

Wombats! Go Camping

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR
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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

Albert and Pickles are going camping together for the first time but this pair of besties have very different ideas of what exploring the great outdoors will be like. Albert is ready to camp the old fashioned way, while Pickles is ready to glamp.

When Pickles finds out that camping does not include a jacuzzi under the stars, a luxury cabin, and five-course meals, he's going to have to find a way to cope for one whole night. Luckily Albert is there to assist in pitching a tent, cooking their food, and scaring away the bugs.

While navigating their way through the rest of this camping trip, Albert and Pickles happen upon a lost baby koala and their friend, Platters who's in search of the Woolly Moon Beast—a legendary, ferocious animal that roams the woods. Together, they'll have to find a way to reunite this baby koala with its mama while this scary creature looms large. And Pickles might find an appreciation for the wilderness along the way.

ABOUT THE CREATOR

Maddie Frost is a children's author/illustrator from Massachusetts. Her books focus on funny characters and are packed with heart. Most of Maddie's ideas come from emotional and personal places that are spun into a hilarious story. She uses her anxious and worried brain to make art and relate to readers of all ages. When Maddie is not making books, she's hanging out with her two pups, Mozzy and Remy.

THEMES

- Camping
- Nature
 - Discuss the way that Pickles changes his mind about nature based on his experiences in the book.
 - How do you feel about nature?
- Discovery
 - Pickles is forced to discover many things for the first time, like how to put up a tent and how to use a compass. Invite students to share their own experiences of discovery, and to reflect on the way discovering new things makes them feel.
- Friendship
- Adventure
- Fear

- Pickles is so afraid that when baby koala first starts crossing the bridge towards the cave, he tells him that he won't be able to help. What helps him to overcome his fear? What is his reward for this? What are you afraid of?

STUDY NOTES

- As a graphic novel/comic, this book is written entirely in dialogue. Compare this to a novel that students have read and discuss the way that the other details of the story are captured in the images. Experiment with retelling familiar stories entirely in dialogue:
 - How does dialogue change the way we respond to characters in a story?
 - Does the dialogue always match what is happening in the pictures? Why/why not?
 - How does the writer use the speech bubbles to show differences in speech, like thought or excitement?
- Write one of the scenes from the book as prose. What information do you need to include from the images, and how will you translate this into words? Consider the emotion, the characters and the setting.
- Pickles gets confused a lot during the story, with some pretty funny consequences. Discuss the different meanings in various scenes where the illustrations show one meaning and the words describe another. What happens as a result of some of these misunderstandings? Have you ever pictured something one way but discovered that the reality is completely different?
- Discuss the way that frames are used in comics to break up the story. Why are some frames larger than others? Explore the way that some pictures go beyond the frame, or the way that sometimes something will happen out of frame. Why might the illustrator make these decisions? Draw your own eight-frame story using pictures to illustrate a simple process.
- On her YouTube channel, Maddie Frost teaches you to draw your own cool animals (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Fxfy4xnHpU>). Watch the video and draw a new character that Bert and Pickles might meet on their next adventure. Give your character a name.
- Design a brochure advertising a camping weekend away in Australia. Where would you go? What should you pack? What might you see? Is there anything people should be warned about before going?
- Platters comes up with some pretty wild plans to get the baby koala home. Come up with your own plan to get the baby koala across the river.
- Use the descriptions of the Woolly Moon Beast on p 50 to draw a picture of what you think it looks like. What are some other terrifying features you could give it?
- When Bert and Pickles do finally get the baby koala home, they're rewarded with a night in Pickles' dream camping house. Draw a picture of your dream getaway house.

COMPREHENSION

- What does Pickles think camping will be like? What is it really like?
- Describe some of the things Bert loves about camping.
- How does Pickles feel when he realises that camping is all about staying outside? How do the illustrations show this feeling?
- Where does Pickles find the baby koala? What is his first reaction to the discovery? What changes his mind?
- Why is Platters hiding in the shrubs?
- What kind of animal is Platters? Why is he so offended when Baby Koala calls him a duck?
- Why doesn't Pickles want to take the baby koala across the bridge? What ends up convincing him?
- What is so special about the hat that Pickles is wearing? What other situations might a hat like this come in useful?
- How does Pickles overcome his fears of the outback? Do you think he'll go camping again?
- Why is Sheila so determined to stay hidden?
- Discuss your favourite part of the book. How would you describe the story to a friend?