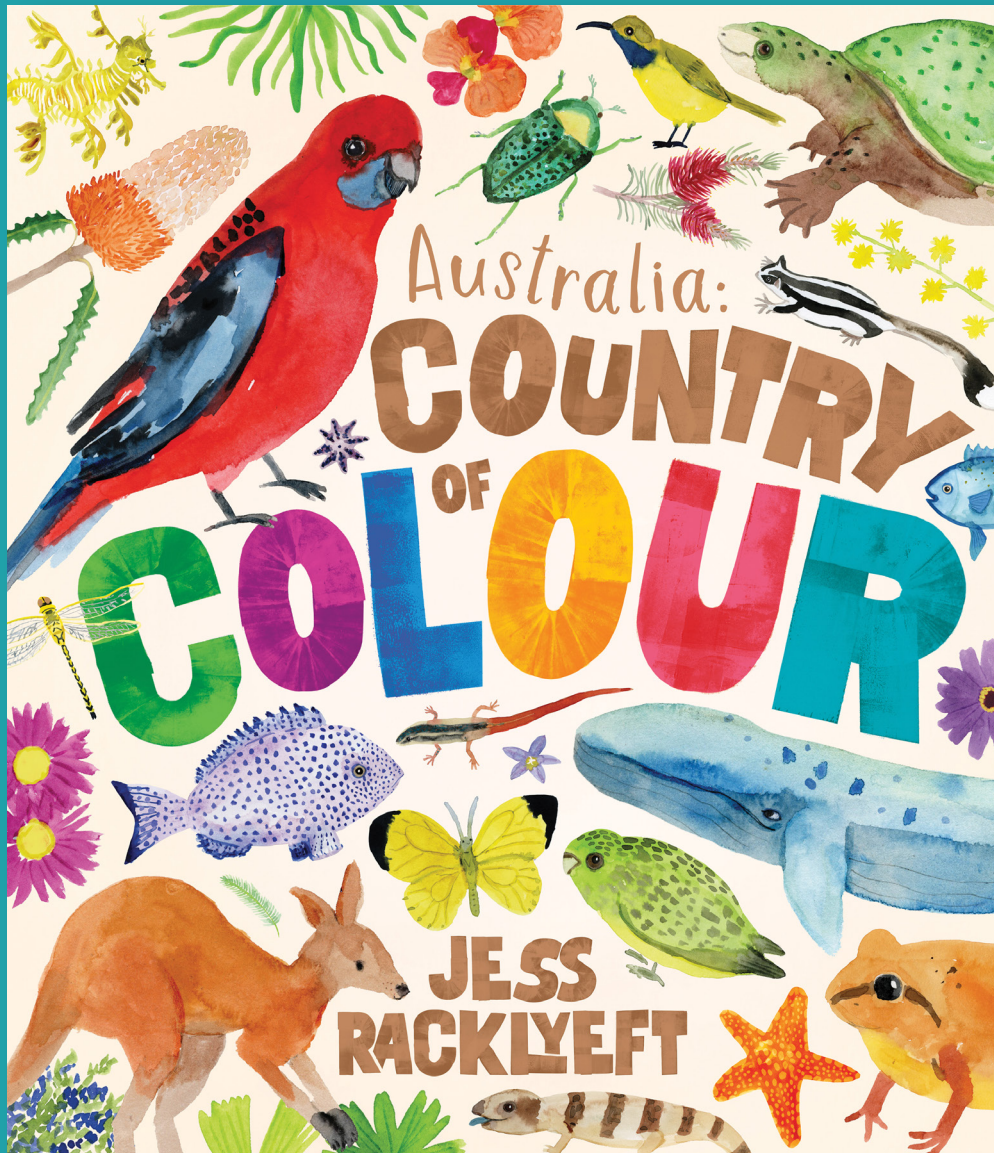


Classroom Resources



Written and illustrated by
Jess Racklyeft

Suitable for ages
4+

Contents of this pack

- Book details for *Australia: Country of Colour*
- Discussion points to develop skills in comprehension, critical thinking, creativity and imagination
- Four activities: a Book Quiz (comprehension and fact-checking); Poster-Making (research and writing); Poetry Analysis (critical thinking) and Drawing.

Description

With its vivid red dirt, big blue skies, wild green bushland and golden sandy beaches, Australia is a country of extraordinary colour.

Here is a celebration of the stunning plants and animals of this colourful country, from vibrant pink Flame Peas to startling blue Fairy Wrens, electric yellow Billy Buttons, glossy black Tasmanian Devils, and many more.

Come and take a closer look at nature's paintbox and the rainbow of life that lives in Australia, from one of our best-loved picture book creators.

About the author-illustrator

Jess Racklyeft is an author and illustrator based in Fitzroy, Melbourne. From her home studio, Jess creates original paintings and prints for greeting card companies and various clients. But her favourite work of all is producing children's books! Jess has authored and illustrated several picture books and board books and has won several awards, including a CBCA Award.

Find this book at our website:

<https://affirmpress.com.au/publishing/australia-country-of-colour/>



Discussion points

- Have a look at the front cover. What do you think this book will be about?
- Would you say this book is a work of non-fiction or fiction? Why?
- How many animals can you identify on the cover? How about the plants?
- When you think about Australia, what colours do you think of?
- Where was the last holiday you took in Australia? Did you see any new animals or plants there?
- What is your favourite colour? How does it make you feel?
- Did you have a favourite colour section in this book? Why? What did you like the most about this section?
- What do you think of the introductory pages to each section, which explain a little bit about each colour? What did you learn from these pages?
- Describe your favourite animal in this book. What makes this animal appealing to you? Had you heard of this animal before you read the book?
- Go through the book and find examples of animals in your state or territory. Have you ever seen any of these animals?
- Perform a counting exercise: count how many birds, or frogs, or bugs are in this book. Perhaps you could keep a tally of all types of animals?
- Had you heard of the term 'macropod' before reading this book? Look up this word. What types of animals are macropods? Can you find examples of macropods in this book?
- You will see that each animal and plant is shown with a common name as well as a scientific name. The scientific names can be difficult to read and say aloud! What language do you think this is? Why do you think animals and plants need scientific names as well as common names?
- List five plants you learned about through reading this book. Which was your favourite? Why?
- What is the coolest fact you've learned from this book?
- How many animals in this book contain a colour in their name?
- Where in Australia would you most like to visit? What types of animals or plants might you see there, based on the information in this book?
- Did you enjoy reading this book? Would you like to read more non-fiction in future? What else would you like to learn about?



Activity One: Book quiz

For this activity, students will need *Australia: Country of Colour* in front of them. Their task is to answer the questions and fill all the blanks in the sheet below, using the information in the book to help them. This could be an independent, partnered, group or all-class activity. The answers are

- The colour violet is often associated with feeling spiritual, brave and _____.
- A Quandong is also known as a _____.
- What does the Bronze Orange Bug do when it is threatened? _____
_____.
- Where in Australia would you find the Golden Bowerbird? _____
_____.
- The Australian Emperor is a type of _____.
- What type of parrot was once considered extinct and is now very rare to see?
_____.
- How tall can a Fan Palm grow? _____.
- The Great Barrier Reef is larger than which two Australian states combined? Circle the correct answer: Victoria and New South Wales; Victoria and Tasmania; Victoria and Queensland.
- What fruit does the Blue-Faced Honeyeater especially love to eat? _____.
- What colour is the Swan River Daisy? _____.
- What part of the Dainty Green Tree Frog is purple? _____.
- The Eastern Grass Owl is also known as the _____.

Answers: Creative; Native Peach; it produces a stinky liquid; rainforest mountains in north-eastern QLD; a dragonfly; Night Parrot; 20 metres; Victoria and Tasmania; bananas; purple; its thigh; Daddy Long-Legs Owl

Activity Two: Poster-making

Teachers, this activity could be completed independently, in pairs or in small groups. The activity includes selecting any animal from *Australia: Country of Colour*, researching the animal and presenting the research in the form of a poster (or a fact file or information report, if those better fit your learning outcomes!).

Students should use the book as their first research source. Other books and internet sources can then be used to find more out about their chosen animal. Students should also draw/paint or stick on a picture of their animal on their poster. Here's a list of all elements the poster could include, which will guide students on the type of research they need to conduct. This list should be adapted to suit the age range of the students involved.



Name

Include the common name, the scientific name (in italics) and the First Nations name (if possible).

Habitat

Where does the animal live? This includes the place/places it is found in Australia as well as the type of habitat it lives in.

If the animal makes a nest, what it is made out of?

Could you spot this animal's home easily in the wild, or would it be difficult to see?

Does the animal hibernate? When?

Diet

What does the animal eat? Does it have a varied diet or a very limited diet?

What time of day does the animal seek food?

How does the animal find their food? How do they eat it?

Characteristics

What does the animal look like? Does it have distinctive markings or colours?

How does the animal move? Try to use some adjectives for extra creativity!

How long does this animal live for in the wild?

Other facts

Which animals are predators of this one?

Is this animal commonly seen in Australia, or is it difficult to spot?

Is this animal endangered or near extinction? Why? What can be done about this?

Are there other, similar animals in Australia? What makes them similar-looking and different-looking to this one?

What other interesting things can your poster tell us about this animal?

Activity Three: Poetry analysis

Read the extract from the poem *My Country* shown below. This poem was written by Dorothea Mackellar to describe the beauty of Australia. She wrote it when she was feeling homesick.

I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains.

I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror –
The wide brown land for me!

A stark white ring-barked forest
All tragic to the moon,
The sapphire-misted mountains,
The hot gold hush of noon.
Green tangle of the brushes,
Where lithe lianas coil,
And orchids deck the tree-tops
And ferns the warm dark soil.

By Arrangement with the Licensor,
The Estate of Dorothea Mackellar, c/- Curtis Brown (Aust) Pty Ltd.

Analyse this poem with your students. For children in lower primary school, focus this activity on rhyme and rhythm, and/or expansion of vocabulary. For students in upper primary, here are some questions to consider asking:

- What is the poet trying to say about Australia? What emotions might the poet be trying to convey?
- What did you feel when you read this poem? Did you enjoy the poem?
- What is meant by 'a sunburnt country'? What other words are used to describe Australia's heat and sunlight?
- Can you identify the rhyming pattern?
- What is meant by 'her beauty and her terror'? What examples of 'terror' are used? What examples of 'beauty'? How can something be beautiful and terrifying all at once?
- Assonance is the term given to syllables that sound the same. One example is 'ragged ... ranges' in the third line of the extract. Can you find other examples of assonance? What is the effect of this when you're reading the poem aloud?
- The poem uses the word 'jewel' to describe the sea. Can you find other gem references in this poem? What is the effect of this?
- What is a 'lithe liana'? Are there other words that are unfamiliar to you in this poem?
- Does this poem reflect an Australia that you know and love? Explain why/why not.

Perhaps students would like to write their own ode to Australia through poetry?

Activity Four: Drawing

Pick an animal from this book and draw it in its natural habitat. For this activity, you will need to ask for permission to use the internet so that you can find pictures of this animal and where it lives. You might want to draw the animal in a different pose to the picture you see in the book! Remember to include the plants that this animal would live near or in.

Drawn by