

## **The Unlikely Story of Bennelong & Phillip**

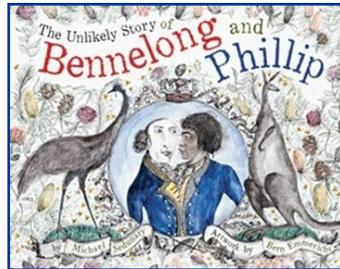
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The book explores the extraordinary and improbable friendship between Bennelong, a local Aboriginal man, and Captain Arthur Phillip, who led the First Fleet and founded the settlement that became Sydney. It is one of Australia's most important and fascinating stories, yet remains largely unknown to most people.



Teacher notes have been prepared by the publisher, Berbay publishing. Our notes are normally only kept to one page, but as there is so much detail in this book and it is aimed at the more senior primary students, we have included them in full.

### Themes:

- Australian History: first European settlement
- Indigenous culture
- Identity and belonging
- Friendship and other allegiances
- Cultural differences and similarities
- Authority: compassion and cruelty
- History: how factual is it?

### Study Notes and Activities:

The following are offered as discussion points to help young students deepen their involvement in this story and to form their own views about various aspects of it.

- Think about the conditions aboard those incredible hulks. What adjectives come to mind as you think about this? How would the convicts have received the news that they were to be transported to Botany Bay?
- Was Lord Sydney's decision to move convicts offshore a good one? Is this a good way for governments to solve problems they are having with certain groups of people?
- Why would the first Australians have seen the new arrivals as aliens, devils, or ghosts?
- Why is it so difficult to have a simple, straightforward view about Phillip's attitude to aboriginal people? (Best answered after you have finished the story.)
- What clues are there in the text that this is not just an account of known facts about Bennelong and Phillip? How important is imagination in reading and writing history?
- When Bennelong escaped from Government House, Governor Phillip 'was left to ponder what he had done wrong.' What (if anything) had he done wrong?
- If Phillip was Bennelong's friend, shouldn't he have done something to stop the spearing on Manly Beach? Could he have if he wanted to?
- What is an ambassador? Is this too grand a term for Bennelong as he goes about life in his hut at Tubowgalle?

**Continued overleaf.....**

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**Picture Story**

*Teacher Notes and Activities*

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- Imagine Governor Phillip pacing up and down in his study, deciding what to do after the stealing of the vegetables. What would have been going through his head?
- How big a decision was it for Bennelong to accept Phillip's invitation to sail to England? Why were Bennelong's friends and family so upset by it?
- Do you think Phillip would have kept in touch with Bennelong in London? Why did he take him there in the first place?
- The book refers to Bennelong's letter as sad in some ways. Read the letter and see if you agree.
- In 2014, the bicentenary of Arthur Phillip's death, Prince Philip helped unveil a memorial in Westminster Abbey to the first governor of New South Wales. In the ceremony Phillip was referred to as 'far sighted' and 'humane'. Is there anything in this book to support that description of him?
- Write an account of a recent event that everyone in your class took part in (e.g a sports day, an excursion). Compare the accounts that different people have written. Which account is the true one?
- Imagine and act out a conversation between two Londoners on seeing Bennelong and Yemmerewanne in the streets, at the theatre or at Parliament House. Now act out a conversation between the two Eora men as they notice the Londoners talking about them.
- After the death of McEntire, William Dawes, risking serious punishment, refused a direct order from Governor Phillip to take part in the expedition to hunt down Pemulwuy. Write a letter as William Dawes, explaining your decision and asking for the Governor's understanding.