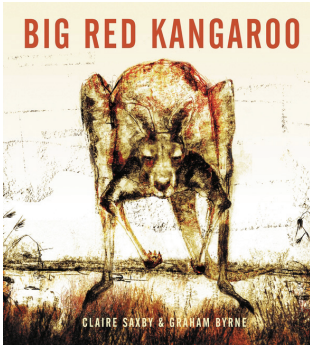




# Walker Books Classroom Ideas



## Nature Storybooks: Big Red Kangaroo

Author: Claire Saxby  
Illustrator: Graham Byrne

HB: 9781921720420  
PB: 9781922244390

\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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## Outline:

Far inland, the sun floats on the waves of a bake-earth day. Big Red and his mob of kangaroos wait for night-time when they can search for food. Young male kangaroos wait too – ready to challenge Red and take his place as leader.

## Author/Illustrator Information:

Claire Saxby was born in Melbourne and grew up in Newcastle. She's lived in more houses than she can remember, and attended many schools. Claire is the author of many books including *There Was an Old Sailor*, illustrated by Cassandra Allen, which won the Crystal Kite Member Choice Award, Australia and New Zealand Division, Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, 2011.

Born in Sydney sometime last century, Graham Byrne did the usual school and university time, worked as an electrical engineer for years, then went into building houses and structures. An interest in art as a creative adjunct to the practical nature of building led to formal education, work installing artworks at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, and wonderings about other roads to explore. Wanting his art to have some "practical" useful purpose, to be illuminating, pointed Graham to illustration and design pathways. Explorations of drawing, painting, filling sketchbooks, making books for his grandchildren and illustrating short stories have combined to prompt his journey as a book illustrator. *Big Red Kangaroo* is Graham's first picture book.

<p><b>These notes are for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary years 2+</li> <li>• Ages 7+</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key Learning Areas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English</li> <li>• Science</li> </ul>	<p><b>Example of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-fiction</li> <li>• Narrative non-fiction</li> </ul>	<p><b>Themes/Ideas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kangaroos</li> <li>• Australian wildlife</li> <li>• Nature</li> </ul>
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National Curriculum Focus:*			
<p>Science</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>ACSSU030</p> <p>ACSSU032</p> <p>ACSI037</p> <p>Year 3</p> <p>ACSSU044</p> <p>ACSHE050</p> <p>ACSHE051</p> <p>*NB this book is a useful resource for studies of biological sciences throughout the F-6 Australian Curriculum.</p>	<p>English</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>ACELA1460</p> <p>ACELA1463</p> <p>ACELA1465</p> <p>ACELA1466</p> <p>ACELA1468</p> <p>ACELA1469</p> <p>ACELT1587</p> <p>ACELT1589</p> <p>ACELT1590</p> <p>ACELT1593</p> <p>ACELY1665</p> <p>ACELY1666</p> <p>ACELY1668</p> <p>ACELY1671</p>	<p>Year 3</p> <p>ACELA1475</p> <p>ACELA1477</p> <p>ACELA1478</p> <p>ACELA1483</p> <p>ACELT1594</p> <p>ACELT1596</p> <p>ACELT1598</p> <p>ACELT1599</p> <p>ACELT1600</p> <p>ACELT1601</p> <p>ACELT1791</p> <p>ACELY1678</p>	<p>*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.</p>



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas

## Discussion Questions and Activities:

### Physical characteristics

Draw a picture of Red and label the parts of his body as described in the book. Also write a brief description of what each part is for.

Red kangaroos are just one type of kangaroo. Research and list some other kinds and their similarities and differences to red kangaroos.

### Natural habitat

In what areas might you find red kangaroos? Shade a map of Australia to indicate where red kangaroos live.

In small groups, create a diorama in a cardboard box to represent the kangaroo's habitat. Try to incorporate materials from the natural environment into your display.

### Literature and context

Find other books written by Claire Saxby in your school library. Are her other books similar or different to this one? Write about which one you prefer and explain why.

Find other books about kangaroos in your school library. How do the authors of the other books deal with the subject of kangaroos differently to Claire Saxby and Graham Byrne?

### Examining literature

The text in this book is presented in two styles. Identify the formats. Why do you think the author did this? Read the book using each format separately and then discuss how the different formats change the purpose and alter the perception of *Big Red Kangaroo*.

Identify the events in a kangaroo's life as described in this book. Have students work in small groups to present this as a Keynote/PowerPoint presentation.

As a class, write a list of the facts about kangaroos as presented in the book on the IWB.

Which writing style do you prefer: the descriptive storytelling style or the informative, factual style? In what types of texts would each of these writing styles usually be used? For example, novels, short stories, newspaper articles and reference books.

The author uses descriptive language, or imagery, on many occasions in the book. For example, "...lets the early evening breeze wash over him" What other examples can you find? How does this description help bring the world of the kangaroo to life?

There are also many examples of metaphor, ("Around them, the night orchestra begins." page 11) and alliteration ("A sudden storm ..." page 12) in this book. List other examples of these literary devices that the author has used throughout the book.

Look at the colours the illustrator has used in *Big Red Kangaroo*. Why do you think he chose to use these colours? Do they accurately represent the environment that kangaroos live in?

### Responding to literature

Before beginning a study of this title using an online or IWB polling tool, conduct a survey to ascertain students' knowledge of kangaroos. Ask participants questions like:

- What do kangaroos eat?
- When do kangaroos eat?
- What predators threaten kangaroos?

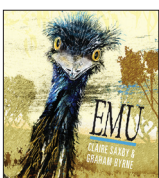
Redo the poll after reading *Big Red Kangaroo* and discuss results.

Do you think a kangaroo is a good animal for a pet? Why or why not? Hold a class discussion.

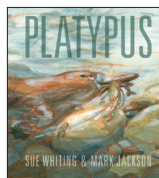
How would you feel if you encountered a mob of kangaroos hopping along past you? Write a diary or blog entry.

Whose point of view is this book told from? Look at the spread on pages 22-23. Rewrite this scene from the point of view of the other male kangaroo. Think about the reasons the other male would want to attack Red.

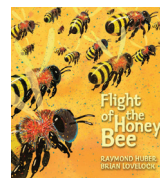
Write a book review on *Big Red Kangaroo*. Write about what you liked about the book and if you think the author and illustrator did a good job of conveying information in an interesting way. Mention any books that are similar to *Big Red Kangaroo* and make a recommendation as to who you think will like this book.



**Emu**  
Claire Saxby  
Graham Byrne  
9781922179708 HB  
Classroom ideas available



**Platypus**  
Sue Whiting  
Mark Jackson  
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Classroom ideas available



**Flight of the Honey Bee**  
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