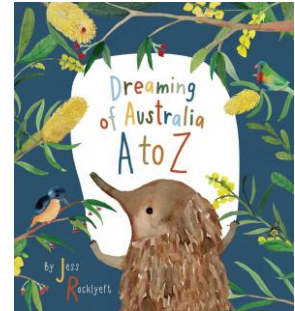




Dreaming of Australia by Jess Racklyeft

A sweet Australian alphabet book that highlights Aussie animals, plants, landmarks and activities. Written in rhyme with watercolour illustrations.



Key Message for Parents | Children are born ready to learn

- Children are constantly learning.
- Children of preschool age learn by integrating and connecting experiences – considering what they already know and making links with new learning.
- Children are eager to learn – follow their natural curiosity and encourage them to think out loud
- Children who begin to learn about the alphabet in playful ways, such as through story, remain more motivated to learn.
- Support children to explore learning in a variety of ways such as through songs, art and play

Australian Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) | Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world.

- Children begin to understand that they live in the country 'Australia'.
- Children are given opportunities to express ideas and opinions.
- Children develop their knowledge their world.
- Children explore relationships with living and no-living things.
- Children with an awareness and understanding of their environment are more likely to become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.

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.

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

thelittlebigbookclub.com.au     



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 –

Discussion: Show the children the cover of the book and ask them what they notice. Can they name any animals or plants on the front cover? Then, draw the readers' attention to the gum leaves before introducing the song.

As the song is quite long it would be helpful to have the words on display for the adults to sing along with.

Home Among the Gum Trees

I've been around the world

A couple of times or maybe more

I've seen the sights, I've had delights

On every foreign shore

But when my mates all ask me

The place that I adore

I tell them right away

CHORUS

Give me a home among the gumtrees

With lots of plum trees

A sheep or two, a k-kangaroo

A clothesline out the back

Verandah out the front

And an old rocking chair

You can see me in the kitchen

Cooking up a roast

Or Vegemite on toast

Just you and me, a cup of tea

And later on, we'll settle down

And go out on the porch



And watch the possums play

CHORUS

Welcome everyone! – You are going to love today’s story, it is called *Dreaming of Australia A to Z*

Before Reading

Read the title of the book and ask the children what ‘Australia’ means. Re-read the title and ask if any of the children can point to an ‘A’ and a ‘Z’ on the front of the book.

During Reading

For each double page spread you may choose to focus on

- The Rhyming words
- The illustration/alphabet

You might like to try a combination of both. Try to gauge the children’s interest and trim or stretch the conversation accordingly.

Rhyming words – After reading a double page spread ask the children if they can hear any rhyming words. Re-read the text and emphasise the rhyming words if need be. The say the rhyming words and ask the children to say them with you. “Let’s say it together. Land/Sand.”

The illustration/alphabet – Read the text on a single page and then ask the children to spot the animal in the illustration. Say the letter name and the sound. “C is for the cockatoos, screeching through the sky. - Can you see the cockatoos? There they are. C C C cockatoos. Let’s say it together c c cockatoo.” Ask the children to point to the letter C on the page. Point to the capital letter C and the lowercase letter C. You may like to comment on any children in the room whose name begins with the letter C. Ask the children what letter of the alphabet is coming next – Sing the Alphabet Song to get to the correct letter if you need to, to help remind them “A, B, C...D!”

After Reading

Discussion – Ask the children to recall some things from the book. ‘What was your favourite animal in the story? Can you remember any food in the story? Can anyone remember any of the places that were in the story?’ Turn to the appropriate page of the book to revisit the story as the children contribute ideas. Allow the children to share ideas of their own experiences of Australian animals, food, places and ideas come up. “Has anyone seen a Tassie devil before? Who’s been on a picnic? Do you like to eat vegemite? Etc.”

Alphabet – Ask the children what letter of the alphabet their name starts with and make up a little song for their name to the tune of Skip to my Lou.

For example: Harris
Happy Harris h h h
Happy Harris h h h
Happy Harris h h h
The letter H says h.

Songs - Sing the Alphabet Song together and then finish with Home Among the Gum Trees.



Extension Activities:

Maps – The first illustration shows a globe. Use a large world globe to locate Australia. Then look at a large map of Australia and talk about the things that can be noticed on the map. E.g. Roads, place names, landforms, water.

Nature Study – Australian Plants – Banksia, Eucalyptus and Wattle are named in the book. Have sprigs cut for the children to examine. Encourage children to notice the small details of the plants. What shape are the leaves? What colour are the flowers? What do you notice about the shoots? Then ask children to draw what they see with thin markers and watercolour palette paints. You may refer back to the illustrations in the story for inspiration.

Or, go on a walk outside together to find native plants growing nearby. You might use clipboards and pencils to draw the plants outdoors. You could embellish your artwork by sticking leaves or flowers onto the page to creating a collage effect.

Art – Australian Animals – Some of the animals in the story are illustrated in a simple style, which makes it easy for children to copy. Look at either the Echidna (A page), the koala (E page), the owl (O page) or the quokka (Q page). Ask the children about what shapes make the animal's body and head. Begin by drawing the basic shape outlines of an animal and then add details such as eyes, claws and tails.

Song –

Wombat Wobble

Come and do the Wombat Wobble.

Let's do it.

Do the didgeridoo

And the wombat wobble

And the Kangaroo

And the emu too

Jump in the air

And you turn around

And say to mum and dad

And all your friends in a big love heart

I LOVE YOU.

Do the crocodile snap

And the cockatoo flap

And the penguin walk

And the little seal clap

Jump in the air

And you turn around

And say to mum and dad

And all your friends in a big love heart

I LOVE YOU.

**Song continues to get faster rock and roll version*



Highway Number One

This is a fun, easy to follow circle song. A simple action is introduced at each verse, as well as a different Australian capital city. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndBlkINdXmU>

I travelled round Australia on highway number 1 (Walk/march around in a circle)

I travelled round Australia just to have some fun (stop)

And when I got to Sydney (take 4 steps into the middle of the circle)

I stopped to see someone (take 4 steps back out) and she said...

*(Do the following actions on the spot) Walk, walk and run, run, run Walk, walk and run, run, run
Walk, walk and run, run, run on highway number 1!*

Repeat with other cities: I travelled round Australia on highway number 1 (Walk/march around in a circle)

I travelled round Australia, just to have some fun

And when I got to Brisbane (Darwin, Perth, Adelaide, Hobart, and Melbourne)

The actions are introduced at each city as follows:

- *Walk, walk and run, run, run*
- *Heel, toe and stamp*
- *Side together wiggle*
- *Jump, jump and clap, clap, clap*
- *Skip, skip and bump*
- *Gallop, gallop, jump*
- *Hop, hop, hop and stomp*

ATSI Perspectives

The phrase 'yalii maliyaa – goodbye, mate' is included in the book. Listen to it hear.\

Yaluu maliyaa <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0W0asUirkF4>

Learn more about the Gumbaynggirr People and language here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdOzhUTPAckgrQPZGe3pKkg/featured>

STEM Focus

Sorting and Classifying – Land/Air/Water

The K page shows a double page spread of Kakadu. (You may like to start by locating Kakadu on the map of Australia). The illustration shows animals in the water, in a tree and on land. Begin a discussion with the children about animals they can see on land or in the water or in the air. Name the animals in the book and talk about why they may be in the water or on the land etc.

Using some animal figurines or picture cut outs create a space to sort animals by laying out three different coloured mats – one for land, one for air and one, for water. Work alongside your child to sort the animals onto the appropriate mat. Pause to discuss why animals might like a particular environment. Some animals inhabit all three. Let your child develop theories about why this is and choose which mat to place the animal. (This experience could be completed on a felt board with felt animals in front of a group if necessary.)



This learning experience can be extended by looking at the features and adaptations of animals that help them to exist in a particular environment. You could also introduce manufactured vehicles such as boats, planes and cars and talk about the features that allow these machines to operate effectively. What features do they share with animals?

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. If your library has copies, make them available for families to borrow or include them in your story time session.

For some more stories to share, we recommend the following titles:

- *A is for Australia* by Frané Lessac
- *Hop Up! Wriggle Over!* by Elizabeth Honey
- *Ten Blue Wrens* by Elizabeth Honey

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 choice.

Goodbye

This is the way we say goodbye (wave)

Say goodbye, say goodbye

This is the way we say goodbye

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