



The
GREAT
Aussie Easter
EGG-and-SPOON
RACE

Written by Sophie Sayle
Illustrated by Daron Parton

TEACHERS
RESOURCES

The GREAT AUSSIE EASTER EGG-and-SPOON RACE

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INTRODUCTION

This is a heartwarming Easter picture book featuring Australian bush baby animals, which will appeal to fans of Little Bilby's Aussie Easter Egg Hunt.

Slow, sleepy Echidna is always trailing behind the other bush babies. And now it's time for their great Easter egg-and-spoon race. Can Echidna keep up with her friends, the other bush babies, and enjoy all the fun on this special day?



THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes are covered in this book which are related to the Australian Curriculum, including:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

Several topics are relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/>

EASTER

Discussion Point: Easter is a religious celebration. Research its origin and the beliefs associated with Easter.

Discussion Point: Easter has also come to be associated with secular celebrations and rituals. These include the Easter Bunny, Easter eggs, Easter baskets and Easter bonnets. What other rituals do we associate with Easter?

Activity: Make some Easter crafts. [See **Creative Arts** below.]

Activity: Read other picture books about Easter. [See **Bibliography** below.]

AUSTRALIAN ANIMALS

Discussion Point: The echidna is the focus of this story, but other Aussie animals appear in it as well: wombat, bandicoot, kangaroo and kookaburra. (The Easter Bilby is also mentioned.) What other Australian animals can you think of? Write a list of Australian animals in alphabetical order. Then write a fact about them. [See **Worksheet 2**.]

Discussion Point: Kookaburra calls echidna a little puggle as a baby echidna is known as a puggle. What other baby animal names do your students know? [See **Worksheet 3**.]

Activity: Make some Australian animal crafts. [See **Creative Arts** below.]

Activity: Read other picture books about Australian animals. [See Bibliography below.]

GAMES

Activity: The egg-and-spoon race is a game which has been played at least since the late nineteenth century. It is often included in school events. Research the history of this game

Discussion Point: What other games are popular at sports days, fetes and festivals? (For example, sack race or tug of war.) Visit websites to research this topic further. [See **Creative Arts** below.] [See **Bibliography.**]

COMPETITION AND COOPERATION

Discussion Point: The idea of competing against someone else is a common narrative convention in picture books and classic tales such as The Hare and the Tortoise. The latter is often described as a moral fable. How does this description relate to this picture book?

Discussion Point: Echidna is helped by her friends to win the race. Often competition can lead to unkind behaviour, so the message here is that in cooperating and helping each other, everyone is a winner, not just echidna. Invite students to discuss their feelings about this message and how it applies to their lives.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>>The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following aspects:

Activity: The **structure** of events used here is typical of cumulative tales which often detail a repeated activity, for example, when searching for materials to make dye we are told that the animals each do something different:

The bush is full of bright colours – if you know where to look.

Wombat digs up some sticky yellow clay.

Bandicoot picks handfuls of juicy red berries.

Kangaroo fills her pouch with beautiful bush flowers. But Echidna comes back empty-handed.

This sets a pattern for echidna being the last in the pack, which of course leads to him becoming the winner! This reversal lies at the heart of the story's structure. Invite students to write a story about a hapless creature, like echidna, reversing his bad luck, based on this cumulative structure.

Activity: Test your students' **comprehension** by asking them questions about the written and visual text.

VISUAL LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>>

The visual text of a book combines with the written text to tell the story using the various parts of the book's design and illustrations, as explored below:

Activity: The **cover** of the book features a wreath made of Australian wildflowers with echidna, kangaroo, wombat and bandicoot each holding a spoon and egg. Create your own cover for this book.

Activity: The **endpapers** are coloured mauve and do not include any images. Design some endpapers for this book using decorated eggs in a repeated pattern.

Discussion Point: The **title page** features a few objects found on a beach, under the lettering of the title. Invite students to design an alternative title page.

Activity: The **medium** or **style** employed is digital art. The **colours** used in this book are bright primary hues. Encourage students to discuss the colours used in the cover they design for the book.

Discussion Point: Observe the endearing **facial expressions** and **body language** of the animals. They give the reader some idea of each animal's character. How do these attributes advance the story? Invite students to suggest what sort of character they each have.

Activity: Invite students to draw, paint or collage another scene to accompany the story you wrote above about reversing a narrative situation. Create a classroom mural using all the images. [See also **Worksheet 1** below.]

CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

1. EASTER CRAFTS

Activity: The animals paint their eggs by using dyes taken from nature. Invite students to choose something from nature, for example, red dirt, green leaves, yellow berries, and experiment with making their own dyes. They could then use the dyes to paint their own eggs.

Activity: Visit websites for inspiration and collect materials appropriate to your design to make the **Perfect Easter Bonnet**, for example see:

'40 Easy Easter Bonnet Ideas For Boys & Girls' *Simplify Create Inspire*

<<https://www.simplifycreateinspire.com/easy-easter-bonnet-ideas-for-boys-girls/>>

Activity: Invite students to suggest ideas for an **Easter Basket**. Visit websites such as the following for ideas:

'Easter Baskets: 10 Easter Basket Ideas for Kids', *Bright Star Kids*, 18 December, 2021

<<https://www.brightstarkids.com.au/blog/easter-baskets-10-diy-easter-basket-ideas/>>. Then invite them to make their own bonnets.

Activity: Many people decorate their houses at Easter, as they do at Christmas. Some have an Easter tree, put Easter wreaths on their door, or create Easter table centrepieces. Create

such **Easter decorations** with your students. [See websites listed in the **Bibliography** for ideas.]

2. ANIMAL CRAFTS

Activity: Create a **Bilby Mask**. [See Template at: 'Bilby mask', *For Teachers For Students* <<https://www.forteachersforstudents.com.au/site/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/tmpl-bilby-mask.pdf>>.

Activity: Make a **Paper Plate Koala** [See 'Paper Plate Koala Craft' in 'Animal Activities for Kids', *DLTK's Sites for Kids* <<https://www.dltk-kids.com/animals/mplate-koala.htm>>]

3. GAMES

Activity: Engage your students to play games such as an egg-and-spoon race or a sack race

4. POSTER

Activity: Create a **poster** to advertise this book.

5. BOOK TRAILER

Activity: Create a **Book Trailer** to promote this book. [See **Bibliography**.]

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

Activity: Research the topics above online.

Activity: Research the author and illustrator online.

MATHEMATICS

Activity: Have fun counting things on each page in this visual text, for example, eggs, shells, berries, flowers etc. [See also **Worksheet 4** below.]

FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

- Sophie Sayle is a debut author. How would you describe her style of writing?
- Research the work of Daron Parton. Compare this to his other books.
- Students might research this book in comparison to reading other picture books such as those listed in the **Bibliography**.
- Investigate any other topic not covered in these notes which you consider is suggested by this text.

CONCLUSION

This is an entertaining title for young children. The plot involves Easter, Australian animals and outdoor games – a formula for lots of fun.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sophie Sayle grew up in Sydney and now lives in Melbourne. She enjoys long bushwalks and large Easter eggs.

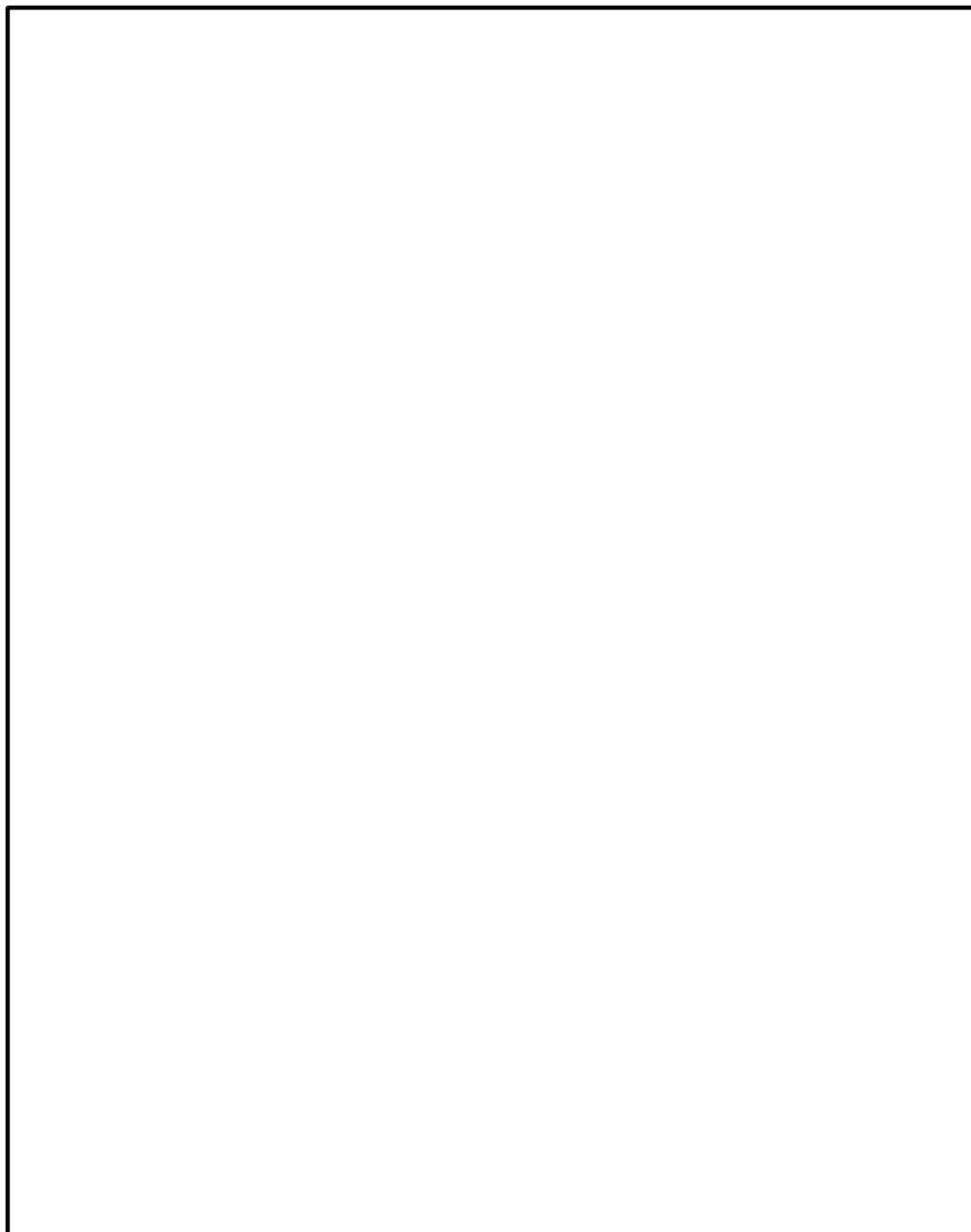
ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Award-winning New Zealand illustrator **Daron Parton** was born in the UK, married a Kiwi and moved to New Zealand in 1995. He has been working as an illustrator since 1990 and is also an illustration tutor at Auckland University of Technology. Daron's books include *The Ultimate Survival Guide to Monsters Under Your Bed*, *A Crocodile in the Family*, *Let's Build a House*, *Let's Build a Backyard* and *Snake Brought Cake*.

See: 'Daron Parton' *Watermark Creative*
<<https://watermarkcreative.co/daron-parton/>>

WORKSHEET 1. AUSSIE ANIMAL SQUIGGLE

Draw your own favourite Australian animal.



WORKSHEET 2. ALPHABET OF AUSTRALIAN ANIMALS

Write a list of Australian animals in alphabetical order. Then write a fact beside each animal.

	ANIMAL	FACT
A		
B	BILBY	
C		
D		
E		
F		
G		
H		
I		
J		
K		
L		
M		
N		
O		
P		
Q		
R		
S		
T		
U		
V		
W		
X		
Y		
Z		

WORKSHEET 3. BABY ANIMAL NAMES

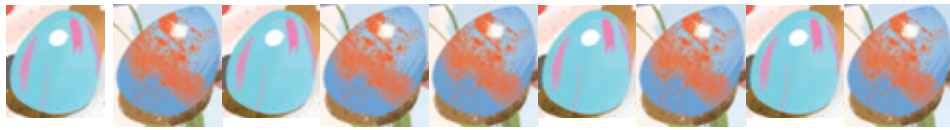
Many – and very different – Australian animals often share the same name for their babies. See if you can answer the quiz below. Then draw an image in the column indicated below.

Image	Animal Name	Baby Animal Name
1.	Echidna	
2.	Kangaroo	
3.	Bandicoot	
4.	Bilby	
5.	Wombat	
6.	Kookaburra	
7.	Platypus	
8.	Koala	
9.	Possum	
10.	Emu	



Answers: 1. Puggle 2. Joey 3. Joey 4. Joey 5. Joey 6. Chick 7. Puggle 8. Joey 9. Joey 10. Chick

WORKSHEET 4. COUNTING THINGS

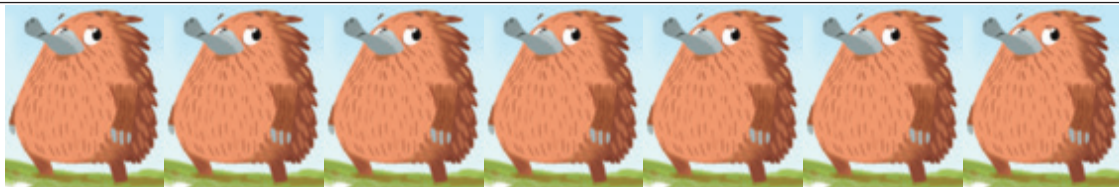


1. How many eggs are above?

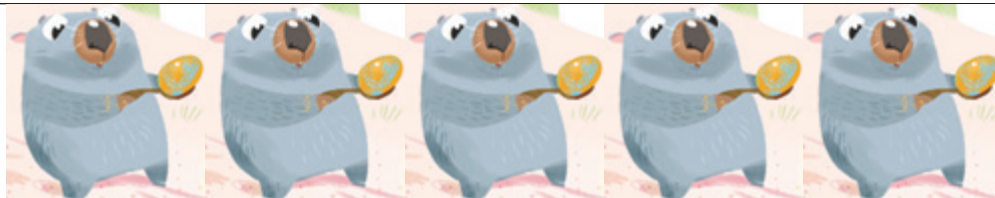
2. If you divide the eggs above by three, how many eggs do you have?



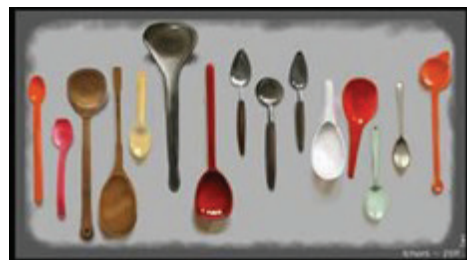
3. If you multiplied the kookaburras above by four, how many would you have?



4. If you take four echidnas from the line above, how many would be left?



5. If you added ten wombats to the line above, how many would you have?



6. How many spoons are in each of the two boxes above? How many spoons are in both boxes?

ANSWERS: 1. Nine 2. Three 3. Twenty-four. 4. Three. 5. Fifteen. 6. Fifteen. There are thirty in total.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright AM operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011 she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, in 2012 the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021 she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.

