

Bird Creek Mission

LINKS TO:

Stage 3, Module 14

Learning Object 2: *A comic book journal*

Exercise 1

- 1.1 What are the main ideas in the text? Summarise, in English, the main ideas from each paragraph.**

Paragraph one

Poppy has received a mysterious letter, written in Chinese, which she cannot read.

Paragraph two

She asks Johnny about the letter: who gave it to him to give to her?

Paragraph three

A Chinese man, who knew that Poppy and her brother were at Bird Creek, gave the letter to Johnny.

Paragraph four

Poppy asks Johnny to read the letter to her.

Paragraph five

Johnny cannot read. He says he has to go and then leaves.

Paragraph six

Poppy contemplates all the unanswered questions she has, and wishes her brother, Gus, was with her. She is worried he will never find her.

- 1.2 Were there particular words or phrases you found difficult to understand? What strategies did you use to understand these words or phrases, or to understand the text as a whole despite not being sure what some words meant?**

There are several strategies that I use to understand words or phrases that are difficult to understand.

First of all, with basic words such as *astinta* 'ink' and *kwas* 'a brush', for example, I would just consult a

dictionary or an online dictionary to find its meaning. For phrases that I don't understand, I would look at the context to see if I can understand the word preceding or following that difficult phrase. For example, the phrase *penjaja keliling* is preceded with the article *si*, which in Indonesian is used as a person marker. So I can deduct that the phrase *penjaja keliling* refers to a person. After I worked out that *penjaja* consists of the prefix *peN-* + the verb *jaja* 'to sell', and the word *keliling* means 'to go around', I came to the conclusion that *penjaja keliling* means a peddler.

- 1.3 Who gave the letter to Johnny?**

A Chinese man who asked Johnny if he knew a 'half Chinese boy an' girl at Bird Creek'.

- 1.4 Why can't Johnny read the letter to Poppy when she asks him to?**

Johnny says that he comes from a poor family and therefore cannot read.

- 1.5 Why do you think Poppy cannot read the letter herself, even though she has a Chinese father?**

I don't think Poppy knows any Chinese, because she refers to the writing in the letter as 'strange symbols'. I think she has seen Chinese writing before, however, because she says 'this time' the symbols are written with a brush.

I think that Poppy and Gus have not been living with their father, but possibly were taken away from him to live at the Bird Creek Mission. I know that some Aboriginal children were removed from their families at this time, so perhaps that is why they are at the mission.

Exercise 2

2.1 What do you think makes a person 'Indonesian' or 'Australian'?

Do you think there are cultural differences in how people in Indonesia and people in Australia relate to their cultural heritage?

I think that Australia has a diverse cultural heritage, with a mixture of Indigenous, European and Asian backgrounds.

Although I think Australia is a peaceful and safe country, I do think that there have been conflicts between people from different cultural heritages over time. For example, I know that unrest, including the Lambing Flat riots on the Australian gold fields, led to anxiety about the impact the Chinese community was having on Australian life. Nevertheless, these days we mostly think of Australia as a multicultural country, meaning that you can be 'Australian' no matter what your heritage. Nevertheless, I think many people who value their heritage also value that history. For example, Gabrielle Wang refers to herself as a Chinese-Australian. I think this shows that she values both of these identities.

I feel comfortable calling myself Australian. I was born here, although neither of my parents were. Both of my parents call themselves Australian, although sometimes they refer to the countries where they were born as 'home'. They both have Australian citizenship.

Indonesia does not consist of one homogenous ethnic group, culture or religion, so identity is defined in a number of ways: by Indonesian citizenship; by recognition of the flag and national anthem; by recognition of national holidays; by education about Indonesia's history; and the *Pancasila*, the Five Principles on which the nation is based. The history of Indonesia itself focuses on resistance to colonialism and communism by national heroes and leaders, and much of this has been introduced through the schools and the media.

Ethnic relations in Indonesia have long been a concern, and the possibility of ethnic and regional separatism has been recognised by Indonesian leaders from the time the republic was established. However,

generally, Indonesians adopt the concept of a national identity as the primary standard for all, and what unites the people of Indonesia is more their shared history rather than ethnicity, culture or religion.

The relationships between indigenous Indonesians or *orang pribumi* and the Chinese have been greatly influenced by Dutch and Indonesian government policies. According to the 2010 census, the Chinese comprise about 3.7 per cent of the population, but are said to control as much as 60 per cent of the nation's wealth. The Chinese have traded and resided in the islands of Indonesia for centuries, but in the 19th century the Dutch brought in many Chinese people to work on plantations or in mines. The Dutch also established a system of social, economic and legal stratification that separated Europeans, Chinese, Indo-Europeans and indigenous Indonesians, so the Chinese had little incentive to assimilate with local societies.

As a result of this colonial social system, the Chinese could be identified by the terms *totok* and *peranakan*. *Totok* are those of non-mixed descent, who have been in Indonesia for two or three generations and have had a Chinese language education and therefore have a Chinese cultural orientation. They speak Mandarin or a Chinese dialect at home, and work in business and trade.

Peranakan are the children of mixed marriages between Chinese and indigenous Indonesians. Typically, they have been in Indonesia for at least three generations, they do not speak Chinese at home, nor do they have a cultural orientation towards the area in which they have settled. They have a university education and work in free professions, as well as in business and trade.

In Indonesia, the Chinese are referred to as *orang Cina* or 'Chinese people', even though they have lived in Indonesia for generations. During the late 1950s and the 1960s the Chinese, who at the time still had dual citizenship, were given the opportunity to decide which nationality they wanted to adopt. Those who opted for Indonesian citizenship were given an Indonesian Citizenship Certificate, but were nevertheless still identified as *non-pribumi*

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or 'foreigners'. This certificate was required when conducting business with government officials. The use of this certificate was abolished in 1996, but even naturalised Chinese citizens faced restrictive regulations, despite the existence of flourishing business relationships between Chinese leaders and Indonesian officials or bureaucrats.

2.2 Use your creative-thinking skills to come up with possible answers to these questions. Write your answer in Indonesian.

Saya pikir barangkali surat itu berasal dari ayah Poppy dan Gus. Barangkali dia telah mencari mereka sejak mereka dibawa ke misionari. Akhirnya, dia berhasil menemukan bahwa mereka berada di misionari Bird Creek dan dia ingin berhubungan dengan mereka.

Saya pikir, dalam surat ini, barangkali dia mencoba menjelaskan mengapa dia belum datang untuk menjemput mereka. Dia mungkin menjelaskan bahwa dia telah lama mencari mereka, atau bahwa dia telah berusaha mendapatkan mereka kembali melalui saluran resmi tanpa hasil. Seandainya dia telah berusaha dan gagal untuk mengeluarkan mereka dari misionari lewat saluran resmi, ada kemungkinan bahwa dia akan menganjurkan sebuah rencana untuk melarikan diri!