

Synopsis:

Taha, Mum and Joel leave Cairns, in Queensland, and drive even further north, heading towards Darwin and the 'top end' of Australia. During this trip they will travel through mining and cattle towns, as well as towns that were once thriving gold-producing areas. Taha and Joel continue to record their travels with photographs and notes in the journals that they were given by their teacher, Mrs Zimmerman. Taha also uses the Oracle Pod that was given to him by his neighbour, Mr Wilson, to find out interesting facts on their trip.

Before Reading

Discuss the following:

- The book format – Students can read the blurb, the table of contents and skim additional features such as the Aussie Jokes, Slang and Facts. Note the mix of photography and illustrations. Discuss design features.
- Citizenship and immigration – Review the citizenship ceremony (pp6-9) and discuss the importance placed on this ceremonial event. Talk about why, and from where, people migrate to Australia and then become Australian citizens. Locate Vietnam on a world map. Ask students why Chi might like to open a restaurant.
- Campervans – Taha, Mum and Joel travel in their campervan, the Southern Cross. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of these 'homes on wheels'. Discuss travelling games that can be played on long trips, such as 'I spy'.
- Indigenous Australians – Do students know about the indigenous Australians or traditional owners of the land in their local area or on the east coast of Australia? Discuss the references to indigenous culture on pages 58, 60 and 72. (It is important to acknowledge the role of indigenous Australians and explore Australia's indigenous history prior to European settlement.)

Build up a collection of resources such as books, travel magazines, maps, street directories and websites.

Language Features and Activities

First person narrative:

- The author engages the reader by using a character, Taha, to tell the story. This makes the narrative very personal. Taha's conversations with his mum, Joel and the people he meets give us an insight into their personalities and characters. (For example, Taha has great self-confidence and enthusiasm for life and often imagines himself as a high achiever or adventurer, such as a crocodile handler on page 102.) Joel's character is a foil for the overtly confident Taha.

Journals:

- Taha and Joel use their journals to keep photographs and record written information about the trip. Discuss whether students keep journals, especially while travelling or on holidays, and why journals can be important documents.

Letter writing:

- Taha writes to his neighbor, Mr Wilson. Taha often jokes about Mr Wilson's age in his letters and comments about past misdemeanors that have impacted on Mr Wilson. This provides additional

information (such as type of character, travel experiences, etc.) for the reader in a different format. Demonstrate the correct format for writing a letter. Ask your students to select an activity such as a weekend trip or family celebration, and then write a letter about it to the class. Compare writing a letter with writing an email and discuss similarities and differences.

Factual writing:

- Most of the factual information in the text is presented using the device of the Oracle Pod. However, there are other occasions when Mum and Taha give information to the reader. Use the shape of an oracle pod, cut out of card, to record research information about topics or places in this book that the students are interested in. Students can use the map of Australia on Blackline Master 3 to identify towns or locations referred to in the text.

Vocabulary:

- Use a dictionary to find meanings for words and phrases such as 'granite', 'stew', 'wafting', 'amphibious', 'traditional', 'casserole', 'crack of dawn', 'bright and early' and 'mango cheeks'.
- Ask students to make a list of bold or coloured words and explain why these are used in the text (for example, as sound effects or to describe and emphasise feelings, reactions or other physical features).
- There are several double-page illustrations in this book (pp52-53, pp78-79, pp92-93). Consider the links that the illustrations provide to the text. Also look at illustrations on pages 83 and 111 and discuss how they work with the text.

Grammar/Punctuation:

- Find examples of ellipses in Chapters 3 and 4 (refer to the chapter titles and pages 53 and 64. (Ellipses indicate the omission of a word, phrase or sentence.) Ask students why the author might have used ellipses and have them find more examples in the text.
- Discuss the use of nicknames for people or things (p24), why some people and places have them,

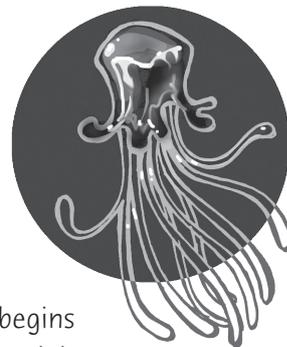
and how they come about. Emphasise the importance of positive rather than derogatory nicknames. Note that many sports stars have nicknames that can be discussed as examples.

Comprehension:

- To maintain an awareness of students' understanding throughout the text, use the chapter headings to ask questions about their content. (For example, ask them why the author chose the title 'Out and About...' for Chapter 6.)

Activities

- Re-visit the interview with Charlie (pp114-117). Discuss the format and questions that Taha and Joel asked. Ask students what questions they would ask Charlie and list their responses.
- Re-read Taha's conversation with Kevin (pp102-111). Ask students to list the main facts from the conversation. Use the facts to write a newspaper article about Kevin. Look at local papers to find a model for a similar article. Make up a suitable headline, and make sure students record information in order from the most to least important?
- Use Blackline Master 4 to link illustrations with information from the text. Encourage students to write explanations in their own words instead of copying from the text.
- Use Blackline Master 5 to record information after researching crocodiles.
- Discuss the steps for how to write recipes. Make pancakes as a class group and take a photo of students eating the pancakes.
- The illustrator has made 'totally awesome' into one feature word on page 91. Use this as a template for an acrostic poem. (An acrostic poem is written using a word as the title and each letter of the word then begins each line of the poem.) Link each letter with words from the text.



Characters

Taha remains keen to travel and seek out new places and people. In this title, the reader learns more about his friendship with Joel. Taha is very confident, adventurous and often cheeky (especially in his letters to Mr Wilson). Josh is quieter, yet often demonstrates his keener knowledge and understandings about Australia. In this book, Joel becomes more involved in conversations and expresses his feelings more often. Re-visit the boys' discussion with Mum regarding travel times (p70).

Maps and Maths

- Calculate the distances travelled.
- Revise the units of measurement used in recipes.
- Discuss the statistics for Tennant Creek on page 58.
- Review the temperatures and seasonal changes in Far North Queensland and the Northern Territory.
- Re-visit the statistics for Darwin's Wave Lagoon (p95).
- Using concrete materials such as plastic blocks or cardboard materials to show how 'force' can affect structures such as bridges.
- Find the Stuart Highway on a map – why is this road so important?



Our Australia series by Phil Kettle
Illustrations by David Dunstan
Teacher notes by Judi Champion
Edited by Emma Short
Design by Goanna Graphics (Vic) Pty Ltd

Our Australia DARWIN

Research Topics

- citizenship and immigration
- the history of Darwin including the events of World War II and Cyclone Tracey
- the life and legacy of Charles Darwin
- Brahman cattle, dingos, snakes, crocodiles
- the history of Indigenous rock art
- amphibious vehicles

Useful References

- Tourism agencies
- Local councils, libraries, historical societies
- State automobile clubs – maps and trip planners
- Local RSL clubs
- Local parliamentary or council offices
- <http://en.travelnt.com/experience/nature/the-crocodile.aspx>
- www.abc.net.au/schoolstv/animals/CROCODILES
- www.kidcyber.com.au/topics/crocs_oz.htm
- <http://www.crocosauruscove.com/>
- <http://www.whatsnakeisthat.com.au/>
- www.derm.qld.gov.au/.../snakes/...snakes.../snakes_of_southeast_que...
- <http://www.tourismtopend.com.au/>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darwin,_Northern_Territory
- Australian Geographic articles relating to Canberra:
Croc numbers recover (Lisa Martin/AAP)
28 June 2010

Dingoes originated in China 18,000 years ago (Natalie Muller), 13 September 2011

10 weekend adventures: Darwin (Bridget Brennan)
9 December 2009

Darwin, Wallace and the princess in the south (Tim Low) 24 February 2010

Name: _____ Date: _____

Draw a map of Taha's trip. Add pictures, captions or labels.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Write a review about this book.

Title:

Author:

What happens:

My opinion of this book:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Choose a topic or idea from *Our Australia Darwin*. Use the Internet, books or other resources to research this topic. Record the information you find on the Oracle Pod below.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Study the pictures below and use the chapter clues to find an explanation for each one. Then write the explanation in your own words.

Chapter 2 (p26)



Chapter 2 (p27)



Chapter 2 (p33)

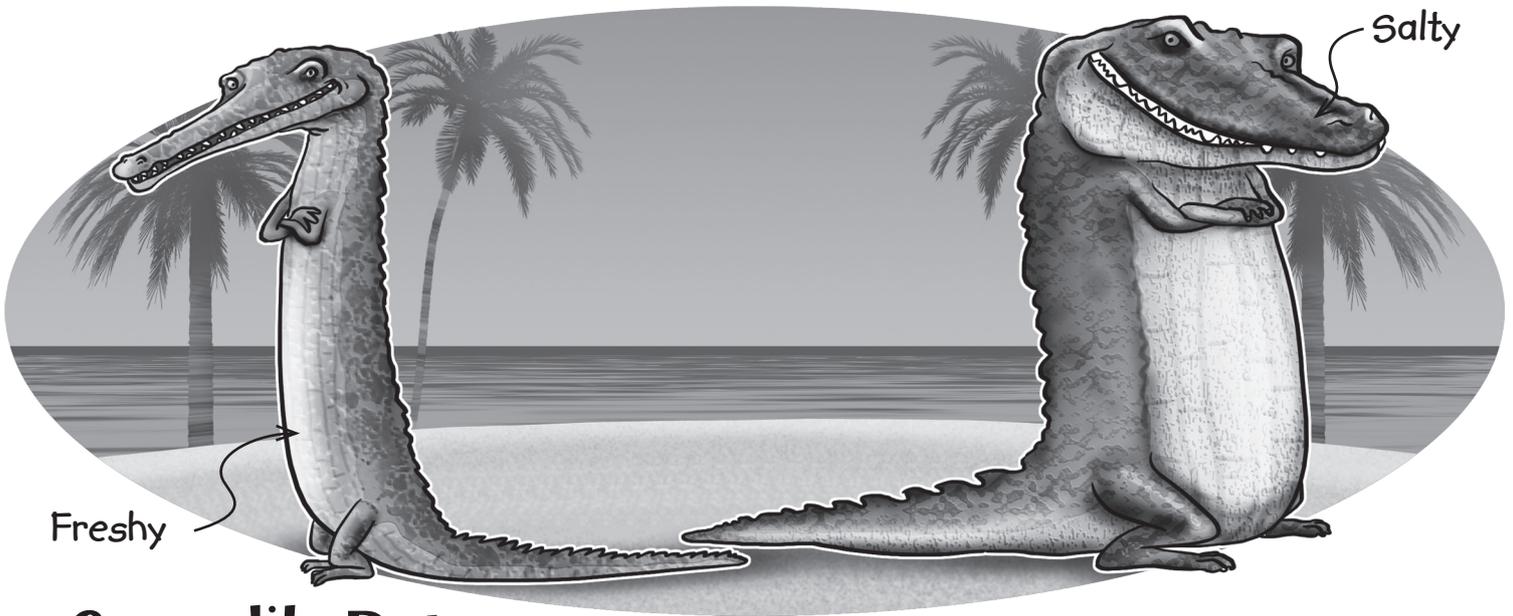


Chapter 5 (p71)



Name: _____ Date: _____

Re-read Chapter 7 and enter the information about crocodiles into the table below. Use the internet or a non-fiction book to find an interesting fact about each type of crocodile.



Crocodile Data

| Type | Habitat | Teeth | Jaws | Prey | Interesting Fact |
|------------|---------|-------|------|------|------------------|
| Saltwater | | | | | |
| Freshwater | | | | | |