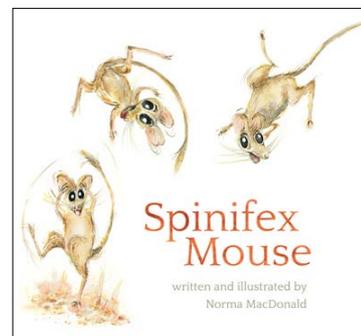


Magabala Books • Teacher Notes

Spinifex Mouse

Written and illustrated by Norma MacDonald



Teacher Notes prepared by Christina Wheeler

OVERVIEW

Cheeky is a Spinifex Hopping Mouse. He lives up to his name, showing off and greedily eating spinifex seeds. Little does he know that Brown Snake is watching his every move. Set in the Pilbara region of Western Australia, *Spinifex Mouse* is a story about the nature of a little mouse and the very important lesson that he learns.

THEMES

- Spinifex Hopping Mouse
- Food chain
- Family
- Greed

AUDIENCE AND WRITING STYLE

Suitable for early primary students, *Spinifex Mouse* incorporates figurative language to help instil a sense of prey versus predator. There is a clear moral for readers that greed and showing off can be problematic.

LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

This book and the classroom activities provided are primarily relevant to **English** and **Science** at **year levels F-2**. The appendix highlights relevant content descriptions, cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

Norma MacDonald is descended from Yamitji people of the Gascoyne region and the Nyungar people of the South West of Western Australia.

One of Australia's leading artists, her work is held in national collections including the Art Gallery of Western Australia and the National Gallery of Australia. She lives in Perth.



CLASSROOM IDEAS

- *Spinifex Mouse* is set in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. Locate the Pilbara on a map of Australia.
- How does Cheeky grow and change from the beginning to the end of the text?
- Create a mind map of Cheeky's character traits. Give examples from the text that help to illustrate his characteristics.
- What's in a name? Discuss the author's choice of name for the mouse. How might the mouse's character change as a result of his name change? What is your opinion of his new name?
- The author uses figurative language in the text. Explore examples of this, discussing the author's choice of language features. Examples include:
 - *The snake slithered out from under the log*
 - *The sun was rising and a warm glow crept over the blue hills and across the land*
 - *She would wait for the sun to warm her body*
 - *She flicked her tongue about*
 - *Cheeky heard a roar like a strong wind*
 - *A rush of air whirred past his head*
- Write a reflection of the story, including what you see as the main message or moral of *Spinifex Mouse*.
- Discuss the artwork in *Spinifex Mouse*. How do the illustrations contribute to the text?
- Cheeky gets picked up by a bird of prey. He hangs upside down. Draw a picture of what Cheeky might have seen whilst upside down in the talons of the bird.
- Compare *Spinifex Mouse* with Narelle Oliver's *Fox and Fine Feathers*. How are these stories similar and different? Create a table or mid map to show this comparison.
- Research the Spinifex Hopping Mouse. Create an information report about this creature. Include headings such as appearance, diet, habitat and reproduction.

<http://www.perthzoo.wa.gov.au/animals-plants/australia/nocturnal-house/spinifex-hopping-mouse/>

http://www.marsupialsociety.org/spinifex_hopping_mouse.html

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GROQWgpQDO0>

Use this story to explore food chains and develop diagrams.

- Research what spinifex is. What animals eat spinifex? How is this vegetation crucial to the Australian environment?



APPENDIX - LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM F-10 (VERSION 8.1)

Year	English	Science
Foundation	<p>Explore the different contribution of words and images to meaning in stories and informative texts (ACELA1786)</p> <p>Recognise that texts are created by authors who tell stories and share experiences that may be similar or different to students' own experiences (ACELT1575)</p> <p>Share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts (ACELT1783)</p> <p>Retell familiar literary texts through performance, use of illustrations and images (ACELT1580)</p> <p>Use comprehension strategies to understand and discuss texts listened to, viewed or read independently (ACELY1650)</p> <p>Create short texts to explore, record and report ideas and events using familiar words and beginning writing knowledge (ACELY1651)</p>	<p>Living things have basic needs, including food and water (ACSSU002)</p>
1	<p>Discuss how authors create characters using language and images (ACELT1581)</p> <p>Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts and share personal responses to these texts, making connections with students' own experiences (ACELT1582)</p> <p>Discuss features of plot, character and setting in different types of literature and explore some features of characters in different texts (ACELT1584)</p> <p>Recreate texts imaginatively using drawing, writing, performance and digital forms of communication (ACELT1586)</p> <p>Respond to texts drawn from a range of cultures and experiences (ACELY1655)</p>	<p>Living things live in different places where their needs are met (ACSSU211)</p>
2	<p>Identify visual representations of characters' actions, reactions, speech and thought processes in narratives, and consider how these images add to or contradict or multiply the meaning of accompanying words (ACELA1469)</p> <p>Discuss how depictions of characters in print, sound and images reflect the contexts in which they were created (ACELT1587)</p> <p>Discuss the characters and settings of different texts and explore how language is used to present these features in different ways (ACELT1591)</p> <p>Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning and begin to analyse texts by drawing on growing knowledge of context, language and visual features and print and multi</p>	
<p>Cross curriculum priorities</p> <p>Sustainability</p>		
<p>General capabilities</p> <p>Literacy, Personal and social capability</p>		

