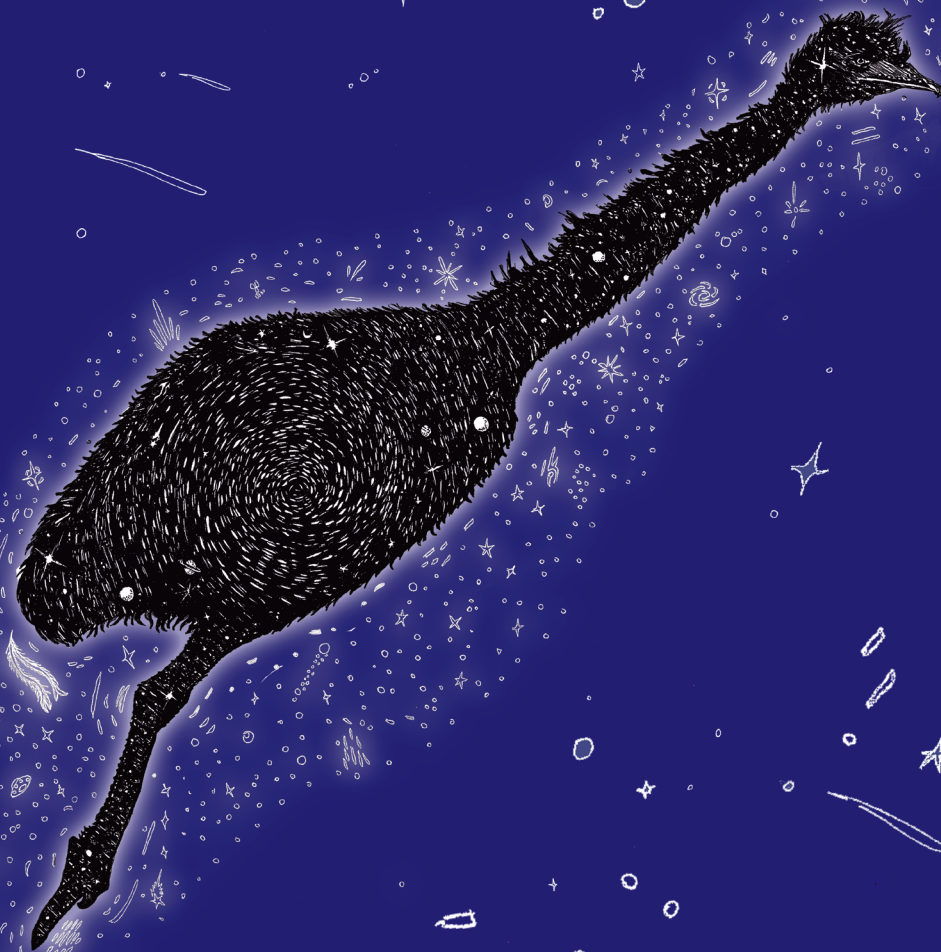


OUR Stories



Meyne  
Wyatt



Teachers' Notes

Maku



## Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- Create their own stories for a movie
- Discuss bullying and learn steps to respond to bullying situations
- Brainstorm ideas on how they can help to take care of the environment
- Reflect on their own cultural heritage and family traditions
- Discuss the concept of 'home' and the various things it can mean
- Learn and discuss the reality of diverse stories taking place on Aboriginal land
- Learn about diversity, empathy, inclusion and acceptance

## About the story

Maku has just started at a new school. It's tricky fitting in, but Maku always tries his best, even when some kids gossip about him and make fun of his name. Maku's homework for the weekend is to come up with an idea for his own movie. After school, Maku's nan and pop take him to go bush. Maku learns about his cultural heritage; he learns about the Rainbow Serpent, his totem and ceremony, the great Emu in the sky, and to respect and protect nature and wildlife. Maku's weekend with his grandparents gives him lots of inspiration for his superhero movie. At school, Maku presents his movie idea to the class, and everyone applauds. Maku has made a new friend at school, and goes home to his nan and pop.

## Before you read the story

Read the blurb together. Look at the cover for clues about the story. Ask students to describe what they're seeing and how they think the boy is feeling?

## Questions

1. What does 'Maku' mean? What is the origin and meaning of your first name? [Note for teacher: this will likely require some online searching].
2. What is Maku's favourite thing to do? Why do you think it's his favourite? What are some of your favourite things to do, and why?
3. Why do you think the kids pick on Maku in the playground? How do you think it makes Maku feel? What do you think about Maku's response to the kids picking on him? How do you think you would respond in Maku's situation?
4. Maku wants to make a movie when he grows up – what do you want to do when you grow up? How do you think you'll achieve this?
5. Maku's second favourite thing to do is to go bush with his nan and pop. What do you think 'go bush' means? Why do you think it's one of his favourite things to do?
6. What is a 'totem'? What do you think your totem would be, and why?
7. Who is *Wanambi*? What is the story of *Wanambi*? Have you heard this story before?
8. What animal do Maku and his grandparents release into the wild? How do you think the animal felt when it was released, and why? How did Maku feel? Why do you think he felt this way?
9. How do Maku and Leya become friends? How does the story show us they are friends?
10. What did you think about Maku's movie? Did you like it? Why, or why not? What do you think the message of Maku's movie is? What do you think it is trying to teach us?
11. As a character and superhero, is Maku happy being himself? What in the story tells us this? In a few sentences, describe what makes you who you are and what makes you unique (family, friends, likes and dislikes, character traits, things you're good at, your cultural background). What are your favourite things about yourself?
12. Read the note by the editor at the back of the book (page 87). 'Our Stories is told on land that was and always will be Aboriginal land.' What do you think this means?
13. In the note, the editor writes that the series is about 'inclusion' and 'diverse lives'. What's fun about diversity? Why do you think it's important to read stories about other people's lives? What steps can we take to make sure people feel included whatever their backgrounds? What makes you feel happy, safe and accepted?

## Activities

1. In small groups or individually, ask the students to create their own story for a movie, with a beginning, middle and end. This can be a narrative or some dot points. Then ask the students to illustrate their movie in storyboard form on butchers' paper. Ask the students to present their movie to the rest of the class.
2. Read Chapter 2 aloud together. Take this opportunity as a class to discuss the bullying situation. What identifies this as a case of bullying? What steps can you take to respond appropriately if you find yourself in a similar situation? What should you do if you see someone else being bullied?
3. As a class, discuss the role of Maku's grandparents as Rangers. Brainstorm ideas on ways we can help to look after the land and native wildlife around us. How can we take better care of the environment, at home and at school? Guide the class to identify some environmental issues, their causes and how they might contribute to help fix the problem – highlighting that every action, no matter how small, is helping. If possible, implement one of these suggestions as a class at school.
4. Instruct the students to individually reflect on their own cultural heritage/s. Ask them to write down some of their favourite things about it, who in their family teaches them about their cultural heritage, and what are some of their family traditions?
5. At the beginning of the book, Maku is not living with his grandparents, but at the end of the book Maku is able to go home with his nan and pop. Discuss as a class what 'home' means, broadly at first and then more personally to each student – highlighting the difference between a brick and mortar 'house' and the concept of 'home'.
6. Brainstorm as a class the students' response to question 13: 'Our Stories is told on land that was and always will be Aboriginal land.' What do you think this means?
7. Ask the class to individually look up what Aboriginal country their school is on, and what language is spoken there. On a big piece of cardboard put the school's Aboriginal country and language in the centre, and then ask the class to write their own languages and countries of origin around it.
8. Create a class roll call template with the names of each student in one column and a corresponding blank second column. Make enough copies for each student. Ask the students to look up the Aboriginal country and language of their home and write this in the blank space next to their name on the 'roll call'. Then ask the students to fill in the rest of the blank spaces by asking their classmates to tell them the Aboriginal country and language of their home.
9. Divide the board into four columns corresponding to the four sub-questions of question 13, as below. Ask the students to write their responses on the board, and as a class discuss these.
  - What's fun about diversity?
  - Why do you think it's important to read stories about other people's lives?
  - What steps can we take to make sure people feel included whatever their backgrounds?
  - What makes you feel happy, safe and accepted?

Ask the students to individually draw their happy, safe and accepted place on a piece of paper.