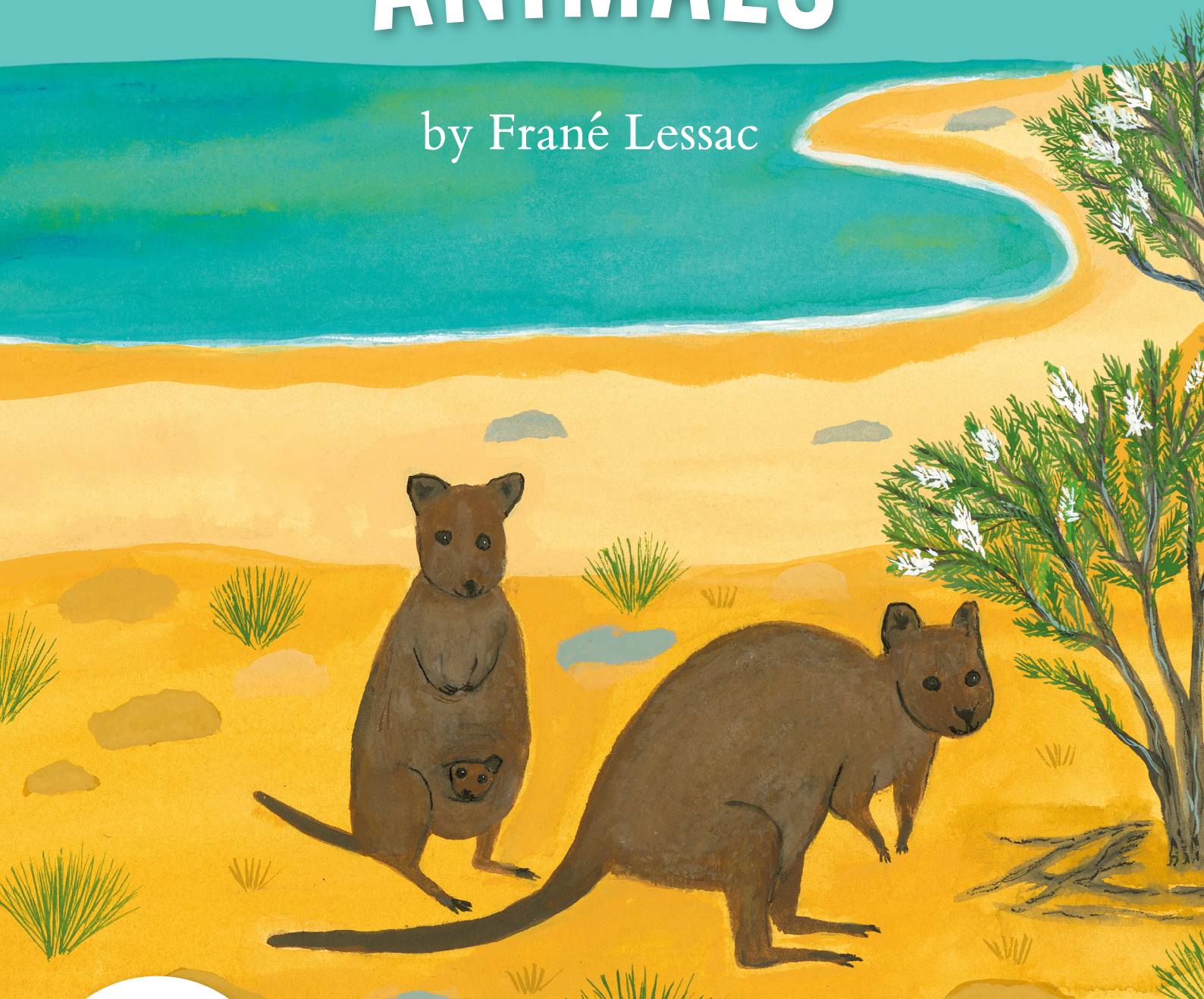


A IS FOR AUSTRALIAN ANIMALS

by Frané Lessac





**Make reading part of a child's daily routine.
Find a special time in the day to enjoy
reading aloud.**



TRY THIS

Fiction vs Fact

Explore the front cover of *A is for Australian Animals*. Read everything on the cover and point as you go. Ask:

What is the title?

Who is the author and illustrator? Explain that the author is the person who writes the book, and the illustrator is the person who does the drawings/art. In this book, Frané Lessac is the author AND the illustrator.

Point out the words *A factastic tour* on the front cover and discuss what this means. Ask:

Is *factastic* a word?

What word sounds similar? (fantastic)

Why do you think the author has put the word 'fact' into fantastic?

What is a fact?

Explore what is a fact and what is fiction. Give some examples of true and false things that children are familiar with to reinforce the point.

Explain that books that we read are either fact (non-fiction) or fiction. Non-fiction books present facts in interesting ways and have features which help children work their way through the book. Point out common features that are sometimes found in non-fiction books. Look for:

A **glossary** which explains some of the unusual words

An **index** which is at the back of the book and lists the subjects in alphabetical order along with the page number where the information is located

A **Table of Contents** which helps readers find the page number on which information is located

Captions which are used to add extra facts or explain a diagram or picture

Not all non-fiction books will have all these features. Look through *A is for Australian Animals* to identify what features it has. Compare this to a fiction book featuring Australian animals to reinforce the difference.

As *A is for Australian Animals* does not have a glossary, look at developing one together. Write a simple definition for any unusual words you come across as you share the story.





At school

Fill your book corner with a selection of fiction and non-fiction Australian animal books. As children explore the books, encourage them to consider whether they are fiction or non-fiction. Explore the Better Beginnings Book Finder for some great suggestions.



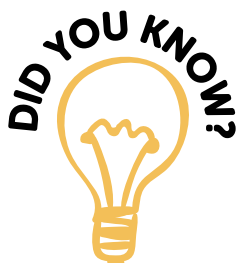
In the library

Promote all parts of the library collection to families and show them how to identify fiction from non-fiction by referring to the spine label.



At home

Was there an animal in *A is for Australian Animals* that your child was particularly interested in? Visit your local public library to borrow books and learn more about that animal. Many libraries have their own junior non-fiction collection where you can find factual books suitable for children. Ask library staff for assistance if you need help.



Shared reading is the single most important activity you can do with children to help get them ready to read independently.





Talking with children helps them to learn new words and develop conversation skills.

TRY THIS

Who Am I?

Read *A is for Australian Animals*.

For each animal, discuss the following features:

What type of body covering does it have? (fur, scales, feathers etc)

What environment does it live in? (land, water)

How does it move?

What does it eat?

Include any other characteristics that children may want to explore and introduce new words like habitat, nocturnal and mammal.

When children are familiar with the features of the animals, play 'Who Am I?'

Demonstrate how to play the game either with a partner or in a small group:

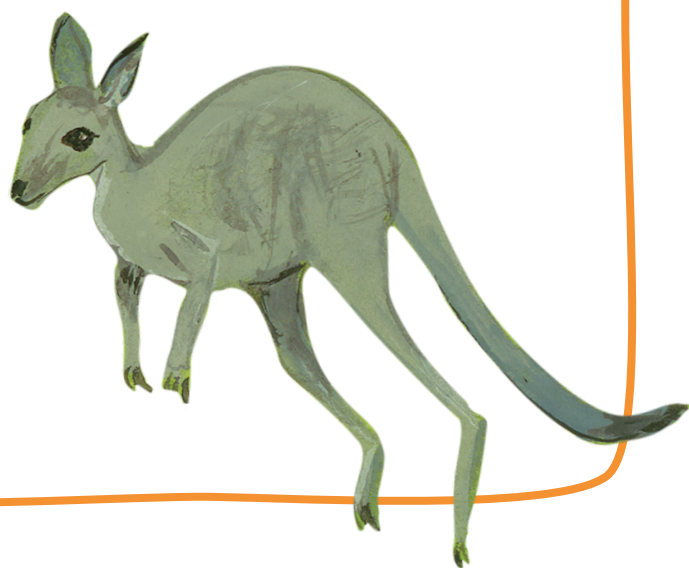
One person thinks of an animal from the book.

They provide clues about the animal for the other/s to guess. For example, 'This animal lives in the water.'

Start with broad clues, before narrowing the focus if children are having a hard time guessing. A narrower clue could be, 'This animal starts with the letter K.'

Take turns at guessing the animal and providing the clues.

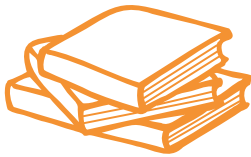
This is an opportunity to encourage good social skill behaviours and taking turns.





At school

Children use their knowledge to paint or draw a picture of an animal from the book. Encourage them to draw it in the habitat it lives in and include some of the appropriate physical features. Use the completed illustration as a prop for children to deliver an oral presentation about their chosen animal.



In the library

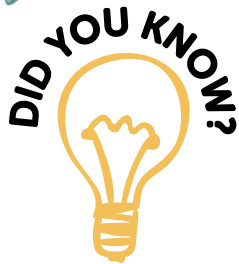
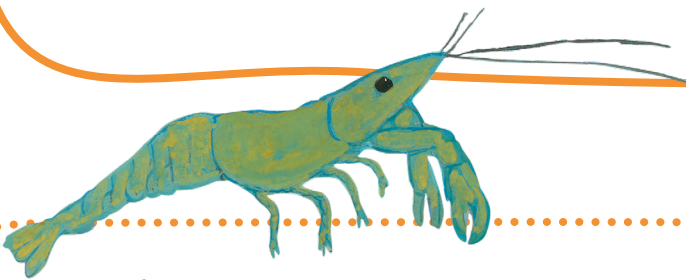
Turn this game into a craft activity that children can take home. Cut out the animal image sheets and place them into a paper bag. Take turns reaching inside the bag and pulling out an animal image to describe to the other person.

[Download the animal image sheets](#)



At home

Children learn from books and real-world experiences. Can you visit the zoo to see some of the animals in the book? As you see an animal, read the signs, and talk about the facts you have learned.



When you add new words and information to conversations with children, you are building their vocabulary and getting them ready to read.





Singing combines all the benefits of talking with the power and joy of music.

TRY THIS

Sing and Move

Read the **C** and **K** pages from the book *A is for Australian Animals* focusing on how the animals move and their physical features.

Encourage children to replicate the movements of the animals on the page.

For example:

Look like a cockatoo by wiggling your fingers on your head to create the cockatoo's crest.

Move like a cockatoo by flapping your arms and swooping and soaring.

Look like a kangaroo by putting two hands in front of your body for paws.

Move like a kangaroo by jumping.

Ask the children 'What else can your body do?'

Demonstrate different body movements like tapping, clapping, waving, hopping, or skipping.

Sing 'Everybody Clapping' and encourage children to do the actions.

Ask for suggestions for more actions. Can they:

Slither like a snake

Flutter like a butterfly

Waddle like a wombat

Scuttle like a crab



Explore other songs related to the alphabet, Australian animals, and movement on the Better Beginnings for Kindergarten Play List on YouTube.





At school

Encourage children to engage in increasingly more complex movement activities through song and dance to develop their fine and gross motor skills. The 'Hokey Pokey' is a good song to teach the concept of left and right.



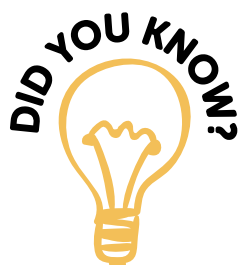
In the library

Incorporate song and movement as part of your program. Explore the Better Beginnings Rhyme Finder for some great suggestions.



At home

Singing songs with finger actions helps to develop fine motor skills which strengthen the muscles in fingers used for holding a pencil. 'Incy Wincy Spider' has quite specific actions which can be difficult for children to master. Try singing the song and teaching the actions to your child.



Singing helps to build many skills that are crucial for early learning. When words and information are sung to a tune, it helps with learning and remembering information.



Write



Any activity that engages children in making marks on paper is helping them to develop writing skills.

TRY THIS

My Name Is . . .

Read *A is for Australian Animals* focusing on the structure of the book.

Discuss how this is an alphabet book and that each letter features at least one Australian animal.

Sing 'The Alphabet Song' to reinforce letter knowledge.

Ask the children what letter their name starts with. Can they find it in the book? What animal represents your name in the book *A is for Australian Animals*?

Provide each child with the letter sheet that corresponds to their name. Encourage them to:

- Write their name

- Colour the images

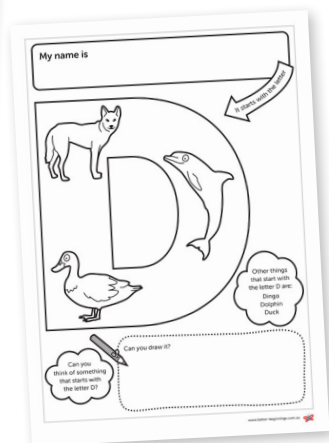
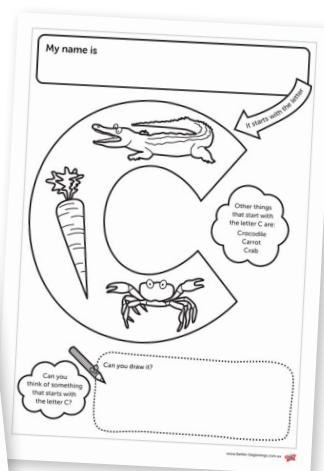
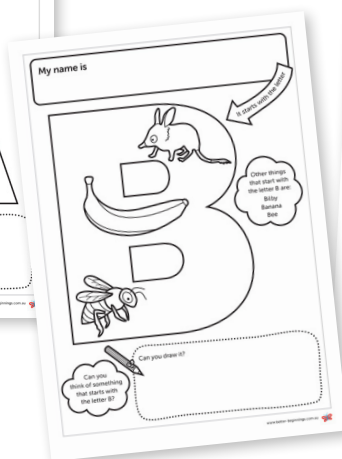
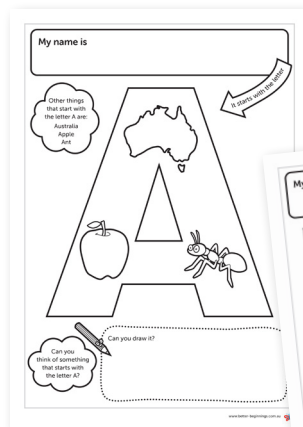
- Think of something else that starts with the same letter and draw it.



Materials required:

- Colouring materials

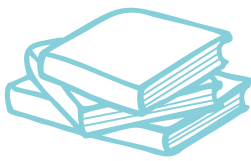
- Alphabet colouring sheets ([download here](#))





At school

Display the artwork in alphabetical order. Discuss:
How many children have names that start with the same letter?
What letters are missing in our display?
Encourage children to write the missing letters on paper to fill in the gaps.



In the library

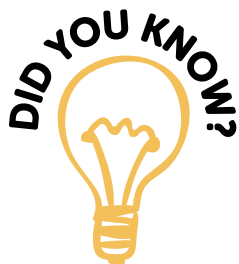
Read other alphabet books to reinforce letter knowledge. Explore the Better Beginnings Book Finder for some great suggestions.



At home

Play word games to reinforce letter knowledge:
I'm thinking of a word that starts with the letter A
It is something you can eat
It can be red or green
What am I?

Write the letter and draw a picture of the object. This doesn't always need to be on paper, kids love drawing with chalk and paint too.



A child's name is one of the first words they will recognise in print and is often one of the first words they will attempt to write.



Play is how children learn about their world.

TRY THIS

Pop Stick Puppets

Create the pop stick puppets by colouring the animals, cutting them out and attaching them to a pop stick or stick.

Use the puppets to assist with oral storytelling by creating your own story using the characters you have made.

Provide simple story starters for inspiration:

I was swimming in the waterhole when I saw . . .

The sky was dark and cloudy and when I looked up, I saw a . . .

Walking through the bush, I heard . . .

Encourage children to have a simple beginning, middle and end to their puppet story.

Materials required:

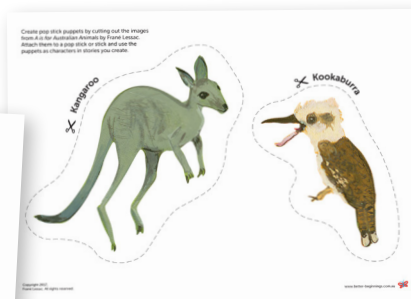
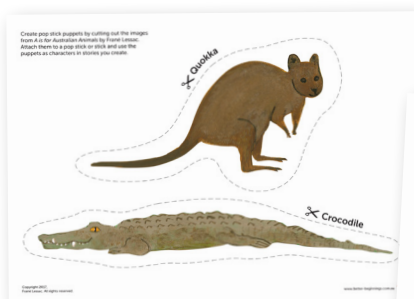
Colouring materials

Pop sticks or sticks

Sticky tape or glue

Scissors

Animal image sheets ([download here](#))





At school

Retell other stories using puppets and props. Stories containing Australian animals which are good for this purpose and suitable for a Kindy age group include *Tiddalick* by Robert Roennfeldt and *Wombat Stew* by Marcia K. Vaughan.



In the library

Storytime doesn't always need to end with a craft. Experiences which encourage open ended play are just as valuable for children to engage in. A discovery table or box with Australian animal figures or puppets would support *A is for Australian Animals*.



At home

Paper bags and paper plates make great puppets - and toys and puppets make great props for story retelling and play. Use these props to set up your own zoo. Will you:

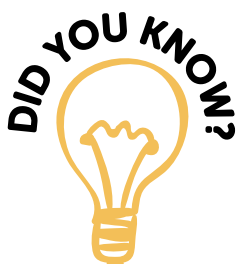
Be an animal at the zoo

What noise do you make

How do you move? OR

A zookeeper

What can you teach me about this animal?



**Play is directly linked to literacy.
When children play, it gives them
stories and experiences to talk
and write about.**

