

# THROUGH MY EYES: AUSTRALIAN DISASTER ZONES

## MIA

A novel by Dianne Wolfer with series creator and editor Lyn White

### Cultural Safety

The events related to the cyclone depicted in *Mia* are based on real events and could have specific relevance to some students. Teachers are encouraged to monitor reactions and respond appropriately. 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.

**RECOMMENDED FOR:** 11–14 years old **Years 5–8, UPPER PRIMARY to LOWER SECONDARY**

**THEMES:** Climate change, cyclone, disaster resilience, courage, friendship, family, community, conservation, anxiety and identity.

**ISBN (AUS):** 9781760877026

### CURRICULUM LEARNING AREAS:

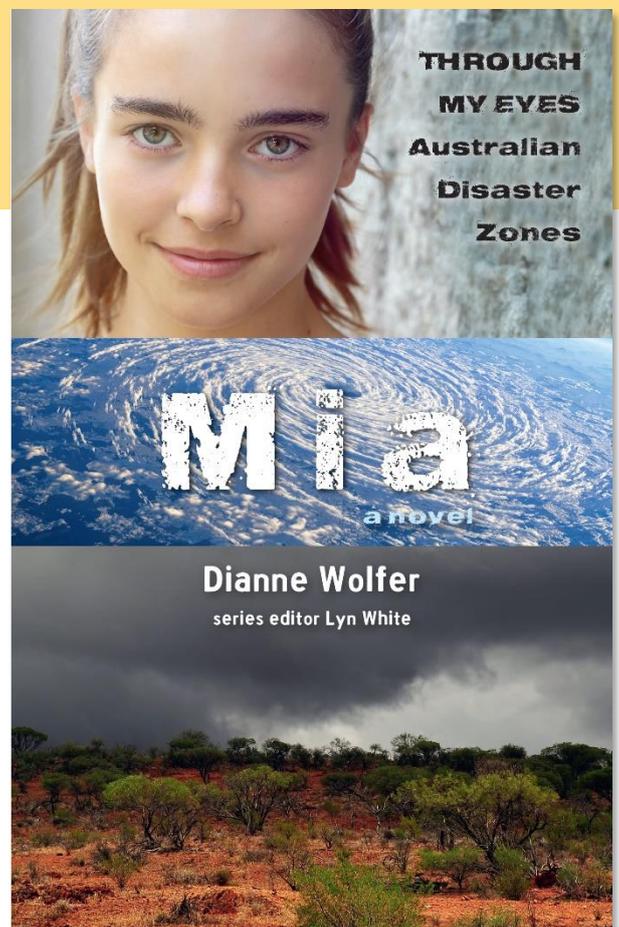
- **ENGLISH:** Literacy, Literature and Language
- **HASS:** Geography
- **CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITY:** Sustainability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

**NOTES WRITTEN BY:** Bec Kavanagh

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools, but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

### CONTENTS:

Introduction .....	2
Plot summary .....	2
Q&A with Diane Wolfer .....	3
Classroom discussions and activities .....	4
Before reading <i>Mia</i> .....	4
ENGLISH: Literature .....	5
ENGLISH: Literacy.....	7
ENGLISH: Language .....	7
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES .....	9
<b>ACROSS THE CURRICULUM:</b>	
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures .....	9
Sustainability .....	10
About the author .....	10
About the series editor and the writer of the notes .....	11
Corresponding literature .....	11
Hyperlinks in full.....	12
Worksheets	



## INTRODUCTION

Thirteen-year-old Mia loves her friends and her community, and is passionate about protecting the environment. She and her mother live on a bush-block near Wickham, 50 kms from Karratha in the West Australian Pilbara. Like her mother, Mia has plans to go into equine therapy. When the community is first notified of Cyclone Veronica, it's business as usual – everyone living in the area is used to cyclones. Mia's biggest concerns are how to overcome her fear of public speaking for a class presentation, and her fears at being left out of her friendship trio. But it soon becomes clear that Cyclone Veronica is going to be a big one, and Mia will discover confidence and bravery that she never knew she had.

## PLOT SUMMARY

Mia suffers from nightmares and anxiety about the effect of global warming and climate change on the animals she loves so much. But with the help of a school counsellor she's finding ways to cope. It's been a peaceful wet season in the Pilbara where Mia lives with her mother. Their property is located at Wickham, between Roebourne and Point Samson. Mia helps her mother with her equine therapy sessions and the vet clinic at their house. Mia loves caring for the vast array of native and local animals living with them.

When a new girl arrives for equine therapy, Mia is immediately aware of how different she is from this new girl. Erin's dad is one of the fly-in-fly-out crew and Erin is two years older, full of Melbourne style, and already bored of the Pilbara. Mia tries to be nice to her during their lesson, but when her two best friends, Kirra and Jess, start to copy Erin's hair and nails, Mia starts to feel as if *she's* the odd one out. When Mia's teacher sets an English assignment to present a persuasive speech to the class, Mia decides to choose a topic she's passionate about – the plight of turtle hatchlings as a result of global warming and other threats, although she's nervous about speaking to the whole class.

At home, Mia's neighbour Jimmy brings some of his homemade damper over. As they eat, Jimmy points out that the ants on the balcony are moving their eggs to higher ground, telling Mia that it's a sign of a big storm coming. Later that night, as Mia works on her collection of sea-glass jewellery the storm hits, and she spends a rainy weekend at home writing her English assignment and making notes in her gratitude journal.

Mia is used to cyclone build-ups, but at school half of the corridors are empty. After school, although no official cyclone warning has been announced, Mia's mum picks her up, and together, with Kirra and Jess, they spend the rest of the afternoon filling sandbags to take home in preparation. Mia continues to feel as if her friends are leaving her behind – Kirra isn't interested in their shared jokes anymore – and after she's dropped them home Mia distracts herself by helping her mum lay down the sandbags around the vet surgery, making a flood barrier just in case the cyclone hits. There still hasn't been an official cyclone warning, but Mia and her mother feel well prepared.

By the following day the storm has been upgraded to Cyclone Veronica and given a Blue Alert, meaning it's far enough away that Mia has to go to school and her mother goes to help a horse who is struggling to give birth at a remote farm. Mia pushes aside her own fears about being left at home alone and encourages her mother to go and help the horse, insisting she can manage alone.

Mia is home alone as the storm increases when her friend Nick arrives at the door. He's driven through the rain with his dad, who has been seriously injured, in the hopes that Mia's mum will be able to provide medical assistance in the crisis. Mia tells Nick that her mum's away and steps into help, calling the ambulance and immobilising his dad's arm while they wait.

As the cyclone continues to build, Nick leaves to take his dad to meet the ambulance. Alone again, Mia continues to prepare, letting the horses out and filling containers with enough fresh water to survive several days. Soon, her mum calls to say she's stuck at the farm because the road is flooded too badly for her to drive home. She makes plans for a neighbour to fly her back in their chopper, but shortly after

a Red Alert is issued for the whole Hedland region. They're officially in lockdown, and Mia is going to face Cyclone Veronica alone.

Nick calls to tell Mia that his dad has been collected by the ambulance and flown to Perth. He offers to come back to Mia's house to help her with the animals until the cyclone passes and Mia gratefully accepts. Just as he arrives Mia hears a high-pitched squeal against the roaring wind. It's her beloved pony, Bandit, barbed wire tangled around his shoulder. Mia has no choice but to bring him into the surgery and treat him. He's bleeding deeply, and although Mia has helped her mum perform similar procedures in the past, she's terrified of getting it wrong as she sedates Bandit and cautiously removes the wire, stemming the bleeding and stitching up one particularly deep wound.

She and Nick make it through the height of the cyclone together. After he leaves the next day Mia checks in with Jimmy and clears the helipad for her mum's return. When her mum comes home Mia is relieved, but also proud that she's been able to take care of things alone so well. The disaster has given her newfound confidence in her abilities. When Mia returns to school and her friends she takes that confidence with her, using it to deliver a powerful speech and call to action to help the environment.

### **Classroom relevance:**

*Mia: Through My Eyes – Australian Disaster Zones* is an excellent text for exploring contemporary themes (listed above), ideal for readers in Years 5–8. This book can be studied as a class text and would be perfect for a tuning-in resource for Inquiry Learning across the Learning areas.

The text would be useful for literature circles, guided reading and for inclusion on suggested reading lists.

The point of view, themes and setting make it suitable for study in: English Literature, English Literacy, Humanities and Social Science (History and Geography), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Culture and Sustainability.

## **Q&A WITH DIANNE WOLFER**

### ***What sort of research did you do for Mia?***

I met some interesting characters as part of my research and attended rodeos to watch camp-drafting. The way a rider and their horse can work as one is amazing, and a good camp-draft horse really can be worth tens of thousands. I visited the Red Dog statue in Dampier (again) and took a photo of my own dog beside the canine legend. Then a local showed me the plaque near Wickham in the vicinity of where Red Dog was buried.

### ***What did you find challenging?***

Veronica was a very slow-moving cyclone. She hung around, off the coast, for ages and her eye didn't actually make landfall. This made plotting Mia's story challenging. It was difficult keeping her mum away for so long. Poor old Raven and her foal had to go through a lot of drama to ensure Mia's mother couldn't get home.

The area most impacted by Cyclone Veronica has no weather station and so I had to rely on anecdotal reports to make events as true to life

as possible. Whilst people in Point Samson and Wickham were totally pummelled, Karratha residents to the east said Veronica was 'a bit of a fizzer'.

Point Samson residents also told me the lack of weather station there meant the Red Alert was still in place well after Veronica passed when their kids were safely playing in the flooded carpark at the fishing harbour. Despite modern communications and weather tracking, residents in remote parts of Australia can still feel very isolated.

### ***What was your favourite part of this project?***

Writing Mia's story rekindled my love of Sturt Desert Peas and other northern wildflowers, made me laugh at the antics of bungarra and thorny devil lizards, and encouraged me to learn more about rock art protection and turtle rehabilitation projects. I hope to visit nesting beaches later this year and volunteer.

# CLASSROOM DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

## BEFORE READING

### SETTING THE SCENE

*Mia* is set in the Pilbara region during severe Tropical Cyclone Veronica that caused significant disruptions and damage to the area in March 2019. Students might benefit from some background information on the area and the cyclone before reading the book.

Related online links for further research on these topics can be found in the Online Resources section at the end of these notes and also in the Timeline and Find out more about... sections of the text.

### The Pilbara region

The book is set in the Pilbara region, located in the north of Western Australia and bordered by the Indian Ocean to the west and the Northern Territory border to the right. The region holds cultural and economic significance.

Mining is a major industry in the region, which has a wealth of petroleum, natural gas and iron ore deposits. The mining industry supports a community of fly-in fly-out (FIFO) workers, and Erin's dad is an example of this in the book.

The Pilbara is a mining powerhouse of Australia, balancing development with tourism and protection of significant cultural sites is challenging. It's home to over 700 historic Indigenous archaeological sites and 1,000,000 rock engravings. The region is well known for the diversity of wildlife and endangered species that inhabit this area.

- Look at some of the pictures of the Pilbara online. How is it similar or different to where you live?
- What kind of community do you expect to find in a place like this?
- Using a map online (or the maps included in the front of the book), make a note of the following locations:
  - Port Hedland
  - Karratha
- As you read, mark the locations of the following people and places:
  - The school
  - The beach
  - Jude's farm
  - Mia's house

### Cyclones

A cyclone is an intense storm with a low-pressure centre that forms over warm tropical waters and can reach wind speeds of up to 280 kilometres per hour. In Western Australia, where the Pilbara (and the book) is located, cyclone season starts in November and continues through to April. The northwest of Western Australia is the most cyclone prone part of Australia's coastline. On average northern Australia experiences 11 cyclones per year, although only 4-5 of these reach land.

- As a class discuss:
  - How are cyclones categorised?
  - Which areas of Australia are more prone to cyclones and why?
  - How can we adapt to cyclones in the long term?
  - What are some of the health, economic, and environmental impacts of cyclones?
  - How do communities prepare for cyclones?

Cyclone Veronica reached a Category Five intensity in March 2019. Although it didn't cross the Pilbara coast, local communities (including Port Hedland, Wickham, Roebourne and Point Samson) experience extreme storm winds and rainfall, with significant disruption and destruction to local infrastructure. Many homes in the Port Hedland area were cut off due to flooding. See the Timeline (p.228) for the sequence of events.

## ON THE COVER

Before reading, examine the front and back covers of the book as a class.

- Read the blurb aloud. Make a list of some of themes you expect to encounter in the book. Who is the story about? Make some predications about the story.
- Examine the front cover. What do you notice about the photographs of the setting?
- Mia is a part of the series 'Through My Eyes: Australian Disaster Zones'.
  - Why do you think the series is called Through My Eyes?
  - What does this suggest about the way the story is written?
  - Why is it so powerful to capture historic events via individual experiences?

## ENGLISH

### LITERATURE

#### Vocabulary

- Research and discuss the meaning of these concepts found in the book. Make a list of 3-5 additional concepts that are new to you as you read.
  - Global warming
  - Equine therapy
  - Wildlife conservation
  - Citizen scientists
  - Anxiety
  - Cyclone strength categories
  - Red Alert
  - Climate anxiety

#### Comprehension

As you read, answer or discuss the following comprehension questions:

- What is Mia afraid of? Make a list of some of the techniques she uses to manage her anxiety.
- Discuss some of the challenges of living in a remote community that are raised in the book.
- What are your first impressions of Erin? How does your opinion of her change over the course of the story?
- Why is Mia worried that her friends don't like her anymore?
- What is Mia's relationship with their neighbour, Jimmy? What makes her realise that she should make more of an effort to get to know him?



#### Literature and context

Year 6 'Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts'

Year 7 'Identify and explore ideas and viewpoints about events, issues and characters represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts'

Year 8 'Explore the interconnectedness of Country/Place, People, Identity and Culture in texts including those by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors'

#### Responding to Literature

Year 5 'Present a point of view about particular literary text using appropriate metalanguage, and reflecting on the viewpoints of others'

Year 8 'Use comprehension strategies to interpret and evaluate texts by reflecting on the validity of content and the credibility of sources, including finding evidence in the text for the author's point of view'

- What has Mia’s mum taught her about horses during a cyclone? How does Mia feel about this?
- Should Mia have been honest with her dad when he called during the cyclone?
- What is Mia’s passion?
- How do you think Mia’s mum would describe her?
- Describe Mia’s emotional journey in the story – how does she change from the beginning to the end? What does she learn about herself?
- Discuss resilience and mental health. How are the two connected? If they choose to, students can start their own gratitude journal and draw or write in it every day for a month.
- Use the book to come up with a list of positive ways to strengthen mental health and help others in the community.
- What are some of the signs of global warming and climate change in the story? What changes are you noticing in your own environment?

#### Examining literature

Year 5 ‘Recognise that ideas in literary texts can be conveyed from different viewpoints, which can lead to different kinds of interpretations and results’

Year 6 ‘Identify, describe and discuss similarities and differences between texts, including those by the same author or illustrator, and evaluate characteristics that define an author’s individual style’

Year 8 ‘Recognise and explain differing viewpoints about the world, cultures, individual people and concerns represented in texts’

### Compare and Contrast

- Watch the film *Red Dog*, based on a book by Louis de Bernières. While *Mia* is realistic historical fiction (the disaster is real but characters, some events and places are fictitious), *Red Dog* is based on a true story – the story of a cattle dog who was beloved all over the Pilbara region for his friendship and travels (there is a statue of Red Dog in Dampier!). Compare and contrast the film with *Mia*.
  - How do both texts turn real life events into a story?
  - Discuss the similarities and differences between the way the Pilbara is described in *Mia* and the way it is shown in the film.
- What would you do to turn *Mia* into a film? Which scenes would you keep and which scenes would you cut?
- Read another title from the ‘Through My Eyes: Australian Disaster Zones’ series.
  - List five similarities and five differences. (See the list of titles at the end of these notes.)

### Fact and Fiction

- Writers often use real-life stories as inspiration for fiction. Why do you think this is? When we turn a real-life story into fiction, we can apply fictional techniques to the facts to bring them to life in a new way.

## WORKSHEET 1: Turning Fact into Fiction

Read the following facts about sea turtles: [How much do you know about sea turtles](#), and use the worksheet at the end of these notes to start thinking about turning these facts into a piece of fiction.

### Point of View

- Point of view refers to the narrator of the story, and their position in relation to the story being told. Discuss the different points of view (first person, second person, third person). What are some of the pros and cons of each?

## WORKSHEET 2: Point of View

*Mia* is written in third person and told from Mia's point of view. Imagine the story from a different point of view, and write an action scene describing the cyclone from their perspective. You could write from the point of view of Jimmy, Bandit or Erin. Use the worksheet to think about some of the things that might have influenced their experience.

## WORKSHEET 3: Venn Diagram

Use the Venn diagram worksheet to make a note of the things unique to Mia's experience of the cyclone, the things unique to your chosen character's experience of it, and the experiences they share.

## LITERACY

### Powerful presentations

- Like Mia, plan, rehearse and deliver a speech on a topic you're passionate about. Think about the tips Mia's teacher gives them for their planning.
  - Choose something you're passionate about and balance that passion with reason (p36)
  - Think about how other people will relate to your topic.
  - Practise reading your speech
- An impactful speech will have a strong opening and a clear call to action.
- Mia opens her speech like this – 'When I began listing the urgent issues our generation faces, I felt overwhelmed, anxious, then sad . . . but sadness won't help our planet. We need to act.' (p199).
  - What makes Mia's opening sentence powerful?
  - What is her call to action?
- Write an opening line and call to action before you start writing your speech, and workshop these in small groups.
- In groups choose a scene from the book and develop a script for a performance of the scene. You can create props and sound effects. After the performance, the students can be 'interviewed' by the rest of the class.

## LANGUAGE

### Drawing inspiration from setting

Read the following description of the Pilbara in *Mia* and answer the questions below:

*Mia winds up her window as Mum squirts water onto the windscreen and flicks the wipers. Everything around here is covered in iron-ore dust, and the difference between one side of Boat Beach Road and the other is startling. On the left side, sand dunes lead to sparkling waters teeming with sea-life; on the right, it's like a futuristic sci-fi movie setting. Massive machinery processes ore around the clock. A tall wire fence keeps the public out, but the fine dust escapes. (p21)*



### Texts in context

Year 5 'Show how ideas and points of view in texts are conveyed through the use of vocabulary, including idiomatic expressions, objective and subjective language, and that these can change according to context'

### Interacting with others

Year 5 'Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations for defined audiences and purposes incorporating accurate and sequenced content and multimodal elements'

Year 7 'Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content and multimodal elements to promote a point of view or enable a new way of seeing'

### Interpreting, analysing, evaluating

Year 6 'Analyse strategies authors use to influence readers'

### Text structure and organisation

Year 5 'Understand how texts vary in purpose, structure and topic as well as the degree of formality'

- Use a straight line to underline words that describe the natural landscape, and a wavy line to underline words describing the mines. What are some of the differences between the two?
- How do you think Mia feels about the mines?
- How do the mines interact or interfere with the natural landscape?
- Look at pictures of the unusual Pilbara landscape. Make a list of five words or images that the landscape makes you think about. Use at least two of these in a nature-inspired Haiku or song.
- Learn to write a Haiku here: [How to Write a Haiku](#)

## WORKSHEET 4.1 and 4.2: Sensory Descriptions

Mia uses her senses as a way to ground herself in the moment and manage her anxiety, but writers use a similar technique to create a vivid setting for stories.

- Use Worksheet 4.1 to collect examples of the way the writer uses sensory descriptions to describe a setting in *Mia*.
- Use Worksheet 4.2 to come up with sensory descriptions for your own local setting.
- As an extension activity, come up with a simile to create a stronger image for one of your own sensory descriptions, like this one from the book:

*The dark clouds rolling in from the west look like colossal bruises on the sky. (p.85)*

### Presenting information

- Map the events of the book against the timeline at the back of the book.
  - Are you surprised by the length of time it took the cyclone to play out?
  - Where does the story start and finish against this timeline?
  - How does the timeline at the back, and the map at the beginning of the book, help you to understand the story better?
- We can show the information in stories in a variety of ways. In addition to the timeline and maps written by the series editor, the author uses weather reports within the text to present factual information about the progression of the cyclone. How is the language in these announcements different to the language used in the rest of the story? Try telling a scene from the book using one of the following ways (think about what information you will include, and the language you'll use to convey the information):
  - A news report
  - A series of text messages between two characters
  - A visual diary

# HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE (HASS)

## GEOGRAPHY



- Use Google Maps to locate the Pilbara and its salient features.
  - Make a list of the places mentioned in the book, locate them on Google Maps and then mark them on your own printed map of the area. Overlay this map with a map showing the distance between your home, school, friend's house etc and compare the differences in the distance.
  - How does distance influence the events in the novel?
- Students might not be familiar with cyclones, but Australia is home to a lot of other natural disasters. Ask students to compare Mia's experience of the cyclone to their own knowledge of natural disasters.
  - Use this augmented reality resource to experience a hypothetical storm. <https://www.mtresilience.com/>
  - What are some of the steps to prepare for a cyclone or severe storm?
  - Which of these steps does Mia follow in the book?
  - What are some of the changes we might need to make to infrastructure to manage disasters in the future?
  - Learn more about the five cyclone strength categories and three alert colours.
- Read some of the following messages from young people to the government (2020): [Youth Survey Report](#)
  - Write your own message to the government about an environmental issue.
- Track an Australian cyclone at the Bureau of Meteorology website: [Tropical Cyclone Reports](#)
  - Choose one to research, and write a scene about someone living in the time and place of your chosen cyclone.

### Water in the world

Year 7 'Causes, impacts and responses to an atmospheric or hydrological hazard'

### Changing nations

Year 8 'Management and planning of Australia's urban future'

### Reflecting and responding

Year 7&8 'Reflect on their learning to propose individual and collective action in response to a contemporary geographical challenge, taking account of environmental, economic and social considerations, and predict the expected outcomes of their proposal'

## ACROSS THE CURRICULUM: ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES



As with all of Australia, the Aboriginal ownership of the Pilbara predates European colonisation by more than 30,000 years. Burrup is well known for its rock art, or petroglyphs.

In his English presentation, Jack says:

*...we are lucky to live by the site of the most abundant rock carvings in the world. Each image tells a story and I believe that business should not determine which rock stories remain. If we allow mining companies to destroy images, including those of now-extinct Tasmanian tigers, we lose our shared culture. (p71)*

- What does Jack mean by 'shared culture' and why is this important?
- How is mining destroying petroglyphs and contributing to the destruction of other sacred places?
- What can be done to stop this?

### Geography

Y8 Unit 'Landforms and landscapes' Developing an understanding of the concept of environment enables students to explore the significance of landscapes to people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Culture

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have longstanding scientific knowledge traditions and developed knowledge about the world including observation, using all the senses, prediction and hypothesis and making generalisations within specific contexts such as navigation and sustainability of the environment

# ACROSS THE CURRICULUM: SUSTAINABILITY



## What is Climate Change?

'A change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change apparent from the mid to late 20th century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.' (Oxford Languages)

Useful information from the United Nations: [What is Climate Change](#)

## Citizen Scientist

- A lot of people (including Mia) feel anxious and overwhelmed by climate change and global warming. Write a short reflection of your feelings about these issues.
- Mia overcomes these feelings by focussing on what she can do in her local community – what are some of the things she suggests?
- Make a list of five things you can do to make a difference to the environment.
- Mia talks about being a citizen scientist. You can read more about becoming a citizen scientist here: [Citizen Science and Education](#)
- What are some of the things that citizen scientists do to help the environment?
- What kinds of animals can be helped by citizen scientists?
- Research and join a citizen science group in your local community. How does this help you to become more observant about the place you live? Why is connection to place an important part of overcoming climate change?

General Capabilities

Ethical Understanding

Critical and Creative Thinking – especially in relation to 7, 8 Geography, Civics and Citizenship

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Dianne Wolfer** is an award-winning author of 22 books, including *The Dog with Seven Names* which won the 2019 Speech Pathology Award, was shortlisted for the Patricia Wrightson Prize for Children's Literature, was a CBCA Notable Book and is published in Chinese. Her historical middle fiction novel *Lighthouse Girl* won the WA Young Readers' Book Award and was shortlisted in the WA Premier's Awards and NSW Premier's History Awards. It also served as inspiration for PIAF's *The Giants* and was adapted into a stage production by Black Swan State Theatre Company. One of Dianne's picture books, *Photographs in the Mud* (set along the Kokoda Track), is used as an international peace reference and has been published in Japanese. Another picture book was CBCA shortlisted, and *Nanna's Button Tin* is published in the US market.



Dianne's PhD research explored anthropomorphism and animal voices in children's literature, and was listed as a University of WA Board of the Graduate Research School Dean's List Winner. She shares her interest in all things anthropomorphic via the website [www.animalswhotalk.com](http://www.animalswhotalk.com), in addition to her author website, [www.diannewolfer.com](http://www.diannewolfer.com).

Dianne writes across genres and for different ages. Four titles are currently optioned for film, including her fantasy novel, *The Shark Caller*, inspired by the ancient practise of calling sharks in Papua New Guinea. In 2022 three new books will be released: a WWI historical fiction, a STEM Star biography, and *Mia*. Dianne has been actively involved in the Australian writing community for many years. She is a long-term member of the ASA, writingWA, CBCA and SCBWI, amongst others, and served six years as Regional Advisor for SCBWI WA. Dianne is a bookworm. She reads every day and loves everything about books and storytelling.

## ABOUT THE SERIES EDITOR

**Lyn White** has been a primary school teacher-librarian and EAL teacher for more than 20 years and an editor for 10 years. She is passionate about children's literature, committed to developing life-long reading habits in children, and has great expertise in engaging students with quality texts and teachers with quality resources. Her work with refugee children inspired the first series of *Through My Eyes* set in war zones. The second series, *Natural Disaster Zones*, won the 2019 Educational Publishing Award for Primary Chapter Book. Lyn is an education consultant and conference presenter.



## ABOUT THE WRITER OF THESE NOTES

Bec Kavanagh is a writer, literary critic, and academic. She has had fiction and non-fiction published in a number of publications including *The Guardian*, *The Big Issue*, *Mascara* and *Review of Australian Fiction*. She writes teachers notes for a number of publishers including Allen & Unwin. Bec is a PhD candidate and sessional tutor at La Trobe University, where her research focuses on the representation of female bodies in literature. She is the Youth Programming Manager at The Wheeler Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas and in 2021 was one of Regional Arts Victoria's Creative Workers in Schools, developing a creative writing zine with a group of students from Coburg High.

## CORRESPONDING LITERATURE

**Additional background information can be found on the sites listed below:**

**The Pilbara region** (information and images)

Overview of the Pilbara region by Rural Health West: <https://www.ruralhealthwest.com.au/explore-wa/pilbara-region>

Tourist overview and map of the Pilbara region:  
<https://www.australiasnorthwest.com/explore/pilbara#no-back>

Report on Severe Tropical Cyclone Veronica prepared by the Bureau of Meteorology:  
[http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/history/pdf/Veronica\\_Report.pdf](http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/history/pdf/Veronica_Report.pdf)

Overview of the Pilbara region: <https://kids.kiddle.co/Pilbara>

**Cyclones** (useful videos and more on the link between climate change and cyclones)

The Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub:  
<https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/cyclone/>

The Tropical Cyclone Knowledge Centre (via the Bureau of Meteorology):  
<http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/tropical-cyclone-knowledge-centre/>

Climate Council Hurricane briefing: <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/media/4543/climate-council-hurricane-briefing.pdf>

CSIRO: <https://www.csiro.au/en/research/natural-disasters/floods/faqs-on-tropical-cyclones>

7 Things to Know About Tropical Cyclones: <https://blog.csiro.au/here-are-seven-things-to-know-about-tropical-cyclones/>

Australian Geographic 'Cyclone Facts and Figures':  
<https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/science-environment/2011/02/cyclones-facts-and-figures/>

Cool Australia disaster resilience resources: <https://www.coolaustralia.org/unit/disaster-resilience-education-years-7-8/>

## Sea Turtles

West Pilbara Turtle Program: <https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/parks-and-wildlife-service/volunteering-with-parks-and-wildlife/west-pilbara-turtle-program>

WIRES Turtle Conservation: <https://www.wires.org.au/media-releases/turtle-conservation>

Australian Marine Conservation Society: <https://www.marineconservation.org.au/about/>

Flatback Turtle Monitoring: <https://careforhedland.org.au/turtle-monitoring/>

Adopt a Sea Turtle: [https://gifts.worldwildlife.org/gift-center/gifts/Species-Adoptions/Green-Turtle.aspx?sc=AWY1800OQ18317A01909RX&\\_ga=2.21538107.1085624407.1641173601-1551390543.1641173601](https://gifts.worldwildlife.org/gift-center/gifts/Species-Adoptions/Green-Turtle.aspx?sc=AWY1800OQ18317A01909RX&_ga=2.21538107.1085624407.1641173601-1551390543.1641173601)

## Fiction with similar themes

*The Dog With Seven Names* by Dianne Wolfer

*Red Dog* by Louis de Bernières

## Other books in this series

Through My Eyes: Australian Disaster Zones:

*Tyenna* (Tasmania)

*Mia* (Western Australia)

*Alex* (South Australia)

Through My Eyes: Natural Disaster Zones:

*Hotaka* (Japan)

*Shaozhen* (China)

*Lyla* (New Zealand)

*Angel* (Philippines)

Through My Eyes:

*Shahana* (Kashmir)

*Amina* (Somalia)

*Naveed* (Afghanistan)

*Emilio* (Mexico)

*Malini* (Sri Lanka)

*Zafir* (Syria)

*Hasina* (Myanmar)

## HYPERLINKS IN FULL

In the activities above, webpages have been embedded as hyperlinks throughout. Over time, if information on webpages changes, some of these hyperlinks may no longer work. In these cases, please see below for full webpage URLs and contextual information which you can use to search for the articles using an online search engine or other methods.

In addition, please note that most of the webpage links in these notes are to educational sites, however, some links are to media sites with changing news stories and advertisements in sidebars. It is recommended that teachers preview these sites *on the day students will view them*: possibly disturbing or inappropriate material may be headlined in the sidebar for that day.

How much do you know about sea turtles: <https://www.wwf.org.au/news/blogs/how-much-do-you-know-about-sea-turtles>

How to write a haiku: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98m\\_SXCk-4g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98m_SXCk-4g)

Youth Survey Report – Messages from young people to the government:

[https://www.aidr.org.au/media/7967/youth-survey-report\\_messages-to-government\\_2020.pdf](https://www.aidr.org.au/media/7967/youth-survey-report_messages-to-government_2020.pdf)

Tropical Cyclone Report from the Bureau of Meteorology: <http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/tropical-cyclone-knowledge-centre/history/past-tropical-cyclones/>

Mt Resilience augmented reality resource: <https://www.mtresilience.com/>

Citizen scientists: <https://citizenscience.org.au/2021/04/14/citizen-science-and-education/>

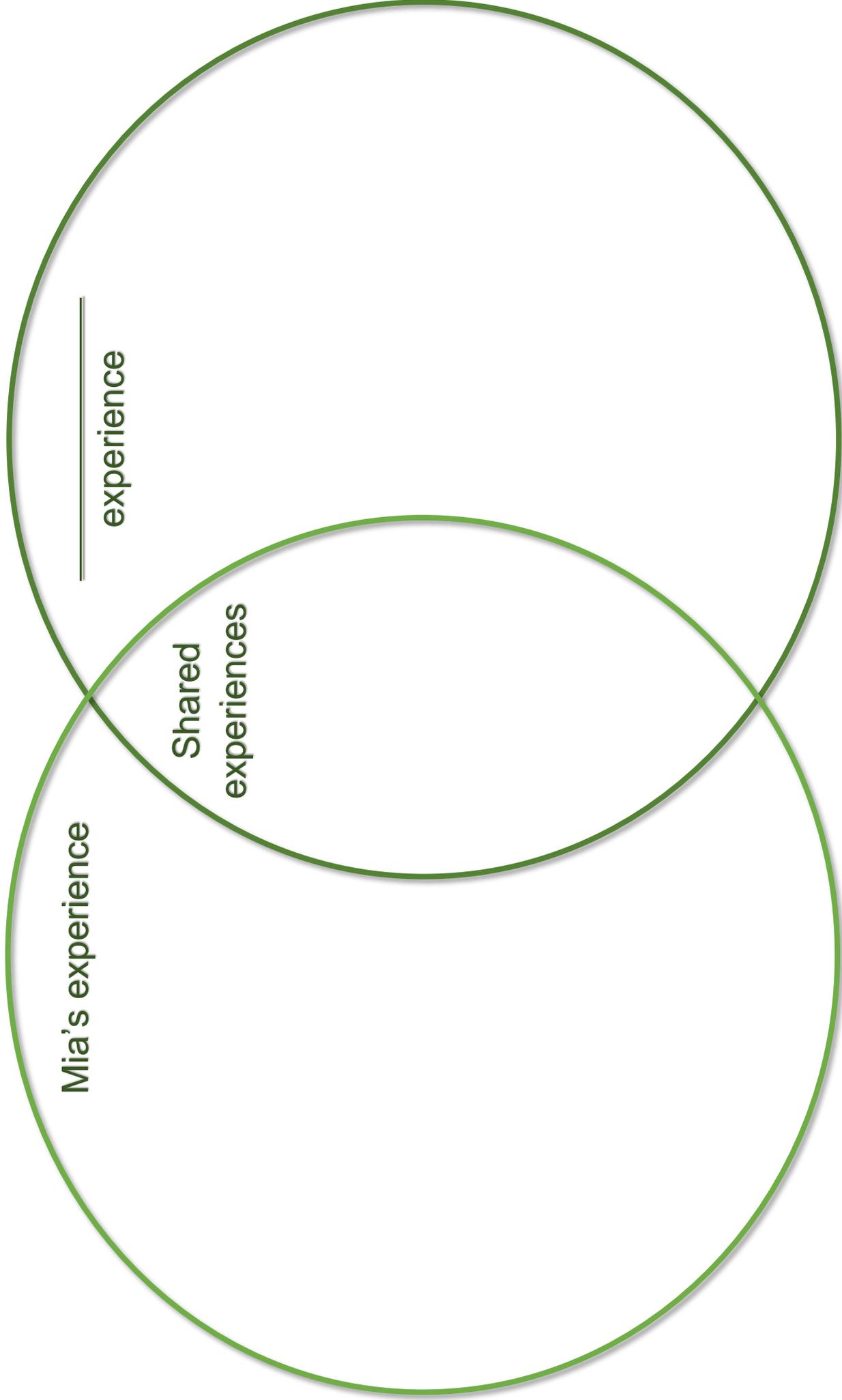
## WORKSHEET 1: Turning Fact into Fiction

<b>POV</b> Who is going to tell the story?	
<b>Character</b> Who are some of the main characters in the story? What is interesting about them?	
<b>Setting</b> Where is the story set? Describe it.	
<b>Conflict</b> What is the challenge that your characters have to overcome in the story?	
<b>Resolution</b> What is going to happen at the end of the story?	
<b>Dialogue</b> Imagine and write a short conversation between two of your characters.	

## WORKSHEET 2: Point of View

	ERIN / JIMMY / BANDIT
Who was with them when the cyclone hit?	
Where were they?	
How did they feel?	
What did they do?	
What did they say?	

### WORKSHEET 3: Venn diagram



## WORKSHEET 4.1: How Dianne Wolfer uses sensory descriptions in *Mia*

Setting from <i>Mia</i> :	
Things we can <b>see</b>	
Things we can <b>smell</b>	
Things we can <b>taste</b>	
Things we can <b>touch</b>	
Things we can <b>hear</b>	

## WORKSHEET 4.2: Use sensory descriptions to describe a local setting

Your setting:	
Things we can <b>see</b>	
Things we can <b>smell</b>	
Things we can <b>taste</b>	
Things we can <b>touch</b>	
Things we can <b>hear</b>	