

Sunshine Super Girl

GENERAL NOTE

In studying *Sunshine Super Girl*, educators will engage with the knowledges and understandings of First Nations peoples in Australia. It is important to note that educators who are not Indigenous do not and cannot hold this knowledge. As with any text, it is important for teachers to learn about the cultures and cultural contexts of the texts they are teaching; that is appropriate (and expected) in teaching content from a First Nations writer about a First Nations person.

The terms 'Indigenous', 'Aboriginal', and 'First Nations' are all used throughout this unit. Please note that, although the unit writer has used these terms interchangeably, there are diverse views amongst First Nations people and communities on which terms are preferred in certain contexts. Please engage with First Nations staff at your school and in your local community to check which terms are preferred.

Along with utilising the content of this unit, teachers should engage with local First Nations community members for the sharing and teaching of local cultural knowledges. Incursions and excursions are strongly encouraged and would add to the learning experience provided here.

Two excellent resources that can guide your teaching practice are:

- [Magabala Books – Teaching Indigenous Content](#)
- [Ngarrngga – Building a Ngarrngga Curriculum](#)

The Australian Curriculum emphasises the value that teachers are to place on [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures](#). Within English, this means that teachers are to provide 'culturally relevant and engaging contexts' for students to:

- appreciate First Nations literature
- engage with First Nations histories, cultures, and perspectives in literature
- examine significant events, ideas about Country, and First Nations languages and identities
- discuss the representation of First Nations peoples and cultures
- explore how oral narrative traditions connect to people, Country/place, and cultural identity

CONTENT WARNINGS

Sunshine Super Girl addresses both racism and sexual harassment. This may bring up sensitive matters for students in your class. Consider inviting a student support officer, youth worker, or similar support person to sit in on lessons that address these issues. Ensure that students know about the services they can access both at school and in the wider community if these issues bring up anything for them. Consider having a poster displaying this information in the classroom throughout this unit.

For more advice on teaching sensitive content, see Nirvana Watkins' **Safely In and Safely Out Protocols** in her resource for [The Drover's Wife*](#) (**Initial Response > Introductory Activities**).

* *Reading Australia* title

Introductory activities

VIEWING AND PARTICIPATING IN THEATRE PERFORMANCES

Discuss students' experiences (if any) as audience members at a theatre show, OR as participants in a theatre production. If possible, provide an opportunity for the class to view a play – ideally one written or produced by a First Nations person or people (Narragunnawali and Australian Plays Transform have a **handy list** of these). You will need to research your local theatre companies (e.g. **Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company** in WA; **Ilbjerri** in VIC; **Moogahlin Performing Arts** in NSW) to see what is current.

THE PLAY AND PLAYWRIGHT

Sunshine Super Girl, produced by **Performing Lines**, is the story of Wiradjuri tennis champion **Evonne Goolagong**. The play was first presented by Griffith Regional Theatre on Wiradjuri Country in 2020 (p. xiii), and the playscript was published by **Currency Press** in 2021.

Direct students to explore how Yorta Yorta/Gunaikurnai theatre maker Andrea James came to create *Sunshine Super Girl*. Working individually, they will use the following resources to create a mind map of all that they learn about this process:

- **Melbourne Theatre Company – In Conversation with Andrea James**
- **ABC Listen: The Stage Show – Truth-telling in the theatre – Why Andrea James ditched law for the arts**
- **Not in Print – Andrea James: on collaboration, First Nations' storytelling and Sunshine Super Girl**
- **ABC News – Aboriginal theatre maker Andrea James continues to tell vital First Nations stories in her tribute to tennis legend Evonne Goolagong**
- **Vimeo – Andrea James | Sunshine Super Girl | Interview with Andrea James (SydFest)**

Students should now read the Author's Note and description of the original cast and performance (pp. xi–xiii). They can then answer the following questions:

- What practical steps did James take in creating this play? From where did she receive support, and why was this important? How did she gather the information needed?
- Who are Performing Lines and what do they do?
- What was the significance of the choreographer's role in this play?
- What is **dramaturgy**? Why is dramaturgical support important when creating a play?
- In her Author's Note, James says that many people contributed to the play's development (pp. xi–xii). Why might this have been helpful? How is this similar to or different from other forms of storytelling?
- What is 'physical language' in theatre?
- Read the original cast list (p. xiii) and count the number of roles each actor played. How do you think they managed this? What is the benefit of having actors play multiple roles within a play? What are the challenges associated with this?
- Read the crew list (p. xiii) and jot down what each role entails (in a general sense – e.g. what does a 'Set and Costume Realiser' do?), conducting additional research as needed.

(AC9E10LE03) (AC9E10LE07) (AC9E10LY01) (AC9E10LY05)

CLOSE READING OF THE INTRODUCTION

NOTE: Evonne Goolagong is both a real person AND a character in the play. To avoid confusion, the character will be referred to as 'Evonne' while the real person will be referred to as 'Goolagong'.

The Introduction to the play is written by the Hon. **Linda Burney**, the Minister for Indigenous Australians from 2022–2024. Burney, who was a teacher before entering politics, was the first Aboriginal person to serve in the NSW Parliament. She is also Goolagong's cousin. Guide students to engage with the following resources:

- **National Film and Sound Archive of Australia – Australia Daze: World's oldest living culture**
- **ABC News – Linda Burney's life in politics and why she decided to step away**

Direct students to read Burney's Introduction (pp. vii–x) and create a brief timeline of Goolagong's life using the information therein. Afterwards, discuss the following questions as a class:

- Why was Burney selected to write the Introduction? Discuss all the reasons you can think of.
- The Introduction explores Goolagong's background, 'The Sydney years', 'The year 1971', and Burney's personal connection to the play. Why is it structured in this way?
- How do you think this Introduction might influence your reading of the play?
- What are Burney's achievements (conduct some brief research as needed)? What parallels can you draw between the stories of these two cousins?

(AC9E10LY01) (AC9E10LY05)

INTRODUCING THE PROTAGONIST

Ask students to read the Prologue (pp. 1–2). They should read silently at first, then aloud with a partner (reading half the scene each OR taking turns to read the whole scene). You could also prerecord yourself reading this scene aloud as a resource for students who are not able to do so. [This website](#) explores why reading a play aloud is important, and offers additional ideas for how to manage this in a classroom setting.

Now consider why the playwright has introduced the protagonist in this way. Do this by completing the [see, think, wonder](#) thinking routine:

What do you
see?

What do you see on stage? What do you hear in this opening scene?

What do you
think about that?

Why do you think the opening scene has been constructed in this way? Why is the main character (who we know is a highly decorated tennis player) introduced like this, and in this setting?

What does it
make you
wonder?

If this is how the play starts, predict how you think the play will conclude.

WIMBLEDON

Watch [this short Wimbledon documentary](#), narrated by former tennis player and Ngarigo woman [Ash Barty](#), as a springboard to reading the play. Barty and Goolagong have a close relationship, as evidenced by [this WWOS video](#) and [this SBS NITV article](#).

Direct students to research the [1971](#) and [2021](#) Wimbledon Championships, noting the experiences of Goolagong and Barty respectively. Note the similarities and differences in the 50 years between these tournaments, including references to Wimbledon's dress code. The following resources will be useful here:

- [The Sydney Morning Herald – The poignant meaning behind Ash Barty's Wimbledon outfit](#)
- [National Museum of Australia – From the vault: sporting achievements](#)
- [National Museum of Australia – Ash Barty's Wimbledon outfit](#)

(AC9E10LY01) (AC9E10LY05)

Personal response on reading the text

RESILIENCE, PERSEVERANCE, AND DETERMINATION

Students should consider how Evonne, as characterised in *Sunshine Super Girl*, displays resilience, perseverance, and determination. They should provide FIVE examples from the text as evidence for their reflections. They can then write a journal entry exploring these themes in their own life.

CHALLENGING RACISM IN SCHOOLS

One of the central themes in *Sunshine Super Girl* is the experience of racism directed at First Nations peoples. This theme, and the way it is addressed in the text, will be explored later in this unit.

As an introductory task, direct students to the [Anti-Racism Kit](#). This is a collection of strategies, resources, and guides to reduce racism, created by and for Australian high school students. Students can work through the ‘[Self](#)’ section independently; the ‘[School](#)’ section in pairs or small groups; and the ‘[Society](#)’ section as a class.

The Anti-Racism Kit is also available [as a book](#).

(AC9E10LE04) (AC9E10LY01) (AC9E10LY03) (AC9E10LY05)

Outline of key elements of the text

PLOT STRUCTURE

The play is divided into four acts and 29 scenes. Students can use the plot structure handout ([PDF, 79KB](#)) to map the key events, scene by scene.

(AC9E10LA03) (AC9E10LE05) (AC9E10LY04) (AC9E10LY05)

SETTING

Consider the set design as described on p. xiv (immediately prior to Act One). Using only this description, students will recreate (digitally or by hand) the setting for the play. Provide access to A3 paper and drawing materials, as well as software (e.g. [Sketchbook](#)/Sketchbook Pro) on computers or devices, so that students can choose their preferred medium. To differentiate this activity, you can prepare the information on p. xiv as a checklist, and allow students to work in pairs or small groups at your discretion.

Now show students the following videos to give them a sense of the set design:

- [Melbourne Theatre Company – Watch the Sumner transform for Sunshine Super Girl](#)
- [Melbourne Theatre Company – Andrea James brings Evonne Goolagong’s life to the stage in Sunshine Super Girl](#)

Seating the audience like spectators at a tennis match would impact the choreography and blocking of the play. Explore the concept of blocking using this [Backstage article](#). Consider and discuss how this set design might have impacted the actors’ performances and the director’s decisions when blocking scenes.

(AC9E10LA07) (AC9E10LE03) (AC9E10LE07) (AC9E10LY01)

CHARACTER

Characters develop more quickly in plays than in novels. They need to be easily distinguishable so that the audience can understand the plot. In *Sunshine Super Girl*, there are approximately 35 characters played by five actors. Enabling the audience to follow the plot, while also getting a clear sense of each character, is a feat of acting, choreography, and stage management.

Discuss how a playwright might assist the audience to get a quick and clear understanding of each character. This may include costume design, accents and tone of voice, and the use of names within dialogue. Lighting and media design can also help the audience understand when the setting has changed, and to associate certain characters with certain settings.

Prepare for the next activity by reading “[Getting It Right”: Anita Heiss on Indigenous Characters](#)’ with students. Acknowledge the complexity of engaging with stories about the lived experiences of Aboriginal people, as discussed in this article. When reading *Sunshine Super Girl* aloud, it is important that students do NOT attempt to assume the voice of the Aboriginal characters,

particularly if they are not Aboriginal themselves. Emphasise that they are performing a literal reading of the words of the text, and should NOT attempt to use accents to prevent cultural stereotyping.

Working in small groups, students will read Scene 2 (pp. 4–5) aloud. Consider the dual role of Evonne as protagonist and narrator:

- What is the importance of narration in a play – what purpose does this serve?
- What other narration techniques are used throughout the play – is Evonne the only narrator? Why or why not?
- Do all plays have a narrator? Think about musical theatre – who is the narrator in the musical *Hamilton*? What is the benefit of having a character as the narrator, rather than a voiceover?

Ask the groups to hypothetically become the directors of this scene. Conduct a group discussion addressing each of the following questions:

- How would you indicate to the audience when the actor who plays Evonne is narrating, and when the actor is speaking dialogue?
- What impact does stage direction have on character development? Give an example from Scene 2.
- Find another example of stage direction clearly influencing character development in the play.

Each group should then nominate a speaker (or speakers) to feed this information back to the class.

(AC9E10LA01) (AC9E10LA07) (AC9E10LE01) (AC9E10LE05) (AC9E10LE06)
(AC9E10LY02) (AC9E10LY05)

SYNTHESISING TASK

Connection to Country and community is a key theme in *Sunshine Super Girl*.

Using the text and other research methods, identify Goolagong's hometown and other places of connection. Display the [AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia](#) to identify Wiradjuri Country, then use the following resources to learn more about the Wiradjuri nation:

- [Wiradjuri Condobolin Corporation – About Us](#)
- [Parkes Shire Council – Wiradjuri Ngurambang Exhibition](#)
- [Narrandera Shire Council – Wiradjuri People](#)
- [Enviro-Stories – Wiradjuri Land, Then and Now](#)
- [AIGI – Wiradjuri community engagement](#)

Now consider the concept of connection to Country ([Common Ground](#) and [Evolve Communities](#) may be useful here). As a class, read Common Ground's article '[Connection to Animals and Country](#)' and watch BTN's video '[Connection to Country](#)'.

Utilising what they have learned so far, students are to investigate *Sunshine Super Girl* for evidence of connection to Country and community. Invite them to record any evidence they locate on the whiteboard or a Padlet. Remind them to include the act and scene number for each example.

Then, using the themes handout ([PDF, 44KB](#)), students can work in pairs or small groups to brainstorm additional key themes within the text. They should record their ideas in the lefthand column of the handout. Guide them using the list below, if assistance is required:

- sport
- achievement
- racism
- grief

- relationships
- overcoming adversity
- sexual harassment
- belonging and identity
- gender

Now allocate ONE theme to each pair/group and ask them gather evidence of this theme in the text. They should record relevant examples (with act and scene numbers) in the righthand column of the handout. To differentiate this activity, set a time limit and ask students to gather as many examples as they can within that time (e.g. 20 minutes).

The handouts can then be collated digitally as a resource for the continued study of this text.

(AC9E10LA03) (AC9E10LE01) (AC9E10LE03) (AC9E10LE04) (AC9E10LE05)
(AC9E10LY01) (AC9E10LY03) (AC9E10LY04) (AC9E10LY06)

The writer's craft

ACT ONE

Monologues

Consider the use of monologues in plays. What is a monologue? What are some types and examples of monologues? The following resources will help students get started:

- [Britannica – Monologue](#)
- [StudioBinder – What is a Monologue: Definition, Examples and Types Explained](#)

If you have access to *Kangaroo Stew* by Zac James, read John's monologue from Scene 10. Otherwise, [watch Wongutha-Yamatji actor and writer Meyne Wyatt](#) deliver a monologue from his play *City of Gold*, OR [watch extracts](#) from the one-woman play *The 7 Stages of Grieving**, as examples of monologues written by First Nations playwrights.

Students can partner up and take turns reciting the opening monologue of the play (Prologue, pp. 1–2). Note that Act One is bookended by monologues (see also Scene 10, p. 18). What effect does this have on the reader/audience?

* *Reading Australia* title

Exposition

Show students [this introductory YouTube video](#) and discuss the meaning of 'exposition' ([Myers Fiction](#) has a useful definition). Using their newfound understanding of this technique, students can map the expository elements Andrea James has included in Act One. What do the audience learn about the characters, the backstory, and the setting? Remind students to include anything they learn about the characters' cultural identity. Use this exposition worksheet ([PDF, 76KB](#)) as a guide.

The role of the Dancers

Ask students to use sticky notes or scrap paper to bookmark the pages on which the Dancers appear in Act One. How does James utilise these roles in the play? Students should examine each appearance and consider if/how the same effect could be achieved without the Dancers. They might like to refer to other plays they have seen in their response.

(AC9E10LA01) (AC9E10LA03) (AC9E10LA05) (AC9E10LE01) (AC9E10LE03)
(AC9E10LE05) (AC9E10LE06) (AC9E10LY02) (AC9E10LY04) (AC9E10LY05)

ACT TWO

Titles

Consider why the acts and scenes might have titles in the playscript if they are not made apparent to the audience during a performance. Why are they significant and what purpose might they serve?

Act Two is titled 'Living White', as is its opening scene (Scene 11, pp. 19–20). Why has James used this title here? Have students map the key plot points of Act Two and develop an explanation for the title 'Living White'.

(AC9E10LA03) (AC9E10LE03) (AC9E10LE05) (AC9E10LY04)

ACT THREE

Scene 15

Act Three begins with Scene 15 (pp. 25–26). In this scene, Evonne is practising with Mr Edwards while a voice-over reads from *The Inner Game of Tennis* by W. Timothy Gallwey.

After completing a careful reading of Scene 14 (pp. 22–24), have students hypothesise why James begins the play's third act in this way. Read through Scene 15 once as a class, then ask:

- How does this contribute to character development and progress the plot?
- What does the audience hear, and what do they see?

Have students read Scene 15 a second time, annotating as they go in response to these questions.

Headlines

Students should complete the **headlines** thinking routine to capture what they see as the most important aspect of Scene 15. Afterwards, ask:

How does this headline differ from the headline you might have created for Scene 14?

Now consider the use of headlines throughout the play. As a class, locate examples from the text and collate them on the whiteboard or a Padlet.

Scene 21

Place students in small groups and allocate actors and a director to read Scene 21 (pp. 37–41) aloud. The director should read the stage directions.

- Who was Evonne playing against in the final?
- Where were her family during the final?
- What nicknames did the press give Evonne after she became the Wimbledon Women's Champion?
- How did Evonne celebrate her win?
- How did her family respond to her win?

Now move to an outdoor space OR an area of your school with easy access to objects for makeshift staging (crates, chairs, benches, sticks, hoops – anything that requires minimal preparation). Students will reconvene with their groups and, with their director's guidance, perform Scene 21.

- Did the impact of this scene shift for you between the reading and performance? What did you notice that you didn't before?
- Why might James have chosen to split the setting between two places in this scene?
- If you were the director, what decisions would you make to ensure seamless transitions between the two settings?

(AC9E10LA01) (AC9E10LA02) (AC9E10LE01) (AC9E10LE03) (AC9E10LE05)
(AC9E10LY01) (AC9E10LY02) (AC9E10LY04) (AC9E10LY05)

ACT FOUR

Structure and pacing

Have students summarise the key plot points in Act Four in a **T-chart**. They should map these against Goolagong's achievements to work out how many years Act Four spans. They can then repeat this process for Acts One, Two and Three.

Act Four is made up of five scenes:

1. Scene 25: Hell Schedule (p. 48)
2. Scene 26: Mr Edwards Insults Evonne at the Bar (pp. 49–50)
3. Scene 27: Marriage and Divorce (pp. 50–51)
4. Scene 28: Roger and Me and Baby Makes Three (pp. 51–53)
5. Scene 29: Wimbledon Comeback (pp. 53–57)

Consider James' decisions regarding the structure and pacing of Act Four. Why might these scenes be shorter than many others in the play?

(AC9E10LE01) (AC9E10LE03) (AC9E10LE04) (AC9E10LE05) (AC9E10LY01)
(AC9E10LY04) (AC9E10LY05)

Text and meaning

RACISM

NOTE: At the conclusion of Scene 13 (pp. 21–22), Evonne is called the N-word. This term is deeply offensive and should NOT be spoken in the classroom.

It is highly likely that there will be students in your class who have been (or are currently being) impacted by racism. Frame your approach to this discussion using Nirvana Watkins' **Safely In and Safely Out Protocols** (see **Initial Response > Introductory Activities** for *The Drover's Wife**). Also invite a student support officer, youth worker, or similar support person to join this lesson.

Teach students about the concept of casual racism using [this 2014 Conversation article](#). Also show them 'The Invisible Discriminator', a one-minute video produced by Beyond Blue. Then consider the nature of overt and explicit racism using examples from *Sunshine Super Girl*.

Have students read Scene 13 individually. Provide them with sticky notes, tabs, or flags to allow for annotation. Students should highlight any examples of racism or racial vilification that they can find.

When Evonne's opponent calls her the N-word, she reacts with surprise, suggesting that she has not heard this term before. In the context of the scene, however, it is clear that she understands it to be offensive. In order to effectively address this term, and why it is offensive in the context of the play AND in society today, access the Anti-Defamation League's lesson plan on 'The N-Word: Its History, Use, and Impact'. This lesson is pitched appropriately for Year 10 and will complement any discussions you have about racism, both in the text and more broadly.

* *Reading Australia* title

(AC9E10LA01) (AC9E10LA02) (AC9E10LE01) (AC9E10LE03) (AC9E10LE04)
(AC9E10LY01) (AC9E10LY03) (AC9E10LY05)

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Scenes 17 (pp. 28–32) and 19 (pp. 35–36) address the harassment Evonne was subjected to by her long-time coach, Mr Edwards, as well as her burgeoning relationship with former tennis player Roger Cawley. Consider the behaviour of Mr Edwards in Scene 17. This is an opportunity to help students develop their understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment and how to respond if

this happens to them or someone they know. There are many resources online that can guide these discussions, including:

- [AMAZE – What is Sexual Harassment?](#)
- [Project Semicolon – Sexual Harassment and Sexual Bullying](#)

Be mindful that students in your class may have experienced sexual harassment. Speak to your Head of Learning Area, school psychologist, or student services coordinator prior to this lesson to ensure that you are effectively supporting students to work through this content. Some students may need to be given an alternative activity, and supported to work with another member of staff, during lessons that address this theme.

Other resources that you might like to consult or share include:

- [Our Watch – Respectful Relationships Education Resources](#)
- [Lifeline Australia](#) (13 11 14)
- [Kids Helpline](#) (1800 55 1800)

(AC9E10LA01) (AC9E10LA02) (AC9E10LE01) (AC9E10LE04) (AC9E10LY01)
(AC9E10LY03)

COMMUNITY

Direct students to research the [Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs](#) ('the Foundy') in Sydney, which gives Scene 14 (pp. 22–24) its name. They can then use the [reporter's notebook](#) thinking routine to organise their research and consider the thoughts and feelings of the characters in this scene.

Now develop students' understanding of the Coolbaroo Club, a social club run by the [Coolbaroo League](#) in Perth (1947–1960), by playing one or both of the following videos:

- [City of Perth – Coolbaroo Club Heritage Perth Weekend](#)
- [City of Perth – Heritage Perth: Coolbaroo Club](#)

What was the significance of such venues for Aboriginal people in Australian capital cities at this point in history?

(AC9E10LE01) (AC9E10LE05) (AC9E10LY01) (AC9E10LY05)

SYNTHESISING TASK

The City of Sydney's [Barani](#) website explores the histories of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Using the information on [government policy in relation to Aboriginal people](#), students will create a timeline (in pairs or groups, digitally or on paper) of government policies that have impacted Aboriginal people from colonisation until the era in which this play is set (1950s to 1980s). They will then return to their reporter's notebook from the previous lesson. Is there more to add, now that they have learned more about the play's historical context?

Read the dialogue between Evonne and Bob at the bottom of p. 23. Consider what Bob means when he says that '[being] a blackfella living in Australia' is political. What point is he making? Have students jot down some notes about this statement and discuss with a classmate.

Now direct students to read the Australian Human Rights Commission resource, '[The history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples advocating for the right to be heard](#)'. They should add any new information about advocacy by First Nations peoples to their notes. Why might Evonne suggest that she's 'not political', and why might Bob refute this claim? Encourage students to locate further evidence from the text to support their ideas.

(AC9E10LA01) (AC9E10LA02) (AC9E10LE04) (AC9E10LY04) (AC9E10LY05)

Ways of reading the text

LANGUAGES

At the end of Scene 16 (pp. 26–28), a reporter asks Evonne to ‘speak Aboriginal’. The following activities will help your students develop an understanding of Aboriginal languages in Australia.

Before colonisation, more than 250 First Languages (and around 600–800 dialects) were spoken around Australia. In 2022, [according to Common Ground](#), only 120 First Languages were still being spoken. Today there are many [language revitalisation](#) projects underway, such as [My Grandmother’s Lingo](#), the [50 Words Project](#), and the [Gambay First Languages Map](#).

Additionally, more than 80% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people speak a variety of Aboriginal English (AbE). There is a pervasive view among speakers of Standard Australian English (AusE) that AbE is a form of ‘broken’ or ‘incorrect’ English; [this is a misconception](#), as AbE has its own grammatical rules, sounds, and vocabulary. AusE is simply another variety of English that has been codified and accepted as the ‘standard’ in Australia, particularly in official communications and settings.

Direct students to read the following articles by Bardi and Kija person Sharon Davis:

- [AIATSIS – Aboriginal English](#) (up to the Aboriginal English quiz)
- [IndigenousX – Aboriginal English: what isn’t it?](#)

These articles present information about First Languages, AbE, and AusE. Students can read through the information to complete the web quest ([PDF, 70KB](#)), then take the Aboriginal English quiz at the bottom of Davis’ AIATSIS article.

To consolidate learning, guide students to complete a thinking routine like [+1](#) or [take note](#). The following resources may also be useful:

- [First Languages Australia – World Expo Dubai presentation](#)
- [Common Ground – First Nations Languages](#)
- [Deadly Story – Languages](#)
- [Department of Education WA – Aboriginal languages](#)

([AC9E10LE01](#)) ([AC9E10LE05](#)) ([AC9E10LY02](#)) ([AC9E10LY03](#)) ([AC9E10LY08](#))

Comparison with other texts

‘IF—’ BY RUDYARD KIPLING

The stage directions for Scene 21 (pp. 37–41) tell us that, at the beginning of the scene, a quote is projected around the performance space. This quote comes from ‘[If—](#)’, a poem by British writer Rudyard Kipling (st. 2, ll. 3–4).

The following questions can be answered independently, then discussed as a class OR in small groups:

- Why has Andrea James selected this quote? Research the links between the quote and [Wimbledon](#).
- In your opinion, what does this quote mean? What is its relevance to professional sport, and to Goolagong’s life as explored in the play thus far?
- [Read the whole poem](#). Consider any other links to Goolagong’s life. If you had to choose ONE other line from ‘[If—](#)’ to represent her character in the play, which line would it be and why?
- Using a medium of your choice (including digital mediums and photography), create a visual representation of the quote you have chosen. Your art must NOT contain words.

Display the artworks in the classroom and have students predict, using sticky notes, which quote from 'If—' each piece is referencing.

(AC9E10LA01) (AC9E10LA02) (AC9E10LA03) (AC9E10LA06) (AC9E10LE01)
(AC9E10LE02) (AC9E10LE06) (AC9E10LY01) (AC9E10LY06)

KANGAROO STEW BY ZAC JAMES

Kangaroo Stew is a play written by Wonguktha, Yamaji, and Murri playwright Zac James. It was first performed in Boorloo (Perth) in 2021. You can access the [blurb](#) for the playscript, along with a [media release](#) and [teacher notes](#), on Magabala Books' website.

The cast of *Kangaroo Stew* is similar in size to that of *Sunshine Super Girl*. Comparisons can be drawn between the stage, sound, and lighting design as described in the stage directions.

Kangaroo Stew also explores similar themes to *Sunshine Super Girl*, including:

- Aboriginal peoples – culture and spirituality
- identity
- family relationships
- conflict
- Country
- grief
- responsibility
- power

Evaluation of the text

WIMBLEDON

Have students research the Wimbledon Championships. You might like to allocate them a page each from the '[About Wimbledon](#)' section of the official website. Discuss various note-taking strategies, using [examples from Goodnotes](#) (or others that you prefer), and have students select different strategies to trial. They can then collate their research on a Padlet OR class mind map, depending on which note-taking strategies were utilised.

Ask students to locate FIVE other texts that reference the Wimbledon Championships. These might be films, documentaries, novels, picture books, or non-fiction texts. Suggestions include the 2021 biographical drama *King Richard* (about Venus and Serena Williams) and the Netflix series *Break Point* (2023–2024). Students should add the book covers/movie posters for their chosen texts to a single document and jot down some notes about their connection to/portrayal of Wimbledon.

Now read Scene 16 (pp. 26–28). Students should make connections between their earlier research, the information gleaned from other texts, and this scene. Ask:

- How does Scene 16 consolidate what you have learned about Wimbledon?
- How does it challenge what you have learned about Wimbledon?
- How does James represent the challenges Goolagong faced at Wimbledon? Remember, she was only 19 years old at the time.

(AC9E10LE01) (AC9E10LY01) (AC9E10LY04) (AC9E10LY05)

MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN SPORT

At the beginning of Scene 29 (pp. 53–57), Evonne recalls the dismissive and reductive reporting by the BBC and London press during her Wimbledon comeback. Explore media representation of the Matildas (soccer), Diamonds (netball), Opals (basketball), and Hockeyroos (field hockey). Also explore media representation of female tennis players who are mothers, such as Serena Williams. Draw comparisons, and note changes, between contemporary media coverage and that of Evonne in *Sunshine Super Girl*. Resources that may aid this discussion include:

- [Change Our Game – The conversation of sport: representation of women in sports news coverage 2023–24](#)
- [UN Women Australia – Facts and figures: women in sport](#)
- [ABC News – As we mark International Women’s Day, let’s do better in covering women’s sport](#)
- [The Conversation – Women’s sport and social media: the arguments over shared or separate accounts](#)
- [Parliament of Australia – Women’s Sport and the Media](#)

Scene 29 not only portrays Evonne’s second Wimbledon victory, but celebrates her entire career. Discuss:

- How is this scene written to manage the transition from the 1980 Wimbledon Championships to the reflection on Evonne’s career and the conclusion of the play?
- How are the two Dancers utilised to tell the final part of the story?
- Where is Evonne at the conclusion of the play? Why? Consider the links between this scene and the Prologue (pp. 1–2).
- How is the ending comedic, and how is it heartfelt?

(AC9E10LA01) (AC9E10LE01) (AC9E10LE04) (AC9E10LE05) (AC9E10LY01)
(AC9E10LY03) (AC9E10LY05)

RICH ASSESSMENT TASK

RESEARCH AND PANEL DISCUSSION

In Scene 22 (pp. 41–43), Evonne competes in the (now defunct) South African Open. Prior to this, Bob and Isabel challenge her to boycott the tournament. There is some key historical information in this chapter of which students may have varying degrees of awareness. To further their understanding, they should select ONE of the following topics and conduct some research:

- [The Aborigines Advancement League](#)
- [The Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs](#)
- [The Aboriginal Tent Embassy](#)
- [Apartheid](#)

Your approach to this task will depend on the class. You could provide a note-taking framework or have students choose one themselves; you could have them work independently, in pairs, or in small groups. What matters is that students develop their own understanding, rather than just copy down notes. [This blog post](#) could act as a suitable introduction to the task.

Once students have completed their research, collate it and conduct a [gallery walk](#). Follow this with a class discussion so that students can engage with each topic.

Students will then work in groups of four to five to present a panel discussion that demonstrates their speaking and listening skills, as well as their understanding of Scene 22’s historical context.

By way of introduction, explain that a panel discussion brings together representatives (often experts in a field) from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives to explore/debate contemporary issues. For their panel, students will discuss the importance of historical context in understanding and responding to *Sunshine Super Girl*. They must provide textual evidence from Scene 22 to support the discussion, focusing on the following guiding statements:

- What are the key events that take place in Scene 22?
- Explore the arguments for and against Evonne going to South Africa.
- How does an understanding of historical context impact your reading of Scene 22? What do you understand now that you may not have prior to your research?

It may be useful to outline the following key features of panel discussions:

- They are structured classroom discussions in which students take on the role of panellists, while the remaining students become members of the audience.
- They are facilitated by a chairperson or panel leader who ensures roughly equal contributions from all panellists, and maintains a smooth flow in the discussion.
- They allow students to demonstrate their abilities to listen to and acknowledge other viewpoints, as well as use non-verbal strategies to support their verbal communication.
- They expose students to new perspectives and different ways of approaching topics of interest/concern.
- They encourage collaboration and productive learning and foster critical capabilities.

Additional tips can be found in this handout ([PDF, 112KB](#)) from Reading Australia's teaching resource for *Ghost Bird** (see **Informed Reaction > Reflecting on Awareness of the Text's Wider Cultural Value > Panel Discussion**).

You can utilise any of the following rubrics to assess this task:

- [OpenSciEd – Self-Assessment for Classroom Discussions](#)
- [Edutopia – Discussion Rubric](#)
- [Cow Creek Education – Panel Discussion Rubric](#)
- [Searle Center – Rubric for Classroom Discussion](#)

* *Reading Australia* title

(AC9E10LA03) (AC9E10LE01) (AC9E10LE02) (AC9E10LE04) (AC9E10LY01)
(AC9E10LY02) (AC9E10LY05) (AC9E10LY07)

Synthesising core ideas

PERSONAL REFLECTION

In their notebooks (or in another form), students should reflect on what they have learned from studying *Sunshine Super Girl*. This might be in the form of a mind map, infographic, blog post, vlog, podcast, or narrated PowerPoint. Students must consult with you to decide the form of their reflection prior to beginning this task.

Focus questions might include:

- What is unique about how this play was staged? Explain how tennis is incorporated into the dialogue and choreography.
- What aspects of society have changed since the era in which the play is set? What aspects of society are consistent with the era in which the play is set? Give evidence for both.
- What do you see as the most important theme in the play, and why?
- What do you admire most about the character of Evonne?
- What have you learned about Australia's historical context in the decades since colonisation (specifically relating to First Nations peoples and communities) that you were not aware of before studying *Sunshine Super Girl*?

(AC9E10LA03) (AC9E10LE01) (AC9E10LE04) (AC9E10LE05) (AC9E10LE07)
(AC9E10LY01) (AC9E10LY05) (AC9E10LY06)

RICH ASSESSMENT TASK

DEVELOPING AN INTERVIEW

Show students an episode of the ABC TV series *The Assembly*, ideally Episode 5 featuring Adnyamathanha/Narungga man and former AFL champion Adam Goodes. Make sure you explain the premise of the show – in which journalist Leigh Sales mentors Autistic journalism students to interview well-known Australians – before watching.

NOTE: 'Autistic' with a capital A is an example of **identity-first language**. The way people identify can vary significantly, so it is always best to ask about their preferences and use that language accordingly. See the **PWDA Language Guide** for more information about respectful disability-related language.

Learning from the guidance Sales gives the interviewers, students should craft a series of 20 interview questions for Evonne and Andrea James. At least EIGHT of these questions need to be directed to the playwright.

Students should utilise their knowledge of *Sunshine Super Girl's* plot, characters, structure, and themes, as well as their knowledge of Goolagong's career, when crafting their questions. They should also research the difference between **closed and open-ended questions**, and ensure that they only use the latter.

Finally, they should consider the order in which they will ask their questions (again taking guidance from *The Assembly*). Once they have drafted and edited their work, they will submit their final list of questions, arranged in the order they think will be most effective.

An example rubric (**PDF, 80KB**) has been provided.

(AC9E10LA01) (AC9E10LA02) (AC9E10LA03) (AC9E10LA06) (AC9E10LY02)
(AC9E10LY03) (AC9E10LY04) (AC9E10LY06)

[Back to Top](#)



Unit Suitable For English – Year 10

Duration 4–5 weeks

Curriculum Summary

Version 9.0 content descriptions

Themes

belonging, community, connections to Country, First Nations texts, gender roles and stereotypes, grief, identity, overcoming adversity, racism, relationships, sport

General Capabilities

Critical and Creative Thinking, Digital Literacy, Ethical Understanding, Intercultural Understanding, Literacy, Personal and Social Capability

Cross-curriculum Priorities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

FURTHER DETAILS

Publisher Currency Press

Date of Publication 2021

ISBN 9781760626754

Category Drama

Pages

72

Unit Writer

CASEY MULDER is a Ballardong Noongar woman with Dutch and English heritage. She loves storytelling in all its forms and lives on Whadjuk boodja. Casey works in a variety of education roles and is also a freelance editor and writer. She facilitates the First Nations Write Night at the Centre for Stories with Luisa Mitchell and is currently working on a creative non-fiction manuscript with the support of the Centre for Stories, Magabala Books, and Australian Indigenous Coffee. Casey is also the First Nations editor for *Westerly* Magazine.

© AATE 2025

COPYRIGHTAGENCY

© Copyright Agency and contributors 2025
ABN 53 001 228 799

