

LION IS THAT YOU?

MOIRA COURT

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YEAR LEVEL: K–3

CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITY: Sustainability

ABOUT THE BOOK

'Come on, let's take a good look around. Are there really lions to be found?' Rumours abound of ex-circus cats roaming wild in the hills. But are the stories true? Join in the search, and discover lots of different animals in the Australian bush along the way.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Moira Court grew up in the West Country, England. She emigrated to Australia in 2001 and now lives in the Perth Hills with her husband, daughter and fur children. An artist and illustrator, she predominantly works in printmaking and likes to chop up the failures to use for collaging. Her work is inspired by nature, conservation, folklore and folk art.

THEMES

- Australian wildlife
- Observing and celebrating nature
- Connecting with your environment
- Visual art – collage, printmaking
- Word play – rhyme, poetic language

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

K–3 English

K–3 Biological Sciences

K–3 Visual Art

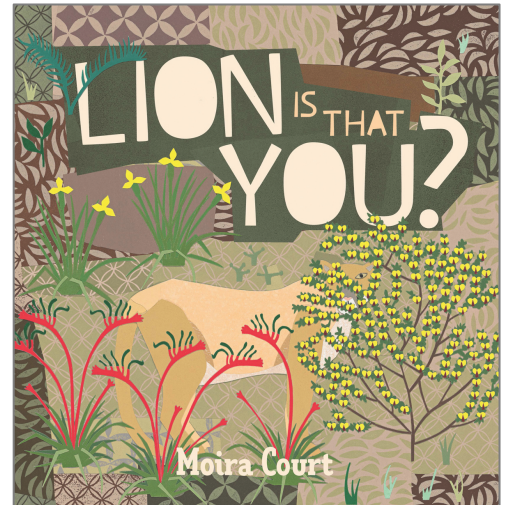
USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author's website: <https://moiracourt.wordpress.com/>

CLASSROOM IDEAS

Discussion questions

1. 'These elusive beasts should not be here' – are lions native to Australia? Where do they come from? How/when did they arrive in Australia? (Hint: Look closely at the vehicles in the background on the first spread.)
 - a. Have you ever watched a circus performance? What did you enjoy most about it?
 - b. Hold a class debate on the following question: Do you think it is ethical to make animals perform in a circus?
 - c. What other animals were introduced into Australia? How do introduced species such as foxes, rabbits and cats impact populations of native flora and fauna?
2. What does the word 'camouflage' mean? How does camouflage help protect animals? How many different animals can you spot hiding throughout the book? Which do you think is the trickiest to spot?
 - a. Go for a bushwalk and create a sketch of all the different plants, insects and animals you encounter. Were any of them camouflaged? What did you enjoy most about observing nature?
3. Can you guess the identity of each animal in the story based on the descriptive clues before turning the page? Have you ever seen any of these animals in real life? Where did you see them and what were they doing when you observed them?



4. Create a list of the common and scientific names of the different native plants and trees illustrated throughout the book. Which is your favourite and why?
5. Why do you think Bobtail is warming up in the sun? (Hint: What is a 'reptile'?) Are there any other reptiles in the story?
6. Which is your favourite animal in the book and why? Turn to a partner and share.
7. Can you spot a lion hiding on the final page? Do you think there really could be lions roaming the bush?

Creative writing

1. Use an appropriate online dictionary to locate the meanings of any words students are unfamiliar with. E.g. elusive, ancestors, timber, drably, hues, limber, hemming, bouquet. Practise using each of these words in a sentence.
2. Invite students to choose a native Australian animal that is not already in the story and create a list of adjectives/phrases to describe its appearance, using examples from the book as a guide (e.g. 'long ears, springy knees, warm woolly coat of brown grey' for Kangaroo). In pairs, invite students to then play 'Guess the Animal' by taking turns to read their descriptions to their partner.
3. Which animal wears 'an armoured suit of pinecone-scales'? What is a metaphor? Can you create your own metaphor to describe another native Australian animal?
4. Underline the rhyming words and highlight the alliteration in each of the following. The first has been done for you:
 - a. 'Hey Lion is that you amongst that scribble of vines? / Are lions covered in short, **spiky** spines / with long curved **claws** on back to front feet?'
 - b. 'Hey Lion is that you beside that fallen timber? Are lions drably hues, long and limber / with stretchy jaws and button eyes all bright?'
 - c. 'Hey Lion is that you upon that tumble of rocks? / Do lions have a hide patterned with spots / and scratchy, scratchy toes on four fast legs?' (Hint: what is imperfect rhyme?)
 - d. Challenge: Can you find examples of consonance in the above? What other examples of alliteration and consonance can you find throughout the book? What other rhyming pairs can you find in the story? Do you think the use of rhyme and poetic language makes the story more fun to read aloud?
5. Add your own spread: Choose a native Australian animal (not already in the story) and use the frame sentence 'Hey Lion is that you ...' then add one sentence to describe the location of your animal and two sentences that describe its appearance. Experiment with using alliteration, consonance, rhyme and metaphor in the style of Moira Court above. Conclude with the frame sentence 'That's not Lion. That's [insert name of your animal]' and a sentence describing its behaviour.
6. Write an imaginative short story in which you encounter a lion while out on a bushwalk!

Biological sciences

1. Choose your favourite animal from the story and create a fact sheet, poster, pamphlet or power point with the following information: English name(s), Indigenous name(s), physical characteristics, habitat, diet, life cycle, interesting facts, labelled diagram, conservation status.
2. Print a pack of cards containing the animals in the story and the following headings: carnivore, herbivore, omnivore, predator, prey, mammal, reptile, monotreme. Invite students to take turns to select an animal card and place it under an appropriate heading.
3. Are any of the animals in the book classified as threatened or endangered? (E.g. echidna) What has contributed to this? As a class, discuss the threats to native animals such as clearing of native vegetation and loss of habitat, introduced predators and pollution. What can we do to help?

Visual art

1. What style has the illustrator used to draw the animals, e.g. realistic, cartoon, abstract? What medium/s has she used? E.g. paper, acrylic, watercolour, oil pastels, pencils, ink, collage, mixed-media, printmaking? What do you like best about this illustrator's style? Which is your favourite illustration and why?
2. How has Moira Court used shapes, repetition, pattern, layering and printmaking to create the background of each spread? How are objects positioned on the page? Draw or trace basic geometric

- shapes on coloured paper (e.g. circles, squares, rectangles, triangles) and cut them out to practise creating different patterns and collages. Invite students to create their own patterned artwork using Pattern Blocks and explore the concepts of symmetry and tessellation.
3. How has Moira Court evoked texture when illustrating plants and animals? (E.g. rocks, scales, fur, etc.) Cover a piece of white A4 cardboard with bright oil pastels using a variety of colours. Next, colour over the top of this bottom layer with a black oil pastel. Finally, use a pencil to draw – the black oil pastel is scratched off to reveal the contrasting colour underneath. Illustrate a bush scene, scratching into the plants/animals to experiment with creating texture.
 4. Create popstick puppets of the various animals in the book to read along with the story. Provide a variety of geometric, coloured shapes made of cardboard, felt, cellophane and recycled materials.
 5. Create a sculpture of your favourite animal from the story using plasticine, clay or recycled materials. Create an accompanying shoebox diorama of the bushland where your animal is camouflaged.
 6. *Styrofoam printing*: Etch a picture of your favourite animal from the story on an A5 piece of foam using a sharp pencil. Next, cover this etching with block ink using a roller. Finally, flip the etching over and, with the wet side facing downward, press firmly onto paper to create your very own print. Repeat using different coloured ink to create multiple layers/patterns.
 7. *Collagraph printing*: Cut an A4 base from cardboard food packaging, such as a cereal box, to design the background for a bush scene. Stick different textured materials (e.g. sand, leaves, sticks, tissue paper, crepe paper, masking tape, sticky tape, layered paper collage, PVA glue, string, ribbon, etc.) then seal with shellac. Next, cover the sealed side with block ink using a roller. Finally, flip this cardboard-textured stamp over and, with the wet side facing downward, press firmly onto paper and apply pressure with a clean roller or printing press. Leave to dry. Finally, create a native Australian animal in the style of Moira Court by cutting up, collaging and layering different colours/textures/patterns of recycled paper on a separate piece of A4 paper. When satisfied, cut out the animal and glue it onto your textured background. Hold a class exhibition.
 8. *Leaf prints*: Go on a bushwalk to collect fallen leaves of different shapes and sizes. Position them with the under-sides facing upward and paint various colours. Press each leaf onto paper and remove to reveal a print. Experiment with overlapping leaf prints to create a collage.
 9. *Pressed flowers*: Open a large, heavy book in the middle and place down two pieces of parchment paper, one on each page. Collect some flowers to carefully place on one page, leaving space between them so they don't overlap. Slowly close the book and place more books on top to add pressure and weight. Wait 2–3 weeks, changing the parchment paper every few days so that the moisture from the flowers doesn't transfer to the pages. Once the flowers are fully dry, remove them from the book using tweezers and carefully glue them to the background of your bush artwork.
 10. Moira Court states that she likes to 'chop up the failures to use for collaging'. Create definitions for the terms 'eco-art' and 'up-cycling'. Why do you think it's beneficial to create art from recycled materials?