

Teacher
Notes

KOALA

CLAIRE SAXBY • JULIE VIVAS



Nature
Storybooks

TEACHER NOTES WRITTEN BY
LEONIE JORDAN

WALKER BOOKS



Koala *Nature Storybooks*

It's time to find your own way, Little Koala.

It is time for Little Koala to leave the protection of his mother. But many challenges and dangers lie ahead for him as he searches for his own home eucalypt and learns to be independent. During his search he encounters other territorial koalas, wanders through a bushfire-ravaged landscape and endures a night of storms.

Nature Storybooks *Series*

Nature Storybooks combine nonfiction and narrative with stunning illustrations to introduce young readers to the wonders of the natural world.

Claire Saxby *Author*

Claire Saxby is an award-winning and bestselling picture book author. Her two previous Nature Storybooks, *Big Red Kangaroo* (2013) and *Emu* (2014), both illustrated by Graham Byrne, have won numerous awards, including the Royal Zoological Society of NSW's Whitley Award. *Big Red Kangaroo* was a 2014 Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Notable Book, and won the CBCA Crichton Award for illustration, and *Emu* was short-listed for the 2015 CBCA Eve Pownall Award and won the Environment Award for Children's Literature. Claire lives in Melbourne, where she works part-time in a bookshop.

Julie Vivas *Illustrator*

Julie Vivas is one of Australia's most loved and popular picture book illustrators. Her first picture book, *The Tram to Bondi Beach* (written by Libby Hathorn), was Highly Commended in the 1982 CBCA Picture Book of the Year Awards. However it is for her illustrations in the beloved Australian classic *Possum Magic*, written by Mem Fox, that she has become most well known. This book was Highly Commended at the 1984 CBCA Picture Book of the Year Awards. In 1990 *The Very Best of Friends*, Julie's first picture book with Margaret Wild, won this particular award. Julie has since been short-listed for this award several times. In 1992 she was awarded the Dromkeen Medal for her significant contribution to children's literature.

Leonie Jordan *Teacher Notes*

Leonie Jordan is a freelance writer based in Sydney. She has previously worked as a High School English teacher, children's bookseller, educational marketing consultant and test reviewer.



AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

These teacher notes are for:

PRIMARY LEVELS 2 – 4
AGE 7+

KEY LEARNING AREAS: English, Science, Humanities & Social Sciences (Geography), Visual Arts

EXAMPLE OF: Picture book, Non-fiction, Narrative non-fiction, Australian history

THEMES & IDEAS: Australian wildlife, Australian environment/habitats, Nature, Life-cycles, Sustainability, Survival

		Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
ENGLISH					
Language	Language variation and change	ACELA1460			
	Language for interaction	ACELA1462		ACELA1489	
	Text structure and organisation	ACELA1463	ACELA1478	ACELA1490	ACELA1504
		ACELA1465			
		ACELA1466			
	Expressing and developing ideas	ACELA1467	ACELA1482	ACELA1496	ACELA1511
		ACELA1468	ACELA1483	ACELA1498	
		ACELA1469	ACELA1483		
		ACELA1470	ACELA1484		
	Literature and context	ACELT1587	ACELT1594	ACELT1602	
Responding to literature	ACELT1589	ACELT1596	ACELT1604	ACELT1609	
	ACELT1590			ACELT1795	
Examining literature	ACELT1591	ACELT1599	ACELT1605	ACELT1611	
		ACELT1600			
Creating literature		ACELT1791	ACELT1607	ACELT1612	
			ACELT1794	ACELT1798	
Texts in context	ACELY1665	ACELY1675			
Interacting with others		ACELY1677	ACELY1689	ACELY1700	
Literacy	Interpreting, analysing, evaluating	ACELY1668	ACELY1678	ACELY1690	ACELY1701
		ACELY1670	ACELY1679		ACELY1703
		ACELY1670	ACELY1680		
Creating texts	ACELY1671	ACELY1682	ACELY1694	ACELY1704	
			ACELY1697		
SCIENCE					
Science Understanding	Biological sciences	ACSSU030	ACSSU044	ACSSU072	ACSSU043
				ACSSU073	
Science as a Human Endeavour	Nature and development of science	ACSHE034			
	Use and influence of science	ACSHE035	ACSHE051	ACSHE062	ACSHE083
Science Inquiry Skills	Planning and conducting	ACSIS038			
	Communicating		ACSIS060	ACSIS071	

*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian Curriculum (www.australiancurriculum.edu.au). However, this is not an exhaustive list of Australian Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text. Information is current as at June 2017. These teacher notes were written by Leonie Jordan.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Before Reading

- As a class, brainstorm what you know about koalas then use this information to create a mind-map. Use subheadings to help organise the information. For example, “Habitat”, “Behaviour” and “Appearance”.
- Write down 5 adjectives (describing words) you would use to describe a koala.

While Reading

Front and Back Cover

- Look at the front cover and read the blurb on the back. Try to predict some of the events that might happen in the story.

End Papers

- What colour are the end papers? Why do you think the illustrator, Julie Vivas, may have chosen this colour?

Title Page

- Look at the pictures of the koalas on the title page. How big do they look? What has the illustrator done to make them look this way?

Pages 6-7

- What do you notice about the way, “Climb, little Koala” is written? Look for other examples of this as you read on.
- How do the words “little koala” make you feel about the young koala? How would it be different if the author had not used the word “little”?
- Metaphors and similes are tools authors use to make their descriptions more interesting for readers. Metaphor is when one thing is said to be something that it isn't. For example, a kangaroo could be described as a “dust-coloured spring”.
- Simile is when one thing is compared to a different thing using the words “like” or “as”. For example, a kangaroo could be described as “red as desert sand”. Find and copy out the simile and metaphor Claire Saxby uses on p 6.

Pages 8-9

- Why do you think the mother koala “cuffs” the young koala? (p 9)
- Look at the backgrounds on p 8 and p 9. What difference do you notice? Why do you think the illustrator may have made this change? (**Hint:** think about how the young koala's feelings may have changed.)

Pages 10-11

- How do you think the young koala is feeling on this page?
- “Gaze” is a word that describes where someone, or something, is looking. Where is the mother koala's gaze directed? Why do you think the illustrator has drawn her with this gaze?
- Why does the young koala have to look after himself now?

Pages 11-13

- Find the metaphor used by Claire Saxby on p 13. What is she trying to highlight through this metaphor?
- One of the sentences in this section is much shorter than the others. Can you find it? Why do you think Claire Saxby made this sentence shorter?
- Look at the position of the branches in this picture. How do they make the young koala appear?
- How does Julie Vivas emphasise the terror of the young koala in the illustrations? Think about the colours she uses, how close we are to the koala and the koala's position, facial expression and gaze.

Pages 14-15

- Read aloud the words “thundering”, “tumble”, “scrambles” and “rumbles”. What do you notice about them? (**Hint:** think about the sounds inside them.) Why do you think Claire Saxby has chosen these words?
- This illustration makes the person looking at the picture (the viewer) feel as if they were looking up at the koala from an angle. Why do you think Julie Vivas has painted it this way?

Pages 16-17

- What do you think may have happened to the bush in this illustration?
- What other animals can you spot?
- What are the main colours used in this illustration? How do these colours help show what the koala may be feeling away from the safety of the trees?

Pages 18-19

- The text (writing) on p 18 is arranged in a long, thin column. Why do you think it has been set out this way?
- Compare the two pictures of the koala. What differences do you notice in how he looks?

Pages 20-21

- Repetition is when something is said, or shown, more than once. What examples of repetition can you find in the text on p 20? Why do you think the author decided to use repetition here? Try to rewrite this section so it doesn't use repetition. Which version do you prefer?
- What extra information do the illustrations give us? Why do you think the author and illustrator may have decided to tell some parts of the koala's story only through the pictures?
- Look at the two people in the picture. If you were telling their story, what sort of events might it include?

Pages 22-23

- Claire Saxby skilfully uses the sound of words to help readers share the koala's experiences. For example, the word "sway", with its long "ay" sound, captures the feeling of the tree going back and forth in the wind. Which words capture the feeling of the koala cuddling up close to the tree trunk?
- Which words on this page help you to imagine the sound of the rain? Write some other words that could describe this sound – you can make some of them up if you like!
- Alliteration is when the first letters of words near each other are repeated. What examples can you find on this page?
- Look at the different lines used on p 23. Which ones are straight? Which ones curve? What is Julie Vivas trying to highlight through this?
- How would you describe the colours used on this page? How do they make you feel?

Pages 24-25

- What is the word for when something hides itself by blending into its surroundings? What example of this do you see on this page?
- Read the sentence beginning, "Koala frights". How many commas are there? Why do you think Claire Saxby chose to make this such a long sentence?

Pages 26-27

- The colours in this illustration are warm and comforting. Why is the illustrator using these colours now?
- Can you find any examples of humour on these pages? Why do you think humour is being used at this point in the story?
- Compare the picture of the koala now with the picture of the koala on p 6. Does he seem different in any way?

After Reading

Koala Vocabulary List

Learn the spelling and definition of the following words. If there are any other words in the book that you don't know, add them to the list.

- Unfurls (p 6)
- Cuffs (p 9) – note, it is used as a verb on this page.
- Marsupial (p 9)
- Violent (p 14)
- Charred (p 18)
- Hesitates (p 18)
- Poisonous (p 19)
- Sapling (p 22)

Learning About Koalas

Answer the following questions. All of the answers can be found in the book.

- What do koalas eat? Why don't most other animals eat this food? (p 6)
- What is a marsupial? (p 9 & p28)
- What do you call a baby koala? (p 11)
- Why are male koalas sometimes aggressive? (p 14)
- How do male koalas mark a tree as their own? (p 16)
- How much food does a young koala need to eat each day? (p 19)
- How do koalas stay dry in the rain? (p 22)
- How do koalas move when they are on the ground? (p 25)
- How long do koalas sleep each day? (p 28)
- How are koalas from the north of Australia different to those found further south? (p 28)

Other Activities

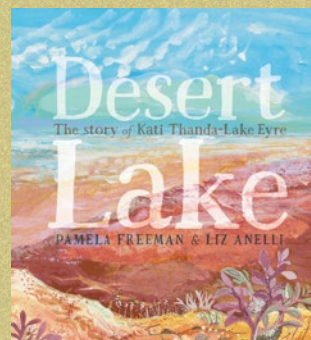
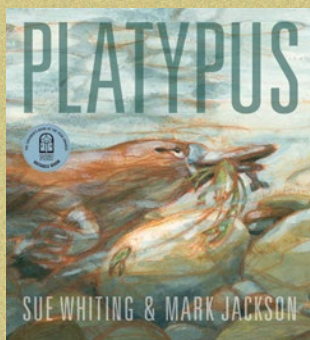
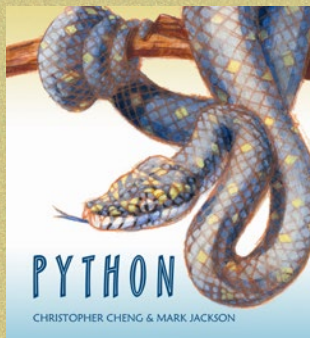
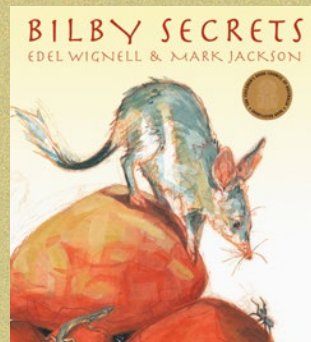
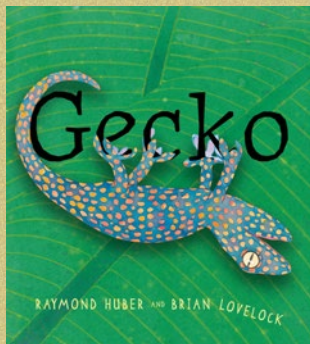
- Return to the mind-map the class created before reading the book. Cross off or edit any points that are incorrect then add any new information that you have learned.
- Revisit the list of adjectives you wrote before reading the book. Cross off any that you think no longer apply and add 3 new words.
- Research more about koalas on the internet. Some useful websites could be the Australian Koala Foundation (www.savethekoala.com) or National Geographic (www.nationalgeographic.com)
- Write a list of challenges and threats that koalas face as they grow up. You can also include challenges not mentioned in the book. For example, habitat loss, bushfires, disease and dogs.



- Koalas are currently classified as “vulnerable” throughout most of Australia. Research another animal that is vulnerable or endangered and present a PowerPoint report on it to the class.
- Research the types of eucalypts koalas like to eat. Look for some of these in your local area or plant some on school grounds.
- Research how a female koala’s life would be different to a male’s. Then, in pairs, rewrite *Koala* from the point of view of a female. Think about which sections you would need to take out or change, and any new sections you would need to put in. Try to write in a similar style to Claire Saxby.
- By the end of the story, the koala has changed from being looked after by his mother to becoming independent and finding his own home. List some of the important steps humans take as they grow from babies into independent adults.
- Copy out all the sentences written in larger type (“Climb, little Koala”) Read them aloud in order. Do they tell a story by themselves?
- Create a colour chart for the book. Divide a page into two columns. On one side, write down the page numbers for each double-page spread, for example, “Pages 6-7”. Next to it, use coloured pencils or paint to show the main colours used on those pages.
- Design the ultimate enclosure for a koala in a zoo or wildlife park. Present your design to the class, explaining how it meets all of the animal’s needs.
- Discuss ways that your class could help protect koalas.

Nature Storybooks

SERIES TEACHER NOTES



The following activities can be adapted for any of the titles in the **Nature Storybooks** series. The series works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide range of ages and ability levels, and should be selected accordingly.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Before Reading

- Examine the front and back cover of the book and identify the following:
 - The title
 - The author
 - The illustrator
 - The publisher
 - The blurb
- Look at the front cover and read the blurb on the back. Try to predict some of the events that might happen in the story.
- As a class, brainstorm what you know about the animal/subject that the book is about then use this information to create a mind-map. Use subheadings to help organise the information.
- Write down 5 adjectives you would use to describe the animal/subject.
- Come up with a list of questions about the animal/subject. Look for the answers to these as you read the book, then use any unanswered questions to guide further research.

After Reading

English

- Revisit the list of adjectives you wrote to describe the animal/subject. Cross off any which you think no longer apply and add 3 new words.
- Retell the story verbally focusing on sequencing, or the order in which events happen.
- Discuss what emotions the animal/subject might be feeling on each page.
- Identify the 2 different types of text used in the book. Read the book aloud reading only one type of text. Repeat with the other type of text. How are the versions different? Why might the author have chosen to write the story this way?
- Do you prefer the descriptive, storytelling sections of the text or the informative, factual sections? In what types of texts would each of these writing styles usually be used? For example, novels, newspaper articles and reference books.
- Is the book an imaginative, informative or persuasive text, or a combination of these text-types? If you were a librarian, what section of the

library would you put the book in?

- Look at the index at the back of the book. What is its purpose? How do you use it? Find another book with an index in the school library.
- The author uses imagery, or descriptive language, on many occasions throughout the book. Make a list of examples. Choose another animal/subject and write your own description of it using imagery.
- Choose an animal/subject and write a metaphor and simile to describe it. Read these aloud in class and see if your classmates can guess what you are describing.
- Choose an animal/subject to research then write your own story about it, in the style of the “Nature Storybooks” series.
- Research the author and/or illustrator on the internet. Locate other books they have done and compare these to the one you read in class.
- Find other books about the animal/subject in your school library. They could be fiction (story books) or nonfiction (information books). How is this book different to the book you read in class? Think particularly about how it presents the subject.
- Compare the book you read in class with another book from the “Nature Storybooks” series. How are they similar and different?
- Deliver a persuasive speech arguing that all primary school students across Australia should study the book. Make sure you explain what the book is about and what the author and illustrator have done well.

Science/Humanities & Social Sciences

- Return to the mind-map you created before reading the book. Cross out or edit any incorrect information then add in anything new that you’ve learnt.
- Draw or trace a map of Australia. Shade the areas where the animal/subject is found.
- Research more about the subject on the internet, using the list of questions you came up with before reading the book as a guide. Create a PowerPoint presentation and present it to the class.
- Make a list of websites which are useful for learning about the subject. Make sure you consider whether the information each site provides is

reliable, who wrote or manages it and how up-to-date it is.

- Look at photographs or video clips of your animal/subject on the internet. Is it different to how you imagined it from the story? Did you learn any extra information?
- Draw a picture of the animal/subject and label its main parts. Also write a brief description of what each part is for.
- Using the index as a starting point, create a short online dictionary for the animal/subject, with links to useful websites or images. You can also include words from other research you've done.
- Research the main threats to the animal/subject.
- Discuss ways your class could help protect the animal/subject.
- Design a poster, brochure or webpage persuading others to preserve the animal/subject and informing them about what they can do to help.

Performing Arts

- Copy out all the verbs used to tell the story. Choose one randomly to act out for the class. See if they can guess which one you are doing!
- Choose a section of the book to read aloud. Think about how you can use your voice and body to bring the story to life for listeners. For example, facial expression, pausing, changing your pace and volume, posture and actions/gestures.
- Create a soundscape for the book using either recorded sounds found online, or sounds that you create yourself. Choose sounds that capture the mood of the story.

Visual Arts

- Discuss how the illustrator has used the following on each page:
 - Colour
 - Line
 - Positioning/Layout
 - Framing Angle
 - Gaze
- Create a new front cover for the book using a different illustration style. You may like to look at other books in the “Nature Storybooks” series for inspiration.
- In small groups, create a diorama in a cardboard box to show the habitat or landscape. Try to incorporate materials from the natural environment into your display. Use the illustrations in the book as a guide for which colours and materials to use.
- Make a mask or costume of your animal/subject.



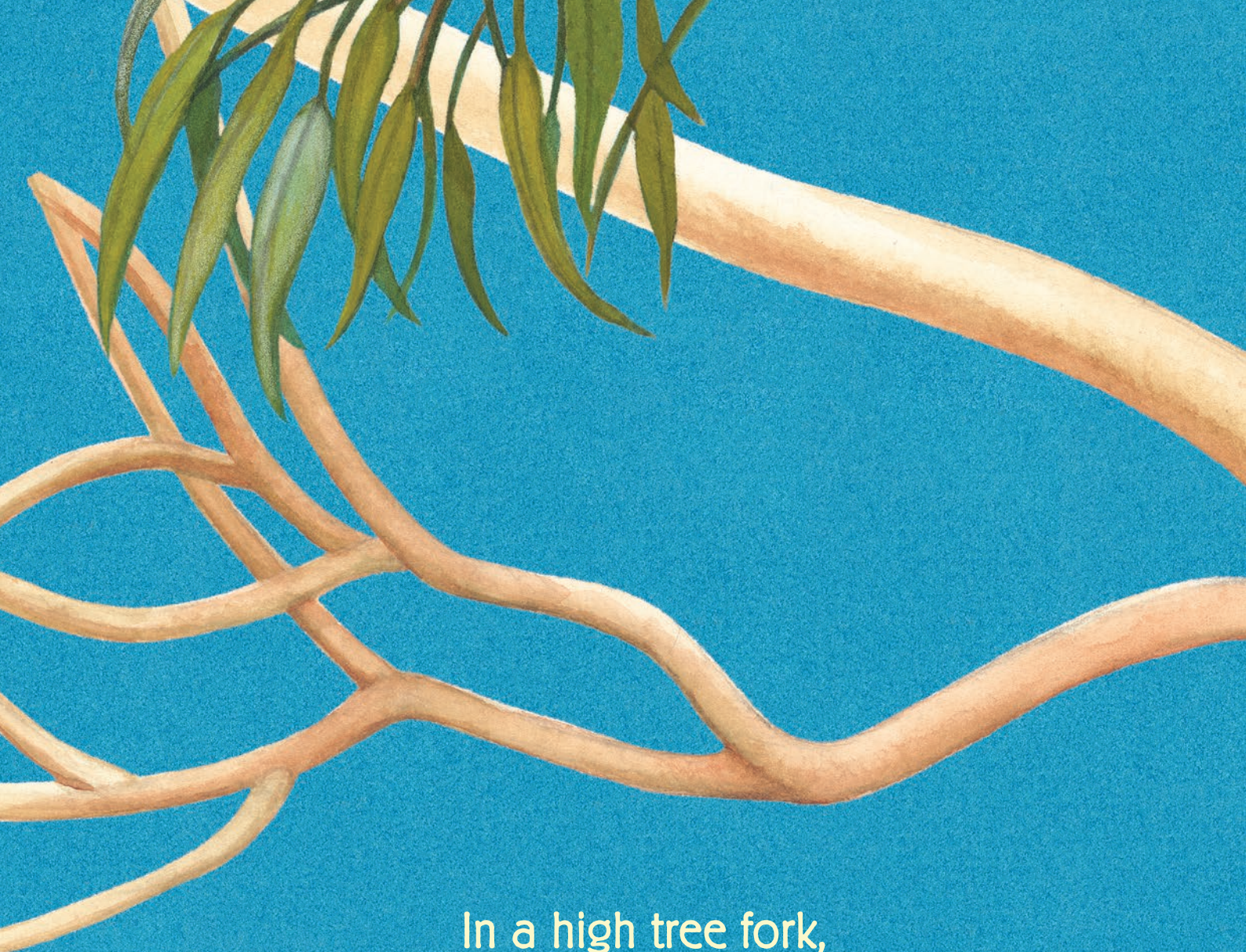
NATURE STORYBOOKS ORDER FORM

Customer name:		Account No:	
Address:		Order No:	
Special instructions:			

TITLE	AUTHOR	ILLUSTRATOR	BINDING	ARRP	NZRRP	EDITION EAN ISBN-13	QTY
Big Red Kangaroo	Claire Saxby	Graham Byrne	HB	\$27.99	\$29.99	9781921720420	
Big Red Kangaroo	Claire Saxby	Graham Byrne	PB	\$16.99	\$18.99	9781922244390	
Bilby Secrets	Edel Wignell	Mark Jackson	HB	\$29.99	\$31.99	9781921529320	
Bilby Secrets	Edel Wignell	Mark Jackson	PB	\$16.99	\$18.99	9781922077042	
Desert Lake	Pamela Freeman	Liz Anelli	HB	\$24.99	\$27.99	9781921529436	
Desert Lake Big Book	Pamela Freeman	Liz Anelli	PB	\$44.99	\$47.99	9781921977091	
Emu	Claire Saxby	Graham Byrne	HB	\$27.99	\$29.99	9781922179708	
Emu	Claire Saxby	Graham Byrne	PB	\$16.99	\$18.99	9781922077158	
Flight of the Honey Bee	Raymond Huber	Brian Lovelock	HB	\$27.99	\$29.99	9781921529665	
Flight of the Honey Bee	Raymond Huber	Brian Lovelock	PB	\$16.99	\$18.99	9781925126266	
Gecko	Raymond Huber	Brian Lovelock	HB	\$24.99	\$27.99	9781925126556	
Koala	Claire Saxby	Julie Vivas	HB	\$24.99	\$27.99	9781925126396	
Platypus	Sue Whiting	Mark Jackson	PB	\$16.99	\$18.99	9781925381139	
Python	Christopher Cheng	Mark Jackson	HB	\$29.99	\$32.99	9781921529603	

Please note Walker Books does not directly supply schools and libraries.
This order form can be used with your regular booksellers or education suppliers.





In a high tree fork,
a grey ball unfurls.
It's time for young Koala
to leave his mother.

Good luck, little Koala,
you'll have many adventures
finding a new home.

**WALKER
BOOKS
CLASSROOM**



Free education resources written
to the Australian curriculum.

classroom.walkerbooks.com.au