

Example text: Historical narrative

Bound For New South Wales

Sarah stood quietly in the shade of an overhanging branch. She had done her best to make herself look presentable for the Reverend, but she knew it was a hopeless task. Clutching her infant son to her chest, she murmured soothing sounds to quieten him.

“Ahem...”

Her thoughts were disturbed by a polite cough coming from the makeshift pulpit. Reverend Richard Johnson stood there, staring at Sarah.

“We, His humble servants, are gathered here today in the sight of our most merciful Father. We ask Him to forgive us sinners...”

As the Reverend continued, Sarah once again allowed her thoughts to wander.

She had grown up in a small, country village, three days walk from London. Yet at the tender age of 16 she was forced to leave all that she knew. At the point of starvation, alone, dressed in threadbare rags, she had done what so many before her had.

The words of the judge in the court of Old Bailey still echoed in her ears, “You have been found guilty of theft. As a result, I sentence you to seven years hard labour in the penal colony of New South Wales.”

So here she was, in a strange and unwelcoming land with nothing but the rags on her back and a babe in her arms.

“... and protect him from the evils of sin so that he may become an honest and pious man.”

With that, Reverend Johnson dipped his fingers in the blood warm water and wiped them across the infant’s head.

“May your sins be cleansed. May you start your life anew in the eyes of God.”

As Sarah stood there, holding her infant son, she thought about what the Reverend said. She was surprised to find that there was much truth in it. Back in England she had been an illiterate peasant, with no home, no family, and no chance of a decent life. But here things were different. Here there was a chance: a chance for freedom, land and independence. Here there was hope, hope for her son and his future.

Maybe, just maybe, she too could start anew in the colony of New South Wales.