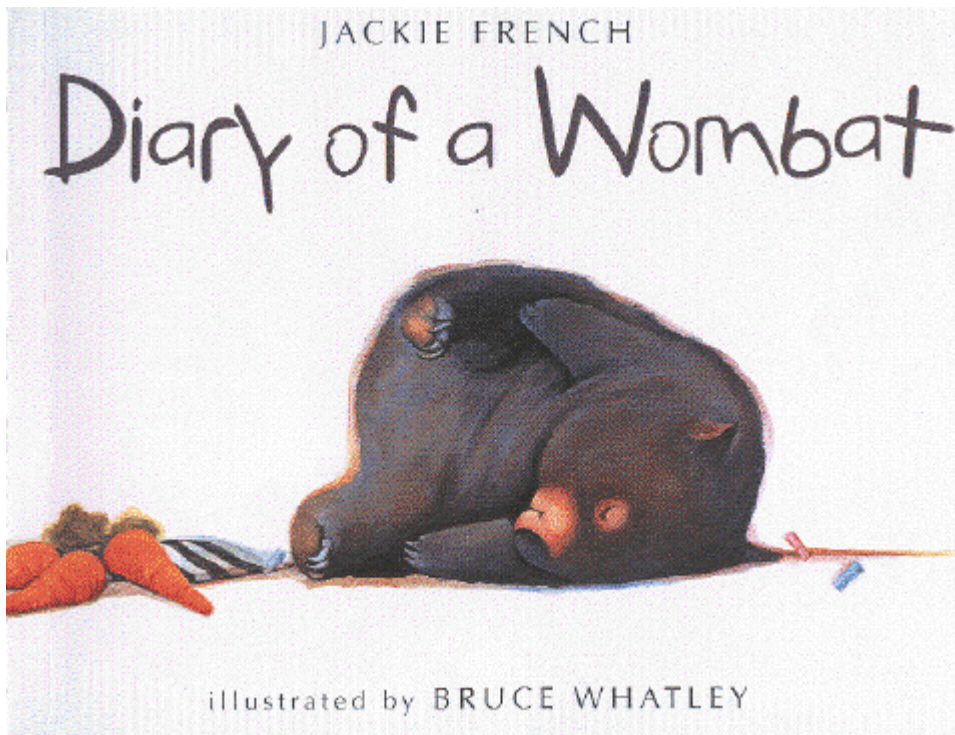


A LITERACY BASED UNIT FOR THE BOOK

DIARY OF A WOMBAT

BY JACKIE FRENCH ILLUSTRATED BY BRUCE WHATLEY

KEY LEARNING AREAS: ENGLISH / MATHEMATICS / HUMAN SOCIETY AND ITS ENVIRONMENT /
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY / CREATIVE AND PRACTICAL ARTS / ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVES



Diary of a Wombat depicts the cheeky antics of Mothball, 'a wombat with attitude'. This wombat leads a very busy and demanding life. She wrestles unknown creatures, runs her own digging business, and even trains her humans. She teaches them when she would like carrots, when she would like oats and when she would like both at the same time.

Through Bruce Whatley's delightful illustrations, discover how Mothball - between scratching, sleeping and eating - manages to fit the difficult job of training humans into her busy schedule.

VOCABULARY

reach	itchy	resistant	Wednesday	easily
found	perfect	source	invading	against
territory	major	hole	creature	energetic
delicious	appeared	constantly	scratched	instead
response	discovered	curiously	decided	message
quite	request	chewed	night	oats

GRAMMAR & SPELLING

- Several words from the text are **homonyms**. Write their partners
hole ate night morning won more no some
new source rained pair one flower nose paws
- **Adjectives** describe nouns and make our writing more interesting by painting a vivid image in our minds. List the nouns from the text and describe them by writing appropriate adjectives.
- Write the **meaning** for these underlined words.
 - 'Discovered flat, hairy creature invading my territory'
 - 'Tried yesterday's hole. Curiously resistant to my paws.'
 - 'Also discovered a new source of carrots.'
- Diary of a Wombat is written in the **past tense**. Discuss the reason for this. Write the past tense for these verbs.
sleep eat scratch decide flap fight win make chew discover try begin
dig work move know feel amaze get bash arrive demand

READING & VIEWING ACTIVITIES:

1. Revise the construction of information reports. Using factual texts, research wombats. In pairs or individually, jointly construct an information report. (Worksheet 1)

2. Using the students' completed information reports, delete key words to create a cloze passage. Students cloze exercises drawing on their research and comprehension skills.
3. Rewrite the story as a timeline or a story map, showing the main ideas and events for each day of Mothball's diary.
4. Using words from the vocabulary list, students create own word search puzzle. Students then swap puzzles to complete. (Worksheet 2)
5. Mothball is somewhat destructive around the place. Drawing on her antics, what solutions could prevent Mothball from destroying the garden and the house?
6. Explore opposing viewpoints. Consider and describe the same event from two points of view. (Mothball vs. family members) Discuss the use of visual text as a way of enhancing meaning.
7. *Diary of a Wombat* is a humorous text. Identify the various devices Jackie French and Bruce Whatley have used to make this book entertaining
8. In literary texts, dialogue plays an important role in character development. However, there is no dialogue in *Diary of a Wombat* (from Mothball). Analyse the text to glean information about Mothball. How has Jackie French developed Mothball's character without the use of dialogue?
9. Complete a crossword puzzle. (Worksheet 3)

WRITING ACTIVITIES:

1. List words that describe Mothball's physical appearance. Using Bruce Whatley's illustrations, write a physical description of Mothball. (Worksheet 4)
2. Select appropriate words to describe Mothball's character. Write a description that reveals her personality. (Worksheet 4)
3. Mothball is an adorable pet but her owners find her a challenge. They decide she is too much trouble and seek a new home for her. Revise the structure of persuasive writing. Write an advertisement for the local paper describing Mothball's character in a way that would entice people to want to own her. Eg. Loves the garden, easy to feed.
4. Discuss the owners' feelings portrayed through Bruce Whatley's illustrations. How must they feel about the shredded doormat? The perfect dustbath? The hole in the door? Rewrite the diary from the family's point of view. Try to keep the events unchanged,. Choose an appropriate title.
5. Write an instruction kit on how to care for a wombat. The kit could include a booklet, poster and a list of DOS and DON'TS.
6. Examine the sentence structure of a diary. Discuss the use of first person. How is it different to third person? Write the events of the diary as a third person narrative. Identify the differences in sentence structure between the two.

7. Mothball is a wombat that resides on Jackie French's property. At the time of publication of *Diary of a Wombat* (November 2002) Mothball was carrying a baby in her pouch. Read the extract from Jackie's October newsletter (Worksheet 5). Write a sequel to *Diary of a Wombat*. Now that she is a mum, how will Mothball's days be different? What pranks might she and her baby get up to now?

TALKING & LISTENING ACTIVITIES:

1. The wombat in this story has a likeable personality. She is a 'wombat with attitude'. What does this mean?
2. Discuss the different pets that people own and compare how and where they are kept. List questions that arise from the discussion., Research the needs of a wombat and list the positive and negative aspects of owning a wombat as a pet.
3. In groups, discuss the need for 'Beware of the Dog' signs. Why are they necessary? Design and make a sign forewarning visitors that wish to enter Mothball's territory.
4. Some events cause other events to happen. This is called 'cause and effect'. Identify & discuss the events from the text that caused something else to happen.
5. 'FOR PETE'S SAKE, GIVE HER SOME CARROTS!' This line is written in grey. Why?
6. Discuss visual literacy, Bruce Whatley's illustrations tell a different story to the text. Examine the family's facial expressions. Do they have a similar view to Mothball?

OTHER KEY LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

1. 'Discovered flat, hairy creature invading my territory.' Wombats are territorial animals. Draw an aerial view (map) of Mothball's territory. Label each of the main features from the book. Be sure to include the garden setting, the clothes line, the house, the barbeque, etc. Feel free to add your own landmarks, even if they are not mentioned in the book.
2. Draw *Diary of a Wombat* as a cartoon. Compress the events into 8 frames, each frame referring to the 8 days in Mothball's diary. Remember to include speech bubbles, thought bubbles, sound effects, action and captions summarizing the action along the bottom of the frames. (Worksheet 6)
3. Aboriginal Art is unique and often features animals. Primitive paintings of animals are usually drawn with their bodies and internal organs showing. This is referred to as 'x-ray' art. The Aboriginal people used dots to decorate their paintings. Paints were ground from the earth around them and came in colours of rich reds, browns and yellow ochre. Examine Aboriginal paintings done in this fashion. Using the same method and colours, design an Aboriginal painting of a wombat.
4. Visit Jackie French's website at www.jackiefrench.com.au