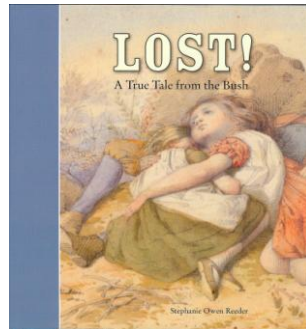


Teachers Notes

Lost! A True Tale from the Bush



About *Lost!*

Lost! A True Tale from the Bush is a fictionalised retelling of the true story of three children from the Duff family—Isaac, Jane and Frankie—who were lost in the bush in the Wimmera District of Victoria in the winter of 1864. Based on eye-witness accounts and newspaper articles from the time, as well as later versions of the story written over the years, *Lost!* relates the story from the perspective of both the lost children and those who were searching for them. The book is lavishly illustrated with paintings and drawings from the 1800s, drawn from the vast Pictures Collection of the National Library of Australia.

Information sections at the end of each chapter document how children lived in the 1860s, looking in particular at housing, entertainment, food, transport, toys, schooling and clothing. An epilogue relates what happened to the children when they grew up, and a select bibliography provides suggestions for background reading.

Lost! was shortlisted for the Eve Pownall Award for Information Books in the Children's Book Council of Australia's Book of the Year Awards 2010.

Using *Lost!* in the classroom

Lost! is a perfect book to use for introducing the study of Australian colonial history. The story itself contains information about how children lived at the time, and this is augmented by the information sections. The book lends itself to being read out loud in the classroom, chapter by chapter, with follow-up activities involving research, language, drama and art skills. A number of possible activities related to the book are outlined below.

NATURE STUDIES

Mallee-tree forests:

- What sorts of trees are mallee trees? What parts of Australia do they grow in? What special characteristics do they have?
- Draw a map of Australia and indicate the areas where mallee trees grow.

Wildflowers:

- What sorts of wildflowers grow in your area?
- Draw pictures of the wildflowers and identify the major parts of a flower.

Native animals:

- What sorts of native animals live in your area? Are any of them endangered animals?

Birds:

- What types of birds live in your area? How many of them are native birds and how many are introduced species? Are any of the native birds endangered?

Reptiles:

- What sorts of reptiles live in your area? Are any of them endangered?
- What should you do when a snake crosses your path? What should you do if someone is bitten by a snake?

Water:

- Research water sources in the bush. How can people ensure that they do not suffer from dehydration when they are lost in the bush?

Weather:

- Research the changing weather patterns in your area over the last 100 or 50 years. Have the weather patterns changed? Are you getting more or less rain? What impact does this have?

Lost in the bush:

- How should you prepare for a long walk in the bush? What should you do if you get lost? Should you stay where you are and wait to be rescued, or should you try to find your way home?
- Draw the tracks of the following animals: children, men, dogs, cats, chickens, kangaroos.
- Make a track around the playground.

SOCIAL HISTORY

Daily life:

- Write a story about a day in the life of a child living in the 1860s.
- Include descriptions of the following: their house, who they live with, where they sleep, how they wash themselves, where they go to the toilet, what they do when the sun goes down.
- Use bark from trees or paddle-pop sticks to make a model of a bark hut like the one that the children in the story lived in.
- Collect squares of material from old clothes that are being thrown out. If everyone in the class brings in a few squares, there will be enough to make an interesting patchwork quilt.

Children's games:

- Make a list of the games children play today. Does the list include the following games played by children like Isaac, Jane and Frankie?
 - blind-man's bluff; hide-and-seek; cricket; ball games; climbing trees; making daisy chains; catching butterflies; fishing; hopscotch; battledore; bushrangers; board games.
 - Research one of the games you are not familiar with, and play it.
 - What board games do children play today? When were these board games invented?
 - Make a board game based on getting lost in the bush.

Household chores:

- What chores do children do around the house today? Are they similar to the ones that the children in *Lost!* had to do?
- What has changed in the way we live at home since the 1860s? Is it easier being a child now compared to in the 1860s? If so, why?

Cooee!:

- Have a cooeing competition in the playground to see who can cooe the loudest. Measure how far away the loudest cooe can be heard.

Clothing:

- Research what clothes children wore in the 1800s.
- Compare the way girls and boys dressed then and now. How does what you wear affect what you can do and what games you can play?
- Make paper dolls out of cardboard and make them two sets of clothes: clothes from the 1800s and clothes from the present day.

Entertainment:

- Make hand puppets and a puppet theatre, and perform a puppet show based on the story of Isaac, Jane and Frankie and their adventures in the bush.
- Research and then perform some of the circus acts that would have been performed in the 1860s.

Toys:

- Compare the toys that children played with in the 1860s with those you play with today.
- Which of the following toys are still played with: spinning tops, wooden blocks, dolls houses, balls, dolls, mechanical toys, jack-in-the-boxes, tea sets, prams, tin soldiers, guns, sailing boats, hoops, bilboquets (cup-and-ball game), wooden animals, musical instruments, puppets, kites, marbles, shuttlecocks, jigsaw puzzles, rocking horses, tricycles, skipping ropes and swings? Why have they survived so long?
- Which toys exist today that were not available in the 1860s?
- Draw a picture of your favourite toys.

- Make balls or dolls using only the following materials: rags or old clothing, paper, buttons, texta pens, needle and thread and glue.

Bush food:

- Identify what bush foods are available in your area. Cook and sample examples of bush food.
- Find recipes for the following: damper, parrot pie, kangaroo stew.

Menus:

- Write menus for breakfast, lunch and dinner for a family in the 1860s and a family today.
- Discuss the differences in the food eaten then and now. How much food do we produce ourselves and how much do we buy from shops? Why have things changed?
- Design a fancy menu featuring the food you have written about.

Aborigines:

- Which Aboriginal tribe or group lived in your area in the 1800s? Research how they lived. What did they eat? What family structures did they have? What sorts of shelters did they build? What stories did they tell? What art work did they produce?
- Read some Aboriginal myths and legends. What do they tell you about the land and its native people?
- Research stories about Aboriginal trackers and the people they have saved.

Bushrangers:

- Which bushrangers were active in your state or territory in the 1800s? Research and document their story.
- Write a story or a play about a bushranger. It can be based on a real bushranger or a fictional character. Include information about where the bushranger lived, what he wore, what weapons he carried and who he held up. What happened to him in the end?
- Make costumes and perform a scene from the life of a bushranger.

Transport:

- Compare the modes of transport used in your area today with the transport used in the 1860s. How much faster is it to travel today than it was then?
- Draw a picture of a rocking horse, a train or a horse-drawn carriage.
- Make a hobby horse. Find some everyday objects that make a sound like a horse's hooves.
- Make a map showing the roads and railways in your immediate area.

Gold:

- Was gold mined in your area? Research the Australian gold rushes. When and where were they? How did people live on the goldfields?
- Write a story about a child living on the goldfields. How do they live? What do they do all day?

Schooling:

- Research how schools have changed since the 1860s.
- Examine classrooms, furniture, teaching aids, writing implements, subjects studied, books, discipline, school uniforms, etc.
- Draw two pictures: one of an 1860s classroom and one of a present-day classroom.

Survival stories:

- Research other stories about children lost in the bush. Do they all have happy endings like the story of the Duff children?
- Write a story about children lost in the bush today. What do they do to survive? How are they tracked? How are they rescued?

Memorials:

- Find out where Jane Duff's memorial is and what is written on it.
- Write a newspaper article about the children's ordeal and how they were found.
- Research the Aboriginal cricket team that toured England in 1868. Were they successful?

LITERATURE AND CREATIVE WRITING

Monsters:

- Write a story about a monster that lives in the mallee-tree forest.
- Include the following information: special characteristics the monster has to survive in the forest; what the monster eats; where it sleeps; what noise it makes.
- Draw a picture or make a model of a mallee-tree monster. Consider the following:
How big is it? How does it get around? What colour is it?

Childhood rhymes:

- Make a list of the rhymes that children learn today when they are small.
- Put together a book featuring the class's favourite childhood rhymes, with illustrations by class members.

Picture book:

- Write and illustrate a picture book which tells the story of Isaac, Jane and Frankie and their adventures in the bush.

**Compiled by Dr Stephanie Owen Reeder, BA (Hons), Dip.Ed., Grad. Dip.Lib., MEd,
PhD**

June 2012