
Teachers' Notes

GIOVANNI

Crystal Corocher / Margeaux Davis

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Reading level: 5 to 8

BOOK SUMMARY

In the tradition of great high seas adventure stories of times passed, with one key difference - this is a true story! The epic adventure of four-year-old Giovanni and the journey that could have ended his life, bringing him instead to start a new adventure in a new country, Australia.



THEMES

Family ▪ Resilience ▪ Empathy ▪ Connection ▪ Community ▪ Migrant experiences ▪ Culture shock ▪

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Boots Teachers' Notes can be used in schools (independent learning, small groups, and whole classes); at home with caregivers; and as part of mental health support programs facilitated by counsellors, psychologists, children's charities, etc.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Crystal Corocher is an author, poet and publishing professional based in Melbourne Australia. In 2022, Crystal was a finalist for an ABIA award as a Rising Star of Australian Publishing as well as releasing her debut picture book, *The Naked Sheep*. With several forthcoming works, she enjoys spending much of her time helping students of all ages to develop their own storytelling techniques.

Having graduated Deakin University with a dual major in journalism and children's literature, with distinctions, Crystal has written and edited her way across radio, television, print news and online. A versatile writer with a growing catalogue of books, Crystal believes in writing stories that bring joy to explore in whatever form they demand to be written. Consequently, her first works are highly contrasting with both rhyming and prose stories for children released, *Giovanni* an example of lyrical, heartfelt writing, sharing a story close to her heart – one of family anecdotes and extensive research combined. A regular contributor to literature conferences and highly active as a visiting author to schools, Crystal is looking forward to sharing the story of Giovanni with readers of all ages.

AUTHOR NOTES

I've grown up hearing family stories about the failed Marquis de Rays Expedition, and how lucky we are that my ancestors survived the difficult voyage to start their new life in Australia, but it took a visit to New Italy Museum in Northern NSW with a dear friend to realise that this is part of Australia's story, and one that needed to be told and shared widely. After that lightbulb moment, the story of Giovanni flowed onto my scrap book that very afternoon.

It's heartening to see the experiences of early Australians and our tremendously rich history of multiculturalism cracking open to a flood of new stories beyond British colonization. I'm passionate about diversity in literature and young readers seeing themselves on the page, so this book means a great deal to me. It also reminds me, that you never know when inspiration may strike, and how sharing stories with others helps us to view them differently for ourselves.

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ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



Margeaux Davis is an illustrator and soft toy designer living in the Northern Rivers region of NSW. With a professional background in environmental education, Margeaux now spends her time illustrating picture books and sewing dolls in a tiny studio in her garden.

Margeaux Davis is also the illustrator for books such as *What Are The Stars For*, *Kingdom of Rooms* and *Goose at the Gate*.

For more information, visit: www.willowynn.com.

You can also support Margeaux on Facebook at [Willowyn](https://www.facebook.com/Willowyn) and at Instagram at [@margeauxdavis.illustration](https://www.instagram.com/margeauxdavis.illustration) and [@willowynn_art](https://www.instagram.com/willowynn_art)



Some illustrations from of animal characters by Margeaux Davis

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

Giovanni is a survival story with many themes interwoven. The relationship between the brothers and the family sticking together show how these relationships help in times of adversity. Giovanni can also help children understand the lengths that many families have gone to in order to reach a safe home, the cumulative and varied experiences migrants may have endured to seek change in the first place and the ongoing challenges of settling into a new culture are all pivotal concepts that can be discussed. Giovanni has the potential to foster empathy in young readers.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Curriculum Areas and Key Learning Outcomes.

FOUNDATION

English, Science, Visual Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

ACELT1575	ACELA1429	ACELA1434	ACELY1653
ACELT1577	ACELA1430	ACELA1786	ACELY1646
ACELT1783	ACELA1432	ACELY1651	ACELT1578
ACELA1435	ACELY1652		
ACAVAM107	ACAVAM108		
ACHASSI005			

YEAR ONE

English, Science, Visual Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

ACELA1444	ACELA1451	ACELT1582	ACELY1656
ACELA1787	ACELA1452	ACELT1584	ACELY1788
ACELA1447	ACELA1458	ACELT1586	ACELY1660
ACELA1449	ACELT1581	ACELT1832	ACELT1581
ACAVAM107	ACAVAM108	ACHASSI022	

YEAR TWO

English, Science, Visual Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

ACELA1461	ACELA1463	ACELT1833
ACELA1462	ACELT1591	ACELY1665
ACSHE035	ACHASSI038	
ACAVAM107	ACAVAM108	

TEACHING POINTS AND ACTIVITIES

This book may be used in whole class, small group or independent learning activities in schools.

Please note, the following suggestions and activities are suited to a variety of year levels spanning Foundation to Year 6 primary aged children. Some activities may be applicable to early secondary school students, as well.

KNOWLEDGE AND LITERAL UNDERSTANDING

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Show the cover to the class and ask the students what they think the book might be about.
2. Read the back cover blurb. Does this give them more of an idea of what the book could be about?
3. Ask students if they can recognize the setting of this story from the cover image.

AFTER-READING QUESTIONS

1. Ask students if any of the characters reminds them of anyone they know: a friend, a sibling, themselves perhaps.
2. Ask students what they think of the story outcome. Do they agree with the ending?
3. What are some of the issues within the story, like migration and culture shock, that are relevant today?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

FAMILY

- What is the relationship between Giovanni and Pietro like?
- How does their relationship help them cope with the rough journey?
- What are other ways in which having strong family relationships, like their supportive mother, help when adjusting to a new place like life in Australia?
- How does family bonds help you share a culture? Share examples, like cooking cultural recipes or celebrating cultural holidays.

RESILIENCE

- What are some of the challenges that Giovanni and his family come up against on their trip to Australia?
- In what ways do Giovanni and Pietro cope with these challenges?
- What does resilience mean to you? How are some ways in which you have been resilient?

EMPATHY

- Can you describe the journey for Giovanni and his family from Italy to Australia? What were some of the things you found sad, unfair, or not okay?
- Put yourself in Giovanni and Pietro's shoes. How would going on a large trip away from the home you knew feel? Would it be exciting? Scary? Both?
- What are some of the ways that you would cope with such a change?
- Are there ways in which you can help other people who immigrate to Australia? What could you do?

MIGRANT EXPERIENCES AND CULTURE SHOCK

- Was anyone in the class born outside of Australia, or was anyone in their family born outside of Australia? Has this impacted them in any way?
- What do you think might have been confusing for Giovanni and Pietro when they arrived in Australia? What are some of the differences you can think of between the life they led in Italy before moving, and the life in Australia when they arrived?
- How do you think it feels to be in a new country and what are some of the things you would do if you were Giovanni?
- What would the journey to a new country look like today? What are the many ways people can migrate countries? Why might they choose to move?
- Have you ever heard the term 'culture shock'? What do you think it means?
- How could you help someone with 'culture shock'?
- What are some things people can do in new countries to help them feel at home?

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ACTIVITIES

MIGRATION

There was a lot of Italians that migrated to Australia in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This was due to overcrowding and unemployment in Italy, and they were encouraged to leave by the Italian government. A large percentage settled into their own colonies by purchasing a lot of farmland close together. In some regions these places became known as 'New Italy'.

- Print this [empty suitcase](#) and fill it with things Giovanni might have packed to go to Australia.
- Plan some games that Giovanni and Pietro might have played on their journey. Think about games from the late 1800s and early 1900s. Things like marbles, tag, hide and seek, hopscotch and skipping are all examples of games played during that period.
- What are some things in Australia that Giovanni and Pietro might have found when they got here? There's some resources [here](#).
- How might that compare to life in Italy at the time? Look at [these photos](#) of life in Italy during the same period and discuss what differences there might be.

PAPER BOAT

- [Here](#) are some instructions for making a paper boat.
- Make a boat out of paper and decorate it.
- See if you can make it float!
- When your boat floats you can have a boat race.

CULTURE SHOCK

Giovanni experienced life in one way and when he got to Australia he found things were different than they were for him in Italy. He went through something called 'culture shock'.

Culture is the language you speak, the things you do that are normal in the place you live (customs), and the way people think about things being similar (practices). It can also include things like traditions and holidays. Culture can also encompass things like slang words.

In Australia, for example we call the place where we get food from at school a 'tuckshop', and when we greet each other we don't do much besides a wave or a handshake.

- In a group discuss some of the things you do everyday that you find normal - at home, at school, what you eat, where you go.
- Draw some of the things you think of as 'Australian'. It could be fairy bread, or a koala, or cricket. Whatever comes to mind.
- As a class talk about your routine at school. How do you get to school, what do you do each day, and what subjects you do. Watch this [video](#) and this [video](#) and discuss the differences between these schools overseas and your experience here in Australia.
- If you were to move to one of these countries would you like it? Or would it seem strange to you? Would you miss Australia? Write down some of the things you like about the schools overseas and some of the things you don't like.

