Neighbours, Asia/Pacific: Upper Primary English, Year 5

Neighbours PNG

This unit of work, Neighbours PNG, begins with the concept of neighbourliness and then extends the focus to our Pacific island neighbour, Papua New Guinea — its place in relation to Australia, major languages and the culture of traditional storytelling.

Texts used include fiction, stories and factual texts, with Miracle on Separation Street by Bob Graham, Bungawitta written by Emily Rodda and illustrated by Craig Smith, a traditional tale The First Lakatoi by Andrew V Solien, material from Get Connected Issue 3: Our Pacific Neighbours, and the video clip Guardians of the River.

Focus

This unit provides opportunities to explore the ideas that:

- good neighbours want to know, understand and assist their neighbours
- Australia has an obligation to help our international neighbours if needed
- despite differences in how we live we have basically the same human needs
- if we know about our neighbours’ lives, customs, languages and cultures we are more likely to understand them
- Australians have a responsibility to learn about Papua New Guinea and our international neighbours.
Australian Curriculum: English

The general capabilities emphasised in the unit of work Neighbours PNG are literacy, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability and intercultural understanding. This unit addresses the cross-curriculum priority Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia.

The Australian Curriculum: English is built around the three interrelated strands of Language, Literature and Literacy. This unit of work focuses on the strands of Literature and Literacy through a range of fictional and factual texts.

Content

Students will be provided opportunities through the activities to engage with aspects of the following content descriptions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Language</strong></th>
<th><strong>Literature</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language for interaction</strong></td>
<td><strong>Creating literature</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand that patterns of language interaction vary across social contexts and types of texts and that they help to signal social roles and relationships (ACELA1501)</td>
<td>Create literary texts that experiment with structures, ideas and stylistic features of selected authors (ACELT1798)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Literacy</strong></th>
<th><strong>Creating texts</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpreting, analysing, evaluating</strong></td>
<td>Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive print and multimodal texts, choosing text structures, language features, images and sound appropriate to purpose and audience (ACELY1704)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify and explain characteristic text structures and language features used in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to meet the purpose of the text (ACELY1701)</td>
<td>Use comprehension strategies to analyse information, integrating and linking ideas from a variety of print and digital sources (ACELY1703)</td>
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# NSW K–6 English Syllabus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syllabus outcomes</th>
<th>Syllabus indicators</th>
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</table>
| **TS3.1 Communicates effectively for a range of purposes with a variety of audiences to express well-developed, well-organised ideas with more challenging topics** | • Engages in discussions involving more than one point of view about characters, events, ideas and themes in literary text  
• Listens to explanations  
• Engages in and discusses oral storytelling |
| **RS3.5 Reads independently an extensive range of texts with increasing content demands and responds to themes and issues** | • Reads texts for personal enjoyment, interest and research  
• Interprets more complex maps, diagrams and retrieval devices  
• Identifies and interprets ideas, themes and issues in literary and factual texts  
• Gathers and interprets information from a range texts, makes inferences and generalisations and draws conclusions |
| **RS3.6 Uses a comprehensive range of skills and strategies appropriate to the type of text being read** | • Uses a range of retrieval devices such as retrieval charts to record researched information  
• Poses questions to guide reading  
• Relates information in texts to personal experience  
• Gathers information from visual texts such as videos |
<table>
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</table>
| RS3.7 Critically analyses techniques used by writers to create certain effects, to use language creatively, to position the reader in various ways and to construct different interpretations of experience | • Recognises and discusses the purpose of organisational stages of different types of texts such as narratives  
• Recognises and discusses the purposes of a variety of texts such as maps, photographs, graphs, charts  
• Discusses writers’ use of language features and techniques and comments on the effects of word choices |
| WS3.9 Produces a wide range of well-structured and well-presented literary and factual texts for a wide variety of purposes and audiences using increasingly challenging topics, ideas, issues and written language features | • Creates written versions of known oral stories  
• Creates annotated drawings to convey information |
Teaching & learning activities

1. Introduce the unit with an overview of student work and the stories they will explore

Throughout the unit students will be required to work with retrieval devices. Explain and discuss the use of these.

- A map of the world. Students may maintain a map individually as well as the class map on display.
- Retrieval charts.
- Vocabulary or glossary list.

Tell the students that the stories they will explore, although very different in style, are all connected through the theme of neighbours — our rural and urban neighbours and our international neighbours in Papua New Guinea.

Fictional texts — *Miracle on Separation Street* by Bob Graham and *Bungawitta* written by Emily Rodda and illustrated by Craig Smith — are used to introduce the concept of neighbourliness.

*Miracle on Separation Street* is an urban story that shows that neighbours can care for and support one another when things don’t work out ‘right’ and can have friendships despite age differences. *Bungawitta* explores a rural neighbourhood in a time of drought and how neighbours work together to try and revitalise their town.

At an international level, Australia is also an important neighbour to many small Pacific island nations such as Papua New Guinea. Good neighbours seek to know their neighbours and understand their cultures, languages and customs. The traditional tale from Papua New Guinea, *The First Lakatoi* by Andrew V Solien, tells the traditional tale of the building of the first lakatoi, a multi-hulled canoe. This unit also uses factual texts from *Get Connected*, Issue 3: Our Pacific Neighbours, to introduce our close international neighbours in the Pacific, including ‘A day in the life …’ story by Damian, an 11-year-old boy from Papua New Guinea.
2. Investigating orientation

Explain to the students that opening paragraphs, or beginnings of narrative texts, which serve the purpose of orientation, are meant to hook the reader and hold their attention.

Most openings give a brief glimpse of a main character, a description that sets a scene and touches on an issue. The voice and tone of the work reaches out through the pages and hooks your attention, and there may already be some sense of how the problem (complication) will be introduced.

Begin by drafting a retrieval chart; that is, a simple matrix or grid where information is recorded for the purpose of retrieving the information and using it in another way. Tell students to be alert to aspects of the stories that will help them complete this chart after reading and discussion.

Example of a retrieval chart for the four texts in this unit, Emily Rodda’s *Bungawitta* and Bob Graham’s *Miracle on Separation Street*, Andrew V Solien’s *The First Lakatoi*, and Damian’s story:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bungawitta</th>
<th>Miracle on Separation Street</th>
<th>The First Lakatoi</th>
<th>Damian’s story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Point of view from which the text is written. <em>Is the text written in first, second or third person?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
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<td>Purpose</td>
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<td>Audience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text type</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text features; for example, repetition, new or interesting vocabulary</td>
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Read the beginning of the texts to the students, stopping at critical points to ask about the particular language techniques and choices that the author has made.
Once completed, ask the students to talk about how the structures and features of the texts contribute to the way each text communicates both information and the setting.

**Bungawitta**

This is the opening of Emily Rodda’s *Bungawitta*:

*It was very dry in Bungawitta. It had been dry so long that Glory-Alice, the youngest person in town, had only seen rain on TV. It had been dry so long that old Maisie Macduff, nodding and dreaming on her front verandah, sometimes thought she had made rain up.*

*As the land dried out, Bungawitta shrank. First the animals left, except for two dogs called Brownie and Blue, a few chooks, a Shetland pony called Meg, and Maisie’s old cat Bruce. Then the people started leaving, two by two, four by four, six by six. It was like Noah’s Ark in reverse.*

Ask the students what questions come to mind when they read the opening.

Some questions could be:

- Where is the story set?
- What does ‘dry’ mean in these opening sentences?
- How does the author convey that the town is dry?
- What words, phrases and clauses are repeated or have a similar pattern?
- What effect does this have on the setting and the situation?
- Why would you stay in such a place?
- Who are the main characters and what do you think about them?
- How old do you think Glory-Alice is? Or Maisie?
- What is their relationship?
- Rodda says that the ‘land shrank’. What does that convey?
- ‘Noah’s Ark in reverse’ what images does that bring to mind? Can the students explain this reference?

Explain that the opening introduces the characters of the neighbours, Glory-Alice and Maisie.
Miracle on Separation Street

This is the opening of Miracle on Separation Street by Bob Graham:

There I've started it. Well, I've written the name of the story, so that has to be a start. I've found this exercise book left over from school last year and ripped out the pages with the sums on. So I have the rest of the book to say what happened.

Ask the students what questions come to mind when they read the opening. Some questions could be:

- The first paragraph uses a different technique to that in Bungawitta. Describe the technique. How is it different? (Hint: what words are repeated? Which words are linked in some way?)
- How does the writer convey the effect of a conversation with the reader — as if the writer was talking directly to them? What words try to draw the reader into the writer’s inner circle?
- In the opening paragraph the writer hints at a secret story and that story is told in the end. Did this opening paragraph hold their attention? Did the ‘hook’ work for them — that is, do they want to find out what the story is about?

The First Lakatoi

From the beginning of The First Lakatoi by Andrew Solien:

Hedai Siabo was a young man from Boera village along the coast of Papua. One day Hedai and a group of men from his village went out fishing at a nearby reef, known as Hidia.

When they arrived at the reef Hedai swam out to the reef in search of a big stone that could be used as an anchor for the canoe. As he was swimming, he came to a big stone underneath the reef that he thought would be just right.

This stone was the home of some sea gods. The gods had seen Hedai and as he approached them, they pulled him into a small passage of the stone where he lived with them for a while. It was during this time in captivity that the gods taught him the sacred art of building the lakatoi.
The first paragraph of this traditional tale uses a different technique to that in *Bungawitta* and *Miracle on Separation Street*.

*The First Lakatoi* is a traditional tale that explains the origins of the lakatoi, and its importance in opening up the possibilities of trade. Explain to the students that from the time of the ancestors, important information was passed on to the young in the form of stories. Many of these stories have survived.

Today, there are still communities in Papua New Guinea where oral storytelling is an important way of passing on important information. At the same time, with increased access to education, there are other communities where reading and writing are also significant forms of communication and learning. With the new skills of reading and writing, it is in the cultural interests of the community that the stories be recorded for now and the future.

Questions for *The First Lakatoi*:

- A traditional tale sets the scene — what information are we given about the setting of this story? Why was this important information?
- List three or four interesting or unusual words or phrases in these opening lines. Why did you select certain words?
- Which part of the story increases the reader’s interest in what might happen? What questions might be asked?
- Do students know what a lakatoi is? Ask them to research the term.
- In the extract the writer hints at a secret story, the sacred art of building the lakatoi and that story is told in the end. Did one part of this opening ‘hook’ you more than another part? Why?
- Ask the students if they have any family or personal stories that are passed on as spoken stories. Are they in danger of being lost if they are not written down? Give the students the opportunity to record their oral stories in written form.

Share an example of the story of the first lakatoi below from a PNG Newsletter.
The story of the first lakatoi

Artist Kohu Muri (left), showing his granddaughter Heni Litau (right) and wife Auda Aua (centre) the story of the lakatoi, using pencil drawings he has created:

‘This story is important because people were starving here, fishing was bad and they were eating bush yams and mangrove fruit and nuts. The fisherman Edai Siabo went out but was not catching anything. A storm came, with lightning, and he was going to drown. But a good spirit eel saved him in an underwater cave. Siabo’s spirit came back here with the vision he received and shared the way to make our first sailboat. This sailboat helped our village to survive by making it possible to trade pots and other things with villages around the gulf.’

Granddaughter Heni Litau (above, right): ‘I like to hear the stories, especially about the lakatoi. Everybody does. It is the history of our Motu tribe. By writing down the story and having my grandfather’s drawings, I can share the story with my own children.’

Source: Issue 5 PNG Newsletter, Stories from the Field1, page 5

3. Group reading and retrieval

Ask the students to work in groups to complete reading the texts Miracle on Separation Street, Bungawitta and The First Lakatoi.

Refer to the retrieval chart and the question of how different orientations use different techniques to capture readers’ attention and ‘hook’ them into the story. Ask the students to work in groups to discuss the text that most excites and holds their interest and give reasons why.

Ask the students to comment on an aspect of the texts they have read and add to the retrieval chart. They could begin by:

- asking a question
- re-telling a section of the story
- using a quote from the story
- stating a fact they found interesting

1 Stories from the Field Issue 5: http://www.pnglng.com/media/pdfs/publications/StoriesFromTheField_Newsletter_5.pdf
4. Our neighbours in Papua New Guinea

Read the recount of a day in the life of Damian, an 11-year-old boy from Papua New Guinea.

A day in the life of Damian

My name is Damian and I am 11 years old. I am doing grade three and I live with my parents in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. I really love playing games like running races and soccer which I play at school with my mates. My favourite food is rice and sweet potato. My favourite subject at school is mathematics and when I grow up I want to become a teacher.

My school has more than 1,000 children and there are around 46 children in my class. There are no computers or televisions at school but we do have some basic sports equipment like volleyball nets and basketballs. I start school at 8.00am and finish at 2.30pm. I walk to school each morning and walk back each afternoon. It takes me about one hour to walk to school unless it rains — then it takes me longer!

For breakfast I usually eat leftover food from the previous night’s dinner, which my mum heats and prepares. At times I just eat flour balls. If there is no breakfast my mum gives me some money to find something to eat at school.

At lunch it’s usually dough balls or biscuits. After school I go straight home to do my homework. Because there is no electricity in our house, I have to do my work while it is still daylight. But in the night I can also light candles to do my homework.

When I don’t have any school work, my mother expects me to help her out with cooking or washing dishes. I also fetch our water from the nearby water supply, which is shared with six other families.

On the weekends I am usually out with my mother selling cooked food along the roadside market. I normally go to bed between 9.00pm and 10.00pm. On the weekends my parents allow me to visit with my friends. This is the only time that I am allowed to have fun with my friends.

Ask students to draw up columns and list the similarities and differences between Damian’s life and
their own. What questions come to mind when they read Damian’s story? For instance:

- What information about the life of an 11-year-old in Papua New Guinea did you
discover from reading Damian’s recount?
- If you lived with Damian for a short time, which aspect of your life in Australia
would you miss the most? Can you rank the things you would miss from most
important to least important?

Display the text in its original format
(right).

- Does the diary format
used in the magazine
draw you into the story?
- Do you have unanswered
questions about
Damian’s life?

Learning about Papua New
Guinea

Read the information report on Papua
New Guinea below and discuss the
purpose of the different features: map,
photographs, graph, chart, sub-
headings and written text.

Locate Papua New Guinea on a world
map and emphasise the proximity of
Papua New Guinea as a near
neighbour to Australia.

Damian’s story

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three and I live with my parents in Port Moresby,
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Case Study: Papua New Guinea

Land

Papua New Guinea is located to the north of Australia and is our closest neighbour. The climate is tropical, with high temperature and humidity levels. Tropical forests which covered much of the country are rapidly being logged. At the same time, the connections between people and their land are very significant and central to their identity.

People

PNG is the most linguistically diverse nation in the world with over 700 indigenous languages spoken. However, the dominant language is Melanesian Pidgin, and English is the official language. Christianity and indigenous animist beliefs are the main spiritual beliefs. One of the challenges for the people of PNG is to reconcile their traditional way of life with the modern, urban lifestyles that have been recently introduced.

History

Archaeological evidence indicates that humans arrived on New Guinea at least 60,000 years ago. In 1885, the eastern half of the island was divided between Germany (north) and England (south). During World War I (1914-18), Australia occupied the German area, and continued to administer the combined areas until independence in 1975. Australia continues to have ongoing ties with the country.

Economy

Many tribes in the isolated mountainous interior have little contact with each other, let alone with the outside world. However, there is an increasing urban population. About 80% of the population is dependent on subsistence agriculture. A small proportion of the land is suitable for growing cash crops, including coffee, copra and cocoa.

PNG has extensive mineral deposits - including gold, copper and nickel - but the rugged terrain and inadequate infrastructure (poor roads, communications) make mining difficult. There are significant reserves of oil and natural gas and the country has hopes of becoming a significant energy exporter. Oil, copper and gold account for two-thirds of export earnings. Australian Government aid (A$355 million in 2007-8) is also a significant source of income and includes training for skilled and responsible leadership.
Living conditions

Some 80% of Papua New Guinea’s people live in rural areas with few facilities. The main problems are access to basic health and education services. Roads often don’t exist or are of a poor standard. They are hard to maintain because of the high rainfall and easily eroded soil. People must walk long distances to get to school or reach a medical care centre.

Health services, especially in rural areas, are poor. Lack of access to safe water and even less access to adequate sanitation mean that communicable diseases like diarrhoea and malaria are major causes of illness and death, especially in young children.

Malnutrition, HIV and AIDS and the use of tobacco and alcohol are increasing problems. People living in rural areas live in a variety of traditional housing made from bush materials while people living in towns tend to live in western-style housing. Food consists of what can be grown in gardens – sweet potato, taro and greens supplemented by meat (mainly pig) and imported tinned fish and rice. Rapid population growth is another source of social and economic pressure, especially in urban areas.

Education

Education is highly valued by the people of PNG. However, the public education system is poorly funded and under-resourced – particularly in the more remote areas. Approximately 30% of children never attend a primary school.

Positively, there are moves to expand the use of tok ples (local language) in education programs. Also, there are increasing efforts to improve teacher training and make the curriculum more relevant to student needs.
Guardians of the River

In preparation for watching the video Guardians of the River, lead a short discussion about local and national celebrations, such as school concerts, community fairs and Australia Day.

The video shows one example of a PNG village preparing for and undertaking a celebration. Watching the five-minute clip will assist students to learn about this village in PNG and appreciate some of the similarities and differences in cultural practices.

View Guardians of the River\(^2\).

Prompt comments on aspects of the cultural event the video shows, including noting details of the preparation and undertaking of the celebration. Form small groups and allocate a topic to each group for their viewing focus. Topics could include: carving and painting, the setting of the village, children’s activities, food, clothing at different times, care of the environment and celebrations.

View the video a second time and ask groups to observe and record information about their specific topic. Students then make an annotated drawing that reflects their topic, that they can display and present to the class.

As a class, use the annotated drawings as the basis for a table that compares the PNG village’s way of living with the same topics in their own Australian community. Draw some conclusions about how people in Australia and our regional neighbour conduct celebrations.

As an extension, students could research aspects of our PNG neighbours. Provide topics for the research, print texts, websites or online articles\(^3\).

Who are our neighbours?

Have students complete the following cloze activity. Place the 10 words below to help make sense of the text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>climate</th>
<th>societies</th>
<th>water</th>
<th>disasters</th>
<th>imported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>islands</td>
<td>services</td>
<td>neighbours</td>
<td>unemployment</td>
<td>conflict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Our Pacific neighbours face a number of challenges to improving the country and looking after their people. Some of the challenges they face are the same as the problems other Pacific nations have, to do with their remote location, and some problems are the same as those people from traditional _________________ face, in other places in the developing world.

**Small and remote islands**

The nations of the Pacific are typically small and remote islands. Seven countries have a population of less than 100,000 and populations are spread over many _______________. This means that providing people with health care, education and social services is difficult.

**Slow economic growth**

Pacific island nations need to buy many basic goods from other countries, and the few things they have to sell, by exporting them to other countries, include fish, some farming products, timber and tourism. They need money from exports to pay for the __________ goods they need to buy and to pay from the services people need. Transport and communication ________________ are basic and expensive, which adds to the cost of things for people.

**High population growth**

While the populations are small, the population in many of the countries has rapidly increased, with more young people. This means that there are a large number of young people of working age. Because the economy has not grown, creating more jobs for people, there is high ________________, with more people moving to urban areas from the country, and increased poverty. In some places these changes can also result in crime and social ________________.

**Poverty**

Many of our Pacific ________________ are so poor that many children miss out on primary education, basic health care and safe drinking ____________ — things we take for granted in Australia.

**Climate change and natural disasters**

Many islands are vulnerable to natural ________________ like floods, cyclones and volcanic eruptions. Low-lying islands are especially vulnerable to the effects of ________________ change, including rising sea levels and temperatures.

**Source:** Adapted from World Vision Australia (2008) *Get Connected*, Issue 3: Our Pacific Neighbours
Global citizenship in action

Ask students read the following information about World Vision and complete the activities to follow.

World Vision

World Vision is a non-government organisation (NGO) that works with people around the world to help eliminate poverty and its causes.

What is the history of the organisation?

World Vision was founded in the USA during the Korean War in the 1950s. World Vision Australia began in 1966 and now works in more than 60 countries around the world.

What does the organisation do?

Humanitarian relief

World Vision provides rapid emergency relief to the victims of war, conflict, flood, drought, earthquake, famine or other natural disasters. Workers in the field provide food, shelter, medicine and other immediate needs. Rebuilding programs follow to enable people to protect themselves better from future disasters. In 2008, 3.4 million people were assisted.

Community development

World Vision works alongside poor communities to find solutions to problems like malnutrition, lack of safe drinking water, illiteracy, unemployment and disease. In 2008, World Vision Australia worked on 891 projects and Australians sponsored 405,000 children.
Advocacy and education

World Vision seeks to raise awareness of human need through education programs and campaigns in Australia. These challenge people to take action — such as letter writing, fund-raising and visiting members of parliament. World Vision also seeks to influence business and government policy affecting developing countries.

How do Australians help the organisation?

- My company works with World Vision to provide materials and support to strengthen local communities in developing countries.
- I use World Vision’s education materials in the classroom to help educate young people about global issues.
- My family sponsors a child in a developing country and I write letters to encourage and support her.
- I do the 40 for famine and organise other kids at school to do it as well. This provides money to support important projects overseas.
- I volunteer my time and energy to support World Vision campaigns.
- I’ve written letters to my member of parliament to run a Fair Trade chocolate stall at school with my friends.
How does the organisation benefit people?

- provides emergency food, shelter, medicine and care in times of disaster
- improves health care and education
- provides access to safe drinking water and sanitation
- increases agricultural production
- improves prevention, treatment and care of disease
- encourages gender equality
- addresses climate change and peace building
- supports and cares for orphans and vulnerable children
- provides loans to develop small businesses
- educates Australians to eliminate poverty and its causes
- helps governments and businesses to address poverty.

Complete the table below by using the information above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the name and purpose of the global organisation?</th>
<th>What does the organisation do?</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do Australians help the organisation?</th>
<th>How does the organisation benefit people around the world</th>
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In small groups, play Millennium Development Goals in PNG — a simulation game⁴. Present your findings to the class or grade.


For the teacher

Find teacher notes for *Bungawitta*\(^5\) (.pdf 272 kB). *The First Lakatoi* and other traditional stories can be ordered from [UPNG Press](http).

Screen Australia has an interactive map\(^6\) of Australia and the Pacific region, and the ABC TV series *Pacific Stories*\(^7\) journeys through the islands of the Pacific to tell of the amazing transformation of the region.

There are over 800 spoken languages in PNG. Tok Pisin is one of the official languages and widely spoken, and also important as the language among Papuans and New Guineans who otherwise have no other language in common. Tok Pisin is a pidgin language whose vocabulary is mainly derived from English, indigenous languages, and other languages, mainly German. Its structure is in many ways un-English. [Radio Australia]\(^8\) has services in Tok Pisin\(^9\). Teachers may wish to listen or to show their students news headlines in Tok Pisin.

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\(^5\) Teacher notes for *Bungawitta* from Scholastic publishers: [www.scholastic.com.au/schools/education/teacherresources/assets/pdfs/BungawittaTeachersNotes.pdf](http).


\(^7\) ABC *Pacific Stories* website: [http://www.abc.net.au/pacificstories/](http).

\(^8\) Radio Australia Home: [http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/](http).