

DREAMERS

Ezekiel Kwaymullina

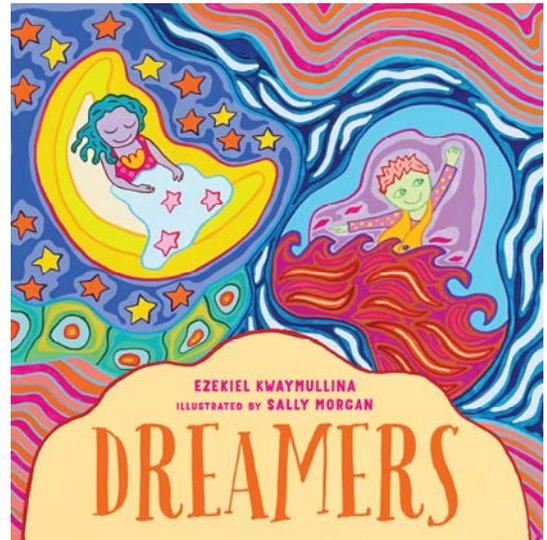
Illustrations by Sally Morgan

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Themes: imagination, dreams, childhood

Year level: Kindergarten to Y3

Cross-curriculum priority: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture



ABOUT THE BOOK

We are the dream and the dreamers — so begins this beautifully written story that celebrates the imagination of children at play. Complemented by Sally Morgan's rich and colourful illustrations, the book is full of movement. It lends itself to interactive reading aloud with play-acting or actions. Journey through fantastic dreamscapes with children who are *dawn weavers* and *sun singers*, *thunder chasers* and *lightning catchers*. Explore the use of poetic language, and find out what the students in your class dream of for their future!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ezekiel Kwaymullina is from the Palyku people of the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Sally Morgan was born in Perth in 1951. She has published books for both adults and children, including her acclaimed autobiography, *My Place*. She has also established a national reputation as an artist and has works in many private and public collections.



STUDY NOTES

LITERACY: COMPREHENDING TEXTS THROUGH LISTENING, READING AND VIEWING

(A) Before Reading

Class discussion

1. Consider the title. What is a dream? There are two different kinds of dreams we often refer to:
 - A dream – the images we experience while asleep.
 - A dream – a wish we desperately want to come true, a goal we would like to achieve.
2. Create a table on the whiteboard listing five examples of each type of dream.
3. Why do you think humans dream while asleep? Ask your students to raise their hand if they can remember a dream they have had. Have them turn to a partner and pair-share their dreams with one another.
4. Are humans the only living things that experience dreams?
 - a. Who has a pet at home?
 - b. Have you ever witnessed them dreaming? How did you know they were dreaming?
 - c. What do you think they might dream about?

Considering the context of the book

5. Discuss the importance of 'the Dreaming' (also known as 'the Dreamtime') in Aboriginal cultures.
 - a. What is the Dreaming?

You may like to refer to the following website which is listed as a resource by the Government of Western Australia Department of Education: www.aboriginalartonline.com/culture/dreaming.php
 - b. What creation stories from the Dreaming do the children already know?

You may like to read some stories from the Dreaming with your class such as 'How Crows Became Black' and 'Why the Emu Can't Fly', available in another Fremantle Press text titled *Bawoo Stories* (www.fremantlepress.com.au/books/indigenous/743).
 - c. Discuss the importance of visual art as a medium of storytelling in traditional Aboriginal cultures (explain that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples did not create an alphabet to record their stories, but instead shared them through oral retelling, song, dance and art).
 - d. In what other ways are stories presented to us every day (besides books)? Have children create a list: television, cinema, theatre, photography, comics, music, jokes etc.
 - e. Which Aboriginal people are the traditional owners of the land on which your school is built?
 - f. Invite an Aboriginal community member to share a story from the Dreaming with your class.

Predicting

6. Explore the blurb, title and front cover. Create a class prediction chart detailing what students think may happen in the story.

Note: It is often interesting to keep this chart to look over at the end – amusing false predictions inevitably arise!

(B) During Reading

Comprehension strategies

7. Examine the different parts of a book: title, author name, illustrator name, front cover, back cover, spine etc.
 - a. Ask children to point to each part of the book.
 - b. Ask children to explain the difference between an 'author' and an 'illustrator'.

Dreamers can be used for several different reading sessions including:

- Modelled reading as a whole class
- Shared reading in student pairs
- Guided reading in small groups
- Independent reading

Comprehension strategies to practise (Kindergarten to Y3):

- Sounding out words aloud (not only in your head)
- Phonics (blending and segmenting)
- Slowing reading rate for comprehension
- Self-monitoring for understanding
- Using illustrations to help predict unknown words
- Predicting words by recognising familiar letter patterns
- Re-reading to crosscheck graphophonic information

Depending on the needs of your class, the stories can be used to practise finding initial and final sounds (e.g. point to a word on the page that starts with 's') to develop letter/sound awareness. Or they can be used to practise fluency and expression for more advanced readers.

Interactive read-aloud with play-acting

8. Create actions for each metaphor as a class. Read the book aloud and have students perform the actions. For example:
 - *rain jumpers* (jump)
 - *cloud fliers* (wave your arms like wings)
 - *sky sleepers* (close your eyes and pretend to sleep)
 - *earth swimmers* (pretend to swim)

Poetic Language

9. Have students find examples of alliteration in the book e.g. *river runners*, *sky sleepers*. Create a list.
10. Have students experiment with alliteration to create their own word-pairs.

Visual art as a storytelling medium

11. Point out that in picture books, illustrations are equally as important as the written word in communicating the story.
 - a. Compare and contrast *Dreamers* with a novel. What do the children notice? What makes the picture book different to the novel?
 - b. List some conventions of the picture book genre.
 - c. Define the term 'imagery' as a class.
 - d. Define the term 'metaphor' as a class. What does each metaphor in *Dreamers* make students think of? Have them pair-share what they imagine when they hear the words *sun singers*, *lightning catchers*, *music painters* etc.
12. In groups of four, have students examine the illustrations in detail.
 - a. What style has the illustrator used to draw the characters – realistic, cartoon, artistic, fantasy?
 - b. What medium has she used – collage, black and white, watercolour etc.? What effect does this create?
 - c. What colours have been used?
 - d. What shapes can students see?
 - e. Where has the illustrator positioned objects on the page and what effect does this create?
 - f. Can students identify any patterns?
 - g. What traditional Aboriginal artistic techniques have been used?

LITERACY: COMPOSING TEXTS THROUGH SPEAKING, WRITING AND CREATING

(C) After Reading

Spelling and vocabulary

13. Have children practise the correct spelling of common sight words included in the book e.g. *the*, *and*, *we*, *are*.
14. Use the book as a resource for teaching the following long vowel sounds:
 - a. Long e spellings
 - ea → dream, dreamers
 - ee → sky sleepers
 - b. Long o spellings
 - o-e → stone chanters
 - c. Long a spellings
 - ai → rainbow dancers
15. Use the book as a resource for teaching the following diphthongs:
 - a. ou → cloud fliers
 - b. aw → dawn weavers
16. Use the book as a resource for teaching the visual pattern *ing* → sun singers.

Poetry

17. Have children practise finding examples of alliteration in the book, e.g. *sky sleepers*.
18. Ask them to create five pairs of words using alliteration that relate to the theme 'dreams'.
19. Have students create a free-verse poem about the theme 'dreams' using these examples of alliteration.

Creative writing

20. Make a class book titled *Dreamers*.
 - a. Have each student create a page containing a metaphor (with alliteration) and an illustration 'We are the ... and the ...'
 - b. Collect all pages and bind together as a class book.
 - c. Make this book available in your school library for other children and parents to read.

Narrative writing: practising simple punctuation, planning, editing and redrafting

Invite students to choose one of the following ideas to plan and create a short story.

21. What kind of things can we do in dreams that we can't in real life? Write a story about a day at school where you had the powers you can have in a dream!
22. What is the difference between a dream and a nightmare? Write a story about a frightening nightmare.
23. Write a story that ends with the line: '... and then I woke up.'

Grammatical elements to explore in narrative writing:

- past tense
- descriptive language to create imagery (e.g. adjectives)
- connectives

Punctuation skills to model, practise and assess:

- capital letters
- full stops
- question marks
- speech marks (appropriate for more advanced writers)

The writing sequence:

- *Modelled writing* (teacher only) – the teacher 'thinks aloud' as he/she writes a story on the whiteboard while the class watch.
- *Shared writing* – the teacher has the pen and continues to 'think aloud', but also asks for children's input and ideas. Children are invited to come and help write/make corrections on the whiteboard.
- *Guided writing* – children can plan their writing in pairs using a narrative planning sheet with the following subheadings: character description, setting, conflict, climax, resolution.
- *Independent writing* – children write their own piece and engage in editing and redrafting.
- *Presentation to audience* – children create an illustration to accompany their story and share with one another in small groups.

Suggested editing activity:

- *You be the teacher!* – have students swap their draft with a partner. Partners to correct spelling/punctuation in a red pen.

Report writing

24. What do the children in your class dream of becoming when they grow up?
 - a. Have them research their dream career and then write a report.
 - b. Consider having an incursion or excursion – invite individuals from popular 'dream careers' to talk to your class about their work.

Speaking and listening

25. Have children make a short presentation to the class (instead of 'show and tell') on the topic: 'What is your dream career?'

Note: children may like to bring in photographs or other materials they have found during their research as part of their presentation.

CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS

History and Geography

26. The author of *Dreamers* belongs to the Palyku people of the Pilbara region of Western Australia.
 - a. Have students locate this region on a map of Australia.
 - b. Where do the Palyku people live now? How is this land currently used?
27. Have students research the history and culture of the Aboriginal traditional owners of the area where you live (cross-curricular link: Technologies – ICT). You may like to use the following headings:
 - a. Name of Aboriginal group
 - b. Geographic area
 - c. Laws
 - d. Spiritual beliefs
 - e. Traditional diet
 - f. Shelter
 - g. Hunting/gathering tools and techniques

Art

28. Research famous Indigenous artists in Australia and arrange a visit to an artwork exhibited in the state gallery. Create class artworks that allow children to experiment with the subject matter and techniques modelled.
29. Have students create an artwork depicting what they imagine when they hear their favourite metaphor from the book (e.g. *sun singers*).
30. Make a class mural depicting the theme 'dreams'.