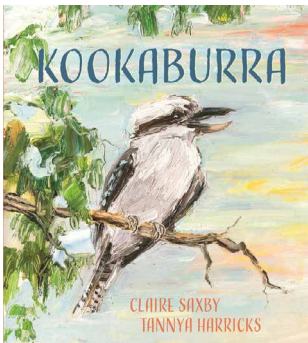




# Walker Books Classroom Ideas



## Kookaburra

Author: Claire Saxby  
Illustrator: Tannya Harricks  
ISBN: 9781760651060  
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\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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## Outline:

"In the crinkled shadows night-dwellers yawn, day-creatures stretch and Kookaburra laughs. Kook-kook-kook. Kak-kak-kak."

The team behind *Dingo* is back again with a new addition to the "Nature Storybooks" series. The kookaburra, perhaps Australia's best-loved bird, is shown in all her glory in a stunning and vivid landscape. Follow along as Kookaburra finds food for her young and goes searching for a nest with her mate.

## Author/Illustrator Information:

Claire Saxby lives in Melbourne, Australia and loves her city. She is the bestselling and award-winning author of many books. *There Was an Old Sailor* (illustrated by Cassandra Allen) won the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators Crystal Kite Award. *Big Red Kangaroo* and *Emu* (both illustrated by Graham Byrne) and *Koala* (illustrated by Julie Vivas) have won numerous awards including the Whitley Award, the Environment Award for Children's Literature, and Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Crichton Award. *Koala* was a CBCA Honour Book. *Dingo* (illustrated by Tannya Harricks) was joint winner of the Patricia Wrightson Prize for Children's Literature at the NSW Premier's Literary Award (2019); won the Royal Zoological Society of NSW's Whitley Award (2018); was shortlisted in 2019 for the CBCA New Illustrator Award, and Best Picture Book in the Educational Publishing awards. *Kookaburra* is a second collaboration between Claire and Tannya Harricks.

Tannya Harricks's award-winning art practice draws on her experience in graphic design, illustration, life drawing and textile design. Her oil paintings, for which she has been awarded the Waverley and Hornsby Art Prizes, have been exhibited in Sydney, New Zealand and Florence. She has also been a finalist in many prominent Australian art awards including the Waterhouse Natural History Art Prize, Gallipoli Art Prize and the Gold Coast Art Prize. She has previously illustrated *Dingo* by Claire Saxby and *Mallee Sky* by Jodi Toering for the Walker Books list. *Dingo* was joint winner of the Patricia Wrightson Prize for Children's Literature at the NSW Premier's Literary Award (2019); won the Royal Zoological Society of NSW's Whitley Award (2018); and was shortlisted in 2019 for the CBCA New Illustrator Award, and for Best Picture Book in the Educational Publishing Awards.

## 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 1-3
- Ages 5-9

### Key Learning Areas:

- English

### Example of:

- Picture Books
- Non-fiction
- Narrative Non-fiction

### Themes/Ideas:

- Nature
- Habitats
- Geography
- Science



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas

## Discussion Questions and Activities:

### Before Reading

View the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title
- The author
- The illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb.

Look at the front cover and read the blurb on the back. Try to predict some of the events that might happen in the story.

As a class, brainstorm what you know about kookaburras then use this information to create a mind-map. Use subheadings to help organise the information.

Write down 5 adjectives you would use to describe kookaburras. Come up with a list of questions about kookaburras. Look for the answers to these as you read the book, then use any unanswered questions to guide further research.

### Exploring the Text

Revisit the list of adjectives you wrote to describe kookaburras. Cross off any which you think no longer apply and add 3 new words.

Is *Kookaburra* 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? If you were a librarian, what section of the library would you put the book in?

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

Choose a spread and write a short paragraph about how you think Kookaburra is feeling and why, using the text and illustrations to support your opinion.

Identify the moments in the book when we hear a kookaburra's song. Why do you think Claire Saxby has included the song at each of those points in the book? What does the song mean for Kookaburra each time?

Make a list of the different threats Kookaburra and her family face in the book, and how they respond to protect each other. Research other threats to kookaburras, and discuss ways your class could help protect them.

How do Kookaburra and her mate support each other throughout the text? Retell *Kookaburra* from the perspective of her mate. How might he see things differently?

*Kookaburra* includes an index at the back of the book. What is the purpose of an index? How do you use it? In what kind of books would you normally find an index? Using the index as a starting point, collect any other words from the book that you don't know the meaning of and create a Kookaburra dictionary. You can also collect words and phrases from any further research to add to your dictionary. Illustrate some of the entries to help further explain their meaning.

Compare *Kookaburra* to a fiction picture book. How is the language different in each? Why have the authors of these texts chosen this language?

### Exploring the Illustrations

Look at the colours the illustrator, Tanya Harricks, has used in *Kookaburra*. Why do you think she chose to use these colours? Do they accurately represent the environment that kookaburras live in?

*Kookaburra* shows one day in the life of a kookaburra. How does the illustrator use colour to show the time of day? What colours help identify morning, daytime or evening?

Discuss how the illustrator has used the following on each page:

- Colour
- Line
- Positioning/Layout
- Framing Angle
- Gaze

### Further Activities

Return to the mind-map you created before reading the book. Cross out or edit any incorrect information then add in anything new that you've learnt.

What do kookaburras eat? Use the text and illustrations for clues, and check your answers in the "Information about Kookaburras" note at the back of the book. Add to your list as you do further research.

Research more about kookaburras on the internet, using the list of questions you came up with before reading the book as a guide. Create a PowerPoint presentation and present it to the class.

Make a list of websites which are useful for learning about kookaburras. Make sure you consider whether the information each site provides is reliable, who wrote or manages it and how up-to-date it is.

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



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas

## Discussion Questions and Activities:

Look at photographs or video clips of kookaburras on the internet, and try to find one with a kookaburra laughing. Do they look or sound different to how you imagined them from the story? Did you learn any extra information?

Draw a picture of a kookaburra and label its main parts. Also write a brief description of what each part is for.

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

Write a book review of *Kookaburra* stating what you liked and disliked about it, who you think would enjoy it the most and whether you think the information provided is credible. Use persuasive language to make the reader understand your opinion.

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

Kookaburras get their name from the sound of their song – so their name is an example of onomatopoeia, or words that sound like what they describe. Can you think of any other examples of onomatopoeia? Make a list of your favourites.

Compare *Kookaburra* with another book from the “Nature Storybooks” series. How are they similar and different?

Create a soundscape for the book using either recorded sounds found online, or sounds that you create yourself. Choose sounds that capture the mood of the story.

Create a new front cover for the book using a different illustration style. You may like to look at other books in the “Nature Storybooks” series for inspiration.

Choose an animal/subject to research then write your own story about it, in the style of the “Nature Storybooks” series.

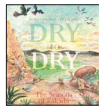
### Other Great Titles From Walker Books



**Dingo**  
Claire Saxby  
Tannya Harricks  
9781925381283 HB  
9781760651565 PB



**Koala**  
Claire Saxby  
Julie Vivas  
9781760650919 HB  
Classroom ideas available



**Dry to Dry**  
Pamela Freeman  
Liz Anelli  
9781760650285 HB  
Classroom ideas available



**Searching for Cicadas**  
Lesley Gibbes  
Judy Watson  
9781922244420 HB  
Classroom ideas available