

# Listen

AUTHORS

**DUNCAN SMITH AND NICOLE GODWIN**

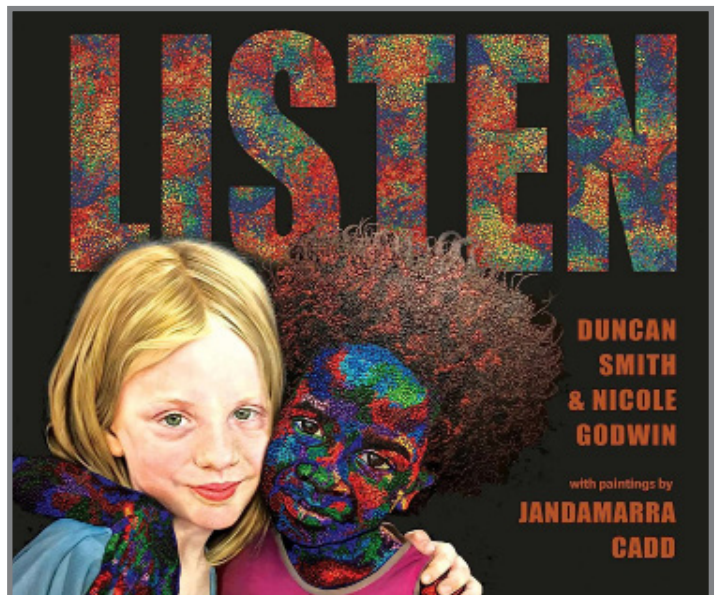
ILLUSTRATOR

**JANDAMARRA CADD**

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**RECOMMENDED FOR:** Lower to Mid Primary



## SYNOPSIS

*Listen.*

*And you will hear the voices of Ancestors.*

*Speaking to us.*

*Guiding us.*

*Leading us on the path to knowledge of culture, of Country.*

*To reconciliation.*

*Listen.*

*Listen* encourages the reader to reflect on the importance of listening and truth-telling in response to Australia's complex history. The poetic writing style creates a rich and respectful text, and the bright colours inject a sense of joy into a text that explores what is often a painful history. The use of traditional First Nations techniques reinforces the longevity and importance of a culture that has lived on Australian land for over 65,000 years.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Duncan Smith OAM was born on Wiradjuri Country. He spent his younger years learning his culture and painting with his Elders and members of his family. Elders in Duncan's community took him hunting and gathering, and taught him cultural dances.

Nicole Godwin is a multi-award-winning author who shines a light on environmental, animal rights and social justice issues through captivating picture books. Her books engage readers and help to create a generation of thoughtful, committed and compassionate individuals.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Jandamarra Cadd is a Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Warung descendent. Painting has been a way of life that has enabled him to express his creativity and storytelling. Jandamarra uses a variety of styles and mediums; with his unique blend of traditional aboriginal art techniques along with his own signature contemporary portraiture.

## THEMES

- Citizens; citizenship; Australia
- First Nations People

- First Nations culture; ceremony
- responsibilities; belonging
- rights; obligations; listening
- Country; history

## STUDY NOTES

### BEFORE READING

- Help students identify the title of the book, the authors' names and illustrator. Discuss the role they each play in creating a book.
- Discuss what clues the cover gives about the book:
  - What do they think is the genre of the book? What might it be about?
  - What does the title tell them about the book? What do they think it means?
  - Who is the book written for? Ask students to explain their answers.
- Examine the cover illustration, then answer the following questions:
  - Take a look at the children depicted. What could they be thinking and feeling?
  - What are the different colours used?
  - Why might the illustrator have chosen to use bright colours instead of a skin tone?
- After reading the blurb, discuss the following questions as a class:
  - Does the blurb confirm or change students' ideas about the book?
  - After examining the cover and reading the blurb, ask students to share any questions they may have about the book.
- After examining the cover and reading the blurb, ask children to share questions they may have about the book. Write questions on the whiteboard, or on a poster for display in the classroom.

### AFTER READING

- Discuss how the book was similar and different to what students were expecting. Have students' ideas about the book changed after reading?
- Return to the title *Listen*. Has its meaning changed after reading?
  - Do you like the title?
  - What else could it have been called?
- Discuss the proverb, 'You can't judge a book by its cover.' How true or untrue is the proverb about *Listen*?
- Return to the class questions. Are there more questions to add?
  - Colour code the questions to show those that have been answered and those that need further investigation.
- Look at the end papers. How did they prepare readers for the book's content and meaning?
  - What might the endpapers signify?
- Ask students to share what they know and/or any questions they have about the following:
  - The Uluru Statement from the Heart
  - The Voice to Parliament
  - Referendums
  - Treaties
  - What does the word 'truth' mean?
- Duncan Smith, one of the authors of *Listen*, was born on Wiradjuri Country. Jandamarra Cadd, the illustrator, is a Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Warung descendant. Australia is comprised of different groups. Each of these groups have their own cultures, customs, laws and languages.
  - Ask students if they know whose Country they live on.
  - Do they know whose Country their school is on? Visit: <<https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>> Show the students the Country where your school is located on the map.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Pages 6–7

- Who are the Ancestors this page refers to?
- What do we need to be guided towards?
- Ask students to look at the artwork on these pages. Why do they think it was chosen for this page?

### Pages 8–9

- Ask students what 'respect' means.
- What does 'scars of the past' mean?
- What would 'healing' look like?
- Why do the students think the artwork 'Country is Within' was chosen for this page?
- Ask students what they think 'truth-telling' refers to. Why might this be difficult?

### Pages 10–11

- What are the first languages of Country?
- Ask the students if they know any names of First Nations languages.

### Page 12–13

- Ask students if they know what Dreaming stories are.
- Ask students if they know any Dreaming stories.
- Visit: <https://www.nla.gov.au/dreaming#> to learn more about The Dreaming and <https://dreamtime.net.au/dreaming/story-list/> to read some Dreaming stories with the students.

### Page 15

- Ask students what a treaty is.
- Ask students whether they think Australia should have a treaty with its First Nations Peoples.
- Ask them to question why one doesn't exist already.

### Page 18–19

- Ask students what they know about First Nations culture.
- Ask students what they think reconciliation means.

### Page 20

- Ask students what we can learn by listening to stories from the past.
- Ask students how listening to views and various voices could guide Australia.

### Page 22

- Ask students to reflect on the cover and the words 'walk together'. Why is this important?
- Ask students to reflect on their ancestors. What would it be like to walk in their footprints?

## ACTIVITIES

- Return to the questions. Note the questions the class previously decided need further investigation. Split the class into pairs or groups of threes, then allocate one of these to pairs or groups of threes to investigate, using technology and books. Ask them to present their findings to the class and share their resources.
- Invite a local Elder to speak to the class. Before the visit, work with students to prepare questions. Ask students to word questions in a way that encourages detailed information from your guest. Discuss with students the importance of deep listening in First Nation culture and what this might look like when listening to a guest.
  - After the visit, have children write a report for the school newsletter or for display in class.