



EK BOOKS TEACHER NOTES & RESOURCES

Title: Australia Illustrated

Author & Illustrator: Tania McCartney

Publisher: EK Books

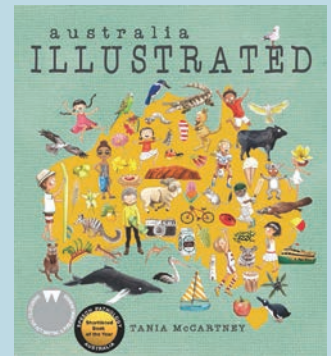
Price: ANZ \$34.99 | USA \$23.99 | CA \$30.99 | UK £14.99

ISBN: 9781925335880

Publication date: Oct 2018 (2nd edition)

Audience age: 4-8 years

Key Curriculum Areas: English, The Arts, History and Geography



SYNOPSIS:

Australia. Big. Beautiful. Diverse. From First People to washing lines and crocodiles, football and sunshine, koalas and Akubras, skyscrapers and beaches that squeak, this 96-page visual delight is a sparkling homage to our wide brown land and its rich and varied multicultural communities.

Vibrantly illustrated with watercolour, ink and mono-printing, *Australia Illustrated* not only celebrates the more ‘typical’ Australian flora, fauna and landmarks, but also showcases the everyday quirks and idiosyncrasies that make Australia unique. Everything from Greek street food to Sydney ferries, from cattle breeds to plants of the Daintree — even the quokka selfie epidemic — is depicted in full-page illustrations that will delight both children and adults.

Divided into Australia-wide entries as well as sections for each state and territory, readers will learn about the endemic plants, animals, foods, landmarks, sports and oddities that make the regions around Australia special.

Whimsical, humorous and high in detail, this is Australia like you’ve never seen it before. Grab your snorkel. Let’s dive in!

AUTHOR MOTIVATION

The way our children read has shifted dramatically in the past decade — from deep and more comprehensive text engagement and word literacy to light scanning and image-reliance. *Australia Illustrated* is designed to engage children to learn through the power of visuals, with the added bonus of encouraging a love of books and engagement with ‘story’ at a visual level. Although *Australia Illustrated* is non-narrative, it encourages a love of books via reader-relatability and visual appreciation. A deep love and appreciation of books encourages children to engage with and persist with the skills required to master text literacy. Visual literacy also expands and heightens our children’s ability to think critically, understand nuance, and problem-solve.

As her first self-illustrated title, *Australia Illustrated* was also born of the author’s love of her country and its multicultural and geographical diversity. Diversity and multicultural representation is something that’s very important to the author, and its themes appear in many of her previous books.



THEMES:

Australia Illustrated is a unique peek at Australia's cultural, geographical and idiosyncratic quirks. The book has a visual focus, making its concepts easily absorbed and retained by children of all ages. Its aim is to celebrate our country's beauty and diversity. The book covers the following curriculum units:

Geography

- place and space
- Indigenous landscapes

Literacy and Numeracy

- visual literacy

Humanity and Social Sciences

- Indigenous studies
- community
- relationship to other people, places and systems, past and present

Physical Education and Health

- understanding and valuing diversity
- challenging stereotypes
- a sense of self

The Arts

- visual arts – illustration and its mediums; multimedia art
- digital illustration

Design and Technology

- digital systems and their interactions – digital artwork is used in this book
- book layout
- illustration design and medium

History

- comparisons – past v present and what has stayed the same over time

Science

- living things and habitats
- landscapes
- day and night

English

- different narrative forms and purposes of written language to develop skills for text creation
- labels
- shape and layout
- fiction/non-fiction comparison



WRITING STYLE:

Australia Illustrated is a visually driven book that relies on labelling and clarification of visual elements with scant accompanying text. The purpose behind this is to focus on visual literacy.

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND:

Tania McCartney simply adores books and words and pictures. If she could, she would live inside a book — and as an author, illustrator and editor, she kind of already does! As an ambassador for several literacy initiatives including the National Year of Reading (2012) and Chief Minister’s Reading Challenge (2016) she is also the Founder of Kids’ Book Review, and is therefore mad about juvenile literacy. She’s also mad about illustration and that’s why she founded the 52-Week Illustration Challenge.

Tania’s other books include *Smile Cry*, *A Texas Year*, *A New York Year* (all EK Books) and *Australian Kids Through the Years*

(National Library Publishing). Her work has won awards and shortlistings. *Australia Illustrated* is her twenty-third (and first self-illustrated) book. Tania has lived in four different countries and currently lives 93 seconds over the ACT border with a very nice husband, two marvellous kids, and a Himalayan mountain of books.

TEACHER ACTIVITIES/NOTES:

RESEARCH

Units: English, History, Geography and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

In researching material for *Australia Illustrated*, the author used many different sources, including the internet, history books, photographs and discussion with colleagues, parents, Indigenous advisors, teachers and librarians. She also drew on personal experience, travel and childhood memories.

Discuss with children the ways they could research a book about Australia (or the country they were born in). If they were researching a similar book, where would they look and who might they speak to, in regard to content? Would they focus on the present or past?

Children can choose a page and either write a story about it or learn more/expand upon its content through research. Older children can complete a research compilation of their very 'own' Australia, complete with pictures.

DIVERSITY

Units: English, Humanity and Social Sciences, Physical Education and Health

Discuss with children how differently each of us view our own country, and our own experience of that country, depending on where we come from, what ethnicities and culture our family is centred in, our day-to-day experiences, and where we have travelled. Younger children can draw a picture that represents how they feel about their country. Compare the varying results between students, and celebrate their diversity.

ILLUSTRATIONS AND TEXT

Units: English, Technology and Design, imagery and text association

Discuss the relationship between text and illustration and how the images complement the text and add nuance and meaning. Discuss the non-narrative nature of this book, and how a narrative thread is nonetheless present both within each page and though the course of the book's pages – a narrative of who we are as a nation.

Discuss with children which pages caught their eye and how it made the book interesting or fun. Older children can choose a page and write a story about it.

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