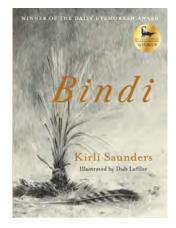
Magabala Books Teacher Notes

Prepared by Christina Wheeler





Bindi

Written by Kirli Saunders Illustrations by Dub Leffler

OVERVIEW

Meet 11-year-old Bindi. She's not really into maths but LOVES art class and playing hockey. Her absolute FAVOURITE thing is adventuring outside with friends or her horse, Nell. A new year starts like normal – school, family, hockey, dancing. But this year hasn't gone to plan! There's a big art assignment, a drought, a broken wrist AND the biggest bushfires her town has ever seen!

Bindi is a verse novel for mid-upper primary students. Written 'for those who plant trees', *Bindi* explores climate, bushfires, and healing. Written from the point of view of 11-year-old, Bindi and her friends on Gundungurra Country.

- Daisy Utemorrah Award Winner
- Beautiful black and white illustrations from award-winning illustrator Dub Leffler
- Award-winning author Kirli Saunders
- Junior fiction verse novel rich in character and relationships, with some Gundungurra language
- Beautifully crafted, sensitively written story that reflects a young girl's relationship to family, her animals, her friends, her Country and her creativity
- Sensitive depiction of a bushfire and its impact on people and community
- Wonderful addition to every family's bookshelf
- Well suited to mid-primary

ABOUT THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR

Kirli Saunders is a proud Gunai Woman and an award-winning international Children's author and poet as well as a teacher, and emerging artist. She created Poetry in First Languages, delivered by Red Room Poetry. *Bindi* has been shortlisted for a CBCA Book of the Year Award, an Australian Book Industry Award (ABIA), Readings Children's Book Prize and an Australian Book Design Award. Her debut picture book *The Incredible Freedom Machines* was shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards and CBCA notables. Her poetry collection, *Kindred* (Mabagala Books, 2019) was shortlisted for the 2021 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards, an ABIA in 2020 and the FAB Booktopia Awards. She is the winner of the University of Canberra ATSI Poetry prize (2019) and was runner up in the Nakata Brophy Prize 2018. Kirli is an esteemed judge for the 2020 Prime Minister's Literary Awards and Val Vallis Poetry Prize. Kirli is the 2020 NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year.

Descended from the Bigambul people of South-West QLD, **Dub Leffler** is one of Australia's most sought after illustrators of children's literature. He has written two books for children and is currently illustrating his 25th title. Dub's work has afforded him travel to places as diverse as remote Australia, Europe, Indonesia and America and his illustrations are now in permanent collection in The National Library of Congress in Washington, DC. He has collaborated with the likes of Colin Thompson, Sally Morgan and Banksy.



THEMES

- Aboriginal Australians Social Life and Customs
 - Country, Mother Earth, Respect, Elders, Ancestors, Totems, Language, Dance, Song, Community, Firestick Farming, Sustainability
- Bushfires
- Resilience
- Family

AUDIENCE AND WRITING STYLE

Bindi takes place in a rural setting that is ravaged by bushfire. Written as a verse novel, it follows the escalating chaos threatening Bindi and her community as the disaster unfolds. Beautifully interwoven with Gundungurra language and Aboriginal culture and customs, it shares the traditional responses to and custodianship of Earth Mother used to mitigate the fury of bushfires. Kirli Saunders' writing is pure and evocative, effortlessly incorporating figurative devices to give *Bindi* a distinctive literary quality. It is highly relevant to the Year 5 curriculum, however, is suitable for a range of mid-upper primary audiences.

LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

This book and the classroom activities provided are primarily relevant to the following areas of the Australian Curriculum:

Learning area	Year level
English	4-6
HASS	4-5
The appendix highlights relevant content descriptions, space surriculum priorities and go	

The appendix highlights relevant content descriptions, cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities that relate to the text and classroom ideas provided.

CLASSROOM IDEAS

- *Bindi* is told in three parts: Seedlings, Cinders and Sprouts. As you read, record the subject matter and contexts of the poems in each section. What themes, plot points and attributes of Aboriginal culture are shared? What is the significance of these section headings?
- The first poem introduces readers to Bindi. How does this poem draw readers immediately into the text? Write a free verse poem introducing yourself to your classmates. Include information about your family, hobbies, pets and friends.
- In *Curried Sausages* (pp 5-6), Bindi alludes to the things that have changed and those that have stayed the same as the new school year commences. Discuss her ideas. How does this compare with the start of your new school year? How does this poem foreshadow the challenges the community is about to face?
- Discuss the use of figurative language in *Afternoon Rides* (pp 7-8). How do these language choices contribute to the verse?
- In *Fambam* (pp9-11), Bindi uses the metaphor of 'warm butter sliding down toast' to describe her mum. What metaphor would you use to describe your mother? What do we learn about Bindi's relationship with her family through this poem? How do we know? Write your own *Fambam* verse based on your family.
- In *Rockmelon with Dinner*, the family laughs 'in the belly/of our home' (p13). Which part of the home do you think this is? Why?
- What role does Aunty Lindy play in *Bindi*? How does she help embed crucial Aboriginal culture and customs into the text? What does she mean when she says 'listening deeply/means hearing from the heart:/hearing with more/than ears' (p14)? Why does she say that 'unmanaged canbe/are the thieves/of our culture/and history' (p90)?
- Discuss the motif of the black cockatoo that runs throughout *Bindi*. What does it represent? Why are its colours of 'black, red and yellow' described as 'symbolic' (p15)?
- The garrall, black cockatoo, is Aunty Lindy's totem. What is a totem? Watch the following clip to better understand the role of totems in Aboriginal culture: <u>http://sydney.edu.au/kinship-module/learning/4-totems.shtml</u>. Explain this to a friend in your own words.
- Who are the 'Old People' referred to throughout *Bindi*? Discuss in context with the Aboriginal connection to Ancestors and the Dreaming.



CLASSROOM IDEAS CONT.

- Why does the community make a point of planting and looking after she-oaks? What is their relationship with other key aspects of the text?
- What role does art play in Bindi's life? How do we know?
- Discuss the poems in which Bindi paints murals on her bedroom wall. How do these verses help connect various parts of the story? (See p22, 43, 63, 69, 123)
- Why doesn't Bindi want her ability to paint to 'stand out' (p17)? What does this tell us about her personality?
- What are Bindi's gifts and talents? Which of these are related to her character strengths, rather than her physical abilities? Discuss how these strengths develop throughout the text. What are your character strengths? Write a reflection to share your thoughts.
- Discuss Kirli Saunders' use of description and imagery in 5.2.21 (pp19-21). Why are her language choices so effective?
- Although Bindi claims to dislike Maths, why has the author used poems such as *Maths Class* (p49) and *17.3.21* (p88) to incorporate mathematical concepts?
- Discuss the power of song and dance in *Bindi*. How are they used to show the interconnectedness between Country, Mother Earth, Ancestors, Elders and Community? Use poems such as *8.2.21* (pp 23-24) as a guide. Why does Bindi say 'We are infinite' (p24)?
- What role does hockey play in Bindi's life, and in the text generally? What attitudes and character strengths are being amplified through the hockey-related verses? (See pp 25-27, 44-45, 107-108, 117-119)
- Why does Bindi say that her 'ideas/had never been my own' (p40)? Discuss whether she says this in a positive or negative manner, giving reasons to support your thoughts.
- Annotate a copy of *Walk Home* starting on p41, discussing the use of figurative devices in the verse.
- As you read the text, create a character profile of Bindi. How does she react and respond to the ensuing danger of the bushfire? Give evidence from the text to support your ideas.
- Create a list of any new or unfamiliar words, particularly those from the Gundungurra language, which you encounter in the text. What do these words mean? Create a class word wall to help make your learning visible.
- Discuss the formatting of the poems, particularly the choice of line breaks and position of words on the page. How do these choices add meaning to the poems? Examples include *Horse Ride* (p51-52), *Canbe* (pp77-79) and *Flying High in the Loungeroom* (pp105-106).
- Explore the poetic devices used throughout the text, discussing how they contribute to the narrative. Examples include:
 - $_{\odot}\,$ to welcome the karrat/to chapped lips/and cheeks/of dulang/and creeks p37 $\,$
 - o sheets blew like leaves p39
 - The day drips/with the scent of camellias/that droop over fences...their velvet petals/pool on the path' p41
 - $_{\odot}~$ Slipped it to Nulla/who slapped it to Mia p44
 - $_{\odot}\,$ Elsie spoons peas/around her plate/scoring goals in garlic sauce p47 $\,$
 - \circ the canbe...licked the back fence p53
 - $_{\odot}\,$ the heat grows/more intense than the hottest stove p73
 - $_{\odot}\,$ there are hundreds of people/carrying their homes like turtles p751
 - $_{\odot}\,$ roll my wrist/free from plaster/and flood blood/in place of restriction p101
 - o her limbs/welcoming wing-made wind p101
 - \circ beneath the trees/now sprayed green p111
- Why has Kirli Saunders deliberately included Bindi breaking her wrist and the black cockatoo hurting its wing? How are Bindi and the bird like one another? Why does Bindi need to 'learn to fly again too' (p95)?
- Discuss the metaphor of Mother Nature as a puppeteer on pp61-62. How is allowing nature to 'take its course' (p61) a central theme of *Bindi*?
- Write a reflection about *Groceries* starting on p67. Have you ever felt the worry that comes with the behaviour of shoppers during crisis events? Share your thoughts.
- Discuss the use of repetition, metaphor and simile in *Evacuation 1* (pp70-72). Why are these such powerful devices? How have they been used to create impact and meaning? Write a script outlining what the teachers' hands are saying 'for them' (p71).



CLASSROOM IDEAS CONT.

- Why does Uncle say that Mother Earth 'has been living/unloved/for too long' (p78)? How would the Old People have done things differently?
- Discuss the formatting of line 9 of Day 5 (p80). Why is this so effective?
- Sketch the scene depicted in Cave Karrat starting on p92.
- As in *Art Class Selection* (pp103-104), use charcoal to draw 'apologies to the Earth'. Why is this action so powerful at this stage of the text?
- What is back burning? How have Aboriginal people traditionally used back burning and firestick farming to proactively manage bushfire season? See *Back Burning* (pp109-110).
- Kirli Saunders uses formatting with great effect on p119 to depict the hockey game. Use this technique to write a verse about a sport or hobby that you enjoy.
- How is rhythm used to create meaning in *Back in the Saddle* (pp120-122)? Compare this ride with the one in which Bindi falls off her horse (pp51-52). How have language features been used in both poems to create such different moods?
- What is the main purpose of Bindi? How does School Mural (p123) help to convey this with such simplicity?
- What do we learn about Aboriginal culture and customs by reading Bindi?
- Bindi's brother, Omeo, loves working with plants 'the earth will always be his calling' (p47). Why does Bindi think
 he may one day be a 'medicine man' (p47)? Find out more about bush medicine by using books such as the *Living
 With the Land* series by Pearson Library, or from websites such as: <u>https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/
 history-culture/2011/02/top-10-aboriginal-bush-medicines/
 </u>
- What role does Country play in Aboriginal culture? How do Aboriginal people connect with and care for Country? How does *Bindi* share this with readers?
- What role does family play in Bindi's life? Create a graphic organiser to show the relationships she has with various members of her family. Similarly, create a visual representation of the connections you have with members of your family.
- In the role of Bindi, write a recount of the day you fell from your horse, Nell.
- Rewrite this story from the point of view of the black cockatoo rescued by Bindi.
- Compare *Bindi* with *Fire* by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley (Scholastic) or *Through the Smoke* by Phil Cummings and Andrew McLean (Scholastic). How does the description of the fire in *Returning* (pp81-83) reflect the illustrations in some of these picture books? Use one of the page openings in these picture book texts as stimulus for your own verse about a bushfire.
- How does the inclusion of Gundungurra language in *Bindi* embellish the reader's understanding of the importance of language in Aboriginal culture?
- Kirli Saunders' voice is instantly arresting. Discuss the importance of a strong sense of voice in writing. How has this been achieved?
- Discuss the power of free verse poetry in creating evocative and tangible messages. Experiment with writing your own free verse poetry.
- Which is your favourite poem in Bindi? Analyse the poetic devices used in this poem. Why is it so effective?



APPENDIX – LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

Year Curriculum Area

4 English

Literature

- Make connections between the ways different authors may represent similar storylines, ideas and relationships (ACELT1602 Scootle)
- Create literary texts that explore students' own experiences and imagining (ACELT1607 Scootle)

Hass

History

• The diversity of Australia's first peoples and the long and continuous connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to Country/Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) (ACHASSK083 - Scootle)

Geography

• The custodial responsibility Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have for Country/Place, and how this influences views about sustainability (<u>ACHASSK089 - Scootle</u>)

5

English Literature

- Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts (ACELT1608 Scootle)
- Use metalanguage to describe the effects of ideas, text structures and language features on particular audiences (ACELT1795 Scootle)
- Understand, interpret and experiment with sound devices and imagery, including simile, metaphor and personification, in narratives, shape poetry, songs, anthems and odes (ACELT1611 Scootle)
- Create literary texts that experiment with structures, ideas and stylistic features of selected authors (ACELT1798 Scootle)

Hass

Geography

- The influence of people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, on the environmental characteristics of Australian places (ACHASSK112 Scootle)
- The environmental and human influences on the location and characteristics of a place and the management of spaces within them (<u>ACHASSK113 Scootle</u>)
- The impact of bushfires or floods on environments and communities, and how people can respond (ACHASSK114 - Scootle)

6 English

Literature

- Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1613 Scootle)
- Analyse and evaluate similarities and differences in texts on similar topics, themes or plots (ACELT1614 -Scootle)
- Identify the relationship between words, sounds, imagery and language patterns in narratives and poetry such as ballads, limericks and free verse (ACELT1617 Scootle)
- Create literary texts that adapt or combine aspects of texts students have experienced in innovative ways (<u>ACELT1618 - Scootle</u>)
- Experiment with text structures and language features and their effects in creating literary texts, for example, using imagery, sentence variation, metaphor and word choice (ACELT1800 Scootle)

