

# Lesson 1 of 20

Unit plan

## Brindabella

🕒 Total duration 1h  
📄 Number of phases 3  
📅 Year Year 3

Learning Area English

Discipline Literature

Strands Engaging with and responding to literature, Examining literature and creating texts

Materials Novel *Brindabella* by Ursula Dubosarsky (2018) – teacher copy, Chapter 1 of *Brindabella* by Ursula Dubosarsky (2018) – 1 per student, Blank A4 paper – 1 per student, Whiteboards and markers – 1 per student, 'Brindabella novel study: images of the Australian landscape' (Key resource 2)

Lesson Overview In this lesson, the teacher reviews the settings of the farm and bush by guiding a discussion using the blurb and front cover of *Brindabella* and focusing on Chapter 1. Students examine how descriptive words are used to show the setting. The teacher models how to write descriptively, and students use this knowledge to describe familiar settings in their own writing.

Victorian Curriculum 2.0 content descriptions

- Describe how different types of texts across the curriculum have different language features and structures depending on purposes (VC2E3LA03)
- Extend topic-specific and technical vocabulary and know that words can have different meanings in different contexts (VC2E3LA11)
- Describe how different types of texts across the curriculum have different language features and structures depending on purposes (VC2E3LA03)

Prior knowledge Before starting this sequence, students should understand:

- what a setting is in a story
- how to identify and use adjectives (describing words) to show what settings look, sound and feel like
- that an author's choice of words can influence how a reader portrays a setting.

Building fluency and making meaning In this sequence, students should be supported to develop reading fluency through:

- the teacher should frequently model reading chapters from the novel aloud to students, demonstrating appropriate fluency, accuracy and expression
- the teacher should read and reread short sections of chapters selected for close reading
- students should take turns, in pairs, to read sections of chapters used in close
- students should be supported when reading independently with guided questions.

Vocabulary

- **Cockatoos:** large parrots with a crest on their heads that make loud noises.
- **Galahs:** pink and grey birds that live in the Australian bush.
- **Motto:** a short phrase that tells what someone believes in.

Learning objective

- We will learn the how to use descriptive language to write about a setting.

Success criteria

- I can find and explain words that describe a setting.
- I can explain the purpose of descriptive words in a setting.
- I can use descriptive words to write sentences that show what a setting looks and feels like.

Teaching considerations

- **Enrich** learning by asking students to search for descriptive language in other narrative texts, choose two or three descriptive words and use these to write an extended description of a setting.
- To plan this sequence, the following version of this text has been used: Dubosarsky, U. (2018), *Brindabella*. Allen & Unwin. ISBN: 9781760112042

### Stage 1

🕒 10min

**Activate prior knowledge: settings and describing words**

**Explain** what farm and bush settings are and **highlight** key features typically found in these settings. For example: landscapes, animals, vegetation. **Revise** students' understanding of a setting in a narrative text by providing a definition. For example: 'Setting is where and when a story happens. It includes the places and the time of day or year in the story.'

**Ask** students to **Pair-Share** and define a setting.

**Check for understanding** by calling on volunteers to share their responses.

**Show** and **describe** images of the Australian bush and farm settings using '[Brindabella novel study: images of the Australian landscape' \(Key resource 2, slides 6-7\)](#).

**Write** descriptive words on the board to portray features of a setting. For example: 'lush green grass' or 'towering gum trees.'

**Discuss** the meaning of the descriptive words and their purpose in creating a picture in the reader's mind of the grass and trees.

**Explain** how these words can help set the scene of the story.

**Ask** students to **Pair-Share** with a partner to discuss additional descriptive words they might use to describe the Australian bush and farm settings.

**Observe** student discussion and provide feedback and support if needed.

**Call** on volunteers to share their responses and **record** them on the board.

**Briefly discuss** how these words contribute to the overall picture of the setting.

**Introduce learning objective**

**Read** the learning objective and ask students to read the success criteria.

**Explain** that they will see how an author uses descriptive words to help readers picture the Australian bush, which is the setting of the story.

### Stage 2

🕒 40min

**Modelling, demonstration and explanation**

**Show** the cover illustration of *Brindabella* and prompt students to think about the key features of the illustration.

**Call on** volunteers to share their responses and record these words on the board.

**Explain** that this illustration may give clues about the setting of the story, helping readers imagine where it takes place.

**Read** aloud the first few sentences of the blurb of *Brindabella*.

**Pause** to highlight examples of descriptive language. For example: 'The house was made of honey coloured stone.' (p. 2).

**Explain** how the author's choice of 'honey coloured' instead of 'yellow' creates a warm and inviting image of the house, giving readers a specific feel about the setting.

**Ask** students to focus on listening to identify descriptive words about the setting.

**Ask** students to do a **quick write** on their whiteboards, where they write down any descriptive words they notice as the blurb is read aloud.

**Check for understanding** by asking students to raise their whiteboards to display the descriptive words they have identified from the blurb.

**Guided practice**

**Read** aloud Chapter 1, pausing and explaining key descriptive words as needed.

**Select** the word 'galahs' (p. 3 from the chapter).

**Provide** the definition of galahs.

**Show** a picture of a galah, describing its features, including its pink and grey colouring, its habitat in the Australian bush and its loud squawking sounds.

**Ask** students to think about why the author might have chosen galahs to help describe the bush setting, and how their squawking sounds help to create a sense of the place.

**Ask** students to **Pair-Share** their ideas about how galahs help to bring the bush setting to life.

**Call** on non-volunteers to share their responses.

**Model** and **narrate writing** two sentences that include galahs. For example:

- 'The galahs squawked loudly, filling the bush with their chatter.'
- 'The pink galahs flew over the trees, their noisy calls echoing through the bush.'

**Explain** how descriptive words like 'squawked loudly' and 'noisy' help readers visualise both the sounds and movement of the galahs.

**Highlight** how these words make the bush setting feel more vivid and real to the reader.

**Ask** students do a quick write where they use the word 'galahs' in a sentence to describe the setting of the bush.

**Observe** student progress using descriptive language and provide help as needed.

**Call** on volunteers to read their sentence.

**Model** writing 2-3 sentences that describe the image from '[Brindabella novel study: images of the Australian landscape](#)' (Key resource 2) using descriptive words. For example:

- 'The playground bursts with vibrant colours. Big, green trees surround the playground.'

**Explain** how these words help create a vivid picture of this setting.

**Ask** students to **Pair-Share** to consider additional descriptive words they could use and to write these on their whiteboards.

**Call** on a non-volunteer to share one of the words or sentences they have written on their whiteboard.

**Use** these responses to collaboratively write a new sentence on the board, adding descriptive detail. For example:

- 'The wide playground is surrounded by towering eucalyptus trees.'

**Repeat** this process one more time by calling on another non-volunteer.

**Independent application**

**Ask** students to write 2-3 sentences describing what the image from '[Brindabella novel study: images of the Australian landscape](#)' (Key resource 2) looks like using describing words.

**Enable** students to generate ideas for their sentences by providing a list of describing words. For example: 'spacious,' 'colourful,' 'quiet.'

**Extend** students to add a comparison. For example, 'The park is as lively as a carnival' to enhance their descriptions of the setting.

**Observe** what students write, looking for:

- the use of descriptive language
- variety in word choice.

**Provide** support as needed.

**Pair** students to read their sentences aloud to each other.

**Ask** students to use the **Two Stars and a Wish** feedback strategy by highlighting two things they like about their partner's sentence and suggesting one way it could be improved.

**Provide** a sentence frame to guide their feedback. For example:

- 'I like how you used the word... to describe...'
- 'You could also add... to say more about how it looks.'

### Stage 3

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**Review and reflect**

**Return** to the learning objective and success criteria.

**Check for understanding** using an exit ticket strategy:

**Write** and **think aloud** two sentences on the board to describe the Australian bush, leaving blanks for descriptive words. For example: 'tall,' 'leafy/lush green trees,' 'gently,' 'slowly,' 'softly' or 'calmly,' 'cool/warm/soft/brisk wind,' 'large,' 'ancient/shady/tall.'

- 'The..., ... trees swayed... in the... bush.'
- 'The... wind rustled the leaves on the... tree in the harsh landscape.'

**Ask** each student to fill in the blanks on a small piece of paper, using descriptive words to complete the sentences as their exit ticket.

**Collect** the exit tickets written on a small piece of paper as students leave to assess their understanding of using descriptive language to enhance a setting.