

GROUP A

Rabbit Proof Fence (original film title)

Your task:

Use your phrase to guess what kind of story will be told in the film.
Be prepared to present your ideas to the class.



GROUP B

Long Walk Home (film title in Germany)

Your task:

Use your phrase to guess what kind of story will be told in the film.
Be prepared to present your ideas to the class.



GROUP C

The history of *The Stolen Generations*

Your task:

Use your phrase to guess what kind of story will be told in the film.
Be prepared to present your ideas to the class.



RESEARCHING THE HISTORY OF THE STOLEN GENERATIONS

Research the following terms.

Use online resources for your research, e.g.: dictionaries, newspapers, video channels, history sites, etc.

Bring your findings to our next lesson.

In groups you will prepare a presentation about your terms.



Aborigines

- Definition
- Culture
- Places

Aborigines Act in Western Australia from 1905

- Regulation
- Consequences

Mr. A. O. Neville

- Position
- Policy

The Stolen Generations

- Definition

Rabbit-Proof Fence

- Location
- Function

Bringing Them Home Report

- Aims
- Content

National Sorry Day

- Origin
- Aims

Sorry Speech

- Content
- Aims

STORY VERSUS HISTORY

Compare the meaning of

history versus **story**



Think: By yourself compare the meaning of the two terms.
(differences/ similarities)

Take notes:

DISCUSS YOUR IDEAS

Quietly talk to your partner and pool your ideas.
Add new ideas to your notes.



SHARE YOUR RESULTS

Share your ideas with the class.
Again add new ideas to your notes above.



The goal of this activity is to make students aware that both words

- a) share a word stem.
- b) are related in their meaning (fictional stories versus stories about the past).
- c) are different in that a story is based on imagination and fantasy and history is based on events in the past.

ELEMENTS OF STORY AND HISTORY

With your partner: List elements of story and history that you remember from the film.



STORY

HISTORY

ELEMENTS OF STORY AND HISTORY

With your partner: List elements of story and history that you remember from the film.



STORY	HISTORY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• E.g.: actors• Dramatic music• Cross-cutting of scenes (e.g. Molly and her mother are touching the fence at the same time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documentary film scenes (end of the film)• Historical information (beginning and ending of the film)

STOLEN GENERATIONS' TESTIMONIES

In your group go through the online museum Stolen Generations' Testimonies and complete the following tasks:



1. Design of the online museum. (Bullet points are sufficient.)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. Look at a few testimonies of your choice. List any differences and similarities you find in these testimonies compared to the story told in Rabbit-Proof Fence.

SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES

3. Identify the film techniques used in the clips.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Briefly comment on their effects:

STOLEN GENERATIONS' TESTEMONIES

4. Briefly explain why you think the clips start with a note that “information in the testimonies are presented in good faith”.



5. Briefly reflect on why it might be important for survivors to have such online museum.

STOLEN GENERATIONS' TESTIMONIES

In your group go through the online museum Stolen Generations' Testimonies and complete the following tasks:



1. Design of the online museum. (Bullet points are sufficient)

<i>Portraits of survivors</i>	<i>Elements of Aboriginal works</i>
<i>Slow music</i>	<i>Background design</i>
<i>Text overlay</i>	...

2. Look at a few testimonies of your choice. List any differences and similarities you find in these testimonies compared to the story told in Rabbit-Proof Fence.

SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taken away together with siblings - Strong bond with their mother - Happy childhood living close to nature - Feeling of alienation - ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grown up with mother and father before being stolen - Mother took her child to the station herself - Family was tricked into giving children away - Family was away when children were stolen - ...

3. Identify the film techniques used in the clips.

<i>Music</i>	<i>eye-level camera angle</i>
<i>Setting</i>	...

Briefly comment on their effects:

The film techniques are used to stage the survivor stories/to make their experiences more compelling/...

STOLEN GENERATIONS' TESTIMONIES

4. Briefly explain why you think the clips start with a note that “information in the testimonies are presented in good faith”.



This is to illustrate that for some of these personal accounts there is no further historical source to prove them. Also, sometimes people have different recollections of the same event.

5. Briefly reflect on why it might be important for survivors to have such an online museum.

They know that their stories continue to live. People can learn from their experiences. Sometimes it helps to share an experience in order to overcome it.

THE MOMENT OF BEING STOLEN

Watch 00:09:45-00:13:10.

While watching the scene take notes on filmic devices used.



SUMMARISE

Summarise the sequence of events in the film scene (~150 words).

Read the extract from the book and summarise the sequence of events (~150 words).



COMPARE AND SHARE

With a partner: Compare your summaries and make a list of similarities and differences between the incident told in the film and the book.



SIMILARITIES

DIFFERENCES

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“In short, Noyce was a filmmaker at the height of his career when he made Rabbit-Proof Fence and this goes some way to explain why the film was both a critical and popular success. However the acclaim was also due to the manner in which Noyce brought back to Australia his old commitment to social justice. Equally, its success was due to the wedding of the Aboriginal narrative to a Hollywood aesthetic style — a simple story line, a recognisable closure, an emphasis on heroic endeavour and a stress on an emotional response from the audience.” (McCarthy 2004: 12)

1. While watching the scene take notes on filmic devices used

Some of the filmic devices used in the scene are: dramatic music, shaky camera movements illustrating confusion and anxiety, over the shoulder shots of Riggs when chasing the girls in his car, high angle shots of Riggs and low angle shots of Maude to illustrate his power over her and her children, head and shoulder close-ups of Maude and the children to illustrate fear and tension, the camera rotating in the car to illustrate the children's perspective on being driven away.

2. Summarise the sequence of events

Constable Riggs arrives in a car to take away Molly, Daisy and Gracie. They are trying to run away but Riggs follows them in the car. The three girls, Maude and other women are resisting the abduction. Riggs has to pull the children away from Maude. Especially Molly puts up a fight when Riggs tries to put her in the car. When the car is driving away the women are following it in a desperate attempt to stop it and be with their children. Throughout the scene there is lots of shouting and crying and when the car is gone a woman injures herself by hitting an object on her head.

3. Read the extract from the book and summarise the sequence of events

The family is sitting together in the shade having lunch when Constable Riggs arrives on horseback to take away Molly, Daisy and Gracie. He speaks with an authoritative voice and some of the family refuse to face him, yet no one resists. Daisy is not there so he leaves with Molly and Gracie on horseback. When they are leaving the family members, male and female, begin to wail and injure themselves as a sign of their sorrow. [This is not part of the excerpt: Riggs tracks down Daisy later that day and together the three girls are taken away to Moore River.]

4. With a partner: Compare your summaries and make a list of similarities and differences between the incident told in the film and the book.

SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The girls resist and fight against their abduction (film) versus absence of resistance/passivity (book)</i> - <i>Daisy is absent</i> - <i>There is a lot of shouting and crying (film) versus the scene is depicted much quieter (book)</i> - <i>The scene in the film is more dramatic (due to the change of the plot and use of particular film techniques)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Constable Riggs takes the children away</i> - <i>Constable Riggs is an authoritative figure</i> - <i>Relatives are present when the girls are abducted</i> - <i>Wailing and self-injuring of the girls' relatives to express sorrow</i>

- Students might realise that a **dramatic narrative ‘works better’** in the cinema.
- Is it **historically correct to change the original plot?** Pupils might relate back to their knowledge of the survivors’ testimonies, some of which are actually quite close to the film sequence.
- The **means of transportation to Moore River:** Whereas in the film the children are being transported in some kind of cage on a train the actual transport was done by ship. In discussing this, pupils may notice a reference to the genocide committed during National-Socialism in Germany as trains have become almost symbolic of transporting victims to the death camps. Pupils will be motivated to discuss why Phillip Noyce chose this reference.

FILM & TESTIMONY

While watching Donna Meehan's testimony (<http://stolengenerationstestimonies.com/index.php/testimonies/974.html>) about the incident of being taken away, concentrate on the differences and similarities between the film and her experiences.



Use the chart for listing them afterwards.

SIMILARITIES

DIFFERENCES

PAIR UP

Quietly talk to your partner and compare your notes.
Add any new ideas.



SHARE YOUR RESULTS

Share your ideas with the class and again
add new ideas to your chart.



Summary of Donna Meehan's testimony (Chapter 2: Letter / Train / Mum)

When Donna was five and a half years old her mother received a letter one day. She told her children they were going for a ride on a train. Her children were excited because they had never been on a train. By taxi Donna's mother took her seven children, aged between nine years and three months, to the station in new clothes and told them to remember their manners. Excitedly the children got on the train where a white lady with a red hat sat down next to Donna. It was only when the train pulled out of the station and Donna saw her mother in her best blue dress crying on the platform that she realised she was being separated from her family.

SIMILARITIES

- *Neither of the mothers wanted to give away their children*
- *Visible grievance of the mothers*
- *Feeling of fear*

DIFFERENCES

- *Donna's mother took her children to the station herself*
- *The abduction incident sounds more bureaucratic in Donna's case*
- *Donna's mother received a letter whereas in the film it seemed to be a raid without any forewarning*
- *Donna was so young that at first she did not understand that she was being taken away whereas Molly immediately knew what was happening to her*

STORY BOARD

In your group turn Donna's story into a story board using the table below. As film directors decide how to stage and narrate the incident of Donna being taken away.



PICTURE	TEXT	SOUND	TIME
<i>Draw a picture of what can be seen in the scene.</i>	<i>E.g.: Action: Girl goes for a walk along a river Material: river, tree, birds</i>	<i>E.g.: Steps, whistling, rustling trees Girl: "It is so quiet out here."</i>	<i>E.g.: 00:08</i>

THE DOCUMENTARY FRAME

Watch the beginning of the film (00:00:00-00:02:55) and list the sequence of events.
Then colour-code the **documentary** and **fictitious** elements.



INFLUENCE OF THE DOCUMENTARY FRAME

In your group watch the ending (01:20:05-01:24:20) and

- a) list and colour-code the sequence of events.
- b) comment on the effect the documentary frame has on the overall perception of the film.
- c) discuss the pros and cons of using fictitious filming for informing people about historical events.



1. Watch the beginning of the film (00:00:00-00:02:55) and list the sequence of events. Then colour-code the documentary and fictitious elements.

Aboriginal singing, history text, the 'real' Molly's voice-over, bird's eye camera angle, etc. (documentary and fictitious elements)

2. In your group watch the ending (01:20:05-01:24:20) and
a) list and colour-code the sequence of events.

The 'real' Molly's voice-over, Mr. Neville dictating a letter, film shots of the 'real' Molly and Daisy in old age, history text (documentary and fictitious elements)

- b) comment on the effect the documentary frame has on the overall perception of the film.

Pupils will understand the effect of the documentary ending in relativising the happy ending of Molly's and Daisy's return to Jigalong as well as contextualising the film story in the general history of the Stolen Generations.

- c) discuss the pros and cons of using fictitious filming for informing people about historical events.

PROS

- tells fictitious events representative for a specific historical period (Repräsentationsauthentizität; Pandel 2009)
- people like stories
- etc.

CONS

- does not show historical sources
- shows events that did not really happen exactly like this
- could misinform people and even be used for propaganda
- etc.

LANGUAGE AS A TOOL FOR STAGING HISTORICAL EVENTS

As a group read the following **quote** and

- identify words and phrases which reveal the racism underlying the ideas of the assimilation policy.
- Then compare your findings to the terms 'Bringing Them Home report' and 'Stolen Generations' to reflect on how they reveal an attitude contrasting the former Australian assimilation policy.



Mr. Neville, Western Australia's Chief Protector:

*The native must be helped in spite of *himself! Even if a measure of discipline is necessary it must be applied, but it can be applied in such a way as to appear to be gentle persuasion ... the end in view will justify the means employed.*

(cited in: Commonwealth of Australia 1997: 238)

PAIR UP

In pairs read the following extract and analyse how the film makes use of language in characterising Mr. Neville.

[Words considered politically inappropriate from today's perspective have been marked by *]

When dictating a letter to Constable Riggs Mr. Neville says:

*At present we lack the funds to pursue the missing *half-caste girls Molly and Daisy. I would ask to be kept informed of their whereabouts so that at some future date they may indeed be recovered. We face an uphill battle with these people, especially the bush natives, who have to be protected against themselves. If they would only understand what we are trying to do for them. (Rabbit Proof Fence, 01:21:45-01:22:19)*

With your partner discuss the following questions:

- How would you judge Mr. Neville?
- Do you think he was a product of his society and its values, or do you consider his decisions universally wrong?
- The Bringing Them Home report refers to the forceful removal and displacement of children in Australia between 1910 and 1970 as 'genocide' – do you agree with this in spite of Mr. Neville's intention to help?



LANGUAGE AS A TOOL FOR STAGING HISTORICAL EVENTS

Task 1a)

Group A - Mr. Neville, Western Australia's Chief Protector:

*The native must be helped in spite of *himself! Even if a measure of discipline is necessary it must be applied, but it can be applied in such a way as to appear to be gentle persuasion ... the end in view will justify the means employed.*

Group B - A local protector in Western Australia:

*The *half-caste is intellectually above the aborigine, and it is the duty of the State that they be given a chance to lead a better life than their mothers. I would not hesitate for one moment to separate any *half-caste from its aboriginal mother, no matter how frantic her momentary grief might be at the time. They soon forget their offspring.*

Task 1b)

Pupils will understand that explicitly using the term 'stealing' acknowledges the wrongdoing of removing and displacing children and that by 'bringing them home' an attempt was made to reconcile if not undo something which cannot be revoked.

Task 2

Pupils will notice:

- *The film here uses almost an exact quotation of Mr. Neville referred to in the Bringing Them Home report.*
- *They will be able to detect how his wording reveals the racist thinking of Mr. Neville as a character in the film, especially the fact that he believed to be doing something right and felt superior to the Aboriginal population.*
- *They will also remember further examples from the film illustrating the power of language, e.g. the fact that the inmates of Moore River were not allowed to speak the Aboriginal language.*

Task 3

Leading questions for the discussion are:

- *How would you judge Mr. Neville?*
- *Do you think he was a product of his society and its values, or do you consider his decisions universally wrong?*
- *The Bringing Them Home report refers to the forceful removal and displacement of children in Australia between 1910 and 1970 as 'genocide' – do you agree with this in spite of Mr. Neville's intention to help?*

(For the latter question pupils could research online the United Nations definition of genocide from 1948.)