



Come Together: Years 3-4 English and HASS

Exploring the 2023 CBCA Short List: Information Books

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: [Isaiah Firebrace](#) **Illustrator:** Jaelyn Biumaiwai

Designer: [Keisha Leon](#) **Publisher:** [Hardie Grant](#)

Unit writer: [Karen Rogers](#)

Synopsis (from CBCA judges' notes): This strikingly gorgeous book by pop artist Isaiah Firebrace introduces the basics of First Nations customs, beliefs and history. From the attractive cover showing hands coming together, and simple endpapers, the reader is drawn into learning about the oldest continuous civilization on earth. Isaiah shares important insight into aspects of Indigenous culture that all people, not just the young, should know – from caring for Country and Dreaming stories to the importance of Elders and even the Indigenous origins of AFL. Language is easily accessible to the younger reader, and while it does not delve into some of the more complex aspects of First Peoples culture, there is sufficient information to provide an overview and the knowledge to inspire the reader to look further. The accompanying colourful illustrations by Jaelyn Biumaiwai dominate each double-page spread, enhancing the written text and having maximum impact. This is a powerful book that would appeal to a wide ranging audience and holds significant enduring value.

Themes: respect, culture, connection, understanding, unity

Year levels/Learning Areas: Australian Curriculum: English, Year 3 and 4; HASS (History; Geography; Civics & Citizenship), Year 3 and 4

General capabilities: Intercultural Understanding, Level 3

Cross-curricular priorities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures; Sustainability

Why use this book? In this book the author, Isaiah Firebrace, draws on his own experience of education in Australia to create an argument for learning about our First Peoples. Using a first-person perspective he speaks directly to his target audience of 'Aussie kids'. The topics chosen for inclusion in the book are easily relatable for primary school students and the language used is both personal and informative. In the classroom the book can serve as a springboard for further exploration of Indigenous cultures and histories and as a mentor text for informative writing as well as the use of multimodal design elements.

Focus passages: The following pages have been selected for closer analysis throughout the teaching unit:

- Pages 2-3 – Author's purpose; language to persuade
- Pages 34-35 – Text structure; illustrations; layout; creating meaning

Curriculum codes, links and descriptions

Australian Curriculum

NSW Syllabus

VIC Curriculum

NSW Syllabus Outcomes Stage 2

EN2-RECOM-01 reads and comprehends texts for wide purposes using knowledge of text structures and language, and by monitoring comprehension

EN2-UARL-01 identifies and describes how ideas are represented in literature and strategically uses similar representations when creating texts

EN2-VOCAB-01 builds knowledge and use of Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary through interacting, wide reading and writing, and by defining and analysing words

EN2-SPELL-01 selects, applies and describes appropriate phonological, orthographic and morphological generalisations and strategies when spelling in a range of contexts

EN2-CWT-01 plans, creates and revises written texts for imaginative purposes, using text features, sentence-level grammar, punctuation and word-level language for a target audience

Reading and appreciating the book

Book introduction (big picture)

- **About the author:** Isaiah Firebrace introduces himself on pp. 2-3. Read the pages together and summarise the main things that we learn about him. How can we use this information to understand his motivation for writing this book? There is additional information about Isaiah's singing career at his [Official Website](#). What else can you learn about him from this website?
- **About the illustrator and designer:** This visual in this book were created by an **illustrator** and a **designer**. Think about and discuss how these roles might be similar and different. You may like to refer to this article to support your discussion: [Illustrator vs. Designer: What's the Difference?](#) Look closely at one or two double page spreads in the book and think about which parts were created by the illustrator and which were created by the designer.

How do each of these aspects create cohesion throughout the book? Notice the way the designer has used the wavy lines and dots as background, and also as part of the section headings. Read about the illustrator and designer on the back inside cover of the text – how does what we learn about them here connect with their work in the book?

- **Tuning in to current knowledge:** Look at the full title of the book – *Come Together. Things every Aussie kid should know about the First Peoples*. Begin by discussing the terms "Aussie kid" and "First Peoples". What do each of these terms mean? Who are they referring to? Next, create a T-chart for students to complete individually, in small groups or as a whole class as appropriate.

On the left of the T-chart make a list of everything that students know already about First Peoples (What I know). On the right of the T-chart make a list of the things that students think they should know about First Peoples (What kids should know). Make shared predictions about the topics that might be explored in the text based on students' current knowledge and thinking.

- **Text structure and organisation:** List all of the headings in the book and compare them to the predictions that students made earlier. Read again the introduction from the author on pp. 2-3 and discuss the ways that the topics chosen reflect his interests and purpose for writing the book. Which topic areas are surprising to students? Which are they interested to explore further?
- **Author's voice:** The book is written from a first-person perspective. It presents information about Australia's First Peoples for 'Aussie kids'. Look at the text on pp. 2-3. Identify and highlight the personal pronouns that show the first-person perspective (I, we, you, yours, mine). Discuss the way that these pronouns create a direct dialogue between author and reader.
- **Language to persuade:** Read the text on pp. 2-3 where Isaiah introduces himself and the book. Notice the persuasive and personal language that he uses, e.g. 'I want'; 'it's important'; 'we should'; 'we need to'. Discuss the impact of these words on the reader. Why has Isaiah used personal and persuasive language? How does it connect to his purpose as an author?
- **Building and expanding knowledge of the field:** Drawing on students' area/s of interest choose some of the topics in the book to explore together. Read the chosen topic pages together and discuss what has been learned about the topic.

Next introduce the [+1 Routine](#). Use the routine to explore, expand and summarise the relevant additional information presented in the table. This thinking routine is designed to 'identify important ideas worth remembering'.

Topic	Page Number	Additional Information
Welcome to country	4-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome to Country - Behind The News
Ceremonies	6-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • corroboree - Britannica Kids • Adrian Brown on smoking ceremonies
Oldest continuing culture	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mungo Man - Behind The News
First inventors	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bark Canoe - Behind The News
Caring for Country	10-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original Greenies - Stuff Everyone Should Know About Australia
The Dreaming/Creation Stories	12-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet Dreamings - Stuff Everyone Should Know About Australia
Songlines	16-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet Dreamings - Stuff Everyone Should Know About Australia
Elders	18-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lois Peeler - ABC News • Indigenous change makers - ABC News • NAIDOC Indigenous Women - Behind The News
Clans and Languages	20-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language Warriors - Stuff Everyone Should Know About Australia • Reviving Indigenous Languages - Behind The News • AIATSIS - Australian Languages

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gambay - First Languages Map • 50 words
Totems	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Totems - Deadly Story
Flags	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Flag History - Behind The News • Torres Strait - Behind The News • Australia's Flag - Behind The News
Seasons	24-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous seasonal calendars - CSIRO • Kakadu seasons - ABC Education
Astronomy	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Indigenous Astronomy
William Cooper	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Australians SBS On Demand
Food	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishes & Loaves - Stuff Everyone Should Know About Australia
Music and Dance	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiwi Music - Behind The News
Yidaki	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Didgeridoos - Behind The News
Dot Painting	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fake Aboriginal Art - Behind The News
Art	32-33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living Knowledge Project - Art is Soul
Marngrook	34-35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marngrook Footy - Behind The News • Marngrooks and emu callers - ABC Education
Significant annual events	36-37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Reconciliation Week • Narragunnawali - Celebrate Days of National Significance • Reconciliation Week 2021 - Behind The News • What is NAIDOC week? - Behind The News
The Stolen Generations	38-39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Sorry Day - Reconciliation Australia • National apology to the Stolen Generations - National Museum of Australia • Bridge Walk Anniversary - Behind The News • Schools Resource Kit The Healing Foundation
One big family	40-41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phenomenom, Ep 17: The one with the welcome - ABC Education

Close reading

For this unit, links between receptive and productive modes have been made. For each teaching idea in **Close reading** you will find a corresponding teaching idea in **Using the book for listening, speaking, writing & creating**. The ideas below for

close reading and engagement with the text are focused on pp. 34-35 of the book – ‘Marngrook’. The ideas are transferable and can be used to structure close reading for any of the other pages of the text.

Whole text:

- **Heading:** Look at and discuss the heading on pg. 34 ‘Marngrook’. How well does it convey meaning about the topic of this section to the reader? Compare this heading to some of the others in the book. Notice that they use only one, two or three words – why is it important to be succinct? Why do informative texts use headings?
- **Illustrations:** Look at the illustration on pg. 34. If a reader had never heard of Marngrook, what inferences could they make about it, based on the illustration? Provide students with a copy of the text on pg. 35. Read the words together. As you read, invite students to highlight or underline the words that are represented in the illustration (e.g. AFL, ball, Collingwood, players). Discuss the way that illustrations support or add extra meaning to the text.
- **Page layout:** Look at and discuss the design and layout features on pp. 34-35. Notice the way that the heading is curved to reflect the arc of the ball being kicked. Notice the way that the image is positioned on the page – what is the reader’s attention drawn to (salience)? Why might this be? Also notice the sense of movement that is created by the body positioning of the AFL player – his foot is pointing towards the ball, his leg is raised and his eyes are looking in the direction of the ball’s travel path. Also notice the font that is used for the heading – refer back to other pages to notice the cohesion that this design element creates across the text. Finally, notice the colours that are used across the two pages and the way that they complement each other. How do all of these features support the reader to make meaning from the text?

Paragraph level

- **Paragraph structure and purpose:** Support students to notice the paragraphs on pg. 35. Read each paragraph and discuss their purpose. The first paragraph introduces the topic; the second provides more information about the topic and in the final paragraph the author describes his personal connection to the topic. Choose some of the other topics in the book for students to look at together, in small groups or individually to see if they notice a similar structure. Discuss how this grouping of related ideas and repeated structure supports the reader to make meaning as well as connect to the author.

Sentence level

- **Sentence structure:** Pp. 34-35 includes a variety of sentence types that can be used for exploring sentence structure. Find an example of a simple and a compound sentence (see table below for some examples). Discuss the way that each sentence functions to support understanding for the reader. [For additional teacher support in this area please refer to the grammar resources at the end of this unit.]

SIMPLE:

Single independent clause

‘Marngrook’ is a word from my Gunditjmara clan which means ‘game ball’.

Compound:

Two or more independent clauses
joined by a conjunction

Marngrook is usually played with very large teams (50 to 100 players on each side) **and** the game can sometimes last up to two days!

Word level

- **Present tense:** Look closely at the words in each sentence that describe the process (verb). Examples from pg. 35 include was, is, has created. Notice the tense that is used for the process. Informative texts are usually written in present tense – why might this be? Allocate a different page of the text to small groups and invite them to find the words that show present tense. How does this affect understanding?

Word recognition, phonic knowledge and spelling

- **Etymology.** Many Australian place names have been derived from the local Indigenous language. Research place names in your local area such as students' street address, suburb names, council, rivers and waterways, parks etc. Find out their meaning and origin. You may find this article about [The forgotten Aboriginal names for 10 of Melbourne's suburbs](#) interesting.
- **Morphology.** Pg. 35 (Marngrook) has a number of words that are interesting to investigate. For each word find the base and discuss meaning. Then identify any prefixes and suffixes and discuss the way that they modify the meaning of the word – what do they mean on their own? What other words use the same prefixes and suffixes? Introduce the term 'morpheme' to describe the smallest unit of meaning within a word ([Morpheme](#)). Words to investigate include:
 - Traditionally = tradition + al + ly
 - Usually = usual + ly
 - Played = play + ed
 - Sometimes = some + times (compound word)
 - Connections = connect + ion + s
 - Relationships = relate + ion + ship + s
 - Generations = generate + ion + s
 - Players = play + er + s
 - Inspired = in + spir + ed

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Using the book for listening, speaking, writing and creating

For this unit, links between receptive and productive modes have been made. For each teaching idea in **Using the book for listening, speaking, writing & creating** you will find a corresponding teaching idea in **Close Reading**.

After reading and exploring the book, invite students to create a shared class book to represent the culture and history of the First Peoples of your local area – following the stages below. Support students to find and engage with relevant information from websites, books and local community members and organisations. An alternative option could be for students to work together to create a book about your school – what are the important things that people (such as new students) need to know?

Whole text

- **Headings:** Provide students with the opportunity to practise writing succinct and meaningful headings. Use an additional similarly structured informative text – [The First Scientists](#) by Corey Tutt is a good example. Cover the headings, read the page together and ask students to brainstorm to come up with a suitable heading for that section. Share and discuss the possibilities and then compare to the heading in the book. Next, discuss and make a list of possible topics and headings for your shared class book.
- **Illustrations:** After deciding on the section headings for the shared class book, allocate one section/ heading to individual students or small groups. For each heading think about an illustration that would show the important features or ideas for that topic. Plan and create an illustration that will support and enrich the text that students will write.
- **Page layout:** Consider the type of information that will be included in the allocated section and think about the layout that will support the reader to make meaning. Work together to design a font or design element that can be used across the whole text. Ask students to consider the positioning of illustrations and heading as well as the colours that they will use to match their topic. Share ideas; provide and receive feedback; and then finalise the design and layout of each page.

Paragraph level

- **Paragraph structure and purpose:** Use the text on pg. 35 as a mentor text for students to construct their own paragraphs. The first paragraph should introduce the topic; the second provides more information about the topic and in the final paragraph the author describes his personal connection to the topic. Practise using this structure to create some paragraphs about their allocated topic. Share ideas; give and receive feedback with a focus on the way that each paragraph has related ideas and a shared purpose. How well does the text create meaning and connect to the reader?

Sentence level

- **Sentence structure:** Invite students to construct a variety of simple sentences about their topic area. Then experiment with combining two of the simple sentences to make a compound sentence. What word will they need to join the two together to make sense? Remind students that this word is called a conjunction. Experiment with different conjunctions and discuss the impact on meaning.

Word level

- **Present tense:** Re-read the text that students constructed in the 'sentence level' task. Look closely at the words in each sentence that describe the process (verb). Notice the tense that is used for the process – have they used present tense? If not, how can changing the tense impact meaning for the reader? Provide additional support for those students who may need extra help with tense conversion.

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Relevant resources and links

- **Grammar resources:** [Sentence structure](#) and [teaching grammar in context](#)
- **Persuasive texts:** [PETAA PAPER #178 – Writing persuasive texts](#) discusses various types of persuasive texts and unpacks their structural and language features
- **First Nations languages:** An interesting article about Isaiah Firebrace's advocacy for First Nations languages: [First Nations languages must be taught alongside 'truthful' history in schools, advocates say](#)
- **Information about the Yorta Yorta People:**
 - [Water in Yorta Yorta - ABC Kids listen](#)
 - [Sun in Yorta Yorta - ABC Kids listen](#)
 - [Father of the Waters in Yorta Yorta - ABC Kids listen](#)
- **Related PETAA teaching units**
 - [Heroes, Rebels and Innovators](#) by Karen Wyld and Jaelyn Biumiawai is an informative text about the untold stories of significant First Nations Australians
 - [The First Scientists](#) by Corey Tutt is a compilation of the innovation and inventions of Australia's First Peoples.

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