



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Upper primary, early secondary
(ages 9–13; years 4 to 7)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English; Humanities and Social Sciences; History
- **General capabilities:** Critical and Creative Thinking; Literacy

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- A unique look at Australia during the bombing of the far north during World War II, *The Dog with Seven Names* introduces primary-aged readers to what it was like to live through a war – the political climate, hardships, threats, disasters and sense of community spirit.
- Seeing the story through a dog's eyes adds an extra layer of meaning and depth, enabling the reader to imagine life through a different lens.

THEMES

- Animals and dogs
- War
- Belonging, acceptance and family
- Survival and resilience
- Rural life
- Royal Flying Doctor Service

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia and Dianne Wolfer

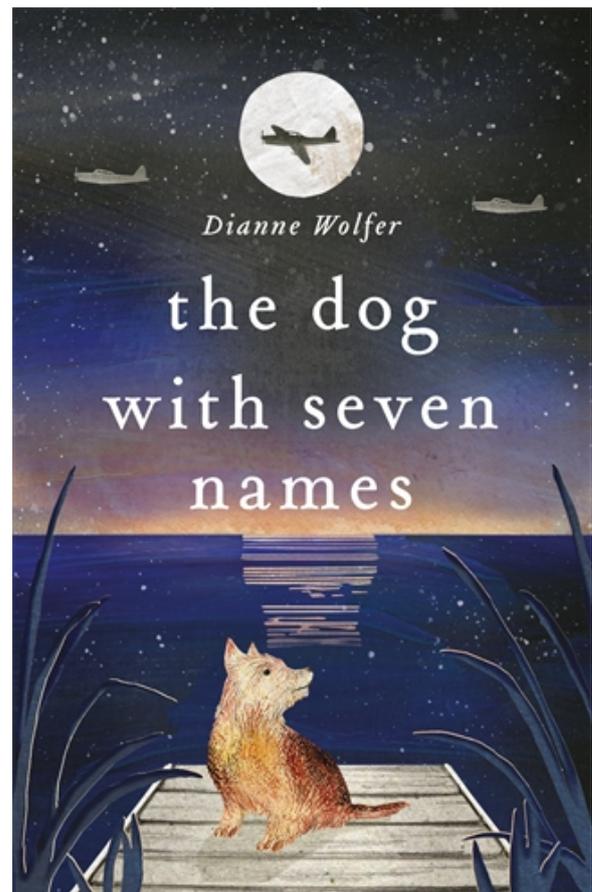
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The Dog with Seven Names Dianne Wolfer

PLOT SUMMARY

The heart-warming story of a golden-eyed dog in a time of war.

A tiny dog, the runt of the litter, is born on a remote cattle station. She shouldn't have survived, but when Elsie finds, names and loves her, the pup becomes a cherished companion. Life is perfect . . . until War arrives.

With Japanese air raids moving closer, Elsie's family leaves the Pilbara for the south and safety. But the small dog has to stay behind. After travelling far from home with drovers and a flying doctor, she becomes a hospital dog and experiences the impact of war on north-western Australia. She witnesses wonderful and terrible things and gives courage to many different humans.

But through all her adventures and many names, the little dog remembers Elsie, who girl who loved her best of all. Will she ever find her again?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dianne Wolfer is the author of 19 books for teenagers and young readers. *Light Horse Boy* was a Children's Book Council of Australia Honour Book and won the 2014 Western Australian Premier's Book Award for Children's Books. *Granny Grommet and Me*, inspired by surfing grandmas, was also on the CBCA shortlist. *Lighthouse Girl*, winner of a West Australian Young Readers' Book Award, explores the story of Fay Howe, the Albany lighthouse keeper's daughter who signalled to soldiers in 1914. It inspired the hugely popular Royal de Luxe performance of The Giants at Perth Festival (2015). Dianne enjoys writing across genres. *The Shark Caller* and *Nanna's Button Tin* were both shortlisted for the WAYBRA children's choice awards and are CBCA Notable Books.

Dianne wrote her latest books, *The Shark Caller* and *The Dog with Seven Names*, as part of the PhD she has completed at UWA, looking at the subject of anthropomorphism in children's literature.

Find out more about Dianne Wolfer, including how to book a school visit, at: diannewolfer.com



[Dianne and her dog Harry]

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Dianne says: I've always loved reading (and writing) animal stories. *The Dog with Seven Names* began in 2012 as part of my PhD research into anthropomorphism and ways animal characters are used in Australian children's literature. However the story seeds of *Dog* lodged long before that. Like many people living in regional Australia, I'm fascinated by stories of flying doctors landing on remote airstrips. My home town, Albury celebrates the *Uiver* landing and in 2005, I accompanied my daughter (with fractured pelvis) across Australia in a small Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) plane. We refuelled several times at isolated airstrips, before eventually reaching Perth. The kindness of the medical and flying staff stayed with me and I wanted to share that generosity in

story-form. I also hoped to capture a sense of the laconic, good-natured resilience of outback communities through an animal's eyes/nose. These themes combined with my interest in history form the core of this book. My stories are often sparked by small historical anecdotes. By chance, I read about a flying doctor encountering Japanese Zeroes as he approached Port Hedland airstrip in 1942. The rest as they say is history ...

The Shark Caller (2016) was also part of my PhD study. Students may be interested to compare ways such different species provide different anthropomorphic perspectives.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES

Point of view

The Dog with Seven Names is told from the point of view of a dog – an Australian terrier/dingo cross – rather than a human.

- Think of examples of how this impacts the way the reader learns about things in Dog's world. For example, since Dog can only count to four, how does she let the reader know about the amounts of things? What are some other ways Dog communicates with the reader?
- Can you think of other stories you've read from the point of view of an animal? How did they differ from this story? Can you think of any contemporary stories told from the point of view of an animal?
- What are some of the limitations of writing from a dog's point of view? What methods does the author use to convey information that a dog wouldn't normally know? For instance, how does the author show us what is going on with the war?
- Choose a scene from the story – one that involves another animal. For example, the scene of Stan, Dave and Dog droving or the mean dogs in Marble Bar chasing Dog or maybe of Dog following the rat during the cyclone. Re-write that scene from the point of view of either Diesel, Dave's horse, one of the mean dogs or even the rat! How does this change the narrative? What extra pieces of information can you add to the story by doing this?
- Experiment with first and third person point of view by rewriting this scene from another perspective.

The senses

There are five senses that humans use to collect information about our surroundings. These are sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch. Animals use these



senses too, and sometimes their senses are much stronger than ours.

- Dog often notices smells, connecting scent to emotions and using this to understand how the humans around her are feeling. Find examples of this as well as other instances when Dog uses her keen senses.
- Do you think smell is the strongest way dogs collect information? What other animals use one particular sense to navigate their world?
- Do humans favour one of the senses over others?
- What senses do we use as humans to detect emotions in others?
- During the story, Dog frequently smells something and is reminded of her time with Elsie. Do certain smells or food ever remind you of things in your past? Write down some examples of smells connected to memories you have, then compare these with someone else in your class. Are any of your smell triggers the same? For example, what smells make you think of summer days at the beach, or snuggling up in winter, or being at school?

Australia in the 1940s

- Many things have changed since the 1940s, particularly technology, which has played a major part in developing communication and transportation across our huge nation. In the novel, Doc and Stan use a pedal radio to communicate with the hospital in Port Hedland. Today we would pick up a phone or go online. Look online to see if you can find photographs of a pedal radio. What do you think people did when they needed a doctor before the invention of the pedal radio?
- Air travel has also changed enormously over the past eighty years. In the story, Doc flies two types of planes: a Fox Moth and then a Swallow. Research one of these aeroplanes and then try to draw one. As a comparison, research the Japanese plane mentioned in the story, the Zero, and draw it. Compare the Fox Moth or Swallow to the Japanese Zero. Do the planes differ? Why do you think they are different shapes? Why would you need different features on these planes?
- Have you read other novels that are set during this time period? How are they different to *The Dog with Seven Names*?

Setting/Geography

- When reading the novel, write down all the place names you come across. Print out a map of the world and mark the places you've listed. Are there

other cities and countries that you know about that have strong connections to the events of World War II?

- Research the areas of Western Australia where the book is set, including Broome, Marble Bar, Corunna Downs, and Port Hedland. How far away are they from the capital city of Western Australia? What are the primary activities or jobs of those who live in these remote areas? What are some of these towns famous for?
- Print a map of Australia and mark all the RFDS bases. Which one is closest to your home?
- In chapter 6, Doc compares the aerial view of a river system to the veins and arteries in the human body. Imagine a birds-eye view of the area where you live. Try to draw it.

What's in a name?

- Dog has many names in the story: Princess, Dog, Flynn, Engel, Gengi, Florence and Pooch. Take a look at each character who gives Dog a name. What do you think their name choice says about their personality? Which name do you think suits the dog best?
- Do you have a pet at home? What did you name it? Why did you choose that name? (If you don't have a pet, imagine what you would call your pet if you were to get one.)

Language

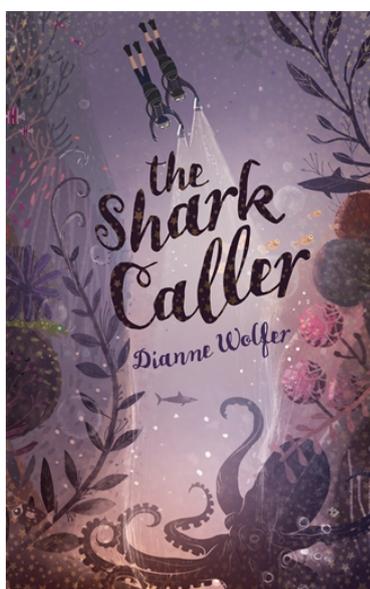
- Find examples in the book of language used in the 1940s that isn't used today, such as 'tickety-boo'. What has changed, and why do you think it has?
- Which words can you find that tend to be unique to Australia or mainly used here? (Examples include drover, willy-willy and billy.) Name some other words that we've invented.
- Find some of the non-English words used in the story. Can you guess their meaning? Do you speak another language? Make a list of greetings or perhaps the word 'dog' in other languages.

MORE INFORMATION

1. To look at a timeline of historical events that occur throughout the novel, go to page 219 of the book.
2. For details about the factual elements included in the story, go to page 224.
3. Want to know more? For a list of books and resources the author used as references for different elements of her story, look at pages 235-236.



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



The Shark Caller
by Dianne Wolfer

Isabel is on a plane heading back to her island birthplace in Papua New Guinea. Izzy is looking forward to seeing her family again, but there's another tragic reason for the trip. Izzy's twin brother, Ray, died in a freak diving accident, and Izzy and her mum are taking his ashes home for traditional death ceremonies.

After they arrive, Izzy realises things have changed since their last visit. Logging threatens the community's way of life and sharks no longer answer the song of the shark callers.

Izzy's cousin Noah explains that the clan needs someone to undertake a traditional diving ritual. The person must be a twin from the shark calling lineage. The dive will be perilous.

And Izzy is the last twin.

Will she have the courage to attempt the dive? And what deep, dark secrets will the ocean reveal if she does?

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



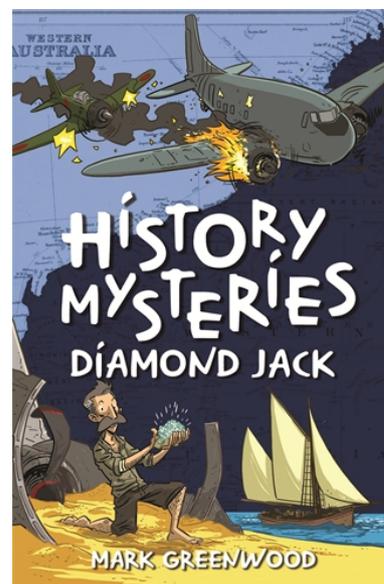
The Forgotten Pearl
by Belinda Murrell

'Let me tell you a story. A story about friendship and sisters, about grief and love and danger, and about growing up . . .'

When Chloe visits her grandmother, she learns how close war came to destroying her family. Could Poppy's experiences help Chloe face her own problems?

In 1941, Poppy lives in Darwin, a peaceful paradise. But when Japan attacks Pearl Harbor and then Australia, everything Poppy holds dear is threatened. Terrified, she flees to Sydney – only to find that the danger follows her there. Poppy must face her war with courage and determination. Will her world ever be the same?

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



*History Mysteries:
Diamond Jack*
by Mark Greenwood

In March 1942, an aircraft prepares for a desperate midnight escape, taking refugees to safety in Australia. Just before take-off, the pilot is entrusted with a mysterious, wax-sealed package. But when the plane is shot down by the enemy and crash lands on the Kimberley coast, the package is forgotten. Until someone stumbles across the find of a lifetime . . .

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
The Dog with Seven Names	Dianne Wolfer	9780143787457	4-7	\$16.99		
The Shark Caller	Dianne Wolfer	9780143780557	4-7	\$17.99		
The Forgotten Pearl	Belinda Murrell	9780857986962	4-6	\$17.99		
History Mysteries: Diamond Jack	Mark Greenwood	9780143309260	4-6	\$12.99		
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