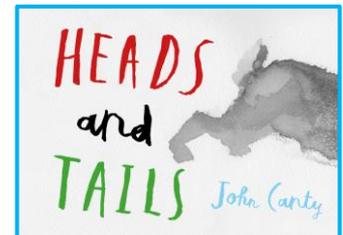


## Heads and Tails

by John Canty

Many children have a fascination with animals and this book captures children's imaginations by inviting them to play an animal guessing game on each page. The creator of this book, John Canty, uses beautiful watercolors and a playful layout whereby only the tail of each animal is revealed and a description of their attributes is given. It has a lovely ending which personalises the story back to the child who is reading it. Can you work out which animal is hiding on each page?



### Key Message for Parents | Children learn through being engaged and doing

*"Play more than any other activity, promotes healthy development of children. All learning (emotional, social, motor and cognitive) is accelerated by play"* (Perry et al., 2000).

Support parents and carers understanding of how they can help children learn through being engaged and doing. Some ideas to share with parents are:

- Children play because it is fun but it is also how they learn and develop. Play is good for parents too. Having fun is a great way to relieve the pressure that can come with young children.
- It can be as simple as talking, singing and reading. Even if young children can't yet understand the words; these early experiences help them develop language and social skills by making important connections in their brain.
- Children who feel loved and secure are more likely to have good self-esteem, more confidence and increased ability to cope with challenges and do better in school

### Learning Outcomes | Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

When children feel safe, secure and supported learning can take place. We can see evidence of when children:

- Sense and respond to a feeling of belonging
- Openly express their feelings and ideas in their interactions with others

We can promote children's learning by:

- Acknowledging and responding sensitively to children's cues and signals
- Being emotionally available and support children to express their thoughts and feelings
- Spending time interacting and conversing with children at Story Time

Find booklists, tip sheets, nursery rhymes and activity and learning time sheets @

[thelittlebigbookclub.com.au](http://thelittlebigbookclub.com.au)     



### Themes within this story

- Animals
- Opposites
- Repetition

### Welcome

Ask carers to write nametags for themselves and their children.

Welcome everyone, introduce yourself, remind adults to turn their mobile phones off and that there will be time for adults to chat after the story and songs.

### Welcome Song (or your preferred song)

Have the words available as a handout or written on a board or butcher's paper for the adults to read and join in.

### Good Morning

*Good morning to you*

*Good morning to you*

*Good morning everybody*

*and welcome to you!*



### Song

Before singing ***Sleeping Bunnies*** ask the children to curl up in a ball on the floor before the next song begins and pretend to be asleep.

You could even make some snoring noises before you begin singing. The “wake up bunnies” line in the children’s cue to jump up and start hopping. Repeat the process for each verse. This is a great song for children to get some energy release which may help with their listening and attending skills before you start reading the story.

### Sleeping bunnies

*See the bunnies sleeping till it's nearly noon*

*Shall we wake them with a merry tune?*

*They're so still, are they ill?*

*Wake up little bunnies!*

*Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop*

*Hop, hop, hop - Hop, hop, hop*

*Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop*

*Hop, hop, hop...*

*See the bunnies sleeping till it's nearly noon*

*Shall we wake them with a merry tune?*

*They're so still, are they ill?*

*Wake up little bunnies!*

*Skip little bunnies, skip, skip, skip*

*Skip, skip, skip - skip, skip, skip*

*Skip little bunnies, skip, skip, skip*

*Skip, skip, skip...*

*(continued next page)*



*See the bunnies sleeping till it's nearly noon*

*Shall we wake them with a merry tune?*

*They're so still, are they ill?*

*Wake up little bunnies!*

*Jump little bunnies, jump, jump, jump*

*Jump, jump, jump - jump, jump, jump*

*Jump little bunnies, jump, jump, jump*

*Jump, jump, jump...*

*Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop*

*And stop.*

*(Ask children to sit back down to get ready for the story).*



### **Before Reading**

Introduce the book by showing the children the front cover. Read the title and name the author. Ask: "Who do you think the story will be about? What can you see on the front cover? Is it an animal?" Provide them time to respond. (An effective strategy is to slowly and silently count to 5 in your head. This gives children some time to form their response.)

Explain that this book is actually like playing a game. "We will only be able to see the tails of each animal and I am going to read you a description and I want to see if you can guess which animal it may be".

### **During Reading**

Look at the first page together and ask "What can you see?" Begin reading the description, take your time and use your hands to gesture or help describe the words.

When you get to the final sentence on the first page "I am a" provide time for the children to say which animal they think it is before you turn and reveal the head on the next page. Repeat for each page. Point out in the illustrations some of the describing features e.g. "striped furry coat" to make the connection for the children between the words and the image. You could talk about the colours, size, patterns and shapes in the illustrations too.

There are lots of action words in the book and you could gesture these with your hands whilst reading. For example for "swim with my fins" make the swimming action with your arms.

### **After Reading**

For children to become readers and love books, they need to understand what is being read to them. Ask them what they can recall from the story.

- Ask the children "what animals can you remember from the story?"
- Ask them "can you remember how they described the fish or the crocodile?"
- Perhaps repeat the story if the children are interested in 'playing' again. This will also reinforce the themes from the book.
- Finally, you could ask them "what do you like to play?"



## Activity Time

**Lets play a game...** This is a simple circle game that children love called which animal could I be?

### What you need:

- Enough space for the group to form a circle in which to play the game
- Song words below
- Resources for dramatic play table including animals, blocks and natural materials (this is a second option for children)

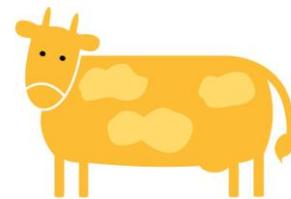
Sing:

*Which animal could I be?*

*Which animal could I be?*

*Which animal could I be?*

*Can you guess?*



### What to do:

1. Select a willing child to go in the middle and encourage them to think of an animal to pretend to be. Hint: Get the child in the middle to whisper to you or their parent/caregiver the name of the animal first because then you can provide some more verbal descriptors which may help the other children guess the animal
2. Ask them to move like the animal and make the noises that the animal makes
3. The remaining children have a guess until someone figures it out
4. Go around the circle until all children who want to have had a turn. Get some of the parents involved in the activity too
5. Not all children may want to participate in the game, have a dramatic play scene set up which the children can access too. Provide some animals from the story so that they can develop their own play scripts. Use open ended blocks and natural materials to add to the scene. Encourage adults to participate in this dramatic play with their children.



### Share with parents about the benefits of group games/circle time:

- It creates a strong sense of community and identity where everyone feels that they belong and can contribute
- It fosters turn taking, team work and negotiating skills
- Supports the development of rich oral language
- Builds confidence in children to express their ideas



### Extension Activities / Other Ideas

- Get the children to describe themselves (linking to the last page of the book)... e.g. "I am three, I have a baby brother, I have black hair" to begin to develop their pre-literacy skills. You may need to go first to model the language.
- Play musical statues. Encourage children to move about like their favourite animal.

### Goodbye

Conclude the session with some suggestions of books that parents might want to share with their children. The Little Big Book Club suggests the following books to support learning in this area:

- **Picken** by Mary Murphy
- **Eye to Eye** by Graeme Base
- **Wiggle and the Whale** by Roger Priddy
- **Muddled up Farm** by Mike Dumbleton

### Goodbye Song

Depending on the size of your group, you may wish to insert each child's name in the place of 'you' as it develops a more personal relationship between yourself, the child and the family.

Sung to the tune of (*Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*) **or** your preferred choice.

#### Goodbye

*This is the way we say goodbye (use a waving action) Say goodbye, say goodbye*

*This is the way we say goodbye*

*To all our library friends (or) (to our friend.....)!*

