

# Reading Thematic Overview

## 'Alone on a Wide Wide sea' – Michael Morpurgo

Alone on a Wide Wide Sea is a heartfelt story about a boy who loses his family and is sent to Australia. As he grows up, he chooses to sail across the ocean to uncover more about his past and reconnect with his family.

### English

The theme of Alone on a Wide Wide Sea inspires pupils to engage in rich creative writing by exploring ideas of identity, belonging, and survival through character-led narratives. Pupils can write their own stories of resilience and personal journeys, mimicking the novel's emotional tone. The text also lends itself to studying and composing biographies, as students investigate the life of the protagonist and create biographical accounts based on fictional or real individuals, developing empathy and understanding of personal histories.

### Technology

Pupils can explore futuristic and sustainable technology by designing and modelling 'cities in the oceans'—innovative habitats that link to themes of exploration, isolation, and environmental adaptation. The story's Australian elements also provide an opportunity to study and recreate the design of boomerangs, understanding their cultural significance and aerodynamic properties, blending cultural appreciation with practical design and technology skills.

### Geography

The ocean plays a central role in the story, symbolising life's highs and lows. It illustrates how the sea can bring about fresh starts, new relationships, and personal growth, demonstrating its significance for both individuals and communities. Maps are vital for finding one's way and understanding our place in the world, both literally and metaphorically. The boy's journey involves meticulous planning and charting his course, akin to how maps help people navigate and understand diverse landscapes, making them essential tools for exploration and discovery.

### Science

Through the journey of the main character and his changing environments, pupils can explore how animals and humans adapt to different habitats. The Australian setting offers a gateway into discussing unique species, their adaptations, and survival traits. The theme also introduces fossils, linking to the character's discovery of new landscapes and evoking curiosity about ancient life, geological change, and natural history.

### Art

The story invites pupils to reflect on and artistically represent memories, both real and imagined, through mixed media, collage, or sketching. The Australian context allows for exploration of Aboriginal art and Dreamtime stories, encouraging pupils to create dot paintings and visual storytelling that express connection to land, ancestry, and memory, inspired by the novel's emotional depth and setting.

### History

The book explores themes of adventure and settling down, much like the Vikings when they journeyed to new lands. The protagonist's quest to discover his identity and find his roots reflects the journey of those who explore unfamiliar places to forge new lives.

Although the story isn't about space travel, the boy's sea voyage symbolises a search for knowledge and the excitement of encountering new experiences, like the human desire to explore space. Both require courage and navigating uncharted territory in pursuit of answers and connection.

