

A CROCODILE IN THE FAMILY



TEACHERS RESOURCES

A CROCODILE IN THE FAMILY

by Kitty Black, illustrated by Daron Parton

Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

Introduction	3
Themes & Curriculum Topics	3
Study of History, Society and Environment	
English Language and Literacy	
Visual Literacy	
Creative Arts	
Learning Technologies	
Mathematics	
Further Topics for Discussion and Research	8
Conclusion	8
Author's Notes	9
Illustrator's Notes	9
About the Author	10
About the Illustrator	10
Worksheets	11
Bibliography	17
About the Author of the Notes	19

INTRODUCTION

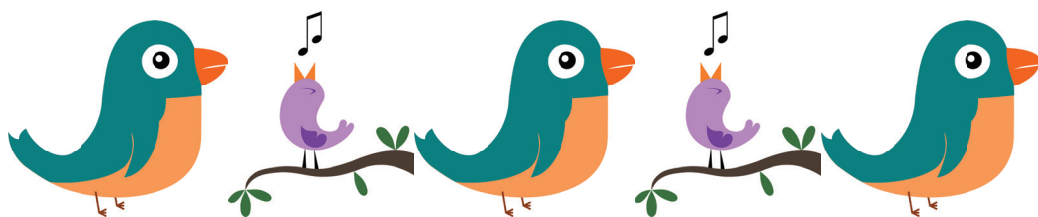
'They belong together, and that's that.'

A family of birds discover a large egg and take it home. But when it hatches it is not quite what they expected...

This cumulative tale contains a series of incidents prompted by a repeated question, 'Is that why you keep him?', and resolves itself in the simple statement above. A crocodile (Croccy) might seem an unlikely companion for a family of birds, but to them ... he simply 'belongs'.

In this lively and rhythmical cumulative tale Kitty Black's text is matched with Daron Parton's vibrant digital images to create a perfect read-aloud for children, which also carries an important message.

We are all different but we can still manage to 'belong together'.



THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes are covered in this book which might be related to the Australian Curriculum, including:

STUDY OF HISTORY, SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT

FAMILY

DISCUSSION POINT: Families come in all shapes and sizes. Some families adopt others, as the birds adopt Croccy in this story. Discuss families and the different ways in which they might be constituted.

DISCUSSION POINT: Being a 'normal family' is sometimes cited as something to be aspired to. But what is a 'normal family'? Every family is different, and even within a family there are members with very different needs. How should families treat a member who is not perceived to be like everyone else?

DIFFERENCES

DISCUSSION POINT: Croccy would seem to represent a danger to the birds given his size, sharp teeth and propensity to eat things which are smaller than him, but he's actually very loveable and they adore him. Can creatures which are different live happily side-by-side?

ACTIVITY: Research animals in the eco-system. Which animals are surprisingly compatible despite their differences?

DISCUSSION POINT: Differences are also emphasised in this text with the family of birds all wearing different colours, the different Australian animals, and the different hats they bring to hang on Croccy as a coat rack. What other differences did you notice in this picture book?

CROCODILES

DISCUSSION POINT: Research crocodiles and their habitats. [See **Bibliography.**]

DISCUSSION POINT: Read other picture books about crocodiles and compare to this one. [See **Bibliography.**]

ACTIVITY: In this book, Croccy is variously useful in opening cans, helping the animals to cross the river acting as a floating bridge, and as a coat rack. Invite students to suggest what other funny purpose a crocodile might be put to?

AUSTRALIAN ANIMALS

DISCUSSION POINT: Invite students to identify the Australian animals in this book. [See also **Worksheet 3.**]

DISCUSSION POINT: Read other books about or featuring Australian animals. [See **Bibliography.**] Choose one animal to research further.



ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following aspects:

ACTIVITY: **Cumulative Tales** rely on a traditional structure in which a character embarks on a journey, encounters a series of animals or people, each of whom ask a repeated question, which leads to a climax. Repetition is also important in cumulative tales. The same sequence of words is repeated until the climax, until

the order is upset or reversed, and the story is resolved. This story is told in the alternating voices of the various Australian animals encountered by the birds and Crococy in past tense asking questions. Invite students to write a cumulative text using questions and answers like this.

ACTIVITY: Continue the story by adding two more incidents in which Crococy demonstrates other attributes apart from being 'beautiful, helpful and fun'.

ACTIVITY: Test your students' **comprehension** by asking them questions about the written and visual text. For example apart from the bush animals who appear throughout the book, what tiny creature appears on pp 4 and 6 in this book?

Answer: A snail.



VISUAL LITERACY

The visual text of a book combines with the written text to tell the story using the various parts of the book's design and illustrations, as explored below:

ACTIVITY: The **cover** of a book is an important part of its message. This one has two images front and back which are very amusing. On the front Crococy is lying on an inflatable bed on the water, with the birds sunbaking on his chest, or playing around him, as if on a beach. On the back he is dancing in a pink striped leotard! Invite students to create a new cover depicting Crococy doing something equally amusing.

ACTIVITY: The **endpapers** are patterned green images of the crocodile's skin. Create your own endpapers using some of the images which appear in the book, for example, hats, umbrellas, lady beetles, donuts, birds. (See **Worksheets** for ideas.)

DISCUSSION POINT: Invite students to **observe the details** in each of these images. For example, many hats appear in the visual text. [See **Worksheet 6** for related activity.] There are also many funny incidental details such as on p 20 where several animals are wearing floaties as they travel on Crococy's back. The platypus is also dressed as a lifeguard in each of the images. Invite students to point out other amusing details to their classmates.

DISCUSSION POINT: The **title page** depicts Crococy emerging from his shell. What other animals are hatched from shells?

DISCUSSION POINT: The **format** of the book is square. How does format influence the way each double page spread is framed?

DISCUSSION POINT: **Perspective** is also important in varying each image. For example, see p 18 and p 19 in which different parts of Croccy's body are depicted. Observe and discuss how perspective is used in these images.

DISCUSSION POINT: How does the **layout of the storyboard** and the **format and design** of the book influence your reading of it?

ACTIVITY: Creating characters entails studying **facial expressions and 'body language' as well as clothing and accessories**. Study how each of the animals is depicted in this book.

ACTIVITY: The **medium or style** employed is digital art. Discuss with your students and watch a video of preparing a digital art image, such as: 'Raising Digital Kids'- Art Apps for the iPad' *YouTube* May 11, 2010 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFj2KEFbmf8>>

ACTIVITY: The **colours** used in this book are vibrant primary colours. Encourage students to explore this colour palette in the images they create in this unit of work.

DISCUSSION POINT: **Prediction** is an important part of picture book reading. Read the first two pages of the book and invite students to predict and discuss what might happen next.

ACTIVITY: The reader's **observation of strong left to right movement** across a double page spread is also important in a picture book, encouraging the reader to follow the action sequentially in a filmic way. Create a flip book of the crocodile doing something simple. For instructions, see: Andymation 'How to Make a Flipbook' *YouTube* January 20, 2018 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-I9n0wiXpU>>

ACTIVITY: Invite students to **illustrate the two additional sections** to the story which they wrote above. Create a classroom mural using all the images. [See also **Worksheet 1** below.]

ACTIVITY: Create a **graphic novel/comic** version of a scene in this book. [See **Bibliography**.] [See also **Worksheet 4**.]



CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

1. Make a paper plate crocodile or bird. Visit the following website for simple instructions:

'Crocodile Paper Plate Craft' *Easy Peasy and Fun*

<<https://www.easypeasyandfun.com/crocodile-paper-plate-craft/>>
'Paper Plate Bird Craft' *Easy Peasy and Fun* <<https://www.easypeasyandfun.com/paper-plate-bird-craft/>>

2. Make a Popsicle Stick Crocodile. For instructions see: 'Cool Crocodile Popsicle Stick Craft for Kids' *Mas & Pas Your Parenting Village* <<https://masandpas.com/cool-crocodile-craft-sticks/>>

3. Create a Crocodile Mobile. [See **Worksheet 5.**]

4. Create a poster to advertise this book.

5. Create a Book Trailer to promote this book. [See **Bibliography.**]



LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

ACTIVITY: Research the topics above online.

ACTIVITY: Apart from animals, this text might encourage small project research activities, for example, to find out the names and origins of hats as so many appear in this text. [See **Bibliography.**]

ACTIVITY: Research the author and illustrator online. [See **Bibliography.**]



MATHEMATICS

ACTIVITY: Have fun counting things in this text.

ACTIVITY: See **Worksheet 2** below for a mathematics activity.



FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

Research the work of Kitty Black. Compare this to her other books.

Research the work of Daron Parton. Compare this to his other books. Students might research this book in comparison to reading other cumulative picture books such as those listed in the **Bibliography**.

Investigate any other topic not covered in these notes which you consider is suggested by this text.



CONCLUSION

This is a lively and entertaining picture book for young readers. It is fun but it also teaches a valuable lesson – that members of a family can be different and that we should embrace our differences.



AUTHOR'S NOTES

Crocodile in the Family was inspired by my own experiences of being part of a neuro-diverse family and our relationship with society. Through this book I hoped to showcase a lesser seen perspective of diverse families, that of us thriving and being happy and enjoying the unique characteristics of our children. I also hoped to highlight some of the common experiences of diverse families, such as a sense of being monitored by society and freely given but often unasked for advice. Additionally, when your kid on the spectrum spends two years insisting they're a reptile and you have ADHD, you tend to write a story about it. Ultimately, this book was inspired by love, a sentiment all families can share.

ILLUSTRATOR'S NOTES

A Crocodile in the Family has inspired me to jump into the vibrant colours of Australia from the red earth of the outback to the greens of Queensland and the Northern Territory. As an artist, I'm always trying to develop new ways to use my mediums - I use handcrafted textures and apply them into photoshop. I've always loved to draw characters, people and anthropomorphic animals, and when I'm given a gorgeous book by Kitty I'm in my element. I'm also a Birder (a birdwatcher) - give me an opportunity to illustrate birds and I'll grab it.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kitty Black is a children's author living in Perth, Western Australia. Kitty has a background in psychology and education, this taught her the importance of stories. She lives with her husband and two children who are excellent at providing both inspiration and noise, although rarely in equal amounts. Kitty's books include *Who's Afraid of the Quite Nice Wolf* illustrated by Laura Wood, with more books to be released. *A Crocodile in the Family* is Kitty's first picture book to be published with Hachette Australia.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

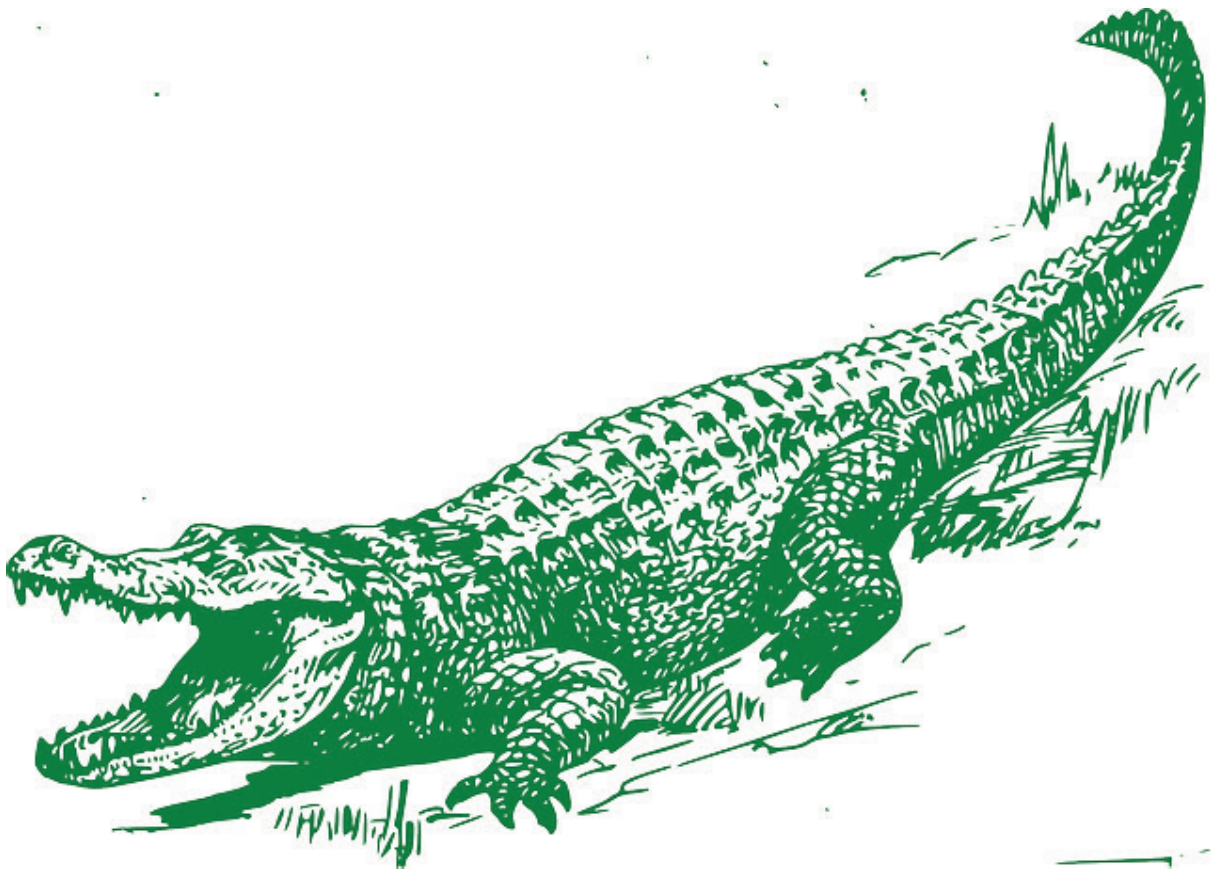
Daron Parton was born in the port city of Aden in Yemen near the Red Sea, son to parents hailing from Kent and Shropshire in the UK. He was a student at Central St. Martin's college in London and since 1995 has lived in Hamilton, New Zealand with his New Zealand-born wife and two children. Daron has received recognition in the form of two merits in the 3x3 annual – one for a children's book, the other an advertising project. He has been working as an illustrator since 1990 and is also an illustration tutor at Auckland University of Technology. Daron's other books include *The Ultimate Survival Guide to Monsters Under Your Bed*, *Dinosaur Disco*, *Alligator in an Anorak*, *Zoo Train* by Sally Sutton, *Big Digger*, *Little Digger* by Timothy Knapman and *The Same Game* by Renata Hopkins. For further information see: <https://watermarkcreative.co/daron-parton/>



WORKSHEETS

WORKSHEET 1. DECORATE THIS IMAGE

The crocodile in this picture looks a little more alarming than Croccy does. Invite students to add features which make him look less scary! Then draw a landscape behind him.



WORKSHEET 2. COUNT THESE IMAGES



1. How many lady beetles are above?



2. If you subtract the birds singing from the other birds above, how many birds do you have?



3. If two of these koalas were taken away how many would be left?



4. How many of these donuts are without sprinkles?



5. If you multiplied the hats above by two, how many would you have?



6. If you divided the umbrellas above by three, how many would you have?

ANSWERS: 1. Seven. 2. Four. 3. Four. 4. Two. 5. Four. 5. Twelve. 6. Three.

WORKSHEET 3. NAME THAT ANIMAL

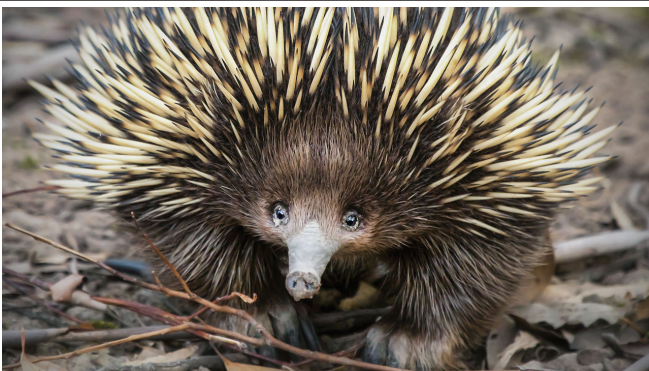
Each of these creatures appears in this book. Identify each of them.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.

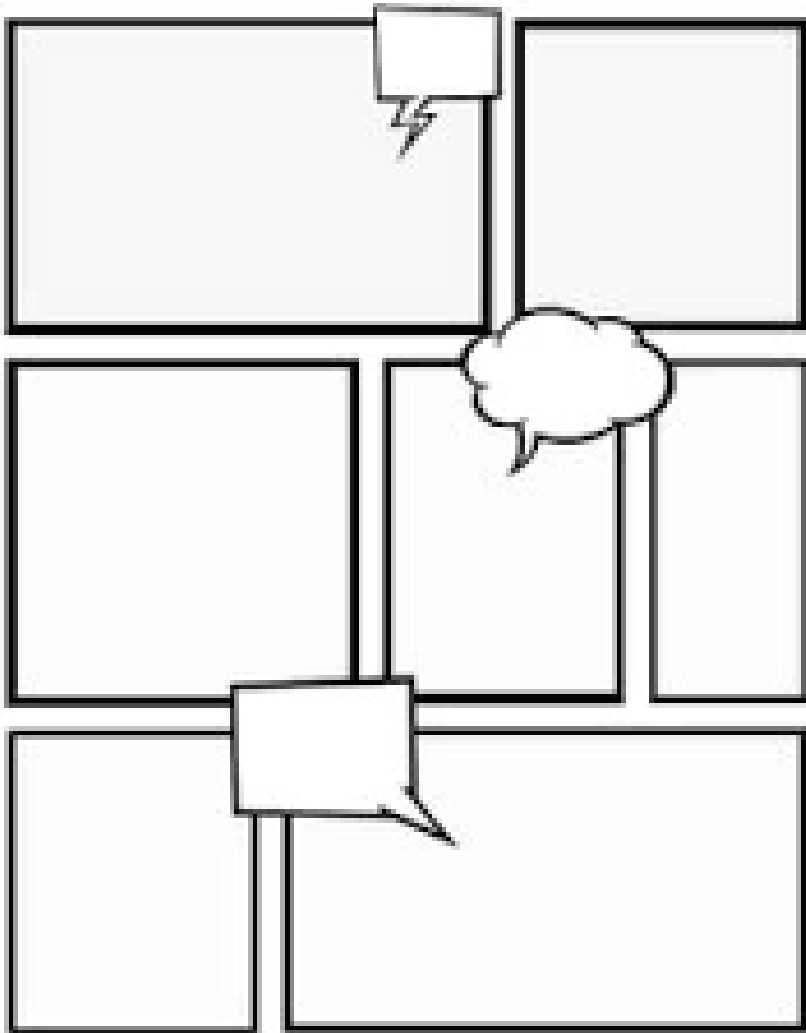


6.

ANSWERS: 1. Koala. 2. Cockatoo. 3. Echidna. 4. Platypus. 5. Wombat. 6. Kookaburra.

WORKSHEET 4. GRAPHIC STORYTELLING

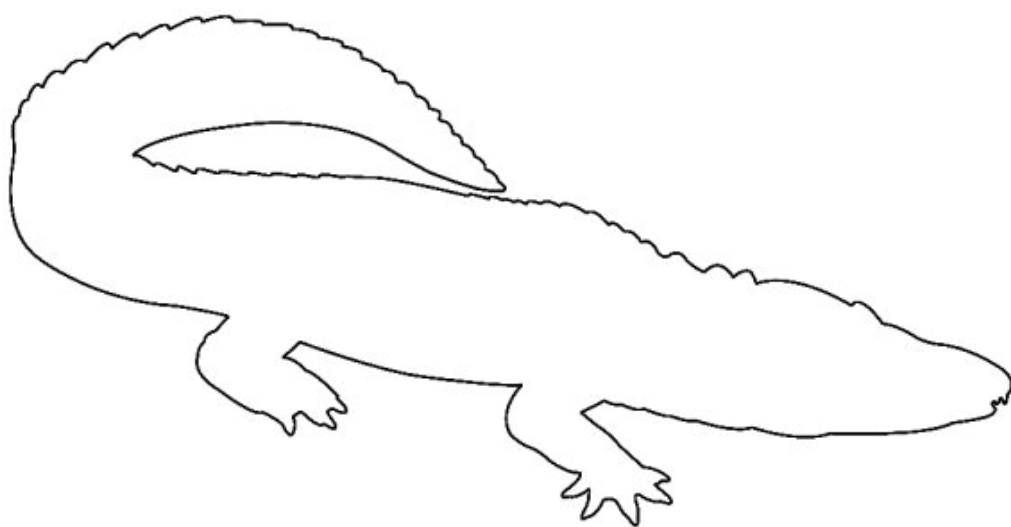
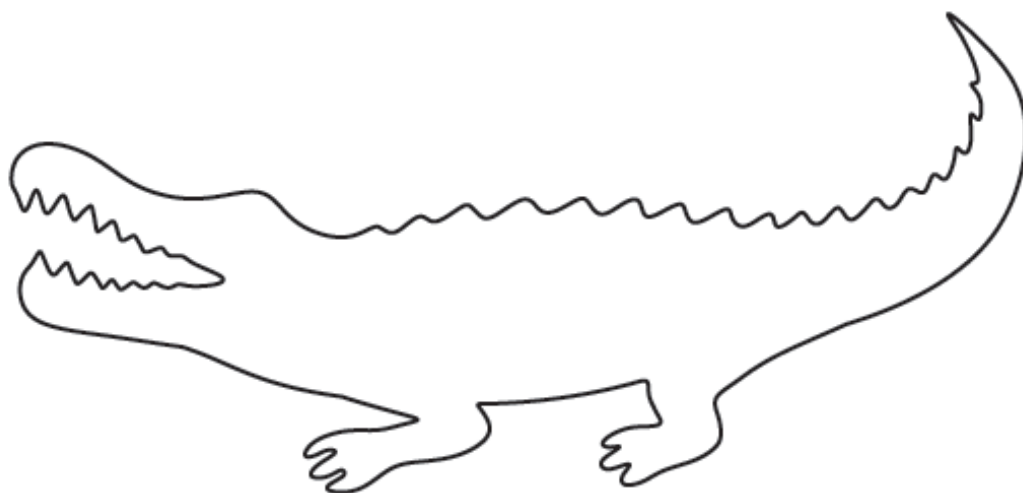
Create a graphic novel/comic interpretation of one of the scenes in this book. Use the layout below as the storyboard for your comic. Enlarge on a photocopier to give you more space.



Comic Book Template viewed at:
<<http://www.pinterest.com/pin/365706432212821426/>>

WORKSHEET 5. CROCODILE MOBILE

Enlarge the pictures below and glue on to craft paper and cut each image out. Colour it in and then thread fishing line through the images and hang from a wire coathanger.



WORKSHEET 6. NAME THAT HAT!

Each of these hats appear in this book. Try to name each one.

		
1.	2.	3.
		
4.	5.	6.
		
7.	8.	9.

ANSWERS: 1. Top hat. 2. Cap. 3. Fez. 4. Bowler hat. 5. Sombrero (Mexican). 6. Party hat. 7. Sun hat. 8. Policemen's helmet. (Known as a Custodian Helmet in the UK.) 9. Beanie (with pom pom).

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011 she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, in 2012 the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award.

