
COLOUR FOR CURLEWS

Renée Trembl

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Reading level: 4 to 8

BOOK SUMMARY

Who could resist a little dab of colour here and there? Two curious curlews discover a stash of paints and brushes.

An adorable case of Australian birds introduce readers to the joy of colours and colour mixing.

THEMES

Colours • Colour Mixing • Wildlife • Native Australian animals

These teaching notes take inspiration from and utilise some of the content found in Random House Australia's teaching resources created for the first print run of *Colour for Curlews*.

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**Renée Tremblé is available for author talks and workshops.
Contact Wombat Books for more information.**

*Colour for Curlews Teachers' Notes can be used in schools
(independent learning, small groups, and whole classes); at home
with caregivers; and as part of mental health support programs
facilitated by counsellors, psychologists, children's charities, etc.*

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR

Renée Trembl was inspired by Australia's wildlife and native birds after moving from America to Brisbane in 2007. Renée loves to create artworks that highlight the subtle details of nature with delicacy and humour. Renée creates limited edition prints for design markets and online retailers and her work is becoming well known in the Australian art and design world. Her first picture book, *One Very Tired Wombat*, was shortlisted for the 2013 CBCA Crichton Award.

NOTES ABOUT THE CREATOR

Renée has always loved both animals and art. Though she initially pursued a career in environmental science, her passion for drawing never faded, eventually leading her to become a full-time artist. She has experience creating illustrations for prints and cards, where expressive animal personalities often emerge in her work.

For this book, she used a unique technique combining scratchboard with watercolour and acrylic paints. Her process involves sketching animals from many angles, often after observing them in zoos and museums, to capture both accuracy and whimsy. One of the main challenges she faced was finding the right paint combinations that would work with the ink and preserve the vibrancy of the colours.

A particularly rewarding part of the project was sharing it with her young son, who loved the story and pictures and even began "reading" the book himself. Among her inspirations is acclaimed illustrator Shaun Tan, and one of her favourite childhood picture books was *The Runaway Bunny*.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS & LEARNING OUTCOMES

YEAR ONE

English, Humanities and Social Science, Science

AC9E1LE02 - discuss literary texts and share responses by making connections with students' own experiences

AC9E1LY02 - use interaction skills including turn-taking, speaking clearly, using active listening behaviours and responding to the contributions of others, and contributing ideas and questions

AC9E1LA07 - understand that words can represent people, places and things (nouns, including pronouns), happenings and states (verbs), qualities (adjectives) and details such as when, where and how (adverbs)

ACELT1584 - discuss features of plot, character and setting in different types of literature and explore some features of characters in different texts

AC9E1LA03 - explore how texts are organised according to their purpose, such as to recount, narrate, express opinion, inform, report and explain

AC9E1LY11 - use short vowels, common long vowels, consonant blends and digraphs to write words, and blend these to read one- and two-syllable words

AC9E1LY05 - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising and questioning when listening, viewing and reading to build literal and inferred meaning by drawing on vocabulary and growing knowledge of context and text structures

AC9E1LA10 - understand that written language uses punctuation such as full stops, question marks and exclamation marks, and uses capital letters for familiar proper nouns

AC9E1LE01 - discuss how language and images are used to create characters, settings and events in literature by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors and illustrators

AC9E1LA09 - recognise the vocabulary of learning area topics

AC9HS1S04 - discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events

AC9E1LE05 - orally retell or adapt a familiar story using plot and characters, language features including vocabulary, and structure of a familiar text, through role-play, writing, drawing or digital tools

AC9S1U01 - identify the basic needs of plants and animals, including air, water, food or shelter, and describe how the places they live meet those needs

AC9S1H01 - describe how people use science in their daily lives, including using patterns to make scientific predictions

YEAR TWO

English, Humanities and Social Science, Science

AC9E2LA01 - investigate how interpersonal language choices vary depending on the context, including the different roles taken on in interactions

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AC9E2LA03 - identify how texts across the curriculum are organised differently and use language features depending on purposes

AC9E2LE05 - create and edit literary texts by adapting structures and language features of familiar literary texts through drawing, writing, performance and digital tools

AC9E2LA02 - explore how language can be used for appreciating texts and providing reasons for preferences

AC9E2LE03 - discuss the characters and settings of a range of texts and identify how language is used to present these features in different ways

AC9E2LY01 - identify how similar topics and information are presented in different types of texts

AC9HS2S04 - discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events

AC9S2H01 - describe how people use science in their daily lives, including using patterns to make scientific predictions

AC9S2U02 - explore different actions to make sounds and how to make a variety of sounds, and recognise that sound energy causes objects to vibrate

YEAR THREE

English, Humanities and Social Science, Science, Health

AC9E3LE01 - discuss characters, events and settings in different contexts in literature by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors and illustrators

AC9E3LY02 - use interaction skills to contribute to conversations and discussions to share information and ideas

AC9E3LE02 - discuss connections between personal experiences and character experiences in literary texts and share personal preferences

AC9HS3S07 - present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms

AC9HS3S05 - draw conclusions based on analysis of information

AC9S3U01 - compare characteristics of living and non-living things and examine the differences between the life cycles of plants and animals

AC9HP4P10 - investigate and apply behaviours that contribute to their own and others' health, safety, relationships and wellbeing

AC9HP4P05 - describe how valuing diversity influences wellbeing and identify actions that promote inclusion in their communities

AC9HP4P01 - investigate how success, challenge, setbacks and failure strengthen resilience and identities in a range of contexts

AC9E3LA02 - understand how the language of evaluation and emotion, such as modal verbs, can be varied to be more or less forceful

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TEACHING POINTS AND ACTIVITIES

This book may be used in whole class, small group or independent learning activities in schools.

Please note, the following suggestions and activities are suited to a variety of year levels spanning Foundation to Year 3 primary aged children.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GENERAL

- What was your favourite bird in the story? Why?
- Do you think the illustrator got the colours right? How can you tell?
- What do you think was the most fun part of painting for the illustrator?
- What colours would you use to paint your own bird?
- How do you think the illustrator felt when her son read the book?

ABOUT THE ART & ILLUSTRATOR

- What do you notice about the way the birds are drawn?
- How do you think the illustrator made the pictures? (Share that she used scratchboard and paints!)
- What do you think would be fun or tricky about using a sharp knife to draw with?
- What expression do the birds have? Do they look happy, sleepy, silly, or something else?
- If you could ask the illustrator one question, what would it be?

BIRDS AND NATURE

- Which bird in the story would you most like to see in real life? Why?
- Can you think of a bird that lives near your house or school?
- How are the birds in the book different from each other?
- Some birds collect things, like the bowerbird. What would you collect if you were a bird?
- What do you think curlews like to eat? What about lorikeets?

COLOURS & EMOTIONS

- What is your favourite colour in the book? Why?
- How do the colours in the pictures make you feel?
- If you were a bird, what colour would your feathers be?
- Can colours show feelings? Which colours feel happy, sad, calm, or excited?

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STORY AND LANGUAGE

- What was your favourite part of the story? Why?
- Did you hear any funny or interesting rhyming words? Can you remember them?
- If you wrote a story like this, what animals would you include?
- What do you think happens after the end of the story?

CREATIVE THINKING

- If you could mix your own paint colour, what would it be called?
- Imagine you're a bird painting a picture — what would you paint?
- What would you do if you found a rainbow puddle of paint like the curlews?

CONNECTION TO THE REAL WORLD

- Have you ever seen any of the birds in the book? Where were you?
- Can you think of a place where lots of colourful birds might live?
- Why is it important to take care of birds and nature?

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY - COLOUR HUNT

As you read the book, identify each colour mentioned (they're highlighted in the text).

Complete a chart:

Colour	Object
Yellow	Lemon
Red	
Blue	
Green	
Orange	
Purple	

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY - WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Make a list of birds from the story and research where they're found. Here's an example:

Bird	Where They Live
Curlew	Australia, Asia, Europe
Lorikeet	Northern Australia
Brolga	Eastern Australia

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ACTIVITIES

RHYMING WORDS & SENTENCE BUILDING

After reading the story once or twice, pause before the rhyming words and ask students to guess the rhymes.

- Revisit one page and identify all the rhyming pairs (e.g. sun/fun, blue/shoe).
- Challenge students to think of more words that rhyme with one from the story.
- Use rhyming pairs to create silly sentences.

Some examples are: "Don't get glue on your new shoe!" and "Go for a race in outer space!"

CREATIVE RHYME ACTIVITY

Take a line from the book and ask students to complete it.

Prompt: "Bowerbird spies a tube of paint in a beautiful shade of blue, he..."

You can use websites like [RhymeDesk](#) for help.

PAINT MIXING EXPERIMENT

- Introduce primary colours (red, yellow, blue).
- Let children dip one hand in each of two colours, then rub hands together to create a secondary colour.
- Create handprint art with their new mixed colour.

PLAYDOUGH OR ICING FUN

- Mix food dye with playdough or icing to explore how colours combine.
- Talk about the new colours they create — what do they remind them of?

BIRD CALL LISTENING SESSION

- Ask: What do you know about Australian birds? Can you mimic a kookaburra, crow, or magpie?
- Explore lesser-known birds from the book: curlew, bowerbird, brolga, quail, lorikeet, and fruit dove.
- Listen to their calls on YouTube and compare them. What sounds surprised you?

BIRD FACTS WHILE READING

1. As you read, pause to share fun facts:
 - Bowerbirds collect blue things!
 - Brolgas are known for their graceful dances.
2. Ask: Have you seen any of these birds in real life?

BIRD RESEARCH PROJECT

1. Choose a bird from the book.
2. Look it up in a documentary or online.
3. Draw a picture and write or dictate a sentence about what you learned.
4. Share it with the class or send a photo of your project to a family member.

GLASS JAR INSTRUMENTS

- Fill glass jars with different levels of coloured water.
- Tap each jar with a spoon and explore the different pitches.
- Try to play a simple tune or copy a bird's call using your "water xylophone."

Further resources can always be found on our website.

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