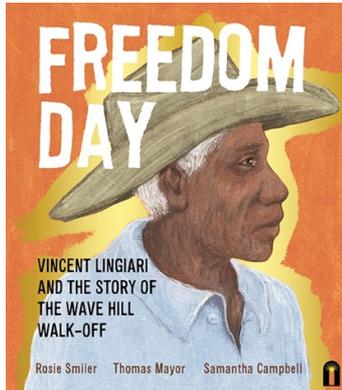


Teacher's Notes



Freedom Day

**Written by Rosie Smiler and Thomas Mayor
Illustrated by Samantha Campbell**

Teacher's Notes by Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright AM

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

RECOMMENDED FOR

5 years and older (Grades F–6)

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: English, HASS, Intercultural Understanding
- General capabilities:
 - Comprehending texts; Share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts ([ACELT1783](#)); The ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples maintain special connections to particular Country/Place ([ACHASSK049](#)); Recognising culture and developing respect; Interacting

and empathising with others;
Reflecting on intercultural experiences and taking responsibility

THEMES

- **Indigenous Workers' Rights & Unions**
- **Indigenous Land Rights & Culture**
- **Gurindji people**
- **Colonialism**
- **Racism**

SYNOPSIS

WHEN MANY VOICES ARE JOINED TOGETHER, CHANGE CAN HAPPEN.

On 23 August 1966, more than two hundred courageous Aboriginal people walked off the Wave Hill Cattle Station in the Northern Territory. Led by Vincent Lingiari, these stockmen and their families were walking together to fight for equal pay and land rights. *Freedom Day* delves into the events that led up to this moment, and makes a rallying cry for the things that still need to change in its wake.

Thomas Mayor and Rosie Smiler, Vincent Lingiari's granddaughter, worked together to bring this vital story to life. Samantha Campbell exquisitely illustrated it. Fragments of this story exist in the Australian consciousness – mainly due to the symbolic photo of Gough Whitlam handing back soil to the Gurindji people in 1975 – but many Australians don't know the full story, and it has never been published as a narrative picture book. 2021 is the 55th Anniversary of the walk-off. Gurindji people celebrate the walk-off every year at the Freedom Festival. This work has been endorsed by Vincent's family and Gurindji elders.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Thomas Mayor is a Torres Strait Islander man born on Larrakia country in Darwin. As an Islander growing up on the mainland, he learned to hunt traditional foods with his father and to island dance in the Darwin community of Torres Strait Islanders. In high school, Thomas's English teacher suggested he should become a writer. He didn't think then that he would become one of the first ever Torres Strait Islander authors to have a book published for the general trade. Thomas became a wharf labourer from the age of seventeen and a union official for the Maritime Union of Australia in his early thirties. Thomas found his voice on the wharves, gaining the skills of negotiation and organising and applying those skills to advancing the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Thomas is a signatory to the Uluru Statement from the Heart and a tireless campaigner for a constitutionally enshrined First Nations voice, and a Makarrata Commission for truth-telling and agreement-making or treaties. His previous books include *Finding the Heart of a Nation* and *Finding our Heart*, along with a book about fatherhood from First Nations perspectives called *Dear Son*.

Rosie Smiler is a 39-year-old Gurindji woman, a twin with Lisa Smiler and a granddaughter of the great Gurindji leader, Vincent Lingiari. Rosie is a teacher's assistant for Years 3 and 4 at the tiny primary school in the Gurindji community of Kalkarindji. Rosie speaks Gurindji, Walpiri and Mudburra Aboriginal languages, as well as Gurindji Kriol and English. She describes herself as *minyiti*, or shy, though she is also very brave, just like her grandfather was.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Samantha (Fry) Campbell is an illustrator and graphic designer based in Darwin, Northern Territory. Samantha is descended from the Dagoman people from Katherine, and as a child lived in remote Aboriginal communities across the Top End. Samantha studied graphic design in Melbourne and worked as a freelance graphic designer before illustrating her first children's book, *Alfred's War* (written by Rachel Bin Salleh). *Alfred's War* was shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Literary Awards and Speech Pathology Australia's Book of the Year Awards. Samantha's other books include *Brother Moon*, by Maree McCarthy Yoelu, and *Aunty's Wedding*, by Miranda Tapsell and Joshua Tyler. Samantha enjoys illustrating with a range of different mediums in many styles.

THEMES

- **Indigenous Workers' Rights & Unions**

Research the long battle for Indigenous workers' rights and the results of the Wave Hill walk-off.

Research the Australian Union Movement and its part in the recognition of Indigenous rights.



- **Indigenous Land Rights & Culture**

Native title is a concept which relates to Aboriginal ownership of the land. Research the history of the land rights movement and how key figures such as Vincent Lingiari, Eddie Mabo, Charles Perkins, Marcia Langton, Noel Pearson and others have played a part in that history.

Indigenous people value their connection to Country. Research Indigenous cultural and social beliefs.

Read other picture books which explore Indigenous history and compare to this text.

- **Gurindji People**

Research the Gurindji people and their cultural beliefs and language.

Examine maps of the area in which the Gurindji people live.

- **Colonialism**

‘The cattle trampled and chewed through the best grasslands. Our sacred sites were violated, our meeting places, hunting grounds and waterways were fenced off – our food supplies became scarce. They called themselves settlers. But to my people, they were invaders.’ (p 10) This book presents this story from the point of view of Indigenous custodians of the land which was never ceded to white invaders. Why do so many white people find it difficult to accept that settlers were actually invaders?

‘Aboriginal people began to starve. If we took a cow to eat, entire families were ambushed and killed as punishment. We can still see bones from these massacres, like the skulls at Blackfellow’s Knob. Aboriginal people were treated like this all over Australia.’ (p 12) Massacres and frontier violence were a legacy of such colonialist attitudes, and yet our history books until recently failed to document that history. Why did historians maintain this silence for so long?

- **Racism**

‘The *kartiya* believed Aboriginals to be less than human because we were black, and because of the differences in our language, laws and way of living with the land – our culture. It suited the invaders to think this way, because by believing we were not human, it was easier for them to do cruel things and take our land.’ (p 11) This simple description details the origin of racism and the excuses made by white people when dispossessing Aboriginal people. How should we combat racism?

‘We were not free. We were slaves.’ (p 18) This book reveals that Aboriginal people were paid not in wages but in kind with food and other supplies. When did this practice cease in Australia?

WRITING STYLE

Co-written in first person by Rosie Smiler, the granddaughter of Vincent Lingiari, with Thomas Mayor, this account is a personal one, imbued with the emotional ties Rosie has to this story. Write an expository text in third person telling the story and compare the two versions.



COMPREHENSION

What percentage of the Australian population do Aboriginal people now represent? *Answer:* Three per cent.

Who did Vincent befriend when in hospital in Darwin? *Answer:* A white man, or *kartiya*, Brian Manning, and two Aboriginal men: Dexter Daniels and Tudawali, each from the Union.

Who was the Prime Minister who was photographed in 1975 pouring a handful of sand into Vincent Lingiari's hand as a symbol of the government's recognition of Indigenous land rights? *Answer:* Gough Whitlam.

What is the Uluru Statement from the Heart? *Answer:* A document drafted in 2017 calling for Aboriginal people to have a voice in parliament and in our Constitution.

What is Freedom Day? *Answer:* a festival celebrated by the Gurindji people on the anniversary of the Wave Hill walk-off, held on the Friday following 23 August.

WRITING EXERCISE

Write a review of this picture book.

ILLUSTRATION STYLE

Samantha Campbell alternately uses sepia-toned drawings and richly coloured paintings in this visual text. Why do you think she has chosen to use two different styles in this way?

ILLUSTRATION EXERCISE

Draw a portrait of Vincent Lingiari based on the images in this picture book.

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Create a book trailer for this book.

Create an acrostic poem about Vincent Lingiari using the first letters in his names.

Design a new cover for this book.



RELATED READING

Picture Books:

- Bancroft, Bronwyn *Coming Home to Country* Little Hare/ Hardie Grant, 2020.
Bancroft, Bronwyn *Remembering Lionsville* Allen & Unwin, 2013.
Castles, Jennifer *Say Yes: A Story of Friendship, Fairness and a Vote for Hope* Ill. by Paul Seden. Allen & Unwin, 2017.
Dreise, Gregg *Common Wealth* Scholastic, 2021.
Kelly, Paul and Carmody, Ken *From Little Things Big Things Grow* Ill. by kids from Gurindji country with paintings by Peter Hudson. One Day Hill & Affirm Press, 2008.
Kwaymullina, Ezekiel *My Country* Ill. by Sally Morgan. Fremantle Press, 2012.
Mayor, Thomas *Finding Our Heart: a Story about the Uluru Statement for Young Australians* Ill. by Blak Douglas. Hardie Grant Travel, 2020.
McQuire, Amy *Day Break* Ill. by Matt Chun. Bright Light, 2021.
Muir, Aunty Fay and Lawson, Sue *Respect*. Ill. by Lisa Kennedy. Magabala Books, 2020.
Muir, Aunty Fay and Lawson, Sue *Family* Ill. by Jasmine Seymour. Magabala Books, 2020.
Murphy, Aunty Joy *Welcome to Country* Ill. by Lisa Kennedy. Walker Books, 2016.
Murphy, Aunty Joy and Kelly, Andrew *Wilam, a Birrarung Story* Ill. by Lisa Kennedy. Walker Books, 2019.
Pryor, Boori Monty *Shake a Leg* Ill. by Jan Ormerod. Allen & Unwin, 2010.
Roach, Archie *Took the Children Away* With illustrations by Ruby Hunter. Simon & Schuster, 2020.
Russell, Elaine *A is for Aunty* ABC, 2000.

Non-Fiction:

- AIATSIS *The Little Red Yellow Black Book: An Introduction to Indigenous Australia* Contributor: Bruce Pascoe. Aboriginal Studies Press, 2018, 1994.
Australian Curriculum Aboriginal Studies (Series) R.I.C. Publications.
Hokari, Minoru *Gurundji Journey: A Japanese historian in the outback* UNSW Press, 2011.
Langton, Marcia *Welcome to Country: an Introduction to our First Peoples for Young Australians* Explore Australia, 2019.
Pascoe, Bruce *Young Dark Emu: A True History* Magabala Books, 2019.
Ward, Charley *A Handful of Sand: The Gurindji Struggle, After the Walk-off* Monash University Publishing, 2016.

Websites:

- 'A Timeline of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the Labour Movement' *United Workers Union*
- 'Aboriginal Culture Investigation Lesson Plan – Year 3/4 by Kalinda Knight Sept 3, 2013' *Australian Curriculum Lessons*
<https://www.australiancurriculumlessons.com.au/2013/09/03/aboriginal-culture-investigation-lesson-year-34/>
- 'Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples' *Parliament of Australia*



https://www.aph.gov.au/Visit_Parliament/Whats_On/Exhibitions/Custom_Media/Apology_to_Australias_Indigenous_Peoples

‘Australia’s First People Unit Plan in History (Suitable for Year 4)’ *Teach Starter*
<https://www.teachstarter.com/au/unit-plan/australias-first-people/>

‘Charles Perkins’ *National Museum Australia*
<https://www.nma.gov.au/explore/features/indigenous-rights/people/charles-perkins>

‘Curriculum Resources’ *Narragunnawali*
<https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/curriculum-resources>

‘Eddie Koiki Mabo’ *AIATSIS*
<https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/eddie-koiki-mabo>

‘Educational Resources about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures posted by Ara Sarafian’ *ABC Education* 8 November 2020
<https://education.abc.net.au/newsandarticles/blog/-/b/3233160/educational-resources-about-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-histories-and-culture>

Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools: A Guide for School learning Communities Queensland Government, 2011
https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/fundingAndSupport/Documents/eatsips_2011.pdf

Egan, Ted ‘Lingiari, Vincent (1919–1988)’ *Indigenous Australia*
<https://ia.anu.edu.au/biography/lingiari-vincent-14178>

‘First Nations Workers Alliance’ *Australian Unions*
<https://www.australianunions.org.au/campaign/first-nations-workers-alliance/>

‘Gurindji’ *National Archives of Australia 1961–2021*
<https://www.naa.gov.au/taxonomy/term/1306>

Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation
<https://www.gurindjicorp.com.au/>

‘Gurindji people’ *Wikipedia*
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gurindji_people

‘History of Australian Unions’ *ACTU*
<https://www.actu.org.au/about-the-actu/history-of-australian-unions>

Hokari Minoru ‘Maintaining History: the Gurindji People’s Truthful Histories’ *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine* April 28, 2010
<https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/maintaining-history-gurindji-peoples-truthful-histories>

‘Marcia Langton’ *Wikipedia*
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcia_Langton



National NAIDOC Week

<https://www.naidoc.org.au/>

'Native title, rights and interests' *Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC)*

<https://nativetitle.org.au/learn/native-title-and-pbcs/native-title-rights-and-interests>

'Noel Pearson' *Wikipedia*

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noel_Pearson

O'Neill, Sally 'Buchanan, Nathaniel (Nat) 1826–1901' *Australian Dictionary of Biography* Volume 3 (MUP), 1969

<https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/buchanan-nathaniel-nat-3101>

Reconciliation Australia

<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/>

'Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture' *State Government of Victoria Education & Training*

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/multicultural/Pages/koorieculture.aspx>

Uluru Statement from the Heart

<https://fromtheheart.com.au/>

'Walk-off at Wave Hill: Birth of Aboriginal Land Rights' *Creative Spirits*

<https://www.naa.gov.au/taxonomy/term/1306>

'Wave Hill Station' *Wikipedia*

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wave_Hill_Station

'Wave Hill Walk-off' *Australians Together*

<https://australianstogether.org.au/discover/australian-history/wave/>

William Vestey, 1st Baron Vestey' *Wikipedia*

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Vestey,_1st_Baron_Vestey

