

IN YOUR DREAMS DAN'S GRANDPA JUST A LITTLE BROWN DOG

Sally Morgan

Illustrations by Bronwyn Bancroft

In Your Dreams ISBN (PB): 9781922089731

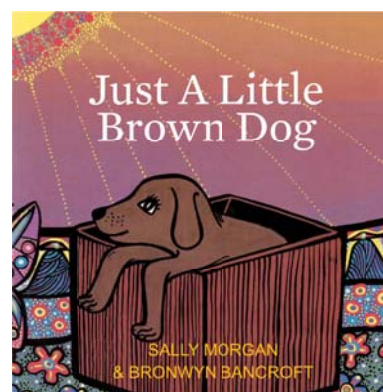
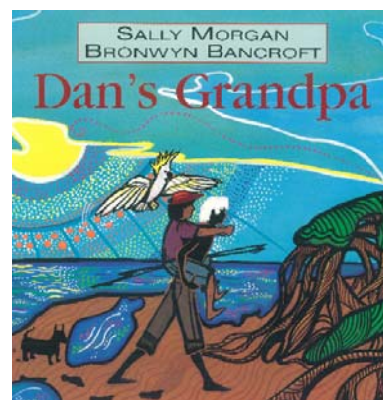
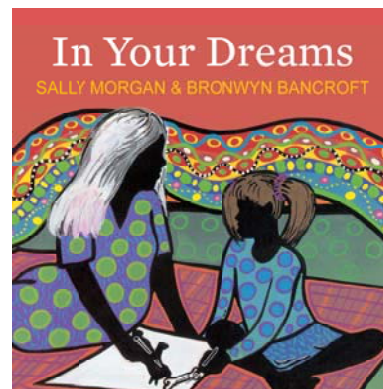
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Themes: dreams, friendship, family, loss, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture

Year level: Kindergarten to Y3

Cross-curriculum priority: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture



ABOUT THE BOOKS

This delightful trio of picture books from award-winning author Sally Morgan in collaboration with acclaimed artist Bronwyn Bancroft will make an exciting addition to your classroom! Engaging stories and illustrations explore the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture cross-curriculum priority.

In Your Dreams

Susie is supposed to write a story about what she wants to be when she grows up – but she hasn't got a clue! However, when she has a series of puzzling dreams, Gran encourages her to think about their deeper meaning. She soon finds she knows what to write after all.

Dan's Grandpa

Six months after Dan's Grandpa has passed away, he still feels very sad. He misses fishing with Grandpa down in the mangroves where the big turtles come in. He misses learning to speak Naml with him, and learning to sing and dance old corroboree songs. But then one day while sitting out in the bush thinking about Grandpa, something remarkable happens.

Just A Little Brown Dog

A contemporary fable exploring the dynamic between animals and humans, *Just A Little Brown Dog* follows a little puppy trying to find his way in the world. The last of the litter to find a home, he discovers new creatures and environments, and eventually becomes the new best friend of a lonely young boy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sally Morgan was born in Perth in 1951. She has published books for both adults and children, including her acclaimed autobiography, *My Place*. She has also established a national reputation as an artist and has works in many private and public collections.



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Bronwyn Bancroft is a descendant of the Bunjalung people of New South Wales and grew up in the small country town of Tenterfield. As an artist with an international reputation, her work is represented in galleries throughout Australia and the world. Bronwyn enjoys illustrating as it allows for the wider distribution of Indigenous stories, which for a long time have been overlooked.

STUDY NOTES

LITERACY: COMPREHENDING TEXTS THROUGH LISTENING, READING AND VIEWING

(A) Before Reading

Considering the titles

In Your Dreams

1. Consider the title. What is a dream? There are two different kinds of dreams we often refer to:
 - A 'dream' – the images we experience while asleep.
 - A 'dream' – a wish we desperately want to come true, a goal we would like to achieve.
2. Create a table on the whiteboard listing five examples of each type of dream.
3. Why do you think humans dream while asleep? Ask your students to raise their hand if they can remember a dream they have had. Have them turn to a partner and pair-share their dreams with one another.

Dan's Grandpa

4. Have students bring in a photograph of their grandpa or grandma. Allow them to pair-share and talk about the fun things they like to do with their grandparents.

Just A Little Brown Dog

5. Who has a pet dog? What breed is it?
6. Who has another kind of pet? Have students pair-share.
Note: students who do not have a pet can talk about their dream pet and explain why they would like this animal.
7. What usually happens when a dog has a litter of puppies – do the owners keep all of the puppies? Why/why not?
8. Have any students in your class owned a dog that had a litter of puppies?
9. What effect does the word 'just' have in the title of this story? What do you think it suggests about the little brown dog?

Predicting

10. Read the blurb of each book and examine the titles and cover illustrations together as a class. Create a whole-class prediction chart detailing what students think may happen in each story.
Note: It is often interesting to keep this chart to look over at the end – amusing false predictions inevitably arise!

Considering the context of the books

In Your Dreams

11. Discuss the importance of 'the Dreaming' (also known as 'the Dreamtime') in Aboriginal cultures.
 - a. What is the Dreaming?
You may like to refer to the following website which is listed as a resource by the Government of Western Australia Department of Education: www.aboriginalartonline.com/culture/dreaming.php
 - b. What creation stories from the Dreaming do the children already know?
You may like to read some stories from the Dreaming with your class such as 'How Crows Became Black' and 'Why the Emu Can't Fly', available in another Fremantle Press text titled *Bawoo Stories* (www.fremantlepress.com.au/books/indigenous/743).

Questions applicable to all three books

12. Discuss the importance of visual art as a medium of storytelling and in traditional Aboriginal cultures (explain that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples did not create an alphabet to record their stories, but instead shared them through oral retelling, song, dance and art).
13. In what other ways are stories presented to us every day (besides books)? Have children create a list: television, cinema, theatre, photography, comics, music, jokes etc.
14. Which Aboriginal people are the traditional owners of the land on which your school is built?
15. Invite an Aboriginal community member to share a story from the Dreaming with your class.

Just A Little Brown Dog

16. Discuss the importance of the relationships between humankind and animal kind. Why do people choose to keep pets? e.g. for work (carhorses, sheepdogs etc), for companionship (dogs, cats etc).
17. Which animals were important to the traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the area on which your school is built? Why were they important?

(B) During Reading

Comprehension strategies

18. Have younger students examine the different parts of a book: title, author name, illustrator name, front cover, back cover, spine etc.
19. Ask children what the difference is between an 'author' and an 'illustrator'.

In Your Dreams, *Dan's Grandpa* and *Just A Little Brown Dog* can be used for several different reading sessions including:

- Modelled reading as a whole class
- Shared reading in student pairs
- Guided reading in small groups
- Independent reading

Comprehension strategies to practise (Kindergarten to Y3):

- Sounding out words aloud (not only in your head)
- Phonics (blending and segmenting)
- Slowing reading rate for comprehension
- Self-monitoring for understanding
- Using illustrations to help predict unknown words
- Predicting words by recognising familiar letter patterns
- Re-reading to crosscheck graphophonic information

Depending on the needs of your class, the stories can be used to practise finding initial and final sounds (e.g. point to a word on the page that starts with 's') to develop letter/sound awareness. Or they can be used to practise fluency and expression for more advanced readers.

Visual art as a storytelling medium

20. Point out to students that in picture books, illustrations are equally as important as the written words in communicating the story.
 - a. Compare and contrast *In Your Dreams*, *Dan's Grandpa* or *Just A Little Brown Dog* with a novel. What do the children notice?
 - b. What makes a picture book different to a novel?
 - c. List some conventions of the picture book genre.
21. In groups of four, have students examine the illustrations in detail.
 - a. What style has the illustrator used to draw the characters – realistic, cartoon, artistic, fantasy?
 - b. What medium has she used – collage, black and white, watercolour etc.? What effect does this create?
 - c. What colours have been used?
 - d. What shapes can students see?
 - e. Where has the illustrator positioned objects on the page and what effect does this create?
 - f. Can students identify any patterns?
 - g. What traditional Aboriginal artistic techniques have been used?

LITERACY: COMPOSING TEXTS THROUGH SPEAKING, WRITING AND CREATING

(C) After Reading

Spelling and vocabulary

22. Have children practise the correct spelling of common sight words included in all three books:

the, and, we, are, of, about, his, her, had, very, to, with, he, she, friends, all, was, in, where, when, get, got, there, many, put, tell, day, made, at, sit, look, be, one, school, too, just, after, happy, see, their, not, up, some, off, for, mum, now, dog, tree, on, then, what, after, me, do, can, into, it, other, soon, next, you, your, lots, but, from, going, just, good, bad, could, best, work, come, make, don't, again, win, fast, run, now, bath, back, smell, sleep, car, box, bed

23. Use the books as a resource for teaching the correct spellings of long vowel sounds and diphthongs present in the story. For example:
 - a. long vowel sounds – ee, ea, e-e, y, ay, o-e, ow
 - b. diphthongs – ou, aw, au, oy
24. Have students keep a personal dictionary with a page for each of the 26 letters from A to Z. Students can then refer back to this resource to spell words correctly in their own writing.
 - a. Have students add new words they encounter under the letter with which they start.
 - b. Have students add the following words to their personal dictionaries as they read in small groups.

In Your Dreams

kitchen
rainbow
laughing
colour
teacher
animals
astronaut
special
ocean
something
silver
natural
earth

Dan's Grandpa

grandpa
water
bush
remember
safety
learning
dance
night
hospital
jumped

Just A Little Brown Dog

little
brothers
sisters
slimy
rotten
bath
flying
strange
money
breakfast
doctors
bike

Written activities

In Your Dreams

25. Have students complete the same writing exercise as Susie in the story – write a piece entitled 'What I Want to be When I Grow Up'. Focus on correct use of simple punctuation (full stops, capital letters).
26. Have students research this dream career and create a report with the following subheadings:
 - a. Job title
 - b. Location
 - c. Qualifications
 - d. Skills needed
 - e. Common tasks
27. 'No two trees are ever alike,' said Gran. 'Just like people. Everyone has something special to give.'
Have students discuss the following questions with a partner:
 - a. What special gift do you have to give?
 - b. What is your favourite thing about yourself?
 - c. Write a paragraph entitled 'I am special because ...'
28. Susie has many vivid dreams. Have students write a description of a dream they have had (language focus: adjectives). Encourage them to find adjectives that appeal to the five senses. Allow them to pair-share their work afterwards and edit a partner's work.

Dan's Grandpa

29. *When Dan was sad he liked to escape to the bush, where he could sit quietly with his animal friends and remember Grandpa.*
 - a. Ask students: Do you have somewhere quiet you like to go think about things?
 - b. Have students create an artwork depicting this place and then write a paragraph describing it.

30. Recount writing – have students write a recount of a fun day they have spent with their grandparent/s, parent or guardian. Ensure they create a plan for all elements of a recount before writing – who, where, when, what, how they felt.
31. Dan mentions that he liked learning *corroborees* with his grandpa. Have students find a definition for this term and write an explanation of the importance of corroborees in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
32. Dan’s grandpa teaches him the Naml language. What is the language (or languages) of the Aboriginal group from your region?
33. Dan loves to go fishing with his Grandpa in the mangroves. Have students research and write a description of a mangrove ecosystem under the following subheadings:
 - a. Natural features
 - b. Weather
 - c. Plant life
 - d. Animal life
34. *Grandpa also told Dan stories about the stars. Dan loved to look at the night sky.* Have students research famous stories about the constellations in the Southern Hemisphere. Allow them to create their own.
35. *‘Don’t worry, Dan,’ Grandpa said one day. ‘No matter what happens I’ll always be with you, looking after you.’* Have students write a paragraph explaining what they think Grandpa means.

Just A Little Brown Dog

36. Ask students: If you could have any pet, what would you have? Why? Invite them to write an imaginative story about bringing this pet to school for a day!

Grammatical elements to explore in writing a short story:

- past tense
- descriptive language to create imagery (e.g. adjectives)
- connectives

Punctuation skills to model, practise and assess:

- capital letters
- full stops
- question marks
- speech marks (appropriate for more advanced writers)

The writing sequence:

- *Modelled writing* (teacher only) – the teacher ‘thinks aloud’ as he/she writes a story on the whiteboard while the class watch.
- *Shared writing* – the teacher has the pen and continues to ‘think aloud’ but asks for the children’s input and ideas. The children are also invited to come and help write/make corrections on the whiteboard.
- *Guided writing* – children can plan their writing in pairs using a narrative planning sheet with the following subheadings: character description, setting, conflict, climax, resolution.
- *Independent writing* – children write their own piece and engage in editing and redrafting.
- *Presentation to audience* – children create an illustration to accompany their story and share with one another in small groups.

Suggested editing activity:

- *You be the teacher!* – have students swap their draft with a partner. Partners to correct spelling/punctuation in a red pen.

CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS

History and Geography

Have students research the history and culture of the Aboriginal traditional owners of the area where you live (cross-curricular link: Technologies – ICT). You may like to use the following headings:

- a. Geographic area
- b. Laws
- c. Spiritual beliefs
- d. Traditional diet
- e. Shelter
- f. Hunting/gathering tools and techniques

Art

37. Research famous Indigenous artists in Australia and arrange a visit to an artwork exhibited in the state gallery. Create class artworks that allow children to experiment with the subject matter and techniques modelled.
38. Make a class mural depicting the theme 'dreams'.
39. Are there any whole-school, interschool or statewide art competitions like the one Susie enters in *In Your Dreams* that your students can enter? Alternatively, conduct a class art competition.
40. 'You can learn a lot from natural things,' Gran said. 'The Earth is full of all kinds of patterns and pictures.' Discuss this quote from *In Your Dreams*. Then go looking for natural patterns around your schoolyard. Use these as inspiration to create artwork.

Mathematics

41. After reading *Just A Little Brown Dog*, create a tally chart and bar graph recording the different pets owned by students in your class. Have students analyse the graph to determine which is the most popular pet and which is the least common pet.