

The Hairy-Nosed Wombats Find a New Home

Jackie French, Illustrated by Sue deGennaro

Book Summary

The Hairy-Nosed Wombats Find a New Home is a charmingly humorous picture book for young children about the endangered Hairy-nosed wombat and the search for a new home for them.

Curriculum Areas and Key Learning Outcomes

The Hairy-Nosed Wombats Find a New Home is appropriate for Years two – four and can be used in Primary School rooms and the activities have been designed with this in mind. You may wish to modify them for your own group.

- English - Language Literature and Literacy
- Sustainability
- Visual Arts

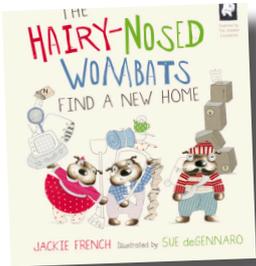
Appropriate Ages:

4-8

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Notes By Jennifer Asha; additional material supplied by The Wombat Foundation, Jacqui Barton and Gemma Fahy at HarperCollinsPublishers



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Contents

Themes

- Endangered animals
 - Moving House
 - Families
 - Travel

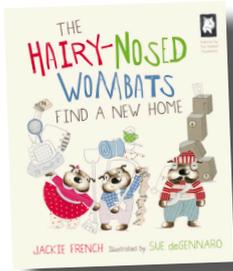
Study Notes on Themes and Curriculum Topics

- English Literacy
- English Language
 - Visual Arts

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Bibliography

About the Author of the Notes



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Introduction

This is the (almost) true story of how finding a happy new home for Hairy-nosed Wombats helped one of the world's most endangered species to breed and thrive again. All author royalties are being donated towards wombat research and care.

About the Author and Illustrator

Jackie is an award-winning writer, wombat negotiator and the Australian Children's Laureate for 2014-2015. She is regarded as one of Australia's most popular children's authors, and writes across all genres.

In her capacity as Australian Children's Laureate, 'Share a Story' will be the primary philosophy behind her two-year term.

Jackie French's proceeds from this book will be used to help wombat research. If you would like to help too, either by raising money for research or wombat refuges, or helping as a volunteer, go to www.wombatfoundation.com.au where you'll also find much more information about the fascinating world of Hairy Noses.

You can find out more about Jackie at:

<http://www.jackiefrench.com>

<http://www.childrenslaureate.org.au/>

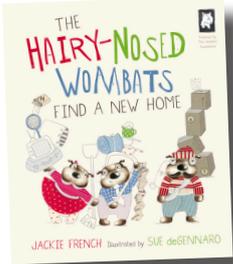
Sue deGennaro is an author and an illustrator. Sue's illustrations are quirky and infectiously funny. Sue has worked in many careers (including confectionery, circuses and home renovations!), and now (between making books) she often teaches writing & illustration. She lives in Melbourne

Author and Illustrator Inspiration:

Jackie writes:

'It is impossible to look at a wombat and not grin. When they walk the front half goes one way and the back half the other, though both go in the same direction when they run. Or decide to bite your leg, which adds a certain spice to turning the hose off at night here. You never know if a brown lump is going to materialise out of the darkness and go chomp.

I became a director of The Wombat Foundation, set up to raise funds to help preserve one of the world's most endangered species, the Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat – even more endangered than the panda – without ever having met a Northern Hairy-nose. I still haven't, though the funds we raise have paid for the DNA hair census (which enables the identification of each individual by analysing the hair left on sticky-tape strips left at all burrow entrances) that shows that the species is slowly recovering, from about 35 individuals to almost 200 at last count.



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It is a true good news story. Give wombats the things they love – dirt and grass and safety from predators – and they'll do what wombats do best – eat and dig and create new baby wombats.

But the Hairy-noses are far from out of the woods. They need more woodlands – forest with the right soil of the right consistency for their massive burrows – and grass free from weeds. Weeds are now bringing Southern Hairy-noses to the point of being critically endangered too. Far more research is needed to save them.'

Sue says:

'Before I started the artwork for this book, I looked at lots and lots of images of Hairy-nosed wombats and even watched a video capture of a baby Hairy-nose venturing out from its burrow. Although I have never met a Hairy-nosed wombat before it was easy to imagine how heavy, round and solid these wombats were. I started off by sketching round heavy balls, with arm legs and of course a nose. I decided to anthropomorphise the wombats, then I could get them to do very ridiculous things, like ride a bike, drive a bulldozer and eat tinned beans. Each character has its own personality, if you look closely at all the objects around each wombat maybe you too can work out his or her personality/hobbies.

When I think wombat I think joy, and all the wombats I got to meet in the creation of this book made me giggle endlessly, especially Denis, the wombat with the moustache. Whenever I drew Denis he was always so grumpy however on the last page you will see he is just a big marshmallow with babies clambering all over him; behind that very bushy

moustache is a very big smile.

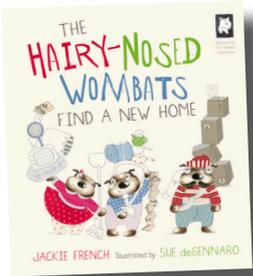
I decided to use collage from the very beginning and when I discovered Washi tape (Japanese masking tape) I knew I had found my characters outfits. For months I dressed and redressed my wombat templates just as you would a cut out paper doll set. For the girl wombat I created her skirt out of a patty pan and some of the boy wombat trousers are made from the inside of envelopes.

Do you have any scrap paper or lolly wrappers that could potentially make great outfits for your wombat characters, what about a ticket stub?

The backgrounds in this book are all imaginary environments for these very funny anthropomorphic wombats. Deciding on what they would have in their burrows was very exciting and some of my favorites include spotty undies and spotted wallpaper, the kitchen sink as part of essential packing and the toy bulldozer. Most of the objects inside their burrows are really similar to the things that are inside my house, even the spotted undies.

Adding detail to my images is such an important way of conveying a visual narrative some of my favorite details include, the buckets and letter-boxes on top of the burrows, the teapots and endless cups of tea and of course a wombats favorite snack – carrots.

Finally my favorite colour combination in this book is pink and green – when these two colours sit side by side they make me really happy. I also love yellow and blue and green and blue together. What are your favorite colour combinations?'



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The Wombat Foundation

The Wombat Foundation is a charitable organisation set up to support activities that aim to bring the Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat back from the brink of extinction.

The Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat is one of the world's most endangered species – it is more endangered than the Giant Panda.

Hairy Nosed Day is on the **11th of May** each year. The Wombat Foundation is urging all Australians to Wear Whiskers for Wildlife next Hairy Nosed Day.

Your school might like to get your whiskers on and organise a fund-raising day!

<http://wombatresources.com/>

A list of online mapping resources.

[Northern Hairy-nosed wombat facts](#)

[Wildlife Queensland](#)

Themes

Endangered Animals

Have a look at the cover and the title

Discussion Point:

What do you think the book is going to be about?

Northern Hairy-nosed Wombats are **critically endangered**.

What does this mean?

What is the difference between being **endangered** and **critically endangered**?

Who decides on this?

How are critically endangered species like the Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat managed?

Activity: Make a list of ten endangered Australian fauna

Discussion Points:

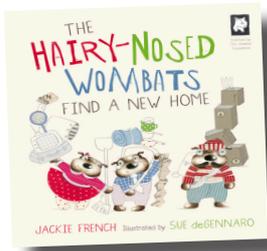
Who is supposed to look after endangered species?

Do you think they are successful?

What are the species of wombats found in Australia?

Activity: On a map of Australia mark where each species currently live. What animals are endangered in your region?

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedSpeciesApp/AreaHabitatSearch.aspx>



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Activity: Create poster that bring together facts about Northern Hairy-nose Wombats their **habits, habitats** and **threats to their survival**.

Read about other rare and endangered animals in Australia and compare their plights to that of the Northern Hairy-nosed wombat.

Brainstorm the **basic needs** for survival for humans and animals

Activity: Create flow charts to show what happens when those basic needs aren't met. Create another flow chart to show when humans and environmental changes impact on the basic needs.

Moving house

Moving house can be very exciting, but it can also be very stressful.

Discussion Points:

What needs to be done when you move house?
Why do you think people move houses?
Have you ever moved house?

Activity: Have a look at pages 6-7 and pages 10-11. The story tells us what the Hairy-nosed wombats need (and don't need) to have a happy home.

In groups of 3-4 discuss what would make an ideal home for wombats, **(also keeping in mind the work done previously on what a Hairy-nosed wombats habits are, their habitats and threats to their survival)**

On a very large piece of paper, each member of the group works on a section of the Hairy-nosed wombat's new home. (Like the illustrator, you may like to use different types of material to make their homes look really beautiful.)

When your group has finished, compare it with the other homes in the class. Then have a peak at pages 26-27; the Hairy-nosed wombats have now moved in! How similar are your houses to the ones shown in the book?

Family

The Hairy-nosed wombats have to find a new home, not only for themselves, but so that one day they can have a beautiful and safe place to raise their families.

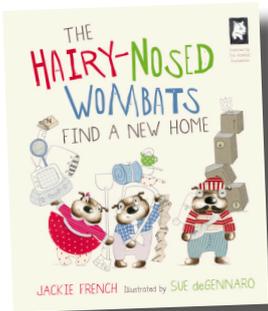
Pages 24 -27 show that the move was successful, so successful that the wombats were able to have

'The most special, wiggly, wobbly wonderful wombat of them all!'

Which was then followed by lots more adorable baby wombats!

Discussion Points:

Why was the baby so important to the story/family of wombats?
What do you think the baby signifies?
Discuss what new babies mean to students' families and how and why they celebrate new arrivals. Look at the toys the young wombats are playing with. What is their significance?



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Have you got any younger brothers and sisters? What changes did your family have to make to welcome a new baby?

Activity: Imagine what your family would look like if you were Hairy-nosed wombats. Using paint and materials, create a family portrait of your family as the Hairy-nosed versions of themselves.

Travel

When the Hairy-nose wombats are thinking about moving, they consider a lot of different places, including **The Pyramids, The London Eye, The Leaning Tower of Pisa and The Alps.**

Activity: Research and discover where these places are in the world. On a map put a mark or a sticker to show what country each of these landmarks are. Then put a sticker where the Northern Hairy-nosed wombats live ... you might remember where they live from the research you did in **The Endangered Species** topic (see above)

Discussion Points:

Are these destinations close together or far apart? Could the Hairy-nosed wombats travel to each of these places from their new home by bike as they did in the book?

If not, how could they get there?

Has anyone in the class been to these landmarks? Or even to the country that these landmarks are?

To start their journey the Hairy-nosed wombats are using maps, a globe and even a telescope (pages 8-9) to figure out the best location for a new home.

Activity: Get Intrepid!

Grab a notebook, a pencil and a rubber and leave your classroom, walk around and map your school. Have symbols for classrooms, playgrounds, trees and anything else that your school might have. When you get back to the classroom, use your research to create a proper map. Then using this map, figure out the quickest routes from your classroom to:

- a) The school gate
- b) Your favourite piece of play equipment
- c) The school canteen
- d) The nearest toilet

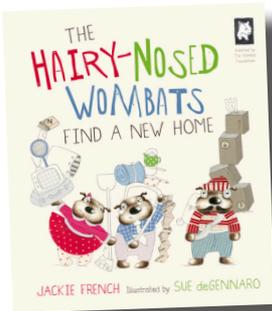
Curriculum Topics

English Literacy

Read the **True history of the Hairy-Noses** and the author notes at the back of the book.

Activity: As a group discuss the actions taken by The Wombat Foundation and Jackie French to help the Hairy-nosed wombats

Activity: Brainstorm what you can do to help this species or others of significance to your local area.



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Alliteration

Alliteration is when the same sounds, at the beginning of a word, are repeated. Jackie French has used a lot in this text, for example:

'gobbled the good green grass'

Activity: Read the book as a class and find all the examples of alliteration

Activity: As a class, get into a circle. The first person starts off with a word, then each member of the class has to go around and alliterate with that word. You have to think of a word in three seconds, if you can't, you're out.

The winner will be crowned for the day as
The most special, wiggly, wobbly, wonderful wombat of them all!

(Teacher, you may like to make a special whisky badge for this!)

Repetition

The word **forever** occurs twice in the text, once at the beginning and once at the end.

Discussion Point: What actions or decisions turned the Northern Hairy-noses negative 'forever' at the start of the story into a positive 'forever' at the end?

Discussion Point: Are there any other words that are repeated in the text?

Tense

The Hairy-Nosed Wombats Find a New Home is written in the **past tense**. Why do you think that is?

Activity: You are the storyteller!

Write a diary entry for one of the Hairy-nosed wombats, sharing a part of the story in present tense format.

Adjectives

Adjectives are used to describe nouns. In *The Hairy-Nosed Wombats Find a New Home* Jackie French has used some funny and unusual adjectives including:

whiskery wildlife
wondrous wombat adventure
wiggly, wobbly, wonderful wombat

Activity:

Discussion Points: What do these words mean? What information do these words convey for you?

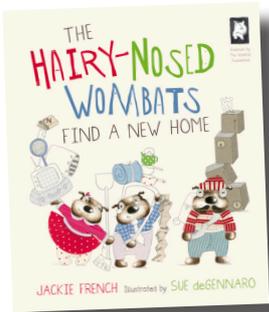
Visual Arts

Sue deGennaro has created the most gorgeous pictures using a blend of water colour and collage.

Discussion Points:

Why do you think that she chose to use these techniques?

What is the feel that it gives to the book?



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Sue mentions in her illustrator's notes that she used a lot of materials that she finds on her travels.

Activity: As a class go through the book and see if you can recognise all the different things that she uses.

She also mentions that she spent a lot of time dressing the wombats:

'In this book I dressed each wombat as you would a cardboard cut-out doll with paper dresses. Using this technique gave me the chance to experiment with endless combinations of shirts and pants until the perfect combination was reached.'

Activity: Read Sue's **Illustrator's Note** at the back of the book. Taking your cues from Sue, spend a couple of days keeping your eyes out for bits of paper that you think could be useful.

Have a think about what your ideal place would be. And what you would be doing in that place, eg sleeping, reading, eating

The teacher will take a photograph of you in that position and print it out.

Using a large piece of cardboard and your collected materials, create a beautiful place for yourself.

Then cut out the picture of you that the teacher took and dress yourself using Sue's method. Make sure your outfit is as good as your place! Paste yourself into the scene.

Write a few sentences explaining why this is your favourite place and why you chose your special outfit

(Teachers, for this activity make sure you have a waiver signed allowing the school to take photos of your class)

In her **Illustrator Inspiration** she mentions:

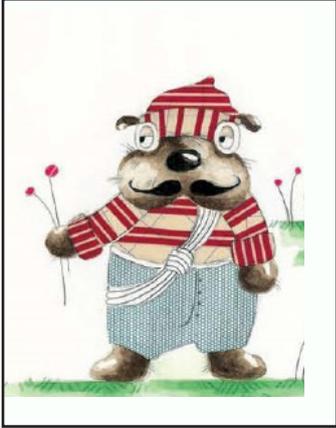
'Each character has its own personality, if you look closely at all the objects around each wombat maybe you too can work out his or her personality/hobbies.'

When I think wombat I think joy, and all the wombats I got to meet in the creation of this book made me giggle endlessly, especially Denis, the wombat with the moustache. Whenever I drew Denis he was always so grumpy. On the last page, however, you will see he is just a big marshmallow with babies clambering all over him; behind that very bushy moustache is a very big smile.'

If you look closely you can see that Sue deGennaro has designed the wombats to be very distinct.

Activity: Make a list of all the different wombats in the story. Follow each one throughout the book and see if you figure out a bit about them, what they might like and dislike **(see activity sheet one)**

Activity Sheet One: Who are the wombats?

<p>Name:</p> 	<p>Likes:</p>	<p>Dislikes:</p>
<p>Name: Denis</p> 	<p>Denis likes:</p>	<p>Denis dislikes:</p>
<p>Name:</p> 	<p>Likes:</p>	<p>Dislikes:</p>

<p>Name:</p> 	<p>Likes:</p>	<p>Dislikes:</p>
<p>Name:</p> 	<p>Likes:</p>	<p>Dislikes:</p>
<p>Name:</p> 	<p>Likes:</p>	<p>Dislikes:</p>

Activity: Hairy-nosed Wombat Day

May 11 is Hairy-Nosed Wombat Day — a day where you can dust your whiskers off, and wear them to raise awareness of the plight of the Hairy-nosed wombat. If you go to the wombat foundation, there are some examples of people proudly wearing their whiskers.

If you don't already have some whiskers to dust off, you can make your own.

Think of whiskery things: Thread, thin strips of material, ribbons, fake fur, any of these things will do.

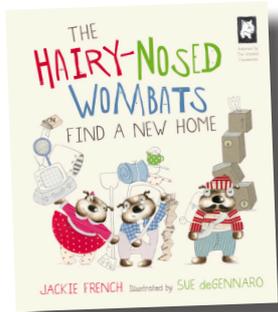
(Jackie French likes to experiment with plaited wool ones, this year she is going long and blonde!)

Then get a nose, an egg carton would work well, but half a ping-pong ball, even some cardboard would work well too and stick your chosen whiskers on.

Make two small holes on either side of your nose and thread some elastic or ribbon through and make sure you tie it tightly enough so that it doesn't slip off

And you're now ready!

If you're in a pinch, you can draw them on with lipstick or an eye-pencil. Maybe not a great idea to use text or indelible ink!



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<http://www.arkive.org/northern-hairy-nosed-wombat/lasiorhinus-krefftii/image-G348.html>

Hairy-Nosed wombat day

<http://www.wombatfoundation.com.au/hairynosedday.htm>

Jackie French

<http://www.jackiefrench.com>
<http://www.childrenslaureate.org.au/>

The Neurotypical Site

http://www.theneurotypical.com/maslows_basic_needs.html

NSW Government Environment and Heritage

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedSpeciesApp/AreaHabitatSearch.aspx>

Queensland Government: Department of Environment and Heritage Protection

http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/wildlife/threatened-species/endangered/northern_hairynosed_wombat/index.html

Queensland Wildlife Society

http://www.wildlife.org.au/wildlife/speciesprofile/mammals/northern_hairy_nosed_wombat.html

Splash: ABC TV Can you help this wombat, please?

<http://splash.abc.net.au/media/-/m/155058/saving-the-northern-hairy-nosed-wombat>

The Wombat Foundation

<http://www.wombatfoundation.com.au/index.htm>

Wombat Resources

<http://wombatresources.com/>

About the Author of the Notes

Jennifer Asha is a literacy educator with a depth of experience across primary and tertiary settings tutoring and lecturing at the Australian Catholic University and the University of Sydney in a variety of literacy teaching units. Jennifer's teaching emphasises the use of rich children's literature as the basis of quality literacy teaching and learning. She has a passion for helping children read for meaning in technologically and visually rich environments and has been involved in several publications and research projects in these areas. Jennifer wrote the Foundation unit of work for the English for the Australian Curriculum website. She currently writes the Blast Off and Orbit Teaching Guides and Insights into Visual Literacy for The School Magazine. Jennifer wrote the 2012 and 2013 PETAA Teachers' Guide to the Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year Awards Picture Book category.