

TSSMTM
Creating VCE Success

SAMPLE

ENGLISH TEXT SUMMARY NOTES
No Sugar

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SAMPLE

AUTHOR NOTES

Jack Davis was an Australian playwright, poet and Indigenous rights campaigner whose work predominately dealt with themes of Indigenous oppression, inequality, and explored the experiences of Aboriginal Australians. As an activist for Indigenous Australians, his plays give a voice to, and represent, the Indigenous struggle for cultural identity. Born in Perth in 1917, Jack Davis was raised on the Yarloop and Moore River native settlements and learnt the language and culture of his people, the Nyoongarah people of Western Australia while he spent several years living on the Brookton Aboriginal reserve. As an Indigenous Australian who had experienced first-hand the oppression carried out by the White Australians, Davis was successful in portraying these struggles throughout many of his texts. He became an activist to give a voice to his people. He received the British Empire Medal in 1977 and became a member of the Order of Australia in 1985. He has been the benefactor of many performing arts awards and in 1986 his *No Sugar* was the co-winner of the award for the best stage play of the year, awarded by the Australian Writers Guild.

His published plays include *Kullark* (1972), *The Dreamers* (1982), *No Sugar* (1985), *Honeyspot* (1985), *Moorli and the Leprechaun* (1986), and *Burungin* (1988). Davis has also had several poetry anthologies published. Jack Davis died in March 2000.

GENRE

No Sugar is an Australian, post-colonial play. As a play, *No Sugar* explores the oppression of Australian Aboriginal people by a dominant white society. The play explores Australian history and identity and focuses on Indigenous issues.

Theatre always tells us something about society and analysing theatre can give audiences different perspectives on that society. For instance, we can develop an understanding about life, customs and ideas present in the Elizabethan era from Shakespeare's plays. Thus, Australian theatre in many ways reflects issues present in Australian society. However, it wasn't until the 1970s that Indigenous theatre really developed. Prior to this most of the portrayals of Aborigines in plays were written by Anglo-Australians whose representations of the Indigenous people were based largely on stereotypes. Jack Davis was one of the first Indigenous playwrights to gain recognition by a wide audience.

The medium of a play allows Indigenous Australians to continue to engage in the oral tradition of storytelling, allowing them to share a history that validates the ancient forms of Aboriginal storytelling and that formal written historical records often omit.

Post-Colonialism

No Sugar is a post-colonial play. Post-colonial literature responds to European colonisation and the effects of this on the country being colonised. This post-colonial play records and explores the struggle of the Indigenous people who were exploited and oppressed by colonial rule.