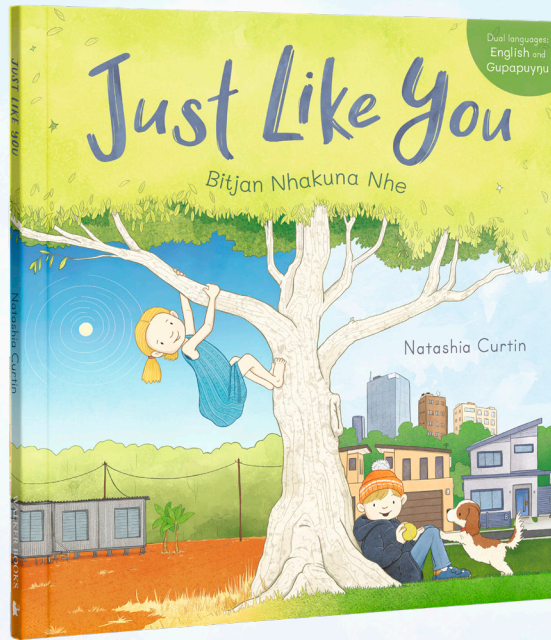


DISCUSSION GUIDE

Teacher Notes by Natasha Curtin

WALKER  BOOKS

About the Book



JUST LIKE YOU

CREATOR: NATASHIA CURTIN
ISBN 9781760658069 HARDBACK
AUGUST 2024

Just Like You is a very personal book. It's based on my growing up experiences in Ramingining, Northern Territory in the 1970s-80s.

My parents were translators, linguists and literacy specialists who worked with the Djinang people for ten years. A copy of Dad's Masters thesis on the Djinang Dictionary and Grammar is housed at the ANU library. We use our copy to press flowers. My mother enjoyed developing literacy materials in Djinang and later in various indigenous languages in Papua New Guinea. She also trained others in PNG and the Solomon Islands to do the same, and to use their materials to teach others to read and write. She has a Masters degree in Education. I wrote this book to honour the amazing childhood I had – being a part of a Yolngu community (my skin name is Gamanydjan) and living on Djinang land. Yolngu is pronounced similar to Yule-ngoo.

My children have grown up in a capital city, which is predominantly monocultural, and have had a very different childhood to mine. I wanted to create something for them to document what my upbringing was like. I also wanted to create conversation opportunities with children to explore multiculturalism, generational change, the differences between rural and urban Australia, and the universal experiences of growing up ... and draw a really cute dog. *Just Like You* is hopefully a positive contribution towards what Mr Bobby Bununggurr expressed to me during our cultural consultation session – 'It is good for Balanda and Yolngu to learn and walk together'.

- Natasha Curtin

About the Translation

The book is also published in Gupapuyŋu, pronounced Goop-Ah-Poi-NGoo (the last syllable starts with the ng sound from sing). It was translated by **Judy Nalambirra**, who currently lives on the island of Milingimbi. Nalambirra was born in 1951 and grew up on country around Milingimbi and Ramingining, learning traditional customs, languages and cultures while being part of an extended family and multilingual community. The majority of her schooling was undertaken at Milingimbi. As a young adult she worked in the school as a teaching assistant, helping children learn to read and write in Gupapuyŋu, as well as writing and translating a variety of texts. Her late husband also worked in the school. While she was raising her six children and others in her extended family, she continued as a school teacher, and taught in the Adult Education Centre. She is a significant elder in her clan and community, and is a strong advocate for bilingual education. Nalambirra is a friend of my parents. She translated the text whilst my parents were visiting her in 2022, in the hope that the book would one day be published in her own language.

About the Creator

Natashia Curtin grew up in a Yolngu township in the Northern Territory, and completed high school while living in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. She always had her nose in a book, or was drawing pictures - because computer games weren't invented yet, and it was stinky hot outside. She moved to Melbourne in the 90s to study graphic design and learned how to live in a big city. While working as a graphic designer, Natashia met and married a lovely man, and they had two boys (who don't draw, because computer games were invented). She likes boogie-boarding, listening to music and hanging with friends. She promised to barrack for Collingwood in her wedding vows. She hates rockmelon, rap music and bad paragraph spacing. You can follow her on Instagram, Facebook or at natashiacurtin.com.



Discussion Guide

Raminging Arts and Culture

David Gulpilil is a famous actor and dancer who lived on an outstation near Raminging, and would often visit town. Gulpilil appeared in many movies, including *Crocodile Dundee*, *Rabbit Proof Fence*, and *Ten Canoes* (filmed around the Raminging area).

David Malangi was famous for the amazing painting that was used on the Australian \$1 note. Unfortunately, no one bothered to ask his permission to use his painting. Malangi stood up for his rights, and was the first aboriginal person to win compensation for use of his work.

Bula'Bula Arts, under curator Djon Mundine (OAM) created a special artwork called 'Aboriginal Memorial' for the 1988 Bicentennial, which you can see at the National Gallery in Canberra. It features 200 mortuary logs (what people's bones are collected and kept in after death) and was painted by many artists in the Raminging area.

Bobby Bununggurr is a highly respected painter and elder at Bula'Bula Arts. He provided guidance and approval on the cultural practices depicted in *Just Like You*.

Art

Draw an animal or plant. Use thin lines or dots to colour in the animal. It takes lots of patience and a very steady hand.

- What sort of colours will you use?
- What sort of colours do first nations artists use? Why?

Find out names of different animals and plants in the First Nation's language of your area, or closest to your area. Create a class mural, drawing and labeling these things in English and the language you have found out on a large sheet of paper.

Research different First Nation art styles in different areas of Australia. Look at the areas around Perth, Arnhem Land and Alice Springs for three distinct styles. Research contemporary first nations artists and explore some of their work.

Research David Malangi and the \$1 note. Discuss who has the right to paint in First Nation's style, and how the tourism industry has historically ignored these rights.

- Why is Malangi significant?
- How would you feel if someone took your artwork without asking?
- What bodies exist to protect First Nations artists? How can consumers check what they are buying is not exploiting First Nations artists?

Paintings can show important information or spiritual ideas. Ask the children to draw something important to them, as an informational drawing. E.g. A tv show, a story or sport. Before starting to draw, make a list of the elements which are important to include.

For example, if the sport is AFL, you might show goal posts, an oval ball, players taking a mark, many players on a field, not just one, etc. Emphasise the painting's function is to pass on information, not necessarily to be realistic.

Discuss:

- What is important to include? What isn't important?
- If you believed the act of painting would improve that important thing, how would your painting change?

Music and Dance

Source the short film '3 dances Gulpilil' from the NFSA on Youtube. **(If you have indigenous children in your class, make sure you have permission for them to view the film first.)** What characteristics of the animals can you see shown in the dances? What are the differences between the three dances?

Use wooden clap sticks and do some dancing to a rhythm outside. Try to get everyone doing the same dance together, with kids taking turns to set the rhythm on the clapsticks.

You might like to try and use gestures from animals in your dance, like a hopping kangaroo, a sinuous sliding snake, a pecking emu or a dancing brolga.

Can you tell a story by dancing? Break up into 2-3 groups. Using clapsticks or hand claps for music, can your group communicate a daily event only by dancing? Something like 'getting breakfast', 'riding to school' or 'doing chores'. Present your dance to the other group. Can you guess the theme of each other's dance?

Source music samples of contemporary Yolngu dancing and singing, such as Gurrumul, Baker Boy, Saltwater Band and Yothu Yindi to play in the classroom. Source the words and try to sing along in Yolngu languages! If you practice hard, you might like to perform a song with some of your own dancing in school assembly.

Cultural Awareness and Generational Change

Ask a significant person of an older generation:

- What did they like to eat when they were young?
- Did they live in the city or the country?
- What is different and what is the same?
- What sport or games did they like to play?
- What chores did they do at home?
- What was their favourite song/s? Did they like to dance?

Report back to your class the information you've found out about your significant person. This task could be set as a poster or oral presentation.

For younger children: Draw a picture with your significant person. Use one side for you, the other side for your significant person. You might like to draw a picture of each other! What things will you show in this picture?

Yolngu culture is very different from Balanda (white) culture.

Discuss: What does the word 'culture' mean? (It is a group of people who have a certain way of doing things. This might be shaking hands, or saying thank you. It might be who does the cooking. It might be what clothes you wear. These rules are often not written down. You have to learn them by being with people.) Culture changes over time. The way your parents lived is probably different to how you live now.

Discuss: What rules does our culture have? (Shaking hands or saying 'Hello' when introduced to a stranger. Using knives and forks. Wearing certain clothes at certain places, like a school uniform.)

Can you find out about some cultural rules from other cultures? Check out Japan, Saudi Arabia, Bali, Spain, America, Italy, Fiji. Make a class poster with different cultural rules, greetings or sayings from around the world, or, have each child find a cultural practise from a country of their choice and present it to the class.

Geography and Biology

Use Google maps to find and label these places: Gunbalanya, Ramingining, Maningrida, Nangalala, Arafura Swamp, Blythe river, South East Alligator River, Darwin, Kathrine. Arnhem Land. (*supply map)

Source a map of First Nations groups of Australia on the internet. Find out what nation owned the land you live on now. Make a map of your state, colouring and labeling the First Nations groups. Can you find out any information about these nations?

Draw a map of your house and what is near it. Label the things on your map. What is important to show, and what is not important? Why? (e.g. labelling specific trees is not important to us, but would be important for birds!)

What sort of plants and animals can you find in the Arafura swamp? Use the internet to find out. What sort of plants and animals live where you are? Are they very different to those found in the Arafura Swamp, or the same?

Find out more about these animals and their habitat: File Snake, Magpie Goose, Crocodile, Mud Cab, Freshwater stingray, Catfish, Goanna, Green Tree Frog, Gecko.

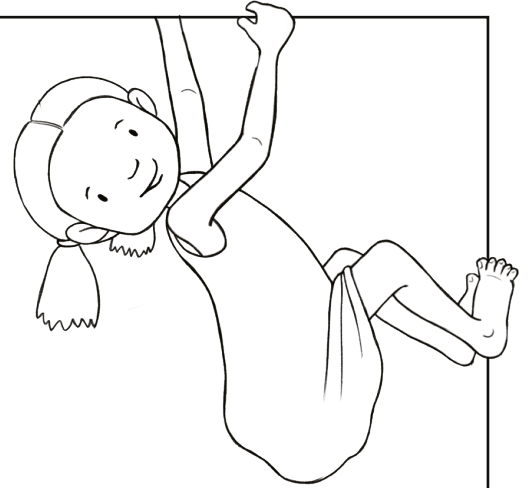
Sport

The game we played with tin cans and a tennis ball was made up by the Yolngu children. Can you make up your own sports game? In two to three large groups, experiment at making up a new game. You might use running and jumping, or throwing or catching. You might use a ball, a bat or two, or only your bodies. What will you call the game? Write down the rules. Try your game out, and then think of a way to improve the rules to make it more fun! Share your game with the other groups.



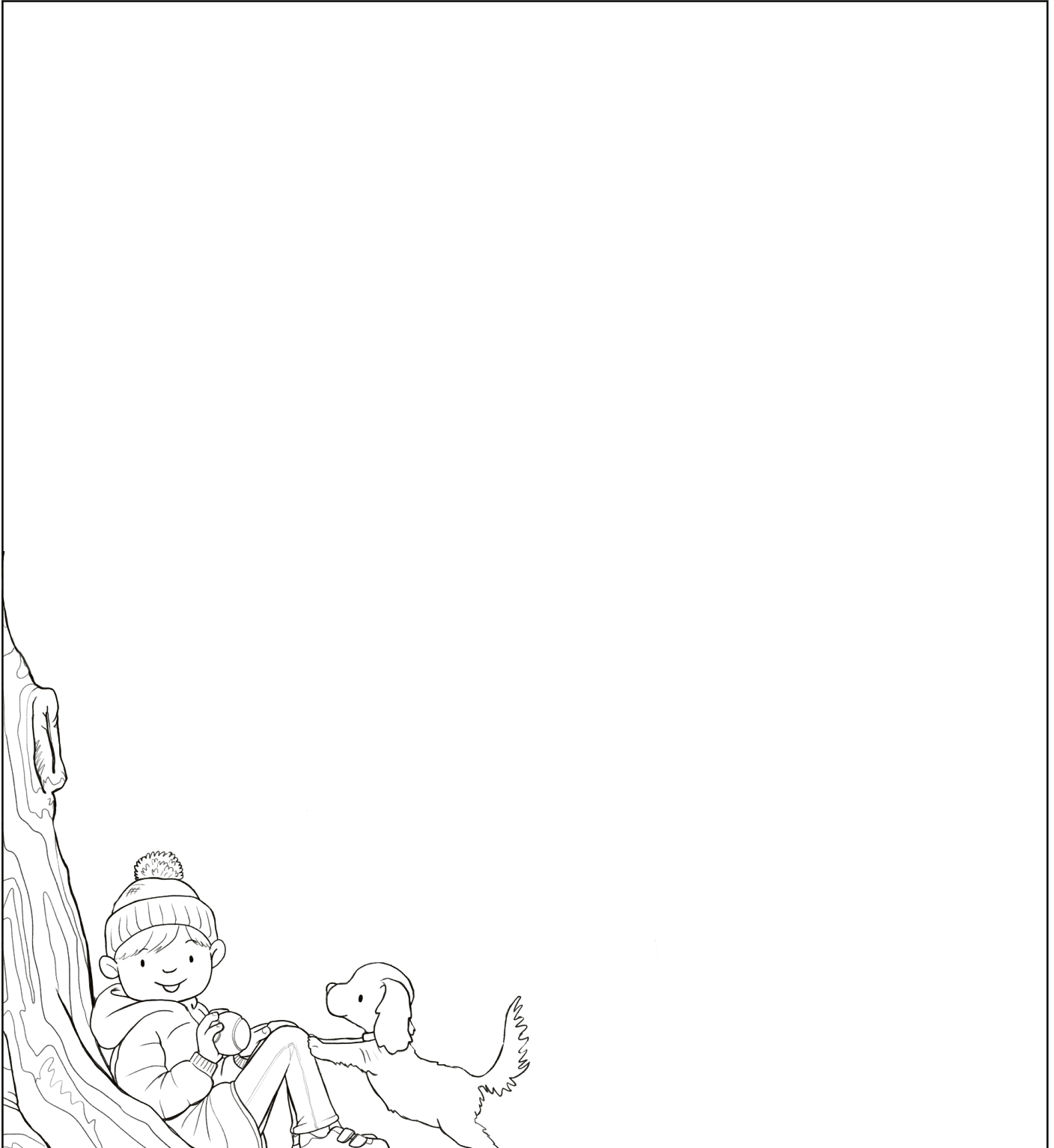
1. Dot & Line Drawing

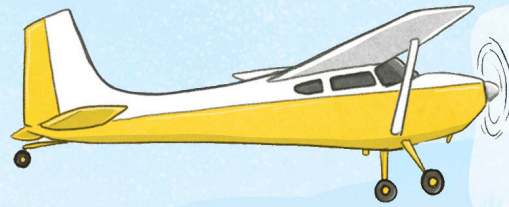
Draw an animal or a plant. Use thin lines or dots to colour in the animal. It takes lots of patience and a very steady hand. What sort of colours will you use? What sort of colours do first nations artists use? Why?



2. Informational Drawing

Draw something important to YOU (E.g. A TV show, a story or sport).
Before starting to draw, make a list of elements which are important to include. For example, if the sport is AFL, you might show goal posts, an oval ball, players taking a mark, many players on a field, not just one, etc.





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