

Australia Theme Day

Here are some picture books:

Adventures of Riley; Outback Odyssey, by Amanda Lumry and Laura Murwitz, Scholastic Press, 2009 – Using illustrations within photographs this book chronicles young Riley (illustrated) who helps his uncle in the Outback. This is both a longer story and has a lot of non-fiction facts throughout the book in side boxes so it might appeal to older kids.

Are we There Yet?: A Journey Around Australia, written and illustrated by Alison Lester, Kane/Miller Book Publishers, 2005 – This book chronicles a family's three month journey around Australia giving a great overview of what Australia has to offer.

The Aussie A to Z, by Heath McKenzie, Black Dog Books, 2007—This alphabet book has great illustrations that have lots of details making this a fun and informative book about Australia.

Ernie Dances to the Didgeridoo, by Alison Lester, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000 – A boy named Ernie moves to Arnhem Land near the top of Australia and writes to his friends to tell them about the different things going on for each of the six seasons they have there.

Marsupial Sue, by John Lithgow and illustrated by Jack E. Davis, Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2001 – This fun book has Marsupial Sue searching for a more interesting life but then realizing it's great fun to be a kangaroo. Try to find the book with the CD in it as the song is delightful. Just looking at the title makes me hum the tune.

Possum Magic, by Mem Fox and illustrated by Julie Vivas, Omnibus Books, 1983, A little possum named Hush has fun when he is turned invisible by his grandmother's magic but Grandmother forgets how to turn him visible again so they must search for the Australian food that will restore him.

Sun Mother Wakes the World: An Australia Creation Story, adapted by Diane Wolkstein and pictures by Bronwyn Bronwyn Bancroft, Harper Collins Publications, 2004 – The illustrator is an indigenous Australian artist and designer which makes this book of the aboriginal dreamtime story of creation magical.

Waking Up Down Under, by Carol Votaw and illustrated by Susan Banta, Northword, 2007 – This rhyming book with beautiful illustrations looks at different Australian animals as they wake up at various times (day and night).

The Wild Wombat, by Udo Weigelt and illustrated by Anne-Katrin Piepenbrink, A Michael Neugebauer Book, 2001 – This humorous story shows how a little misunderstanding makes a big difference as the animals in the zoo spread rumours of what the “Wild Wombat” coming to live with them looks like. The poor little fuzzy wombat doesn’t know the animals think he is a fearsome monster and he wonders why no-one is there to greet him. This was a big hit with my boys who loved the flaps that reveal what each animal thinks the wombat looks like.

Wombat Goes Walkabout, by Michael Morpurgo and Christian Birmingham, Collins, 1999 – Gorgeous painted illustrations make this story of a little wombat who meets many different animals while searching for his mother come alive.

For joke loving kids try this book:

Playing Possum: Riddles about Kangaroos, Koalas, and Other Marsupials, by John Jansen and pictures by Susan Slattery Burke, Lerner Publications Company, 1995.

Here are some nonfiction/learning titles about Australian animals:

Australian Animals, by Caroline Arnold, Harper Collins Publications, 2000 – This one looks at the different regions of Australia (Forest and woodland, grasslands, deserts, and water’s edge) and examines the animals that live there in large photographs and easy to read text.

Joey: The Story of a Baby Kangaroo, by Hope Ryden, Tambourine Books, 1994 – Using photographs this easy to read book details what a young joeys life is like.

If you can find them, here are some nonfiction/learning titles about the country of Australia:

The Aboriginal Peoples of Australia, by Anne Bartlett, Lerner Publications Company, 2002 – This is a good book for older children as it has a lot of text and information including the area where the aboriginal peoples of Australia live and their past, plus languages, laws and ceremonies etc..

Australia: A Question and Answer Book, by Nathan Olson Capstone Press, 2005 – This book covers a broad range of subjects like location, government, housing, transportation, industries, sports and games, art etc., but without a lot of detail, which makes it a good beginner reader book and a good starting point for young grade-schoolers to learn about a different country in a basic way.

Australia in Pictures, by Ann Kerns, Lerner Publications Company, 2004 – This has a lot of information, and a lot of smaller text so is probably better for much older children and advanced readers.

Top to Bottom Down Under, by Ted and Betsy Lewin, Harper Collins Publishers, 2005 – This title looks at the top of Australia (Kakadu National Park) and the bottom (Kangaroo Island). Even with larger text this book has a lot of information and includes great illustrations.

Uluru: Australia's Aboriginal Heart, by Caroline Arnold and photographs by Arthur Arnold, Clarion Books, 2003 – This has gorgeous photographs of the amazing Uluru (the big red Ayer's Rock in the outback if you are unfamiliar with it). It has a moderate amount of text but in slightly larger print so good for older kids.