

TANGKI TJUTA – DONKEYS

Tjanpi Desert Weavers

Pitjantjatjara text by Tjunkaya Tapaya OAM and Imuna Kenta

Based on stories told by Akitiya Angkuna Tjitayi, Imuna Kenta and Anne Karatjari Ward

Translated into English by Linda Rive

Cultural Safety

Before you begin, carefully consider the steps you can take to ensure that you are providing a culturally safe and inclusive space for everybody in your classroom and school. This may include undertaking cultural competency training and reading widely and proactively to self-educate.

RECOMMENDED FOR: 4–8 years old, Foundation – Year 6, lower to upper secondary

An Information/Descriptive text, narrative recount, tjukurpa ayini-ayini (funny story)

Themes: include Aboriginal Culture and History, community, family, creativity, humour, feral animals, donkeys

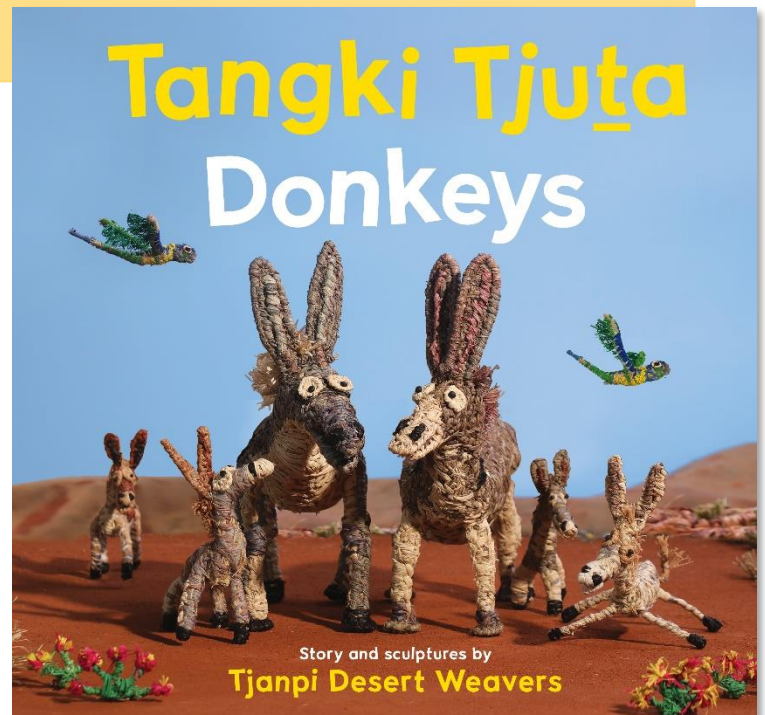
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NOTES WRITTEN BY: Daniel Bleby

CURRICULUM LEARNING AREAS:

- **ENGLISH:** Literature, literacy and language
- **HASS:** Knowledge and Understanding Skills
- **Visual Arts:** Developing practices and skills, Creating and making, Presenting and performing
- **Languages: Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages** First Language Learner Pathway: Communicating, Understanding
- **Cross curriculum priority:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

Most of the learning activities described in these notes lend themselves to integrated units of work, capturing learning within the learning areas of English, HASS, Visual Arts and the Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages (in this case specifically for first language Pitjantjatjara speakers). The content descriptions are provided as prompts only, and many more could be included.



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STORY SUMMARY

Long, long ago, we didn't have donkeys. We didn't have a lot of the things we have today. We didn't know donkeys existed.

Our people used to walk with their camels and donkeys from Areyonga to Ernabella. They brought their donkeys here, and left them.

Donkeys are *maḷpa wiru*, valuable friends and helpers in the families and desert community of Pukatja (Ernabella) in the APY Lands of northern South Australia. People set off on their donkeys for picnics and longer journeys, always returning home safely.

Told in Pitjantjatjara and English and featuring the whimsical, distinctive sculptures that have made Tjanpi Desert Weavers famous, this dual language Australian story offers warm and humorous insights from an *Anangu* perspective.

The Making of the Artworks:

The artworks featured in *Tangki Tjuṭa* are created by seventeen artists of Tjanpi Desert Weavers. The artists made these sculptures from *minarri*, *wanguṇu*, and *intiyanu*: desert grasses collected from their Lands. They bound the grass together around wire frames with string, wool or raffia. One of the donkeys was made from buffel grass, which was introduced by *Piṛanpa* (white people) and has become a weed. 'Tjanpi' means desert grass in the Western Desert language.

ABOUT TJANPI DESERT WEAVERS

Tjanpi Desert Weavers is the dynamic social enterprise of the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council (NPYWC). NPYWC was formed in response to the land rights struggles of the late 1970s when women realised that they would have greater power, a stronger voice and be able to improve the life of women and children on their Lands if they united and collectively advocated for systemic change. Since that time, NPYWC has grown from an advocacy service into a major Indigenous directed and governed organisation delivering a wide range of health, social and cultural services across 26 desert communities on the tri-state border of SA, NT and WA.

Tjanpi began in 1995 as a series of basket-making workshops facilitated by NPYWC in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands of WA. Women wanted meaningful and culturally appropriate employment on their homelands to better provide for their families. Building on a long history of using natural fibres to make objects for ceremonial and daily use, women quickly took to coiled basketry and shared the new techniques with relatives and friends from neighbouring communities. It was not long before they began experimenting with producing sculptural forms. Today, over 400 women across three states are making spectacular contemporary fibre art from locally collected grasses, and working with fibre in this way has become a fundamental part of Central and Western Desert culture.

At its core, Tjanpi embodies the energies and rhythms of Country, culture and community. Women regularly come together to collect grass for their fibre art, taking the time to hunt, gather food, visit significant sites, perform *inma* (cultural song and dance) and teach their children about Country whilst creating an ever-evolving array of fibre artworks. The shared stories, skills and experiences of this wide-reaching network of mothers, daughters, aunties, sisters and grandmothers form the bloodline of the desert-weaving phenomenon and fuel Tjanpi's rich history of collaborative practice.

Visit tjanpi.com.au

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CONNECTING TO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

AUSTRALIA'S LANGUAGE LANDSCAPE



KEY INFORMATION

It is thought that prior to colonisation there were around 250 distinct languages and many hundreds of dialects on the continent now known as Australia (Walsh & Yallop, 1993).

There is great diversity in these languages. Neighbouring languages can sound as different as English and French. There are also connections which run across languages, and 'families' of languages which share common sounds, structures and even words.

All languages are intimately connected to the Country on which they are spoken. They hold the connections between Land, people, and ways of seeing and understanding the world.

Sadly, of the more than 250 languages which were being spoken on the continent prior to colonisation, only 12 are considered 'relatively strong' today (National Indigenous Languages Report 2020). Many Aboriginal language communities are working hard to maintain or revive their languages. Some languages which have 'gone to sleep' (are no longer spoken as first languages by the community) have to be awakened by using old word lists written down many years ago.

Broadening horizons

- View the [AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia](#) and/or the [Gambay resource](#).
 - Explore the language of the Country you are on and the surrounding languages. Do students know any words in the local language, or do they see or hear the language anywhere in the school or local community?
- Using the AIATSIS map as a prompt, students work in small groups to discuss what they notice about the map, or what stands out to them. Students could be prompted to discuss:
 - The number of languages represented
 - The spread of languages across the continent
 - Why do you think there are more languages covering smaller areas in the East and along the coasts, and fewer covering bigger areas around the centre?
 - What role might geography play in this, eg. availability of water, variety of food sources etc.?
 - The shapes of language groups – why aren't they divided by straight lines, like the states of Australia, or by firm boundaries?
- Collect students' wonderings about the map and any questions they have for exploration and investigation.

Exploring Language

- Prompt students to consider their own languages – those spoken at home, at school and in other contexts. This may include other dialects of English, including Aboriginal English.
 - Discuss which languages they use for different purposes, such as interacting with family, with friends, for learning, for religious or cultural activities. Students can share and teach their classmates a key word or phrase from their language.

CPP – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

First Nations Australian societies are diverse and have distinct cultural expressions such as language, customs and beliefs. As First Nations Peoples of Australia, they have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural expressions, while also maintaining the right to control, protect and develop culture as Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.

HASS

Foundation: The importance of Country/Place to First Nations Australians and the Country/Place on which the school is located. Identifying and using the name of the local First Nations Australians' language group or groups.

Year 2:

Liaising with community to identify language groups of First Nations Australians who belong to the local area and exploring the relationship between language, Country/Place and spirituality.

Interpret information and data from observations and provided sources, including the comparison of objects from the past and present. Interpreting geographic maps, concept maps and other digital or visual displays to explore system connections.

- Use these discussions to create a class language map. This could be in the form of a 'word cloud' (there are many online generators which can create these for you), a geographical map, or any other expression of the diversity of languages in the group.
- If your school has an existing connection with the local Aboriginal community, engage with these networks to consider the best ways to engage students in this learning for their context. This may include inviting appropriate people to come and share with the students, or organising a visit for students to local sites of importance to the Traditional Owners. It cannot be assumed that all Aboriginal communities are in a position to share their language, so any approaches should be made sensitively and respectfully.

Diversity of cultural, religious and/or social groups and their importance to identity.

Recognising that the identity of First Nations Australians is shaped by Country/Place, language and knowledge traditions.

Pitjantjatjara (First Language Learners Pathway)

Gather, organise and compare information from a range of sources relating to Country/Place, community and past and present ways of living. Notice and describe similarities and differences in ways of using language and interacting with people when communicating in the language and in other known languages, including English.

Explore the language situation of their community and the diversity of language situations in Australia.

INTRODUCTION

PITJANTJATJARA PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE

- Students locate Pitjantjatjara using one of the map resources above, and consider the following:
 - What do you think this area is like?
 - Do you know of any famous places nearby? (If they look very closely, they may see that Uluru and Kata Tjuta are on Anangu Country.)
 - Share with the children that Pitjantjatjara is the name of the language, one of several that make up the Western Desert language group. The name for the people who speak Pitjantjatjara is 'Anangu' – which is the Pitjantjatjara word for 'person'.

- Yankunytjatjara is the neighbouring language of Pitjantjatjara, and shares the same sounds and many of the same words.

Explore the sounds of the language by visiting the Mobile Language Team's Yankunytjatjara language portal:

<https://portal.mobilelanguagesteam.com.au/lessons/yankunytjatjara-lesson-2/>

- Visit the previous lesson in the portal to listen to and practice some useful words and greetings. Encourage students to share the greetings with one another, and to practice them in the yard and in the mornings.
- Watch and listen to the Pitjantjatjara song 'Kata, alipiri, muṯi, tjina' (Heads, shoulders, knees and toes): <https://ictv.com.au/video/item/47>



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First Nations Australian societies are diverse and have distinct cultural expressions such as language, customs and beliefs. As First Nations Peoples of Australia, they have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural expressions, while also maintaining the right to control, protect and develop culture as Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.

HASS

Foundation: *The importance of Country/Place to First Nations Australians and the Country/Place on which the school is located. Identifying and using the name of the local First Nations Australians' language group or groups.*

Year 4: *Diversity of cultural, religious and/or social groups to which they and others in the community belong, and their importance to identity.*

Recognising that the identity of First Nations Australians is shaped by Country/Place, language and knowledge traditions.

- Sing along and mimic the words. Play the game at the end of the video using the prompts '[body part] yaaltji?' (where is your ...)

E.g. 'Kata yaaltji' (Where's your head?)

- aljipiri (shoulders)
- mutji (knees)
- tjina (feet)
- pina (ears)
- kuru (eyes)
- winpinpi (lips)
- mulya (nose)

- Tell students that the story they will be reading has been told by Aṅangu and written in Pitjantjatjara and translated into English.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

BEFORE READING

On the cover

- Show the students the cover of the book, and invite them to share what they notice or wonder about:
 - the setting (where the story happens)
 - the title (what the book is called)
 - the art works
 - what kind of story it might be
- Tell them the title of the book, and explain that *Tangka Tjuṯa* is the Pitjantjatjara title, and means 'Donkeys'.
- Ask students to share any stories they know about donkeys.
 - What kinds of stories are they?
 - Where are they usually set?
 - What are donkeys in these stories like?

Visual Literacy

- Focus students' attention on the art works – how do students think they were created?
- Discuss with students that this book is written in two languages, Pitjantjatjara and English, and that the art works are sculptures made from desert grasses. These grasses were collected in the bush, bound together around wire frames with string, wool or raffia. The word 'tjanpi' refers to desert grass in Pitjantjatjara. You can visit <https://tjanpi.com.au/> to view other sculptures and baskets made with similar techniques.

Story time

- Tell students they are going to listen to the story first in Pitjantjatjara. Even though they may not understand the words, prompt students to listen and watch for other clues about the story, including the images, the reader's tone of voice and anything else they notice.

CPP – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

First Nations Australian societies are diverse and have distinct cultural expressions such as language, customs and beliefs. As First Nations Peoples of Australia, they have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural expressions, while also maintaining the right to control, protect and develop culture as Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.

English

Foundation: Share ideas about stories, poems and images in literature, reflecting on experiences that are similar or different to their own by engaging with texts by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors and illustrators.

Visual Arts

Years 1 and 2: Explore where, why and how people across cultures, communities and/or other contexts experience visual arts

Explore examples of visual arts created by First Nations Australians.

Using the QR code at the back of the book, listen to the story read in Pitjantjatjara by Tjulyata Tjilya. Note that each ‘swishing’ sound prompts you to turn to the next page.

Pitjantjatjara (First Language Learners Pathway)

Years 3-6: Understand that texts such as stories, paintings, songs and dances have a distinct purpose and particular language features, and understand and apply text conventions.

- After listening to [the story in Pitjantjatjara](#), get students to work in groups of three or four to again consider:
 - The setting
 - The language(s)
 - The art works
 - What they think happens in the story
 - What kind of story it might be
 - Is this like other stories they have read?
- What clues did they use to come to these conclusions?

Now in English, with a map

- Tell students you will be reading the English translation of the book now. It tells the story of donkeys in a remote Anangu community, and their relationship with the people there.

Have a map visible to the students with Ernabella (also known as Pukatja), Areyonga (also known as Utju), and Balfours Well (approximately halfway between Ernabella and Umuwa) clearly marked.

ENGLISH

LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE

Responding to the text

- In groups of four, ask students to discuss things they connected with. This could include things like travelling with family, favourite pets, or funny stories relating to family members.
- Get each group to agree on one question they have about the text. Ask each group to share their question back to the class, and collect them on a poster or chart. You can use this poster throughout the learning to prompt research or develop further questions. Don't feel the need to have all the answers – you can research the answers together.

Language for Social Interactions

Understand that texts can take many forms such as signs, books and digital texts.

Expressing and Developing Ideas

Explore the contribution of images and words to meaning in stories and informative texts.

Responding to Literature

Respond to stories and share feelings and thoughts about their events and characters.

Examining Literature

Recognise different types of literary texts and identify features including events, characters, and beginnings and endings.

Thinking about characters

- Question the students about the characters in the story, including the narrators.
 - How old do you think the narrators are in the story? (*'We Anangu kids saw the baby donkeys'*)
 - Look at the representation of 'Older Brother'. Notice that this is how the narrator refers to him, rather than by name, and that he is much older than the narrator in the story.

Key information

The Anangu kinship system works differently to traditional Western family units. All of your cousins are called by the same terms as your brothers and sisters, and 'siblings' can be many many years apart in age. Calling this man 'Older Brother' is a sign of both affection and respect for a senior relative in your generation.

- Focus students' attention on the introduction to the story: 'Long, long ago, we didn't have donkeys. We didn't have a lot of the things we have today. We didn't know donkeys existed.' Why do they think the narrators 'didn't have a lot of things we have today'? Why do you think they 'didn't know donkeys existed'?

Key information

The early parts of this story probably happened around the mid-1950s. The first settlement on Anangu Country in South Australia was the Ernabella Mission, which was established in 1937 (you can see the Ernabella church, which still stands in the centre of the community today, in the background of the double-page spread). Even after the mission was established, the policy was that there should be no interference in Anangu language and culture. Family groups continued to travel between Ernabella Mission, the mission station at Areyonga, and their traditional homelands, often on foot or accompanied by donkeys or camels.

- What do students notice about the lives of the characters? What kinds of activities do they engage in? Where do they live? Elicit that their lifestyle at the time included:
 - Living in shelters (called wiltja) – see image on the first page of text
 - Walking long distances (Areyonga to Ernabella would have been around 300km on foot), 'travelling far and wide', going on holidays, travel in the warm weather
 - Riding donkeys, riding up high on top of the donkeys
 - Going on picnics
 - Hunting and gathering witchetty grubs, figs, honey ants and quandongs
 - Traditional tools, including wooden dishes (piti) and head rings (manguji) for carrying them, spears (kuḷaṭa)
 - Introduced items, such as blankets, clothing, windmills, limited buildings (like the church).
- According to the story, what are some of the things that have changed for Anangu since these times?

HINT: 'These days we all live in houses, and we have cars and we wear clothes.'

Focusing on relationships – Anangu and their donkeys

- Discuss with students the relationships between the narrators and the donkeys (refer to the table below for some hints):
 - How do you think the narrators feel about the donkeys?
 - What is their relationship with them?
 - What clues are there in the words and the pictures that tell us the relationship is a close one?



Creating Literature

Retell and adapt familiar literary texts through play, performance, images or writing.

Create and deliver short spoken texts to report ideas and events to peers, using features of voice such as appropriate volume.

Interpreting, Analysing, Evaluating

Identify some differences between imaginative and informative texts.

Use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising and questioning to understand and discuss texts listened to, viewed or read independently.

HASS – Past and Present

Develop questions about objects, people, places and events in the past and present.

Interpret information and data from observations and provided sources, including the comparison of objects from the past and present.

Interacting and empathising with others

discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events.

Here are some words relating to Anangu people and their feelings towards donkeys:

'really excited'	puḷkaṛa pukuḷaringi
'loved riding'	pukuḷpa tatilpai
'had so much fun'	pukuḷpa nyinakatipai
'safely and happily'	pukuḷpa pitjapai
'looked after... really well'	wirura alatjiṭu aṭunymankupai
'carried us back home safely'	maḷakungku ngurakutu katinytjaku
'really good helpers'	wirura alpamilalpai
'nice and steadily'	wirura katirinkupai
'always come to visit'	rawa pitjapai
'our friends'	Nganampa maḷpa tjuṭa

The pictures show the way people feel about donkeys

- People smiling
- People with their hands on the donkeys
- People riding the donkeys
- The donkeys helping the children to get bush foods



Animals On Country

- Get students to look through the book and note every other kind of animal they see. They may notice:
 - Birds (tjuḷpu), like the Port Lincoln parrot (patilpa), or the magpie (kurpaṛu)
 - Dogs (papa)
 - Camels (kamula)
 - Sheep (tjiipi)
- What are the relationships of these other animals to the people? Are they wild? Companions? Transportation? Livestock? How do they differ to the donkeys?
 - Consider what the narrators tell us about the donkeys. In small groups, come up with a list of nouns or adjectives which describe these donkeys.

These might include things like: patient, steady, caring, safe, clever, cheeky, helpers, friends
 - Reflect back on the 'Before reading' activity, when children discussed what they know about donkeys already, and on common references to donkeys in Western culture. 'Donkey' can be an insult meaning someone is silly. Characters like Eeyore from *Winnie the Pooh* or the *Wonky Donkey* are silly creatures. There is the phrase 'stubborn as a mule', which is a close relative of the donkey. How do these ideas contrast with the image of donkeys evoked in *Tangka Tjuṭa – Donkeys*?
 - Consider other stories in which the representation of donkeys is much closer to the idea of the steady, loyal friend. Make connections with the story of Simpson and his donkey at Gallipoli, or the donkey that often appears in the Christmas story, carrying Mary to Bethlehem.

Communicating and socialising

Interact with others, sharing and comparing experiences, personal perspectives and points of view on topics related to immediate environment and personal world.

Understanding systems of language

Understand that texts such as stories, paintings, songs and dances have a distinct purpose and particular language features, and understand and apply text conventions.

LITERACY



Analysing the text structure

- Discuss with students what kind of text this is:
 - What genre does it belong to?
 - Is it an information text?
 - A narrative?
 - A recount?

Key information

This story, like many Anangu texts, doesn't fit neatly into one category or genre. Anangu stories can often cross boundaries to inform, educate and entertain all at once.

In addition to providing information about donkeys and their place in Anangu communities, the text includes a narrative recount of a funny episode in the life of one of the narrators, a 'story within the story'. This is a common form of storytelling in Anangu culture – oral recounts of funny experiences, or tjukurpa ayini-ayini, often entertain families as they are told around fires and in homes. Much of the humour often centres around small misfortunes or accidents, such as Older Brother being knocked off his donkey. Donkeys often feature in these kinds of stories, especially for those who grew up in and around Ernabella.

- Consider the typical narrative structure:
 - Orientation/setting – the beginning
 - Complication/problem
 - Resolution/solution – ending

In what ways does the text follow this structure? In what ways is it different?

- Give students a large piece of paper divided into five columns. Get them to draw the key plot points in sequence from one to five, ensuring that they include:
 - The family travelling from Ernabella to Balfours Well
 - Older Brother becoming impatient with the donkey
 - The donkey charging under a tree and knocking Older Brother off
 - The donkey waiting for Older Brother
 - The family helping Older Brother back onto the donkey and continuing on to Balfours Well
- On the wall of the classroom, provide a large space divided into three columns: **orientation; complication; resolution**. Get students to consider what parts of their sequence fit into the orientation, which parts relate to the complication, and which part is the resolution. Ask them to cut out the five columns, and stick them in the appropriate section on the wall.

Creating texts

- The images for the text have been created sculptures made from desert grasses, wool and raffia, and photographed as 'freeze frames'. Get students to recreate key moments from the narrative recount in their own 'live' freeze frames.
- Ask students to consider their own experiences. Are there funny stories that are told over and over again in their families? Ask students to share their funny family stories and consider:

Communicating and informing

Convey information on specific topics using formats such as oral or digital presentations, displays, diagrams, timelines, narratives, descriptions and procedures.

Examining Literature

Recognise different types of literary texts and identify features including events, characters, and beginnings and endings.

Interpreting, Analysing, Evaluating

Identify some differences between imaginative and informative texts.

Use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising and questioning to understand and discuss texts listened to, viewed or read independently.

Composing texts, through speaking, writing and creating

Create and deliver short spoken texts to report ideas and events to peers, using features of voice such as appropriate volume.

Visual arts

Explore where, why and how people across cultures, communities and/or other contexts experience visual arts.

Explore examples of visual arts created by First Nations Australians.

Use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to create artworks.

Share artworks and/or visual arts practice in informal settings

- What are some of the common features?
- What makes them funny?
- Are there sounds, actions or gestures that go with them?
- Would they be as funny if they were written down?
- Get students to choose a 'family story' which is regularly told in their family. It could be funny, or memorable for some other reason (be sensitive to the appropriateness of the story for this context).
- Consider the setting for the story, and the characters. Students then create a diorama, like a 'stage' for the story, and characters. This could be done using found items, figurines, peg dolls, corks or any other creative media.
- Students use their dioramas to recount the story, moving their characters along with the plot. Students could select four to five key scenes, following the orientation-complication-resolution structure, to set up as 'freeze frames', and photograph them using digital cameras or tablets. Depending on the student's level, the teacher can transcribe the story for the student, or they can attempt to write simple sentences for each frame themselves.

FRAMEWORK FOR ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LANGUAGES

Note that almost all of the activities listed for pre-reading, during, and after reading above, can be replicated for students who are learning Pitjantjatjara through the **First Language Learner Pathway**, shifting the focus to the Pitjantjatjara text and to their own experiences of living as Anangu children in remote communities.

Additionally, use the Pitjantjatjara text as a basis for analysis of language features of a narrative recount. The exercise below is an example of one possible approach.

Language features of the text

- Work through each page of the text, getting students to identify the verbs (doing, thinking, feeling, being words). Create a large tense chart, with spaces into which students can organise the verbs they find (see example below).

Past continuous	Simple past	Characteristic
-ngi, -ningi, -nangi, -ngangi (e.g. was going)	-ngu, -nu/-ngu, -nu, -ngu (e.g. went)	-pai, -lpai, -nkupai, -ngkupai (e.g. goes)
Nyinangi	Wantikatingu	Ankupai
Pukuḷaringi	Waḷuringu	Alpamilalpai
...

- Discuss how these are common verb tenses for recounting stories, and that the three tenses have different roles:
 - Past continuous: often sets the scene – where were the characters living? What were they doing?
 - Simple past: specific actions in time – what happened? What did the characters do?
 - Characteristic: tells us about the characters – what do they like? What do they always do? What happens all the time?

As students write or recount their own narratives, focus in on using these tenses to structure their stories.

ADDITIONAL LINKS

Tjanpi animations: <https://tjanpi.com.au/pages/animation-project> The film trailers for two short animations: *Tangki* (the award-winning short film on which this book was based) and *Kukaputju*. Also, animations of two stories about dogs. These can act as good comparisons of Anangu forms of storytelling, and as another example of Anangu perspectives on 'pets'.

About Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara languages: Information about the Pitjantjatjara language and where it is spoken. <https://mobilelanguageteam.com.au/languages/pitjantjatjara/>

<https://portal.mobilelanguageteam.com.au/lessons/yankunytjatjara-lesson-2/> Online portal with introductory lessons in the Yankunytjatjara language.

Ananguku Wangka: A I U (an illustrated Pitjantjatjara alphabet). Published by the South Australian Department for Education. <https://vimeo.com/653542040/744ca6b961>

OTHER PITJANTJATJARA STORIES

Papa Mawal-Mawalpa Tjuta (Too Many Cheeky Dogs) by Dion Beasley and Johanna Bell. <https://vimeo.com/677531337/d6457f4352>

Kunmanara by Sally Deslandes, Katrina Lester and Simon Kneebone. <https://vimeo.com/672221134/00a8c62c3d>

Ngayulu Paku Pulka (I'm so tired) by Sally Deslandes, Langaliki Robin and Samantha Fry. <https://vimeo.com/672613130/58bfcf72b6>

ABOUT THE CO-AUTHORS

TJUNKAYA TAPAYA

Tjunkaya Tapaya OAM is an award-winning, multidisciplinary Pitjantjatjara artist whose arts practice encompasses weaving, fibre sculpture, ceramics, painting, wood carving, batik, printmaking and writing. Born in the northwest of South Australia near Atila (Mount Conner), Tjunkaya went to school at the Ernabella Mission. In the women's craft room, she learned skills that laid the groundwork for her stellar artistic career, becoming a renown fibre artist with Tjanpi Desert Weavers, and a highly acclaimed ceramicist with Ernabella Arts.

Tjunkaya's Tjanpi work is exhibited throughout Australia and in Europe. She has had two solo Tjanpi exhibitions and multiple group shows, and she is a featured artist of the national touring show *Obsessed: Compelled to Make* (2018–22). Her Tjanpi work is also in *Songlines: Tracking the Seven Sisters*. Tjunkaya's artwork is in the public collections of the Art Gallery of South Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, National Museum of Australia, Queensland Art Gallery, and the British Museum, London.

Adding to her long list of achievements, Tjunkaya won the Perpetual Gladys Elphick Award in 2018 and The Design Files x Laminex Design Award in the Handcrafted Category in 2020 for her woven teapot sculpture. Tjunkaya is deeply committed to her community and passing on to younger generations her knowledge and skills. She was awarded an Order of Australia for her services to Indigenous visual arts and to the community.

Tjunkaya's fond memories of riding donkeys on weekends and school holidays informed her work in 2019–21 as the cultural director and a lead artist of the Tjanpi stop-animation *Tangki*, on which this picture book is based. Tjunkaya has for many years quietly written stories, and she worked closely with her co-author Imuna Kenta and translator Linda Rive to craft this dual language story. She also made the 'hero' grey and brown donkeys, and some of the Anangu children.



IMUNA KENTA

Imuna Kenta is a Pitjantjatjara artist, performer and now an author, too. She was born in Pipalyatjara, a small community in the north-west of South Australia. As a child she moved east to Ernabella Mission (now Pukatja Community) with her family, and she went to the mission school. In her youth, donkeys and camels were her family's only form of transport.

Like co-author and artist Tjunkaya Tapaya, Imuna began her textile arts practice at the mission's craft room. One of her batiks depicting Turkey Bore, a nearby homeland where she raised her large family, is in the collection of Museums Victoria. Imuna also lived at Balfours Well, and this homeland just south of Pukatja is the setting for part of the story she tells in *Tangki Tjuṯa – Donkeys*. Imuna took up fibre art with Tjanpi Desert Weavers in 2005 and her Tjanpi artwork was first exhibited in 2014. She often makes the animals that surround her home community of Pukatja, such as kangaroos, goannas, camels and dogs. They are always quirky and characterful.



Imuna sang with the Ernabella Choir for many years, and she was involved in the Big hART production *Ngapartji Ngapartji*, including performances at the Perth Festival and Melbourne International Arts Festival (2007, 2008). She has also contributed to the NPY Women's Council's mental health literacy project Uti Kulintjaku.

Imuna started working on the tangki project with Tjanpi in 2019, narrating on camera a funny story of her older brother riding his donkey. This became a feature of the award-winning short stop-motion animation *Tangki*, on which this picture book is based. At Tjanpi workshops in Pukatja, Imuna and her daughter Carolyn crafted the Aṅangu adults, and Imuna collaborated on the text during visits to Mparntwe (Alice Springs).

LINDA RIVE (translator)

Linda Rive has been working with Western Desert people since 1979 in the field of interpreting and translating the Western Desert language, specialising in the Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara dialects. She is well known to and trusted by senior Aṅangu across Central Australia. She is a NAATI-accredited interpreter and translator and language facilitator and has worked in many spheres where language services are needed, alongside Aṅangu, including national parks, land use, flora and fauna, publishing, courts, meetings, tourism, hospitals, the arts, and women's Law and culture, always working under the authority of senior Aṅangu men and women.

Linda has studied local and family history and has found her niche with the Aṛa Irititja digital archive, focusing on collecting and repatriating photographic collections and other historical media associated with Western Desert people, stories and oral histories. Her extensive knowledge of the people and their family networks provides essential information for the profiles, genealogies and oral histories she has prepared for the archive. Linda's language expertise is invaluable to the translation and preservation of meaning and knowledge embedded in the spoken word and in written documents, especially as they become more and more accessible to traditional Aboriginal people via new media technologies. Linda has worked on a large number of publications, films and videos over the years, including the book *Tjanpi Desert Weavers*. Linda has one son and enjoys bushwalking and hiking in the beautiful Central Australian ranges.