

# MY COUNTRY by Dorothea Mackellar

- Purposes of this lesson:
  - This lesson is a logical following to the one about Australia. Learning a bit of literature helps foreigners to get the country sensibility
  - Understanding the compound nouns and adjectives.
  - Learning some literary words.
  - studying the shades of the colour words
  - Using an appropriate software to illustrate a poem and explaining how using it
  - Meeting an Australian poet...which is a rare opportunity in Europe

# MY COUNTRY by Dorothea Mackeller

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hquYbyViZzI>

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- The love of field and coppice
- Of green and shaded lanes,
- Of ordered woods and gardens
- Is running in your veins.
- Strong love of grey-blue distance,
- Brown streams and soft, dim skies
- I know, but cannot share it,
- My love is otherwise.
  
- I love a sunburnt country,
- A land of sweeping plains,
- Of ragged mountain ranges,
- Of droughts and flooding rains.
- I love her far horizons,
- I love her jewel-sea,
- Her beauty and her terror
- The wide brown land for me!
  
- The stark white ring-barked forests,
- All tragic to the moon,
- The sapphire-misted mountains,
- The hot gold hush of noon,
- Green tangle of the brushes
- Where lithe lianas coil,
- And orchids deck the tree-tops,
- And ferns the warm dark soil

- Core of my heart, my country!
- Her pitiless blue sky,
- When, sick at heart, around us
- We see the cattle die
- But then the grey clouds gather,
- And we can bless again
- The drumming of an army,
- The steady soaking rain.
- 
- Core of my heart, my country!
- Land of the rainbow gold,
- For flood and fire and famine
- She pays us back threefold.
- Over the thirsty paddocks,
- Watch, after many days,
- The filmy veil of greenness
- That thickens as we gaze ...
- 
- An opal-hearted country,
- A wilful, lavish land
- All you who have not loved her,
- You will not understand
- though Earth holds many splendours,
- Wherever I may die,
- I know to what brown country
- My homing thoughts will fly.

Act n° 1: find all the words used as adjectives  
which end by “ed”:

# Act n° 1: answers and Act n°2 find their translation in a dictionary

- Shaded
- Ordered
- Sunburnt
- Ragged
- Barked
- Misted
- Hearted
- Loved

## Act n°2 (answers)

- Shaded
- Ordered
- Sunburnt
- Ragged
- Ring- Barked
- Sapphire-Misted
- Opal-Hearted
- Loved

- Ombragé
- Ordoné
- Brulé par le soleil
- Déchiqueté, accidenté
- Encerclé d' écorce
- À la brume couleur de saphir
- Au coeur d' opale
- aimé

# Act n°3: Explain how they are composed

- Shaded
- Ordered
- Sunburnt
- sweeping
- Ragged
- Barked
- Misted
- Hearted
- Loved

## Act n°3 : answers

- Shaded: past participle of a verb used as an adjective
- Ordered: past participle of a verb used as an adjective
- Sunburnt: past participle of a verb preceded by a noun
- Sweeping: present participle used as an adjective
- Ragged: past participle of a verb used as an adjective
- Barked: noun transformed in adjective
- Misted: noun transformed in adjective
- Hearted: noun transformed in adjective
- Loved: past participle of a verb used as an adjective

# Grammar points

- Adjectives can be: a true adjective like **blue, big**, a present participle like **sweeping** plains, a participle like **shaded lanes** or a compound adjective like **grey-blue**.
- Some other words can be considered as adjectives such as nouns such as **opal-hearted** which gathered two nouns linked by an hyphen. In this case, the second noun gets a “ed” end and is invariable. The first word can be also an adjective for example a **blue-eyed girl** and follows the same rules. The second word can also be a participle such as a **good-looking man**.

# Grammar point n° 2

- Take a look at the following words and observe them:
  - jewel-sea
  - tree-tops

# Grammar point n° 2

- Take a look at the following words and observe them:
  - jewel-sea
  - tree-tops → they are composed of two words linked by an hyphen
- But some other forms exist:
  - two separate words: rain forest
  - a single word: rainbow

## Act n° 4: Lexical difficulties

- Coppice
- Dim
- Stream
- Otherwise
- Drought
- Flood
- range
- Stark
- Hush
- Tangle
- Ferns
- Lithe

- Coil
- Soaking
- Drumming
- Threefold
- Paddock
- Filmy
- Veil
- Gaze
- Wilful
- Lavish
- thoughts
- Homing

# Act n°5: each group looks for the translation of three difficult words

## G1

- Coppice
- Dim
- Stream
- Otherwise

## G2

- Drought
- Flood
- Range
- Stark

## G3

- Hush
- Tangle
- ferns
- Lithe

## G4

- To coil
- Soaking
- drumming
- Threefold

## G5

- Paddock
- Filmy
- veil
- Gaze

## G6

- Wilful
- Lavish
- thoughts
- Homing

# Act n° 6 answers and Act n° 7: Each group leader gives the answer to the class

- Taillis
- Sombre
- Courrant
- Par ailleurs

- Sècheresse
- Inondation
- Chaîne
- désolé

- Silence
- Enchevêtrement
- Fougères
- Souple

- Serpenter
- Trempant
- Tambourinant
- Tripler

- Enclos
- Pelliculé
- Voile
- Regarder

- Volontaire
- Fastueux
- Pensées
- Instinct de retour au pays

## Act n° 8 : working on lexical fields

- 1) Quote all the colours in the poem
- 2) Find all the words linked to nature

Act n°8 answers and act n° 9: use them in sentences using at least one of the words of each columns

- Green
- Grey-blue
- Brown
- White
- Sapphire
- Gold
- Blue
- grey

- Field
- Coppice
- Woods
- Gardens
- Mountains
- Plains
- Tree
- Soils
- Brushes
- Skies
- Clouds
- Rain
- Rainbow
- Earth

# Context of the poem writing and clues to help its understanding

- Dorothea Mackellar was born on 1st July 1885. She was an Australian poet and fiction writer. Mackellar was educated at home and began writing at a very young age. Her best-known poem is My Country, written at age 19 in 1904, while homesick in England;
- The title 'My Country' immediately conjures up images of the unique countryside and diverse oceans.
- The poem begins with Mackellar describing another country. This is because she has portrayed it as "ordered woods" and "soft, dim skies". But then she continues and the tone becomes more of a love affair with Australia with Mackellar saying "My love is otherwise". This brings to mind Australia's natural assets. The beauty is in the abundant and varied landscapes. "otherwise" is a key word which allows the author to change the described place.
- My Country is a rhyming poem, fourteen stanzas in length. The opening two stanzas describe the British landscape, but this is not the country the young Dorothea Mackellar yearns for. The genre is part of bush poetry and does not tell a story.
- This poem deals with nature descriptions about Australia. It was written in order to inform people about the beauty and the wilderness of this country. Dorothea Mackellar 'My Country' is a poem expressing her deep passion and love for her country, Australia. The whole poem's intention seems to evoke the sense of praising for the country.
- Literary devices:
  - Onomatopoeia : "drumming of an army" creates a feel that soldiers are marching to the beat of nature;
  - Alliteration - "lithé lianas", "flood, fire and famine". The use of alliteration helps to emphasize the characteristics of Australian rural life.
  - Imagery: An example of this is "of droughts and flooding rains". This describes Australia as cruel in times of droughts and unpredictable in the rainy season.
  - Personification: By using words like, "she" and "her" the poet personifies Australia. The audience gets a feel that Australia is not just lifeless piece of land.

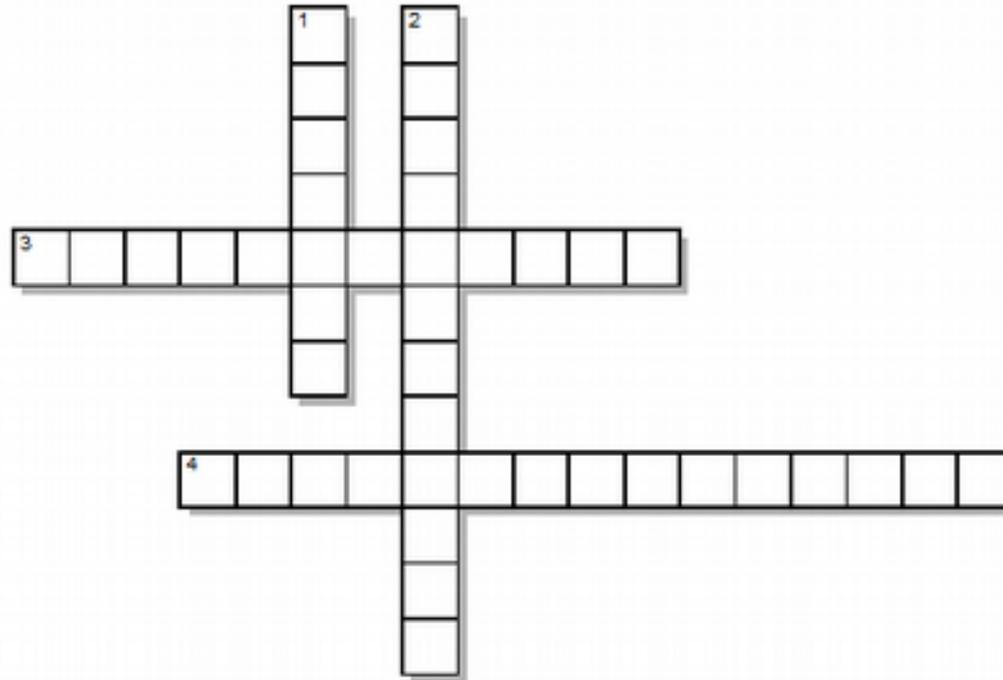
# Literary word definitions

- Onomatopoeia: word that imitates the sound of what it means.
- Alliteration is formed by words beginning by the same consonant.
- Imagery: figurative or descriptive language in a literary work.
- Personification: the attribution of human characteristics to things, abstract ideas, etc...

## Act n°9 : Literary word definitions and now find some examples in the poem for each of them.

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# Act n° 10: CROSSWORD



## ACROSS

- 3 Is formed by words beginning by the same consonant.
- 4 The attribution of human characteristics to things, abstract ideas

## DOWN

- 1 Figurative or descriptive language in a literary work.
- 2 Word that imitates the sound of what it means.

<sup>1</sup>I  
M  
A  
G  
<sup>2</sup>ALLITERATION  
R  
Y  
T  
O  
P  
<sup>4</sup>PERSONIFICATION  
E  
I  
A

# INTERMEDIATE TASK: each group takes a paragraph in charge and tries to translate these few lines

The love of field and coppice  
Of green and shaded lanes,  
Of ordered woods and gardens  
Is running in your veins.  
Strong love of grey-blue distance,  
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know, but cannot share it,  
My love is otherwise.

I love a sunburnt country,  
A land of sweeping plains,  
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The stark white ring-barked forests,  
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# Answers

L'amour des champs et des taillis  
Des vertes allées ombragées  
Des forêts ordonnées et des jardins  
Coulent dans vos veines.  
Un amour fort de la grande  
distance gris-bleue  
Des courants bruns et doux et des  
cieux sombres  
Je le connais mais ne peux le  
partager  
Mon amour est ailleurs

Du fond du coeur, mon pays  
Son ciel bleu implacable  
Quand, à bout de force autour de  
nous  
On voit le bétail mourir  
Puis par la suite les nuages gris  
se rassemblent  
Et nous pouvons bénir encore  
Le tambourinage d'une armée  
De la pluie trempante intense

J'aime un pays brûlé par le soleil  
Un pays aux plaines balayées  
Aux chaînes de montagnes  
déchirées  
De sécheresse et aux averses  
innondantes  
J'aime ses horizons lointains  
J'aime sa mer précieuse  
Sa beauté et sa terreur  
Et pour moi la grande étendue  
brune

Du fond du coeur, mon pays  
Pays de l'arc-en-ciel doré  
Pour les inondations, le feu et la  
famine  
Elle nous paie au triple en retour  
Depuis les enclos assoiffés  
Regardez, après plusieurs jours,  
La fine pellicule du voile de  
verdure  
Qui s'épaissit quand nous la  
regardons

Les forêts désolées aux anneaux d'écorce  
blancs  
Tous tragiques à la lumière de la lune  
Les montagnes embrumées de couleur  
saphir  
Le chaud silence doré de midi  
Les enchevêtrements verts des brosses  
Où les lianes souples serpentent  
Et les orchidées parent le sommet des  
arbres  
  
Et les fougères réchauffent le sol sombre

Un pays au coeur d'opale  
Un pays volontaire et fastueux  
Vous ne comprendrez pas  
Où que je puisse mourir  
Je sais que mes pensées  
S'envoleront vers le pays brun  
Où mon instinct me ramène

# Explanation of the poem

- This cherished, timeless poem by Dorothea Mackellar clearly describes the Australian landscape, which is an important part of identity. The landscape is important to Australians because of its diversity which provides a very wide range of lifestyles and occupations, culture and history.
- The poet personifies Australia by using words like "she" and "her". By doing this the reader gets a feel that Australia is not just a lifeless piece of land, but sharing the same characteristics of a person. Just as sailors refer to their boats as "her" or "she", because they have a deep affection for the sea. I believe Mackellar is using the same affection when describing her love of the Australian landscape. Feminine affection is usually stronger hence the use of "she" and "her".
- In the first stanza the poet is comparing the natural landscape of another country to that of Australia. She describes the other country (England) as tame because it is portrayed with "ordered woods" and "soft skies". However Mackellar characterizes Australia as wild with a vivid description of the starkness and cruel beauty of the country she loved by using words like "ragged mountains" and "sweeping plains". As well as the rugged mountains and plains, Australia's landscape boasts deserts, surf beaches, beautiful reefs and majestic forests. All of these enable us to enjoy the best of both worlds in our own country. Mackellar is emphasizing the differences between England and Australia to highlight the unique identity of her adopted country.
- Mackellar paints a picture which takes the reader on a descriptive journey of Australia's natural environment. An example of this is shown in the line, "of droughts and flooding rains". This describes Australia as cruel in times of droughts and unpredictable in the rainy season. Throughout this absorbing poem Dorothea uses the poetic technique of alliteration, such as "lithe lianas", "steady and soaking," and "flood, fire and famine." Mackellar uses this alliteration to emphasize the characteristics of Australian rural life and to create the effect that Australia is sometimes harsh and unpredictable.
- Dorothea's endearing description of the country she loved with its ragged ranges, cruel and dark landscape and sweeping vistas, captivates the reader and engages them on a journey through her imaginative portrayal of the Australian landscape.

# FINAL TASK

- Each group of the class choose a paragraph and its translation and some pictures which are linked to. With the help of “publisher” or “scribus” create a poster. At the end of your task, you gather all the posters and you decorate your classroom with bright coloured English and Australian landscapes and a famous poem.