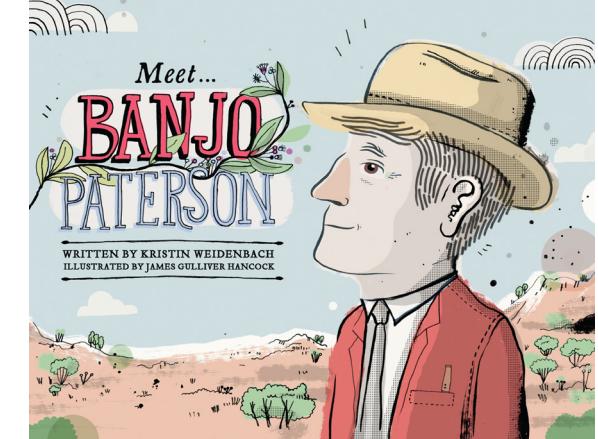




Lightning Jack

Using quality literature springboard

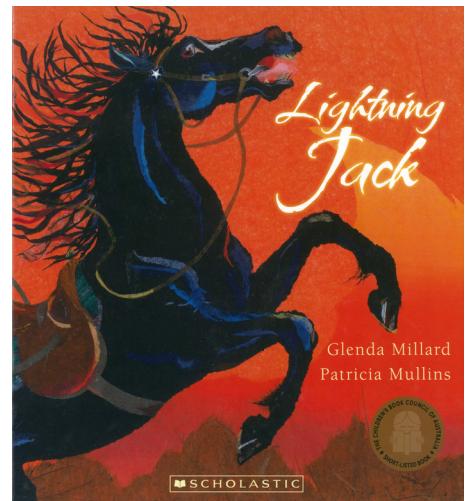
English
Stage 3
Years 5–6



Review:

Lightning Jack

MILLARD, Glenda & MULLINS, Patricia Scholastic Australia, NSW, 2013 ISBN 9781743622407 [A821]



USER LEVEL: Stage 3

KLA: English

SYLLABUS: English K-10

SCIS 1628043 \$15.99

What is it about?

A boy journeys from a farm to a carousel on a horse. The journey is a dream that takes the reader along as *Lightning Jack* morphs into an historic horse, a mythical horse, a racehorse and eventually a calmer, more decorative horse. The textual features of the book include repetition, rhythm, imagery and intertextual references. M. Najdovska & S. Rasaiah

Why is this important? Why does it matter?

Lightning Jack has strong Australian cultural references. The book could be read by all stages. However study of the book would be best suited to Stage 3. This text works on the rhythm of the prose, the *imagery* that the reader experiences and the *intertextual* references that the author and illustrator subtly place throughout. To understand this text in depth, the reader needs to have knowledge of the Australian icons Phar Lap and Ned Kelly, poetry from Banjo Patterson, art by Sidney Nolan and Tom Roberts and understanding of the visual imagery of Pegasus. This text could provide the basis for a rich unit of learning on the English textual concept of *literary value*. In Stage 3, students begin to understand that texts can be valued for the ways they convey experiences and ideas. Students learn that texts which have several layers of meaning or which can be interpreted in various ways can be satisfying. They learn that texts which are thought-provoking and extend one's understanding of the world are valued.

Related texts:

- Banjo Paterson's *The man from Snowy River* – the poem – read by Frankie J. Holden (illustrated with scenes from the film). A DVD special feature from *The man from Snowy River*.

Resources:

- *The man from Snowy River* by A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson & Freya Blackwood
- *Meet... Banjo Paterson* by Kristin Weidenbach & James Gulliver Hancock
- *Meet... Ned Kelly* by Janeen Brian & Matt Adams
- *Teachers' notes. Lightning Jack*, Scholastic

Learning and teaching activities in this springboard are centred on outcomes and content from the [NSW English K-10 syllabus](#) and the [English Textual Concepts](#) resource.

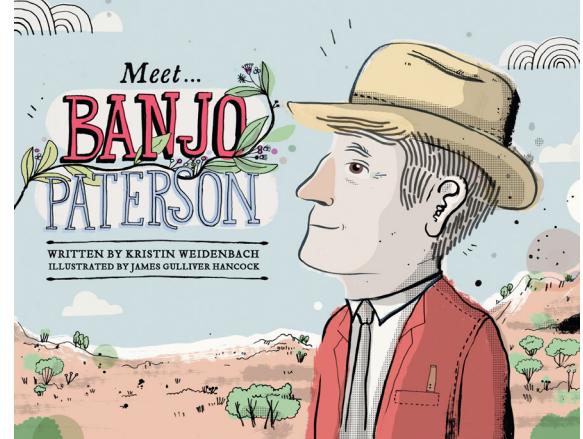
See next page for [teaching ideas](#).



Lightning Jack (continued)

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How do I use the text to teach the textual concepts of literary value, connotation, imagery and symbol, and intertextuality?

Understanding and experimenting with sound devices

Before reading the text to students, do some field building and vocabulary work in collaborative groups to enable students to access the text. Share the following quote from the author, Glenda Millard, with the students. Discuss what the author means.

I wrote in rhyming verse because it seemed to be the obvious way to create a sense of movement, which I think is essential to this story. Glenda Millard

Poetry should be read aloud in a way that brings out the meaning and feeling intended by the poet. Read the text aloud to help students identify rhyme and rhythm. Help the students to identify the relationship between the words and the sounds and how it creates a sense of movement. Draw students' attention to the repetition of *A... horse, a midnight horse, a horse called Lightning Jack* throughout the text.

Then, in small groups of two or three, students choose another page from the text. After clarifying the meaning of any unknown words, students practise reading their chosen section aloud to experiment with the rhyme and rhythm of this text. Students refine their reading of that part of the text and perform their piece to the class. Their performance could be accompanied by sound or visuals. (*Understanding, experimenting and engaging personally.*)

EN3-3A

- understand, interpret and experiment with sound devices and imagery, including simile, metaphor and personification, in narratives, shape poetry, songs, anthems and odes (ACELT1611)

EN3-7C

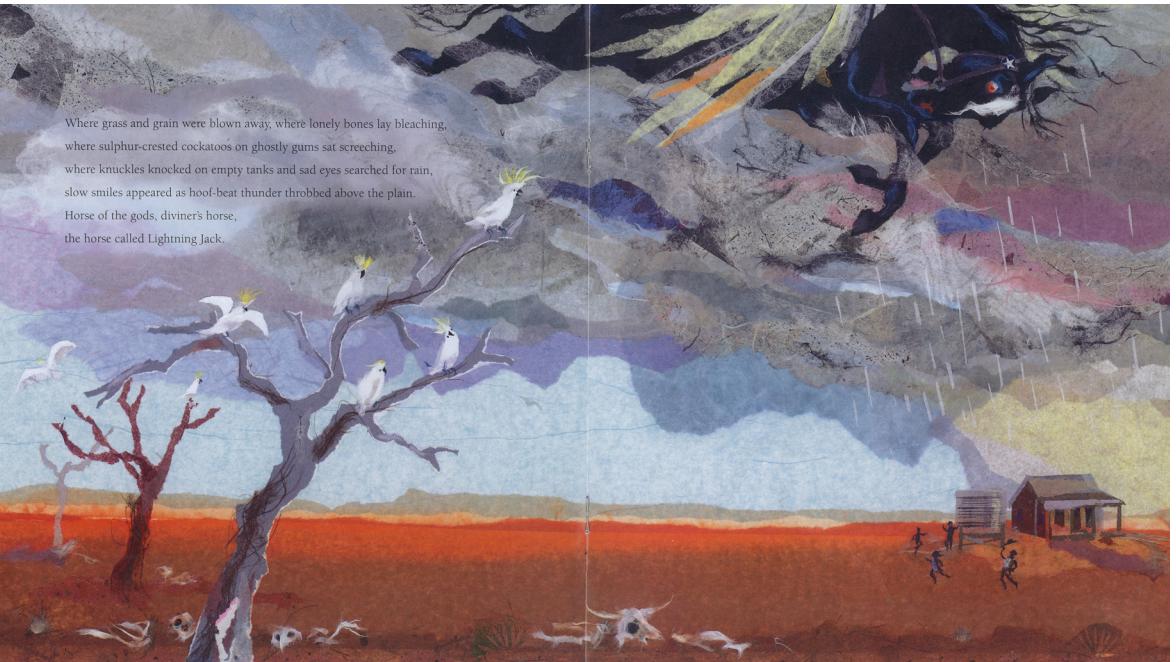
- identify the relationship between words, sounds, imagery and language patterns in narratives and poetry such as ballads, limericks and free verse (ACELT1617)

Interpreting imagery, and symbols

During a small group reading of the text, pause and draw the students' attention to the metaphorical language used on the page where *sulphur-crested cockatoos are sitting on the ghostly gums*. Look at the use of *imagery* for this drought scene (*knuckles knocked on empty tanks and sad eyes searched for rain*) and the sound devices, such as alliteration (*lonely bones lay*

bleaching). Ask students to interpret what they think is happening here. *Lightning Jack has turned into lightning and as the thunder throbs, rain falls from the sky onto the dry ground. Jack and Sam break the drought.* (*Understanding* and *engaging critically*.)

*Where grass and grain were blown away, where lonely bones lay bleaching, where sulphur-crested cockatoos on ghostly gums sat screeching, where knuckles knocked on empty tanks and sad eyes searched for rain, slow smiles appeared as hoof-beat thunder throbbed above the plain.
Horse of gods, diviner's horse, the horse called Lightning Jack.*



EN3-7C

- recognise and explain creative language features in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that contribute to engagement and meaning

EN3-3A

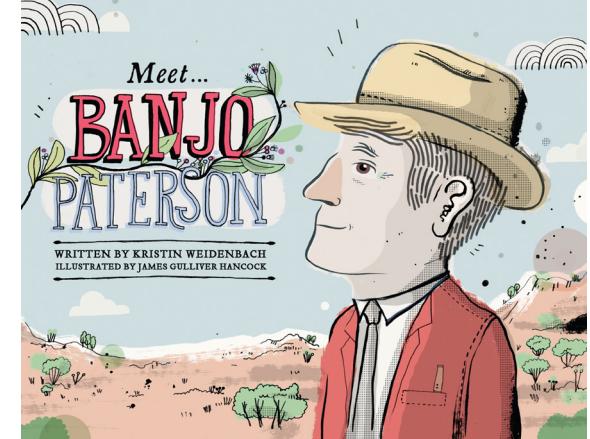
- understand, interpret and experiment with sound devices and imagery, including simile, metaphor and personification, in narratives, shape poetry, songs, anthems and odes (ACELT1611)



Lightning Jack (continued)

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Connecting with *The man from Snowy River* by A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson

Listen to a reading of *The man from Snowy River*. Identify *The man from Snowy River* and *Lightning Jack* as ballads. A ballad is a poetic story that is typically arranged in verses with the rhyme scheme ABAB. Ballads are often used in songs because of their rhyme. In pairs or small groups, have students identify the story arc of these two texts. Students can share their ideas with the whole group. (Structure of *The man from Snowy River*: farm to wild to farm. Structure of *Lightning Jack*: farm to wild to carousel.) Students may come to the conclusion that *Lightning Jack* appears to be a modern version of a famous Australian literary text by A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson. Glenda Millard has actually used one line of text from Paterson's *The man from Snowy River* to connect these texts more obviously. To identify the echoes of *The man from Snowy River*, reread the text where Sam and Lightning Jack are chasing the steers down the mountain. Guide students to look for other references to *The man from Snowy River* in *Lightning Jack*. (*Connecting* and *engaging critically*.)

<i>Lightning Jack</i>	<i>The man from Snowy River</i>
<i>They thundered through the stringy barks, through saplings thick and thin...</i>	<i>Through the string barks and saplings, on the rough and broken ground</i>
<i>And though the thought of such a ride sent quivers down his back</i>	<i>It well might make the boldest hold their breath</i>
<i>In oilskin coat and snarling spurs and lasso at his hip He strode towards his challenger with billy, sway and whip</i>	<i>But the man from Snowy River let the pony have his head, And he swung his stockwhip round and gave a cheer</i>

EN3-1A

- use appropriate metalanguage to identify and describe relationships between and among texts
- EN3-7C
- identify, describe, and discuss similarities and differences between texts, including those by the same author or illustrator, and evaluate characteristics that define an author's individual style (ACELT1616)

Experimenting with textual structures and language features

With the necessary scaffolding, students should be given opportunities to experiment with text structures, language features and *textual concepts*. Students can work independently or collaboratively for this task. They need to choose a line or two from *Lightning Jack* that they can relate to and use it to create their own ballad or short story about something that moves fast

in their life. It could be about a ball in a sport they play, cooking something, riding a bike, running a race or catching a bus. Encourage students to include some sound devices, such as rhyme, rhythm and alliteration, as well as metaphorical language, such as *imagery*, simile, metaphor and personification. In preparation, students can design a story arc and storyboard for their new text before they start writing to help develop their ideas. (*Engaging personally* and *experimenting*.)

EN3-2A

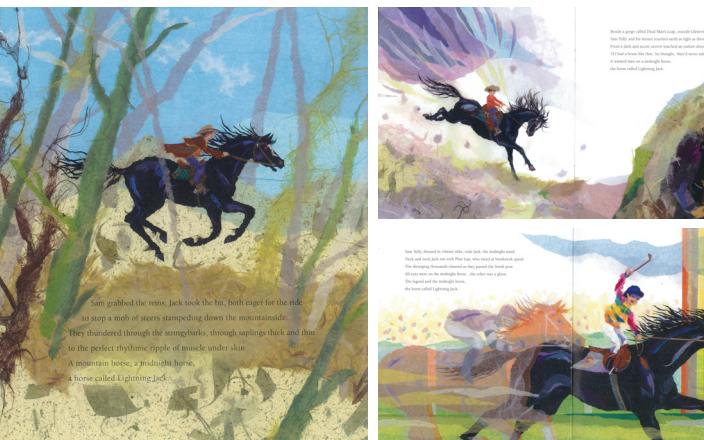
- plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, choosing and experimenting with text structures, language features, images and digital resources appropriate to purpose and audience (ACELY1704, ACELY1714)

EN3-7C

- create literary texts that adapt or combine aspects of texts students have experienced in innovative ways (ACELT1612, ACELT1618)

Extending understandings

Historical, mythical and visual references are made throughout this text: a stockman's horse, a fabled horse, a legendary racehorse, and a wanted man on a midnight horse. These are all *intertextual* references. In small collaborative groups, students could research these textual references to add meaning and extend their understanding of this text. Some students may want to research A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson and Australian artists Sidney Nolan and Tom Roberts. Groups should be supported and scaffolded to compose an informative, multimodal text and short oral presentation to share their new understandings with their peers. (*Understanding*, *connecting* and *reflecting*.)



EN3-9E

- discuss how the reader or viewer can enjoy and discover a wide range of literary experiences through texts

EN3-5B

- compose more complex texts using a variety of forms appropriate to purpose and audience.