



Super Snake: Year 2 English and Geography

All curriculum links in this unit use the latest national and state curriculums. [Use this guide](#) to compare codes across AC versions.

 **Download and print this unit:** [AC Version](#) | [NSW Version](#) | [VIC Version](#)

Author & Illustrator: Gregg Dreise

Publisher: Magabala Books

Unit writer: Ingrid Gilholme

Synopsis: A charming morality tale, this book tells the tale of the Rainbow Serpent and the creation of the Darling/Barka River. In the Dreamtime, the bush was in the middle of a drought. A storm came and Mundegutta Gooriya the Super Snake was created. *Way back, before Once-upon-a-time there was the Dreamtime and the bush was in the middle of a drought. After a storm, one large rainbow curved down. The Super Snake slithered down that rainbow on to the earth and promised the Elders he could help them find water. That Super Snake called out, 'You can't have a rainbow without water. 'Dhurruluwi guuma-li - Come together! Wantima - Rise up! Woorri - Share.'* Like many, Gregg read The Rainbow Serpent by Dick Roughsey in primary school. He has always wanted to make a Rainbow Serpent book from his own Culture to highlight to people the diverse Countries and Cultures across Australia. Although people around the world may think of Aboriginal people as all being the same, there are hundreds of Countries on this continent. (*Publisher synopsis*)

Rationale: In this unit students will develop their understanding of the interconnections of First Nations Australians to a local Country/Place. Students will identify and explore words from First Nations Australians' languages and discuss how characters and settings are connected in literature created by First Nations Australians. Students will identify figurative language in Super Snake, before innovating on the text to share information about their local area. After researching important local natural features, and learning about the First Nations Australians' stories

regarding their formation, students will draw a picture sharing their understanding, and create an idiom about the importance of caring for the land.

Cross-curriculum links: Geography; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Culture

English concepts: Narrative; Point of View; Context

Overarching questions:

1. How does listening to stories by First Nations Australians and their connections with land, sea and animals change our perspective?
2. How can our language choices engage the audience?
3. How do we care for places in our local environment?

Rich assessment task: Students will investigate and research an important local natural feature, including a discussion of the natural features of places identified in Aboriginal Dreaming stories and/or creation accounts of the Torres Strait. Students will share their research by drawing an illustration detailing the local feature and creating an idiom to consider different ways it can be cared for.



Additional teacher resources:

1. Video: [Using First Nations literature in the primary classroom](#)
2. Article: [First Nations students and the English curriculum area](#)

Curriculum codes, links and descriptions

| Australian Curriculum | NSW Syllabus | VIC Curriculum |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| <h3 data-bbox="146 1189 660 1240">Australian Curriculum</h3> <p data-bbox="146 1283 264 1323">Year 2</p> <p data-bbox="146 1352 413 1391">English: Language</p> <p data-bbox="146 1438 1329 1523">AC9E2LA01 investigate how interpersonal language choices vary depending on the context, including the different roles taken on in interactions</p> <p data-bbox="146 1570 1334 1657">AC9E2LA02 explore how language can be used for appreciating texts and providing reasons for preferences</p> <p data-bbox="146 1704 1390 1792">AC9E2LA05 navigate print and screen texts using chapters, tables of contents, indexes, side-bar menus, drop-down menus or links</p> <p data-bbox="146 1839 1401 1926">AC9E2LA09 experiment with and begin to make conscious choices of vocabulary to suit the topic</p> <p data-bbox="146 1973 413 2011">English: Literature</p> <p data-bbox="146 2058 1383 2145">AC9E2LE01 discuss how characters and settings are connected in literature created by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors and illustrators</p> | | |

AC9E2LE02 identify features of literary texts, such as characters and settings, and give reasons for personal preferences

AC9E2LE03 discuss the characters and settings of a range of texts and identify how language is used to present these features in different ways

English: Literacy

AC9E2LY02 use interaction skills when engaging with topics, actively listening to others, receiving instructions and extending own ideas, speaking appropriately, expressing and responding to opinions, making statements, and giving instructions

AC9E2LY03 identify the purpose and audience of imaginative, informative and persuasive texts

AC9E2LY05 use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning

AC9E2LY06 create and edit short imaginative, informative and persuasive written and/or multimodal texts for familiar audiences, using text structure appropriate to purpose, simple and compound sentences, noun groups and verb groups, topic-specific vocabulary, simple punctuation and common 2-syllable words

HASS: Geography

AC9HS2K03 how places can be spatially represented in geographical divisions from local to regional to state/territory, and how people and places are interconnected across those scales

AC9HS2K04 the interconnections of First Nations Australians to a local Country/Place

Learning intention: Making and confirming predictions and discussing new vocabulary helps us to build meaning while reading

Exploration

Share an enlarged copy of the cover of *Super Snake* for the class to see. Explore the detailed illustrations throughout the text and invite students to share their predictions of what the text is about. Read the text to the class and review predictions.

Key questions:

- Can you describe the front cover?

- What do the illustrations show us?
- What do you think this text is about?
- Did a certain illustration stand out to you?
- Were your predictions correct?
- How do the illustrations connect to the text?

Response

Teacher to ask students to share new vocabulary from the text. Discuss the meaning of each word, using external research sources as needed. Create a class display recording the words that are shared and their definition. As part of the display, ensure that the First Nations vocabulary is included. Examples:

Mundegutta Gooriya

Bunya-Bunya

'Dhurraluwi guuma-li

Wantima

Woorri

Yirray

Guiding questions:

- What are some words that are new to you?
- Do you think you could define these words?
- Why is it important for us to understand unfamiliar words?

Evidence of Learning

Students:

- *infer content from the cover of a picture story text*
- *identify and define new vocabulary*

Learning intention: Connecting places in a story to places in real life helps us to understand the significance of the story

Exploration

Explain to students that they will become geographers, tracking Mundegutta Gooriya's journey in the text. Re-read *Super Snake*, and on an enlarged map of Australia, work as a group to track the journey taken. Ensure the key geographical features are recorded.

Key questions:

- Where did Mundegutta Gooriya's journey begin?

- Which direction did he first travel in?
- Which river do you think he carved out?
- How many states did he travel across?

Response

On an A4 map of Australia, students will draw their own version of Mundegutta Gooriya's journey. As they draw the journey, students can annotate the map to include the First Nations language from the text and the town/area it is also known as. On the map, students may like to plot their own location as well as any important places to them. Once the journey has been drawn, students write a one paragraph description detailing the journey. To guide students, explain that they can record the town that Mundegutta Gooriya started in, which direction he went first, the next town he went past until they have provided a summary of the journey.

Guiding questions:

- What is significant about Mundegutta Gooriya's journey?
- Is your location close to any of the areas plotted on the map?
- What key words should you include in your description of the journey?

Evidence of learning

Students:

- *Track the events of a story on a map*
- *Create a written and visual text to show a geographical journey*
- *Describe the connection between First Nations creation stories and geographical landmarks*

Learning intention: Knowledge of First Nations Australians' languages can help us to better understand a topic

Exploration

Display the vocabulary poster from the first lesson and revise the words and their meanings. Explore the [AIATSIS Languages Alive website](#) and explain the importance of learning about the different First Nations Australians' languages. Whilst you display the site, ask students to write down on a whiteboard any key pieces of information or new facts they have learnt. This can be scaffolded by the teacher and completed as a class.

Key questions:

- How many First Nations languages and how many dialects are there in Australia?
- Why is the language so important?
- When taking notes, how can you best record the key information?

Response

Display [Gambay, the First Languages map](#), and explore a range of the languages that are represented. Allow students time to work with a partner and explore the interactive map. In their workbooks, students are asked to write down key information about the First Nations language that is local to them.

Guiding questions:

- What is the language spoken in your local area?
- Did you learn any new words from your local First Nations language?

Evidence of learning

Students:

- *identify and define words from First Nations Australians' languages relevant to a topic*
- *identify their local First Nations language*
- *write down information about their local First Nations language*

Learning intention: Similar topics and information can be presented in different texts

Exploration

Display the book, *The Rainbow Serpent* by Dick Roughsey, or watch a reading of it online, [such as this one](#). Ask students to share their predictions of what it is about. Read or view the reading of the text then ask students to think about and share some of the similarities and differences between this text and *Super Snake*.

Key questions:

- Can you describe the front cover? What are the similarities to *Super Snake*?
- What do you think this text is about? How will it differ to *Super Snake*?
- Were your predictions correct?
- What was similar and what was different between this text and *Super Snake*?
- Why do you think Gregg Dreise wrote *Super Snake*?

Response

Students complete a Venn diagram recording the similarities and differences between *The Rainbow Serpent* and *Super Snake*. Students may like to reflect on the characters and settings in the texts as well as the plot.

Guiding questions:

- Are there more similarities or differences between these texts?
- The main characters are both snakes, are there any supporting characters that are similar?
- Do you prefer one text over the other? Why?

Evidence of learning

Students:

- compare similarities and differences between two texts
- discuss how characters and settings are connected in literature created by First Nations Australian

Learning intention: First Nations communities of Australia maintain a deep connection to, and responsibility for, Country/Place

Exploration

Read pages 22, 23, 24 and 25 of *Super Snake* to the class. Ask students what Super Snake created underground. With a partner, students are asked to discuss what they think a rock well is and where they might be found in Australia.

Key questions:

- How did Super Snake create the rock wells?
- Have you ever heard of a rock well before?
- Where do you think we could find rock wells in Australia?
- What did Super Snake say the rock wells were used for?
- Do you think people still use rock wells today? If so, who might use them?
- How do First Nations Australians care for rock wells?
- Why do you think it is important for them to care for rock wells?

Response

Display and read through the relevant information on a range of the following sites. Working as a class, create an informative display for the wider school community to learn about rock wells and their importance to First Nations Australians.

- [Waterwise Queensland: How did Aboriginal peoples manage their water resources](#)
- [Wet rocks: Aboriginal people and groundwater](#)
- [ABC article: Aboriginal people built water tunnels](#)
- [Monash University article: Tapping into Aboriginal knowledge to create a water-resilient future for Australia's cities](#)
- [Australia State of the Environment: Indigenous water](#)

Guiding questions:

- How should we share our knowledge about rock wells?
- What should we include to ensure our audience is engaged and informed?

Evidence of learning

Students:

- *describe rock wells and their importance to First Nations Australians*
- *contribute ideas to create a shared text with information about rock wells*

Learning intention: Figurative language, such as idioms, gives words more power

Exploration

Begin by asking if anyone has ever heard of the word idiom. Ask if they could explain what an idiom is. Explain that an idiom is a commonly used phrase or expression, usually figurative or non-literal, that has an understood meaning specific to a language or dialect. For example, over the moon, half asleep, pull your socks up. Re-read pages 7 and 8 from *Super Snake* and ask if anyone heard the idiom in the text. Display cards that have a common idiom written on them (such as [these ones created for you by PETAA!](#)) and another card with its meaning. Ask students to work as a group to match the idiom to its meaning.

Key questions:

- What is an idiom?
- Have you heard the phrase 'idiom' before?
- Where have you heard or read an idiom?
- Can you share an example of an idiom?
- What prior knowledge do you need to understand the meaning of idioms?
- What did Mundegutta Gooriya mean when he said "Actions speak louder than words!"?

Response

Display a range of idioms on the board. Ask students to make groups of 4 and take turns acting out an idiom for the rest of the group to guess.

Students will divide a page into 4 and write a different idiom in each section. Students will draw a picture to share the meaning of each idiom.

Guiding questions:

- What have you learnt about idioms?
- Why do you think authors such as Gregg Dreise might use idioms in their writing?

Evidence of learning

Students:

- *match a range of idioms to their meaning*
- *use body language to demonstrate their understanding of different idioms*
- *write and illustrate the meaning of different idioms*

Learning intention: Our local environment has natural and human features that people are connected to

Exploration

Begin with a class discussion about natural and human features. Can students define both of these and provide examples for each? Discuss the natural and human features found in Super Snake. As a class, create a list of the natural and human features in the school and local environment. Sort these into either natural or human and discuss the difference between these features.

Key questions:

- What are natural and human features of places?
- What are the differences between the natural and human features in our local environment?
- Is there a significant natural feature in our local environment?

Response

In this lesson, students will conduct fieldwork investigating a local natural feature. If possible, students will visit the local natural feature to observe and collect information about it, including the ways it is cared for. Alternatively, students could use Google Earth for their research. Students will sketch and take notes about the feature for use in the following lesson.

Guiding questions:

- What do you notice?
- What details are important to record about the feature?
- How can we find out more information?

Whilst students are observing ask:

- What does it look like?
- What does it feel like?
- What is it used for?
- How has it changed over time?

Evidence of learning

Students:

- *express an opinion about the event in a narrative*
- *interpret visual information*
- *record visual and written observations*

Learning intention: Investigating the features of places can teach us important information about their creation and people's connections to them

Exploration

Begin the lesson by exploring the information on the following sites, which will provide students with important context about the connection that First Nations Australians have with the land.

- [Creative Spirits: Meaning of land to Aboriginal people](#)
- [Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council: Land is our Future: Caring for Country](#)
- [Working with Indigenous Australians First Nations People: The Land](#)

Ask students to share the information they gathered about the local natural feature that they researched in the previous lesson. As a class, conduct research on the First Nations Australians stories related to the formation of the local feature. As part of this, it would be ideal to form a connection with a local First Nations community member or Elder and ask them to share their valuable perspective. Discuss the similarities and differences between this and the creation of the Darling River in *Super Snake*.

Guiding questions:

- How has your understanding of First Nations Australians connection to the land changed?
- Has your thinking about how the natural feature was formed changed?
- Were there any similarities between the formation of the natural feature and the formation of the Darling River?

Response

Students will draw a detailed illustration of the local natural feature they have researched. They will create an idiom/use figurative language to share advice about the importance of caring for the feature. They may like to include information about its formation and share why people are connected to it.

Guiding questions:

- What information is it important to tell people about the natural feature?
- How can we use figurative language to engage the audience?
- How can we care for the natural feature?

Evidence of learning

Students:

- *draw a detailed illustration of a local natural feature*
- *create an idiom to encourage people to care for a local natural feature*

Supporting resources

Websites (referenced in unit above)

- [Gambay, the First Languages map](#)
- [AIATSIS Languages Alive website](#)
- [Waterwise Queensland: How did Aboriginal peoples manage their water resources](#)
- [Wet rocks: Aboriginal people and groundwater](#)
- [ABC article: Aboriginal people built water tunnels](#)
- [Monash University article: Tapping into Aboriginal knowledge to create a water-resilient future for Australia's cities](#)
- [Australia State of the Environment: Indigenous water](#)
- [Creative Spirits: Meaning of land to Aboriginal people](#)
- [Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council: Land is our Future: Caring for Country.](#)
- [Working with Indigenous Australians First Nations People: The Land](#)

Classroom templates (referenced in unit above)

1. [Idiom cards](#)

Related texts and corresponding PETAA curriculum units

1. [Our Dreaming](#) by Kirli Saunders and Dub Leffer: This tender book highlights the importance of First Nations cultures and the passing on of this culture from elders to children. It demonstrates the way language is fundamental to identity, culture and to the sharing of culture. This unit of work can help students and teachers to consider and respond to the role of culture in their own identity and raise awareness of First Nations culture through close reading and viewing.
2. [Wilam: A Birrarung Story](#): In this stunning picture book beautifully given form by Indigenous artist Lisa Kennedy, respected Elder Aunty Joy Murphy and Yarra Riverkeeper Andrew Kelly the story is told of one day in the life of the vital, flourishing Birrarung (Yarra River). As ngua rises, Bunjil soars over mountain ash, flying higher and higher as the wind warms. Below, Birrarung begins its long winding path down to palem warreen. Wilam – home. This book tells the Indigenous and geographical story of Melbourne's beautiful Yarra River, from its source to its mouth; from its pre-history to the present day. Wilam brings Aboriginal life, culture and language right in to the heart of the city.

Related PETAA publications

- [Transforming practice: Transforming lives through diverse children's literature](#) by Helen Adam
- [Teaching poetry for pleasure and purpose](#) by Sally Murphy