



TEACHING NOTES

THE A IN THE RAINFOREST

Written by Judith Barker,
Illustrated by
Janie Frith.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



AWARD-WINNING CHILDREN'S AUTHOR JUDITH

BARKER attributes Dr Seuss' fantastical tales about faraway places to her love of writing children's books. She is a teacher, author, and education consultant. After teaching phonics and phonemic awareness to children in Europe, the Middle East, India and China, Judith saw a growing need to support literacy in schools. Her desire to lend a helping hand to those involved in the art of teaching early reading skills has resulted in this wonderful series of beautifully illustrated, Australian phoneme-themed stories. Apart from developing reading skills, the books foster imagination, language, and sound-spelling recognition.

OUTLINE

THIS IS THE STORY OF THE A. It's a sound that sings with every word you say.

When winter calls the migratory birds of the Tarkine Rainforest to seek warmer climes, a fledgling rainbow bee-eater must learn how to fly. This beautiful Australian story teaches young readers about the vowel sound a, and where they can find it in different words.

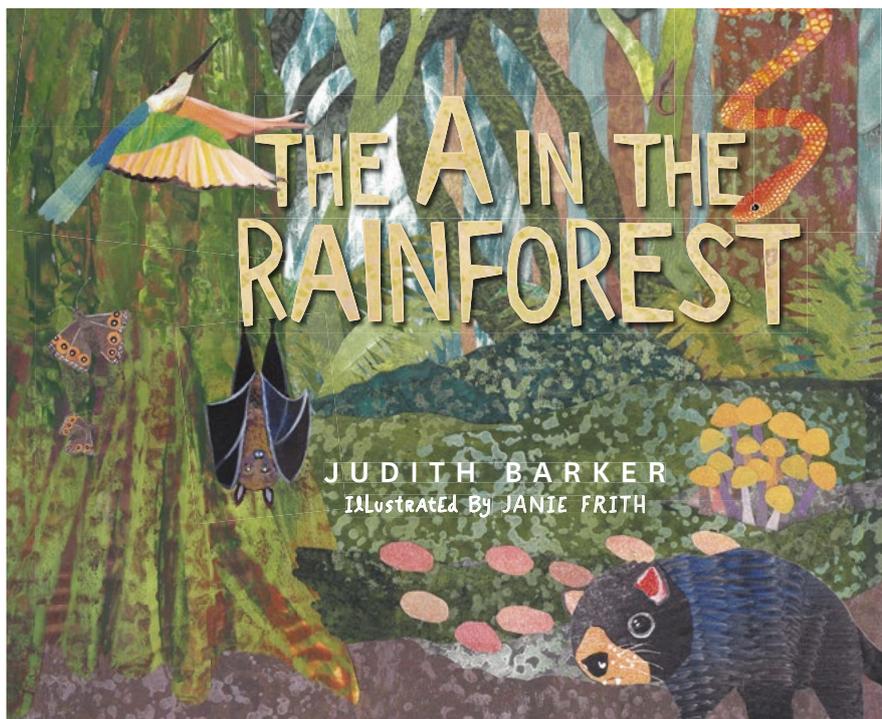


AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

THE JOY IN THIS UNIT OF WORK IS ITS FOCUS ON THE TARKINE RAINFOREST IN TASMANIA, AND A FLEDGLING'S MIGRATORY JOURNEY TO DORRIGO NATIONAL PARK.

It can be taught over a week or four-week period, and supports the teaching and learning in geography, science and humanities, language arts, balanced literacy, phonemic awareness, phonics, and heritage and cultural connections, across the primary school curriculum.

Topics include Aboriginal Connections to the Land and People; Indigenous Culture and Heritage; UNESCO World Heritage Sites; Places and Connections; Biodiversity; Animals, Birds, Plants and Wildlife; Threats to Nature (logging) and Endangered Species; Rainforest Climates; Ecotourism; Responsible Practices in Nature; Language; and Mapping. Creative arts can also be incorporated across the unit.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION



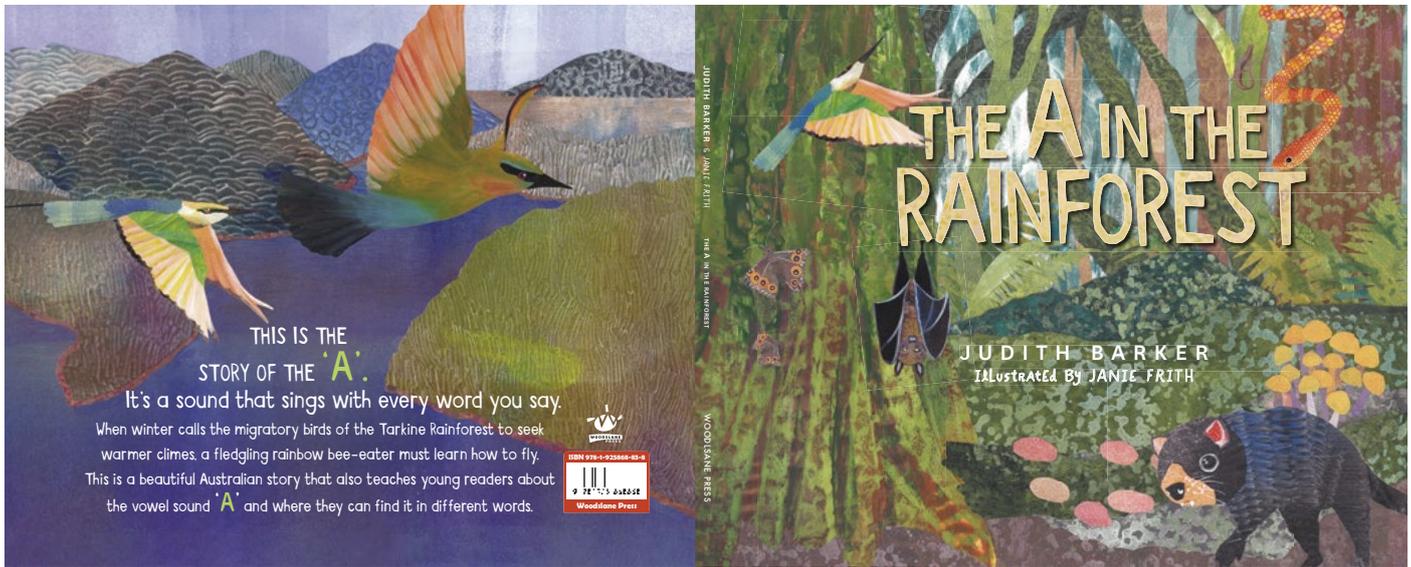
- **The takayna/Tarkine wilderness region** is located in the north-west of Tasmania. The area encompasses approximately 447,000 hectares of virgin wilderness, including the second-largest temperate rainforest in the world, the southern hemisphere's largest single tract of temperate rainforest, and the largest temperate rainforest in Australia.
- **The Tarkine** is a mix of rainforest, wet and dry eucalypt forest, mixed forest, riverine, heathland, moorland, and coastal ecosystems.
- **This wild coastline** holds an extraordinary wealth of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites, as well as habitats for more than 60 species of rare, threatened, and endangered species.
- **Over 90%** of the natural attributes of the takayna/Tarkine are largely intact. It is a living example of one of the most primitive vegetation formations on Earth.
- **Providing a unique window** into our planet's ancient past, the cool temperate rainforests of the takayna/Tarkine once covered much of Australia, and they date as far back as the time of the dinosaurs and the primordial super-continent of Gondwana.
- **It offers some of the best-preserved fossil sites** in the world. Fossils between 100 and 700 million years old, algal stromatolite fossils, were found around the Arthur and Julius Rivers and are Tasmania's oldest known fossils. The world's only known insect fossils were found in the Tarkine Rainforest, in sediments of true glacial origin.
- **Three plants found there share a direct link** with South America's Patagonia, New Guinea, and New Zealand, to which Tasmania was once connected as part of Gondwanaland.
- **There are also magnesite karst systems** of caves and pinnacles considered internationally rare.
- **Over 2,000 hectares** are covered by wet, eucalypt forest areas, where trees grow to be taller than 41 metres high. These areas are said to be large enough to be self-sustaining and to be able to support ongoing evolutionary processes.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

CONTINUED

- **There are also numerous wild rivers** and spectacular mountain ranges. <https://www.tarkinetrails.com.au/about-takayna-tarkine/>
- **The Tarkine** remains a stronghold for Earth's largest living marsupial carnivore, the Tasmanian devil, and the region is also prime habitat for giant wedge-tailed eagles, grey goshawks, quolls, wombats, and platypuses.
- **The Tarkine** is also home to the world's largest freshwater crayfish. *Astacopsis gouldi*, also known as the giant freshwater lobster, grows to a metre in length and six kilograms in weight.
- **There are** almost no introduced predators.
- **Takayna/Tarkine** is one of Australia's richest, Aboriginal cultural landscapes. Along the takayna coast is the National Heritage-listed Western Tasmania Aboriginal Cultural Landscape, with globally significant Aboriginal cultural sites, including the greatest number, diversity, and density of Aboriginal hut sites in Australia.
- **There are also extensive scatters of stone** artefacts, huge middens containing shells and bones of marsupials and seals, rock shelters, human burial grounds, and petroglyphs of geometric forms.
- **The Australian Heritage Council** found takayna/Tarkine to be of outstanding heritage value and recommended it be included on the National Heritage List. In 2013, the Australian Government failed to list in full the recommended area. Consequently, the Aboriginal heritage coastline continues to suffer severe damage from off-road vehicles.
- **Further information** can be found at the Bob Brown Foundation: https://www.bobbrown.org.au/takayna_tarkine and at <https://www.tasmanianexpeditions.com.au/Blog/top-facts-about-the-tarkine#:~:text=The%20Tarkine%20is%20home%20to,as%20the%20Giant%20Freshwater%20Lobster> and at: <https://discoverthetarkine.com.au/activities/>



BEFORE READING

- **Listen** to a nature scape from the Tarkine Rainforest: <https://listeningearth.com/play/album/66Tarkine.php>
- **Ask** students to identify birds they can hear. What else are they able to hear in the background? How do they feel inside when they listen to the sounds of nature? The recording begins at daybreak, with birdsong drifting between the trees. Moving deeper into the forest, we pause by a rippling stream and encounter yellow-tailed black cockatoos calling as they fly overhead. <https://listeningearth.com>
- **Watch** a video and save the Tarkine Rainforest: <http://www.tasmania360.com/articles/stunning-tarkine-video/>
- **View** the cover and title of the book, identifying the title, the author and illustrator, the publisher, the blurb, the long vowel sound a, and the different spelling patterns: ae, ai, ay, eigh.
- **Share** pictures of the Tarkine Rainforest. <http://www.tasmania360.com/tarkine/images/>
- **Note** that takayna (*tah kye nah*) is the palawa kani name for this region.
- **Ask:**
 - What do you think the book might be about?
 - What do you think the title means?
 - What do you know about the long vowel a from the title?
Can you think of other words with the long a sound?
 - How many spelling patterns do you know with the long a phoneme?
 - What do you know about the Tarkine Rainforest?
 - What plants, birds and wildlife are found here?
 - What is the Indigenous name for the Tarkine? (tarkanya)

DURING READING

General Comprehension

- **Where** are the Tarkine and Dorrigo Rainforest located? What are some of the climatic differences between the two (one being a cool temperate rainforest and the other a sub-tropical rainforest)?
- **Distinguish** between the birds, plants and wildlife found in a cool temperate rainforest and those found in a sub-tropical rainforest. Students could work in groups to illustrate the different birds, plants and wildlife from cool temperate and sub-tropical rainforests and give oral presentations to explain the various environments and habitats.
- **Visit** the amazing rainforest of Dorrigo National Park by watching https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SujN6nzY_bw
- **What** is a Tasmanian devil? What is a thylacine? Why do animals become extinct? What are some of the threats and dangers to the Tarkine rainforest? What animals found in the Tarkine are endangered species? <https://www.thecultureconcept.com/protecting-the-tarkine-wilderness-in-tasmania-a-no-brainer>
- **What** are migratory birds? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpq3FwPfbqo>
- **What** is a rainbow bee-eater (rainbow bird)? Research and track the journey of the rainbow bird from the Tarkine to Dorrigo National Park.
- **Identify** the different migratory birds from various regions around Australia. What distances in kilometres do they travel from cool regions to warmer climates? Identify the different environments and habitats they migrate through.
- **Identify** the native birds, wildlife and habitats from the story: Tasmanian devil, bat, eastern quoll, giant freshwater crayfish, kingfisher birds, orange bellied parrot (threatened), swift parrot, kingfisher, brush turkey, grey goshawk, pied oystercatcher, hooded plover, Muttaborrasaurus, Australovenato, ringtail possum, thylacine, masked owl, rainbow bee-eater (rainbow bird), shorebirds, wombat, sugar glider, tawny frogmouth owl, southern angle-headed dragon, lyrebird, golden orb spider, koala, songbirds, Ulysses butterfly. See <https://discoverthetarkine.com.au/the-tarkine/>
- **What** countries used to be a part of Gondwanaland? Watch a video about the break-up of Gondwanaland over a period of 200 million years <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9gHLs7QeTw>



DURING READING CONTINUED

- **Why** are the Gondwana rainforests listed as World Heritage Areas? <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/types-of-protected-areas/world-heritage-listed-areas/gondwana-rainforests-of-australia>
- **What** can we discover about the carnivores (dinosaurs) and the ancient Gondwana rainforest? <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/conservation-and-heritage/gondwana-rainforests-of-australia> What dinosaurs lived in Gondwanaland? Create an illustrated timeline of the various dinosaurs from the video <https://www.cmnh.org/science-news/blog/april-2020/carnivores-of-gondwana>
- **Watch** *Muttaborrasaurus: Life in Gondwana*. Full movie available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f11Le4xlEg>
- **How** have Indigenous Australians traditionally cared for the Tarkine rainforest?
- **Make** word-search games in groups using key vocabulary.
- **Create and play** word games with Kahoot online: <https://kahoot.it/>
- **Classify** words into environmental groups from an ancient rainforest.
- **Prepare a design** for a diorama that represents the Tarkine Rainforest floor and the habitats of various native animals from the story.
- **Words, birds, and wildlife** from the story include Tassie devil, thylacine, eastern quoll, giant freshwater crayfish, brush turkey, orange bellied parrot, swift parrot, kingfisher, wombat, southern angle-headed dragon, lyrebird, masked owl, brown tawny owl, sugar gliders, golden orb spider, koala, eastern yellow robin, hooded robin, fairy wren, rufous fantail.

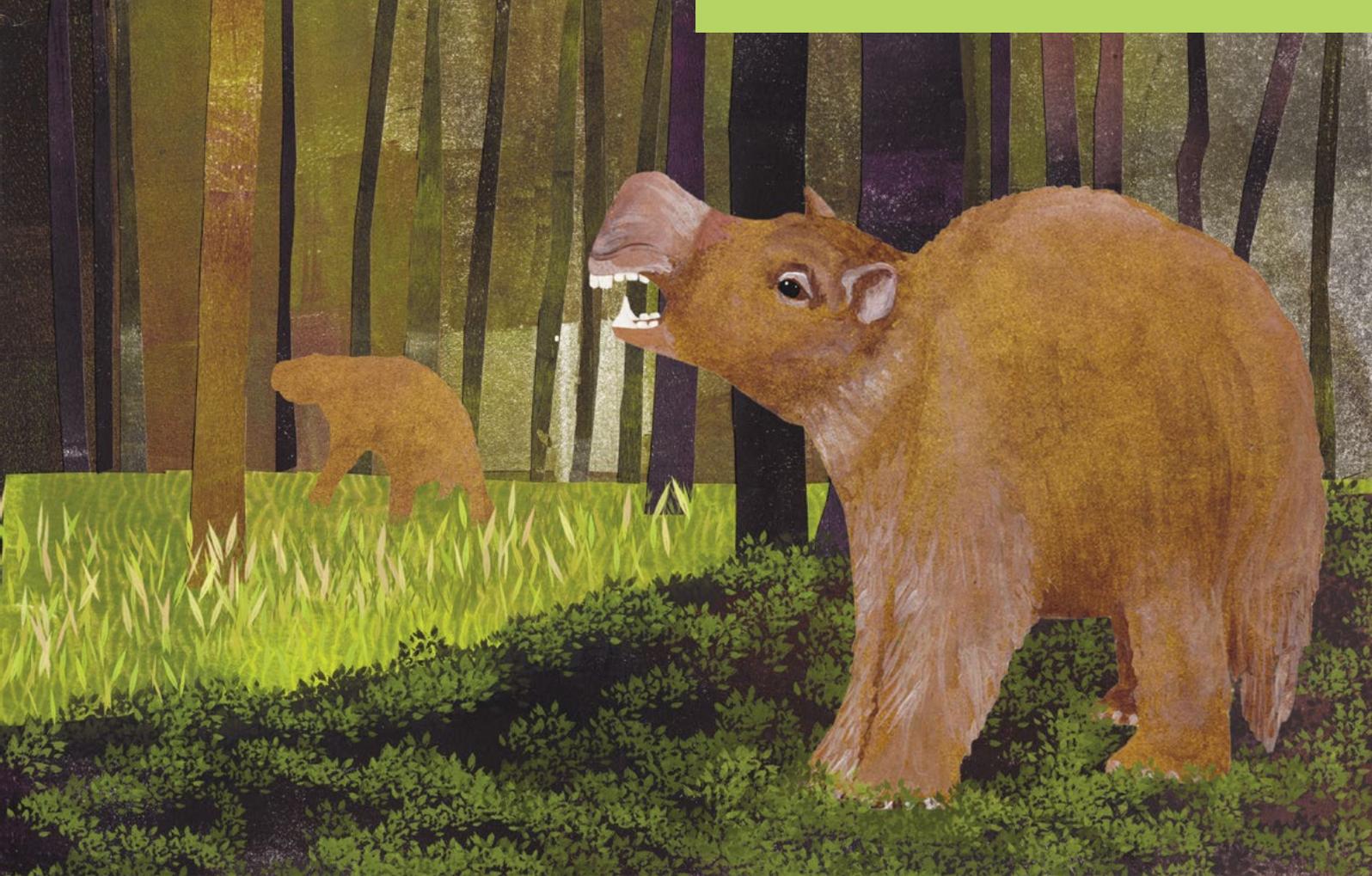
Vocabulary

- **Pre-teach** any difficult vocabulary: claims, treasure, cascade, shelter, enchanting, glades, glacial, limestone craters, ancient, mossy, gullies, lichen, maze, shrouded, stray, scavenging, prey, fledgling, tumbling, trepidation, illuminated, hover, blazing, fleeting, untouched, terrain, menagerie, shorebirds, nightly critters, emblazoned, gilded, caverns, princely, dappled, flux and flummox, thread.
- **Go through** each page and highlight some of the specific words and sounds used in the text.

Visual Literacy

Draw attention to the illustrations and ask students why the illustrator may have chosen particular images or colours to tell the story, and what feelings this evokes in them.





AFTER READING



Creative Arts

- **Develop** a connection with Country by acknowledging and illustrating the Australian rainforests of Gondwanaland.
- **Construct** 3D dioramas with the different dinosaurs from Gondwanaland, eg the Diprotodon (giant wombat) and Australovenator, Muttaburrasaurus and Austroraptor Cabazai. For tips on how to build a diorama, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiQI9qtIFM!>
- **Write** and illustrate a story about Gondwanaland and what it was like millions of years ago.
- **Create** a collage of some of the birds and wildlife from the book.
- **Construct** papier-mache dinosaurs from Gondwanaland.
- **Design** pop-up cards of birdlife, plants and animals from ancient Gondwana rainforests.

Language Arts & Humanities

- **Prepare** an oral presentation about the breakup of Gondwanaland around 200 million years ago.
- **Predict** what our world might look like in another 20 years.
- **Use an integrative map** to research taking a road trip to the north-west of Tasmania and along South Arthur Drive to the Tarkine, with suggested activities to do along the way: <https://discoverthetarkine.com.au/tarkine-drive/>
- **Create** a tourism brochure about the sightseeing and activities you would choose to participate in from the integrative map.
- **Discover** the blue tier funnel-web spider that lives in the Tarkine. <http://www.tasmania360.com/articles/blue-tier-funnel-web-spider-identified/>
- **Explore** Dreamtime stories and highlight Indigenous art and language in the form of posters, videos, murals, and poems.
- **Save** the Tarkine by organising a fundraising platform at school or online.

Cultural Connections

- **For 40,000 years the Tarkine** has been home to the Tasmanian Aboriginal tarkiner people who inhabited the Sandy Cape region of the island's wild west coast. The name Tarkine means belonging to, or of the tarkiner. The Aboriginal community know it as (*tar-keen-nee*) and maintain strong cultural connections to this special place today.
- **Discover** the Tarkine through story: <https://discoverthetarkine.com.au/aboriginal-connection/>
- **Recall** and retell one of these stories by writing and illustrating a book dedicated to the tarkiner people. Alternatively, make PowerPoint presentations for one of the stories.



SUPPORTING READERS WITH PHONEMIC AWARENESS

- **Make** sentences with the different spelling patterns.
- **Distinguish** between the short and long a sounds.
- **Practise** the pronunciation of the short and long a sounds.
- **Recall** the various spelling patterns of the long a sound: ae, ai, ay, eigh
- **Draw** a mind map with the long a spelling patterns.
- **Create** board and card games with the long a spelling patterns.
- **Use** dictation to reinforce the learning of the correct spelling patterns.



LEARNERS IN GRADES 1 TO 3 read texts that contain varied sentence structures, some unfamiliar vocabulary, and a significant number of high-frequency sight words. They recognise a wide variety of letter–sound relationships, and self-correct using knowledge of phonics, syntax, punctuation, semantics, and context. They listen for particular purposes and manipulate sound combinations and rhythmic sound patterns.

Grade 1 Language

- Use short vowels, common long vowels, consonant digraphs and consonant blends when writing, and blend these to read single syllable words (ACELA1458).
- Understand that a letter can represent more than one sound and that a syllable must contain a vowel sound (ACELA1459).
- Understand how to spell one- and two-syllable words with common letter patterns.
- Segment consonant blends or clusters into separate phonemes at the beginnings and ends of one syllable words (ACELA1822).

Grade 2 Language

- Understand how texts are made cohesive through language features, including word associations, synonyms, and antonyms (ACELA1464).
- Understand the use of vocabulary about familiar and new topics and experiment with and begin to make conscious choices of vocabulary to suit audience and purpose (ACELA1470).
- Orally manipulate more complex sounds in spoken words through knowledge of blending and segmenting sounds, phoneme deletion and substitution in combination with use of letters in reading and writing (ACELA1474).
- Understand how to use knowledge of digraphs, long vowels, blends and silent letters to spell one and two syllable words including some compound words (ACELA1471).
- Use most letter-sound matches including vowel digraphs, less common long vowel patterns, letter clusters and silent letters when reading and writing words of one or more syllable (ACELA1824).
- Understand that a sound can be represented by various letter combinations (ACELA1825).
- Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning and begin to analyse texts by drawing on growing knowledge of context, language and visual features and print and multimodal text structures (ACELY1670).

Grade 3 Language

- Understand that languages have different written and visual communication systems, different oral traditions, and different ways of constructing meaning (ACELA1475).
- Understand how to use letter–sound relationships and less common letter patterns to spell words (ACELA1485).

DECODING AS A PATHWAY



IN ORDER TO BECOME

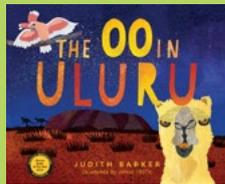
READERS, children learn the systematic relationship between code (letters) and sounds, including knowledge of letter and spelling patterns to correctly pronounce written words. In coming to understand these relationships, children are given the ability to recognise familiar words quickly and to figure out words they haven't seen before. With 44 sounds in the English language and hundreds of ways to spell them, the mind boggles! This series of phoneme-themed stories will help to reinforce the teaching and learning of phonemic awareness with the different and various spelling patterns of the long vowels (digraphs) in a fun and meaningful way.

TEN TIPS FOR READING SUCCESS

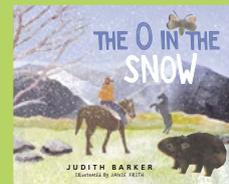
Some strategies for supporting beginning readers are:

- 1** Use context and pictures to monitor sound, letter and word recognition.
- 2** Sound out letters, identify high-frequency words (common, or sight words) in stories.
- 3** Use repetition often to consolidate the teaching and learning of sounds and letters.
- 4** Support the teaching of spelling by helping children to understand that sounds create different letter combinations.
- 5** Help children to sound out unfamiliar words and encourage self-correction.
- 6** Support children to make predictions, to identify the main idea in paragraphs, and to practise summarising.
- 7** Teach children the separate sounds in a name, eg Sam has three sounds S-a-m.
- 8** Ask your child to clap with you as you sound out the syllables in words, eg wonderful has three syllables won-der-ful.
- 9** Take turns to come up with words that rhyme or sound the same. Play sound and word games, such as I Spy with sounds and letters.
- 10** Provide opportunities for reading a variety of texts, to obtain meaning from sounds, letters, and words.

BOOKS IN THIS SERIES



The OO in Uluru



The O in the Snow



The EE in the Deep, Blue Sea



The A in the Rainforest

The I in Island
The AU in Dinosaur



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www.woodslanepress.com.au/collections/author-judith-barker

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