

YIPPEE! SUMMER HOLIDAYS

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Year Level: Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5

ABOUT THE BOOK

Debbie and Billy are excited. It is the start of the summer holidays, and this means their grandfather, Dada Keen, should be arriving to stay with them soon. They look forward to their grandfather's visits, and throughout this story readers gain an understanding of the important relationship which exists across the generations in their family. The simple activities that fill Billy and Debbie's days remind us of the enjoyment that being outdoors and sharing in games and learning about the natural environment can bring.

Racing old tyres is their favourite game, and Dada Keen is a willing participant. He attaches paper streamers to their tyres so they blow in the wind as they race them down the hill. Billy is upset when Debbie beats him in the tyre race, but his tears soon dry and his smile returns when Debbie offers to share her five dollar prize with him. Debbie, in turn, is rewarded with a promise of a surprise from Dada Keen. He tells Debbie about the waterhole where he used to watch the animals drink when he was young. Debbie is excited when her reward turns out to be a walk to the waterhole with Dada Keen. During their walk, Dada Keen tells Debbie about the bush creatures that rely on the waterhole for fresh water and as a place of refuge in a bushfire. He teaches her some Nyungar words and shows her the tracks made by the kangaroo in the sand. He explains how all the creatures in the bush must live in balance and work together as a team – just like her and Billy and their mum are a team. Under Dada Keen's guidance, Debbie's understanding and appreciation of the waterhole and the life it supports grows, and she begins to realise just what a special place it is. Just before they begin the walk back home again, they are surprised by a large kangaroo (yonga) which comes to drink at the waterhole.

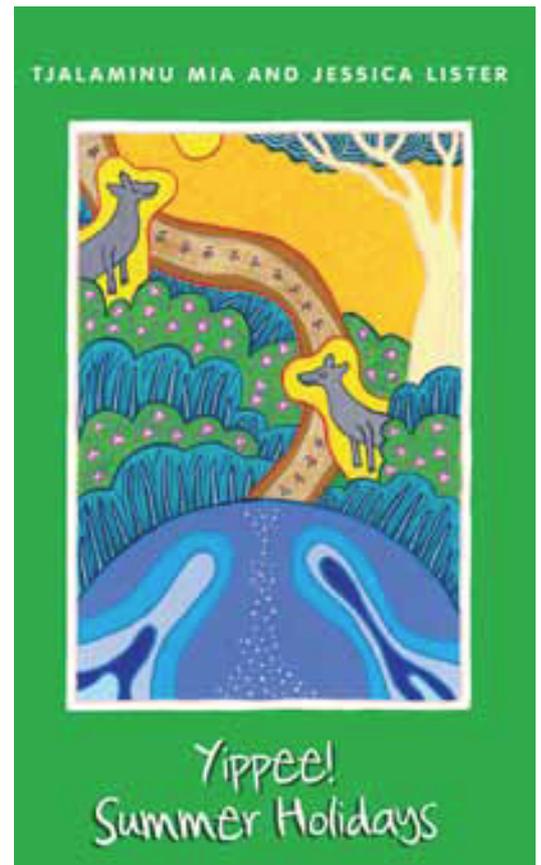
Although Debbie and Billy are sad when Dada Keen has to return to Perth, they soon discover that many things can be made right again by their mum's special chocolate cake that she calls 'cheer up food'. And now they have Dada Keen's next visit at Easter time to look forward to.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Waarda, Nyungar for talking and sharing stories and information, is an exciting new Indigenous children's series. Edited by Sally Morgan, the series is designed to support the literacy needs of Indigenous children in primary school, by making available to them stories written by Indigenous authors. At the same time, it will introduce non-Indigenous children to the richness and depth of Indigenous storytelling. Above all, it is a collection of fun, interesting and diverse first chapter books for new readers.

STUDY NOTES

With a length of 45 pages and 13 short chapters, this Waarda story would suit children who are more capable readers and who have already gained some skills at reading short chapter books. Each chapter is well supported by illustrations which help maintain comprehension through the longer text. The use of chapter titles which reflect the events of each chapter can be used as a prompt to help less confident readers keep track of the story in their memory as they read.



Sharing stories

Yippee! Summer Holidays contains a strong focus upon the passing of stories, knowledge and language from one generation to another through oral storytelling and shared experiences. Discuss with your students:

- what stories are shared in their own families?
- how else do families remember and share information? (family photos, digital images, emails, letters, calendars)
- why are stories important in some cultures?
- who tells the best stories in your family?
- do you know any words in another language? (You can adapt this activity to suit the language characteristics of your class or group.)

Remember that different children will come to these activities with very different experiences of family and storytelling, and that in some families the tradition of sharing stories may not be encouraged or may require some teacher input to ensure stories are suitable to be shared as a group.

Use your senses

Debbie is encouraged to use her senses to take in all the life which exists around the waterhole when she sits watching with Dada Keen. Take students for a walk in their local area (perhaps around the school grounds, on a short walk or to a bush or park setting) and encourage them to use all their senses to take notice of what is around them. This information could be collected and collated into a variety of forms. They could make a poster display using images of what they notice, develop a picture graph or table-recorded numerical data, write a paragraph about each of their senses or create a poem with line starters provided as prompts:

I am walking in the bush

I see ...

I feel ...

I smell ...

I hear ...

I notice ...

I wonder ...

I am walking in the bush.

'Games children play' inquiry

Children will enjoy discovering more about some of the games played by other children around the world. Discuss the games that are played or mentioned by Debbie and Billy in the story (tyre racing, hopscotch and marbles). Ask students to suggest other games that they play at home or school (skipping, elastics, clapping songs, hoops, hide and seek, tiggee). Children can then generate their own questions about the topic 'games children play' and conduct their own research using resources such as people in their family or community, books, pictures, websites or magazines. For example the children can learn about the games that their parents and grandparents played and games kids play in other countries.

Bringing sentences to life

Yippee! Summer Holidays demonstrates the effective use of adjectives and verbs to help bring a story to life. Revisit sections of the text such as Chapter 10 ('The Waterhole') or Chapter 11 ('Bush Balance'). Ask students to locate adjectives (describing words) and verbs (doing words) in the text and to pay attention to how the authors have used these words to make sentences more interesting and bring the story to life for the reader. Then ask students to write their own paragraph describing a place or activity which is special to them, and to focus upon using adjectives and verbs to make their writing interesting.

Top ten holiday activities brainstorm

Organise students into pairs and explain that each pair needs to create their own holiday activity poster to give everyone in the class ideas for ten things they could do during the next school holidays. But there is a catch – the activities cannot involve screen time of any sort! Encourage students to think of activities that are low or no cost, and which use simple, everyday objects rather than expensive toys or equipment such as

tablet computers or handheld games. Students could be asked to share their ideas with the class, display their posters in the room or demonstrate one of their favourite activities.

Tracks in the sand

In many Indigenous Australian cultures, people track animals and birds by observing the marks they leave. Ask in your community and see if there is someone available who has these skills and is willing to talk to your students and share some of their knowledge.

Explore some traditional Aboriginal artworks and research how animal and bird tracks are commonly used to represent a bush creature.

Look at images of various Australian native animals and birds, and discuss what sorts of tracks each one might make as they move through the bush.

Design and build a toy

Ask students to work in small groups to design and build their own toy using everyday objects and simple materials. You might choose to provide some materials to help them begin, such as:

- wood offcuts
- nails
- pieces of hessian or material
- rope or string
- clay
- old plastic containers, bottles and buckets
- cardboard
- polystyrene
- boxes

Focus on recycling and reusing objects rather than buying them new, and remind students that this is a useful way of reducing the amount of rubbish which goes directly to landfill.

Encourage students to plan and design their toy first, and then begin constructing it. This activity could be completed over several sessions, providing you have available space for storage of partially created treasures! Remember to allow plenty of time for playing with and sharing the toys once they have been created.