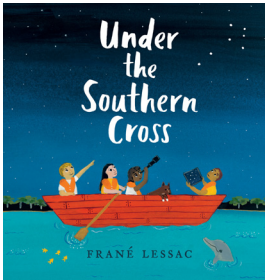




# Walker Books Classroom Ideas



## Under the Southern Cross

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

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## Outline:

*Night-time in Australia, animals are waking, people are exploring, discoveries are being made – under the Southern Cross.*

What makes ribbons of colour swirl in the sky? What are the spooky balls of light that bounce across the outback? What animal lays eggs that look like squishy ping-pong balls? Where can you watch a movie with bats circling overhead? Discover the answers to these questions and more in this fantastic picture book tour of Australia after dark.

## Author/Illustrator Information:

Frané Lessac is an author and illustrator of international renown, having over forty children's books published throughout the world. She was born in the USA and lived on the Caribbean island of Montserrat and London before moving to Australia. Frané has contributed her distinctive paintings to many critically acclaimed children's picture books, including *My Little Island*, a Reading Rainbow feature book. Also, *On the Same Day in March* was named in the Top Ten Science Books by ALA Booklist. Frané's contribution to Amnesty International's *We Are All Born Free*, celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, has been translated into more than 30 languages and was a USBBY Outstanding International Book.

## How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

### These notes are for:

- Primary
- F-3
- Ages 5+

### Key Learning Areas:

- English
- Geography
- STEM
- Visual Arts

### Example of:

- Picture Book

### Themes/Ideas:

- Australia
- Animals
- Outback



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas

## Discussion Questions and Activities:

### Preliminary Questions

Before reading *Under the Southern Cross*, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- Title
- Author/illustrator
- Publisher
- Blurb

Based on the cover, what do you think this book is about? Do you think it is fiction (imaginative) or nonfiction (informative)? What clues are there to support what you think?

### English

Is *Under the Southern Cross* an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? Is it a combination of more than one of these types of texts? How can you tell? Who do you think the book was created for?

Imagine you went on a holiday to one of the locations in this book. Write a journal about what you saw, heard and thought. Design and write a postcard to a classmate about your experience.

Ask students who have visited any of the locations mentioned in the book to stand up and share their impressions with the class. What other facts might they have included on the page based on their experience?

Write a poem about any of the locations or activities mentioned in these books. You could write a haiku, acrostic or free verse poem using the words and illustrations in the book for inspiration. Illustrate your poems and bind them together to create a unique book of Australian poetry.

*Under the Southern Cross* is a nonfiction picture book. Write an imaginative fiction story about yourself or a character that visits or lives in one of the locations or sees one of the animals featured in the books. Use the interesting facts about that location or animal as a story starter.

In small groups, find other books about Australia in your school library. Compare these books with *A is for Australia*, *A is for Australian Animals* and *Under the Southern Cross* and discuss what is similar and what is different about the books. Give a short presentation to the class on how the authors/illustrators deal with the subject of Australia differently.

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

### Geography

Each of the locations and activities featured in this book has distinctive features that make them a unique and special part of Australia. Choose three of the locations or animals and make a list of their distinctive features.

Choose two locations from *Under the Southern Cross* and compare their landscapes. How are they similar and how are they different? Why do you think they are different? “– under the Southern Cross” is repeated at the end of the narrative nonfiction section on each spread. Why do you think Frané Lessac chose to write in this way?

Are there any places where you have travelled in Australia that you think should have been included in *Under the Southern Cross*? What is special about that place? What information could be included on the page?

Plot all of the locations mentioned in the book on a map of Australia. Label each location with an image of the activity described in the book. For example, a little penguin for Phillip Island.

### STEM

Choose a location or activity mentioned in this book and compile a list of questions that you could ask to find out more about it. Where do you think you could find this information? Use this list of questions to research the location and present your findings in a PowerPoint presentation or a poster. Show where you can find this location on a map of Australia and include images and text that give the reader more information than they can find in the book.

What are some of the animals that shown in *Under the Southern Cross*? What is your favourite animal? Why?

When can people see stars? Why can't we see them during the day? What might stop us from seeing stars at night?

What is a hemisphere? In which hemisphere is Australia? Name 3 other countries in the southern hemisphere and 3 in the northern hemisphere. Why do people in the northern hemisphere see different constellations to people in the southern hemisphere?



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There are many other constellations that can be seen in the Southern Hemisphere. Choose one constellation from the list below (or research other constellations that can be seen from Australia) for the following two activities.

- Centaurus
  - Andromeda
  - Pegasus
  - Canis Major
  - Cetus
  - Perseus
  - Crater
  - Cygnus
  - Zodiac constellations (Sagittarius, Scorpio, Libra, Virgo, Leo, Cancer, Gemini, Taurus, Aries, Pisces, Aquarius and Capricorn)
1. Create a diagram of your chosen constellation. Plot and label the stars, then connect the stars to create the image your constellation represents. You could use pens, pencils or paint or collage your diagram with stickers, string, pipe cleaners, beads or natural found material from your school grounds
  2. Research facts about this constellation. What stars make it up? Who has written about it? What does it represent?

Loggerhead turtles nest at Mon Repos. Why do you think they nest there? How might it affect them if the beach at Mon Repos wasn't there anymore? Research the life cycle of a sea turtle and present your findings on a poster. Also include a list of other sea turtles that are similar to loggerhead turtles.

Create a guide for a beginner stargazer. What equipment would you need? When is the ideal time for stargazing? Where is the ideal location for stargazing? What can you expect to find?

Living things live in different places where their needs are met, for example, fish live in water where they can breathe and koalas in or near gum trees as gum leaves are their food. Find animals in *Under the Southern Cross* and discuss why you think they live in that particular location. Check out the spreads about Phillip Island, Bouliia, Mon Repos, Broome, Perth and the Daintree River.

## The Arts

Many of the locations in this book have similar features such as water, though Frané Lessac has used different colours to represent water in many of the illustrations. Why do you think that is? Also take note of the colours she has used in the sky. Keep a journal for a week where you take note of the colours you can see in the sky several times a day. Do your findings surprise you? Why?

The artist's images are created in gouache. Discuss the artist's choice of medium with students and encourage them to create a picture in the same style and an illustration using a different medium.

What colours are particularly emphasised on each page? Why do you think Frané Lessac chose to make that colour prominent?

Design a tourism poster or flyer that uses persuasive techniques to encourage people from overseas to visit Australia. Use facts and locations from the books to help you come up with some persuasive elements to include in your poster or flyer.

Create a spread in similar style to the book about your school or an Australian location or activity of your choice. Illustrate the page to show the most interesting features of the location. Include lots of interesting facts about your location around the spread. Display it in your classroom.

What are some of the activities shown in *Under the Southern Cross*? If you could choose to go to one place and do one activity what would you choose?

## Further Activities

Write a letter to Frané Lessac giving your thoughts on this book. What did you like about it? What did it teach you? Edit your letter then send it to Walker Books Australia (Locked Bag 22, Newtown NSW 2042) to pass on to Frané!

Research the author/illustrator. What other books has she written/illustrated? Which of these books can you find in your school library? Choose your favourite and present it to the class using persuasive language to encourage others to read it. Read more about Frané Lessac at [www.franelessac.com](http://www.franelessac.com).



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas

## Also by Frané Lessac



**A is for Australia**  
Frané Lessac  
9781925381979 PB  
Classroom ideas available



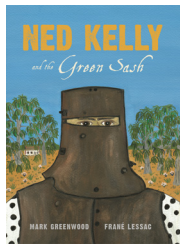
**A is for Australian Animals**  
Frané Lessac  
9781925381351 HB  
Classroom ideas available



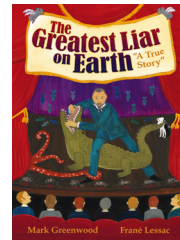
**Midnight**  
Mark Greenwood  
Frané Lessac  
9781925126419 PB  
Classroom ideas available



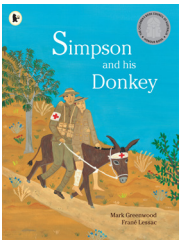
**Pattan's Pumpkin**  
Chitra Soundar  
Frané Lessac  
9781910959848 PB



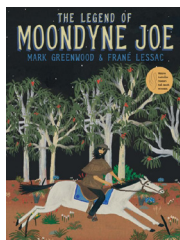
**Ned Kelly and the Green Sash**  
Mark Greenwood  
Frané Lessac  
9781922244598 PB



**The Greatest Liar on Earth**  
Mark Greenwood  
Frané Lessac  
9781921529856 HB  
Classroom ideas available



**Simpson and his Donkey**  
Mark Greenwood  
Frané Lessac  
9781921529542 PB



**The Legend of Moondyne Joe**  
Mark Greenwood  
Frané Lessac  
9781921720123 PB

## Other great titles from Walker Books:



**Backyard**  
Ananda Braxton-Smith  
Lizzy Newcomb  
9781925381177 HB  
Classroom ideas available



**Beware the Deep Dark Forest**  
Sue Whiting  
Annie White  
9781742032344 HB  
Classroom ideas available



**Dinosaur Day Out**  
Sara Acton  
9781760650049 HB  
Classroom ideas available



**Maya and Cat**  
Caroline Magerl  
9781921977282 HB  
Classroom ideas available