

# Introduction

Australian children's writers have described in their stories what it means to be Australian, what is important to Australians and what life is like in Australia. Their stories have reflected and influenced the Australian character.

Many of the first Australian children's books were all about teaching things to children, including how they should behave. Often, characters and settings were very English, but writing for children has changed over the years.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, authors began writing stories about real-life adventures and growing up in Australia. The characters and settings began to be about our **unique** animals, landscape and way of life in Australia. Fantasy stories included creatures and flowers found in the Australian bush.



Stories had previously been about families moving from England to Australia, or of the struggles faced when living in the outback. The characters were often immigrants or settlers. As people became more settled, the stories began to be about Australian families and their tales and adventures.



In the 1900s, children's writers began to write about Australian children growing up in Australia.

Soon, writers started to include serious and **controversial** issues in their stories. Families were more **diverse** and stories were set in cities and the suburbs, whereas, in the past, stories were often set in the country.

Over time, the issues that were important to Australians changed. Stories began to include conservation, pollution, **multiculturalism** and a greater understanding of Indigenous rights and history.

Today, books continue to deal with issues that are important to Australian children. They also include a quirky, **larrikin** style of humour.

*So Much to Tell Us* looks at six well-known Australian children's writers and explores why their books are loved by children throughout Australia and the rest of the world.