



## KANGAROO and CROCODILE



## Teachers Notes

by Bec Kavanagh

Written and Illustrated by Bronwyn Bancroft, Published by Little Hare Books, 2011

### Synopsis

In *Kangaroo and Crocodile* Bronwyn Bancroft makes another uniquely Australian addition to both the shelves of children starting to learn basic concepts (as she has already done in *An Australian abc*, and *An Australian 1,2,3*) and older readers starting to learn about art and indigenous culture. The pages are filled with illustrations in her distinct style, which has marked her as one of Australia's leading indigenous artists and picture book illustrators.

From the earthy tones that surround the striking illustrations of animals such as the bilby, bridled nail-tailed wallaby and fence skink, to the enveloping swirl of blue patterns around the reef life, the blue swimmer crab and the great white shark, to the edible greens of the crocodile and koala these vivid colours and striking patterns will make readers form the connections between art and the environment from an incredibly early age.

### About the Author/Illustrator

Bronwyn Bancroft is a leading Indigenous artist whose work is held at the National Gallery of Australia, the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the Australian Museum.

Bronwyn has illustrated several award winning books for children, including *Why I Love Australia*, *Sam's Bush Journey*, *Possum* and *Wattle: My Big Book of Australian Words*, *Malu Kangaroo*, *An Australian 1,2,3 of Animals* and *An Australian abc of Animals*.

Bronwyn was awarded the 2009 Dromkeen Medal for her contribution to children's literature.



## Themes

Indigenous Art  
Environment  
Native animals  
Australian scenery



## Questions/ Comprehension

- How does the Bronwyn Bancroft group the animals together on each page?
- What other 'groups' of animals can you think of (for example, animals that live in the water, up trees, mammals etc). Create lists of these groups in class. Put the animals in the book in these groups. Do they crossover? How are they similar? Different?
- How has the illustrator used colour to tell you about the animals? What do the different colours tell you?
- What other elements does the illustrator use to show you the differences between the animals.
- Whereabouts in Australia do each of these animals come from? (you can mark these on a large map).
- What are the characteristics of each of those places? (are they wet, hilly, dry?) How are these characteristics represented in the illustrations?
- What other Australian animals can you think of that are not in the book? Do these come under any of the headings already in the book?

## Activities

- There is a glossary at the back of the book, with a fact about each of the animals. Make a glossary for the classroom, including any other information that you find, the groupings that you came up with as a class and maps.
- Make a list of the animals that you have seen and another list of those that you haven't. Choose the animal that you know the least about and make a poster about it. Aside from basic information about the animal, try to find things that make it different or specifically Australian.

- Discuss Aboriginal artwork and the features and symbols that make it so recognisable. Below are some useful websites.
  - <http://aboriginalart.com.au/gallery/iconography.html>
  - <http://www.aboriginalartstore.com.au/aboriginal-art-culture/aboriginal-education-art.php>
- What are some of the symbols used in Aboriginal art?
- How is it different to other art that you've seen?
- Do indigenous artists use any tools other than paintbrushes to create the shapes and patterns?
- Discuss Dreamtime stories with the class. Information can be found via the following websites.
  - <http://australianmuseum.net.au/Stories-of-the-Dreaming>
  - <http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/dreaming>
- In a group choose one of the animals in the book. Either online or in your school library, find a Dreamtime story about that animal. In your groups, re-enact that story for the class.
- If your school is near an art gallery with an indigenous collection, see if you can take the class there on an excursion (even better, if you are near an art gallery with some of Bronwyn Bancroft's work, go there!). While they are there, ask them to think about what they have learnt. Discuss in groups what the students see in the painting based on their earlier lessons. Find some paintings of animals that you have seen in the book. Can you see any similarities?
- Either at the gallery or online, find an artist with a similar style to Bronwyn Bancroft. How are their styles similar? How are they different? Present a short oral presentation to the class on the artist you have chosen. If you can, include a multimedia element such as music, visual examples of their work or a video. Be creative with your presentation.
  - On a map, look at the different habitats of the animals in the book. Divide the class into groups. Each group should look at a different habitat.
  - What are the features of your groups habitat.
  - Research its development over the last ten years. How has the habitat changed?
  - How do you think that might affect the animals that live there?
  - How can we preserve these habitats for the animals?

