

Wombat Wins

By Jackie French and Bruce Whatley

Book Summary:

Forget Rio and the Olympic Games in 2016; for us it will be about a wombat ... winning. Yes, Mothball has become an athlete, albeit a little accidentally. In her never-ending quest for carrots, Mothball stumbles upon children at the local school competing in their school sports. And despite her somewhat limited physique and lack of training, Mothball manages to go home with a gold medal.

Why puff and pant when you can eat, sleep and scratch?

Curriculum Areas and Key Learning Outcomes:

Wombat Wins suits the following Australian Curriculum content descriptors:

Foundation (Kindergarten/Prep)

English

ACELA1429, ACALT1575, ACELY1646, ACSSU002
ACELA1786, ACALT1783, CELY1647, ACELA1758
ACALT1578, ACALT1580

Health and Physical Education

ACPPS007, ACPMP008, ACPMP009

Year 1

English

ACELA1444	ACALT1581	ACELY1661	Science ACSSU017
ACELA1446	ACALT1582		ACSSU211
ACELA1787	ACALT 1586		

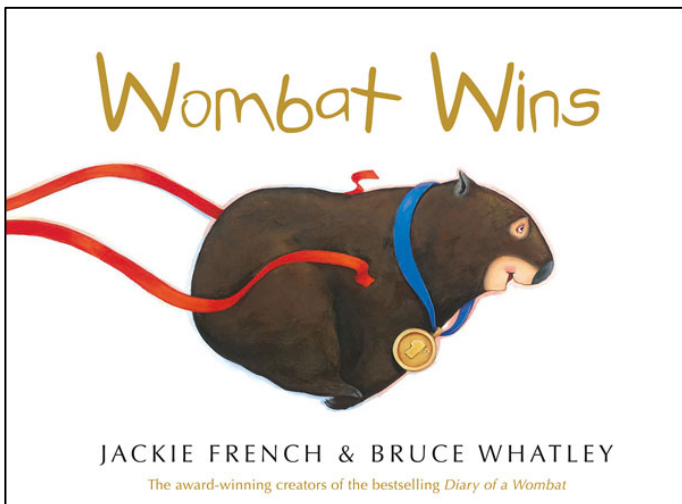
ACELA1448

ACELA1449

Health and Physical Education

ACPMP027

Appropriate Ages: Ages: 3+



ISBN: 9780732299576 (Hbk)

E-ISBN: 9781460703472

Notes by: Christina Wheeler

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jackie French is the Australian National Children's Laureate for 2014 and 2015. She is also an historian, ecologist, dyslexic, and a passionate worker for literacy, the right of all children to be able to read, and the power of books.

Jackie's writing career spans 25 years, 148 wombats, over 140 books, 36 languages, 3,721 bush rats, and over 60 awards in Australia and overseas.

'Stories tell us who we are. They teach us empathy so we understand who others are. They give us the power to imagine and create the future' - Jackie French.

For more information about Jackie French <http://www.jackiefrench.com/>

Author Inspiration

I loved Sport's Day at school (except for the old fashioned bloomers our headmistress made us wear): ice cold drinks and picnic lunches and cheering for your friends, but thought they needed just one thing to make them perfect.

A wombat.

So here it is!

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ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Bruce Whatley is one of Australia's best-loved and most-respected author-illustrators. His most recent books include the enormously successful and award-winning *Diary of a Wombat*, written by Jackie French, and its companion volume,

The Secret World of wombats, also illustrated by Bruce. The best selling team have also collaborated on *Pete the Sheep*, and most recently, *Josephine Wants to Dance*. Two of Bruce's previous books, *The Ugliest Dog in the World* and *Tails from Grandad's Attic*, were named as Notable Books by the Children's Book Council of Australia in 1993 and 1996 respectively. *Looking for Crabs* was shortlisted by the Children's Book Council in 1993 and *Detective Donut and the Wild Goose Chase* was named an Honour Book by the Children's Book Council in 1998. Bruce has illustrated forty books to date, including a number that he has co-written with Rosie Smith. Their latest collaboration was *Little White Dogs Can't Jump*. For more information on Bruce Whatley <http://www.brucewhatley.com/>

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- English
- Health and Physical Education
- Science

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

Wombat Wins is a humorous and engaging story through which reading, writing, listening and speaking tasks can be integrated. It also offers scope for dramatization and play. The language is tangible and relatable to younger audiences and will allow newly independent readers to interact with the text in a successful and way.

THEMES

- Wombats – behaviour, diet, habitat
- Exercise and Sports
- Relationships between humans and animals

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Christina Wheeler is a Teacher-Librarian who works with primary and lower-secondary students. She completed an Arts Degree majoring in English and History, followed by a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education, at the University of Queensland.

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She later received a Graduate Diploma in Teacher-Librarianship from QUT. One of her favourite aspects of her job is what she calls the 'goose bump effect' – those moments when students share their insights and experiences of texts. The joy of being able to bring non-readers to books is another of her passions.

Pre-reading Questions

- Before reading, look carefully at the front cover of *Wombat Wins*. Make predictions about what Mothball might have won. What clues give you these ideas?
- Have you read other *Wombat* books by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley? If so, what do you already know about this wombat? If not, what can you tell about her from the illustration on the cover?
- Discuss the way in which illustrations help tell stories, offering another layer of meaning in addition to the written text.

Reading and Viewing

- Mothball uses body language to express her various moods and feelings. Carefully examine the drawings of her. In small groups, discuss what the illustrations reveal about Mothball's thoughts (Worksheet 1).
- What can we tell about Mothball's nature from the illustration on p6/7 when she sits on top of the bin looking into the window? What clues do we get from the illustrations?
- On the page-opening in which Mothball raids the fridge, what do you think her face looks like under the brown paper bag? Why do you think this?
- Which parts of the story make you laugh? Why are they funny?
- What relationship does Mothball share with her humans? What clues give us this idea? What relationship to you and your family share with an animal? Write a journal entry sharing your thoughts.
- Read some of Jackie French's *The Shaggy Gully Times* to the class, or some of the other *Wombat* books.

Speaking and Listening

- In reading groups, take turns reading the text aloud. Ask for help with any of the unfamiliar words. Add these new words to your Word Wall.
- What is your favourite page in *Wombat Wins*? Why is this your favourite? Share with a friend.
- Mothball has a goal – carrots! How important are goals and determination to reach your goals? Have you ever had a goal? If so, how did you go about achieving it?
- Listen to a partner retell the story of *Wombat Wins* in their own words, then swap and tell your version.

Writing and Representing

- Mothball narrates the story in a 'wombat-like' fashion, but does not always communicate in complete sentences. Revise the components of a simple sentence. Rewrite the first page-opening in full sentences, being careful to use capital letters at the start and full stops at the end of your sentences. (To differentiate, have more able students write more complex sentences.)

Example *Original* *Expected* *Beyond expectations*

- Ate grass. → I ate grass. → I was hungry so I ate some grass.
- Scratched. → I scratched my leg. → My leg was itchy so I scratched it.
- Use role-play to retell *Wombat Wins*. Perform to another class.
- Use an app such as [Explain Everything](#) to explain what happens in *Wombat Wins*.
- Mothball finds herself in the middle of a school sports day. Write a reflection that shares what your sports days are like at school.
- After eating all of the 'Big Grass', Mothball sleeps. What might she be dreaming of as she sleeps?
- Differentiation: Write a simple news report for *The Shaggy Gully Times* about Mothball's glorious day at the Sports Day. Alternatively, perform a sports report similar to what you'd see in the news.

Grammar, Punctuation and Vocabulary

wombat	wins	carrots	ate	scratched	grass
bored	now	not	humans	where	rocks
Differentiation: Extension Vocabulary ↓					
floppy	beast	escaped	attacked	fierce	fought

- Use the vocabulary above to:
 - Create a Word Wall for classroom display
 - Create sight word cards (Worksheet 2)
 - Use sight word cards to play 'memory' in small groups (Worksheet 2)
 - Use as the week's spelling words
 - Break down these words into syllables and phonemes
 - Categorise these words into parts of speech such as nouns, verbs and adjectives
 - Write sentences using some of these words
- Discuss the use of exclamation marks and question marks to punctuate sentences.
 Explain when/why this is the appropriate punctuation mark to use. As a class, identify these as you read the story once more. Practise using these in your own sentences.

Health and Physical Education

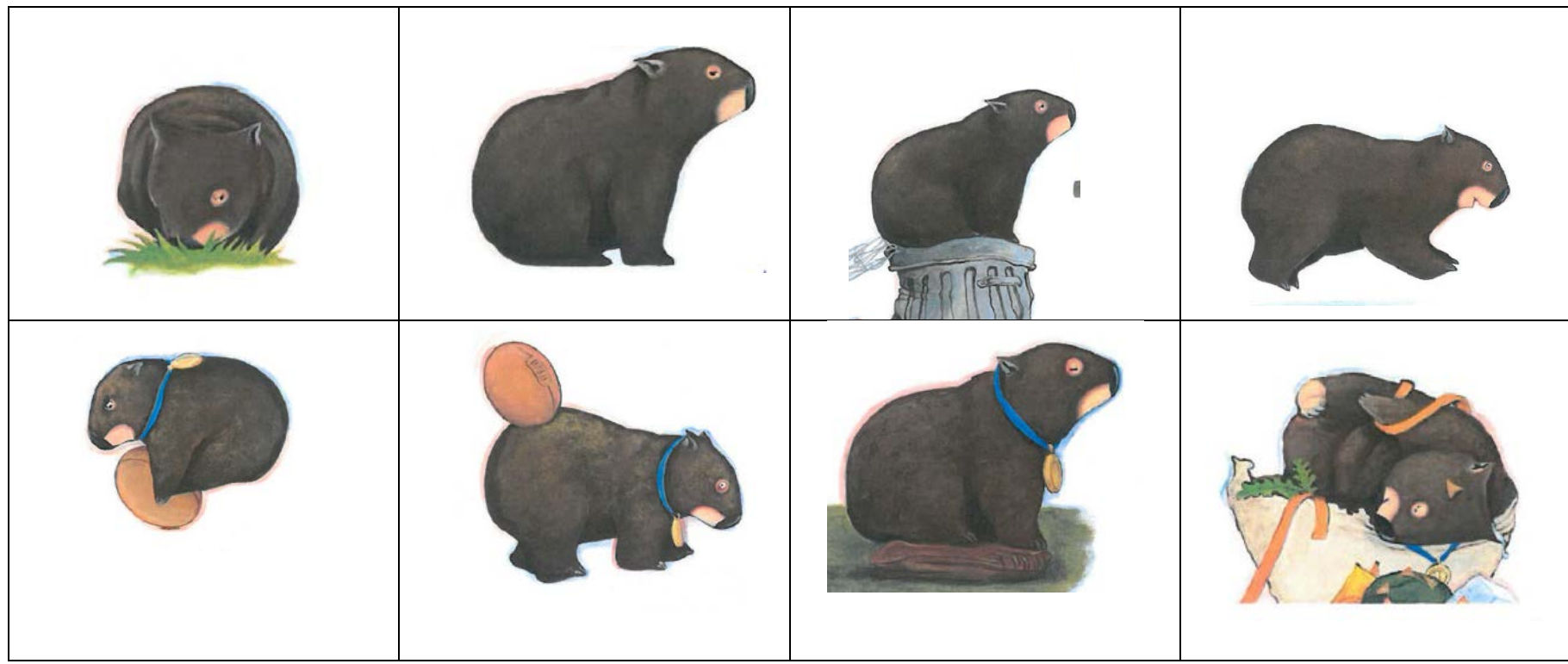
- Try some of the sports that Mothball competes in, such as potato sack races and running races. What is tricky about some of these events? What would you need to adjust next time to help you perform better?
- What other sports could have been included in *Wombat Wins*? Draw your own page-opening suitable for inclusion in *Wombat Wins* with your new sport added in.
- Make up your own game and play with your classmates. Make up a few simple rules for your game.

Science/Digital Technologies

- Read about wombats, in particular their diets. Why does Mothball love carrots and 'Big Grass' so much? What other foods might she enjoy?
- Create a menu for Mothball, including the foods that she might like to try.
- Consider growing your own vegetable patch starting with seeds and tracking their progress. Take photos of the progress, tracking its growth in a photo journal.
- As you read about wombats, take notes about their:
 - Appearance
 - Diet
 - Habitat
 - Behaviour
 - Location (on a map of Australia)
 - Life Cycle

Use these notes to present an information report about wombats.
(Worksheet 3)

Worksheet 1 – Mothball's body language (non-verbal communication)



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Worksheet 2 – Sight Word Cards

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bored	now	not	humans	where	rocks
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Worksheet 3 – Note-taking – Wombats

Appearance	Diet	Habitat
Behaviour	Location (Map of Australia)	Life Cycle

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