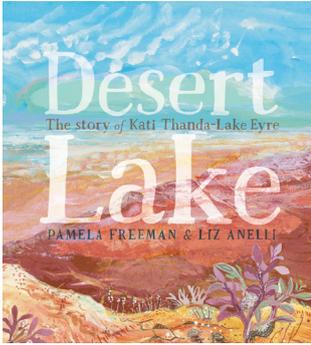




# Walker Books Classroom Ideas



## Desert Lake: The Story of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre

by Pamela Freeman  
Illustrated by Liz Anelli  
ISBN: 9781921529436  
ARRP: \$24.95  
NZRRP: \$27.99  
June 2016

### Outline:

The dry salt bed of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre shimmers in the desert heat. But far up north, the rains have come. Water is flooding into empty riverbeds and swirling down towards the lake. Soon everything will change.

### Author/Illustrator Information:

Pamela Freeman is an award-winning author who has also worked as a freelance business and technical writer. Pamela's work ranges from picture books to adult novels and she is best known for her Floramonde series of fantasy novels. The Castings Trilogy is Pamela's highly successful fantasy series for adults published by Hachette Australia. In addition to this, she teaches creative writing to adults at the Australian Writers' Centre. Victor's Challenge won the 2009 Aurealis Award for Best Children's Short Fiction/Illustrated Work/Picture Book and was a Notable Book in the Younger Readers Category, CBCA Awards, 2010. *Mary's Australia* was shortlisted for the 2015 CBCA Eve Pownall Award. For more information about Pamela and her books, please visit her website: [www.pamelafreemanbooks.com](http://www.pamelafreemanbooks.com).

Liz Anelli has recently come to live in Newcastle, NSW, having previously lived and worked as an illustrator in England. She has a huge passion for drawing and keeps rows of sketchbooks in her studio. Alongside books and other illustration commissions Liz has been a key activist for "The Campaign For Drawing", facilitating numerous international "Big Draws" for the past thirteen years. She also has been much involved with creative child learning in schools and community settings. Liz won an Australia Council grant to visit and research Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre.

### How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

<p><b>These notes are for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary years 2+</li> <li>• Ages 5+</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key Learning Areas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English</li> <li>• Science</li> </ul>	<p><b>Example of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-fiction</li> <li>• Narrative non-fiction</li> </ul>	<p><b>Themes/Ideas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australian wildlife</li> <li>• Nature/Environment             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change</li> <li>• Lie Cycles</li> <li>• Weather</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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National Curriculum Focus:*			
<p><b>English</b></p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>ACELA1460 ACELA1463 ACELA1465 ACELA1466 ACELA1468 ACELA1469 ACELT1587 ACELT1589 ACELT1590 ACELT1593 ACELY1665 ACELY1666 ACELY1668 ACELY1671</p>	<p>Year 3</p> <p>ACELA1475 ACELA1477 ACELA1478 ACELA1483 ACELT1594 ACELT1596 ACELT1598 ACELT1599 ACELT1600 ACELT1601 ACELT1791 ACELY1678</p>	<p><b>Science</b></p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>ACSSU030 ACSSU032 ACSI037</p> <p>Year 3</p> <p>ACSSU044 ACSHE050</p>	<p>*This book is a useful resource for biological sciences study throughout the F-6 Australian Curriculum.</p> <p>*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.</p>

\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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# Walker Books Classroom Ideas

## Discussion Questions and Activities:

### Before Reading

Before reading *Desert Lake*, examine the front and back cover of the book. Identify the following:

- The title
- The author
- The illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb.

Before reading the book, have a class discussion about what you would expect a lake to look like and the flora and fauna you could expect to find there. Turn to the first spread (“Under the vast blue desert sky ...”), what is surprising about this spread? What is different about this lake to your idea of what a lake should be like?

### Exploring the Text

Is *Desert Lake* an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? Is it a combination of more than one of these types of texts? How can you tell? Who do you think the book was created for?

The text in this book is presented in two styles. Identify the formats. Why do you think the book is designed this way? Read the book using each format separately and then discuss how the different formats change the purpose and alter the perception of *Desert Lake*. Which writing style do you prefer: the descriptive storytelling style or the informative factual style? In what types of texts would each of these writing styles usually be used? For example: novels, short stories, newspaper articles and reference books.

One of the font types sometimes features words in a larger or smaller font size. What effect does this change in font size have on the reader? Pay particular attention to the following:

- Spread 2: “Rain falls.”
- Spread 3: “ ... tumbling and leaping ... ”
- Spread 4: “ ... the hungry gobies snap them up.”
- Spread 8: “But the lake is shrinking.”

*Desert Lake* includes an index at the back of the book. What is the purpose of an index? How do you use it? In what kind of books would you normally find an index? Using the index as a starting point, collect any other words from the book that you don't know the meaning of and create a Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre dictionary. You can also collect words and phrases from any further research to add to your dictionary. Illustrate some of the entries to help further explain their meaning.

“The skies above the lake are alive with birds.” (Spread 6) In this quote Pamela Freeman has used a metaphor to describe the number of birds flying around Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre. What effect does this have on the reader? How would it be different if Freeman had simply written “There are lots of birds in the sky.”?

Research Pamela Freeman online or in your school library. What other books has she written? How are they similar or different to *Desert Lake*?

Write an imaginative story about a character exploring Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre. Use imagery to describe what your character experiences. You can choose to set your story when the lake is dry, or full, or any point during the flooding or evaporation of the lake.

Compare *Desert Lake* to a fiction picture book. How is the language different in each? Why have the authors of these texts chosen this language?

### Exploring the Illustrations

Look at the colours Liz Anelli has used in *Desert Lake*. Why do you think she chose to use these colours? Do they accurately represent the environment of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre?

Research Liz Anelli online or in your school library. What other books has she illustrated? How are they similar or different to *Desert Lake*?

Endpapers are the first and last pages in a book – they are usually stuck to the inside of the front and back cover. What is depicted on the endpapers of this book? Why has the illustrator chosen to illustrate the endpapers in this way?

Discuss the techniques Liz Anelli has used to enhance the mood of the illustrations on the following spreads:

- Spread 2: the thunderstorm bringing a flood of water to the dry lake
- Spread 4: the lake teeming with new life
- Spread 9: the creatures preparing for another dry spell.

### Further Activities

Find Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre on a map of Australia. How far away is it from your school?

Compare spreads 1 and 11 to spreads 3, 4 and 6. How do the words and illustrations demonstrate the dramatic change that occurs to Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre when it is filled with water?



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas

“The frogs of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre are special.” (Spread 4)

How are these frogs different to other frogs? Consider what they need to survive and their life cycles.

“No one understands how they know that the lake is full of water, but the pelicans don’t come in years when the lake is dry.” (Spread 5)

Have a class discussion to come up with ideas that might explain how the pelicans know the lake has filled with water.

The name Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre is a combination of the indigenous Australian name for the lake and the name given by European explorers. Research the meaning of Kati Thanda and who Lake Eyre was named for.

Adaptation is the adjustment or changes in behaviour, physiology, and structure of an organism to become more suited to an environment ([www.biology-online.org/dictionary/Adaptation](http://www.biology-online.org/dictionary/Adaptation)). Identify three animals that have adapted to live in this environment. What benefit has this adaptation given them?

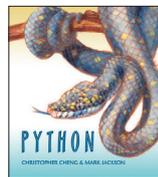
Have you ever visited Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre? Did you see any of the animals or landscapes shown in this book? How do the illustrations compare to the real thing?

Write a book review of *Desert Lake* stating what you liked and disliked about it, who you think would enjoy it the most and whether you think the information provided is credible. Use persuasive language to make the reader understand your opinion.

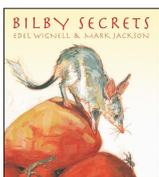
## Great Titles From Walker Books’ Nature Storybook Series:



**Platypus**  
Sue Whiting  
Mark Jackson  
9781922077448 HB  
Classroom ideas available



**Python**  
Christopher Cheng  
Mark Jackson  
9781921529603 HB  
Classroom ideas available



**Bilby Secrets**  
Edel Wignell  
Mark Jackson  
9781921529320 HB  
9781922077042 PB  
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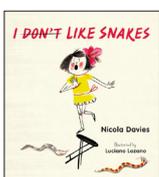
**Flight of the Honey Bee**  
Raymond Huber  
Brian Lovelock  
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**Big Red Kangaroo**  
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**Emu**  
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Graham Byrne  
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**I (Don't) Like Snakes**  
Nicola Davies  
Luciano Lozano  
9781406342833 HB  
Classroom ideas available