

Chapter 1

Context



Exercise 1.3

Read through the Noongar Lore section at www.noongarculture.org.au/noongar-lore/. Under each of the following headings, explain the lore and identify specific differences with those laws of the white settlers.

Adulthood	Marriage	Elders	Payback	Rules
Land	Food	Values	Medicine man	

Impact of White Law on the Noongar People

That Deadman Dance spans the period of 1826-1844, a period in which much change took place. Print the table at <http://bit.ly/1c84YkG> which details the impact of white law on the Noongar people. Refer to the table as you read the novel to familiarise yourself with the laws at that time.

Exercise 1.4

Listen to Aunty Doolan Leisha Eatts (<http://bit.ly/19ZX4ol>) discuss her Grandmother's first encounter with white people.

1. What parallels exist between *That Deadman Dance* and her narrative?
2. What is your response to her story?

Exercise 1.5

View the short film (<http://bit.ly/18af12W>) of the experience of Weewar who was convicted for killing an Aboriginal man under British Law in 1842. **Listen** carefully to the powerful speech Weewar makes in the boat as he is taken to Rottnest Island.

1. Was his conviction justified? Why or why not?
2. What is your response to Weewar's speech?

Exercise 1.6

Go to the Noongar Culture website [www.noongarculture.org.au/]. Study the information under CULTURE to build your understanding of Noongar culture. Find other sources to deepen your knowledge of the Noongars. Try web browsers *Mr Sapo* and *Bing*.

1. List the important **features** that you have discovered about Noongar culture?

There are many Aboriginal Australian languages and dialects spoken in Australia. For example, in the centre of the Northern Territory, both Arrente and Pitjantjatjara are spoken, while further North, you can hear Wandjira and Alyawarr; in West Australia, Noongar and Marti present good examples of dialectal groups. There is also Aboriginal English or Yumplatok (Torres Strait Islander Creole). Through studying texts such as *That Deadman Dance*, we learn to appreciate diverse writing systems and oral traditions. Analysing these differing ways of sharing the past expands our own understanding of the way we communicate and make meaning.

Elders educated the younger Noongars. This has helped to keep their language alive, despite white authorities attempts to ban the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. Noongar grammar is ordered differently to the English language. The order of a sentence is **SUBJECT OBJECT VERB**. You may notice this as Bobby provides his own writing / thoughts within the novel.

2. Find 2 examples of Noongar **sentence structure** in the novel.
3. Why do you think Scott chose to incorporate Noongar language into the novel?