



# Teachers' Notes

## Bush Holiday

Leonie Norrington

Illustrated by Brenton E McKenna

Teachers' Notes Written by Carolyn Carter

### OMNIBUS BOOKS

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Author	Leonie Norrington
Illustrator	Brenton E McKenna
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## Introduction

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Tillithia loves the school holidays. She's looking forward to riding her bike, going to the movies, and maybe even visiting the market. But Mum has other plans. They are going bush with Auntie Doreen. Tillithia doesn't want to go. She remembers the last bush holiday. Mum and Auntie Doreen made her do culture stuff. She had mud in her hair, broken fingernails, and the bush food tasted terrible. But could things be different this time? Will this be a holiday to remember ... for the right reasons?

## About the Author

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Leonie Norrington was born in Darwin, the third of nine children, and grew up at Barunga Aboriginal community, south of Katherine. 'We were looked after by Clare, who 'grew us up properly': teaching us bush tucker, hunting, and respect for sacred places and important people.'

Leonie's first children's book *The Barrumbi Kids*, was Honour Book in the Australian Children's Book Council (CBC) Awards in 2002 and shortlisted for the New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards in 2003. The sequel, *The Spirit of Barrumbi*, was shortlisted for the 2004 South Australian Festival Awards. *Leaving Barrumbi* and *You and Me: Our Place* were shortlisted in the 2008 CBC Awards. Leonie's picture book *Look See, Look at Me* was an Honour Book in the 2011 CBC Awards. Her novel *The Devil You Know* won the Territory Read Award 2010.

## About the Illustrator

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Brenton E McKenna is an indigenous writer/Illustrator from Broome. Ever since he can remember, he has been passionate about art and telling stories and immersed in the world of comic art, cartooning and graphic novels. He is inspired by the multicultural history of his hometown and draws on Aboriginal and foreign mythologies in his stories. Brenton studied visual arts for two years at Goldburn TAFE

and in 2009 was awarded a mentorship with the Australian Society of Authors. Brenton was a Deadly Award nominee in 2011 and winner of Kullarri NAIDOC award for Literature. His first book, *Ubbys Underdogs: The Legend of the Phoenix Dragon*, is a graphic novel featuring a cast of Indigenous characters, the first of a trilogy for Magabala Books.

## Activities

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### English

1. Culture means 'way of life'. There are many things that make up our culture, like:

- food
- clothing
- arts
- sports
- language
- family life
- what we do in our spare time.

Some things that are part of Auntie Doreen's culture are:

- hunting and gathering food
- respect and pride for the land
- sharing traditional stories
- getting together with family and people who come from the same place.

What are some of the things that are part of your family's culture? As a class, share some of these things and list them on the white/smartboard.

2. Find a poem, rhyme or song from a different culture to share with the class.

Which country is it from? Do you know if it has a special meaning for the person who created it?

3. 'Billabong' and 'tucker' are uniquely Australian words. With some help from your teacher, look these up in the dictionary. What do they mean? Draw a picture of each.
4. At the beginning of the book Tillithia is unhappy about going on a bush holiday. What particular details does the author include to show this?
5. How does Tillithia feel about the bush holiday by the end of the story? How do we know this?
6. Write your own review of *Bush Holiday*.

## Creative Activities

1. Look at the illustrated border that runs along the top and bottom of the pages in *Bush Holiday*. If you hold the book's spine in your left hand and slowly flick the pages with your right, you will notice that it looks like the geese are flying past the trees. Create your own flip book. A video on how to make a simple one can be found here:  
*How to make a flip book* - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zEiORwNTDeM>.
2. Pretend you are on an Australian bush holiday. Write a postcard to a friend describing the things you have seen and done.
3. Write about a time in your life when an experience that seemed negative suddenly became positive.
4. Make an acrostic poem using the word 'BATS'.
5. Design a postage stamp with a picture of an Australian plant or animal.

6. Create a family web. Draw a circle in the middle of a page and write 'My family' inside the circle. Draw pictures or glue photos of each family member in the space around the circle. Include the person's name with each picture and an explanation of how this person fits into your family (e.g. sister, grandfather). Draw a line (or glue pieces of string) out from the circle to each person. (Your picture will look a bit like a sun with many rays.)
7. In groups of three, think of a recipe you could make using at least one bush food. Share this with the class and vote on which recipe sounds the tastiest.

## Society and Environment

1. Choose a native Australian animal to research. Write down four interesting facts and share these with your classmates.
2. A dilly bag is a bag woven from plants, like vines or tough dried grasses. What does Auntie Doreen put in her dilly bag? Some Indigenous Australian (Aboriginal) communities have also used vines to weave fish traps. What do you think a fish trap might look like? Draw a picture.
3. Many native Australian plants and trees (or flora) can be used as medicines. An example is the nut from the boab tree. The white powder inside can be used to cure stomach aches and colds. Research the native Australian flora that can be found in your state or territory to see how they can be used as medicine.
4. Bush food (also called bush tucker) is food that can be found in the bush. What do Auntie Doreen, Tillithia and her mum eat on their way to Goose Camp? What are some other Australian bush foods? Find out and list at least five of these.
5. Families come in many different shapes and sizes. As a class, have a discussion about who is in your family. Is your family big or small? Is there someone such as a friend, or a person who lives nearby, who you include as part of your family?

6. Tillithia and her mum are included as part of Auntie Doreen's family. In Auntie Doreen's culture it is her responsibility to pass on knowledge of the Indigenous Australian ways to Tillithia and her mum. What things does Auntie Doreen teach them? Make a list on the white/smartboard.
7. There are some Indigenous Australian words (shown in italics) in *Bush Holiday*. What is the name of the language these words come from? (The answer can be found in the book.)
8. An important part of Auntie Doreen's culture is to get together with family members and people who come from the same place to talk, laugh, eat and have a good time together.

Think about the times you and your family and friends enjoy getting together as a group. Write a list of the funny things you talk about. Is there also a funny story that your family likes to tell when you are all together?

## History

1. Your ancestors are the people in your family who lived a long time ago. Indigenous Australians have always had a strong respect for their ancestors. Dreaming stories are one of the traditions that have been passed down by the ancestors. Dreaming stories share information about how the land and everything in it was created. Read a Dreaming story together as a class.
2. Another tradition of Indigenous Australian culture is 'looking after the land'. Read the 'All About Us' section at the end of the story to give you an idea of what this means.

3. Auntie Doreen, mum and Tillithia travel to a special meeting place - Goose Camp.

Does your family have a special place that they like to visit? Or do you have a special place of your own? If so:

- what is special about this place?
- how does it make you feel?
- when do you go there?
- what do you do to look after this place?

As a class, talk about these special places.

4. What is a corroboree? Do some research to find out why Indigenous Australians have corroborees.

5. Think about special occasions that have traditionally been celebrated in different cultures around the world, like birthdays and Christmas. In pairs, make a list of these. Write the name of the occasion and the reason for the celebration. Share your list with the class.

6. Do you know where your ancestors came from? If not, ask someone like a parent or grandparent to find out.