

Teachers' Notes  
written by Jane Welsh



# ANIMALIA

## By Graeme Base

This book can be used with all grades, Prep to Grade Six

Most children will have seen this book; however there are so many wonderful things you can use it for in the classroom that it would be a disappointment not to look with more depth at this literary and artistic treasure.

### Shared Reading

- Look at the cover of the book. Talk about all the things the children can see in the picture.
- Read the title and discuss why the book would be called *Animalia*. See if they can come up with some other titles during the discussion.
- Look at the illustrations and talk about how Graham Base may have produced the pictures, what media did he use etc? Use the internet to answer questions about his style and techniques.
- Turn and look at the title page and read the poem. This can lead you to treasure hunt poetry, discussions about rhyming and a return to the cover to find Graham as a small boy.

Each page can be treated separately with younger children if you want to focus on pure phonics or the book as a whole can be used as a jumping off point for alliteration activities.

I have listed many activities that can be used with children of different ages. Even the simplest activity can be adjusted to suit older children and vice versa. The children can complete some activities independently, especially if you have a classroom set up with a publishing corner and/or an art/craft wet area or trolley.

I have not placed the activities in an order specific to grade but I have used each of the pages to design tasks so that you can focus on the alphabet or alliteration if you wish to.

## Activities that can be used with any page.

### Treasure hunt poetry

Select any page, or you may want the children to choose their own page. Ask them to write a poem or some prose, depending on your focus, to lead their peers on a search for something or a series of things that can be found on the page. You can integrate this lesson with maths and add direction and location to the task.

### Alliteration tee shirts.

This could be a whole school activity if you have the energy! Or it could be a buddy or class task depending on how excited you get.

Each child will need an old white or pale coloured tee shirt.

During a literacy session they will have read the alliteration sentences that Graham Base has on each page of *Animalia*. These sentences can be written out on large sheets of paper or sentence strips to help the children write their own.



- Every child is given a letter of the alphabet to write about or you could focus on one letter with the children working separately or in pairs to come up with their sentence.
- I encouraged the children to use their dictionaries and to make the sentences amusing rather than silly.
- I gave each child an A3 sized paper tee shirt to help them design and print their sentence. They then transferred the design onto their fabric tee shirt with fabric textas and paint. Some younger children had their sentence written for them.
- We then had an alliteration morning tea, in our case it was everything starting with 'p,' potatoes, popcorn, pikelets, pink lemonade etc. We had a wonderful time. The children wore their tee shirts to assembly and had their photo taken for the newsletter. It took a week of literacy sessions and was a great success.

### **A**

- Make mini alphabet books. Use tiny sales tags and small split pins. Children can keep their books in matchboxes.
- Look for all the hidden or watermark pictures.
- Find out what an aqueduct is. Use the internet and then provide clay for the children to make mini aqueducts. How easy is it to make the water run continuously?
- Use an abacus for your maths lessons.
- Children can write letters to an astronaut to take into space. This can be a lesson in future archaeology and space exploration, what will people in the future want to know about our time on earth and in space? Their letters can be sealed in a space capsule to be hidden on mars or the moon!

## B

- Make sure you give the children enough time to search the butterfly's wings.
- Having looked at different bicycles designed over time, ask the children to design their own bike and label it. Ask them to design a second bike that serves several purposes, eg, transport for people, packages and animals, an emergency bicycle, a bike that can be used to help with the house work, or be used remotely.
- Make a butterfly lifecycle book in the shape of a butterfly. The children will need to add illustrations and researched information.
- Collect small juice bottles, one per child. Ask them to write a message to someone they have never met before, describing themselves, their lifestyle and family or ask the children to design a treasure hunt for another class member. Roll the paper into scrolls and place them in the bottles. Label with different coloured dot stickers and display. These bottles can become literacy activities where children take different bottles, read the scrolls and either write a response or follow the directions to find the hidden treasure (which could be a book on the class bookshelf, something a child has hidden, a message placed in the room etc) The bottles could also be used for fast finishers.

## C

- Use the internet to research castles around the world. Ask the children to choose a castle to explore. They can draw it and write a 'mock' history of their castle and for those who lived there. They can build it with boxes or clay, displaying their stories and information on flags from turrets or on the draw bridge. They could also draw maps showing how to get to certain places within the castle eg the dungeons, kitchen, the great hall etc.
- Children can make scroll cameras with small boxes, a length of cartridge paper and old pencils or pieces of dowel. Text can be added to each picture. Pictures could be a sequence of events specified by the teacher or it could be left to the children to decide what they want to 'photograph.'
- Older children can take photos using the school digital cameras or cheap disposables. Ask them to sequence their photographs so that they can write a cartoon strip text for them. Photos and text can be displayed in flip books for others to borrow.
- Group children and ask them to design their own instruments for a concert. They must write their own music and lyrics. They could then design invitations and posters for the concert. It is up to you as to whether they perform to a class group, school assembly or parents.

## D

- All children love dragons and they can lead to wonderfully imaginative pieces of art and writing.
- Concertina books can be used to make dragon bodies then the children can design dragon heads and tails to stick to the covers. Stories can be written inside the folding body and displayed or borrowed.

- Donut books! Cut out medium sized donut shaped books. Ask the children to write food poems in the round or collect recipes for a class 'delicacies' book. The recipe books can be borrowed by class members or if they are fabulous consider copying them to give parents for Christmas presents.
- Talk about diplomas, what are they and how do people attain a diploma? Look at some diploma certificates on Google images. Ask the children to design their own Diploma after deciding what they want to do when they grow up, these ideas, especially for younger children can be humorous, eg. dragon trainer, donut maker, Olympic coach for the dragon fly team, diamond hunter etc.
- Children can design their Diploma using the computer and then create a stamp using the end of a wine cork. Drip red wax onto the bottom of the Diploma and press the stamp into it before it dries thus creating individual seals.

## E

- Research Indian and African elephants.
- Look at the environmental and ecological problems facing elephants. Information can be written up on elephant shaped cards and displayed around the classroom.
- Read about elephants in Indian cultural ceremonies.
- Children can research the use of elephants in ceremonies; write a description of the ceremony and the significance of the elephant and then design costumes using coloured foil paper (you can now buy Easter egg foil from Art suppliers).
- Start a "Save the Elephant promotion" asking the children to write to the Zoo to seek information about how they can help the world elephant population or even adopt an elephant at the city zoo.

## F

- Children can help set up a class fish tank or bowl. They can then write a 'How to...' book for fish owners. This could be in the shape of a fish or fish bowl.
- Teach the children how to make a concertina or fan book. Each page can be used for 'f' pictures for younger children.
- Research forests in Australia and around the world. Map them on a globe. Define what sort of forests they are.
- Choose a forest to protect. Children can write to editorial pages with information about forestry concerns and ideas about how to protect certain forests.
- Make a flamingo using card and paper plates for the body. On pink feather shapes children can write flamingo facts (having read about the life of a flamingo) and stick them to the body of the bird.

## G

- Create mini greenhouses using ½ PET bottles and allow the children to grow some plants. Vines, ivy and some herbs work very well. They can

then keep a diary about how they made their green house and the growth of their plants.

- The globe gives you so many options! Children can plot where gorillas live and write labels as to how endangered each species is.
- Use the globe to plot the early explorers travels, children's holidays, where they would like to go if they were pioneers now etc
- Buy a cheap Gnome from a \$2 shop. Set him/her up in the classroom and allow the children to write imaginative stories about Gnomes or letters to the Gnome.
- Sequence the Goldilocks story discussing values along the way. How can the children write their own version using as many of the characters on the 'G' page as possible?

## H

- Discuss and explore the idea of heraldry. Research some famous heraldry on the internet to show the children the reasons for the designs and the mottos.
- Children can write their own individual or family motto and then a banner or coat of arms for themselves with an explanation for the motto and design.

## I

- The perfect opportunity for the children to improvise on their own homemade instruments. They can write music and lyrics and perform for their group or class. They can research ancient instruments, design futuristic instruments and use recycled bits and pieces to create.
- Children can write procedural text for making ice cream. An easy recipe that doesn't involve an ice cream maker or beating during freezing follows:  
300ml thickened cream, 1 tablespoon castor sugar and vanilla essence. Beat all ingredients until stiff peaks hold. Spread into a lined tray and freeze.

## J

- Juggling is one of the most powerful brain exercises you can teach to anyone so give it a try with 2 balls at first then introduce 3. Bean bags make good juggling balls for learners.
- Make jelly the old fashioned way with gelatine and fruit juice. The children can sequence the activity and then write it up in a science experiment format that includes some form of reflection.
- Use the concertina book method to make a Jack-in-the-box book for young children to write and draw 'j' words in.

## K

- Collect different kaleidoscopes and display them, allowing the children to look through them and experiment. Use cellophane and a tube of card to create a simple scope. Write the directions up for the children to follow for a literacy session.

- Patterns for more intricate kaleidoscopes can be found on the internet. They require some skill to make but would be suitable for older children.
- Give the children food dyes and ask them to fill jars with water and make a water kaleidoscope using the dyes. They may have to mix colours.
- Cut cardboard keys out and ask each child to think of six things they would like to 'unlock' within themselves. They can write on the keys. Goals can be set and revisited at a later stage when reflections can be written.

## L

- Look at Latin roots for words we use today. This is an interesting lesson even for Year 1 student who finds 'old fashioned' things fascinating.
- Explore the legend of the Loch Ness Monster of Loch Lomond. Children can speculate about the monster, research and design their own monster. Stories can be written and dioramas made for presentation.
- Visit the library and borrow all the picture story books written by authors whose names begin with L. Have a lying down literacy session reading these books. Children can then report in written form or verbal about their books. They could rate them from 1 to 10 and recommend them to others in the school.

## M

- Children can write their own plays in their literacy groups to perform for the class. Masks can be designed and made to show characterisation. Tell the children that they cannot use props other than the masks.
- Children often find miming a difficult task. Ask them to mime well known stories to begin with then move onto the guided reading material you are using.
- Use calculator letter fonts to write a code. Pass the codes around the group to see who can break them. If children find it difficult to come up with their own sentence to code give them rhymes or simple sentences to begin with.
- Design a Monopoly board based on the area around the school. Use a Melways map to help the children set their boundaries. They can then write the chance and community chest cards and the rules.
- Research the history of medals. Children create a medal that they would like to award someone they admire. They could make a simple cardboard medal or use clay or plaster. Designs can be stamped into the wet clay and then an accompanying certificate can be written. The presentations could be to anyone inside or outside the school. A letter could be written explaining the activity and inviting the special person to attend a medal presentation. If this isn't possible the medal and a letter could be sent.

## N

- Put together a class newspaper with a catchy name. This can be a short or long term project. I have found that it is difficult to stop this activity; it is so much fun and so popular with the whole school. The newspaper can begin as a single A4 sheet; I can assure you that it will grow! All children in the class participate during literacy group as they write, interview, photograph and edit their paper. As it grows articles can be included from other classes and staff. Advertising can be added, the tuckshop contributed to this section suggesting healthy goodies. 'Star of the Week' students were congratulated in the paper and interviews with staff were included.

## O

- Ask the children to research all the pictures hidden behind the ostrich. Question cards can be made to prompt research eg. Where do these things originate? How are they used? What do they do? Where would you find these things?
- Discuss the history of the Egyptian obelisks. Children can use clay or pipe cleaners or soft wire to make their own obelisk. Research the hieroglyphs on the major obelisks and ask the children to develop their own message in hieroglyphs for their obelisks.

## P

- Children can write their own puppet show scripts and make puppets. The puppets can be as simple as pictures on icy pole sticks or you can let go and make 3D puppets using *papier mache* or felt.
- Ask the class to research Punch and Judy shows. This can lead older children to look at political satire and early cartoons.
- Place 2 or 3 objects in small boxes. Place the packages on the tables for writing workshops and ask the children to use the objects to create a story linking the objects.
- Give each child 6 zip lock plastic bags. Ask them to take them home and collect 6 or more things that begin with 'p.' Some ideas could be popcorn, peacock feather, plastic toys, pins, photo, pens, pencils, pinecone etc. When the bags come back to school, place the zip locks together, punch holes down the opposite side and place rings (key rings will do) These plastic bags then become books. Each page has an object and text can be added during literacy sessions.

## Q

- Step back in time and get everyone in the class to prepare and use a quill to write with for the day. Long quilled feathers are available from craft shops.
- Ask children to use dictionaries and encyclopaedias to create class quizzes. Everyone needs 10 questions, trivia included! The questions are written on blank business cards. These can be used as research tools, eg Use these tools (dictionary, encyclopaedia, internet, library books etc) to answer these questions. Groups of questions can be given to children to work on during literacy sessions or they can be

used for fast finishers. Answers to the questions can be written on different coloured cards so that children can check their own answers.

## R

- Design a rubbish recycling robot. Use recycled materials to create the robot and display it or build it around a rubbish bin or worm farm with posters to promote the use of these receptacles.
- Make a class rubbish graph by collecting packaging for a couple of days. Children can write their own rubbish or recycling goals for the rest of the year
- Ask the children to research pedal rickshaws in India or China then use the Six Thinking Hats to show the positive points and negative points (Yellow hat and Black hat thinking) about the use of this form of transport. They can then do the same for taxis in their home town and discuss the pros and cons for both. The children can write up their research and also their points of view based on what they find.
- Look at self portraits by Rembrandt, Rubens and Renoir paintings. Stick questions around the paintings asking questions for the children to research. For example; What do you think these men are thinking about? Who do you think they are? When did they live? Find other paintings by these artists. Choose one artist to focus on. Choose one of his paintings or drawings and try to draw in that style too.

## S

- Give each child in the literacy group a set of the pictures from around the edge of the 's' page. Ask them to devise a story that will link the pictures.
- Write summer letters to Santa. What does he do during summer? What is the North Pole like in summer time? etc.
- Write and draw a comic strip for a Superman adventure.
- Have a spider-making treat day. Recipes can be written for a procedural text activity. You can use juice and soda water with a spoon of vanilla ice cream to make it fizz.
- Do some science experiments to find out how much sugar is in each of their favourite drinks.
- Build snake sandcastles. Rubber snakes are readily available. Attach snake facts to their tails and thread them through the sandcastle holes. Other children have to pull out the snakes to read the information.

## T

- Make turtle and tortoise books to collect information about animals beginning with 't'.
- Look at the endangered status of the tiger around the world. Children can write suggestions to help the tigers or run a competition to raise money for the Siberian tigers.
- Where is Timbuktu? Use a globe or atlas to find it. Research the area and the people who live there.
- Have a tea party for grandparents. The children can write invitations, make scones or biscuits and serve the guests.



- Children look at different sorts of travel tickets. Collect information from travel brochures so they can design their own tickets and brochures to their chosen holiday destination.
- Travel diaries can be written using research or first hand information.
- Luggage tags and passports can be made after looking at some originals.

## U

- Display umbrellas from the roof of the classroom. Children can hang 'u' pictures and words from the spokes of the umbrellas.
- Ask children to write magical unicorn stories. They can also research where the unicorn legend originates from.

## V

- Ask children to look for all the 'v' words in a children's dictionary then use them in sentences, showing their meaning.
- Pair the children and ask them to prepare a ventriloquist act. They will have to work on a script together, choose who will be the dummy and perform for the class. Try to video the performances, they are usually very funny and well worth seeing again especially by the actors!
- Make vegetable soup. Children can read recipes and choose which one they want to follow. They can then write a food critics response to the soup.
- Ask a staff member, parent or child to play a violin or viola. Children can draw the instrument and label it.

## W

- Wizards and witches provide lots of ideas that you can expand on. Children can write up brews and potions to make their wishes come true or ...to turn the Principal into a frog!
- A mini Indian teepee can be set up in the room using long dowelling and calico. Children can research the American Indian culture and suggest symbols to be painted on the sides of the tepee.
- Supply the children with some wheat in its raw form. Give them different bread recipes from around the world preferably that don't require yeast. Ask them to find a way to grind the wheat (you will have to supply rocks or a mortar and pestle.) Procedural texts can be written and displayed and simple bread made and tasted by the rest of the class.

## X

- There are so few words that begin with 'x' that using mirrors to experiment with words with 'x' as the final sound is exciting and novel for children.
- Look at x-rays, most families have some x-rays hiding under the bed! Children can label the bones after looking at pictures of skeletons.

## Y

- Give children a list of simple instructions to make a yacht. Supply 1 large and 2 small kinder squares, pipe cleaners or straws, and masking tape. Allow them to display their yachts on a mural that could then be used for an ordinal number lesson.
- Have a go at making yogurt. It isn't difficult and there are many recipes available on the internet. Children can make the yogurt and add fruit for a healthy morning tea. They will probably be able to make enough for the whole class. It is always interesting to see their faces when they taste unsweetened yogurt! They can add fruit pulp to sweeten the yogurt but try to keep the sugar to a minimum.

## Z

- Ask the children to research zeppelins and their unique story. Use long balloons as zeppelins. The children can hang their information from the balloons.
- Children can design a zoo based on what they think would be best for the animals.
- Children can write a story about what it would be like to live in a zoo behind bars with the animals looking in.
- Zig zag zebra books are easy to make with black and white paper. Z pictures can be drawn on the strips or information about zebras or zoo animals could be added. The books look wonderful as a display.