

**Grades
7-10**

Unit 10
**“Pioneer Australians
(& Resourcefulness)”**

ENGLISH



ENGLISH (Grades 7-10) – Unit 10

“Pioneer Australians (& Resourcefulness)”

SUMMARY:

This English unit explores Australian pioneer life through poetry, short stories, and excerpts from ‘We of the Never Never’, examining how language and storytelling shape national identity and reflect the challenges of living in the Australian bush. Students analyse themes of resilience, isolation, courage, and resourcefulness as portrayed in classic works by authors such as Dorothea Mackellar, Banjo Paterson, Henry Lawson, and Oodgeroo Noonuccal. Through close reading, comparison of perspectives, and creative and analytical writing tasks, students develop their understanding of literary techniques, context, and voice, while exploring how Australians have interpreted land, hardship, and identity across time.

Grade 7-10 English: Weekly Themes Overview

Topic	Theme	Focus Text/Poem	Literary Focus	Writing Focus
1	The Homestead	<i>My Country</i> – Dorothea Mackellar	Imagery, cultural response, adverb groups	Descriptive setting writing
2	True Blue Aussie Grit	<i>Clancy of the Overflow</i> – Banjo Paterson	Tone, cohesion, vivid vocabulary	Character sketch using emotive language
3	Women in the Bush	<i>A Bush Girl</i> – A.B. Paterson	Characterisation, idioms, repetition	Diary entry from a historical perspective
4	Aboriginal Voices	<i>We Are Going</i> – Oodgeroo Noonuccal	Context, perspective, bias	Reflective response from a respectful viewpoint
5	Pioneers on the Move	<i>The Teams</i> – Henry Lawson	Social context, verb groups, cohesion	Descriptive narrative about a pioneer journey
6	Outback Challenges	<i>The Fire at Ross’s Farm</i> – Henry Lawson	Emotive verbs, vivid action, repetition	First-person recount of a bushfire or natural event
7	Life on the Land	<i>Said Hanrahan</i> – John O’Brien	Figurative language, humour, elaborated tense	Newspaper-style report or letter to the editor
8	Faith in the Bush	<i>The Bush Christening</i> – Banjo Paterson	Satire, audience, metaphor	Final Task: Narrative story using literary techniques studied throughout the course

RESOURCES:

- ‘We of the Never Never’ by Mrs Aeneas Gunn (Jeannie Gunn)
- Each child will also need an English Journal (i.e., a lined exercise book for writing responses to questions and creative writing activities).

- It is also helpful to have a good dictionary.
- All the other information you need is included within the informational story in each lesson plan. The hands-on or creative activities are designed to use materials you will likely have already in your home, but you should maintain some art and craft materials.
- Three lessons a week will provide the basic learning. To enjoy a richer learning experience, you could supplement the lessons with extra books about the topics in this unit, from your local library.

Some suggestions for extra reading include but are not limited to...

- ‘Swallows & Amazons’ by Arthur Ransome
- ‘John of the Sirius’ by Doris Chapman

Links to Australian Curriculum English (Yr 7–10)

Week 1 – The Homestead (Imagery & Identity)

AC9E7LE01; AC9E7LE04; AC9E7LY01; AC9E7LY08
 AC9E8LE01; AC9E8LE04; AC9E8LY01; AC9E8LY08
 AC9E9LE01; AC9E9LE04; AC9E9LY01; AC9E9LY08
 AC9E10LE01; AC9E10LE04; AC9E10LY01

Week 2 – True Blue Aussie Grit (Tone & Character)

AC9E7LE01; AC9E7LE04; AC9E7LY01
 AC9E8LE04; AC9E8LY01
 AC9E9LE01; AC9E9LE04; AC9E9LY08
 AC9E10LE04; AC9E10LY08

Week 3 – Women in the Bush (Character & Endurance)

AC9E7LE01; AC9E7LE04; AC9E7LY01
 AC9E8LE01; AC9E8LY01
 AC9E9LE01; AC9E9LE04; AC9E9LY01
 AC9E10LE01; AC9E10LE04

Week 4 – Aboriginal Voices (Context & Contrast)

AC9E7LE01; AC9E7LY01
 AC9E8LE01; AC9E8LY01
 AC9E9LE01; AC9E9LY01
 AC9E10LE01; AC9E10LY01

Week 5 – Language, Accent & Realism

AC9E7LE04; AC9E7LY08
 AC9E8LE04; AC9E8LY08
 AC9E9LE04; AC9E9LY08
 AC9E10LE04; AC9E10LY08

Week 6 – The Power of Place

AC9E7LE01; AC9E7LE04
 AC9E8LE01
 AC9E9LE01; AC9E9LE04; AC9E9LY01
 AC9E10LE01

Week 7 – Literary Style & Tone

AC9E7LE04

AC9E8LE04

AC9E9LE04; AC9E9LE01

AC9E10LE04

Week 8 – Faith in the Bush (Narrative Composition)

AC9E7LE01; AC9E7LY08

AC9E8LY08

AC9E9LY08

AC9E10LY08

Prior to starting each week, review the recommended resources.

Contents

Topic	Description	Page
Topic 1	Introduction to Literary Australia	
Topic 2	Outback & Identity	
Topic 3	Women and the Outback	
Topic 4	Aboriginal Perspectives	
Topic 5	Language, Accent & Realism	
Topic 6	The Power of Place	
Topic 7	Literary Style & Tone	
Topic 8	Personal Response	
Topic 9	Finalise your narrative story from lesson	
Assessment:		

TOPIC 1

INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY AUSTRALIA

Topic 1 – Introduction to Literary Australia

Focus Texts:

- *We of the Never Never* by Jeannie Gunn (Chapter 1)
- *My Country* by Dorothea Mackellar

Big Ideas:

- How authors shape national identity through language and imagery
- First impressions vs deeper understanding
- How landscape shapes character and story

Lesson 1.1 – First Impressions of the Outback

Focus Text: *We of the Never Never* (Chapter 1)

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Read Chapter 1 of *We of the Never Never*.

If you have a printed copy, read slowly with a pencil in hand. If digital, highlight text and make notes.

Step 2: As You Read, Think About...

- Who is telling the story? What tone do they use?
- How is the Australian outback portrayed?
- What do you learn about the characters' attitudes and values?
- How are people and place connected in this opening chapter?

Literary Style Focus:

Jeannie Gunn uses poetic and descriptive language.

Find 3 quotes that:

- Paint a vivid picture of the landscape.
- Show the narrator's personal feelings about leaving Melbourne.
- Suggest the challenges ahead.

Context & Representation:

- What does this chapter reveal about women's roles at the time?
- How does it reflect social attitudes to the bush or Indigenous people?
- What assumptions does the narrator carry with her from city life?

Journal Task:

In your English journal, answer these:

1. What is your first impression of the narrator?
 2. What mood does the landscape evoke?
 3. Do you think the author wants readers to admire or question bush life?
-

Lesson 1.2 – Poetry & National Identity

Focus Poem: *My Country* by Dorothea Mackellar

Read and annotate the weekly poem.

- Explore:
 - Imagery and figurative devices.
 - Themes and personal connection to place or identity.
 - Spelling/stylistic quirks (accents, rhythm, layout).
 - Make links to the week's main literary text. (AC9E9LE04, AC9E9LY08)
-

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Read the Poem Slowly – aloud if possible.

Pay close attention to the rhythm, imagery, and emotional tone.

My Country

*The love of field and coppice,
Of green and shaded lanes.
Of ordered woods and gardens
Is running in your veins,
Strong love of grey-blue distance
Brown streams and soft dim skies
I know but cannot share it,
My love is otherwise.*

*I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains.
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror –
The wide brown land for me!*

*A stark white ring-barked forest
All tragic to the moon,
The sapphire-misted mountains,
The hot gold hush of noon.
Green tangle of the brushes,
Where lithe lianas coil,
And orchids deck the tree-tops
And ferns the warm dark soil.*

*Core of my heart, my country!
Her pitiless blue sky,
When sick at heart, around us,*

*We see the cattle die –
But then the grey clouds gather,
And we can bless again
The drumming of an army,
The steady, soaking rain.*

*Core of my heart, my country!
Land of the Rainbow Gold,
For flood and fire and famine,
She pays us back threefold –
Over the thirsty paddocks,
Watch, after many days,
The filmy veil of greenness
That thickens as we gaze.*

*An opal-hearted country,
A wilful, lavish land –
All you who have not loved her,
You will not understand –
Though earth holds many splendours,
Wherever I may die,
I know to what brown country
My homing thoughts will fly.*

-- Dorothea Mackellar

Deep Dive Questions:

- What emotions is Mackellar expressing about Australia?
- What imagery stands out? Is it positive, negative, or both?
- What values are being promoted (e.g., resilience, loyalty)?

Historical & Cultural Context:

Mackellar wrote this in 1908 while in England, feeling homesick for Australia.

- Why do you think her perspective as a *woman poet* from that era matters?
- How might the poem contrast with modern views of Australia?

Creative Task:

Create your own 4-line stanza using Mackellar's rhythm and theme.

E.g.,

I walk through ghost-gum shadows,
Where silence holds the land,
The winds are wide and restless,
And time slips through my hand.

Lesson 1.3 – Reflection & Personal Response

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Compare First Impressions Think back to when you began reading *We of the Never Never* and then re-read the first two pages.

Journal Response: Write a short reflection (1–2 paragraphs) answering:

- How did your impression of the narrator change?
- What did you assume about the bush at the start? What do you see differently now?
- How do the poem and novel show different feelings about the land?

Vocabulary Focus:

Pick 3 words or phrases from the poem or novel that are distinctly *Australian*.
E.g., “sunburnt country”, “plains”, “the Never Never”

- What do they suggest about how Australians see their own country?

◆ Optional Discussion Prompt:

If discussing with a parent/tutor or peer:

- “In what ways do both texts reflect pride in the land, even when it’s harsh or dangerous?”

TOPIC 2

OUTBACK & IDENTITY

Topic 2 – Outback & Identity

Focus Texts:

- *We of the Never Never* by Jeannie Gunn (Chapters 2–3)
- *Clancy of the Overflow* by A. B. (Banjo) Paterson

Big Ideas:

- Romantic vs realistic depictions of the bush
- City-bush contrast as a key theme in national identity
- Tone and rhythm in storytelling and poetry

Lesson 2.1 – Contrasts and Characters in the Outback

Focus Text: *We of the Never Never* (Chapters 2–3)

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Read Chapters 2–3 slowly, taking note of new characters and their reactions to the narrator.

- Underline moments where the narrator observes or interprets other people.
- Notice how descriptions of the journey and landscape shift the mood.

Step 2: Focus Questions

- How does the narrator feel about the people she meets?
- How is the fact that she is a woman, possibly shaping her experience so far?
- How is the outback described differently in these chapters compared to Chapter 1?

Language & Style Focus:

Find 3 examples of **figurative language** (simile, metaphor, personification) and explain what they tell us about:

- the land
- the people
- the narrator's evolving mindset

Journal Response:

Write a short character sketch (one paragraph each) of:

1. The narrator (based on how others view her)
2. One of the male bushmen (e.g., The Dandy or the Maluka)

How are these characters shaped by the setting?

Lesson 2.2 – Clancy and the Dream of the Bush

Focus Poem: *Clancy of the Overflow* by A. B. Paterson

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Read the Poem Aloud

Pay attention to the rhythm—Paterson was a master of musical verse.

*And the bush hath friends to meet him, and their
kindly voices greet him
In the murmur of the breezes and the river on its
bars...*



Clancy of the Overflow

I had written him a letter which I had, for want of better
Knowledge, sent to where I met him down the Lachlan, years ago,
He was shearing when I knew him, so I sent the letter to him,
Just "on spec", addressed as follows, "Clancy, of The Overflow".

And an answer came directed in a writing unexpected,
(And I think the same was written with a thumb-nail dipped in tar)
Twas his shearing mate who wrote it, and verbatim I will quote it:
"Clancy's gone to Queensland droving, and we don't know where he are."

In my wild erratic fancy visions come to me of Clancy
Gone a-droving "down the Cooper" where the Western drovers go;
As the stock are slowly stringing, Clancy rides behind them singing,
For the drover's life has pleasures that the townsfolk never know.

And the bush hath friends to meet him, and their kindly voices greet him
In the murmur of the breezes and the river on its bars,
And he sees the vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended,
And at night the wond'rous glory of the everlasting stars.

I am sitting in my dingy little office, where a stingy
Ray of sunlight struggles feebly down between the houses tall,
And the foetid air and gritty of the dusty, dirty city
Through the open window floating, spreads its foulness over all

And in place of lowing cattle, I can hear the fiendish rattle
Of the tramways and the buses making hurry down the street,

And the language uninviting of the gutter children fighting,
Comes fitfully and faintly through the ceaseless tramp of feet.

And the hurrying people daunt me, and their pallid faces haunt me
As they shoulder one another in their rush and nervous haste,
With their eager eyes and greedy, and their stunted forms and weedy,
For townsfolk have no time to grow, they have no time to waste.

And I somehow rather fancy that I'd like to change with Clancy,
Like to take a turn at droving where the seasons come and go,
While he faced the round eternal of the cash-book and the journal —
But I doubt he'd suit the office, Clancy, of "The Overflow".

Step 2: Understand the Structure

- How does the rhythm and rhyme help make the bush seem appealing?
- What is the speaker's attitude toward city life?
- Is Clancy real or idealised?

Contextual Analysis:

- This poem reflects a **romanticised view** of the bush from a city-dweller's point of view.
- How does this compare to Jeannie Gunn's portrayal in 'We of the Never Never'?

Mini-Research Prompt (Optional):

Who was Banjo Paterson, and why is he a key figure in shaping how Australians have traditionally seen the outback?

Creative Extension:

Write a stanza in Paterson's style about a modern job or lifestyle, e.g.:

I sit beside the glowing screen,
While emails flood my day,
But dream of hills so wide and green
A thousand miles away...

Lesson 2.3 – Comparing Bush Representations

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Compare

- Read one paragraph from *We of the Never Never* (e.g., describing the river, camp, or track).
- Read a stanza from *Clancy of the Overflow* describing nature (the poem is in the last lesson)

Ask Yourself:

- There are two different perspectives here. Think about whether one of these perspectives speaks to you or gels with you more than the other?
- Can you empathise with, or understand each perspective (understand how they could think that way considering what they are going through), even if you don't feel the same way?
- Does one author use more imagery than the other?

Journal Response:

Answer these prompts in your journal:

1. What are the key differences in how the bush is portrayed by Gunn and Paterson?
2. Who do you relate to more: the narrator from *Never Never* or the voice in *Clancy*?
3. Which view of the outback is more appealing to you, and why?

Vocabulary & Accent Task:

Pick out 3 examples of **spelling used for effect** in the poem:

- e.g., “hath” instead of “has”, or “goin” instead of “going”
- What do these choices suggest about the speaker's character or setting?

Optional Discussion Prompt:

Discuss or write:

- “Is the bush still important to the Australian identity, even when most people live in cities?”

TOPIC 3

WOMEN AND THE OUTBACK

Topic 3 – Women and the Outback

Focus Texts:

- *We of the Never Never* by Jeannie Gunn (Chapters 4–5)
- *The Drover's Wife* by Henry Lawson
- *South of My Days* by Judith Wright

Big Ideas:

- How women experienced the hardships of the bush
- Courage, isolation, and endurance
- Gender roles in early Australian literature

Lesson 3.1 – A Woman Among Men in the Never Never

Focus Text: *We of the Never Never* (Chapters 4–5)

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Read Chapters 4–5

These chapters contain key moments where the narrator, the “Little Missus,” proves herself among male bushmen.

As you read, underline or note:

- How the narrator is spoken to or about by the men
- Instances where she defies expectations
- Descriptions of work, daily routines, and setting

Questions for Close Reading:

- What are the social expectations of women in this environment?
- What does the narrator do that earns the men's respect?
- How does the harshness of the landscape challenge her?

Style Focus:

Find 2–3 examples where the author uses:

- Humour
- Understatement
- Irony or sarcasm

What effect do these techniques have?

Journal Task:

Write a paragraph answering:

“In what ways is the narrator both a stranger and a learner in the outback?”

Include one quote that shows her growth or grit (i.e., courage, determination, perseverance & resourcefulness).

Lesson 3.2 – The Drover’s Wife: Grit in Isolation

Focus Text: *The Drover’s Wife* by Henry Lawson

Note: In this context “grit” means a combination of courage, determination, perseverance & resourcefulness.

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Read the Full Short Story

Lawson’s story presents a very different kind of bush woman—alone, tired, and resilient.

“She is used to being alone. Her husband is away with sheep.”

As You Read:

- What challenges does the woman face?
- What emotions are described—or not described?
- How does Lawson’s **minimalist style** affect the tone?

Literary Style Focus:

Look at how Lawson:

- Uses **short, plain sentences**
- Writes with little emotion, yet conveys much
- Omits the woman’s name—why?

‘The Drover’s Wife’ by Henry Lawson

The two-roomed house is built of round timber, slabs, and stringy-bark, and floored with split slabs. A big bark kitchen standing at one end is larger than the house itself, veranda included.

Bush all around - bush with no horizon, for the country is flat. No ranges in the distance. The bush consists of stunted, rotten native apple-trees. No undergrowth. Nothing to relieve the eye save the darker green of a few she-oaks which are sighing above the narrow, almost waterless creek. Nineteen miles to the nearest sign of civilisation - a shanty on the main road.

The drover, an ex-squatter, is away with sheep. His wife and children are left here alone.

Four ragged, dried-up-looking children are playing about the house. Suddenly one of them yells: "Snake! Mother, here's a snake!"

The gaunt, sun-browned bushwoman dashes from the kitchen, snatches her baby from the ground, holds it on her left hip, and reaches for a stick.

"Where is it?"

"Here! Gone in the wood-heap;" yells the eldest boy - a sharp-faced urchin of eleven. "Stop there, mother! I'll have him. Stand back! I'll have the beggar!"

"Tommy, come here, or you'll be bit. Come here at once when I tell you, you little wretch!"

The youngster comes reluctantly, carrying a stick bigger than himself. Then he yells, triumphantly:

"There it goes - under the house!" and darts away with club uplifted. At the same time the big, black, yellow-eyed dog-of-all-breeds, who has shown the wildest interest in the proceedings, breaks his chain and rushes after that snake. He is a moment late, however, and his nose reaches the crack in the slabs just as the end of its tail disappears. Almost at the same moment the boy's club comes down and skins the aforesaid nose. Alligator takes small notice of this, and proceeds to undermine the building; but he is subdued after a struggle and chained up. They cannot afford to lose him.

The drover's wife makes the children stand together near the dog-house while she watches for the snake. She gets two small dishes of milk and sets them down near the wall to tempt it to come out; but an hour goes by and it does not show itself.

It is near sunset, and a thunderstorm is coming. The children must be brought inside. She will not take them into the house, for she knows the snake is there, and may at any moment come up through a crack in the rough slab floor; so she carries several armfuls of firewood into the kitchen, and then takes the children there. The kitchen has no floor - or, rather, an earthen one - called a "ground floor" in this part of the bush. There is a large, roughly-made table in the centre of the place. She brings the children in, and makes them get on this table. They are two boys and two girls - mere babies. She gives some supper, and then, before it gets dark, she goes into house, and snatches up some pillows and bedclothes - expecting to see or lay or hand on the snake any minute. She makes a bed on the kitchen table for the children, and sits down beside it to watch all night.

She has an eye on the corner, and a green sapling club laid in readiness on the dresser by her side; also her sewing basket and a copy of the Young Ladies' Journal. She has brought the dog into the room.

Tommy turns in, under protest, but says he'll lie awake all night and smash that blinded snake.

His mother asks him how many times she has told not to swear.

He has his club with him under the bedclothes, and Jacky protests:

"Mummy! Tommy's skinnin' me alive wif his club. Make him take it out."

Tommy: "Shet up you little ---! D'yer want to be bit with the snake?"

Jacky shuts up.

"If yer bit," says Tommy, after a pause, "you'll swell up, an smell, an' turn red an' green an' blue all over till yer bust. Won't he mother?"

"Now then, don't frighten the child. Go to sleep," she says.

The two younger children go to sleep, and now and then Jacky complains of being "skeezed." More room is made for him. Presently Tommy says: "Mother! Listen to them (adjective) little possums. I'd like to screw their blanky necks."

And Jacky protests drowsily.

"But they don't hurt us, the little blanks!"

Mother: "There, I told you you'd teach Jacky to swear." But the remark makes her smile. Jacky goes to sleep.

Presently Tommy asks:

"Mother! Do you think they'll ever extricate the (adjective) kangaroo?"

"Lord! How am I to know, child? Go to sleep."

"Will you wake me if the snake comes out?"

"Yes. Go to sleep."

Near midnight. The children are all asleep and she sits there still, sewing and reading by turns. From time to time she glances round the floor and wall-plate, and, whenever she hears a noise, she reaches for the stick. The thunderstorm comes on, and the wind, rushing through the cracks in the slab wall, threatens to blow out her candle. She places it on a sheltered part of the dresser and fixes up a newspaper to protect it. At every flash of lightning, the cracks between the slabs gleam like polished silver. The thunder rolls, and the rain comes down in torrents.

Alligator lies at full length on the floor, with his eyes turned towards the partition. She knows by this that the snake is there. There are large cracks in that wall opening under the floor of the dwelling-house.

She is not a coward, but recent events have shaken her nerves. A little son of her brother-in-law was lately bitten by a snake, and died. Besides, she has not heard from her husband for six months, and is anxious about him.

He was a drover, and started squatting here when they were married. The drought of 18-- ruined him. He had to sacrifice the remnant of his flock and go droving again. He intends to move his family into the nearest town when he comes back, and, in the meantime, his brother, who keeps a shanty on the main road, comes over about once a month with provisions. The wife has still a couple of cows, one horse, and a few sheep. The brother-in-law kills one of the latter occasionally, gives her what she needs of it, and takes the rest in return for other provisions.

She is used to being left alone. She once lived like this for eighteen months. As a girl she built the usual castles in the air; but all her girlish hopes and aspirations have long been dead. She finds all the excitement and recreation she needs in the Young Ladies' Journal, and Heaven help her! Takes a pleasure in the fashion plates.

Her husband is an Australian, and so is she. He is careless, but a good enough husband. If he had the means he would take her to the city and keep her there like a princess. They are used to being apart, or at least she is. "No use fretting," she says. He may forget sometimes that he is married; but if he has a good cheque when he comes back he will give most of it to her. When he had money he took her to the city several times - hired a railway sleeping compartment, and put up at the best hotels. He also bought her a buggy, but they had to sacrifice that along with the rest.

The last two children were born in the bush - one while her husband was bringing a drunken doctor, by force, to attend to her. She was alone on this occasion, and very weak. She had been ill with fever. She prayed to God to send her assistance. God sent Black Mary - the "whitest" gin in all the land. Or, at least, God sent King Jimmy first, and he sent Black Mary. He put his black face round the door post, took in the situation at a glance, and said cheerfully: "All right, missus - I bring my old woman, she down along a creek."

One of the children died while she was here alone. She rode nineteen miles for assistance, carrying the dead child.

It must be near one or two o'clock. The fire is burning low. Alligator lies with his head resting on his paws, and watches the wall. He is not a very beautiful dog, and the light shows numerous old wounds where the hair will not grow. He is afraid of nothing on the face of the earth or under it. He will tackle a bullock as readily as he will tackle a flea. He hates all other dogs - except kangaroo-dogs - and has a marked dislike to friends or relations of the family. They seldom call, however. He sometimes makes friends with strangers. He hates snakes and has killed many, but he will be bitten some day and die; most snake-dogs end that way.

Now and then the bushwoman lays down her work and watches, and listens, and thinks. She thinks of things in her own life, for there is little else to think about.

The rain will make the grass grow, and this reminds her how she fought a bush-fire once while her husband was away. The grass was long, and very dry, and the fire threatened to burn her out. She put on an old pair of her husband's trousers and beat out the flames with a green bough, till great drops of sooty perspiration stood out on her forehead and ran in streaks down her blackened arms. The sight of his mother in trousers greatly amused Tommy, who worked like a little hero by her side, but the terrified baby howled lustily for his "mummy." The fire would have mastered her but for four excited bushmen who arrived in the nick of time. It was a mixed-up affair all round; when she went to take up the baby he screamed and struggled convulsively, thinking it was a "blackman;" and Alligator, trusting more to the child's sense than his own instinct, charged furiously, and (being old and slightly deaf) did not in his excitement at first recognize his mistress's voice, but continued to hang on to the moleskins until choked off by Tommy with a saddle-strap. The dog's sorrow for his blunder, and his anxiety to let it be known that it was all a mistake, was as evident as his ragged tail and a twelve-inch grin could make it. It was a glorious time for the boys; a day to look back to, and talk about, and laugh over for many years.

She thinks how she fought a flood during her husband's absence. She stood for hours in the drenching downpour, and dug an overflow gutter to save the dame across the creek. But she could not save it. There are things that a bushwoman cannot do. Next morning the dam was

broken, and her heart was nearly broken too, for she thought how her husband would feel when he came home and saw the result of years of labour swept away. She cried then.

She also fought the pleuro-pneumonia - dosed and bled the few remaining cattle, and wept again when her two best cows died.

Again, she fought a mad bullock that besieged the house for a day. She made bullets and fired at him through cracks in the slabs with an old shot-gun. He was dead in the morning. She skinned him and got seventeen-and-sixpence for the hide.

She also fights the crows and eagles that have designs on her chickens. Her plan of campaign is very original. The children cry "Crows, mother!" and she rushes out and aims a broomstick at the birds as though it were a gun, and says "Bung!" The crows leave in a hurry; they are cunning, but a woman's cunning is greater.

Occasionally a bushman in the horrors, or a villainous-looking sundowner, comes and nearly scares the life out of her. She generally tells the suspicious-looking stranger that her husband and two sons are at work below the dam, or over at the yard, for he always cunningly inquires for the boss.

Only last week a gallows-faced swagman - having satisfied himself that there were no men on the place - threw his swag down on the veranda, and demanded tucker. She gave him something to eat; then he expressed the intention of staying for the night. It was sundown then. She got a batten from the sofa, loosened the dog, and confronted the stranger, holding the batten in one hand and the dog's collar with the other. "Now you go!" she said. He looked at her and at the dog, said "All right, mum," in a cringing tone and left. She was a determined-looking woman, and Alligator's yellow eyes glared unpleasantly - besides, the dog's chawing-up apparatus greatly resembled that of the reptile he was named after.

She has few pleasures to think of as she sits here alone by the fire, on guard against a snake. All days are much the same for her; but on Sunday afternoon she dresses herself, tidies the children, smartens up baby, and goes for a lonely walk along the bush-track, pushing an old perambulator in front of her. She does this every Sunday. She takes as much care to make herself and the children look smart as she would if she were going to do the block in the city. There is nothing to see, however, and not a soul to meet. You might walk for twenty miles along this track without being able to fix a point in your mind, unless you are a bushman. This is because of the everlasting, maddening sameness of the stunted trees - that monotony which makes a man long to break away and travel as far as trains can go, and sail as far as ship can sail - and farther.

But this bushwoman is used to the loneliness of it. As a girl-wife she hated it, but now she would feel strange away from it.

She is glad when her husband returns, but she does not gush or make a fuss about it. She gets him something good to eat, and tidies up the children.

She seems contented with her lot. She loves her children, but has no time to show it. She seems harsh to them. Her surroundings are not favourable to the development of the "womanly" or sentimental side of nature.

It must be nearing morning now; but the clock is in the dwelling-house. Her candle is nearly done; she forgot that she was out of candles. Some more wood must be got to keep the fire up, and so she shuts the dog inside and hurries around to the woodheap. The rain has cleared off. She seizes a stick, pulls it out, and - crash! The whole pile collapses.

Yesterday she bargained with a stray blackfellow to bring her some wood, and while he was at work she went in search of a missing cow. She was absent an hour or so, and the native black made good use of his time. On her return she was so astonished to see a good heap of wood by the chimney, and she gave him an extra fig of tobacco, and praised him for not being lazy. He thanked her, and left with head erect and chest well out. He was the last of his tribe and a King; but he had built that wood-heap hollow.

She is hurt now, and tears spring to her eyes as she sits down again by the table. She takes up a handkerchief to wipe the tears away, but pokes her eyes with her bare fingers instead. The handkerchief is full of holes, and she finds that she has put her thumb through one, and her forefinger through another.

This makes her laugh, to the surprise of the dog. She has a keen, very keen, sense of the ridiculous; and some time or other she will amuse bushmen with the story.

She has been amused before like that. One day she sat down "to have a good cry," as she said - and the old cat rubbed against her dress and "cried too." Then she had to laugh.

It must be near daylight now. The room is very close and hot because of the fire. Alligator still watches the wall from time to time. Suddenly he becomes greatly interested; he draws himself a few inches nearer the partition, and a thrill runs through his body. The hair on the back of neck begins to bristle, and the battle-light is in his yellow eyes. She knows what this means, and lays her hand on the stick. The lower end of one of the partition slabs has a large crack on both sides. An evil pair of small, bright bead-like eyes glisten at one of these holes. The snake - a black one - comes slowly out, about a foot, and moves its head up and down. The dog lies still, and the woman sits as one fascinated. The snake comes out a foot further. She lifts her stick, and the reptile, as though suddenly aware of danger, sticks his head in through the crack on the other side of the slab, and hurries to get his tail round after him. Alligator springs, and his jaws come together with a snap. He misses, for his nose is large, and the snake's body close down on the angle formed by the slabs and the floor. He snaps again as the tail comes round. He has the snake now, and tugs it out eighteen inches. Thud, thud. Alligator gives another pull and he has the snake out - a black brute, five feet long. The head rises to dart about, but the dog has the enemy close to the neck. He is a big, heavy dog, but quick as a terrier. He shakes the snake as though he felt the original curse in common with mankind. The eldest boy wakes up, seizes his stick, and tries to get out of bed, but his mother forces him back with a grip of iron. Thud, thud - the snake's back is broken in several places. Thud, thud - its head is crushed, and Alligator's nose skinned again.

She lifts the mangled reptile on the point of her stick, carries it to the fire, and throws it in; then piles on the wood and watches the snake burn. The boy and the dog watch too. She lays her hand on the dog's head, and all the fierce, angry light dies out of his yellow eyes. The younger children are quieted, and presently go to sleep. The dirty-legged boy stands for a moment in his shirt, watching the fire. Presently he looks up at her, sees the tears in her eyes, and, throwing his arms around her neck exclaims:

"Mother, I won't never go drovin' blarst me if I do!"

And she hugs him to her worn-out breast and kisses him; and they sit thus together while the sickly daylight breaks over the bush.

Comparison Prompt:

In your journal, write a short paragraph comparing the narrator in *Never Never* with the Drover's Wife:

- Who has more support?
 - How do both respond to danger or difficulty?
 - What does each story say about women in the bush?
-

Lesson 3.3 – Judith Wright’s ‘South of My Days’

Focus Poem: *South of My Days* by Judith Wright

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Read the Poem Slowly (at least twice)

This is a nostalgic, lyrical poem about the land and its people. For example....

*“South of my days’ circle, part of my blood’s country,
rises that tableland, high delicate outline...”*

Note: This poem is dense. Feel free to look up unfamiliar words or phrases.

South Of My Days by Judith Wright

*South of my days' circle, part of my blood's country,
rises that tableland, high delicate outline
of bony slopes wincing under the winter,
low trees, blue-leaved and olive, outcropping granite-
clean, lean, hungry country. The creek's leaf-silenced,
willow choked, the slope a tangle of medlar and crab-apple
branching over and under, blotched with a green lichen;
and the old cottage lurches in for shelter.*

*O cold the black-frost night. The walls draw in to the warmth
and the old roof cracks its joints; the slung kettle
hisses a leak on the fire. Hardly to be believed that summer will turn up again some day in a wave of
rambler-roses,
thrust it's hot face in here to tell another yarn-
a story old Dan can spin into a blanket against the winter.
Seventy years of stories he clutches round his bones.
Seventy years are hived in him like old honey.*

*Droving that year, Charleville to the Hunter,
nineteen-one it was, and the drought beginning;
sixty head left at the McIntyre, the mud round them
hardened like iron; and the yellow boy died
in the sulky ahead with the gear, but the horse went on,
stopped at Sandy Camp and waited in the evening.
It was the flies we seen first, swarming like bees.
Came to the Hunter, three hundred head of a thousand-
cruel to keep them alive - and the river was dust.*

*Or mustering up in the Bogongs in the autumn
when the blizzards came early. Brought them down; we
brought them down, what aren't there yet. Or driving for Cobb's on the run
up from Tamworth-Thunderbolt at the top of Hungry Hill,
and I give him a wink. I wouldn't wait long, Fred,*

*not if I was you. The troopers are just behind,
coming for that job at the Hillgrove. He went like a luny, him on his big black horse.*

*Oh, they slide and they vanish
as he shuffles the years like a pack of conjuror's cards.
True or not, it's all the same; and the frost on the roof
cracks like a whip, and the back-log break into ash.
Wake, old man. This is winter, and the yarns are over.
No-one is listening
South of my days' circle
I know it dark against the stars, the high lean country
full of old stories that still go walking in my sleep.*

Deep Dive:

- How does Wright describe the land? What mood does it create?
- Who is “old Dan” and what does he represent?
- How does this poem add to your understanding of women’s connections to the land?

Spelling for Effect:

Find 1–2 examples where Wright uses informal or stylised spelling:

- How does this add authenticity or character?

Reflection Prompt:

Choose one of the three women featured this week:

- The narrator in *Never Never*
- The Drover’s Wife
- Judith Wright as poetic voice

Write a personal response exploring: “**What does her experience of the land teach me about strength?**”

TOPIC 4

ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVE

Topic 4 – Aboriginal Perspectives

Focus Texts:

- *We of the Never Never* by Jeannie Gunn (Chapters 6–7)
- *We Are Going* by Oodgeroo Noonuccal (formerly Kath Walker)

Big Ideas:

- Representation of Aboriginal Australians in early literature
- Comparing Indigenous voices to colonial perspectives
- Understanding land as cultural identity

Lesson 4.1 – Aboriginal Characters in Early Australian Writing

Focus Text: *We of the Never Never* (Chapters 6–7)

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Read Chapters 6–7 of *We of the Never Never*

These chapters include some of the earliest descriptions of Aboriginal characters from a white author's perspective.

Step 2: Close Reading – Look For...

- Descriptions of Aboriginal people (language, tone, attitudes)
- The narrator's beliefs and assumptions
- The roles Aboriginal characters play in the station community

Questions for Critical Thinking:

- Does the narrator admire or patronise the Aboriginal people? Or both?
- How does the language reflect the views of her time?
- Are the Aboriginal characters presented as individuals or stereotypes?

Journal Task:

Write a short paragraph answering:

“What can we learn about colonial attitudes toward First Nations people from this story?”

Include one direct quote from the text.

Lesson 4.2 – First Nations Voice: We Are Going by Oodgeroo Noonuccal

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Read the Poem Aloud

Try reading twice: once silently and once out loud. Listen for the rhythm and emotion e.g.,...

*“They came in to the little town
A semi-naked band subdued and silent,
All that remained of their tribe.”*

We Are Going by Oodgeroo Noonuccal
They came in to the little town
A semi-naked band subdued and silent
All that remained of their tribe.
They came here to the place of their old bora ground
Where now the many white men hurry about like ants.
Notice of the estate agent reads: 'Rubbish May Be Tipped Here'.
Now it half covers the traces of the old bora ring.
'We are as strangers here now, but the white tribe are the strangers.
We belong here, we are of the old ways.
We are the corroboree and the bora ground,
We are the old ceremonies, the laws of the elders.
We are the wonder tales of Dream Time, the tribal legends told.
We are the past, the hunts and the laughing games, the wandering camp fires.

We are the lightning bolt over Gaphembah Hill
Quick and terrible,
And the Thunderer after him, that loud fellow.
We are the quiet daybreak paling the dark lagoon.
We are the shadow-ghosts creeping back as the camp-fires burn low.
We are nature and the past, all the old ways
Gone now and scattered.
The scrubs are gone, the hunting and the laughter.
The eagle is gone, the emu and the kangaroo are gone from this place.
The bora ring is gone.
The corroboree is gone.
And we are going.'

Step 2: Reflect on Meaning

- What is the poet mourning?
- How does the structure of the poem reinforce the message?
- What does the repeated phrase “*We are going*” mean in a deeper sense?

Context:

- This was one of the first published poems by a First Nations woman in mainstream Australian literature (1964).
- Oodgeroo speaks **from within** the culture, not looking **at** it.

Response Task:

Write a personal reflection (one paragraph) on the emotional tone of the poem.

Then answer:

“How does this poem challenge the portrayal of Aboriginal people in *We of the Never Never*?”

Lesson 4.3 – Comparative Reflection: Whose Story Is It?

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Re-read a small excerpt from *We of the Never Never* (Ch. 6–7) and then re-read *We Are Going* (from the last lesson).

Comparative Prompts:

- How does each text present the **loss of culture or place**?
- Who is allowed to speak for Aboriginal experience in each?
- What emotions are in each text—respect, sorrow, pride, discomfort?

Journal Writing:

Think about the following questions and jot down any significant thoughts about the topic of discussion in your English journal:

1. Which perspective felt more powerful to you, and why?
2. If you were creating a collection of Australian literature, why would both texts be important to include?
3. When reading a historical text, and when modern views could be very different from how people thought in that time and culture – there are two ways of looking at the literature. i) We can look at it from our perspective and judge it as wrong or outdated. Or ii) we can try to understand the mindset of the people living at that time, and not judge them, but realise that they are as much a product of their times as we are usually a product of the thinking of our parents, our peers, the television, youtube, or the social-media algorithm program that determines what we view. As well as perspective i) and ii) there is also an option iii) = When we realise that we have been very likely influenced by so many ideas, and very often we can be swayed in one direction or another by what we are viewing at the time; then where is there an absolute authority with absolute truth? This is where understanding what God thinks on a topic, is so helpful to understand what view we should take on an issue. If they are available, discuss this question #3 with your parent/tutor.

Language Focus – Spelling and Voice:

- In *We Are Going*, the spelling is conventional, but the voice is poetic, direct, and emotional.
- Compare this with the narrator’s voice in *Never Never*. Whose voice feels more personal? Which seems more universal?

Lesson 4. No one is disadvantaged just because they are Indigenous

Read this article by Aboriginal senator Jacinta Price to get another perspective.

The Australian: July 13 2024

July 15, 2024 [Share](#)

No one is disadvantaged just because they are Indigenous



It's a cliché that if you don't learn from history you are doomed to repeat it. More importantly, it's also true that failing to learn from history – and to value history – means failing to move forward and building on the accomplishments that have come before.

As 18th century British philosopher Edmund Burke said: “In history, a great volume is unrolled for our instruction, drawing the materials of future wisdom from the past errors and infirmities of mankind.”

The study of history is not only about learning from past mistakes, but also putting into practice the lessons of success. It helps us understand who we are, forms our policies and culture, and affects how we see ourselves.

So it is a great irony that many on the left who take a “progressive” view of history are also determined to suppress, obfuscate and outright deny the parts of Australia's history that demonstrate our great prosperity, security and success, as well as those parts of Indigenous history that might be less than savoury.

The black armband version of history that [the likes of Bruce Pascoe](#) promote in his resoundingly debunked *Dark Emu* shows this well. We are painted a “rainbows and lollipops” and “noble savage” fiction of an Indigenous civilisation that was destroyed by the evil white men.



This is nonsense: things are much more complex and nuanced, and it is an injustice to the humanity of Indigenous Australians and the reality of the modern success story that Australia has become after British and European settlement.

It is also an insulting reinvention of true knowledge and understanding of traditional culture with no relevance to the creation stories known as Jukurrpa.

Not only is this story incorrect, it has real consequences for today's Australia. It's a story that holds Indigenous people back, as they are encouraged by the left to wallow in victimhood and are rewarded for rejecting the enormous benefits of becoming fully part of modern Australia – the benefits being enjoyed by the very same inner-city activists who are encouraging the victimhood.

Our Australian story is not perfect. There are shameful chapters. But the arc of our history has been overwhelmingly positive. It's a story that has few historical parallels.

In telling the story properly, we must be honest about what pre-British settlement life was like. It was not a subsistent paradise. There was conflict within, and between, clans and tribal groups.

Even by standards of the time, there was retrograde behaviour, such as infanticide and violent cultural payback practices that often involved the slaughtering of men, women and children. The hard fact is that once modernity emerged across the globe, the hunter-gatherer life was not going to last long.

There is no alternative possible version of Australian history where Indigenous Australians would have been left alone to continue their way of life.

The only question was about colonisation by whom – and when, rather than if – and we are fortunate it was the British who arrived and not many of the other alternatives.

Few younger Australians are taught these days about the letter from King George to Governor Phillip instructing him to maintain friendly relations with the native people.

“You are to endeavour by every possible means to open an Intercourse with the Natives and to conciliate their affections, enjoining all Our Subjects to live in amity and kindness with them,” he wrote. “And if any of Our Subjects shall wantonly destroy them, or give them any unnecessary Interruption in the exercise of their several occupations, it is our Will and Pleasure that you do cause such offenders to be brought to punishment according to the degree of the Offence.”

Of course, the British settlers did not always live up to King George’s instructions, but that doesn’t change the fact the instructions were given.

Even in the moments in our history when barbaric crimes were committed against Aboriginal Australians, the civilising rule of law often played out. The infamous Myall Creek massacre in 1838 marks a dark and bloody moment in our history, when 28 Indigenous Australians were murdered by British settlers. But the activists have done a good job of playing down what happened after the massacre.

Contemporary sources indicate that while there were pockets of excuse-making for the perpetrators, there was also clearly an abiding desire of the colony as a whole to do the right thing. The attorney-general, John Plunkett, prosecuted the perpetrators and then – when they were acquitted on a technicality – he prosecuted them again. Seven white men were thus found guilty and hanged.

During the trial, Justice Dowling took care to remind the jury that the law made no distinction between the murder of an Aboriginal person and the murder of a European person. In the sentencing Justice Burton said: “The crime was, however, committed in the sight of God, and the blood of the victims cries for vengeance.”

A crime was committed and justice – to a large extent – was served. Notably, this was a civilised common law process that would not have happened pre-settlement. Violence between tribes and clans was previously simply met with more violence. It is also worth mentioning the violence during this early settlement period was not one-sided.

Crimes were committed, violence and injustice perpetrated by bad actors, but I don’t think it should be controversial to say that both black and white Australia were making the best of things by the standards of the times.

This is demonstrated by the fact that, out of these decades of disruption, something resembling a nation emerged.

So much so that when duty called our first Anzacs to serve in the Great War, more than a thousand Indigenous Australians signed up to fight. Many of these heroes went above and beyond. For example, Albert Knight and his two brothers. Albert was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for conspicuous gallantry in an attack on the village of Bony.

Then there’s Bill Rawlings, who was awarded the Military Medal for leading a bayonet charge at Morlancourt, France. Rawlings was killed in action on August 9, 1918, and buried at Heath Cemetery, Harbonnières.

They are Australian heroes who fought for their country, but their stories of courage and gallantry are not often told by those who take the black armband view.

In the century since, we've seen well-intentioned efforts to integrate these two different parts of Australian society.

Again, it has not been perfect. But time and again, an honest examination of things finds Australians – both black and white – striving to find a way forward together under the standards and norms of the times in which they lived.

Even when misguided policies are pursued, like those that befell the Stolen Generation, we find that, over time, the efforts to integrate proved more fruitful than policies of separation. Indeed, the records show many descendants of the Stolen Generations now enjoy greater prosperity and success than those generations who were simply neglected and left to live in poverty and squalor.

The ends don't always justify the means, but honesty is required if we are to move forward and reconcile as a nation.

Similarly, we can see the mixed results in the more progressive project of Native Title. It should be seen as the beginning of a way forward, but too often it's been used as a mechanism to lock up land and keep communities stuck in time.



That's why when I see the famous photo of Gough Whitlam pouring sand into Vincent Lingiari's hands, I see two things at once. It's a historic moment of the two cultures coming together, but also the moment that consigned many in my community to poverty and anti-progress. The reality is that the bureaucratic regime of Indigenous policies pursued by activists and elites in the inner cities has not moved the dial. At the same time, the sensible policies they reject, such as mutual obligation and cashless debit cards, have made inroads into alleviating Indigenous disadvantage.

Not so long ago, I was informed by a former social worker in the Northern Territory that upon arrival to her first remote Aboriginal community she was expressly told that, regarding any views she had of the potential of Aboriginal people in the context of wider Australia, she needed now to lower her standards. This is the "racism of low expectations".

Last year, in my address to the National Press Club – at the height of the voice referendum debate – I made more than a few headlines when I highlighted positive impacts of colonisation on Indigenous Australians, instead of merely regurgitating the standard deficit narrative peddled by those seeking to maintain the victim mentality.



I stand by that view, because when you take an honest, even-handed position on our nation's history, it's obviously true. It doesn't mean there was no crime or violence or injustice. It doesn't mean people aren't doing it tough in Indigenous communities.

What it means is that the fact of Australia is irreversible.

Colonisation happened and was always going to happen. It brought things like democracy, freedom and prosperity that were not known to Indigenous people.

To the extent that progressives continue to blame “colonisation”, what they really mean is they want to keep up their resistance to real reconciliation and integration. They would rather keep their policies of separatism and paternalism and dress them up in academic language than solve the real problems. If we really do want to heed the lessons of our history there are only two ways forward.

First, we can continue along the separatist road that sees Indigenous Australians as irrevocably damaged by settlement and wants to keep Aboriginal culture stuck in time like a museum piece. Traditional culture is romanticised by those who do not live it, while reinvention of culture has become an industry in the name of reconciliation for the purpose of political influence. This movement aims to keep Indigenous Australians on country, where they are land rich, but dirt poor.

This way forward leaves negative parts of Indigenous culture alone to grow and fester. Things like violent cultural payback, arranged marriage and apportioning tragedies and mishaps to sorcery, all of which are anathema to modern culture.

This is a view that lowers standards for Indigenous Australians. It attributes language and practices to some groups that do not belong to them, as a way of building up the victimising feeling that “things were taken away”.

This has been the strategy of decades of government agencies and academic activists, and yet they fail to draw the obvious connection between this approach and the failure to make much ground on Closing the Gap.

We need a second way: the advancement movement. Under this movement, we are all Australians. We can learn and cherish our Indigenous culture while still meeting the same standards that every other Australian is expected to meet.

Our culture will be respected like never before when Indigenous Australians are making it thrive under their own steam and not as part of a welfare industry. That culture will become part of our national tapestry, rather than a separate story to be fought over.

Before Whitlam came with the sit-down money, Indigenous Australians worked as jackeroos for the cattleman in their backyard. There should be no fly-in, fly-out workers in communities with Indigenous Australians on welfare.

We know where the gap is – it is 20 per cent of the 3 per cent. It’s remote Indigenous Australians, many of whom do not have English as a first language. We already know that we can either fix or exacerbate that by school attendance.



The true lesson of our history is that while we are not perfect, a bunch of imperfect people from different cultures have formed a truly great and prosperous nation. And to the extent that some in our nation are not enjoying that prosperity, it's because of policies of separatism and a black-armband obsession with injustice at the expense of moving forward together.

The simple fact is that no one is disadvantaged just because they are Indigenous. But those who are disadvantaged will remain so if we don't learn the lessons of our past and move forward together.

No meaningful change comes from selling ourselves short through guilt politics. It comes from understanding our history in its entirety.

This means we will not repeat our mistakes, but take pride in our remarkable shared achievements as a nation, so we can pursue a better future for all our children.

Senator Jacinta Nampijinpa Price is opposition spokesperson for Indigenous Australians

Narration:

If they are available, ask your parent or tutor to listen while you retell the views of Jacinta Price. This may also lead into fruitful discussion.

TOPIC 5

LANGUAGE, ACCENT & REALISM

Topic 5 – Language, Accent & Realism

Focus Texts:

- *We of the Never Never* by Jeannie Gunn (Chapters 8–9)
- *The Teams* by Henry Lawson

Big Ideas:

- How spelling and phrasing represent speech, character, and identity
- The role of realism in Australian literature
- How writers capture the rhythm and voice of the land

Lesson 5.1 – Realism in the Never Never

Focus Text: *We of the Never Never* (Chapters 8–9)

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Read Chapters 8–9

Focus on:

- The growing familiarity the narrator has with station life
- Conversations with bushmen or station hands
- Changes in the narrator’s voice or perspective

Watch For:

- How the narrator writes dialogue – does she spell it as it sounds?
- What kind of people are being portrayed through their speech?
- Are there moments when humour or slang changes the mood?

Style and Spelling Focus:

Find 2–3 examples where the spelling is altered to reflect accent or dialect. E.g., “ain’t”, “’im” instead of “him”, or clipped endings like “goin”.

Questions to consider:

- Does it help make the character feel real?
- Does it help the reader hear the speaker's voice?

Journal Task:

Write a short paragraph:

“How does the way people speak in *We of the Never Never* help you picture the world they live in?”

Include one direct quote of dialogue.

Lesson 5.2 – Bush Voices in Poetry: The Teams by Henry Lawson

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Read the Poem Aloud

This rhythmic poem describes bullock teams moving slowly through the bush. For example...

*“A cloud of dust on the long white road;
And the teams go creeping on,
Inch by inch with the weary load...”*

The Teams



*A cloud of dust on the long white road,
And the teams go creeping on
Inch by inch with the weary load;
And by the power of the green-hide goad
The distant goal is won.*

*With eyes half-shut to the blinding dust,
And necks to the yokes bent low,
The beasts are pulling as bullocks must;
And the shining tires might almost rust
While the spokes are turning slow.*

*With face half-hid 'neath a broad-brimmed hat
That shades from the heat's white waves,
And shouldered whip with its green-hide plait,
The driver plods with a gait like that
Of his weary, patient slaves.*

*He wipes his brow, for the day is hot,
And spits to the left with spite;
He shouts at 'Bally', and flicks at 'Scot',
And raises dust from the back of 'Spot',
And spits to the dusty right.*

*He'll sometimes pause as a thing of form
In front of a settler's door,*

*And ask for a drink, and remark 'It's warm,
Or say 'There's signs of a thunder-storm';
But he seldom utters more.*

*But the rains are heavy on roads like these;
And, fronting his lonely home,
For weeks together the settler sees
The teams bogged down to the axletrees,
Or ploughing the sodden loam.*

*And then when the roads are at their worst,
The bushman's children hear
The cruel blows of the whips reversed
While bullocks pull as their hearts would burst,
And bellow with pain and fear.*

*And thus with little of joy or rest
Are the long, long journeys done;
And thus — 'tis a cruel war at the best —
Is distance fought in the mighty West,
And the lonely battles won.*

Step 2: Annotate the Text. With a pencil, mark the following:

- Examples of repetition
- Sound effects (alliteration, onomatopoeia)
- Language that shows hard work or the harshness of the land

Literary and Realism Focus:

- How does the rhythm mimic the slow movement of the bullock team?
- Does Lawson use spelling or phrasing to mimic rural speech?
- What emotions does the poem stir—admiration, exhaustion, pride?

Creative Task:

Write a short descriptive paragraph or poem about a form of **hard work** you've seen or experienced, using rhythm to match the movement (e.g., walking, sweeping, digging, lifting).

Lesson 5.3 – Voice, Spelling and Characterisation

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Review a conversation from *We of the Never Never* (Ch. 8–9). Choose a few lines with strong dialect or character.

Step 2: Compare it with one stanza from *The Teams* (in the previous lesson).

Ask:

- What do these writers *notice* about work and speech?
- How does spelling help paint a picture of the person or the place?

Journal Response:

Answer the following:

1. What do you notice about the way Australians are represented in both texts?
2. Do the people in these works seem proud of their work, or worn down by it?
3. Choose one phrase from either text that stands out to you. What does it suggest about Australia at the time?

Language Task – Accent in Writing:

Try rewriting a short conversation (2–3 lines) from a modern setting (e.g., a café, workshop, or sports field), using **informal or phonetic spelling** to show character voice.

Example:

“Yeah, nah, reckon we’ll finish ‘er off ‘round five. You bring the ute?”

TOPIC 6

THE POWER OF PLACE

Topic 6 – The Power of Place

Focus Texts:

- *We of the Never Never* by Jeannie Gunn (Chapters 10–11)
- *Rain from Nowhere* by Murray Hartin

Big Ideas:

- Landscape as more than background—place as character
- Emotional ties to land, memory, and survival
- Shifting from observation to deep reflection

Lesson 6.1 – The Station as Home (or Not?)

Focus Text: *We of the Never Never* (Chapters 10–11)

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Read Chapters 10–11

These chapters focus more on life as it settles into routine—but also begin to hint at tensions, departure, or changes.

Step 2: Reflect on Setting

- How is the station now described compared to earlier in the book?
- How does the narrator’s emotional response to the place change?
- What scenes show deep affection or frustration with the land?

Style Focus:

Find 2–3 passages where Gunn uses:

- Descriptive language to evoke emotion
- Landscape as symbolic (hope, loneliness, harshness)
- Tone changes—what’s different now from the early chapters?

Journal Task:

Write a paragraph answering:

“How has the narrator’s relationship with the Never Never changed since Chapter 1?”

Support your answer with one quote from the text.

Lesson 6.2 – Rain from Nowhere (Murray Hartin)

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Read or Listen to the Poem

If available, listen to Murray Hartin's recorded performance of *Rain from Nowhere* (search online).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDMibSf6WRw>

If you can't access it online, then read it aloud with feeling.

RAIN FROM NOWHERE – MURRAY HRATIN/CATHERIN CLIFFORD

His cattle didn't get a bid; they were fairly bloody poor,
What was he going to do? He couldn't feed them anymore,
The dams were all but dry; hay was thirteen bucks a bale,
Last month's talk of rain was just a fairytale.

His credit had run out, no chance to pay what's owed,
Bad thoughts ran through his head as he drove down Gully Road,
"Geez, great granddad bought the place back in 1898,
"Now I'm such a useless bastard, I'll have to shut the gate.

"Can't support my wife and kids, not like my dad and those before,
Crikey, grandma kept it going while pop fought in the war."
With depression now his master, he abandoned what was right,
There's no place in life for failures, he'd end it all tonight.

There were still some things to do, he'd have to shoot the cattle first,
Of all the jobs he'd ever done, that would be the worst.
He'd have a shower, watch the news, then they'd all sit down for tea,
Read his kids a bedtime story, watch some more TV,

Kiss his wife goodnight, say he was off to shoot some roos,
Then in a paddock far away he'd blow away the blues.
But he drove in the gate and stopped – as he always had
To check the roadside mailbox – and found a letter from his Dad.

Now his Dad was not a writer, Mum did all the cards and mail.
But he knew the writing from the notebooks that he used at cattle sales.
He sensed the nature of its contents, felt moisture in his eyes,
Just the fact his Dad had written was enough to make him cry.

"Son, I know it's bloody tough; it's a cruel and twisted game,
"This life upon the land when you're screaming out for rain,
"There's no candle in the darkness, not a single speck of light,
"But don't let the demon get you, you have to do what's right;

"I don't know what's in your head but push the bad thoughts well away,
"See, you'll always have your family at the back end of the day;
"You have to talk to someone, and yes I know I rarely did.
"But you have to think about Fiona and the kids."

Then he strode towards the homestead, shoulders back and head held high,
He still knew the road was tough but there was purpose in his eye.
He called his wife and children, who'd lived through all his pain,
Hugs said more than words – he'd come back to them again.

They talked of silver linings, how good times always follow bad,
Then he walked towards the phone, picked it up and rang his Dad.
And while the kids set up the Squatter, he hugged his wife again,
Then they heard the roll of thunder, and they smelt the smell of rain.

Deep Dive:

- Who are the characters?
- What's the setting—and how does drought affect the tone?
- What emotions rise through the rhythm and rhyme?

Literary and Emotional Power:

- How does the landscape intensify despair or hope?
- How does the **rain** function as a turning point?

Response Task:

Write a paragraph response to the question:

“What role does the land play in the emotions of the father and son?”

Optional: If you're comfortable, journal your own experience of a place that shaped you (e.g., a holiday spot, garden, bush track).

Lesson 6.3 – The Landscape Speaks

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Compare a descriptive passage from *We of the Never Never* with a powerful stanza from *Rain from Nowhere* (from the last lesson).

Ask yourself:

- In what way do these writers give the landscape **a voice**?
- How does each writer use language (spelling, rhythm, phrasing) to connect land with emotion?

Journal Response:

Answer these three reflection prompts:

1. Do you see the Australian landscape as friend, enemy, or teacher in these texts? Why?
2. Which piece—novel or poem—moved you more this week? What made it powerful?
3. Do you think Australian identity is still closely tied to the land, or has this changed?

Extension – Language in Action:

Choose one descriptive passage of landscape from either text and **rewrite it in your own voice**, imagining that scene today. You could change the setting, time, or speaker—just keep the connection to place strong.

Example starters:

“The paddocks were empty, silent except for the wind...”

“I stood at the edge of the driveway, looking at the road that never quite ended...”

Topic 7 – Literary Style & Tone

Focus Texts:

- *The Drover's Wife* by Henry Lawson (revisited)
- *In Defence of the Bush* by A. B. Paterson

Big Ideas:

- Tone as a window into the author's attitude
- Literary rivalry between romanticism and realism
- The power of style to persuade or challenge

Lesson 7.1 – Revisiting the Drover's Wife: Tone & Restraint

Focus Text: *The Drover's Wife* by Henry Lawson

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Re-read the Story

If possible, read it aloud this time. Lawson's tone becomes clearer through rhythm and brevity.

Step 2: Mark the Tone

As you read, underline:

- Emotionally neutral statements that actually reveal deep feeling
- Short, clipped descriptions
- Scenes of danger or despair delivered in a quiet voice

'The Drover's Wife' by Henry Lawson

The two-roomed house is built of round timber, slabs, and stringy-bark, and floored with split slabs. A big bark kitchen standing at one end is larger than the house itself, veranda included.

Bush all around - bush with no horizon, for the country is flat. No ranges in the distance. The bush consists of stunted, rotten native apple-trees. No undergrowth. Nothing to relieve the eye

save the darker green of a few she-oaks which are sighing above the narrow, almost waterless creek. Nineteen miles to the nearest sign of civilisation - a shanty on the main road.

The drover, an ex-squatter, is away with sheep. His wife and children are left here alone.

Four ragged, dried-up-looking children are playing about the house. Suddenly one of them yells: "Snake! Mother, here's a snake!"

The gaunt, sun-browned bush-woman dashes from the kitchen, snatches her baby from the ground, holds it on her left hip, and reaches for a stick.

"Where is it?"

"Here! Gone in the wood-heap;" yells the eldest boy - a sharp-faced urchin of eleven. "Stop there, mother! I'll have him. Stand back! I'll have the beggar!"

"Tommy, come here, or you'll be bit. Come here at once when I tell you, you little wretch!"

The youngster comes reluctantly, carrying a stick bigger than himself. Then he yells, triumphantly:

"There it goes - under the house!" and darts away with club uplifted. At the same time the big, black, yellow-eyed dog-of-all-breeds, who has shown the wildest interest in the proceedings, breaks his chain and rushes after that snake. He is a moment late, however, and his nose reaches the crack in the slabs just as the end of its tail disappears. Almost at the same moment the boy's club comes down and skins the aforesaid nose. Alligator takes small notice of this, and proceeds to undermine the building; but he is subdued after a struggle and chained up. They cannot afford to lose him.

The drover's wife makes the children stand together near the dog-house while she watches for the snake. She gets two small dishes of milk and sets them down near the wall to tempt it to come out; but an hour goes by and it does not show itself.

It is near sunset, and a thunderstorm is coming. The children must be brought inside. She will not take them into the house, for she knows the snake is there, and may at any moment come up through a crack in the rough slab floor; so she carries several armfuls of firewood into the kitchen, and then takes the children there. The kitchen has no floor - or, rather, an earthen one - called a "ground floor" in this part of the bush. There is a large, roughly-made table in the centre of the place. She brings the children in, and makes them get on this table. They are two boys and two girls - mere babies. She gives some supper, and then, before it gets dark, she goes into house, and snatches up some pillows and bedclothes - expecting to see or lay or hand on the snake any minute. She makes a bed on the kitchen table for the children, and sits down beside it to watch all night.

She has an eye on the corner, and a green sapling club laid in readiness on the dresser by her side; also her sewing basket and a copy of the Young Ladies' Journal. She has brought the dog into the room.

Tommy turns in, under protest, but says he'll lie awake all night and smash that blinded snake.

His mother asks him how many times she has told not to swear.

He has his club with him under the bedclothes, and Jacky protests:

"Mummy! Tommy's skinnin' me alive wif his club. Make him take it out."

Tommy: "Shet up you little ---! D'yer want to be bit with the snake?"

Jacky shuts up.

"If yer bit," says Tommy, after a pause, "you'll swell up, an smell, an' turn red an' green an' blue all over till yer bust. Won't he mother?"

"Now then, don't frighten the child. Go to sleep," she says.

The two younger children go to sleep, and now and then Jacky complains of being "skeezed." More room is made for him. Presently Tommy says: "Mother! Listen to them (adjective) little possums. I'd like to screw their blanky necks."

And Jacky protests drowsily.

"But they don't hurt us, the little blanks!"

Mother: "There, I told you you'd teach Jacky to swear." But the remark makes her smile. Jacky goes to sleep.

Presently Tommy asks:

"Mother! Do you think they'll ever extricate the (adjective) kangaroo?"

"Lord! How am I to know, child? Go to sleep."

"Will you wake me if the snake comes out?"

"Yes. Go to sleep."

Near midnight. The children are all asleep and she sits there still, sewing and reading by turns. From time to time she glances round the floor and wall-plate, and, whenever she hears a noise, she reaches for the stick. The thunderstorm comes on, and the wind, rushing through the cracks in the slab wall, threatens to blow out her candle. She places it on a sheltered part of the dresser and fixes up a newspaper to protect it. At every flash of lightning, the cracks between the slabs gleam like polished silver. The thunder rolls, and the rain comes down in torrents.

Alligator lies at full length on the floor, with his eyes turned towards the partition. She knows by this that the snake is there. There are large cracks in that wall opening under the floor of the dwelling-house.

She is not a coward, but recent events have shaken her nerves. A little son of her brother-in-law was lately bitten by a snake, and died. Besides, she has not heard from her husband for six months, and is anxious about him.

He was a drover, and started squatting here when they were married. The drought of 18-- ruined him. He had to sacrifice the remnant of his flock and go droving again. He intends to move his family into the nearest town when he comes back, and, in the meantime, his brother, who keeps a shanty on the main road, comes over about once a month with provisions. The wife has still a couple of cows, one horse, and a few sheep. The brother-in-law kills one of the latter occasionally, gives her what she needs of it, and takes the rest in return for other provisions.

She is used to being left alone. She once lived like this for eighteen months. As a girl she built the usual castles in the air; but all her girlish hopes and aspirations have long been dead. She finds all the excitement and recreation she needs in the Young Ladies' Journal, and Heaven help her! Takes a pleasure in the fashion plates.

Her husband is an Australian, and so is she. He is careless, but a good enough husband. If he had the means he would take her to the city and keep her there like a princess. They are used to being apart, or at least she is. "No use fretting," she says. He may forget sometimes that he is married; but if he has a good cheque when he comes back he will give most of it to her. When he had money he took her to the city several times - hired a railway sleeping compartment, and put up at the best hotels. He also bought her a buggy, but they had to sacrifice that along with the rest.

The last two children were born in the bush - one while her husband was bringing a drunken doctor, by force, to attend to her. She was alone on this occasion, and very weak. She had been ill with fever. She prayed to God to send her assistance. God sent Black Mary - the "whitest" gin in all the land. Or, at least, God sent King Jimmy first, and he sent Black Mary. He put his black face round the door post, took in the situation at a glance, and said cheerfully: "All right, missus - I bring my old woman, she down along a creek."

One of the children died while she was here alone. She rode nineteen miles for assistance, carrying the dead child.

It must be near one or two o'clock. The fire is burning low. Alligator lies with his head resting on his paws, and watches the wall. He is not a very beautiful dog, and the light shows numerous old wounds where the hair will not grow. He is afraid of nothing on the face of the earth or under it. He will tackle a bullock as readily as he will tackle a flea. He hates all other dogs - except kangaroo-dogs - and has a marked dislike to friends or relations of the family. They seldom call, however. He sometimes makes friends with strangers. He hates snakes and has killed many, but he will be bitten some day and die; most snake-dogs end that way.

Now and then the bush-woman lays down her work and watches, and listens, and thinks. She thinks of things in her own life, for there is little else to think about.

The rain will make the grass grow, and this reminds her how she fought a bush-fire once while her husband was away. The grass was long, and very dry, and the fire threatened to burn her out. She put on an old pair of her husband's trousers and beat out the flames with a green

bough, till great drops of sooty perspiration stood out on her forehead and ran in streaks down her blackened arms. The sight of his mother in trousers greatly amused Tommy, who worked like a little hero by her side, but the terrified baby howled lustily for his "mummy." The fire would have mastered her but for four excited bushmen who arrived in the nick of time. It was a mixed-up affair all round; when she went to take up the baby he screamed and struggled convulsively, thinking it was an intruder; and Alligator, trusting more to the child's sense than his own instinct, charged furiously, and (being old and slightly deaf) did not in his excitement at first recognize his mistress's voice, but continued to hang on to the moleskins until choked off by Tommy with a saddle-strap. The dog's sorrow for his blunder, and his anxiety to let it be known that it was all a mistake, was as evident as his ragged tail and a twelve-inch grin could make it. It was a glorious time for the boys; a day to look back to, and talk about, and laugh over for many years.

She thinks how she fought a flood during her husband's absence. She stood for hours in the drenching downpour, and dug an overflow gutter to save the dame across the creek. But she could not save it. There are things that even a capable pioneer-woman just cannot do on her own. Next morning the dam was broken, and her heart was nearly broken too, for she thought how her husband would feel when he came home and saw the result of years of labour swept away. She cried then.

She also fought the pleuro-pneumonia - dosed and bled the few remaining cattle, and wept again when her two best cows died.

Again, she fought a mad bullock that besieged the house for a day. She made bullets and fired at him through cracks in the slabs with an old shot-gun. He was dead in the morning. She skinned him and got seventeen-and-sixpence for the hide.

She also fights the crows and eagles that have designs on her chickens. Her plan of campaign is very original. The children cry "Crows, mother!" and she rushes out and aims a broomstick at the birds as though it were a gun, and says "Bung!" The crows leave in a hurry; they are cunning, but a woman's cunning is greater.

Occasionally a bushman in the horrors, or a villainous-looking sundowner, comes and nearly scares the life out of her. She generally tells the suspicious-looking stranger that her husband and two sons are at work below the dam, or over at the yard, for he always cunningly inquires for the boss.

Only last week a gallows-faced swagman - having satisfied himself that there were no men on the place - threw his swag down on the veranda, and demanded tucker. She gave him something to eat; then he expressed the intention of staying for the night. It was sundown then. She got a batten from the sofa, loosened the dog, and confronted the stranger, holding the batten in one hand and the dog's collar with the other. "Now you go!" she said. He looked at her and at the dog, said "All right, mum," in a cringing tone and left. She was a determined-looking woman, and Alligator's yellow eyes glared unpleasantly - besides, the dog's chawing-up apparatus greatly resembled that of the reptile he was named after.

She has few pleasures to think of as she sits here alone by the fire, on guard against a snake. All days are much the same for her; but on Sunday afternoon she dresses herself, tidies the

children, smartens up baby, and goes for a lonely walk along the bush-track, pushing an old perambulator in front of her. She does this every Sunday. She takes as much care to make herself and the children look smart as she would if she were going to do the block in the city. There is nothing to see, however, and not a soul to meet. You might walk for twenty miles along this track without being able to fix a point in your mind, unless you are a bushman. This is because of the everlasting, maddening sameness of the stunted trees - that monotony which makes a man long to break away and travel as far as trains can go, and sail as far as ship can sail - and farther.

But this bush-woman is used to the loneliness of it. At first, as a younger wife she hated it, but now she would feel strange away from it.

She is glad when her husband returns, but she does not gush or make a fuss about it. She gets him something good to eat, and tidies up the children.

She seems contented with her lot. She loves her children, but has no time to show it. She seems harsh to them. Her surroundings are not favourable to the development of the "womanly" or sentimental side of nature.

It must be nearing morning now; but the clock is in the dwelling-house. Her candle is nearly done; she forgot that she was out of candles. Some more wood must be got to keep the fire up, and so she shuts the dog inside and hurries around to the woodheap. The rain has cleared off. She seizes a stick, pulls it out, and - crash! The whole pile collapses.

Yesterday she bargained with a stray blackfellow to bring her some wood, and while he was at work she went in search of a missing cow. She was absent an hour or so, and the native black made good use of his time. On her return she was so astonished to see a good heap of wood by the chimney, and she gave him an extra fig of tobacco, and praised him for not being lazy. He thanked her, and left with head erect and chest well out. He was the last of his tribe and a King; but he had built that wood-heap hollow.

She is hurt now, and tears spring to her eyes as she sits down again by the table. She takes up a handkerchief to wipe the tears away, but pokes her eyes with her bare fingers instead. The handkerchief is full of holes, and she finds that she has put her thumb through one, and her forefinger through another.

This makes her laugh, to the surprise of the dog. She has a keen, very keen, sense of the ridiculous; and some time or other she will amuse bushmen with the story.

She has been amused before like that. One day she sat down "to have a good cry," as she said - and the old cat rubbed against her dress and "cried too." Then she had to laugh.

It must be near daylight now. The room is very close and hot because of the fire. Alligator still watches the wall from time to time. Suddenly he becomes greatly interested; he draws himself a few inches nearer the partition, and a thrill runs through his body. The hair on the back of neck begins to bristle, and the battle-light is in his yellow eyes. She knows what this means, and lays her hand on the stick. The lower end of one of the partition slabs has a large crack on both sides. An evil pair of small, bright bead-like eyes glisten at one of these holes. The snake - a

black one - comes slowly out, about a foot, and moves its head up and down. The dog lies still, and the woman sits as one fascinated. The snake comes out a foot further. She lifts her stick, and the reptile, as though suddenly aware of danger, sticks his head in through the crack on the other side of the slab, and hurries to get his tail round after him. Alligator springs, and his jaws come together with a snap. He misses, for his nose is large, and the snake's body close down on the angle formed by the slabs and the floor. He snaps again as the tail comes round. He has the snake now, and tugs it out eighteen inches. Thud, thud. Alligator gives another pull and he has the snake out - a black brute, five feet long. The head rises to dart about, but the dog has the enemy close to the neck. He is a big, heavy dog, but quick as a terrier. He shakes the snake as though he felt the original curse in common with mankind. The eldest boy wakes up, seizes his stick, and tries to get out of bed, but his mother forces him back with a grip of iron. Thud, thud - the snake's back is broken in several places. Thud, thud - it's head is crushed, and Alligator's nose skinned again.

She lifts the mangled reptile on the point of her stick, carries it to the fire, and throws it in; then piles on the wood and watches the snake burn. The boy and the dog watch too. She lays her hand on the dog's head, and all the fierce, angry light dies out of his yellow eyes. The younger children are quieted, and presently go to sleep. The dirty-legged boy stands for a moment in his shirt, watching the fire. Presently he looks up at her, sees the tears in her eyes, and, throwing his arms around her neck exclaims:

"Mother, I won't never go drovin' blarst me if I do!"

And she hugs him to her worn-out breast and kisses him; and they sit thus together while the sickly daylight breaks over the bush.

Questions for Analysis:

- How would you describe Lawson's tone—sympathetic, dry, blunt?
- How does this tone affect your view of the bush? Of the woman?
- What literary style does Lawson use (realism, understatement, irony)?

Journal Task:

Write a paragraph answering:

“How does Lawson's tone shape the way we view the Drover's Wife?”

Use one quote from the text to support your view.

In the next lesson, we will compare this poem with one of AB Patterson's poems 'In Defence of the Bush'.

Lesson 7.2 – Paterson’s Bold Reply: In Defence of the Bush

Focus Poem: *In Defence of the Bush* by A. B. Paterson

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Read the Poem Aloud

Paterson wrote this poem partly as a **response** to Lawson’s harsh depictions of bush life.

*“So you’re back from up the country, Mister Lawson, where you went,
And you’re cursing all the business in a bitter discontent...”*

Step 2: Analyse the Tone

- What is Paterson defending?
 - Is he angry, proud, sarcastic—or all three?
 - What words or phrases carry that emotion?
-

In Defence of the Bush

*So you’re back from up the country, Mister Townsman, where you went,
And you’re cursing all the business in a bitter discontent;
Well, we grieve to disappoint you, and it makes us sad to hear
That it wasn’t cool and shady — and there wasn’t plenty beer,
And the loony bullock snorted when you first came into view —
Well, you know it’s not so often that he sees a swell like you;
And the roads were hot and dusty, and the plains were burnt and brown,
And no doubt you’re better suited drinking lemon-squash in town.
Yet, perchance, if you should journey down the very track you went
In a month or two at furthest, you would wonder what it meant,
Where the sunbaked earth was gasping like a creature in its pain
You would find the grasses waving like a field of summer grain,
And the miles of thirsty gutters, blocked with sand and choked with mud,
You would find them mighty rivers with a turbid, sweeping flood.
For the rain and drought and sunshine make no changes in the street,
In the sullen line of buildings and the ceaseless tramp of feet;
But the bush has moods and changes, as the seasons rise and fall,
And the men who know the bush-land — they are loyal through it all.*

* * * * *

*But you found the bush was dismal and a land of no delight,
Did you chance to hear a chorus in the shearers’ huts at night?
Did they ‘rise up William Riley’ by the camp-fire’s cheery blaze?
Did they rise him as we rose him in the good old droving days?
And the women of the homesteads and the men you chanced to meet —
Were their faces sour and saddened like the ‘faces in the street,’*

*And the 'shy selector children' — were they better now or worse
Than the little city urchins who would greet you with a curse?
Is not such a life much better than the squalid street and square
Where the fallen women flaunt it in the fierce electric glare,
Where the sempstress plies her sewing till her eyes are sore and red
In a filthy, dirty attic toiling on for daily bread?
Did you hear no sweeter voices in the music of the bush
Than the roar of trams and 'buses, and the war-whoop of 'the push?'
Did the magpies rouse your slumbers with their carol sweet and strange?
Did you hear the silver chiming of the bell-birds on the range?
But, perchance, the wild birds' music by your senses was despised,
For you say you'll stay in townships till the bush is civilised.
Would you make it a tea-garden, and on Sundays have a band
Where the 'blokes' might take their 'donahs', with a 'public' close at hand?
You had better stick to Sydney and make merry with the 'push,'
For the bush will never suit you, and you'll never suit the bush.*

◆ Literary Rivalry:

- Paterson believed the bush had beauty and honour; Lawson thought it needed honesty and realism.
- Their **debate shaped Australian literature**.

Response Task:

Write a paragraph comparing the tone of Paterson and Lawson:

- Who is more emotional?
 - Who is more persuasive?
 - Which style do you personally connect with more, and why?
-

Lesson 7.3 – Tone, Style & Identity

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Reflect on Style Across Texts

Refer back to the last two lessons for the poems. Choose one quote from *The Drover's Wife* and one from *In Defence of the Bush* that best represent each author's tone.

Ask Yourself:

- If these authors were describing the same event, how would they do it differently?
- How does each writer use spelling, rhythm, and phrasing to shape their voice?

Journal Response:

Answer the following:

1. Which tone do you trust more—Lawson's realism or Paterson's passion? Why?
2. Do you think Australia's national identity is better served by confronting hardship or celebrating endurance?
3. Has your idea of the 'Aussie bush' changed after reading both authors? How?

Creative Task – Rewrite with New Tone:

Choose a small moment from *The Drover's Wife* (e.g., snake encounter, waiting for husband) and rewrite it **in Paterson's optimistic, lyrical tone**.

Example Starter:

"The stars lit the ridge like a fire above,
And she stood in the silence, alone but proud..."

TOPIC 8

PERSONAL RESPONSE & FINAL REFLECTIONS

Topic 8 – Personal Response & Final Reflections

Focus Texts:

- Student's choice of **any poem** from the course (e.g. *Clancy of the Overflow*, *We Are Going*, *My Country*, *Rain from Nowhere*, etc.)
- Review of all texts: *We of the Never Never*, *The Drover's Wife*, selected Australian poems

Big Ideas:

- Synthesising learning: context, style, tone, and representation
- Comparing early impressions to developed understanding
- Expressing a personal voice in response to literature

Lesson 8.1 – First Impressions vs Final Understanding

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Reflect on Your First Reactions

- Think back to the first time you read *We of the Never Never* and *The Drover's Wife*. What did you notice?
- What surprised you as you kept reading and learning?
- Were there any ideas you changed your mind about?

Step 2: Revisit Your Journal

- Look at your journal entries from Weeks 1–7.
- Identify 2–3 entries that show your thinking has developed or deepened.

Reflection Writing Task:

Write a one-page reflection titled:

“What I See Now: My Changing Perspective on Australian Literature”

In your response, mention:

- How your view of the bush has changed
- Which author challenged or inspired you most

- What themes you now recognise in our national identity (e.g., endurance, connection to land, inclusion, voice)
-

Lesson 8.2 – Choose a Poem & Go Deep

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

Step 1: Choose Your Favourite Poem Pick one poem studied during the course that moved or interested you.

Suggestions:

- *We Are Going* (Oodgeroo Noonuccal)
- *Rain from Nowhere* (Murray Hartin)
- *Clancy of the Overflow* (A.B. Paterson)
- *South of My Days* (Judith Wright)
- *The Teams* (Henry Kendall)

Step 2: Reread the Poem Carefully

- What is the emotional core of the poem?
- What techniques does the poet use (imagery, rhythm, tone)?
- How is the land, or identity, or struggle represented?

Personal Analysis Task:

Write a paragraph or short essay answering: “**Why does this poem stand out to me, and what does it say about Australia?**”

Include at least one quote, and refer to how the **style** (not just content) affected you.

Optional Extension:

- Create a visual response to the poem (drawing, photo collage, or short video).
 - Record yourself reading the poem with expression and discuss why you chose it.
-

Lesson 8.3 – Final Creative Response: Your Australian Voice

Self-Tutorial Instructions:

This is your chance to respond creatively to all that you’ve read.

Choose one of the following tasks:

Option A: Write a Poem

Write your own **original poem** exploring an aspect of:

- The land
- Identity or culture
- Struggle and survival
- A unique Australian setting or voice

Try to use:

- One poetic device (simile, metaphor, repetition, alliteration)
- Informal or stylised spelling if appropriate (e.g. to show voice, character, accent)

Title your poem and write a short explanation (3–4 sentences) of what inspired it.

Option B: Creative Narrative Piece

Write a short story or personal narrative (~300–500 words) where:

- The setting plays a central role (e.g. a storm on a station, a city-kid visiting the bush, a memory of drought or flood)
 - You show rather than tell emotions
 - You use at least one distinctive phrase or voice technique inspired by Lawson, Gunn, or Paterson
-

Option C: Comparative Essay

Write a short essay comparing two texts (e.g. *The Drover’s Wife* and *We Are Going*) answering: **“How do these authors represent hardship and resilience in different ways?”**

Include:

- Context of each writer
- Tone and style differences
- What each made you feel or think

End-of-Course Reflection (Optional)

Final Journal Prompt:

- What was your favourite text or moment in this course, and why?
 - What have you learned about *your own response* to literature?
 - How will this change the way you read Australian stories in the future?
-

TOPIC 9

CULMINATING PROJECT OR ASSESSMENT

Alternative Years 7–8 Assessment Task

Title: Perspective & Representation – “Life in the Australian Bush”

Description:

Students explore how life in the Australian bush is represented in both a prose text (e.g. *We of the Never Never*) and a poem (e.g. *My Country* or *Clancy of the Overflow*). Students explain how authors use imagery, tone, and descriptive language to portray the land and the people who live in it. They compare at least two perspectives (e.g. romantic vs realistic, city vs bush, male vs female, Indigenous vs settler).

Conditions of Assessment:

- Combination of guided class work and independent response
- Scaffolded comparison structure (e.g. table or paragraph guide)
- 400–700 words OR 3–5 minute multimodal/oral presentation
- Open text (students may refer to studied texts)
- Focus on explanation with supporting examples

Achievement Standard Alignment:

- Explains how ideas are represented and how texts reflect context
- Identifies literary features such as imagery, tone, and perspective
- Creates texts expressing ideas with supporting evidence

Alternative Years 9–10 Assessment Task

Title: Analytical Essay – “Resourcefulness and Identity in Australian Literature”

Description:

Students write a structured analytical essay examining how Australian pioneer literature represents resourcefulness in response to environmental, social, and personal challenges. Students analyse how authors use literary techniques such as imagery, characterisation, tone, and narrative voice to shape meaning and reflect differing perspectives (e.g. settler vs Indigenous, romantic vs realistic). Students must refer to multiple texts studied in the unit.

Conditions of Assessment:

- Independent extended writing task
- 800–1200 words
- Draft + teacher feedback + final submission
- Must include textual evidence and detailed analysis
- Formal essay structure required

Achievement Standard Alignment:

- Analyses representations of people, place, and identity in context
 - Evaluates literary techniques and their effects on meaning
 - Creates sustained analytical texts with substantiated arguments
-