



## Synopsis:

Taha and his mum, a new Australian citizen, recently travelled around Australia. Now Mum decides it's time for another trip, starting with a visit to Canberra, the nation's capital. This time, Taha is allowed to bring his best friend, Joel, along for company. Taha and Joel record their travels with photographs and notes in the journals that they were given by their teacher, Mrs Zimmerman. Taha also uses the Oracle Pod that was given to him by his neighbour, Mr Wilson, to find out interesting facts on their trip.

## Before Reading

Discuss the following:

- The book format – Students can read the blurb, the table of contents and skim additional features such as the Aussie Jokes, Slang and Facts. Note the mix of photography and illustrations. Discuss design features.
- Citizenship and immigration – Review the citizenship ceremony (pp6-9) and discuss the importance placed on this ceremonial event. Talk about why, and from where, people migrate to Australia and then become Australian citizens. Locate Germany on a world map. Compare the differences in size between Australia and countries in Europe.
- Campervans – Taha, Mum and Joel travel in their campervan, the Southern Cross. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of these 'homes on wheels'.
- Indigenous Australians – Do students know about the indigenous Australians or traditional owners of the land in their local area or on the east coast of Australia? Discuss the references to indigenous culture on pages 32, 72 and 112. (It is important to acknowledge the role of indigenous Australians and explore Australia's indigenous history prior to European settlement.)

Build up a collection of resources such as books, travel magazines, maps, street directories and websites. Students could research or write to the Canberra Tourist Bureau for specific information about places to visit in Canberra, and share the information they find.

## Language Features and Activities

### First person narrative:

- The author engages the reader by using a character, Taha, to tell the story. This makes the narrative very personal. Taha's conversations with his mum, Joel and the people he meets give us an insight into their personalities and characters. (For example, Taha has great self-confidence and enthusiasm for life and often imagines himself as a high achiever such as a fighter pilot or the Prime Minister.) Joel's character is a foil for the overtly confident Taha.



### **Journals:**

- Taha and Joel use their journals to keep photographs and record written information about the trip. Students could compare the way Taha and Joel present their information on this trip with the way Taha presented his journal in earlier stories. Is there a difference?

### **Factual writing:**

- Most of the factual information in the text is presented using the device of the Oracle Pod. However, there are other occasions when Mum and Taha give information to the reader. Use the shape of an oracle pod, cut out of card, to record research information about topics or places in this book that the students are interested in. Students can use Blackline Master 3 to investigate and research topics referred to in the text.

### **Vocabulary:**

- Use a dictionary to find meanings for words and phrases such as 'forage', 'eligible', 'dedicated', 'infra-red', 'commemorate', 'medallions', 'diverse', 'interactive', 'replica', 'centenary' and 'Federal'.
- Ask students to make a list of bold or coloured words and explain why these are used in the text (for example, as sound effects or to describe and emphasise feelings, reactions or other physical features). Refer to 'AWESOME!' (p14), 'LONG' (p38), 'galahs' and 'cockatoos' (p40) and 'C-S-I-R-O' (p88).

### **Grammar:**

- Find examples of direct speech on pages 14, 16, 22, 28, 30, 66 and 92. Ask the students to find and discuss the conventions of using correct punctuation for direct speech (for example, speech marks and starting a new line when a new character speaks). Make a class list of words that can be used instead of 'said' such as 'replied', 'answered' and 'agreed'. Also discuss the acronyms 'ANZAC', 'ACT' and 'CSIRO' – ask the students if they know of any others.

### **Diagrams:**

- Re-visit the diagram that shows the basic workings of the Australian Federal Government (p117). Help students interpret the information in the diagram.

If possible, invite a local Member of Parliament or council to speak to the students about the organisation of government. Use a similar format to show how decisions are made within your school. For example, the principal might be at the top, followed by class teachers and each class of students. Other lines may connect student groups or staff from the library, canteen and so on.

### **Comprehension:**

- To maintain an awareness of students' understanding throughout the text, use the chapter headings to ask questions about their content. (For example, ask where Mum might be taking Taha and Joel in 'A Very Scientific Day'.)
- Use Blackline Master 4 to check that students can give appropriate explanations or answers for questions.

## **Characters**

Taha remains keen to travel and seek out new places and people. In this title, the reader learns more about his friendship with Joel. Taha is very confident, and often cheeky and adventurous. Joel is quieter, yet often demonstrates his keener knowledge and understandings about Australia. Re-visit Joel's joke about galahs (p40) and consider Taha's response. Students could make a character profile chart to show how Taha and Joel react and interact in different situations.



## Activities

- Use the recipe on pages 82 and 83 to make Anzac biscuits with the students. Discuss why they were such a success for soldiers at war in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and research typical army rations of today.
- Discuss the 'celebration' of Anzac Day in your local community, and what this day means to Australians in general.
- Consider why the CSIRO is such an important organisation. Have the students research the number of 'new' inventions in our daily lives. (Consider areas such as medicine, space travel, food production and so on.)
- Talk about Questacon. Use the internet to find some simple scientific experiments that can be conducted in the classroom (such as mixing soda and vinegar to make a 'rocket').
- Students can work in groups or individually to create a timeline of prime ministers with Blackline Master 5.
- Students can work in groups to research a specific prime minister. Demonstrate how the information they find can be presented on Blackline Master 6. Each group can present their information to the class.

## Maps and Maths

- Students can use Blackline Master 1 to mark the locations of Violet Town and Canberra. Ask students if there might be a shorter route to Canberra.
- Find and measure the distance for different routes from Melbourne to Canberra.
- How high is the Black Mountain Tower?
- How long did Mum, Taha and Joel stay in Canberra?

Our Australia series by Phil Kettle  
Illustrations by David Dunstan  
Teacher notes by Judi Champion  
Edited by Emma Short  
Design by Goanna Graphics (Vic) Pty Ltd

## Research Topics

- citizenship and immigration
- native birds
- the architectural history of Canberra including its layout, location, street design and significant buildings (National Gallery, National Library, High Court, Australian Institute of Sport, the Lodge, foreign embassies and so on)
- the history of currency in Australia
- prime ministers of Australia

## Useful References

- Tourism agencies
- Local councils, libraries, historical societies
- State automobile clubs – maps and trip planners
- Local RSL clubs
- Local parliamentary or council offices
- [www.writing-for-children.com](http://www.writing-for-children.com) – galah story
- [www.australianzoo.com.au](http://www.australianzoo.com.au) - cockatoo
- [www.visitcanberra.com.au](http://www.visitcanberra.com.au)
- [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au)
- [www.nga.gov.au](http://www.nga.gov.au)
- [www.questacon.edu.au](http://www.questacon.edu.au)
- [www.ramint.gov.au](http://www.ramint.gov.au)
- [www.nma.gov.au](http://www.nma.gov.au)
- [www.moadoph.gov.au](http://www.moadoph.gov.au)
- [www.csiro.au/places/Discovery.html](http://www.csiro.au/places/Discovery.html)
- [http://www.mapit.com.au/canberra\\_map.htm](http://www.mapit.com.au/canberra_map.htm)
- *Australian Geographic* articles relating to Canberra:  
Blog: On this day: Australia's capital city named (Campbell Phillips), 11 March 2011  
Aussie scientists help design giant telescope (AAP with AG staff), 19 April 2011  
How Australia's parliament works (Ken Eastwood) 2001

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Draw a map of Taha's trip. Add pictures, captions or labels.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Write a review about this book.

Title:

\_\_\_\_\_

Author:

\_\_\_\_\_

What happens:

\_\_\_\_\_

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My opinion of this book:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Choose a topic or idea from *Our Australia Canberra*. Use the Internet, books or other resources to research this topic. Record the information you find on the Oracle Pod below.



# BLM 4 Do You Know the Answers?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Give explanations or reasons to answer these questions. Use the page numbers to help you.

What do the red spots on the map of Australia represent? (p27)

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How did Walter Burley Griffin become famous? (p34)

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What was so special near Violet Town? (p44)

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Which towns are called 'twin towns' and why? (pp48-49)

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What did Joel think when they were on their way to the Royal Australian Mint? (p94)

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What do the different designs in the new Parliament House symbolise? (pp112-113)

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What did Mum mean when she said, "Mission accomplished"? (p121)

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