

Grandma's story – Living in the Outback

Name _____ Date _____

Grandma's story – Living in the Outback

When I was a child in the 1950s, I lived on a sheep station in outback Queensland. The station was called 'Nerrigundah'. The nearest town was Quilpie. Nerrigundah was situated 80 kms south west of Quilpie down a pot-holed, corrugated dirt road. It was 19 km from the front gate to where we lived. The land was very flat and there weren't many trees.

The boss and his family lived in the main homestead. There was a house where the head stockman lived with his wife and children and a small house where my family lived. The other workmen lived in the men's quarters.



On the veranda

Electricity for lights came from a generator. We had wood stoves for cooking and heating water, and we had kerosene refrigerators. It was very dry and it only rained once when I was there. We had rainwater tanks for drinking. Water for washing and for the animals was pumped from under the ground. Bores were drilled to reach the water. It was hot when it first came up. There was a large dam for water storage and windmills were used to pump the water into tanks.

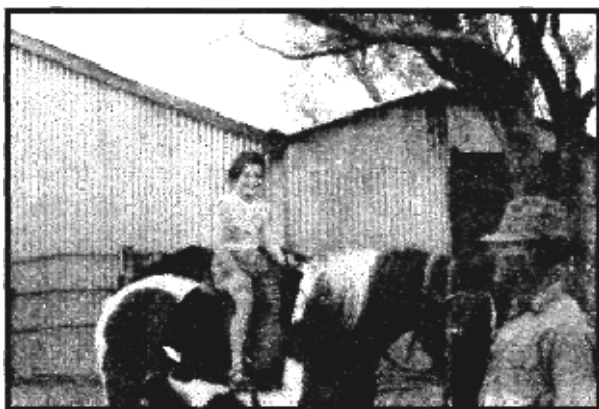
Everyone was busy at shearing time. The stockmen rounded up the sheep with sheepdogs, and a team of shearers would come to do the shearing. The wool was packed into huge bales and these were taken by truck to be sold at the market.

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The station had a herd of cattle for milk and meat. There were also a few pigs that were very tame. We children used to ride them. There were some chickens and a vegetable garden which had a high fence to stop the kangaroos eating the plants.

Because we lived so far from town, I had to do school by correspondence. Our school lessons came once a week with the mail truck. The mail truck also brought other food supplies such as flour, sugar, tea and fresh bread and fruit.



Riding a horse

My mother worked as a governess and taught the children their school lessons. My father was the cowboy and he milked the cows.

The stockmen played a game called Polo. This was played on horseback with long handled mallets used to hit a small ball.



After the polo game

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Write any new words

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Questions

1. Where did Grandma live when she was a child?

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2. What was the road from Quilpie to the sheep station like?

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3. Who lived on the sheep station?

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4. Where did they get their water?

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5. Why did the vegetable garden have a high fence?

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6. How often did the mail truck visit?

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7. Why did the children's school lessons come with the mail?

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8. What else did the mail truck bring?

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9. Write the past tense of these verbs.

Present	Past		Present	Past
live			is	
call			teach	
rain			ride	
pump			have	
work			drive	
milk			hit	
play			bring	

These are **regular** verbs.
Add 'ed'

These are **irregular** verbs.
'ed' is NOT added

10. Fill in the right word.

My name _____ (*is / was*) Marion. When I _____ (*is / was*) a child I
 _____ (*live / lived*) on a sheep station in outback Queensland. I
 _____ (*live / lived*) in a town now.

My mother _____ (*teach / taught*) me my school lessons and now I
 _____ (*teach / taught*) English to students. When I was young I
 _____ (*learn / learned*) by correspondence, now students
 _____ (*learn / learned*) online.

I (*milk / milked*) the cows when I lived in the outback, but I don't _____
 (*milk / milked*) cows now.

Now I live in town I do not _____ (*ride / rode*) horses. When I was a child I
 _____ (*ride / rode*) a horse.

Living in the outback

l l j j h p h q s d e s c s g
e o e v m o u s l l t e o e e
s o m u r a e l e a p i r l n
s h p s r n i c t x o l r a e
o c e t r m t i z j l p e b r
n s e e d r o n i h o p s d a
s r v n i n v w d v z u p e t
s o i c w a n i m a l s o t o
g w i h o m e s t e a d n a r
d t d n a l s n e e u q d g h
y t m e n e s o r e k p e u a
b o r e l d e l l i r d n r n
o u t b a c k u z n o y c r d
g n i d i r c o w b o y e o l
t e l l a m x t h z p k e c e

animals

correspondence

drilled

governess

horses

mallet

pump

riding

supplies

bales

corrugated

electricity

handle

kerosene

outback

quarters

school

windmill

bore

cowboy

generator

homestead

lessons

polo

queensland

station

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Glossary

Bales – large pack of wool weighing more than 100 kg

Bore – a hole drilled in the ground for water

Correspondence school – a school that teaches by mail

Corrugated – has ridges and grooves

Cowboy – man who works with cattle and cows

Governess – female teacher, usually living with the family

Homestead – farmhouse

Men's quarters – a building where the men sleep

Outback – the remote bush country of Australia

Potholes – holes in the road

Sheep station – a large sheep farm

Stockman – person who works with stock (sheep or cattle)



Nerrigundah is an Aboriginal word meaning 'Place of many berries'; here is a link to a photo of the house taken in c1967. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-vn4181451>