

This song is often referred to as an unofficial Australian anthem. While not many Australians remember more than the first verse of Advance Australia Fair (Australian Anthem), mention Waltzing Matilda and you will get the words for sure.

So popular is the song that it can boast its own website:

[http://www.matildacentre.com.au/EducationCentre\\_WaltzingMat.asp](http://www.matildacentre.com.au/EducationCentre_WaltzingMat.asp)

**It's not easy to understand the meaning of the song** due to language barriers as there are a lot of words specific to Australian English and not found in other 'Englishes'<sup>1</sup>.

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|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. <b>WALTZING MATILDA</b>    | the act of carrying the 'swag' while walking around and looking for work as shearers would do.   |
| 2. <b>BILLABONG</b>           | waterhole  |
| 3. <b>COOLIBAH (COOLABAH)</b> | a gum (eucalyptus) tree  |
| 4. <b>SWAGMAN</b>             | a man who walks around carrying a swag (also known as 'matilda' - <i>rolled up blankets</i> ) with his belongings, e.g. his billy and food |
| 5. <b>BILLY</b>               | a tin used as a kettle to boil water over the fire   |
| 6. <b>TUCKER</b>              | food   |
| 7. <b>JUMBUCK</b>             | a sheep  |
| 8. <b>SQUATTER</b>            | a station or land owner  |
| 9. <b>TROOPER</b>             | policeman  |

**Fill in the gaps with the words from the left column.**

- A. Bush \_\_\_\_\_ is normally part of the Aboriginal heritage tour of the National park.
- B. While driving through the outback we spotted a lot of sheep sheltering under a \_\_\_\_\_ tree by a \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. When visiting the Gold Coast we realised how popular \_\_\_\_\_ clothing was amongst the locals.
- D. Before packing up the tent we decided to boil some water in a \_\_\_\_\_ and have a cup of tea.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note, most of these words are old fashioned and only used in historical texts. However, some of them are still used in certain contexts as shown in the gap fill.

**There are many versions of the song. Here is the original one. Please note that whatever version you are listening to, you will still be able to fill in the gaps.**

## WALTZING MATILDA

*by A. B. "Banjo" Paterson*

Oh! there once was a \_\_\_\_\_ camped in a Billabong,  
Under the \_\_\_\_\_ of a Coolabah tree;  
And he sang as he looked at his old \_\_\_\_\_ boiling,  
"Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?"

Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda, my darling?  
Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?  
Waltzing Matilda and leading a water-bag --  
Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?

Down came a \_\_\_\_\_ to drink at the water-hole,  
Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him with glee;  
And he sang as he stowed him away in his \_\_\_\_\_ -bag,  
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me."

Down came the \_\_\_\_\_ a-riding his thoroughbred;  
Down came \_\_\_\_\_ -- one, two and three.  
"Whose is the jumbuck you've got in the tucker-bag?  
You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!"

But the swagman he up and he jumped in the water-hole,  
\_\_\_\_\_  
And his ghost may be heard as it sings in the \_\_\_\_\_  
"Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?"

Answer the following questions.

**1. Rewrite Waltzing Matilda as a short story**

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**2. In your opinion, why despite its popularity, 'Waltzing Matilda' wasn't chosen as a national anthem?**

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