

## NINGALOO

TIM WINTON AND CINDY LANE

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YEAR LEVEL: F-6

CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Sustainability

### ABOUT THE BOOK

In the north of Western Australia, where the desert meets the sea, lies one of the last great wild regions on earth. The First Peoples of the region call it Nyinggulu. The rest of the world knows it as Ningaloo.

Join award-winning author and passionate conservationist Tim Winton and watercolourist Cindy Lane as they dive into this incredible part of the world. From enormous whale sharks to minuscule Cape Range Millipedes, and from colourful coral reefs to muddy mangroves, the biodiversity and interconnectedness of each distinctive ecosystem will fill young readers with wonder and awe.

Most importantly, as the next generation of custodians of Ningaloo, they'll discover how to support and protect the region in the decades to come.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tim Winton was born in Perth, Australia in 1960. A four-time winner of the Miles Franklin Award and shortlisted twice for the Booker Prize, Winton is a bestselling author whose work has been adapted for the stage and screen and is widely translated.

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Cindy Lane is a Perth-based artist, illustrator and children's book creator. Her first picture book, *Great White Shark* (written by Claire Saxby), won the Royal Zoological Society of NSW Whitely Award Best Children's Book for 2022, and Cindy was listed on the CBCA shortlist for New Illustrator in 2022.

### THEMES

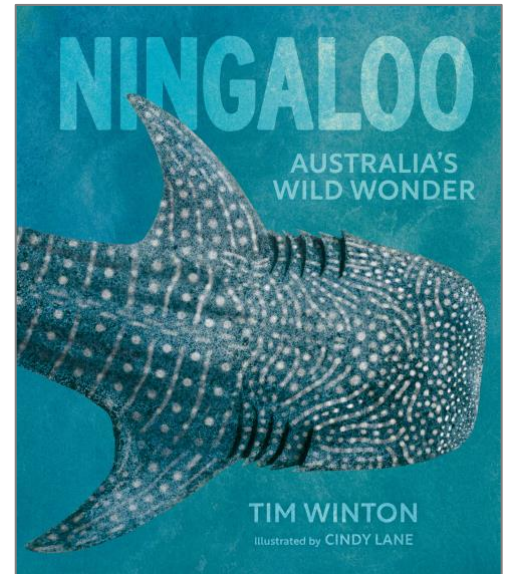
- Coastal and marine biodiversity
- Marine science
- Communities and habitats
- Conservation, sustainability and environmentalism
- Indigenous perspectives

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

- F-6 English
- F-6 Science
- F-6 Humanities and Social Sciences
- F-6 The Arts

### USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author's website: [fremantlepress.com.au/contributor/tim-winton](https://fremantlepress.com.au/contributor/tim-winton)
- Illustrator's website: [cindylaneart.com.au](https://cindylaneart.com.au)
- ABC iView: [view.abc.net.au/show/ningaloo-nyinggulu](https://view.abc.net.au/show/ningaloo-nyinggulu)
- Protect Ningaloo: [protectningaloo.org.au](https://protectningaloo.org.au)



- Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions: [dbca.wa.gov.au/management/world-heritage-areas/ningaloo-coast-world-heritage-area](http://dbca.wa.gov.au/management/world-heritage-areas/ningaloo-coast-world-heritage-area)
- UNESCO World Heritage Centre: [whc.unesco.org/en/list/1369](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1369)
- WA Museum Mandu Mandu shell beads: <https://museum.wa.gov.au/explore/online-exhibitions/travellerstraders/treasures-sea>

## CLASSROOM IDEAS

### Discussion questions

1. Have you been to Ningaloo? Describe your experience.
2. Can you name a coral reef inhabitant starting with each letter of the alphabet (excluding 'x')?
3. What is the meaning of the book's dedication, 'for those who come after'?
4. The author explains, '**in a single day, you can see more species of megafauna here [Ningaloo Reef] than nearly anywhere else on planet Earth**' (p. 10).
  - a. What is megafauna?
  - b. What megafauna can be found at Ningaloo Reef?
  - c. Which megafauna species would you most like to see, and why?
5. What do the following words mean? Use each word in an original sentence:
  - a. custodians (p. 8)
  - b. biodiversity (p. 11)
  - c. arduous (p. 15)
  - d. pristine (p. 15)
  - e. buffer (p. 23)
  - f. porous (p. 26)
  - g. vulnerable (p. 28)
  - h. artifacts (p. 58)
  - i. mobs (p. 59)
  - j. industrialisation (p. 63)
6. How big is a whale shark? Predict how long 18 metres is, then measure it out to gain perspective of the size.
7. On page 57, the author explains that a group of stingrays is called a 'fever'. Research the collective nouns for other animals.
8. Ningaloo is home to many record-breaking species. What record do these animals hold?
  - a. whale shark (p. 32)
  - b. orca (p. 39)
  - c. Far Eastern curlew (p. 44)
  - d. emu (p. 47)
  - e. wedge-tailed eagle (p. 53)
9. Based on the description of how coral is formed on page 18, do you think the formation of a coral reef would be a slow or fast process?
10. Author Tim Winton is a passionate conservationist. What threats to Ningaloo does he highlight in the book?
11. How does Indigenous knowledge contribute to the protection of Ningaloo?
12. Should tourism be allowed at Ningaloo?
  - a. Create a list of reasons for and against.
  - b. Discuss which tourist activities could be beneficial or harmful in the region.
  - c. How can tourism and environmental protection be effectively balanced to ensure sustainable use of the Ningaloo region?
13. The author explains that the emu is the totem animal for the Baiyungu people (p. 47). What is a totem animal?
14. '**Whales and turtles were hunted commercially at Ningaloo until the late 1900s**' (p. 60). In this quote, what does 'commercially' mean?

### Creative Writing

1. Create a series of fictional travel journal entries based on a visit to Ningaloo. Describe what you did and saw each day.

2. Describe the Ningaloo Reef as a story setting. What would you hear, see, taste, smell and feel?
3. Write a short story that takes place in the intertidal community. Include an orientation, a complication and a satisfying resolution.
4. Write a postcard from Ningaloo.
5. Write a letter asking your local member of parliament to do more to protect Ningaloo.
6. Write a book review of *Ningaloo*. Include a short summary, star rating and reader recommendation.
7. Research and write a news article exploring one of Ningaloo's environmental threats.

## The Arts

1. Which is your favourite artwork spread in the book? Why?
2. Illustrator Cindy Lane used seawater in the creation of the illustrations. How can incorporating natural elements enhance the connection between the artwork and the environment it represents?
3. Create a mixed-media collage, using recycled materials, to represent the textures and colours of Ningaloo Reef.
4. Create a poster to raise awareness of a Ningaloo conservation issue.
5. Trace the whale shark image from page 32, then decorate your whale with its own unique pattern of spots and stripes.
6. How have filmmakers and photographers used media arts to capture the environmental and cultural significance of Ningaloo?
7. Watch the series *Ningaloo Nyینگulu* (or excerpts) on ABC iView.
  - a. How do the picture book and the documentary present the same topic differently?
  - b. What details did the documentary include that the picture book did not? Why do you think those choices were made?
  - c. How do the visuals in the picture book and the documentary shape the way we understand the topic?
8. How have First Nations Australian artists represented Ningaloo in their works? What techniques have they used to communicate Indigenous perspectives?

## Science

1. Create a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting fringing reefs (like Ningaloo Reef) and barrier reefs (like the Great Barrier Reef).
2. On page 13, the author explains that some species of plants and animals are found nowhere on the planet but Ningaloo.
  - a. Can you name three of these species?
  - b. What word describes species found in only one place?
3. Create a poster demonstrating your knowledge of one of the Ningaloo communities: coral reef, intertidal, mangrove, seagrass, fossil reef, karst. How does the community's habitat provide for the animals' basic needs, such as food and shelter?
4. Describe some of the physical and behavioural adaptations that help Ningaloo species survive.
5. Choose one Ningaloo inhabitant to explore in a non-fiction information report. Include information on adaptations, diet, lifecycle and habitat, as well as a labelled illustration.
6. Draw and label a food web using species from a Ningaloo community.
  - a. Which species are producers, consumers and decomposers?
  - b. What happens to a food web when one species is removed?
7. Explain the concept of 'carbon sinks' and their relationship to climate change (p. 22).
8. Explain the difference between troglobytes and stygobites (p. 27).
9. What are some common adaptations of cave-dwelling species? How do they help the species thrive in their habitat?
10. Explain how one of the species in the fossil reef community is adapted for life in an arid habitat.
11. Animals can be classified into groups, such as vertebrates (mammals, birds, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds) and invertebrates (insects, crustaceans, molluscs, arachnids). Make a list of Ningaloo species in each group.
12. Mantas and cleaner wrasse cooperate through mutualistic behaviour (p. 35). Can you think of any other animal pairs that benefit from mutualistic behaviour?
13. On a world map, plot a humpback whale's annual migration (p. 40).

## Humanities and Social Sciences

1. Locate Ningaloo on a map. What would be the best method to travel there from where you live?
2. Describe and draw these geographical landforms:
  - a. peninsula
  - b. gulf
  - c. range
  - d. canyon
  - e. karst
  - f. lagoon
3. In 2011, Ningaloo Reef and the Cape Range were added to the UNESCO World Heritage List. What is the purpose of this list?
4. Create a timeline showing the human history of Ningaloo. Explain how human activities have impacted the Ningaloo Reef ecosystem, and what strategies – such as native title agreements and conservation efforts – are being used to manage these changes?
5. The Western Australian Government has implemented conservation measures for Ningaloo, including the creation of coastal reserves, joint management with Traditional Owners, and restrictions on development, yet challenges remain as mining interests, fossil fuel and heavy shipping interests, tourism pressures and climate change threaten the long-term sustainability of the region.
  - a. What are the main impediments to conserving ecosystems of high biodiversity?
  - b. Do governments introduce conservation measures on their own initiative, or are they driven by external pressures? What role does public advocacy and activism play in policy development?
  - c. What are the major barriers to conservation progress in Australia? How do political, economic and social factors impact decision-making?
  - d. Why might corporate, agricultural or political interests oppose environmental protections?
  - e. How can community groups, scientists and conservationists influence government policy on conservation?
6. Exmouth Gulf was left out of the Ningaloo World Heritage listing in 2011, despite being a fundamentally important part of Ningaloo.
  - a. What criteria must be met and demonstrated by the responsible government of an area under consideration for a World Heritage listing?
  - b. Why was Exmouth Gulf left out of the World Heritage listing?
  - c. What protections would a marine park offer?
  - d. How would the Exmouth Gulf benefit from a World Heritage listing?
7. Active and informed citizens contribute to change in local, national, regional and/or global communities.
  - a. How have citizen-led initiatives helped protect Ningaloo's environment and heritage?
  - b. What methods do activists use to raise awareness and drive change on environmental issues? For example: petitions, letters to members of parliament, public demonstrations, works of art, social media, volunteering, philanthropy, public education, legal redress, civil disobedience, etc.
  - c. Evaluate one of the completed campaigns listed on [Protect Ningaloo's website](#). Consider the method used to enact change, the campaign's goals and the outcome.
  - d. Read the list of actions on page 65. Are there any you could commit to doing?
  - e. What change would you like to see in your local community? Consider how you could get involved in, or initiate, a citizen-led initiative.
8. Ningaloo holds deep cultural, spiritual and historical significance to First Peoples.
  - a. How long have Traditional Owners been present in the region?
  - b. Describe the traditional way of life in the region. How did First Peoples traditionally use and care for the land?
  - c. What kinds of evidence of occupancy and artifacts have been found at Ningaloo?
  - d. Ornamental modified shell beads found at the Mandu Mandu Creek rock-shelter are among the oldest known use of decorative ornaments in Australia. Visit the WA Museum online to view the beads. What do the beads reveal about early craftsmanship and artistic expression?
9. In 2019, Ningaloo's custodians regained their place as Native Title Owners (p. 61).
  - a. How did colonisation affect Traditional Owners' access to their land?

- b. How did the legal concept of 'terra nullius' justify dispossession?
  - c. What have been the lasting effects of dispossession on Indigenous communities, including cultural, social and economic impacts? How can returning to Country help restore identity and community well-being?
  - d. What is native title? Are native title agreements the same for all groups and regions in Australia?
  - e. What are some traditional practices that can be continued under native title agreements?
  - f. How do these practices contribute to the cultural and environmental sustainability of the Ningaloo region?
  - g. What are some challenges or conflicts an Indigenous community could face when seeking recognition of their land rights?
  - h. What are the connections between opposition to native title and resistance to environmental conservation? How do colonial legacies and land-use conflicts shape these debates?
  - i. How can individuals and communities support native title holders today?
  - j. How has the government shaped policies around native title? What influence have advocacy groups had?
  - k. How do cultural perceptions and historical narratives influence public attitudes towards native title agreements and Indigenous issues more broadly?
10. What role does the media play in shaping public discourse on Ningaloo's conservation efforts and Indigenous land rights?
- a. What is a 'culture war'?
  - b. What is the media's role in framing debates between opposing sides?
  - c. Can you find evidence of media contributing to either escalating or de-escalating culture wars in Australia, particularly in relation to Indigenous land rights and conservation?