

Tips from the Author

This book offers many opportunities for activities. Here are some ideas.



DRAMATIC PLAY—Sing and act out what each animal does: *snap, hop, splash*, and so on. Kids can also make masks of the animals. See: <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/Mask.shtml>

CUT-OUTS AND STICK

PUPPETS—Using printouts from <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/coloring/Australia.shtml>, color and cut out each animal and glue onto tongue depressors for stick puppets. Or place them on a flannel board as you read or sing the story. Older students can place their cut-outs on a map of Australia, in the appropriate biome.

WHO AM I?—Write two sentences describing an animal in this book, not mentioning which one it is. For example, *I am a small marsupial that glides from tree to tree. I love to lap up sweet sap.*

SNIP-SNAP CROCODILES—Draw a crocodile or enlarge the baby croc in this book, tracing it onto a recycled file folder. Cut it out in three separate pieces: Upper jaw, lower jaw with body, and tail. Kids can color scales, a red tongue, and glue on a google eye. Stick brass paper fasteners through the tail and the upper jaw attaching them to the body. Or make a clothespin alligator that “snaps.” See: www.busybeekidscrafts.com/Clothes-Pin-Alligator.html

A VENN DIAGRAM—Choose two marsupials in this book and compare them in a venn diagram. <http://www.graphic.org/venbas.html>

WRITE A DIAMANTE POEM—A diamante poem is a poem in the shape of a diamond. Compare an animal in the story with the hidden animal on the same page. See www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/diamante/ to get started.

Discuss

- Use an *action* verb for each “hidden” animal to show how it might behave. (e.g. a kookaburra “laughs”).
- What were the ten featured animals called as babies? How many have the same “baby” name?

- Which Australian animals are *herbivores*? Which ones are *carnivores*? Are there any *omnivores*?
- How many mammals in this book are *marsupials*? Which animal in the main story is a *monotreme*? Name another one among the hidden animals.
- Animals that live in Australia’s Great Barrier Reef were not a part of the story. Go onto http://www.reef.crc.org.au/discover/plantsanimals/facts_plantanimal.htm and pick an animal that you could substitute in this story.



DO FURTHER RESEARCH—The map on the last page shows approximately where the animals live. Ask children to learn more exactly the range of each animal.

BOOKMARKS—Click on the “Teaching Tools” button at www.dawnpub.com to download reproducible bookmarks for this book.

Discover more in books . . .

A Field Guild of the Mammals of Australia, P. Menthorst & F. Knight (Oxford University Press, 2005)

Alligators and Crocodiles, Trudi Strain Trueit (Children’s Press, 2003)

Birds of Australia, Ken Simpson (Princeton University Press, 2004)

Pocket Babies and Other Amazing Marsupials, Sneed B. Collard III (Darby Creek, 2007)

. . . and on the internet

Parks Australia: <http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/>

Australia Museum: <http://www.austmus.gov.au/factsheets/index.htm>

Australia Zoo: <http://www.australiazoo.com.au/>

Photos of animals: <http://www.ozanimals.com>

Unique Australian animals: <http://australian-animals.net/>

I would love to hear from educators and parents with creative ways to use this book. My web site is www.marianneberkes.com.

Tips from the Illustrator



The illustrations in this book are collages. Collages can be made from a variety of materials glued together to create a picture. I've used paper, combining colors and textures to create the illustrations. After careful research of each animal and their environment, I select paper that best shows the animal's fur, feathers or skin. While I maintain the reality of each animal and their environment, I also keep in mind my own ideas of color and design. I may choose a paper for the pattern or texture that wouldn't be found in nature. You can see this in the night sky of the sugar gliders and the pattern on the leaves of the lorikeets.



I make a detailed drawing of each illustration. Using a copy of my drawing as a pattern, I cut each piece out of decorative paper. Sometimes I use a toothpick to glue down small pieces. I spread a very thin layer of glue to assemble the elements. It really doesn't take much glue. I put the whole thing between two pieces of acetate and press it under the heaviest books I have. This assures that each finished piece will lie flat. It's like putting a puzzle together! Each animal is made up of a variety of glued-together shapes. All the animals are glued to the background. I finish with colored pencils and pastels to add details, shading, and emphasis.



You can create your own animal collages of Australian animals, or animals in your neighborhood, or your own pet. Also flowers are good subjects for collages, such as the flannel flower from Australia that I used as background around the text. Look around you and collect paper that appeals to you. You can use strips from a brown paper bag to make long grass like the wallabies are hopping through. Another part of the bag can be cut out for fur, such as that of the wombat. Try using a crayon, colored pencil, pastel or chalk to make shading on the body and details like spots, stripes and faces. Crinkled crepe paper or colored tissue paper would make great water, like for the splashing platypus. See how the brolgas are wading through cellophane water with sandpaper as their beach. You can find patterns using newspapers, old magazines, wrapping paper or greeting cards. Look for

details within the designs that you find interesting. Use your imagination, make it your own—and have fun.





Over in Australia:
Amazing Animals Down Under

By Marianne Berkes
Illustrated by Jill Dubin

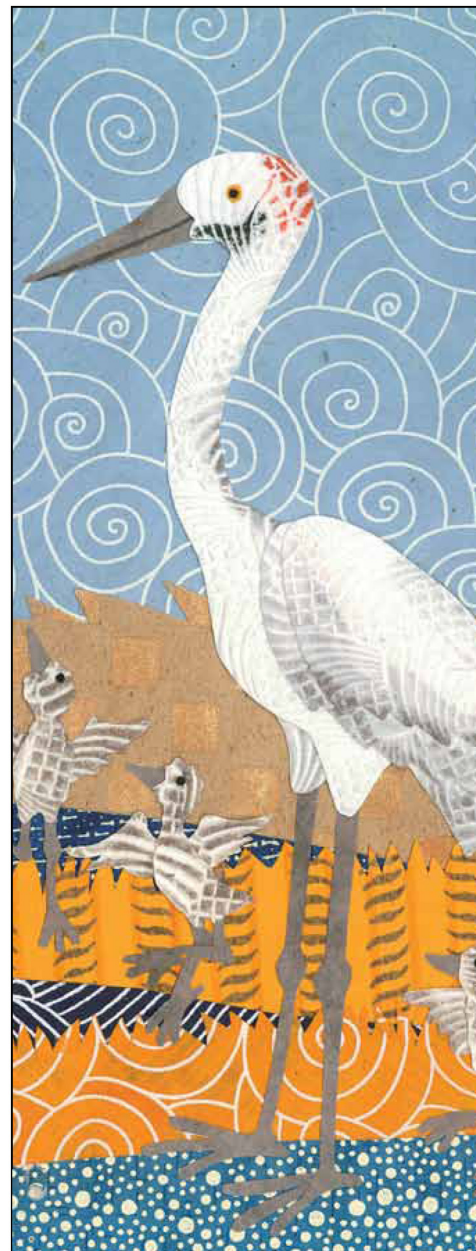
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