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A film inspired  
by the book  
*The Little Prince*  
– Antoine  
de St Exupéry

# THE MIRACLE OF THE LITTLE PRINCE

A FILM  
BY  
**MARJOLEINE  
BOONSTRA**



GRAPHIC DESIGN - STUDIO RON VAN ROOIJ







## ❖ **THE MIRACLE OF THE LITTLE PRINCE**

*The Miracle of The Little Prince* (2018) is a Dutch documentary directed by Marjoleine Boonstra. Inspired by the book *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the documentary shows the stories of the passionate translators of the book who fight for the preservation of their endangered languages.

LANGUAGES: FRENCH, TAMAZIGHT, SÁMI, NAHUAT AND TIBETAN. RUNNING TIME: 90 MINUTES

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## ❖ CURRICULUM LINKS

*The Miracle of The Little Prince* is suitable for students in Years 7–12.

It is recommended that teachers provide students with the opportunity to read *The Little Prince* or excerpts from the book to enrich their understanding of the documentary. In addition, teachers are encouraged to compare *The Miracle of The Little Prince* with a film adaptation of *The Little Prince*.

### YEARS 7–10

In Years 7–10, *The Miracle of The Little Prince* is a relevant resource for meeting learning outcomes in:

- English
- HSIE
- Languages

In addition, *The Miracle of The Little Prince* relates to the general capability Intercultural Understanding within the Australian Curriculum.

### YEARS 11–12

In Years 11 and 12, *The Miracle of The Little Prince* is a relevant resource for meeting learning outcomes in:

- English
- Society and Culture
- Languages

The curriculum included in this student guide:

- invites students to share their responses to the stories told by the film.
- asks students questions about the documentary as a film text.

In completing the tasks, students will have demonstrated the ability to:

- analyse the construction of a film and comment on the ways it represents an interpretation of ideas and experiences;
- respond to a film both personally and in detached and critical ways;
- discuss the social, cultural and historical values embodied in a film;
- draw on appropriate metalanguage to discuss the structures and features of a film;
- use their own written and spoken texts to explore concepts and ideas and to clarify their own and others' understanding.

Teachers are advised to direct students to complete activities that are subject-relevant and age-appropriate. Activity sheets 1–4 have been included for use with junior secondary students.

## ❖ BACKGROUND

*THE LITTLE PRINCE* (1943) BY ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY IS A POPULAR CHILDREN'S BOOK. IT IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST WIDELY TRANSLATED LITERARY WORKS, HAVING BEEN TRANSLATED IN MORE THAN 300 LANGUAGES. WORLDWIDE, ONLY THE *BIBLE* HAS BEEN MORE TRANSLATED. THE FIRST EDITION OF THE BOOK WAS PUBLISHED IN FRENCH AND ENGLISH.

THE LITTLE PRINCE IS THE STORY'S MAIN CHARACTER, A SMALL BOY FROM A TINY PLANET KNOWN AS ASTEROID B-612, WHO LEAVES HIS HOME WHERE HE FEELS LONELY. HIS QUEST FOR FRIENDSHIP AND DISCOVERY OF LIFE'S IMPORTANT THINGS LEADS HIM ON AN EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY. HE MEETS PEOPLE AND ANIMALS AND ASKS WHY THEY DO THE THINGS THEY DO. HIS INTERPLANETARY TRAVELS SHOW HIM THE FOOLISHNESS OF GROWN-UPS WHO HAVE FORGOTTEN WHAT MATTERS. ON EARTH, THE LITTLE PRINCE MEETS A FOX WHO SHARES WITH HIM THE SECRET OF SEEING WITH HIS HEART AND NOT WITH HIS EYES. WHEN THE LITTLE PRINCE MEETS THE NARRATOR, A PILOT WHO IS MAROONED IN THE SAHARA DESERT, HIS ROLE SHIFTS FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER AS HE HELPS THE PILOT WHO HAS FORGOTTEN THE IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE.

*THE MIRACLE OF THE LITTLE PRINCE* DOCUMENTS HOW SMALLER LINGUISTIC REGIONS USE THE BOOK TO KEEP THEIR LANGUAGE ALIVE.

**ADVICE TO TEACHERS:** Copies of *The Little Prince* and study guides can be accessed online. In addition, the 2016 animated adaptation of the book can be watched on Netflix. *Invisible Essence: The Little Prince* (2018), a documentary exploring the book's legacy, can also be watched on Netflix.

- Have you read *The Little Prince*? Did you enjoy it? Why do you think *The Little Prince* is not only a popular but loved book?
- Why do you think *The Little Prince* is the most translated book in the world?
- *The Little Prince* is an allegory. What is an allegory?
- The little prince reveals to the pilot the lessons he has learned. What are the lessons he has learned? How can these lessons be applied in your world?
- Is *The Little Prince* a children's book? What does the book's dedication suggest about the intended audience?
- What connections can you make between *The Little Prince* and *The Miracle of The Little Prince*?



## ❖ DOCUMENTARY PARTICIPANTS

- LAHBIB FOUAD
- TASHI KYI
- NOYONTSANG LAMOKYAB
- JORGE LEMUS
- OMAR TAOUS
- KERTTU VUOLAB

## ❖ SYNOPSIS

Next to the *Bible*, *The Little Prince* is the most translated book in the world. It has versions in over 300 different languages. Why do people from very diverse cultures choose this book to keep their languages and cultures alive?

From the night sky, where the little prince smiles at us on his star and where aviator and writer of the book Antoine de Saint-Exupéry felt most at home, the documentary *The Miracle of The Little Prince* lands in the desert. And, just like the little prince, the film travels around the world to meet people who make the inseparable connection between language, culture and landscape tangible.

In the desert, among the sand and stars, we meet writer Lahbib Fouad and his friend, the poet Omar Taous. Together, they have been fighting for over thirty years to save Tamazight, the Berber language that is officially the second language of Morocco. It is a language that is barely written or read.

In the land of the Sámi, at the border of Norway and Finland, there is Kerttu Vuolab. When she was young, she was bullied at boarding school because of her language and culture.

After the tragic death of her younger sister who drowned in the river near her home, she was even lonelier than before. *The Little Prince* was her source of comfort during these tough times. While attending university, she decided to translate the book into Sámi.

In El Salvador, Jorge Lemus is venturing on a translation into Nahuat, also called Pipil, an indigenous Aztec language. The Pipil natives were massacred on a large scale in 1932. Today, Nahuat is an endangered language.

The Tibetan translation is by Tashi Kyi and Noyontsang Lamokyab. Both of them live as exiles in Paris, cut off from their family, their landscape, culture and language. Their language is under threat.

The story of *The Little Prince* connects these languages, cultures and landscapes. The book's words of comfort and hope find their echo in the struggle of the translators and their friends. These experiences of these translators from far and wide, despite their different cultures and languages, convince us that it is essential for people to be allowed to think, dream and speak in their native language.

## ❖ DIRECTOR PROFILE: MARJOLEINE BOONSTRA

Marjoleine Boonstra is a Dutch film director and photographer with over twenty-five years of experience. Her documentaries always circle around the theme of what keeps mankind alive. Her first feature film *Kurai Kurai* premiered in 2015. Her work combines a poetic visual approach with a compassionate view of the world. Recommended link: <https://marjoleineboonstra.onfabrik.com>



## ❖ PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

### ACTIVITY 1: TRAILER

Watch the official trailer for *The Miracle of The Little Prince*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YmXtwoYaVw&feature=youtu.be>

- What do you think the film will be about? What questions do you have about the film?
- What does the trailer tell a potential audience about the genre, narrative, characters, themes and setting of the film?
- What does the trailer tell a potential audience about the director of the film and the production company?
- What other information is included in the trailer?
- Does the trailer make you want to see the film?

### ACTIVITY 2: PROMOTIONAL POSTER

A film's promotional poster is both art and advertising. The poster exists to promote the film for a commercial purpose. The poster also has an aesthetic value. Use Google Images to locate a copy of the promotional poster for *The Miracle of The Little Prince*.

Look at the promotional poster for the documentary. What can you see? Your notes should refer to both the visual and written features of the poster.

Use the following questions to guide your note-taking:

- What is the title of the film? What is the tagline of the film? What credits are shown on the poster?
- What is the dominant image on the poster? What does this dominant image suggest?
- What is in the foreground of the poster? What is in the background of the poster?
- What are the dominant colours of the poster?
- Does the poster draw on the codes and conventions of a particular genre?
- Does the poster suggest the likely audience of the film?

Drawing on your notes, write an analysis of the promotional poster for *The Miracle of The Little Prince*.



### ACTIVITY 3: LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND LANDSCAPE

#### DEFINING LANGUAGE

*The Miracle of The Little Prince* establishes the importance of language and endorses the preservation of languages. The following questions provide an opportunity for you to consider the ideas and issues associated with language that are explored in the documentary.

- What is language?
- Why is language important?
- What is your first language? Do you speak any other languages? What languages are spoken in your family?
- What is a dialect? Does anyone in your family speak a dialect?
- What is language diversity? Why is language diversity important? What are the most spoken languages in the world?
- What is a dead language?
- What is an extinct language? How does a language become extinct?



- What is an endangered language? Why does a language become endangered?
- Why is it important to preserve an endangered language?
- How can endangered languages be preserved?

Learn more about endangered languages online via the following links:

UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger

<http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/>

UNESCO Frequent Asked Questions on Endangered Languages

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/endangered-languages/faq-on-endangered-languages/>

Endangered Languages Project

<http://www.endangeredlanguages.com>

## DEFINING CULTURE

*The Miracle of the Little Prince* establishes the importance of culture to individuals and to communities. When a community loses its language, its cultural identity is also compromised. The following questions provide an opportunity for you to consider the ideas and issues associated with culture that are explored in the documentary.

- What is culture?
- Why is culture important?
- What is cultural identity? Why is cultural identity important?
- What cultures do you identify with? How does culture shape your sense of identity and belonging?
- How is your cultural identity reflected in your everyday life?
- How is culture learnt?
- How do you keep your culture or cultures alive?
- What is the connection between language and culture?
- What is an endangered culture?
- Why does a culture become endangered?
- Why is it important to preserve an endangered culture?
- How can endangered cultures be preserved?

Learn more about endangered cultures online via the following links:

UNESCO Culture

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/resources/report/the-unesco-world-report-on-cultural-diversity/>

Global Oneness Project: Endangered Cultures

<https://www.globalonenessproject.org/library/collections/endangered-cultures/>



## DEFINING LANDSCAPE

*The Miracle of The Little Prince* establishes the importance of the landscape that we inhabit and endorses showing value to this landscape. The following questions provide an opportunity for you to consider the ideas and issues associated with landscape that are explored in the documentary.

- What is landscape?
- Why are landscapes important?
- Describe the landscape that you inhabit.
- Describe and explain your relationship with the landscape that you inhabit.
- How do you show that you appreciate the landscape that you inhabit?
- What is the connection between culture and landscape?
- What is the connection between landscape and wellbeing?



## ❖ VIEWING ACTIVITIES

How does *The Miracle of The Little Prince* begin? In answering this question, think about what you see and what you hear. How does the opening sequence establish the central ideas of the film? What associations can you make between the beginning of the book and the opening sequence of the documentary?

A central idea of *The Little Prince* is that true understanding cannot be achieved without real-world experience. In *The Miracle of The Little Prince*, we journey around the world stopping in four destinations, witnessing the lives of the documentary participants and, in turn, achieving a clearer understanding of the interconnection between language, culture and landscape.

### THE WATERHOLE

The opening story is titled 'The Waterhole'. We observe the life of a family as they wake and face the day. The footage of the family and other locals going about their daily life is intercut with interviews with translator and writer Lahbib Fouad and his friend, the poet Omar Taous.

- 'But we will not leave this place and we will not leave the cattle behind. This is our way of living. We will endure.' What does the audience learn about the 'way of living' of the local inhabitants? Explain the significance of the man's use of the word 'endure'.
- Describe the landscape that features in 'The Waterhole'.
- Who are Lahbib Fouad and Omar Taous? What do we learn about their personal stories?

Arabic is the national and official language of Morocco. It is spoken by the majority of the population. Modern Standard Arabic is taught in schools. Lahbib Fouad and Omar Taous have campaigned for over thirty years to save Tamazight, the second language of Morocco. Tamazight became an official language in 2011 and is taught in schools. Tamazight is mostly spoken by the people of the Rif Mountains, the people of the Middle Atlas and the people of the High Atlas and the Sous Valley.

Lahbib Fouad is a Tamazight translator. Until he was six years old, Tamazight was the only language that he spoke. In *The Miracle of The Little Prince*, he recalls his first day at school, learning that there was another language than his own and his first experience of Arabic:

*We entered the classroom and the teacher spoke to us in a strange language! We were surprised. We didn't understand a word! The teacher told us we were going to learn Arabic. So we could read and understand the Koran we had to learn this new language. He showed us many different books we were going to learn to read.*

- 'Tamazight is the language my mother gave me.'  
'Tamazight is running through my veins.' – Lahbib Fouad  
Using these statements as a starting point, discuss what Tamazight means to Lahbib Fouad. What do these statements suggest about Lahbib's commitment to preserving and rebuilding Tamazight?

Since 2003, Tamazight has been taught in schools. It was during the introduction of Tamazight into the curriculum that

Lahbib Fouad realised the need for more appropriate texts. His realisation prompted him to translate *The Little Prince*.

Omar Taous offers the following insight into the relevance and importance of *The Little Prince*:

*The Little Prince is like a mirror for Imazighen, their civilisation and their history. They are searching, searching for themselves. They share their cultural assets with their natural environment, with the earth, the trees. That is why you can find in the Amazigh culture a reverence for certain animals or insects. Like the salamander. The great Saint Salamander! Or the Holy Rock! They share all good things with nature.*

- Why did Lahbib Fouad and Omar Taous decide to translate *The Little Prince* into Tamazight?

Rebuilding a language involves creating opportunities for people to speak, listen to, read and write. Lahbib explains that in the past people used to write in Tamazight:

*Most of the time they wrote on stones and rocks. They wrote, for example, their own names, symbols and all kinds of inscriptions, and petroglyphs in Tifinagh script. People wrote short texts on tombs. Like proper names or the dates of when persons had died, etcetera. In the past that used to be the role of Tifinagh script.*

Mothers taught their children the Tifinagh script by drawing in the sand but as Lahbib observes, 'when the wind came everything was blown away until nothing of it was left.'

- Explain the symbolism of Omar writing the words 'water is life' in the desert sand.
- Explain the significance of the excerpts from *The Little Prince* that are narrated in this section of the film.
- The excerpts from *The Little Prince* featured in 'The Waterhole' are taken from Chapters 17, 21, 22 and 23.

Recommended links:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berber\\_languages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berber_languages)  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tifinagh>

**DID YOU KNOW?** In 1935, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry was the pilot of a plane that went down in the Sahara Desert. Saint-Exupéry and his navigator had no hope of repairing the aircraft. For four days the two wandered without food or water in search of help. They were rescued by a passing tribe of Bedouins.





## A DYING STAR: SÁMI (NORTHERN FINLAND AND SCANDINAVIA)

Kerttu Vuolab lives in the land of the Sámi at the border of Finland and Norway. While Finnish is the national and official language of Finland and is spoken by the majority of the population, Sámi is Kerttu's first language.

- Describe the landscape that features in 'A Dying Star'.
- Who is Kerttu Vuolab? What do we learn about her life and the challenges she has encountered?

The story of Kerttu's translation of *The Little Prince* into Sámi begins with her providing an account of the tragic death of her younger sister:

*I was thirteen years old. My sister was eleven years old. It was July twenty-third and a hot day. We had spent the day outside swimming and playing in the river, and then grandmother called us to eat. When we had eaten, grandmother said that one child should make the beds and the others could go back to the river. So I stayed to make the beds and the others ran to go swimming. I lay down a long time reading magazines. Then a bad feeling came that I should be with the others. I was going down the hill. My cousin came and said that Pirkko was drowning. She was drifting under water. I saw my mother on the other side of the river with a cow in a boat. When she had crossed the river she put the cow ashore and rowed to us. Two neighbours were out on their boat. They lifted my sister into the boat. I ran to get a blanket. It was four kilometres to the first aid. I stayed behind with my other sister and brother. I had to give them supper and put them to bed. I had to stay and wait for the cows, put them in the shed and milk them. But then after midnight they came, mother, father and brother and they told me that my sister had died.*

- What were your thoughts and feelings as Kerttu spoke about the circumstances of her sister's death?

A month after her sister had drowned, Kerttu was sent to boarding school. There, she was bullied because of her language and culture. Her recollection of this time in her life conveys her isolation and unhappiness:

*We had a teacher who didn't know Sámi and in the dormitories they said that when there are people who don't know Sámi you should speak Finnish. But I didn't know Finnish. It felt like someone had cut my throat open. I spoke Sámi when I could and I didn't speak Finnish.*

- Explain the significance of Kerttu's use of the word 'silenced'.
- What does her account of being discouraged from speaking Sámi highlight about the connection between language and identity?
- What does her account of being discouraged from speaking Sámi highlight about the connection between language and wellbeing?

Kerttu hid in the school toilets to escape the bullies and 'find some peace'. She describes her hiding place:

*There in the toilet I had my books, my papers and my paintings and I would amuse and comfort myself. They didn't know that I had built a nest in the toilet. That was my own secret.*

The school library was another place where Kerttu felt safe. It was while she was hiding in the library that Kerttu discovered *The Little Prince*:

*The librarian told me that this book might suit me. I began to read the book. It became like a friend to me, and today it is still my friend. I found friendship and consolation. How the children's world in The Little Prince wonders about the grownups' hardness, the restriction of thought. Because I too felt that. People don't want to see that someone has sorrow in their life. They have to make fun of it.*

- Why did Kerttu find comfort in *The Little Prince*?
- Explain the significance of the illustration from *The Little Prince* that she shows to Marjoleine Boonstra, the director of *The Miracle of The Little Prince*.
- Is there a book, or perhaps a film, that you consider a friend?

Kerttu cares for her elderly mother. She has done so for almost twenty-one years. When Marjoleine Boonstra asks if she finds this role difficult, she replies,

*It's not hard because she's my only mother. In a way I got my... how should I put it... in a way I got back that time of my life. The chance that I lost in my childhood. When I was a small child, my mother was away on the highlands skiing after reindeer, all over the fells. And when I got older, I lived in a boarding school. So I have in a way gotten back the longing that I felt as a child now as a grownup.*

- *This is my little Kerttu. – Kerttu Vuolab's mother*  
*My mother for me is a dictionary. I have worked with her for twenty years and lived with her, and she has also been my manager and in a way I have gotten my mother tongue back through my work with language, translation and writing. – Kerttu Vuolab*



Describe the relationship between mother and daughter. What connections can you make between *The Little Prince* and Kerttu's view of her relationship with her mother?

- *In my opinion a person's strongest ties to life are through language, because through language we advise each other. And in this world there are many languages, and languages are a little like stars like the starry sky. The harder you stare, the more stars you notice, and knowledge of languages is a bit like that. The more you use it, the better you understand, and the broader your understanding. But not one single person ever knows any one language perfectly, because languages change over time. We lose words. We find a need for new words. Stars die and new stars are born and start to shine. And the same happens with languages.* – Kerttu Vuolab  
What does language mean to Kerttu? What does this statement reveal about her view of preserving language?

It was while she was at university that Kerttu decided to translate *The Little Prince* into Sámi.

- Based on your viewing of 'A Dying Star', explain Kerttu's decision to translate *The Little Prince* into Sámi?
- Explain the significance of the excerpts from *The Little Prince* that are narrated in this section of the film.
- The excerpts from *The Little Prince* featured in 'A Dying Star' are taken from Chapters 21 and 25.

Recommended links:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kerttu\\_Vuolab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kerttu_Vuolab)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C3%A1mi\\_languages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C3%A1mi_languages)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C3%A1mi\\_people](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C3%A1mi_people)  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sami-language/>

## A PRICKLY ROSE

In El Salvador, Jorge Lemus is embarking on the translation of *The Little Prince* into Nahuat. Nahuat, also called Pipil, is an Indigenous Aztec language. For the Indigenous population, preserving their cultural identity has not been easy.

- What does the audience learn about the daily life of the local inhabitants?
- Describe the landscape that features in 'A Prickly Rose'.

In January 1932 there was a peasant uprising in the western part of El Salvador. The Indigenous and non-Indigenous peasants demanded their land back. In a matter of days between 10,000 and 30,000 people were massacred. After the rebellion, opponents of the government were intimidated and executed. For the Indigenous population, the effects of the massacre went far beyond the immediate death toll – they increasingly abandoned their native dress and traditional languages because of fear of further reprisals. These are some of the statements of the Pipil natives:

- *Our grandparents practised an ancestral spirituality 86 years ago. Unfortunately, they were murdered but their roots survived. We are part of their roots, descendants of grandpa Feliciano Ama. Grandpa, please, plead for us. That we will always remember 1932. Please plead with the mighty Hau.*
- *Back then, people had stopped talking Nahuat. Nobody talked Nahuat anymore. Nobody spoke it. It was very serious because when certain people from San Salvador came to visit they said that they were going to kill people who talk Nahuat. So if indigenous women saw a guy from San Salvador arriving, they would hide themselves under the bed. They were afraid and that is how Nahuat began to get lost. Only small towns have people that speak Nahuat. Those are ancient words that our fathers and mothers used. The ancient used to*





...speak like that. That's why I speak it a little bit too. That knowledge makes me feel peaceful.

- I can't write but I can read a little bit. I feel that I have my value but only with my tongue, my value is I can speak.
- My grandmother told me she was afraid because of my origins and the Nahuat language. Not that she thought there was going to be a riot like in 1932 but I could suffer other forms of persecution. She always told me to be careful. She said take care of yourself and save this knowledge. Save it because it's our legacy. Whenever she wanted to teach me Nahuat words she even sent the dog away and armed with a wooden stick she stood at her door, looking in every direction to see if no one was near, it didn't matter if they were relatives, before talking to me in the language. We have our feelings. We have our thoughts. We have our spirituality. We have our language and we have our land that has been taken away from us. We want our land back because that is the place where our ancestors lived. It is the place where we are comfortable. It is the place we want to leave to the new generations.
- Use the Internet to research the 1932 Rebellion. Drawing on your research and the statements made by the Pipil people featured in 'A Prickly Rose', describe and explain the immediate and ongoing impact of the rebellion on Pipil culture. How is the impact of the rebellion being addressed by survivors and their descendants?

Jorge is committed to the rebuilding of endangered languages:

*We must raise awareness with the general public about languages such as Nahuat because the language carries the culture, tradition and history of the people that speak it and it's important to safeguard it because if we don't protect these languages, we are directly damaging the worlds cultural and linguistic diversity. As if we say we only need cows, horses or chickens because those are the only animals we eat. So we don't need any birds, eagles or tigers.*

*They can go extinct. It would be a monotonous world, a world without progress.*

Jorge meets with three women to work on the translation of *The Little Prince*. Most Nahuat speakers are more than eighty years old. They are the generation that secretly learned Nahuat within their families. He explains the challenges of the project to the women:

*We are working on The Little Prince, good? For The Little Prince as I already told you, it is important that we translate it exactly. If there are no words for some terms we must look for them. We need to look for the exact meaning. It is very important when we translate that we are faithful to the original work, to how it was originally written. Imagine a medical prescription, badly translated, and instead of adding two spoons, it says add three spoons. I may risk dying. Ok, let's go.*

- 'A language like Nahuat that is dying, that has stopped evolving and adding new words. It lacks many words and expressions that are common in modern languages. We need to find an equivalent.' – Jorge Lemus  
Using these statements as a starting point, discuss what Nahuat means to Jorge Lemus. What does the footage of him working with the three women suggest about Jorge's commitment to preserving and rebuilding Nahuat? Why has Jorge decided to translate *The Little Prince* into Nahuat?
- Explain the significance of the excerpts from *The Little Prince* that are narrated in this section of the film.
- The excerpts from *The Little Prince* featured in 'A Prickly Rose' are taken from Chapter 8.

Recommended links:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pipil\\_language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pipil_language)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pipil\\_people](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pipil_people)

<http://tushik.org/english/what-is-nawat/>

<https://www.teachingcentralamerica.org/pipils-el-salvador/>



## MOTHER TONGUE

The Tibetan translation of *The Little Prince* is by Tashi Kyi and Noyontsang Lamokyab. Both of them live as exiles in Paris, separated from their family, their landscape, culture and language.

- Who are Tashi Kyi and Noyontsang Lamokyab? What do we learn about their personal stories?
- Describe the landscape that features in 'Mother Tongue'.

Tashi shares her story of being separated from her family:

*When I was small, in 1997, I went to India with my whole family...They brought me to a school and went back to*



Tibet. They put me up in a foster home and they all left. Of course, at the time, I cried a lot. I didn't have a clue I wouldn't see them for twenty years. My father and mother probably didn't realise that either. I could not realise that I would not see them again but funnily enough, at the time it felt like we were saying goodbye.

Lamokyab explains his decision to leave his home country:

*I left Tibet secretly, in 1989, without my family knowing. From India, I tried to write to them but they never received the letters, so we couldn't communicate for a long time as I couldn't go back. The reasons for going into exile were mostly the political situation. Secondly, I love literature and wanted to become a writer and a writer needs freedom. Before Tibet was a nation, but since the Chinese occupation, Tibet is an autonomous region officially with its rights to its own spoken and written language. But to influence that situation, official documents must be in Chinese and the main language during any meeting must be Chinese.*

- *There is a huge difference between my horse riding in the past and this here. The horses had lots of freedom on huge grasslands. So, I think, the riders and the horses were happy. Here they are taking care of them and feed them but it feels a little like a prison. – Noyontsang Lamokyab*  
*You can't come. There is nothing to worry about here. You don't have to try to come here. It's better for you to stay on your western path you have nothing here. I feel better you being there instead of coming here. – Noyontsang Lamokyab's mother*  
*The little prince is free to do what he wants he can go for what he needs. He is not bound to a place. He doesn't stop searching. I would love to be like him. – Tashi Kyi*  
What is exile? What does it mean to live in exile? How do Tashi Kyi and Noyontsang Lamokyab view their exile from Tibet? Explain the significance of the footage

of Tashi Kyi and Noyontsang Lamokyab horse riding and of Tashi Kyi's account of the little bird.

Friendship is a key theme of *The Little Prince*. How does this section of the film portray the friendship between Tashi Kyi and Noyontsang Lamokyab? Why is their friendship so important?

- *When we translated The Little Prince, I took the part of editor. Tashi Kyi did the main translation. We tried to translate it into literary Tibetan but sometimes it's hard to convey the inner meaning. – Noyontsang Lamokyab*  
*The Little Prince I co-translated with my teacher, Lamokyab. We had fun translating. I principally referred to the English and French versions of the book and Lamokyab consulted the Mandarin version.' – Tashi Kyi*  
What does *The Little Prince* mean to Tashi Kyi and Noyontsang Lamokyab?
- *Language is one's main identity. It's difficult to separate language and identity. The natives of a land grow up together with its languages. They are inseparable and if they are separated it's difficult to keep one's identity. – Noyontsang Lamokyab*  
What does language mean to Lamokyab? What does this statement reveal about his view of preserving language?
- Explain the significance of the excerpts from *The Little Prince* that are narrated in this section of the film.
- The excerpts from *The Little Prince* featured in 'Mother Tongue' are taken from Chapters 10, 12, 21 and 26.

Recommended links

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibet>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibetan\\_language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibetan_language)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-16689779/>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Tibetan-language/>

**DID YOU KNOW?** After France's armistice with Germany in 1940, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry fled France and lived as an exile in America.

## THE MIRACLE OF THE LITTLE PRINCE

Each of the stories told in *The Miracle of The Little Prince* offers an intimate account of the experiences of the documentary participants. We meet them in the landscape to which their language and culture are connected. They show us around their world, effectively casting us in the role of the curious little prince. We learn about who they are, where they live, what they do and why they do what they do.

Collectively the stories make a statement about the significance of language, culture and landscape. All of the documentary participants willingly share their understanding of what really matters in life and the importance of preserving what is essential. In this sense, the film becomes a meditation on how to live and how to connect to all that lives through the wisdom and clarity of *The Little Prince*.

- Why do people choose *The Little Prince* to keep their language alive?
- What comfort has *The Little Prince* given the documentary participants? What hope has *The Little Prince* given the documentary participants?
- What is the miracle of *The Little Prince*?



## ❖ POST-VIEWING ACTIVITY

After the screening of *The Miracle of The Little Prince*, spend time as a class discussing the students' interest in the film, and provide students with the opportunity to ask questions about the film. Ask students to review their responses to Activities 1 and 2 and, where necessary, make adjustments that correct and/or clarify their analysis of both the trailer and poster.

- Why is the documentary titled *The Miracle of The Little Prince*? Write the title in the middle of an A4 sheet of paper and then, working with a partner, mindmap your answer to this question.

### DISCUSSION: FILM STYLE

A documentary is a nonfiction text that represents events and people from real life. The purpose of a documentary could be to provoke thought, to educate or to persuade. To be successful, a documentary also needs to engage its audience.

- Have you watched other documentaries? Share your experiences of this genre with the class. In what ways is *The Miracle of The Little Prince* like other documentaries that you have watched? How does it differ? Share your responses to these questions with the class.
- What type of documentary is *The Miracle of The Little Prince*? Before you answer this question, spend time online reading about the types of documentaries and the codes and conventions of each type. Use evidence from the film to endorse your answer to this question.
- Imagine you had the opportunity to interview the film's director Marjoleine Boonstra. Compile a list of five questions you would like to ask her about the making of *The Miracle of The Little Prince*.
- Can you recall any moments when you were looking at the film and noticed someone in the film staring back at you? How did you feel? What did you think? Why do you think the director Marjoleine Boonstra relies on this technique?

### EXTENDED RESPONSE

'Language makes us what we are.' Discuss.

Your text response should be 500–750 words in length and should draw on specific evidence from *The Miracle of The Little Prince*.





## REVIEW: *THE MIRACLE OF THE LITTLE PRINCE*

Did you enjoy *The Miracle of The Little Prince*? Share your thoughts about the film with others in the class.

Your task is to make a thirty-second vlog that offers a review of *The Miracle of The Little Prince*. When you have finished, post your vlog to the class' YouTube account.

Just like a film trailer has to sell the film to an audience, your film review should demand the attention of your audience. The opinions expressed in your review can vary. You can express your love, hate or ambivalence for the film. You can offer one-word assessments of the film. You can introduce the plot (but don't give away the ending). You can name your favourite scene, perhaps one that best sums up what the film is about. You can tell your audience about a character that you liked or loathed. You can evaluate the way the film uses a production element. You can share how you felt or what you thought as you watched the film. You can explain why the film is a must-see or best avoided. You can suggest who'll love it and who won't. And finally, you can rate it. From one to five, how many stars does *The Miracle of The Little Prince* deserve?

## INVESTIGATION: SAVING AUSTRALIA'S INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

Can you name an Indigenous Australian language? Your task is to use print and digital resources to investigate the status of Indigenous Australian languages.

Begin this investigation online at <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/indigenous-australian-languages/>.

- Based on your reading and research make an infographic that informs an Australian audience about the status of Indigenous Australian languages.
- Why is it essential that Indigenous Australian languages are saved? Working as a class make a list of reasons why Indigenous Australian languages should be saved. A recommended starting point for your research is 'What is language extinction and why should we care?' which can be read online at <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/my-grand-mothers-lingo/article/2016/10/06/what-language-extinction-and-why-should-we-care/>. Working as an individual, write a letter to the editor of a daily newspaper or a letter to your local member of state or federal parliament that expresses your view on the importance of saving Indigenous Australian languages.
- What actions are being taken to preserve and revive Indigenous Australian languages? Working as a class, identify the individuals, communities and organisations that are actively engaged in this process. Working with a partner, choose one of the individuals, communities or organisations as the focus of further research. Drawing on your research, make a PowerPoint or Google Slides presentation about the subject of your research. The purpose of the presentation is to promote the work of the selected individual, community or organisation.

## ✿ LINKS

Teachers are advised to preview online material to assess its suitability for use as a student resource.

For information about *The Miracle of The Little Prince*, visit the film's official website at

<https://filmstransit.com/the-miracle-of-the-little-prince/> and Marjoleine Boonstra's website at <https://marjoleineboonstra.onfabrik.com/portfolio/the-little-prince/>.

View the official trailer for *The Miracle of The Little Prince* online at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YmXtwoYaVw&feature=youtu.be> and via the film's website.



## ✿ CREDITS

**Director:**

Marjoleine Boonstra

**Producer:**

Pieter van Huystee

**Cinematography:**

Marjoleine Boonstra

**Editing:**

Menno Boerema

**Research:**

Lies Janssen





‘The Waterhole’ is set in Morocco, a country in North Africa. Use Google Earth to visit and learn about Morocco. The language that is the subject of this section of the film is Tamazight.

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- This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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- This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



## ❁ ACTIVITY SHEET 2: A DYING STAR

'A Dying Star' is set in a region located at the border of Finland and Norway. Use Google Earth to visit and learn about this region. The language that is the subject of this section of the film is Sámi.

- 🕒 Sámi is a Uralic language. What is a Uralic language?

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- 🕒 Where is Sámi spoken?

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- 🕒 What is the status of Sámi?

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- 🕒 The Sámi speakers featured in 'A Dying Star' are Kerttu Vuolab and her mother. Who is Kerttu Vuolab? What do we learn about her life and what she values? Why does she want to preserve Sámi?

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- 🕒 Describe Kerttu Vuolab's relationship with the book *The Little Prince*.

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- 🕒 Based on your viewing of 'A Dying Star' and your online research make a fact sheet about Sámi.

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## ❖ ACTIVITY SHEET 3: A PRICKLY ROSE

'A Prickly Rose' is set in El Salvador. Use Google Earth to visit and learn about this region. The language that is the subject of this section of the film is Nahuat, also known as Pipil. The Nahuas are a group of Indigenous people of Mexico and El Salvador.

- Nahuat is a Uto-Aztecan language. What is a Uto-Aztecan language?

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- Where is Nahuat spoken?

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- What is the status of Nahuat?

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- The Nahuat speakers featured in 'A Prickly Rose' are Jorge Lemus, Sixta Pérez, Guillerma López, Andrea López Juliana Ama de Chile and Alexandro Tepas Lapa. Who is Jorge Lemus? What do we learn about him and what he values? Why do Jorge and the other participants want to preserve Nahuat?

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- Describe Jorge Lemus' relationship with the book *The Little Prince*.

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- Based on your viewing of 'A Prickly Rose' and your online research make a fact sheet about Nahuat.

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## ❁ ACTIVITY SHEET 4: MOTHER TONGUE

'Mother Tongue' is set in Paris where Tibetans Tashi Kyi and Noyontsang Lamokyab live in exile. Use Google Earth to visit and learn about Paris and Tibet. The language that is the subject of this section of the film is Tibetan.

- Define the following term: 'mother tongue'.

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- Tibetan is a Tibetic language. What is a Tibetic language?

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- Where is Tibetan spoken?

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- What is the status of Tibetan?

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- The Tibetan speakers featured in 'Mother Tongue' are Tashi Kyi and Noyontsang Lamokyab. Who are Tashi Kyi and Noyontsang Lamokyab? What do we learn about them and what they value? Why do they want to preserve Tibetan?

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- Describe Tashi Kyi and Noyontsang Lamokyab's relationship with the book *The Little Prince*.

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- Based on your viewing of 'Mother Tongue' and your online research make a fact sheet about Tibetan.

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