

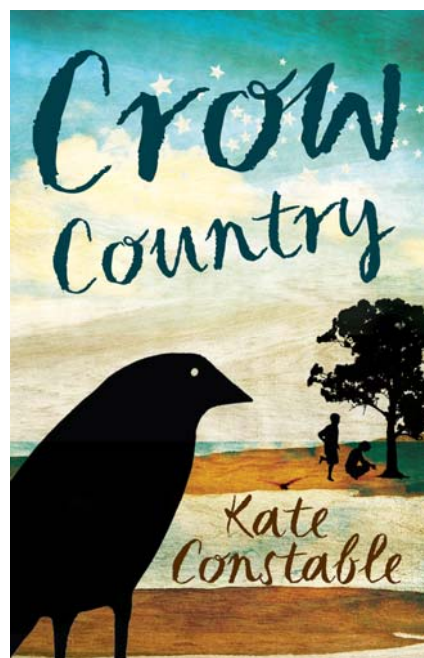
**Teachers' Notes**  
by  
**Fran Knight**

**Crow Country**  
by  
**Kate Constable**

ISBN 978 1 74237 395 9  
Recommended for ages 9 – 13

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## INTRODUCTION

A time-slip story with an extraordinary sense of place, *Crow Country* tells of a fictional crime committed in the 1930's in rural Victoria, swept under the carpet by the inundation of a valley, and then brought to life when Sadie and her mother move to Boort. Returning to the place of her mother's childhood memories, Sadie is alerted to a past injustice through her affinity with the crows of the area. This initiates her time-slips between the present and the time of her great grandparents who lived in the town in the 1930's, running a small shop in the main street.

But this is not a usual time-slip story. Sadie is drawn to a place at the lake, now exposed after years of drought, where the stones remind her of ancient people who once lived there. The crows tell her about the significance of this timeless place, and hint at a secret that only she can unlock.

The time slip sequences happen randomly and she becomes the younger daughter in the family, the girl after whom she was named. She sees the strength of her great grandfather, Clarry Hazzard, and the ties that bind him to the local landowner, the grandfather of the boy she is attracted to in Boort, Lachie Mortlock. She understands the links between Clarry, Mr Mortlock, and the Aboriginal worker, Jimmy Raven, who is dismayed at the proposed flooding of the valley on the Mortlock property. He knows it is a place of significance to the local people and tries to warn against damming the river. But his words go unheeded and, in an argument, he is killed. Clarry becomes an accessory to Jimmy's murder as he buries the body and covers up the deed because of the ties that bind him to Mortlock.

But the crows know, and their bond with Sadie brings her to the place and impels her to redeem the families involved. This is a tightly plotted story, wound around ancient and modern prejudices, full of the hidden life of a country town, where secrets remain unknown even in the family which perpetrated them. The effects of war; the social injustices; the isolation of the Aboriginal community; the question of who owns the land and what is on it, are all alluded to in this tale.

But *Crow Country* is also the story of Sadie's growing up—working out who is important to her and where her values lie. It's a wonderfully evocative story which gives rein to the ideas of not only Aboriginal history or European invasion, but also of our shared history—stunningly exemplified by the younger generation, Sadie, Walter and Lachie, working together in the last chapter to protect the stones.

A novel of complexity, the ideas put forward will engender much discussion in classrooms when this book is studied as a class text. as part of a wider literature circle, or as a book read from the library.

## THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

The Australian Curriculum is available online at <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Home> . The outlines of the three interrelated strands—Language, Literacy and Literature—can then be accessed.

Thus: Language is knowing about the English language; Literature is understanding, appreciating, responding to, analysing and creating literature; and Literacy is expanding the repertoire of English usage.

The notes for this book exemplify these three strands, ensuring that the work fits the criteria that these strands suggest.

# LITERATURE

## DISCUSSING AND RESPONDING TO THEMES

### Racial Prejudice

There are many instances of racial prejudice in this story, from that shown to Aboriginal people in the 1930's, to when Ellie is a teenager growing up in Boort, and later when she returns with her daughter.

#### Class work

Invite the class to create a definition of what racism means. Wikipedia has a neat definition, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racism> and the class could also use dictionaries to come up with their own set of words. Racial prejudice results in discrimination, apportioning traits because of race, segregation, and violence and death. It can be seen in various guises in this story from the hurtful comments made by the Mortlock boys towards Ellie when she is with David, to the assumption that Walter's painting should be a dot painting, to the name of Jimmy Raven, and of course the ultimate prejudice, his killing.

**NOTE: *Crow Country* is a work of fiction: the fact that it is set in a real-life town, Boort, does not indicate that any of the book's themes are specific to Boort, other than its geographical location in Crow Country.**

Ask students to look specifically at instances of prejudice related in the story using the following grid. There may be more instances which could be added to this list.

Chapter	Event	Class discussion
10	David, Ellie, Sadie and Walter go to the pub after football.	Why did everyone stop and stare when they walked in? What happened when Sadie and Walter tried to play pool?
11	David and Ellie argue about their time at the pub. Ellie tells Sadie what happened in the past to David.	Would there have been a different outcome if David had been nearly drowned today? Why do David and Ellie argue about the past? What does each of them believe about the past?
12	Argument between Mortlock and Jimmy Raven in 1933	What does this argument show us about how Jimmy is viewed by both Mortlock and Clarry Hazzard?
14	Lachie and Sadie talk about what happened in the pub.	What expressions does Lachie use which reveal what he thinks about Walter and David?
15	At the art show, Sadie is surprised at her own assumption.	How does David trip her up when talking about Walter's painting?

Chapter	Event	Class discussion
20	Lachie and his mates desecrate the site, including shooting some of the crows.	What has prompted Lachie and his friends to do such a thing? What laws are in place in Australia to protect such sites?

### **Individual work**

Have students select one of the following as a writing exercise.

1. Write a letter to the editor about the saving of the stones found on Mortlock's property.
2. Write a letter to the Mortlocks asking them to save the stones and the area for the future.
3. Some people may have doubts about the author's use of Aboriginal mythology in this novel. Read the *Magpies* article (Sept 2011 issue) which shows the lengths she went to to gain Aboriginal support. Justify her use of Aboriginal mythology to a doubter. (See Appendix A)
4. Compare the type of racial prejudice shown towards Jimmy Raven in the 1930's to that shown to David in the 1990's to that shown to David and Walter today.
5. Use the local newspapers to scan for an incidence of prejudice shown to a group of people in Australia today. Summarise the article, making sure the who, what, when, where and why are used.
6. Does your school have a policy about prejudice or bullying? Search it out and check how it would have held against the prejudice shown towards Sadie and Walter. Does your school's policy need changing?
7. The end of the novel flags a future where we all share our history, acknowledging what has happened in the past and working together. What might people include in the shared history of the fictional Boort of *Crow Country*?
8. Imagine a history book of Boort is about to be written. What should be included? Write a summarising paragraph introducing the Aboriginal history of the town.

### **Extension Study**

For those who want to research further the relationship between Clarry and Jimmy and Mortlock while serving in WW1.

Reread chapter 8

- A. What did Clarry, Jimmy and Mortlock promise each other while at war?
  - Why do you think people made such promises when serving together in war?
  - Why did Clarry fight for Jimmy's name to be on the town war memorial?
  - Present Clarry's argument to the town council.
  - Do you think it was common not to include Aboriginal names on war memorials?
- B. A URL from an Aboriginal man who has done research into Aboriginal enlistment is: <http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/IAAW/about.html>
  - Who has done the research and what led him to do this research?
  - What has he achieved?

- C. Use the following URL to find out how Aboriginal servicemen were treated on their return to Australia:  
<http://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines/indigenous.asp> (Australian War Memorial's information about Aboriginal service)
- How many Aboriginal people enlisted in the various wars Australians have fought in?
  - How were Aboriginal servicemen treated on their return from war?
- D. What things about themselves and then seen in Boort would remind Clarry, Jimmy and Mortlock about their time in the war?

### **Football**

Sport plays a large part in many rural communities. Reread chapters 3, 5, 10, 13 & 15 to gauge how important football is in Boort.

#### **Class work**

1. How do attitudes towards David change when he helps out at the local football club?
2. Why does he hold back from being too involved with the football club?
3. Imagine the front page of the next week's local newspaper after the team won their match. Write up the headline and opening paragraph.
4. Racism in sport is an ongoing issue. Find a newspaper article about racism in sport to discuss with the class, and perhaps give as a comprehension exercise.

#### **Individual work**

1. Write a short piece for the local newspaper describing the changes to the Boort Football Team, attributing the reasons for their success.
2. How might Craig Mortlock go about luring David to coach the team for the rest of the year?

### **Aboriginal Carvings**

Aboriginal carvings (petroglyphs) can be found in many places around Australia. There may be some in your local area that your class could visit.

The students could research this and organise a trip for your class.

#### **Class work**

1. Find out about petroglyphs in your local area. Arrange an excursion.
2. Is there a guide who can come with you and explain them?
3. With permission, take photographs, rubbings (carefully) and drawings of them.
4. Can anyone tell you how old they are?
5. How can they be dated?
6. Search your local archives and on-line State Library and Museum archives to see if anything has been written about them for your class to read.
7. From what you have read in the novel, what sort of carvings are on the Mortlock farm? From the descriptions, can they be drawn?
8. Class work could be placed on a display board showing the petroglyphs visited and comparing them with the ones found in the novel. (If there are none to visit, there

are many websites which give a good description and photographs of many areas around Australia, which could be used in the same way by your class.)

### **Individual work**

1. What did you learn about Aboriginal Rock Art from the novel?
2. Some rock art has been stolen and sold overseas.
  - <http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/arts/aboriginal-rock-art.html> is a site which talks about Aboriginal Rock Art, and also discusses its vandalism, theft and need for protection. What examples does this site give you about the damage to rock art sites?
  - What sort of vandalism was and is about to be perpetrated by the Mortlocks?
3. How differently may Lachie and his family view the Aboriginal site on their land at the end of the novel?

### **Environment**

The environment plays a large part in the background to this novel. It is set in the midst of drought, when a previously dammed river has now run dry exposing the land which was flooded. The Aboriginal people who lived in Boort at the time were opposed to the damming of the river.

### **Class work**

1. Look closely at the references to the damming of the river in *Crow Country*. It is mentioned in chapters 1, 5, 7, 8, 17, 18 and 25 with shorter references elsewhere. What are the issues on either side of this argument?
2. Find a recent or ongoing proposal to dam/alter/change the course of a river which is causing some angst among environmentalists. Compare the proposal with that in the novel, list the differences about how it has been handled. What regulations are in place today which support environmental concerns?
3. How do we know that the younger generation at Boort takes environmental concerns more seriously?

### **Individual/group work:**

1. Examine the motives of both groups of people in the move to dam the river in the 1930's.
2. Write a letter to the editor of the local paper, outlining your opposition to or support of the building of the dam.
3. Create a poster to be held up at a rally in support of or opposition to the dam.
4. Create a poster to encourage people to come to a public meeting.

### **Crows**

Some wonderful tales about crows exist in Aboriginal stories. Ask your teacher librarian to point out the Aboriginal mythology section in your library. Stories can be found in sections about Religion, Mythology, History and Art.

Ask your teacher librarian to source stories about crows. Eg. Dorothy Tunbridge's book, *Flinders Ranges Dreaming* (Aboriginal Studies Press, 1988) contains several stories involving crows. One is the story of 'The eagle and the crows' (from the Adnyamathanha people of the Flinders Ranges) which is very similar to 'The magpie, crow and eagle story' from the Ngadjuri of the mid north of South Australia.

Search out some of these stories to read to your class. List the names that the crow is given in these stories, and look at what the crow does. Is there a story which shows crows in a powerful position?

### **Class work**

1. What is the difference between a crow and a raven? Use Wikipedia, encyclopedias and dictionaries to list the properties of both and list their similarities and differences.
2. Have a cut-out of a crow ready for your students' work. Some of their work for this unit could be placed on cut-outs of crows and hung from the ceiling or pinned to a display wall, or made into a mobile.
3. Are there myths from around the world where an animal and human are intertwined? (Think of the wolf in legends in Central Europe, or modern stories of Dracula, or bats and humans in the vampire stories, or polar bears in Inuit stories.)

### **Individual work: Sadie and the crows**

1. Reread the sections where Sadie interacts with the crows.
  - What does she initially think about them?
  - Why does she change her mind about their presence?
  - What are the crows trying to tell her?
  - Why does she begin to believe them?
2. What do the crows have to do with the time-slip events?
3. How does Walter see the crows?
  - Why are the crows important to him and his family? (see chapter 15)
4. How are crows seen in some non-Australian cultures?

## **EXAMINING LITERARY TECHNIQUES**

Kate Constable uses a number of techniques to further her story.

The time-slip technique is used to make us aware of the past and its impact upon the present. Constable is able to show the past without writing a whole historical novel. The time-slip technique also allows the main character to develop her understanding of the world in which she lives, incorporating what has happened before and so develop and mature.

### **Class discussion**

1. Read again the chapters which show a time-slip (chapters 7, 8, 12, 17, 18)
  - How does each time-slip occur?
  - How does Sadie know she has gone back to the 1930's?
  - What does she do each time that shows that she is confused?
  - List the difference between her life in the 1930's and her life today.
  - How does she help her father, Clarry, in the 1930's?
  - What does she think happened to her in the 1930's?
  - What did happen to her?
2. The time-slip technique used in books can be awkward and clumsy but not so in *Crow Country*.
  - How has the author made us aware of a time-slip?

- How has she made the time-slip believable?
- Who does Sadie tell about this happening, and why?

### **Class discussion**

If the class chooses to do a literature circle using the other time-slip novels suggested, they may like to compare the different time-slip techniques used by other authors. These range from being hit on the head to actually going back in a time machine.

### **Individual work**

1. Reread all the chapters that are set in the 1930's. What image do you get of their life then?
2. Imagine you are a census taker in 1933. Write down the information about the family (names, ages, occupations, type of business, religion, war service, length of marriage, income, type of dwelling, furniture, and any other information you may be able to find to build up a picture of this family).
3. Or imagine that you are Sadie. Describe in 150 words the house you visited while time-slipping. How many more words might you need to describe the scene?

## **LANGUAGE**

### **Some language change over time reflects changing social norms:**

In her story, Kate Constable sometimes uses words (nouns) that are no longer in common use. Words such as *blackfella* and *abo* are racist terms that are regarded as offensive nowadays. Find instances where this occurs in the book (chapters 14, 18 for example) and discuss why Kate Constable has used these expressions.

### **Descriptive and emotive language**

Compare the words (adjectives) used to describe various characters within the story. These words give an image of that person to the reader, and so are important in fostering our sympathy or dislike of that person.

An example to give the class is that of Jimmy Raven. He is described as having a laugh so large it would echo across the town, being so big that he might break the kitchen chair, and having big calloused hands (chapter 8).

Discuss how these words and phrases create an image of this man and his personality, traits vital to the playing out of the story.

### **Imported vocabulary**

Some words (nouns) used are specific to indigenous people. Words such as *totem* and *clever man* are used to describe powers held within the Aboriginal community. Reread the chapters where these occur (chapters 15, 22).

Ask the class to explain what these terms mean and how they are important to the story. Can they find any other words specific to Indigenous people portrayed in this novel?

### **Symbol/metaphor**

Kate Constable uses a lovely metaphor (a thing regarded as being representative or symbolic of something else) of what is happening in her novel. In chapter 21, Ellie and Dave paint over the wallpaper in Sadie's room. When she returns, she feels the bumps of the paper beneath the paint, imagining the layers of paint and wallpaper used over the years. How does the author use this image to reflect what is happening in the story?



# LITERACY

## INTERPRETING, ANALYSING AND EVALUATING

The outline given below may help some students understand the sequence of events. Each section of the story has several focus questions that may be discussed in class.

Chapters	Events	Focus questions
1–4	Introduction of setting and characters. We get to know the main character, Sadie Hazzard and what she feels about her mother’s move to Boort, and what she finds there.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Why have Sadie and her mother moved back to Boort?</li> <li>▪ What does Sadie find on her walk?</li> <li>▪ How does Sadie become aware of the crows?</li> </ul>
5–10	Sadie goes back to 1933 to the home of her great grandparents. She finds out about the relationship between her great grandfather, Clarry Hazzard; the owner of the land, Mortlock; and the worker, Jimmy Raven.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How does the author take Sadie back in time?</li> <li>▪ What does she learn in her great grandparents’ house?</li> <li>▪ Why does Sadie tell Lachie about the stones?</li> </ul>
11–15	The relationship between Ellie and David matures, but brings up some past events. Crow tells Sadie that there has been a death and it is up to her to sort it out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What incidents are there of racially motivated prejudice shown towards David and Walter?</li> <li>▪ What has happened in the past which impacts upon today?</li> </ul>
16–20	Increasingly, Sadie is searching for something and is unsure what it is. David becomes accepted through coaching football, and in 1933, Jimmy is killed by Mortlock. In the present, Lachie and his mates desecrate the site at the lake.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Why is there a difference between the way David is treated before and after he coaches the team to victory?</li> <li>▪ What is the significance of Lachie and his mates desecrating the site?</li> </ul>
21–25	Walter and Sadie become closer, sharing their stories. Sadie meets Walter’s aunt, and Sadie discloses the pressure she is under. Sadie and Walter break into Mortlock’s house.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Why are Sadie and Walter becoming more friendly to each other?</li> <li>▪ How does Walter’s aunt reassure Sadie?</li> <li>▪ Why do they break into the Mortlock house?</li> </ul>
26–29	The climax and resolution of the story sees all the elements come together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ List the things that happen in the last few chapters in chronological order.</li> <li>▪ How has the author resolved all of the issues she raises?</li> <li>▪ What would be a likely next step for all the main characters?</li> </ul>

### Class discussion/activities

1. What category does this story fit? Is it fantasy, realistic fiction, historical fiction, romance, adventure? Debate this in class.
2. How real are the characters? Would you be able to meet them in the street?

3. Take one of the main characters and build a profile of that person (name, age, height, hair colour, weight, interests, parents, home address, school year, friends etc)
4. Trace the changes in attitudes of some of the main characters. For example, Lachie becomes more open to saving the stones, Walter becomes less threatened by other people, David accepts the coaching job (for a while).
5. How might the town see the protection of the stones? And the murder of Jimmy Raven?
6. Would some people have any issues with what has happened in the past? Or with the protection of the stones?
7. Students could imagine that they live in the fictional town and:
  - Write a letter to the Archives asking for more information
  - Write an article for the local newspaper outlining what has happened in the past
  - Prepare a case for a monument to Jimmy Raven
  - Organise the local heritage society to protect the stones and the graveyard
  - Organise a tour of the stones and the graveyard, developing a pamphlet to give to the participants.

### **KNOW THE AUTHOR**

Kate Constable is an author who has lived much of her life in Victoria. For more information about her life and thoughts about writing see any of the following websites.

<http://www.kateconstable.com/> (author website)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kate\\_Constable](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kate_Constable) (Wikipedia)

<http://www.allenandunwin.com/default.aspx?page=311&author=69> (Allen and Unwin)

Her novels thus far are:

<i>The Singer of all Songs</i> (Chanters of Tremaris 1)	2005
<i>The Waterless Sea</i> (Chanters of Tremaris 2)	2005
<i>The Tenth Power</i> (Chanters of Tremaris 3)	2007
<i>The Taste of Lightning</i>	2007
<i>Always Mackenzie</i> (Girlfriend Fiction 4)	2008
<i>Winter of Grace</i> (Girlfriend Fiction 10)	2009
<i>Cicada Summer</i>	2009
<i>Crow Country</i>	2011

Students may like to read more about Kate and her work for a greater understanding of the novel being studied.

### **Class Activity: Literature Circle**

Use Kate Constable's novels to complete a Literature Circle (outlined later in these notes) with groups of 4-6 students. Each group must choose to read one of the novels written by Kate Constable, after a book talk by the teacher librarian or class teacher. There will need to be 4-6 copies of each of her books.

As each group reads their novel, they must keep notes about the story, its characters, setting and themes, to be able to give a presentation to the class, telling the class about that novel. (Proformas are provided at the end of these notes.)

### **Class Activity: Know the Author**

Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students. Each group is to choose one activity to complete and display:

**A** On a map of Australasia, pinpoint the two places Kate Constable has lived and on a map of Melbourne, pinpoint the places mentioned that Kate Constable has lived and been associated with.

**B** *The Taste of Lightning* was nominated for the Aurealis Award. What is this award? Can this group find any other novels in the library which have also been nominated for this award?

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aurealis\\_Award\\_for\\_best\\_young-adult\\_novel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aurealis_Award_for_best_young-adult_novel)

**C** Kate Constable is known as a fantasy writer. What is fantasy? List the fantasy novels that the group has read. Are there elements common to all fantasy books? What is there about her books which make them fantasy?

In 2011 the Tuesday Night Book Club on the ABC, presented a show about fantasy. This might still be available at:

<http://www.abc.net.au/tv/firsttuesday/s3267666.htm?site=hobart>

**D** Boort is an actual place in Victoria. Information about the town can be found at:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boort,\\_Victoria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boort,_Victoria)

Prepare a one-page information sheet about the town and its history for readers of *Crow Country* who want to visit the area. Include a map, and references to any Aboriginal history of the place. *Crow Country* is a work of fiction, and the book is not based on specific events in Boort's history, nor are the book's themes specific to Boort. Discuss why Kate Constable used a real place rather than a generic place. (See Appendix.)

**E** Reading Kate Constable's blog shows that she is interested in much more than writing. <http://kateconstable.blogspot.com/>

- What are some of the things she is interested in? Are these reflected in any way in the book, *Crow Country*?
- Why is her website a '.com' URL and not a '.com.au' URL?
- Is there any evidence that her books are sold overseas?
- Why might the covers have been changed for an overseas market? Look closely at the different covers and think about who they might appeal to.
- Discuss with your group the difficulties of being an author in Australia.

**F** Access the Wikipedia website for Kate Constable. She has written a short story. Are you able to find a copy? *Meanjin* may be online, or your State Library may hold back copies. Do a bit of sleuthing.

If you cannot find a copy, think about its title, and what it might be about, considering that her work is mainly fantasy. Can your group develop a storyline around that title which may be similar to Kate Constable's style of work?

Develop a setting, plot outline and characters to write a short story using the title of Kate Constable's short story. Perhaps each of the group could write their own story after the group has devised an outline.

## LITERATURE CIRCLE: CROW COUNTRY

A Literature Circle occurs when a class is divided into small groups, each group reading one of a group of books similar to the one being studied. Each group sets the rules of their group and assesses themselves. It is expected that a group read one book over 6 or so weeks, keep records about what they like about that book and report back to the class at the end of the unit. Ask your teacher librarian for suggestions and help with this as s/he may be able to suggest other works to include, and do a book talk about each to help your students select the book their group will read. I usually have 6 or so copies of each of the books ready and allow each group to select which novel they will read.

Once selected, the groups will have a lesson a week to read in class, and the leader of the group will allocate how much of the book will be read between lessons. At each session, the group will discuss what has been read so far and work out things like plot, story, characters and theme, to be able to present this to the class at the end of the unit. Sample proformas for the groups are provided at the end of these notes.

Based on the material collected in the proformas, each group is then able to make a presentation at the end to showcase the book they have read in some way.

There are several themes which come to mind when reading *Crow Country*. A literature circle could use the theme of time-slip novels; look at other books that deal with Aboriginal issues; look at historical novels; or perhaps make a study of Kate Constable's novels. Below, I have suggested a number of novels which fit each of these categories.

### RELATED BOOKS SUGGESTED FOR LITERATURE CIRCLES

#### Historical novels

<i>The Golden Day</i>	Ursula Dubosarsky	A teacher's disappearance in the 1970's has repercussions for her class
<i>Eureka</i>	Jackie French	Another of French's excellent historical novels, this time dealing with the gold rush at Ballarat and the Eureka Stockade.
<i>Vinnie's War</i>	David McRobbie	Children evacuated from London during the Blitz in WW2, have a mixed experience of life in rural England
<i>The Hunt for Ned Kelly</i>	Sophie Masson	One of My Australian Story series, has a young woman and her brother pursuing Ned Kelly to take a photo which will change their lives
<i>The Comet Box</i>	Adrian Stirling	Australia at the time of Halley's comet is recreated in this tale of secrets hidden beneath the veneer of a respectable suburb
<i>Taj and the Great Camel Trek</i>	Rosanne Hawke	The epic exploration across the south west of Australia is shown through the eyes of the son of the camel driver, one of the Afghani men who plied their trade in pre Federation Australia
<i>War's End</i>	Victoria Bowen	At the end of WW1, a soldier returns home only to be quarantined because of the outbreak of Spanish Influenza
<i>Nanberry</i>	Jackie French	An amazingly vivid recreation of the early days of the New South Wales penal colony is the setting for this story of an Aboriginal boy adopted by the colony's first surgeon

### Aboriginal themed books

<i>Nanberry</i>	Jackie French	Biographical fiction about an Aboriginal boy adopted by the colony of New South Wales' first surgeon
<i>Maralinga</i>	Christobel Mattingley	An illustrated history, written with Anangu people, the story of their dispossession of their land and their treatment by authorities is poignantly told.
<i>Papunya</i>	Nadia Wheatley	An illustrated history, the story of this community west of Alice Springs is told by the community with school as its focus
<i>Dougy</i>	James Moloney	A trilogy of novels, recently reprinted, centred around Dougy, an Aboriginal boy living in Western Queensland, and his family.
<i>Jasper Jones</i>	Craig Silvey	When Aboriginal boy, Jasper, finds his girlfriend hanging from the tree at the place everyone knows is his hideout, he seeks help from the most unlikely of sources. For mature readers
<i>Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence</i>	Doris Pilkington	A stunning retelling of the most amazing story of survival after three young girls are stolen from their homes and housed thousands of miles away
<i>Barefoot Kids</i>	Steve Hawke	A group of kids in Broome work to save an area of land they are responsible for against the might of the developers
<i>My Place</i>	Sally Morgan	Always in print, this is Sally's story of growing up thinking she was Italian and finding out when a young woman about her true heritage

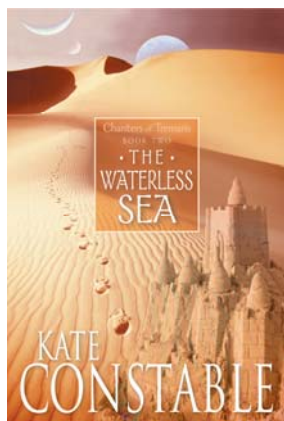
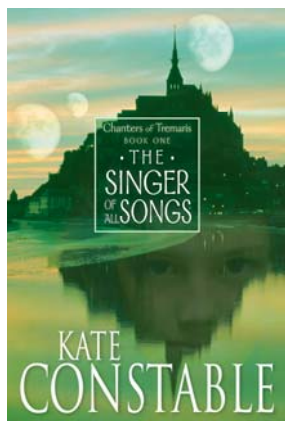
### Time-slip novels

<i>Cicada Summer</i>	Kate Constable	Absolutely charming story of a young lonely girl who finds a friend in the garden at her grandmother's old house
<i>Somewhere Around the Corner</i>	Jackie French	An early time-slip novel which set the scene in the 1980's, and is often reprinted, about the gold rush (and check out Jackie French in your library, there are many more time-slip novels by this author)
<i>The Chimneys of Green Knowe</i> ( <i>Green Knowe series</i> )	Lucy Boston	At Green Knowe a family from centuries before still inhabits the house and grounds. This one in the series is about a boy going back in time and solving the disappearance of jewelry, now filmed as <i>From Time to Time</i>
<i>Shallott</i>	Felicity Pulman	A trilogy of stories about a group of teenagers zapped back into the time of King Arthur's court
<i>Waterslain Angels</i>	Kevin Crossley-Holland	When a piece of the angel which once adorned the roof of the church is discovered, it becomes clear that the angels were not destroyed by Cromwell after all, so the children set out to find them
<i>Market Blues</i>	Kirsty Murray	Sam is hurtled back one hundred years to the Melbourne of the late nineteenth century where he is hounded by the police and is on the run
<i>Mum, Me and the 19<sup>th</sup> C</i>	David McRobbie	Visiting a historical village, Cara and her mother are transported back to 1840

<i>Singing the Dogstar Blues</i>	Alison Goodman	A wonderful sci fi novel of a time when people can be trained to jump through time, Joss is given an alien student to mentor at uni
<i>Stitches in Time</i>	Julie Ireland	The past comes crowding in on Elise when she travels to Burgundy to find the truth of her mother's death
<i>The Devil's Own</i>	Deborah Lisson	An award winner, republished in 2000, retells the story of <i>The Batavia</i> through the eyes of a girl transported back to that ill-fated ship
<i>Gideon the Cutpurse</i>	Linda Buckley-Archer	An exciting story of time travel using a machine, which takes the kids back to the England of highwaymen, murder and pickpocketing

### Novels by Kate Constable

<i>Cicada Summer</i>	Absolutely charming story of a young lonely girl who finds a friend in the garden at her grandmother's old house
<i>The Taste of Lightning</i>	Swordsmen are pursuing three young people, Tansy, Perrin and Skir, escaping from war, but from different sides. Now they must work together to live.
<i>Chanters of Tremaris trilogy (3)</i>	<i>The Singer of all Songs</i> , <i>The Waterless Sea</i> and <i>The Tenth Power</i> make up this remarkable story of the Sisters of Antaris, living behind the ice wall which separates them from Tremaris
<i>Girlfriend series (2)</i>	<i>Always Mackenzie</i> and <i>Winter of Grace</i> are two good reads in the Girlfriend Fiction series, published for young teenage girls



## ABOUT THE WRITERS

### KATE CONSTABLE

Kate Constable was born in Victoria but spent much of her childhood in Papua New Guinea, without television but within reach of a library where she 'inhaled' stories. She studied Arts/Law at Melbourne University before working part-time for a record company while she began her life as a writer. She has had stories published in *Meanjin*, *Island* and other literary magazines. *The Singer of All Songs*, *The Waterless Sea* and *The Tenth Power* form the Chanters of Tremaris series and were her first books, published by Allen & Unwin with very successful overseas sales, followed by a stand-alone novel set in the same world, *The Taste of Lightning*. She has also written a junior fiction book, *Cicada Summer*, as well as two books for the popular Girlfriend Fiction series – *Always Mackenzie* and *Winter of Grace*. Kate lives in West Preston, Melbourne with her husband and two daughters.

### FRAN KNIGHT

Fran is a retired teacher librarian who loves adolescent fiction. She speaks at conferences, writes teacher notes and has articles in *The Literature Base*, *Magpies*, *ACCESS* and *Viewpoint* and has reviewed since the 1970's for *Magpies* and *Fiction Focus*.

In 2005, her book, *Ngadjuri: Aboriginal peoples of South Australia's Mid North Region* was published, following 20 years of research. Pledger Consulting has published ten books which reflect Fran's reading, with lists of books in subject headings, the latest being *Literature to support the Australian curriculum, Annotated lists of fiction and poetry*.

Fran's contribution to teacher librarianship has been recognised with the South Australian Teacher Librarian of the Year award in 2005, and Honorary Life Membership of SLASA (School Library Association of South Australia) in 2007.

**Literature Circle: *Crow Country***

Group names			
Novel being read		Author	Characters
When is the novel set?		Where is the novel set?	What is the theme of the story?
Week	Story	Background	Prediction
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			



Literature Circle: *Crow Country*

Summary of story and its theme(s)	The reasons my group enjoyed the story

# APPENDIX

## Some information about the Indigenous consultation process for CROW COUNTRY by Kate Constable.

Allen & Unwin seek to work in collaboration or consultation with Indigenous communities when publishing books involving Indigenous themes and characters.

The publisher of *Crow Country* began this process by contacting a lawyer specialising in Indigenous intellectual property, cultural heritage, media and business law. Based on a description of the book, the lawyer suggested that the best model, where possible, is collaboration with consultation.

The lawyer was positive about the basic story themes of history repeating, reconciliation, generational uncovering, and particularly (from the Indigenous point of view) of ownership and repatriation.

She pointed out that while Indigenous people accept that others can have a relationship with the landscape, if a writer wants it to be an *Indigenous* landscape then it needs to be authentic, which will probably involve consultation and might include collaboration.

Mentions of Aboriginal mythology – e.g. the crow totem in *Crow Country*– need to be accurate and authentic. It is important to avoid romanticising Aboriginal mythology by making it overly general or fanciful. So *Crow Country* is set in a particular area (Central/NW Victoria) and the author researched the mythology & traditions of that area.

The lawyer also recommended the author contact the relevant Aboriginal Cultural Centre (or similar) for the area in which the book was set.

The author consulted Gary Murray of the Dja Dja Warrung people in Central Victoria. Gary read the manuscript and then circulated it to others in his community for feedback.

The result of this consultation was that the book was given the Dja Dja Warrung stamp of approval.

Readers may be interested to know about some particular points made by Gary in relation to specific aspects of the plot, which were taken on board by the author:

1) use of Crow totem

Gary felt that in the context of a children's story there was no problem talking about Waa, using Waa's name or in his appearing to the children in the form of a crow; he was enthusiastic about using Crow in a story because he's such a great character. During editing, the author's aim was to keep some ambiguity over whether the crows that Sadie communicates with are Waa himself or messengers from Waa, or even aspects of him. Though Waa is referred to by name and he definitely exists in the book, he was left "off-screen".

2) references to sacred/secret objects

Gary had no problem with the use of sacred objects in the story; he did however point out that they would likely be wrapped in possum-fur rather than oilskin. The author and editor decided that, given the emphasis on secrecy and sacredness in the story, it would be more appropriate if Sadie (and the reader) never knew exactly what those objects were.

3) stone circles/clever men

Gary suggested changing the location of the story specifically to Boort in NW Victoria, where there is in fact a dried up lake; this is right in the heart of Crow Country. However, the story of the damming of the creek and other historical and modern day events and people are entirely fictional, and not part of the real Boort's history.

## APPENDIX

Large boulders have been found on a site about 13 km away, so the stone circle is plausible.

Gary agreed that Jimmy Raven, though not from that country, would recognise and feel responsibility for a local sacred site.

Gary thinks it's very important to give children stories about shared history and also Indigenous stories, especially in Victoria. He liked *Crow Country* and wrote a forward for it.

A further outcome of our collaboration is the wonderful illustration for the book's cover, created by Gary's daughter, Ngarra Murray.