

Memorial

Author: Gary Crew; Illustrator: Shaun Tan

The great tree was planted the day they came back from the World War 1. A stone memorial was also built to commemorate those who lost their lives for their country. Over the years many special times were spent by the townsfolk under the tree. But now the tree is threatening to uproot the stone memorial. The council wants to chop down the tree, but isn't it just as much a memorial as the stone statue?

Literacy

1. Getting Ready for the Book

Before reading the book the children:

- Write down, and then share, what they remember about their first day at school. How did they feel? What was the name of their teacher? Where did they sit? Did they cry? Who was their first friend? What did they have for lunch? What activities did they do?
- At home, write down what their immediate family remembers about that first day of school (their version of events). Are memories reliable? Write down what their family, including grandparents, even great grandparents, aunts and uncles, remember about their own first day of school. Are the memories different? Why? Are memories important? Why? Discuss. Keep the written memories in a safe place.

Music

Listening / Singing

- Listen to the song *And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda* by Eric Bogle (ABC *Time to Sing!* 1993)
- This song tells about one person's memories of the first ANZAC day and the ongoing repercussions of it, in his life.

Duration

- Listen to the song and feel the three beats in each bar by clapping on the first beat and clicking fingers to the other two beats.

Structure

- Learn to sing the chorus and sing it as the song is played through again. During the verses create a three beat body percussion pattern.

Tone Colour

- Divide class into four groups and give them a copy of one verse. Have each group describe what is happening in their verse, first verbally, then using instruments to represent the sounds and characters in the lyrics. Add these to the song as it is played and sung through again.

Literacy

2. Introducing the Book

The children:

- Share what they know about ANZAC Day.
- Ask the children's parents, grandparents, great grandparents what they know or remember about World War 1, World War 2, the Korean War and Vietnam. Are these memories important? Why? Discuss.
- Find out what a Shrine of Remembrance is and if there is one in the town or suburb where they live. Why do we have Shrines of Remembrance? Do we still build them?
- Look at the front cover of the book *Memorial*. What is a memorial? What do you think the book is about? What do you notice about the cover illustration?
- The teacher reads the book without stopping. What is the book about? Brainstorm answers and record.

Literacy

3. Getting into the book

- Discuss the content and difficult words; Where is Ypres? What happened there? How do you think Old Pa won his medals? What is Old Pa wearing on the lapel of his jacket? What do they mean? What is reveille? Why do we say the words "Lest we Forget"? What are the other special words said on ANZAC day? Who is the Unknown Soldier?
- Why did they plant a tree? Why did the council cut the tree down? Do you think it was the right or wrong decision? Give reasons. If you were on that council, what would you have done? What memories do the boy's family have about the tree? Is the tree a memorial? Can people be a memorial?

Drama

- Pretend the class is the council.
- Prepare and present a debate on the question : 'Should we authorise for the tree to be cut down?'

Visual Arts

- Create posters lobbying for either the tree to be cut down, or for the tree to stay as a memorial. Display these around the classroom.

Drama

- In the illustrations, how does Shaun Tan show the passing of time? Why are the small illustrations important?
- Look at the small illustrations on the first page, showing the tiny shoot starting to grow into a tall plant.

- Have children crouch down, pretending to be a tiny seed. Read through the song *Just a Little Seed* (MMADD about the Arts CD) as though it is a poem and have children pretend to be a tiny seed which sends out shoots, then leaves, then a bud and finally a flower.

Music

Listening / Singing

Pitch

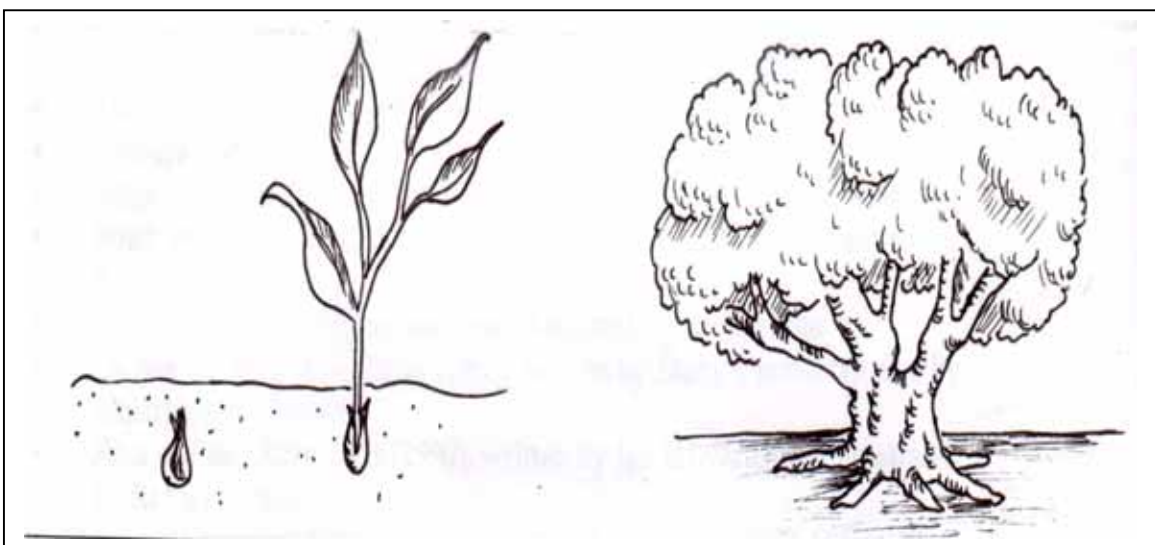
- Listen to the song played on the cassette and have children mime the actions of the seed growing taller. Discuss how each verse starts low and the pitch goes up towards the end, reflecting each growth stage of the plant. Learn to sing the song and show the rising pitch with hands.

Structure

- Create a new third verse about the plant becoming a tall and spreading tree, home to many birds and small animals, and even children!

For example: *Year by year it grows, branches spreading wide,
Birds and children hide and play and nest,
Taller still it grows, covered now in green,
Bringing shade to all who come to rest.*

- Sing the whole song through, with the new third verse, and act out the lyrics.



Visual Arts

- List the different textures the illustrator creates. Why has he included them? Which of our senses does the illustrator want us to use? Why?
- Why does the illustrator use double page spreads without any text? How and why are each different?
- How do the illustrations make you feel? What does the illustrator do to make you feel this way?
- Create your own work of art which portrays an emotion. Think carefully about your choice of content, colour, line and texture.
- Create a series of pictures which shows the passing of time, eg. Christmas Holidays, the first five years of my life, my day at school, etc.
- Mount these artworks and create a border around them, similar to the borders in the illustrations around the text. Note how they reflect the text through their textures, subject matter, and media.

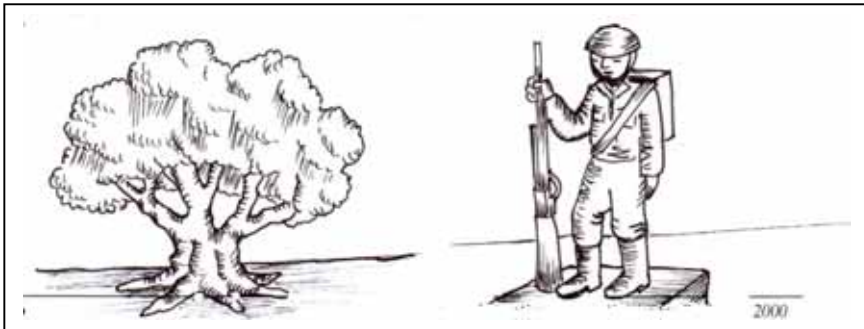
Literacy

4. Coming Back to the Book

- Visit a Shrine of Remembrance. What does it look like? What is written on it? Draw or photograph it.
- Write a letter to the council objecting to the tree being cut down.
- Using your local newspaper as a model, write a series of newspaper articles about the council wanting to chop down the tree and what eventually happens. Present all the different points of view. Has anything similar happened in your community?

Drama

- Conduct or tape interviews with Old Pa, the Mayor or a Counsellor, and the boy for the local radio station, allowing each to put forward their point of view about the tree.
- Present *Memorial* as a Reader's Theatre.



Visual Arts

- Use the 'first day at school' memories recorded in the *Getting Ready for the Book* section and create an illustrated book for the classroom.
- Look at the different ways Shaun Tan illustrates *Memorial* and try to illustrate your book in a similar way, using relevant media and techniques.

Literacy

5. Going Beyond the Book

- Find out and compare how different cultures create 'Memorials'.
- Visit Gary Crew's website. What other books has he written?
- Do an illustrator study on the work of Shaun Tan. How does he change his style to suit the different books he illustrates? Find out if Shaun Tan exhibits his original artwork and arrange a visit. Write to him.

Read other books about people and their memories - which could lead into autobiography and biography.

- *The Power of One* (Young Readers' Edition 1999), by Bryce Courtney
- *Grandpa's Stories* (1996), written and illustrated by Rachel Tonkin
- *Sadako* (1995), written by Eleanor Coerr and illustrated by Ed Young
- *What Was the War Like Grandma?* (1995), written and illustrated by Rachel Tonkin
- *As I Grew Older* (1993), written and illustrated by Ian Abdulla
- *Do Not Go Around the Edges* (1990), written by Daisy Utemorrah and by illustrated Pat Torres
- *Papa and the Olden Days* (1990), written by Ian Edwards and illustrated by Rachel Tonkin
- *Arthur Corunna's Story* (1990), *Mother and Daughter* (1990), *Sally's Story* (1990) written by Sally Morgan
- *My Hiroshima* (1987) written and illustrated by Junko Morimoto
- *The Miracle Tree* (1985) written by Christobel Mattingley and illustrated by Marianne Yamaguchi
- *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* (1981) by Eleanor Coerr

