

Gurriel Storm Bird

LEARNING RESOURCE
(5 YEAR OLDS+)



QPAC's
**OUT OF
THE BOX**
FESTIVAL FOR CHILDREN
EIGHT YEARS & UNDER

QPAC'S OUT OF THE BOX PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH HYMBA YUMBA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

The world premiere of *Gurriel Storm Bird* presents an engaging and educational experience of First Nations storytelling in a contemporary take on an age-old story. Adapted from the prize-winning children's picture book by Trevor (Bumi) Fourmile, this immersive new work features traditional song and movement and is created in collaboration with jarjum (child/ren) from Hymba Yumba Independent School (HYIS), Yidinji Traditional Owners and First Nations creatives. Celebrating the culture of the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji people of Cairns, gather around the campfire in the rainforest to hear the story of Gurriel, the young boy who came face to face with the rainbow serpent.

OOTB'S KEY INGREDIENTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD ART MAKING



Quality arts education for children in Early Childhood requires the children:

- Engage with rich stimulus materials that provide springboards for their individual artmaking
- Have voice and agency in their learning and art making
- Direct their own play with support from adults as required to maintain the play flow
- Choose the art form they want to create and make in
- Engage in story making, dramatic play, puppetry and miniature world play for themselves and not for sharing with an audience.

This means that educators and artists:

- Support children's play and art making responses by identifying and sharing resources and springboards for learning that are likely to engage and stimulate creative and imaginative responses
- Offer rich aesthetic and open-ended materials which provide opportunities for children to respond in a variety of ways and across multiple arts disciplines (for example: via socio-dramatic play, miniature world play, puppetry, music, dance, visual arts)
- Set up learning environments which ensure children are able to exercise agency in their responses
- Support children's creative expression by considering the level of scaffolding each child requires to engage effectively in the response they have selected
- Include opportunities for playful, embodied, active, language rich and visual learning.

PERFORMANCE PREPARATION

PURPOSE: To prepare the children for the Out of the Box performance experience.

RESOURCES: Images of QPAC and live theatre performances.

- Show children an image of QPAC, the building, and some images of a performance on a stage. Also explain how they will be getting there.
- Ask the children if they have ever been to a cinema or to see a movie before? Ask them what that was like. What happened? What did they sit on? Were there other people there? Did the lights in the cinema go out sometimes? How did they feel?
- Ask the children if any of them have ever been to a play with live actors in a theatre. Invite children to share what they saw and what happened.
- Discuss how the experience of a live performance might be similar or different.
- What might be different about going to a theatre with live actors compared to going to a movie at a cinema?
- What might be the same?
- Following the discussion, reinforce to the children that before, during and after the performance, the lights will go up and down - sometimes it will be very dark. Reassure the children that this is meant to happen and that it will be okay. Explain that this is all part of what makes going to the theatre special.
- Also share that at times the sound will change. Sometimes they might be very loud, while at other times the sounds might be soft and there will be music.
- Explain that sometimes there will also be clapping, laughing and noises from the audience.
- Most of all, ensure that the children are excited about the forthcoming experience. Tell them that it will be like stepping into a story book!

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK V2.0

- Children are connected with and contribute to their world.

GENERAL CAPABILITIES

- Intercultural Understanding
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Personal and Social Capability.

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM V9.0

This performance will provide teaching, learning, and assessment opportunities to cover the Achievement Standard aspects in the below examples from Prep to Year 2.

In The Arts Prep students:

- describe experiences, observations, ideas and/or feelings about arts works they encounter
- use play, imagination, arts knowledge, processes and/or skills to create and share arts works in different forms.

In The Arts Year 2 students:

- identify where they experience the arts
- demonstrate arts practices and skills across arts subjects
- create arts works in a range of forms
- share their work in informal settings.

In English Prep students:

- share thoughts and preferences, retell events and report information or key ideas to an audience.
- read, view and comprehend texts, making connections between characters, settings and events, and to personal experiences.
- create short written texts, including retelling stories using words and images where appropriate. They retell, report information and state their thoughts, feelings and key ideas.

In English Year 2 students:

- share ideas, topic knowledge and appreciation of texts when they recount, inform or express an opinion, including details from learnt topics, topics of interest or texts
- read, view and comprehend texts, identifying literal and inferred meaning, and how ideas are presented through characters and events
- create written and/or multimodal texts including stories to inform, express an opinion, adapt an idea or narrate for audience.

CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS



THE ARTS

Drama: F-2


- Explore examples of drama created and/or performed by First Nations Australians (AC9ADR2E02).
- Explore where, why and how people across cultures, communities and/or other contexts experience drama (AC9ADR2E01).
- Explore how and why the arts are important for people and communities (AC9ADRFE01).
- Respond to stories and share feelings and thoughts about their events and characters (AC9EFLA07).
- Recognise different types of literary texts and identify features including events, characters, and beginnings and endings (AC9EFLE02).
- Identify features of literary texts, such as characters and settings, and give reasons for personal preferences. (AC9EFLE03).
- Discuss the characters and settings of a range of texts and identify how language is used to present these features in different ways (AC9E2LE02).

English: F-2

- Discuss how characters and settings are connected in literature created by First Nations Australians, and wideranging Australian and world authors and illustrators (AC9E2LE01).
- Explore the contribution of images and words to meaning in stories and informative texts (AC9EFLA07).

Humanities and Social Sciences: F-2

- The features of familiar places they belong to, why some places are special and how places can be looked after (AC9HSFK03).



PROTOCOLS FOR ENGAGING WITH FIRST NATIONS ARTWORKS IN THE CLASSROOM

When exploring First Nations artworks in the classroom, it's important to follow cultural protocols to ensure respect and authenticity. Here are some key guidelines based on Queensland Department of Education policies and the Australian Curriculum (Version 9) for The Arts (Prep–Year 6):

1. **Ask First** – Connect with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to seek guidance and permissions before using cultural stories, symbols, or artworks.
2. **Respect Cultural Ownership** – First Nations art belongs to specific communities. Avoid copying or using artworks without permission, and always acknowledge the original creators.
3. **Teach Cultural Diversity** – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are diverse. Share that each Nation has its own unique traditions, stories, and artistic styles.
4. **Use Art Ethically** – Ensure children understand that some symbols, stories, and styles have deep cultural meaning and should not be altered or misrepresented.
5. **Celebrate Cultural Connections** – Encourage children to appreciate First Nations art as a living, evolving tradition that connects people to Country, stories, and identity.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES



The following activities support children who are 5+ to stay engaged, active, and curious about *Gurril Storm Bird* before and after the performance. These activities encourage children to work in embodied and sensory ways and begin their understanding of how First Nation culture is about connection to country and storytelling. Please adjust to fit your students and their learning needs.

Key Words: Respect, Elders, Nature, Country, Culture, Connection, Mistakes, Consequences.

Key Characters: Gurril and Gudju-Gudju (the Rainbow Serpent)

Key Questions? What do you see? What do you hear? How do stories help us learn important lessons? Why is it important to listen to our elders?

Scenario: (If available) Gurril learns an important lesson about the power of nature and the importance of listening to those who have wisdom. The story highlights how First Nations people observe and respect the environment. Gurril's encounter with Gudju-Gudju (the Rainbow Serpent) teaches him about responsibility and the effects of his actions. It reinforces the idea that choices have consequences, a valuable lesson for young audiences. The story reflects the deep connection between First Nations people and the land, sky, and animals. It shares cultural knowledge about the storm bird and its role in predicting weather.

PRE-PERFORMANCE STIMULUS

Activity 1: Story Stones

Purpose: Children describe experiences and make connections. Children will use their imagination to create and tell their own stories.

First Nations Protocol: The story *Gurriel Storm Bird* is part of oral tradition, passing down cultural knowledge and values. It demonstrates how First Nations people's stories are used to teach younger generations important life lessons.

Implementing Yarning Circles in your classroom -

<https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/about/k-12-policies/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-perspectives/resources/yarning-circles>

Resources:

- Small stones (or paper circles)
- Pre-drawn picture cards or stickers
- A basket or bag to hold the stones/cards
- Markers or pencils

Step 1: Yarning Circle – Gather children in for a yarning circle. Explain what a yarning circle is and why it is an important part of First Nations culture and storytelling.

Step 2: Ask the children questions about their experience with stories.

- What is your favourite story? Why do you like it?
- Who tells you stories?
- How are stories told to you? Reading, made up etc.
- How can stories make you feel? Happy? Excited? Scared?
- What do we learn from stories?

Step 3:

- Give each child a small stone or paper circle and let them draw a simple picture (e.g., a sun, a tree, an animal, a rainbow).
- Alternatively, use pre-made picture cards to stickers.

Step 4:

- Place all the stones or cards in a basket.
- Explain that these pictures will help us create a new story together.

Step 5:

- Select the first stone and begin a simple story: "One day, under a big bright sun..."

Step 6:

- Each child picks a stone/card from the basket and adds a new part to the story based on their picture.

- For example, if they pick a tree, they might say, "A little bird flew to the tree and built a nest."
- The teacher guides and facilitates the development of the story. Use prompting questions to suggestions if required.

Step 7:

- Continue until all children have contributed, then help them find a fun ending.

Extend – Ask the children to write out or draw the story as they remember it. This could be turned into a picture book.

Activity 2: Gurriel Storm Bird - The Story

Purpose: Children will recall and retell key parts of *Gurriel Storm Bird*.

First Nations Protocol: Acknowledge that the story belongs to the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji people and must be told and listened to with respect. If possible, do the activity outdoors to connect with nature, as First Nations storytelling is deeply linked to the land.

Resources:

- Book - *Gurriel Storm Bird* – by Trevor Fourmile
- Youtube - *Gurriel Storm Bird* - Story Time by Deadly Kindies
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFhJrUXbRGk>

Step 1: Read or listen to *Gurriel Storm Bird* by Trevor Fourmile

Step 2: Sit in a yarning circle and ask simple questions to check understanding.

- Who is Gurriel?
- Who are the young boys afraid of?
- Where did Gurriel travel to and why?
- What happened when Gurriel got to the cave?
- Why did the storm start?
- What lesson did Gurriel learn?
- How do you think Gurriel felt when he became the Black Cockatoo?
- What would you have done if you were Gurriel?
- Why do you think the storm bird is important?
- How can we show respect for nature like Gurriel learned to do?
- Why do First Nations people tell stories like this one?

PRE-PERFORMANCE STIMULUS

Activity 3: Listening and Moving the Storm

Purpose: Children explore the sounds and feelings of the storm in *Gurriel Storm Bird* using their bodies and voices.

First Nations Protocol: If possible, invite a local Aboriginal Elder or artist to share knowledge about the natural environment, birds, storms and their cultural significance. Explain that dance is an integral part of storytelling in First Nations culture.

Resources:

- Audio clips of rain, wind, thunder, and/or birds.
 - Approaching Storm Soundscape
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Mm0k5viEHl>
 - Heavy Thunderstorm Sounds | Relaxing Rain, Thunder & Lightning Ambience for Sleep
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVKEM4K8J8A>
 - The eerie call of the Yellow-Tailed Black Cockatoo
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQVJMpVFuc>
- Open space for movement.

Step 1:

- Take students through a physical warm-up.
- Use any instrumental music or a storm soundscape as background music. I will add an appropriate song from a First Nations artist later if I can find one. Open to suggestions.
- Begin by discussing natural elements from the story (storm, wind, rain, bird, snake) and the soundscape you are listening to.
 - What can you hear?
 - What images or pictures come to your mind?
 - How are you feeling?
- Call out prompts and let students move their bodies:
 - Show me how a big storm cloud grows in the sky! (Stretch arms wide and rise up)
 - Can you move like strong winds blowing? (swaying and spinning)
 - Now, be soft, falling rain. (Tiptoe and wiggle fingers downwards)

- What sounds do you hear when a storm is coming?
- How do birds sound before and after rain?
- Can you move like a bird? (Flapping, hopping, and gliding)
- Can you move like a giant snake? (Slithering, sliding, curling)

Step 2:

- Use the following piece of music for this activity or any other appropriate soundscape.

Gondwana Indigenous Children's Choir – Stormbird, a Yidinji Story by Composer Luke Byrne with Gudju Gudju, incorporating traditional Yidinji songs.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYP_c55RTdU
- Lead a flocking activity with the children.
- Explain that flocking means we move together like birds flying in a group.
- Ask students to pretend they are a Black Cockatoo.
- Have students stand in a group facing one direction.
- The person in front will lead the movement while others follow exactly.
 - For example, if the leader moves their arms, we all move our arms the same way and at the same time. If they crouch, we crouch.
 - Note – it helps if the movement is slow so everyone can focus and try to move together. Students will need to be focused on one another.
- Allow as many students as possible to try being the leader or break up into smaller groups.
- Make suggestions using different characters and elements from the story:
 - Gurriel (the boy) – strong, curious movements
 - Gudju-Gudju (Rainbow Serpent) – slow, winding, powerful movements
 - Storm Bird – fluttering, flying motions
 - Thunder and Lightning – big, explosive jumps or stomps

PRE-PERFORMANCE STIMULUS

Step 3:

- Ask the children:
 - How did it feel to move together?
 - What was your favourite part of the story to move like?
 - Why do you think the storm bird's warning was important?

Step 4:

- **Reflect** – Discuss how First Nations people listen to nature to understand changes in weather.

Extend: Ask children to lie on the floor or outside on grass with their eyes closed and listen to *Approaching Storm Soundscape* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Mm0k5viEHl>

- As a group, create a storm soundscape with your bodies:
 - Use voices and body percussion (clapping, rubbing hands, stomping) to mimic storm sounds. For example, stomping for thunder, finger tapping for rain, whooshing for wind.
 - Or let the children explore shakers, drums, or even plastic containers filled with rice to create stormy sounds.
 - Here are some examples to help you:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iумvI9CV0kc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgKy1gCugKY>

POST-PERFORMANCE STIMULUS AND EXTENSION

Activity 1: Retelling Gurriel's Journey

Purpose: Children will use visual storytelling to retell *Gurriel Storm Bird*. They will work in small groups to create freeze frames representing key moments from the story, helping them recall and understand it.

First Nations Protocol: Acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where your school is located. Explain that *Gurriel Storm Bird* comes from the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji people of Cairns and that this is a shared story, passed down for learning. Do not change the story's meaning – retelling should honour the original message.

Resources:

- Story cards with the key moments as a picture or phrase.

Step 1:

- Lead a warm-up by exploring body shapes to express emotions.
- Ask the children to show different emotions by creating different shapes with their bodies:
 - Show me how Gurriel felt when he was curious.
 - Now, move like a storm cloud growing bigger!
 - How would you move if you were the Rainbow Serpent?
- Encourage big shapes and strong facial expressions.

Step 2:

- Provide children with an image or phrase on a card that represents a part of the story.
- Use the story cards, to recap the key moments:
 - Gurriel explores the forest.
 - Gurriel throwing stones to wake up Gudju Gudju.
 - Gudju-Gudju appears and smashes the stones.
 - Gurriel coming back in the night, hiding in the trees.
 - The storm builds.
 - Gurriel transforming into the Black Cockatoo.

Step 3:

- As a whole class or in small groups, ask the children to create a freeze frame (still pictures using their bodies) for each key moment in the story.
- Remind them to use different body shapes, levels (standing, crouching, reaching high) and facial expressions.
- Encourage group work – some students can be the storm, others can be birds, one or two can play Gurriel, or a few could be Gudju-Gudju.

Step 4:

- Practice changing from one freeze frame to the next and in the order of events from the story.
- Children stay focused and walk or move as their character from one frame to the next.

Step 5:

- While the teacher narrates key story events, the children transition from freeze frame to freeze frame, giving 10-20 counts for the transition.
- Present to another class or the whole school.
- The teacher asks guiding questions:
 - What was the most fun part to act out?
 - How did your body help tell the story?
 - What did we learn from *Gurriel Storm Bird*?

Extend:

- Children create a shadow play retelling the story using cut-out puppets and a light source (a projector or torch).
- After performing, children reflect on the impact of storytelling through shadows and discuss how it connects to oral traditions in Aboriginal cultures.

POST-PERFORMANCE STIMULUS AND EXTENSION

Activity 2: Painting the Storm

Purpose: Children will create storm-inspired paintings using different brushstrokes and colours to represent the energy of the storm in the *Gurril Storm Bird*'s performance or in the book. They will also learn how to respond to Aboriginal artwork by looking at how First Nations artists represent nature in their paintings.

First Nations Protocol: Explain that some traditional symbols have special meanings and should not be copied without permission.

Resources:

- Paint (blue, grey, white, brown)
- Brushes, sponges, hands
- Large sheets of paper

Step 1:

- Revisit the story book or performance of *Gurril Storm Bird*.
- Ask:
 - How did the storm feel in the story? Was it big, soft, loud, or quiet?
 - What colors do you think a storm has?
- Show pictures of real storms, clouds, and rain for inspiration. Note – *Please don't show any First Nations artworks at this point to avoid any potential cultural appropriation.*
- Ask the children to create a painting with stormy skies and rain.
- Set up materials – give students large paper, brushes, and colors (blues, greys, purples, whites, black, and even red or yellow for lightning).
- Explore different brushstrokes – demonstrate swirling lines for wind, dots for rain, big strokes for thunder.
- Encourage movement – students can use big, sweeping brushstrokes like the wind or small flicks for raindrops.
- Optional: Use sponges, fingers, or spray bottles for different textures.
- Play storm sounds in the background to inspire their work.

Step 2:

- Let children explain their artwork in a class gallery walk.
- Ask:
 - What did you want your storm to look like?
 - What part of your painting shows the strongest part of the storm?
 - How does your storm feel—angry, gentle, fast, slow?

Step 3:

- Show Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks of storms or water stories (see list of some examples below)
- Ensure you acknowledge the artist and country. If possible, seek the artist's permission.
- Show students Aboriginal paintings of weather, storms, and the environment. (Use age-appropriate, approved resources – local artwork if possible).
- Ask the children the following questions:
 - What shapes and colours do you see?
 - What does this painting make you feel?
 - How does the artist show movement, like the wind or rain?
- Explain that Aboriginal artists have long depicted the power and significance of storms in their artwork using traditional symbols, patterns, and colours to convey the energy and impact of natural events.

POST-PERFORMANCE STIMULUS AND EXTENSION

- Here are some notable examples:
 - ***Stinging Rain...Dark Night* by Rosella Namok**
<https://www.coeeeart.com.au/product-page/rosella-namok-stinging-rain-dark-night>
In this series of Stinging Rain, Rosella Namok uses various implements to scrape the painted surface.
 - ***Lightning* by Sarrita King**
<https://sarritaking.art/collections/paintings>
Sarrita King's Lightning series portrays the dynamic energy of lightning storms, illustrating their role in bringing rain and rejuvenation to the land.
 - ***Storm Camps on the Rain Dreaming Trail* by Kaapa Mbitjana Tjampitjinpa**
<https://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/papunya-painting/educational-resources/storm-camps-on-rain-dreaming-trail>
This artwork represents the journey along the Rain Dreaming Trail, depicting storm camps and the significance of rain in the desert landscape.
 - ***Cyclone Tracy* by Rover Thomas**
<https://nga.gov.au/on-demand/rover-thomas-joolama-cyclone-tracy/>
Rover Thomas, a seminal figure in East Kimberley painting, created works inspired by Cyclone Tracy. In his distinctive style, he captured the storm's impact.

These artworks showcase the artists' interpretations of storms and serve as cultural narratives, conveying stories and knowledge about the environment and its forces.

- Discuss how First Nations people understand weather patterns.
 - How do storms help the land?

Activity 3: Learning Maps - Collaborative Mural of Country

Purpose: Children will create a large collaborative mural representing the journey of *Gurriel Storm Bird*. This activity helps students understand story structure, connections to Country, and the storm's impact on the land and people.

First Nations Protocol: Highlight the connection between storytelling and Country in First Nations cultures. This reinforces how First Nations' stories are deeply tied to the land and how different landscapes influence storytelling.

Note – If possible, work with a local Elder or Aboriginal artist to create the map with the children.

Resources:

- For a Traditional Mural (Paint & Drawing)
 - Large butcher's paper or canvas (big enough for a group project)
 - Paints (earthy tones like red, brown, yellow, plus blues, purples for the storm)
 - Paintbrushes & sponges (for different textures)
 - Crayons, markers, or oil pastels (for outlining symbols and details)
 - Charcoal or chalk (for sketching before painting)
 - Natural materials (leaves, sand, twigs) for texture and storytelling
- For a Collage-Based Mural
 - Coloured paper & magazines (for tearing and layering)
 - Glue sticks & scissors (safe for young children)
 - Fabric scraps (to add texture to landscapes)
 - Cotton balls or tissue paper (to create clouds and storm effects)
- For a Digital Artwork (if using technology)
 - iPads or tablets with a simple drawing app (like Procreate or Sketchpad)
 - Smartboard or projector to display a collaborative digital artwork
 - Stylus pens (optional for fine detail work)

POST-PERFORMANCE STIMULUS AND EXTENSION

Step 1:

- Explain that maps tell stories, they show where things happen and how places are connected.
- Ask:
 - What places in Gurril Storm Bird were important?
 - What happened in those places?
 - How do you think the storm changed the land and Gurril?

Step 2:

- Take the children outside to find a natural location (a school garden, under a tree, or near water) to retell key moments of the story through visual art, movement, or spoken word.

Step 3:

- As a class or small groups, children map the locations of key events (e.g., where the storm begins, where Gurril appears, how the land is affected).
- Identify key locations in the story, such as:
 - The starting place where Gurril is warned.
 - The storm building over the land.
 - Gurril's journey through the storm.
 - The Rainbow Serpent and the lesson learned.

Step 4:

- Children are to create a large visual learning map (mural or digital artwork) representing the journey of *Gurril Storm Bird*.
- Work as a class to sketch a rough map of the story on a whiteboard or large butcher paper.
- Discuss how they could represent these places.

Note – please be mindful of not using Aboriginal symbols without permission

Step 5:

- Assign different sections of the mural to small groups (e.g., one group works on the storm, another on the land, another on Gurril).
- They create a painting, collage, chalk drawing, digital drawing tools or ephemeral art using natural materials (sticks, leaves, stones) to map the story's connection to Country.

Step 6:

- Children present their mural/s, explaining the significance of how they represented the land.
- Ask guiding questions:
 - How does our map show Gurril's journey?
 - What images did we use, and what do they mean?
 - How does this story help us understand nature and storms?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



- First Nations protocols and frameworks:
 - <https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/about/k-12-policies/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-perspectives/resources/frameworks>
 - https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/cross-curriculum-priorities/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-histories-and-cultures?organising-idea=A_TSICP%2CA_TSIC%2CA_TSIP
 - <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/media/3739/guiding-principles.pdf>

Further Educational Resources

- [How the crocodile got its teeth](#)
- [Walkabout Wellbeing Activity Cards](#)
- [The Colour Ochre Warrior](#)
- [Wuunjoo](#)
- [How the snake got its poison](#)
- [Burinyi The Great Barrier Reef](#)
- [Map of Yidinji](#)
- [Boori Guman – First Fire story](#)
- [Gindaja The Cassowary](#)
- [Mandingalbay Tours](#)
- [Paul Bong Yidinji Shields](#)
- [State Library – Stories from the North Qld First Nations](#)
- [Trevor Fourmile – School visits](#)

Worksheets

- <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Gurril-Storm-Bird-Trevor-Fourmile-Jingalu-Activity-Comprehension-Pack-11187080>