



What a Lot of Nonsense

By Sheena Knowles and Jonathan Bentley

Summary

From the author of the internationally bestselling *Edward the Emu* and *Edwina the Emu*, comes a book that presents readers with a puzzle - to find the anagrams hidden on every page.

Dear reader, please take time to note

Two ways to read this book I wrote.

The first way is for everyone,

Just read the book, enjoy the fun.

The second way will challenge those

Who like to look beyond the prose.

Who'd like to ACT just like a 'cat'

(And that's an anagram, in fact).

Join in the fun with a host of quirky animals, and find out why a bear doesn't want to be bare, a seal goes to a sale, and a dingo is doing a dance.

Key Learning Outcomes

ACELA1453, ACELA1464, ACELA1474, ACELT1582, ACELT1585, ACELT1591, ACELY1669

Key Concepts

Poetry, Rhyme, Imagination, Creativity, Animals, Nonsense, Wordplay, Ways of reading.

Recommended Ages: 5+

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

The cover of a book can tell us a lot about what we will find inside.

- What is the first thing you notice about the front cover of *What a Lot of Nonsense*?
- How many animals can you identify?
- Is there anything unusual about what you see on the cover?

An anagram is a word made by rearranging the letters of another word. There are lots of words in the English language that are anagrams – some people even have names that are anagrams! For example, the name Abby can be rearranged to make baby.

- There are thirteen anagrams in the book – can you find them all? (Find the original word and the anagram of it.)
- How has the designer of the book highlighted the words that have anagrams?
- Anagrams can also use the letters of a word to create a phrase – *anagram* could become *nag a ram*. Can you think of any anagrams of your name? What other anagrams can you make out of words that you encounter during the day?

Anagrams aren't the only type of wordplay in the book. There are also a lot of nonsense phrases and questions.

- Why do you think the writer includes these? How do you react when you read nonsense words or phrases?
- Roald Dahl is famous for his nonsense words with 'frobscottle', 'whizzpopper' and 'uckyslush' being some of them.
 - How do you think writers come up with nonsense words?
 - Does a reader need to be able to understand the meaning of them?
 - What do you think the words that Roald Dahl came up with might mean?
- Does a writer use sound to help readers make meaning out of a word?
 - How do they twist words or phrases you already know in order to make new meaning?
- Make a list of nonsense words of your own.
 - What do your words mean?
 - Put each word into a sentence. Read the sentence to a classmate and see if they can work out what your nonsense word means.
 - What kind of story might they appear in?

Where do words come from? Have a classroom discussion about language and wordplay.

- Why is it important that the way we use words keeps changing and evolving?
- Would it be a bad thing if we still spoke the way we did a hundred years ago?
- Write about a word that has a lot of meaning to you. (It could be a serious word, a silly word- or a slang word.)
 - What is the meaning of your word?
 - Has it ever changed?
 - What kind of person might use it?
 - Would it make sense to someone who hasn't heard it before?
 - How do we make sense of things that are unfamiliar to us?

Roald Dahl has said that one of the reasons he uses nonsense words is so that his readers don't get bored. Is it important to you to not get bored when you're reading?

- What makes a story boring for you?
- Write a short story about the most boring thing that has happened to you this week.
 - How could you change it to make it more interesting?
 - Could you use some of the nonsense words you created?
 - Would adding illustrations make the story more exciting?

In a picture book, the illustrations are just as important as the words in helping to tell the story.

- How do the pictures in this book interact with the words?
 - Do they answer the questions?
 - Are they silly?
- Discuss the relationship between words and pictures in a picture book.
 - What would the story lose if it didn't have pictures, and vice versa?
- Writers and illustrators work together to bring a story to life. Swap your list of nonsense words with another person and ask them to draw pictures for you.
 - Do they interpret your words differently?
 - Does having two people involved in creating a story or an idea make it better or worse?
 - Write about your experience collaborating with an illustrator, and share your nonsense creation with the class.

Although the illustrations can be a bit silly, the animals are drawn realistically.

- What details does the illustrator include to bring a bit of nonsense to the images?
- Draw a realistic picture of your favourite animal.
 - What details could you add to make this image a bit silly?
 - Write a rhyme to go along with your illustration.

As well as using language techniques like anagrams and nonsense words, the text of *What a Lot of Nonsense* is written in rhyme. Rhyme can make it easier to remember the words to a story, so try to memorise a page of this text.

- Each person in the class should choose a page of text to memorise, and then present it.
 - If possible, dress up as one of the animals from your page of the book, and act out the action that is described.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Sheena Knowles lives in Point Lonsdale in Victoria. After a long career as an advertising copywriter, she worked with multicultural communities, children in care, and supporting the elderly and people with disabilities.

Sheena has now retired and plans to spend more time writing and playing with Rupert, her first grandchild. Sheena is the author of *Edward the Emu* and *Edwina the Emu*, both illustrated by Rod Clement, and *What a Lot of Nonsense*, illustrated by Jonathan Bentley.

Jonathan has illustrated over forty books and written four of his own, including *Where is Bear* and *Cat and Dog*. He counts himself very lucky to have worked with so many wonderful authors including Margaret Wild, Andrew Daddo, Shaun Micallef, Patrick Guest, Lian Tanner and even The Wiggles. Jonathan says, 'I hope with my pencil to share a joy in how beautiful and wonderfully ridiculously our world is.'