from grazing land in the south-east.' (Morton, 2021) But in contrast, Landholders for Dingoes is an organisation recently formed by beef producers and property owners promoting the importance of dingoes in their property management. Why and how should we protect them? Should there be an education program to teach people about the role dingoes play in our ecosystem?

DISCUSSION POINT: “The most dangerous thing of all is the Human,” his papa said in a low voice. “The tall animal that walks on two legs. If you smell one, you must run. If you see one close, you must hide. They poison us. They shoot us and they hang us from trees. They don’t even eat us; they just kill us. They just kill.” (pp 6–7) This is Wandi’s father speaking to him; how true are his words? Research the treatment of dingoes by humans.

DISCUSSION POINT: A dingo is an ‘apex predator’ (p 133). What does this mean?

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

‘Australian Curriculum: HASS’ <<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences>>

FIRST NATIONS CULTURAL BELIEFS

DISCUSSION POINT: The novel opens with an acknowledgment of country on the imprint page, acknowledging that it was written on Wadawurrung land and paying respects to the custodians of that land. The text is framed by references to the spirit Bunjil. ‘Bunjil is a creator deity, culture hero and ancestral being, often depicted as a wedge-tailed eagle’ among some First Nations peoples of Victoria. (‘Bunjil’ *Wikipedia* <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bunjil>>) Research Bunjil further. What does this novel suggest about First Nations beliefs?

DISCUSSION POINT: How do First Nations peoples regard the dingo? Do they have particular beliefs about the role which a dingo plays in the landscape?

FRIENDSHIP

DISCUSSION POINT: Wandi makes a friend in Hermione. How important is it for Wandi to find a friend once he has lost his family?

DISCUSSION POINT: Wandi also makes human friends, first in the person who discovers him in their backyard, and then in Lyn, the owner of the dingo sanctuary. The novel points out that dingoes don’t make good domestic pets, but clearly they can become close to human beings. Read more about the importance of the relationship between dingoes and humans.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY

‘Australian Curriculum: English’ <<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>> The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following aspects:

ACTIVITY: This novel is written in third person, except for the first person sections of the Prologue and Chapter 11, where Wandi remembers how much his mother taught him and then writes a ‘letter’ to her in his mind thanking her and expressing his love for her. Write a response to Wandi in his mother’s voice.

ACTIVITY: Invite students to write an expository text about a dingo. There are different types of expository writing, eg. descriptive, sequential, cause/effect etc. [See **Bibliography.**]

ACTIVITY: Test your students' comprehension by asking them questions about the written text. [See also **Worksheet 2.**]

ACTIVITY: Write a lyrical poem about a dingo using models written by published poets. [See **Bibliography.**]

ACTIVITY: Invite students to write a simple cumulative text as the basis for a picture book about Wandjina and Hermione, using repetition, rhyme and rhythm.

DISCUSSION POINT: In some sections of the novel, the author uses a poetic style:

'Forward, forward – paws light on the earth.
Forward, forward – down the hill.
Another grub.
Another treat.
Forward, forward – nose in the dirt.
A pulse of air on his fur.
A shadow, long and jagged and strange.
The beat of giant wings.' (p 17)

And:

'Drifting off to sleep.
Drifting.
Drifting.
No more pain.
And then he felt himself falling.
Falling.
Falling through the air.' (pp 23-4)

Invite students to use this quote as a model and to write a short description of waking up.

VISUAL LITERACY

Australian Curriculum: Visual Arts <<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>>

ACTIVITY: The cover of the book depicts a portrait of Wandjina. What other cover image could have been used? Design an alternative and make a classroom display of all the images

DISCUSSION POINT: Create a storyboard for illustrating the picture book text you wrote under **English Language and Literacy** above. [Discuss the conventions of the picture book story format before embarking on this exercise.]

ACTIVITY: Several black and white drawings enhance this text. Invite students to create their own drawings of Wandjina. [See **Bibliography.**]

ACTIVITY: Create a collage image. [See **Worksheet 1** below.]

CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

- 1. Craft:** Make a **Model** of Wandjina, using fimo clay. [See **Bibliography**.]
- 2. Craft:** Make a Dingo Mask. [See **Worksheet 4**.]
- 3. Writing and Illustration:** Create a **Dingo Scrapbook** to take note of fun facts about and responses to dingoes. Paste into the notebook any stories you unearth about dingoes in the newspaper. Write down any reviews of books you read about dingoes. Include any drawings of dingoes that you do while studying this novel. [See **Bibliography**.]
- 4. Craft:** Create a **Shoebox Diorama** depicting a dingo in its habitat. [See **Bibliography** for relevant resources.]
- 5. Script:** Create a **Book Trailer** to promote this book. [See **Bibliography** for relevant resources.]

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

ACTIVITY: Research topics suggested in these notes, online.

MATHEMATICS

ACTIVITY: Have fun investigating mathematical facts about dingoes such as their population numbers, their longevity, etc.

FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

- Visit Favel Parrett's website and view some of the other writing projects she has engaged in.
- Students might research this book in comparison to picture books, fiction and non-fiction books such as those listed in the **Bibliography**.
- Investigate any other topic suggested by this text.

CONCLUSION

Wandi is a heartwarming story about a dingo cub separated from his family by an extraordinary event, and forced to survive in a world dominated by humans. Happily, several of those humans are kind and determined to preserve the dingo population, unlike so many others, who regard these animals as pests. Wandi finds a new home, a friend in Hermione, and still has his memories of the home and family he left behind.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In 2011, Favel Parrett's career was launched with her critically acclaimed debut *Past the Shallows*. A heart-breaking novel, it was sold internationally, shortlisted in the prestigious Miles Franklin Literary Award and won the Dobbie Literary Award. Favel herself won the ABIA Newcomer of the Year Award in 2012. Her next novel, *When the Night Comes*, was also critically acclaimed and further consolidated Favel's reputation with booksellers and readers. Favel's short stories have been published in various journals including *Island*, *Griffith Review* and *Wet Ink*. *There Was Still Love* was Favel's eagerly awaited third novel. *Wandi* is her first novel for children. For more information, visit favelparrett.com.au or twitter.com/favelparrett.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright AM operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011 she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, and in 2012 the CBCA (National) Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021 she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.

WORKSHEETS

WORKSHEET 1: COLLAGE

Collage this image. *Illustration by Zoe Ingram*



WORKSHEET 2: QUIZ

Answer these questions in the right hand column.

QUESTION	ANSWER
1. When and how do experts think dingoes arrived on the Australian mainland?	
2. Dingoes control populations of native animals such as kangaroos and possums. What invasive species populations do they also control?	
3. What makes the dingo's ear shape distinctive?	
4. What other feature makes a dingo's ears special?	
5. How many types of dingo are there?	
6. What type of dingo is Wandjina?	
7. What adaptations to their environment do alpine dingoes have?	
8. Do dingoes bark?	
9. Dingoes have been compared to what other dogs?	
10. What are the most common colours of a dingo?	

Answers: **1.** Across a land bridge from Papua New Guinea more than 8,000 years ago. **2.** Rabbits, foxes and feral cats. **3.** They are hood-shaped and have been compared to the sails of the Sydney Opera House. **4.** 'Their ears are fully furred all the way on the inside to help them hear some incredible sounds, like a human heartbeat from 25 metres away!' (p 125) **5.** Three - alpine, desert and tropical dingoes. **6.** An alpine dingo. **7.** 'They have thick coats that grow fluffy in winter. They also have a fluffy tail that they can use as a portable blanket...' (p 126) **8.** No, not unless humans teach them to do so. They actually howl. **9.** A 'kelpie or an Australian cattle dog.' (p 124) **10.** They are 'ginger, black and tan, and cream.' (p 125)

WORKSHEET 3: COMIC

Create a comic or graphic novel page of an incident in this novel. Use the devices of comics such as sound bubbles, captions etc.

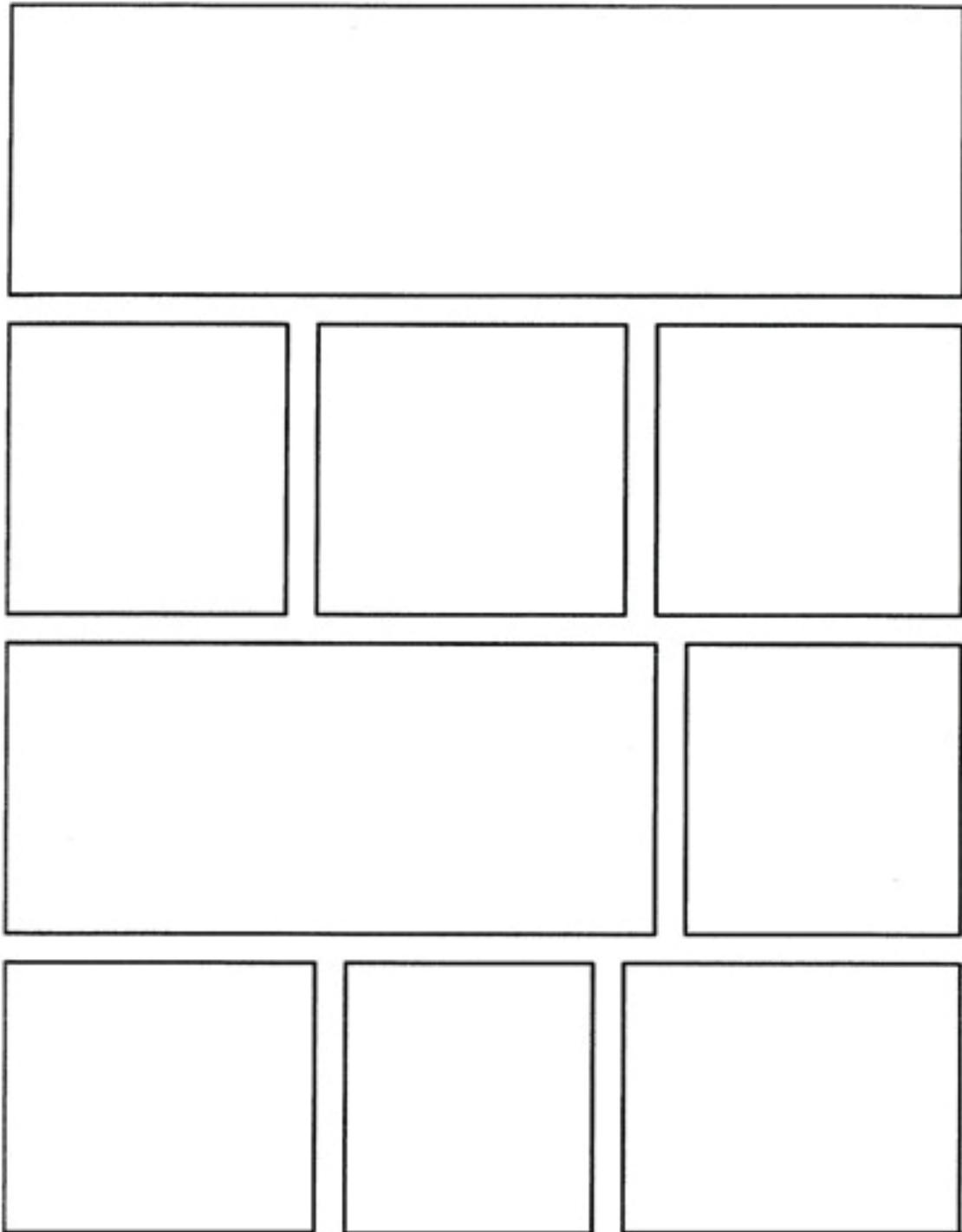


Image from: <<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/3D/d5/2f/3dd52f68d81487824323f70cbe182a9a.jpg>>

WORKSHEET 4: DINGO MASK

Enlarge this on a photocopier. Then glue to craft paper. Cut it out, add elastic to each side, and you have a dingo mask to wear!



Image from: <www.supercoloring.com/paper-crafts/dingo-mask-template>

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