

Once

By Kate Forsyth & Illustrated by Krista Brennan

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Once

A long time ago

My grandmother's grandmother

Travelled far, far across the seas

Over the rim of the world to where the stars were new

Kate Forsyth tells tales of her ancestors' lives in Australia in this beautifully illustrated picture book that celebrates the power of story. From the first perilous journey to a new land, to the great wars and civil rights movements, readers live through key moments in Australia's fascinating history.



Teacher Notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher. A full version is available on our website.

Themes:

- Change and the past
- Memories and stories
- Legacies
- Family

Pre-reading questions:

- How would you define a story? What stories do you know about your family? What information can you learn about this book from the front cover?

After-reading questions:

- Discuss the role of illustrations in picture books. Are there things we only learn from the illustrations, not from the text? Do the illustrations follow the text? Do they enhance the story? How? Do the illustrations make us feel things that the words don't, and vice versa?
- Were you or your parents/grandparents/great-grandparents born in Australia or somewhere else? If elsewhere: Where were they born? Why did they come to Australia? What were their first impressions of Australia?
- How is Australia portrayed in this book through the different time periods?
- How is a sense of time conveyed in the book? Name three ways you see time passing.
- What can we learn about legacies from *Once*?

Activities:

- Write down a story from your family history.
- Collect stories about your local area from residents, and use them to write a fictional narrative, creating a character who lives in that world.
- Bring in an object from home and an autobiography for it. The object can be something as sentimental as a toy, or something as simple as a sock. Describe when it was first created and what it has done since.
- The great-great grandmother in the story comes to Australia with one small chest. What would you put in your chest if you had to move far away? Draw or write what you would bring in the empty chest worksheet that is attached.
- Pick a period in time to research. Have a day in class for students to bring in something to do with their time period. This might be a recipe, a costume, or a figurine.
- The mother in the story marches in the street for peace. What cause are you passionate about? Come up with a slogan that describes your cause.

Worksheet – What would you pack?

If you had to move far away and could only bring one small chest, what would you pack? Draw or write items that you would bring.

