

A stylized illustration of a brown dog with a white collar, set against a background of orange and brown patterns, including a dotted pattern and floral motifs. The dog is the central focus, with its head turned slightly to the left. The background features a large orange area with a white dotted pattern, and a lower section with green and brown floral designs.

# Country

AUNTY FAY MUIR & SUE LAWSON  
with illustrations by CHERYL DAVISON

**TEACHERS' NOTES**



## Blurb:

The wonder  
of Country  
guides us  
to culture,  
to story,  
to how to be.

## Specifications

Authors: Aunty Fay Muir  
& Sue Lawson  
Designer: Cheryl Davison  
ISBN: 9781742036779  
Format: 297 x 210 mm  
Extent: 32pp  
Binding: Hardback  
RRP: \$24.99  
Reading Level: 6+  
Interest Level: 3+  
Age: Foundation-Year 6  
Category: Picture Book

## Curriculum Links

- ENGLISH
- LITERATURE
- LITERACY
- HUMANITIES AND  
SOCIAL SCIENCES
- HISTORY
- CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING
- ART
- MUSIC

Australian Curriculum  
Outcomes  
Foundation to Year 6

## Synopsis

Country introduces young people to the complexity and beauty of Country in First Nations culture. It starts with the complex aspects of Country, including past, present and future, to the requirements Country has of each of us.

## Writing style

Country is written in simple, direct language. The style though simple conveys the richness and complexity of Country.

The sparse language leaves room for the reader to elaborate and explore all that Country entails. The text is suitable to be read to young children or by emerging and established readers.

## Illustration Style

## Australian Curriculum Outcomes Foundation-Year 6

### ENGLISH - LANGUAGE

- ACELA1443\* • ACELA1460\* • ACELA1475\*  
• ACELA1483\* • ACELA1487\*

### ENGLISH - LITERATURE

- ACELT1592 • ACELT1596\* • ACELA1488  
• ACELA1496 • ACELA1504 • ACELT1608\*  
• ACELT1609\* • ACELT1613\* • ACELT161

### ENGLISH - LITERACY

- ACELY1655\* • ACELY1656 • ACELY1789 •  
ACELY1670  
• ACELY1675\* • ACELY1677\* • ACELY1678\*  
• ACELY1682 • ACELY1687 • ACELY1694  
• ACELY1709

### ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLAND HISTORIES & CULTURE (COUNTRY/PLACE)

- OI.1 • OI.2 OI.3

(CULTURE)

OI.5

(PEOPLE)

- OI.7 • OI.8 • OI.9

Visual Arts

ACAVAM106

ACAVAM110

ACAVAM114

### HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES (INQUIRY SKILLS)

- ACHASSI073 • ACHASSI074 • ACHASSI077  
• ACHASSI079 • ACHASSI080 • ACHASSI095 •  
ACHASSI097 • ACHASSI099\* • ACHASSI102 •  
ACHASSI122 • ACHASSI123

## About the Authors



### Aunty Fay Muir

Aunty Fay Stewart Muir, AO is a senior Boon Wurrung and Wamba Wamba Elder, First Nations' community leader and Koori Court Elder. She is a Boon Wurrung and Wemba Wemba Language Specialist and provides cultural guidance to students and teachers at all levels of the Victorian Education system. Aunty Fay is on the Victorian Honour Roll of Women and the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll.



### Sue Lawson

Sue Lawson writes books for children and young adults. Her books include *You Matter – Be Your Own Best Friend*, *Peregrines in the City*, *What's The Big Idea?* and *An Important Message From Mr Beaky*.

## About the Illustrator



### Cheryl Davison

Cheryl Davison is a Walbunja, Ngarigo woman. Cheryl is on the Gulaga National Park Board of Management that governs the direction of care for the Yuin people's beloved and sacred mountain.





## Before Reading

### Country Word Cloud

As a class, brainstorm *Country*. Ask students what *Country* means to them. Use the words to create a Word Cloud.

Resource: <https://www.wordclouds.com/>

After reading *Country*, revisit the word cloud to see if the class would like to add words. Perhaps create a new word cloud with words from the book.

### Examine the Cover

- What clues does it give about the genre?
- What might the book be about?

Discuss the clues about the book. Ask students to share their reasoning.

- Is this a picture book or a nonfiction book?
- What genre might it be?
- Where might students find this book in the library?

Help students identify the title of the book, author, illustrator and publisher.

- Discuss each person's role in creating a book.
- Which of these roles would students prefer if they were to help create a book?

Discuss the book's title: *Country*

- What clues does it offer readers?
- What questions does the title prompt?
- What do you know about *Country*?
- Are there different interpretations of the word *Country*?

### The Blurb

Read the blurb: 'The wonder of *Country* guides us to culture, to story, to how to be. '

- What clues does it provide about the book?
- Discuss with students what they already know about *Country*.
- On a large sheet of paper create a table, with the headings: 'What we know about *Country*' and 'What we want to know about *Country*'. Revisit the poster after reading.

## After Reading

### The Blurb

- Do students want to add anything to either column?
- Were all the questions answered?
- Allocate unanswered questions to pairs to research.
- Take some guesses about how Country might 'guide' us.
- Revisit these guesses after reading the book to see whether anyone was right.

### Turn and Talk

After reading *Country* have students turn and talk to the person beside them and discuss what they found interesting about the book.

- Did they learn anything new?
- Did anything confuse them?
- Did they have a favourite illustration?
- What was the most interesting page?

### What is Country?

Break the class into groups.

- Allocate each group one of the following spreads in *Country*:

Country is the past, present, future.

Country is songs and stories, art and ceremony.

Country is earth and sky. Sun, moon and stars.

Country is waterholes, creeks and rivers.

Ocean and beaches.

Country is mountains and trees, rocks and grasses.

Country is all living creatures.

Animals, birds, and insects.

Reptiles and fish.

Country is all of us. Country is how we behave, how we care for each other.

Have each group discuss their spread and why/how Country can be all of these things.

Each group can choose between a diorama, poster, written report or PowerPoint presentation to present their results. Presentations can be shared in class.



## What Country?

Australia is comprised of different First Nations' groups. Each of these groups has their own culture, customs, law and language.

- Ask students if they know whose Country they live on.
- Do they know whose Country their school is on?
- What Country do they holiday on?
- Where is Aunty Fay's Country?
- Where is Cheryl Davisons Country?

Resource: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>.

- Show the students the Country where your school is located on the map.

## Getting on Country Exercise

Take students outside with some pencils and paper in a quiet spot in nature.

- Ask students to spend 5 minutes looking around.
- Have students write down everything they see.
- Have students think about any points they've written are connected.
- Have students draw a line between these points to represent their connection.
- In groups. have students discuss they connections they've found.

## Incursion: Invite a local Elder to speak to the class.

Before the visit, work with students to prepare questions. Ask students to word questions in a way that encourages detailed information from your guest.

- Discuss with students the importance of deep listening in First Nation culture and what this might look like when listening to a guest.
- After the visit, have children write a report for the school newsletter or for display in class.

## Caring for Country

Read the final spread of *Country*: 'When we care for Country, Country is strong and healthy. Then we are strong and healthy too.'

- Discuss with students the ways we can care for Country.
- Visit the following resrouce: <https://www.ilsc.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Caring-For-Country-Factsheet.pdf>.
- As a class, come up with different ways we can care for Country every day. Create a poster of these ideas for disaply around the school.





## Resources

- <https://aussiechildcarenetwork.com.au/activities/games-and-activities/caring-for-country>
- <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/voice-to-parliament-update/102510176>.
- <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation/support-a-voice-to-parliament/>.
- <https://www.aec.gov.au/referendums/>.
- <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/constitutional-recognition/11370486>.
- <https://deadlystory.com/page/culture/articles/self-determination-and-treaty>.
- [https://deadlystory.com/page/culture/Annual\\_Days/NAIDOC\\_Week/NAIDOC\\_2019/Hey\\_you\\_Mob\\_it\\_s\\_NAIDOC\\_week](https://deadlystory.com/page/culture/Annual_Days/NAIDOC_Week/NAIDOC_2019/Hey_you_Mob_it_s_NAIDOC_week).
- <https://www.wingaruru.com.au/blog/truth-telling-in-classrooms>.
- <https://www.narragunnawali.org.au>.
- <https://ulurustatement.org>.
- <https://www.abc.net.au/education/digibooks/dust-echoes/101734324>.
- <https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/curriculum-resources>.
- <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/rights-and-freedoms/rights-and-freedoms-right-right>.

