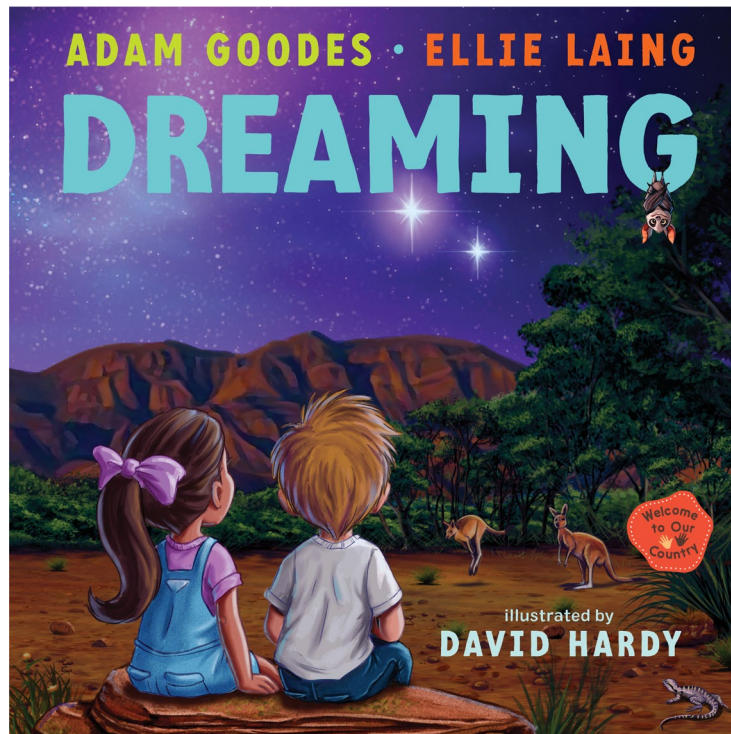




DREAMING

Written by ADAM GOODES and ELLIE LAING

Illustrated by DAVID HARDY

Published by ALLEN & UNWIN

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country on which we work, live, learn and engage. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

ISBN (AUS): 9781761065095

THEMES: First Nations, Indigenous Australians, Aboriginal culture and knowledge, Country, Dreaming

RECOMMENDED FOR: 4–8 years old. A book for preschool to Year 3

NOTES WRITTEN BY: Cool Australia

**COOL
-ORG**


ALLEN & UNWIN

ABOUT DREAMING

*In my dreaming at night, I see pictures behind my eyes that take me far away.
Way way back in the beginning, Akurras slithered, carving rivers, in a Creation story from my
Dreaming, my Muda.
Law men came down from the sky to teach us about our Country.
In my Muda, the Ancestors are never far, and I can see how I fit and who I am.*

Told in a child's voice, *Dreaming* is a joyful and thought-provoking story in the bestselling and award-winning Welcome to Our Country series, and follows one young girl as she imagines what it might be like to be part of the Dreaming, past and present.

ABOUT THE WELCOME TO OUR COUNTRY SERIES

Welcome to Our Country is a series of books designed to connect young children, parents and educators with First Nations history and culture. The series is a collaboration between Adnyamathanha and Narungga man Adam Goodes (former Australian Rules footballer, Australian of the Year in 2014 and co-founder of the GO Foundation), political advisor and former journalist Ellie Laing, and Barkindji illustrator David Hardy.

Together the creators hope the series will be an invaluable tool for children, parents and educators to start conversations and better understand our shared history.

A WORD FROM THE CREATORS OF DREAMING

We acknowledge that the word Dreaming means different things to different people. We also acknowledge that Dreaming is not a traditional word used by Aboriginal people. However, it is the word commonly used to try to explain the interconnectedness, complexity and richness of the Creation stories and spirituality of Aboriginal culture. We have used the word Dreaming in this book to introduce the vastness of this concept.

In Adnyamathanha culture, Muda is the word used to describe a never-ending cycle that links the past, present and future. This cycle is central to the identity of many Aboriginal people and nations, and is linked to Country and spirituality. Muda explains how the world was created by ancestral spirits and how people and nature interact.

As you read this book, rather than try to fully understand or make sense of Dreaming and Muda in your mind, we hope the story helps you feel and appreciate their central importance to the culture and lives of Aboriginal people.

Adam Goodes, Ellie Laing and David Hardy

IMPORTANT INFORMATION BEFORE READING *DREAMING*

Language and Using Language

Using a new language for the first time is tricky for everyone. You might be concerned about mispronouncing words, using them incorrectly or accidentally causing offence. Much like learning any skill, you'll make mistakes at the start and will improve with practice and as your confidence increases. The effort and intent are much more important than the level of skill. Just do your best and use this as a role-modelling opportunity for your child.

Understanding Dreaming

As explored in the book, the word Dreaming means different things to different people, especially First Nations peoples and communities. For the purpose of this text, Dreaming is used to explain the interconnectedness of First Nations Creation stories and the spirituality of Aboriginal culture, which is rich in knowledge.

Dreaming is passed from generation to generation through storytelling. A common misconception is that Dreaming took place at the beginning of time. It is important to understand that Dreaming is a non-linear journey for First Nations peoples, and it encompasses the past, present and future as it is interwoven in the livelihoods of many First Nations people.

The Dreaming, which is shared through stories, has been passed down through generations for over 65,000 years. The Dreaming is representative of the diversity and individuality of First Nations mobs, clans and groups across the continent as the stories can differ between Nations. While there are some commonalities between Nations, it is important to note that the book focuses on the Adnyamathanha culture and language.

Knowing the Country You Are On

In this book, the character explores her connection to the Dreaming through multiple settings and the different landscapes of Adnyamathanha Country using both English and Adnyamathanha language. We recommend familiarising yourself with the Traditional Custodians of the Country you're on, and their language, traditions and culture. You can start by exploring the [AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia](#) and checking out useful tools such as the [Gambay First Languages Map](#).

As you begin exploring the First Nations languages of Australia, you might notice that some words are hard to find, or that multiple spellings and pronunciations exist for the same word. This is because many language groups are in the process of language revival, a journey often supported by oral histories, personal memories, and records written by European settlers. Naturally, this means there will be inconsistencies and gaps. Like all living languages, First Nations languages continue to grow and change, just as your students regularly expand their own vocabularies.

Use the words that have been generously shared with respect and care. By speaking these languages, we help keep them alive and allow them to flourish for future generations. Before colonisation, over 250 distinct languages were spoken across Australia. Approximately 123 of these languages are in use today, 12 of these being spoken fluently by all generations within a community. ([source](#)).

Protocols

Cultural knowledge is central to the identity, history and traditions of First Nations peoples. It is not simply information. It holds deep spiritual, cultural and communal meaning. Engaging with this knowledge requires a clear understanding of its significance, and a commitment to respecting the protocols that govern how it is shared and used.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are deeply connected to Country, stories, and customs, which are passed down through generations via oral traditions such as storytelling, ceremony, song, art and other cultural practices. Respecting these practices begins with recognising the rightful holders of this knowledge and ensuring it is only shared with permission. Some knowledge is considered sacred or restricted and is not meant for public sharing.

Approaching cultural knowledge with respect builds stronger relationships, supports deeper learning, and ensures that First Nations histories and traditions are recognised and shared in ethical, appropriate ways.

Useful Questions

Before reading this book, ask yourself:

- Why have I chosen this book to read with my child?
- What do I already know about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures? What more could I learn?
- How can I approach this story with respect, curiosity, and an open mind?
- What does my child already know about First Nations peoples, and what might they be curious to learn?

After reading this book, ask yourself:

- Did this story change or deepen my understanding of First Nations cultures or beliefs?
- How did the book show the importance of Country, family, and stories for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?
- How can I support my child to reflect respectfully on what we've read and learned together?
- What steps can I take as a parent or carer to continue learning about and celebrating First Nations cultures with my family?

Personal Check-in

Once you've brought this book into your home, take an opportunity to reflect on your own knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, histories and cultures. Cultural responsiveness and awareness begin with acknowledging the limitations of our own perspectives. You should consider:

- What assumptions, knowledge or lived experiences do I bring into my family?
- How can I confront any biases, prejudices or stereotypes that I may have?
- What is my understanding of First Nations peoples and their connection to the Dreaming?

Cultural Safety for Children

Dreaming, alongside all of the books in the Welcome to Our Country series, provides the opportunity to learn and immerse yourself in culturally significant stories and teachings.

Start conversations and create safe, non-judgemental spaces for sharing and building understanding within your family. Use your best judgement and knowledge to support your family's wellbeing. No one knows your family like you do!

If you wish to learn more about the Country you are on, begin by building relationships with your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. You can do this by reaching out to your Local Aboriginal Network (LAN) or the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) of your area. Before approaching, be mindful and respectful that these organisations can have many demands for their time. You can complete research online, explore projects this organisation has undertaken in the past, attend community events or ask your local council if you need a starting point.

Local First Nations organisations often have information about a region's history and culture, and any contacts. Once you have researched, use the information you find to engage with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. By developing your own understanding through research, you are actively seeking opportunities to build your knowledge and understanding. The following websites are great resources to get you started:

- [AIATSIS](#)
- [Common Ground](#)
- [Reconciliation Australia](#)
- [SNAICC](#)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Deep Thinking

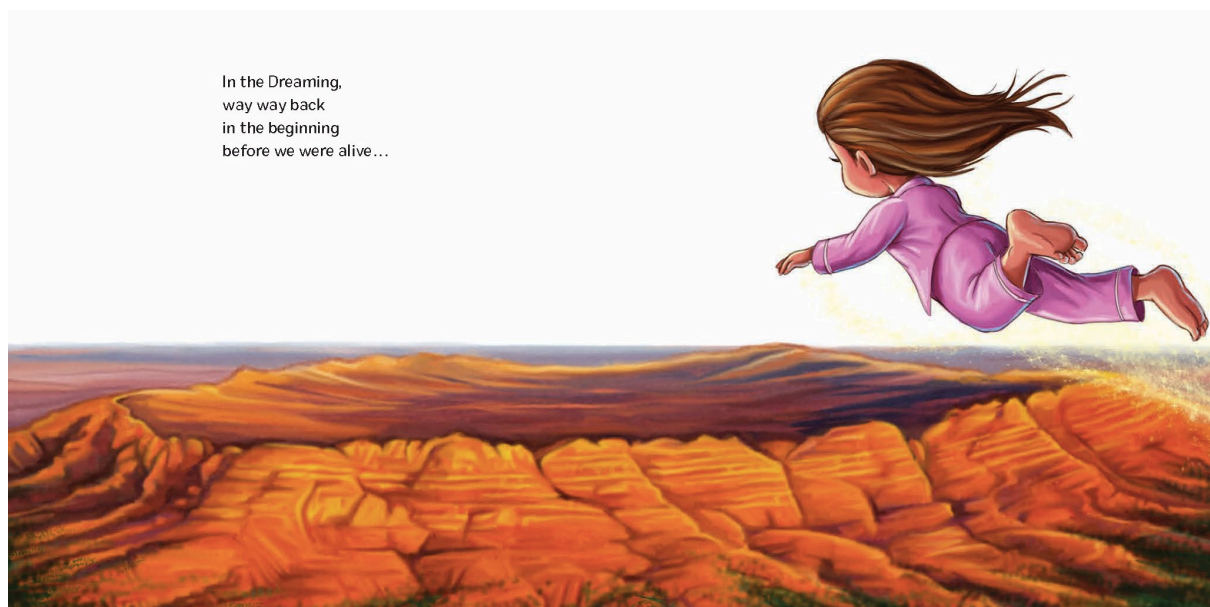
Step 1: Find somewhere nice and cosy to begin reading the book! Before diving into reading, take some time to discuss the following prompts with your children:

- What do you notice about the cover of *Dreaming*?
- What do you think *Dreaming* will be about?
- Do you have any questions about the book?

Step 2: With your children, read *Dreaming* from start to finish. Allow yourselves time to absorb the illustrations as you progress through the book.

Step 3: Give your children a few minutes to consider *Dreaming*. They may have questions about what Dreaming is, and the general themes of family, culture and storytelling within the book.

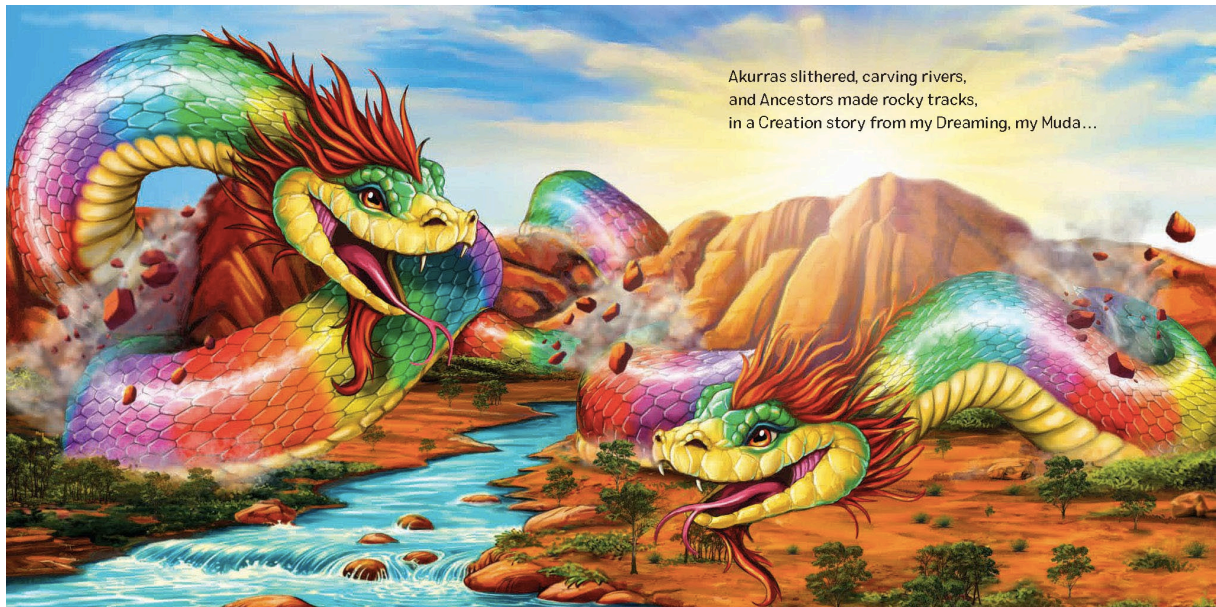
The following pages are great tools for discussing *Dreaming* with your children. You might like to flick back and forth between them and discuss the questions below to explore the book's messaging more deeply.



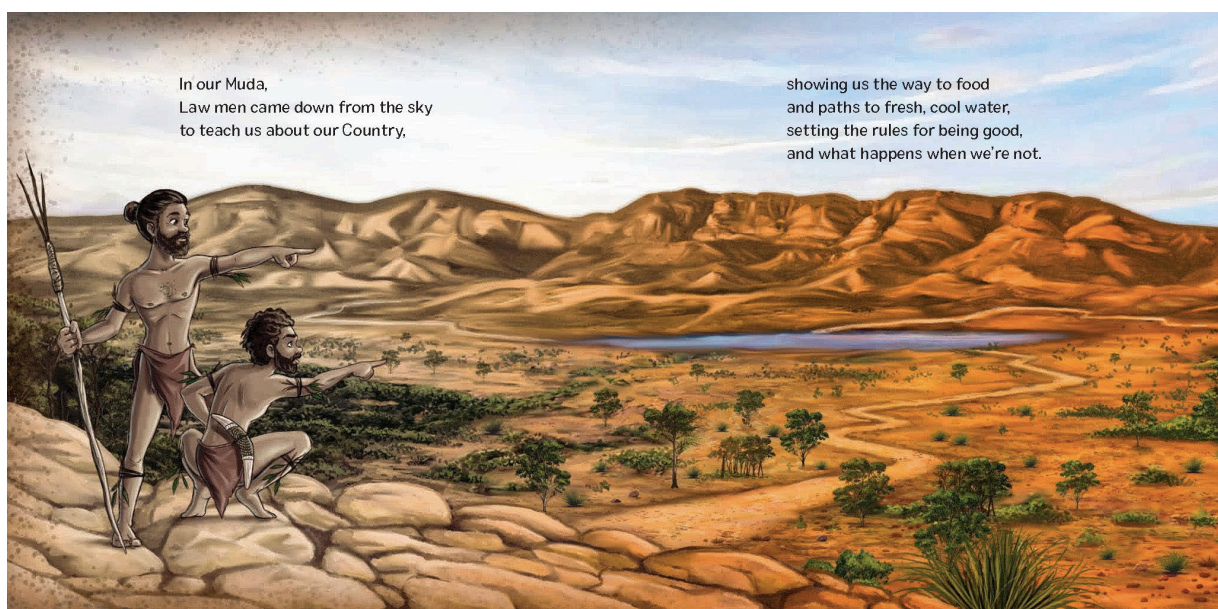
P3: Have you heard of the Dreaming before? What do you think 'way way back in the beginning' means? What do you know about who was here before we were?

Note: The Dreaming is how Aboriginal peoples understand the world. It tells the stories of how everything began, like the land, the animals, and people. The Dreaming helps people know how to care for each other and for Country. These stories aren't just from long ago;

they are still alive today. They help connect people to the land, to their families, and to the way they live.



P4: 'Akurras slithered, carving rivers'. What is an Akurra? Find the glossary at the back of the book to learn more about Akurras. Reflect with your child by asking if your family has any special creatures or animals (for example, a totem or a family crest heirloom).



P5: Muda! That's a new word. What is Muda? Learn more about the meaning of Muda in Adnyamathanha culture from the note from the authors at the front of the book



P6: On this page, the authors refer to the Creation story 'signalling what's wrong and right'. What stories do you know that have important lessons? You can dig deeper by asking your child about the stories you have shared as a family, and which ones are special or important to them.



P8: Who are you? Who is a part of our family? Where do you feel like you belong? For many Aboriginal peoples, the Dreaming involves Creation stories that hold important memories of Ancestors.

Step 4: There are many important themes within these pages. Reflect with your child on what you have learned so far, and ask:

- How would you describe the Dreaming in your own words?
- What special stories do you have of your family members and ancestors?
- What makes you feel connected to your family?

Learning Extension: Jot down some questions you and your child have about the themes covered in the book. If these questions relate to First Nations peoples and cultures, we recommend using a device together and accessing a reputable and authentic website to research and learn more!

- [AIATSIS](#)
- [Common Ground](#)
- [Deadly Story](#)

Learning Support: The book uses some big words that your child may not know. Have a dictionary handy and model how to use it to help your child understand new words. Remember, there is a glossary in the back of the book to help you with the First Nations words.

Activity 2: A Special Place for You and Me

Step 1: Read *Dreaming* all the way through together. While reading, pay attention to the different places shown in the story. Look closely at the colours, the landscapes, the animals and the skies. You might like to say, 'Let's see how many different places we can notice in this story.'

After you read the book, pose the following questions to students:

- Where do you think this place might be?
- What do you notice about the trees, the land, or the animals?

Step 2: After reading, have a quiet conversation together. You might sit outside, at the kitchen table, or wherever you feel relaxed. Use these simple prompts to guide your talk:

- *What places did we see in the book?*
- *Did any of those places remind you of somewhere we've been together?*
- *Do we have a place that's special to our family? What makes it special?*

Take a moment to gently explain that for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, these special places are part of their *Country*, which means more than just land. It

includes the trees, water, animals, skies and stories that connect them to their Ancestors and culture.

Step 3: Let's find out whose Country we live on. Use the [AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia](#) online (or a printed map if you have one) to look up your local area together. Your child may already know who the Traditional Custodians of the area are, but this step is a chance to model curiosity, respect and learning as a family.

Step 4: Now it's time to get creative! Invite your child to draw, paint or collage a picture of a place that is special to them. You can join in too!

Ask:

- Is it a place we go together? A quiet place? A fun place?
- What do you see when you're there? Trees? Sand? Water? Birds?
- How does it feel to be in that place? Happy? Safe? Calm?

Encourage them to include:

- features of nature (trees, rocks, water, hills, sky)
- living things (plants, animals, people, fungi)
- colours or patterns that match the feeling of the place.

Step 5: Once you've both finished your artworks, take turns sharing what you created. Use questions like:

- Why did you choose this place?
- What memories do you have of there?
- How do we care for this place when we visit?

Celebrate the fact that every person has places that help them feel connected, just like the places in *Dreaming* help the narrator feel connected to her Ancestors and her story.

Activity 3: Language of this Land

Step 1: Start by reading *Dreaming* in a quiet place. As you read, highlight any words that relate to nature, place or storytelling (for example, sky, stars, river, trees, ancestors, family).

Ask:

- Are there any words in the story that feel really powerful or special?
- How do you think words help tell stories from the past?

You might even write down a short list together of words that stood out during the reading.

Step 2: Did you know that there are more than 250 First Nations languages in Australia, and many of them are still spoken today? With your child, read 'A Note from the Authors', which explains the Adnyamathanha language used in the book. You may like to turn to the endpapers of the book to learn some new Adnyamathanha words together.

Step 3: Visit the [Gambay First Languages Map](#) together on a tablet or computer. Find your location on the map and click on the local language group for your area (you can zoom in and out).

Say the language name together and try to remember it. If available, listen to audio clips of the language or watch short videos on the site.

With your child, ask:

- What's the name of the language spoken on this land?
- Can we learn how to say a word or two together?
- What else can we learn about this language or the people who speak it?

Step 4: Choose one word in the local language (you can use the Gambay site, a local community page, or a library resource).

Make a small card together with:

- the word
- its meaning
- a picture or drawing to help remember it
- the language name.

Display it somewhere at home (for example, on the fridge or in a notebook) as your Word of the Week. Each week, you can add a new one and build your own family collection.

Learning Extension: Use a small notebook to create your own Family Language and Place Journal where you:

- record the First Nations words you've learned
- write or draw places that connect to those words
- add reflections like 'This word reminds me of...' or 'I saw a [animal] just like in the story.'

Learning support: Remind children that there are no wrong questions when learning about culture and language, but we must be respectful. If your child identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, support them in feeling proud to explore their own language connections.

ABOUT THE CREATORS

ADAM GOODES is an Adnyamathanha and Narungga man and community leader. He is a former Australian Rules footballer, having achieved the greatest heights in the game, and was named Australian of the Year in 2014 for his public work in the fight against racism and his advocacy in First Nations affairs. Together with his cousin Michael O'Loughlin, Adam founded the GO Foundation, which supports and inspires the next generation of First Nations leaders. With a diploma in Aboriginal Studies and his own children at school and preschool, Adam was motivated to publish a series of books for young children and families about Australia's First Nations history.

ELLIE LAING (nee Southwood) is a communications executive and former journalist, who lives on the lands of the Gammeraygal people on the northern beaches of Sydney with her husband and two sons. When Ellie's eldest son Harvey came home from preschool reciting Acknowledgements of Country and singing Aboriginal lullabies, she was inspired to collaborate with Adam Goodes on a series of books aimed at helping families with young children to talk about Australia's First Nations history. She has recently completed studies in Traditional Aboriginal Cultures.

DAVID HARDY is a Barkindji man, author and artist with more than eight years of animation experience with Walt Disney Animation Studios. Married with two children, he is currently Art Director and Game Art Manager for Lightning Box Games. David has worked on twelve animated feature films, including *The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Beginning*, *The Lion King 3: Hakuna Matata* and *Return to Never Land*. His books for children include *Alfie's Search for Destiny* and *Alfie's Big Wish*, *On the Way to Nana's* (written by Frances and Lindsay Haji-Ali), *The Proud Foots 1: Shaka Shaka Hawaii* (written by Lucas Proudfoot) and *Aussie Kids: Meet Zoe and Zac at the Zoo* (written by Belinda Murrell).



ABOUT THE WRITER OF THE NOTES

More than 175,000 educators trust Cool Australia to bring real-world learning into their classrooms. We provide free lesson plans and accredited online professional development courses centred around environmental, social and economic sustainability topics. Quality teachers have one of the most significant impacts on student learning outcomes; our mission is to support teachers to be the best they can be so that all students have access to high-quality education and a successful future.



We are backed by research and evidence. We know that after using our resources, 98% of students increase their knowledge and awareness of real-world issues, and 93% of students are more likely to take action. Using Cool Australia's resources has a positive impact on teachers: 91% say using our resources has increased their confidence in teaching environmental and social issues.

We partner with organisations that share our passion for education. Together, we create high-quality educational content about contemporary issues. Like us, our partners want our education system to empower students to address big environmental, social and economic challenges. We cover a wide range of topics and upskill educators so they can engage with and empower students.