



Waltzing Matilda – Notes



- **Activity types:** gap fill, Past Simple pronunciation.
- **Grammar/Vocabulary:** Past Simple / Australian colloquial language.
- **Level:** Pre-Intermediate.
- **Time:** 40 mins.
- **Note:** This is probably Australia’s most famous song, often referred to as “the unofficial national anthem”, written by A.J. “Banjo” Paterson in 1895. It narrates the story of an itinerant worker, or “swagman”, making a drink of tea at a bush camp and capturing a sheep to eat. When the sheep’s owner arrives with three police officers to arrest the worker for the theft, the worker throws himself in the nearby watering hole, after which his ghost haunts the site. The song was written as a response to a recent sheep shearer strike and intentionally uses a lot of “bush slang”, making it a song for the people about the people, of Australia only. (<http://allaussie.freewebspace.com/custom4.html>) There have been many different recordings of the song, with different lyrics; this worksheet uses the Slim Dusty version, which astronauts played from the space shuttle Columbia as it passed over Australia in 1983.

- 1) Give each student a folded copy of the worksheet. Ask them to look at the first list and find the five words in the picture. Younger students can also draw the missing things. (if you have a class you can get one student to draw on the board at the front of the class what the other students tell them to draw).

Key: a blanket, a pot, a sheep, a travelling worker, happy

- 2) Ask them to look at the second list. Can they guess the meaning of the words? Give them time to guess, then play the song and ask them to number the words as they hear them. There is no need to correct – students can check when they see the lyrics.
- 3) Tell them to unfold the worksheet and to read the words in context. Let them correct the meanings of the words.

Key:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1) Billabong = lake | 7) Squatter = a type of farmer |
| 2) Billy = a pot for heating water | 8) Swagman = a travelling worker |
| 3) Coolibah = a type of eucalyptus tree | 9) Thoroughbred = an expensive horse |
| 4) Jolly = happy | 10) Trooper = a policeman |
| 5) Jumbuck = a sheep | 11) Tucker = food |
| 6) Matilda = a blanket | |

- 4) Ask them to complete the verbs with the regular and irregular Past Simple forms of the verbs.
- 5) Play the song – students listen and check, then feedback.
- 6) Write the following phonetic symbols on the board /d/, /t/, /ɪd/. Ask students to rewrite the regular verbs according to their –ed pronunciation.

Key: /d/	/t/	/ɪd/
Boiled (d)	Camped (t)	Mounted (ɪd)
Grabbed (d)	Jumped (t)	Waited (ɪd)
Stowed (d)	Watched (t)	

- 7) Sing the song together. Students can also act out the story

Discussion:

- a. Does your country have a national anthem? If yes, what story does it tell?
- b. Do you think it’s important to have a national song?



Waltzing Matilda



Look at the picture. Which of the words in the first list do you see?



- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| a. a blanket | 1. Billabong |
| b. expensive horse | 2. Billy |
| c. food | 3. Coolibah |
| d. happy | 4. Jolly |
| e. a lake | 5. Jumbuck |
| f. a policeman | 6. Matilda |
| g. a pot for heating water | 7. Squatter |
| h. a sheep | 8. Swagman |
| i. a travelling worker | 9. Thoroughbred |
| j. a type of eucalyptus tree | 10. Trooper |
| k. a type of farmer | 11. Tucker |

Look at the second list - these are the Australian colloquial equivalents – can you match them to their meanings?

Listen to the song and number them in the order you hear them, then read the lyrics and try to guess the meaning through context.

FOLD

Write the Past Simple form of the verbs to complete the lyrics.

Once a jolly swagman _____(camp) by a billabong
 Under the shade of a coolibah tree,
 And he _____(sing) as he _____(watch) and _____(wait) till his billy _____(boil)
 "You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me."

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda
 "You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me"
 And he _____(sing) as he _____(watch) and _____(wait) till his billy _____(boil)
 "You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me."

Down _____(come) a jumbuck to drink at the billabong,
 Up _____(jump) the swagman and _____(grab) him with glee,
 And he _____(sing) as he _____(stow) that jumbuck in his tucker bag,
 "You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me."

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda
 "You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me"
 And he _____(sing) as he _____(stow) that jumbuck in his tucker bag,
 "You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me."

Up _____(ride) the squatter, _____(mount) on his thoroughbred,
 Up _____(ride) the troopers, one, two, three,
 "With that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker bag?"
 "You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me."

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda
 "You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me"
 "With that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker bag?",
 "You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me."

Up _____(jump) the swagman and _____(spring) into the billabong,
 "You'll never take me alive", _____(say) he,
 And his ghost may be _____(hear) as you're passing by that billabong,
 "You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me."

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda
 "You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me"
 And his ghost may be _____(hear) as you're passing by that billabong,
 "You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me."



Waltzing Matilda – Complete



Once a jolly swagman **camped** by a billabong
Under the shade of a coolibah tree,
And he **sang** as he **watched** and **waited** till his billy **boiled**
"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me."

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda
"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me"
And he **sang** as he **watched** and **waited** till his billy **boiled**
"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me."

Down **came** a jumbuck to drink at the billabong,
Up **jumped** the swagman and **grabbed** him with glee,
And he **sang** as he **stowed** that jumbuck in his tucker bag,
"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me."

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda
"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me"
And he **sang** as he **stowed** that jumbuck in his tucker bag,
"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me."

Up **rode** the squatter, **mounted** on his thoroughbred,
Up **rode** the troopers, one, two, three,
"With that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker bag?"
"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me."

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda
"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me"
"With that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker bag?",
"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me."

Up **jumped** the swagman and **sprung** into the billabong,
"You'll never take me alive", **said** he,
And his ghost may be **heard** as you're passing by that billabong,
"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me."

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda
"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me"
And his ghost may be **heard** as you're passing by that billabong,
"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me."