

TEACHING NOTES



THE OO IN ULURU

By Judith Barker.
Illustrated by
Janie Frith



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



AWARD-WINNING CHILDREN'S AUTHOR JUDITH BARKER

attributes Dr Seuss' fantastical tales about faraway places to her love of writing children's books. She is a teacher, author, and education consultant. After teaching phonics and phonemic awareness to children in Europe, the Middle East, India and China, Judith saw a growing need to support literacy in schools. Her desire to lend a helping hand to those involved in the art of teaching basic reading skills has resulted in this wonderful series of beautifully illustrated, Australian phoneme-themed stories. Apart from developing reading skills, the books foster imagination, language, and sound-spelling recognition.

OUTLINE

THE DESERT LANDSCAPE OF THE ULURU-KATA

Tjuta National Park is a thriving community of birds, mammals, and reptiles; important creation ancestors that appear throughout this story. Take young readers on a walk on the wild side as they explore the land of the Anangu in a unique way, finding the long vowel oo in different words as part of their journey.

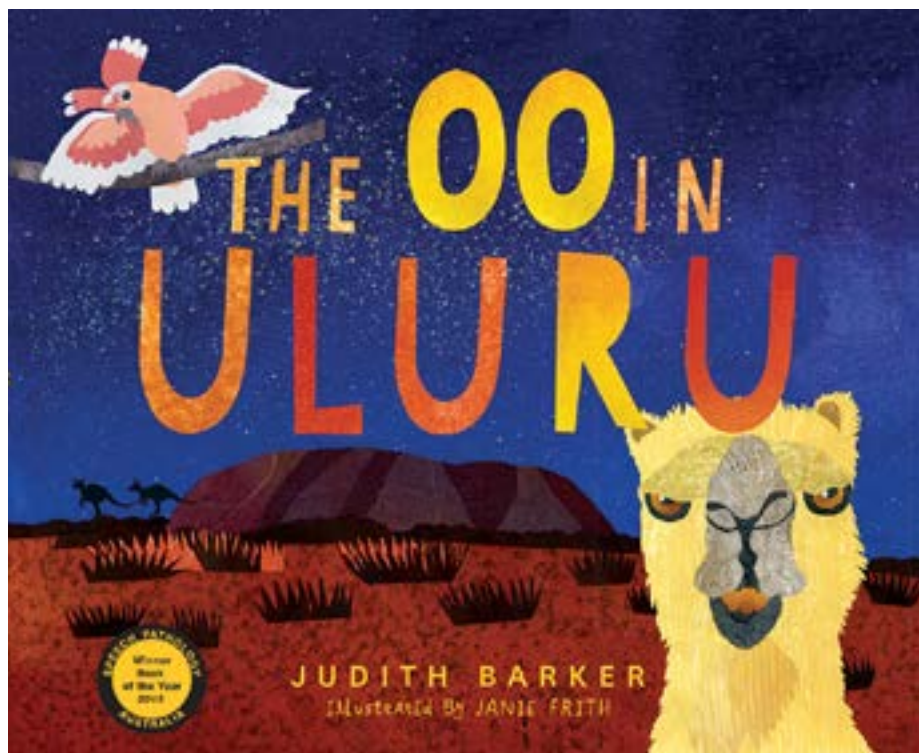


AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

THE JOY IN THIS UNIT OF WORK IS ITS FOCUS ON THE NATURE AND WILDLIFE OF KATA-TJUTA NATIONAL PARK.

It can be taught over a week or four-week period, and supports teaching and learning in language arts, balanced literacy, phonemic awareness, phonics, Indigenous culture and connections, humanities and social science, and geography across the primary school curriculum.

Topics include Indigenous Animals and Habitats, Aboriginal Language and Heritage, National Parks, World Heritage Sites, Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, Endangered Species, Plants, Threats to Birds and Wildlife, and Responsible Practices. Creative arts can be incorporated across the unit.





BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- **The UNESCO World Heritage Site** of Uluru and Kata Tjuta is a deeply spiritual place of significant cultural value to the Pitjantjatjara people, known as the Anangu. The Pitjantjatjara people have called the area home for over 30,000 years and have many Dreamtime stories that relate to the rock and its significance.
- **The national park** was first listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its natural values in 1987 and then for its cultural values in 1994.
- **Uluru is the Aboriginal name for this rock.** The first European to see Uluru was surveyor William Gosse in 1873 who named it Ayers Rock in honour of the then Chief Secretary of South Australia, Sir Henry Ayers.
- **The plants, birds and wildlife** in this story are indigenous to the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park.
- **Indigenous people** believe a giant snake lives underneath Uluru.
- **The rock was created** around 600 million years ago and was originally at the bottom of a large ocean.
- **Uluru is a monolith**, which means one single block of stone of considerable size.
- **Anangu** (pronounced arn-ahng-oo) are the traditional owners of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. They ask visitors to Uluru to use this term. Very few Anangu speak English as a first language.
- **The rock** was handed back to the Anangu people in 2019.
- **Each feature of the rock** has a meaning in Tjukurpa (Dreamtime), the traditional Anangu law explaining how the world was created.
- **Uluru-Kata Tjuta** National Park is Aboriginal land, jointly managed by its traditional owners and Parks Australia.
- **1,325 square kilometres** in size, it is the spiritual heart of Australia's red centre in the Northern Territory, about 450 kilometres south-west of Alice Springs.
- **Refer** to www.awe.gov.au



BEFORE READING

- **Listen** to the sound of a didgeridoo to introduce the story and to promote discussion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yG9ZX1FS20A>
- **Watch** the Parks Australia video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMbRxdT2ybw> to set the scene for the significance of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park to the Anangu people.
- **Pre-teach** vocabulary in the book: Anangu, querulous, foraging, spirits, thrum, marsupial, bound, trench, slithers, beneath.
- **View** the cover and title of the book, identifying the title, the author and illustrator, the publisher, the blurb, and the long vowel oo.
- **Ask:**
 - What do you think the book might be about?
 - What do you think the title means?
 - Where is Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park?
 - What would you like to know about Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park?
 - What can you tell about the long vowel oo from the title?
 - What words can you think of with the long oo sound?
 - What spelling patterns do you know with the long oo phoneme?

DURING READING

Vocabulary

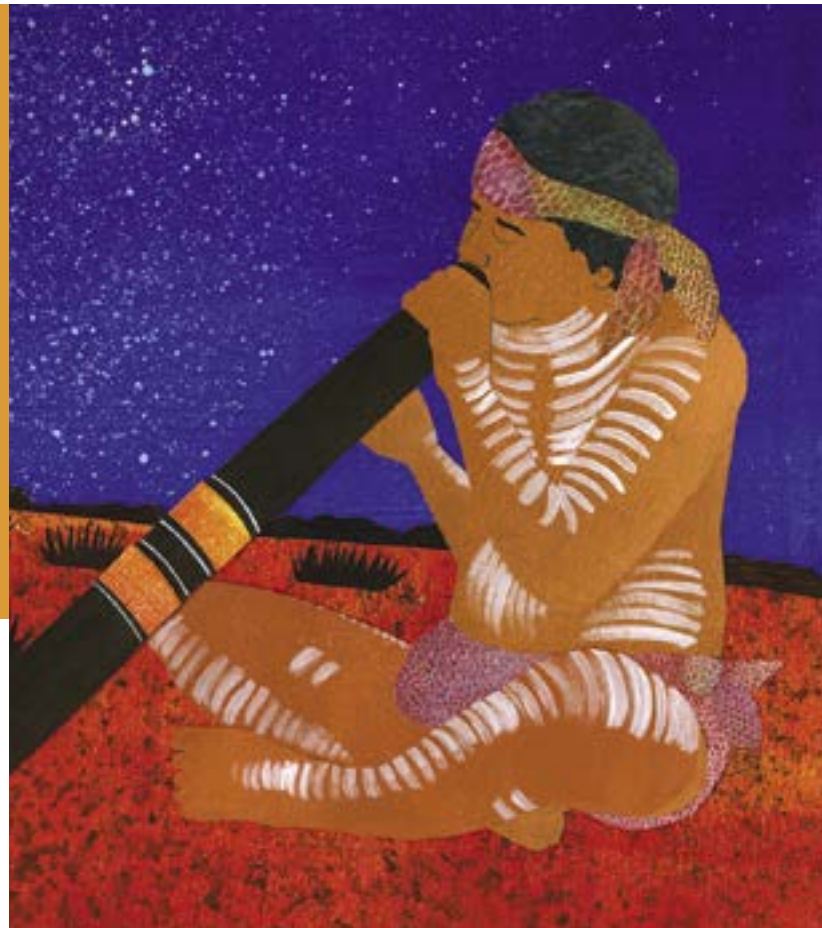
- **After an initial reading** of the book go back through each page, highlighting specific sounds, words and spelling patterns used in the text.
- **Identify unfamiliar words:** querulous, foraging, leap, trails, criss-cross, gobble, burrows, shy, prying, trench, hedge, glowing, shatters, hullabaloo, dune, thrum, spirits, Anangu.
- **Discuss how words** with the long vowel oo contribute to the rhyme and rhythm of the story.

General Comprehension

- **What is the tribal** name of the Aboriginal people from Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park?
- **What is the climate** and habitat of the central Australian desert?
- **What animals** and birdlife can be found in the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park?
- **What is the name** of the traditional landowners of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park?

Visual Literacy

Draw attention to the illustrations and ask students why the illustrator may have chosen particular images or colours to tell the story. What feelings does this imagery evoke in them?





AFTER READING

- **This story has several layers to explore:**

- The strong connection between the Anangu people and the land.

- Discuss NAIDOC's 'Heal Country!' theme.

It includes three sections: Knowing Country, Connecting to Country, and Protecting Country.

- Why is Uluru so important to Aboriginal people?

- Discover the Tjukurpa stories of the Dreamtime from Parks Australia.

- Research the importance of the Mabo decision.

- Refer to <https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5ab8289eff9c8b056fce1981>

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Exploring the Illustrations

- Develop a connection with Country by acknowledging and illustrating the land of the Anangu.

- Identify the native birds and wildlife from the story: camels, bilby, kangaroo, emu, spinifex pigeon, thorny devil, honey ants, hopping mice, goannas, rufus hare wallaby, gecko, wedge-tailed eagle, Major Mitchell cockatoo, mulga snake, brush tailed possum, budgerigar, emu in the sky.

ACTIVITIES



Art and Language

- **Read a Dreaming story** from Uluru and link it to a practical activity during which students learn about traditional string making techniques by making friendship bracelets.
- **Make individual identity** passports to develop a connection with Country.
- **Research creation** stories relating to Uluru-Kata Tjuta. Suggest students watch a short video in which a traditional owner of the Uluru-Kata Tjuta region tells a creation story: <https://parksaustralia.gov.au/uluru/discover/culture/stories/>
- **Find out what** your local Indigenous language is, and then create artworks inspired by the landscape, plants or animals of the land where the language is spoken. Include the name of the language in the artwork. Refer to: <https://www.schoolsreconciliationchallenge.org.au/activities/category/art/>
- **Produce a collage**, poster, storyboard, or creation story about Uluru.
- **Discuss the theme:** Picturing Under One Sky: Yesterday, Today and Forever – Art as a medium to explore reconciliation. Refer to: <https://www.schoolsreconciliationchallenge.org.au/activities/category/art/>
- **Create a mind map** of what Country is and discuss reconciliation between people.
- **Develop the topic** of reconciliation and make posters about different themes. Refer to: <https://www.schoolsreconciliationchallenge.org.au/src-posters/>
- **Share true stories** from Indigenous people with Word Up and discover the diverse languages of black Australia, one word at a time. Refer to: <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/wordup/>

General

- **Recall the different** and various spelling patterns of the oo phoneme and encourage students to write their own stories using the oo phoneme.
- **Draw a mind map** with the various oo spelling patterns, using words from the book.
- **Classify the animals** in the story on a smartboard/whiteboard and match pictures to words.
- **Play card games** with words from the book and identify meanings.
- **Use dictation games** to reinforce the learning of correct spelling patterns.
- **Make a word search** with vocabulary from the book.

Painting

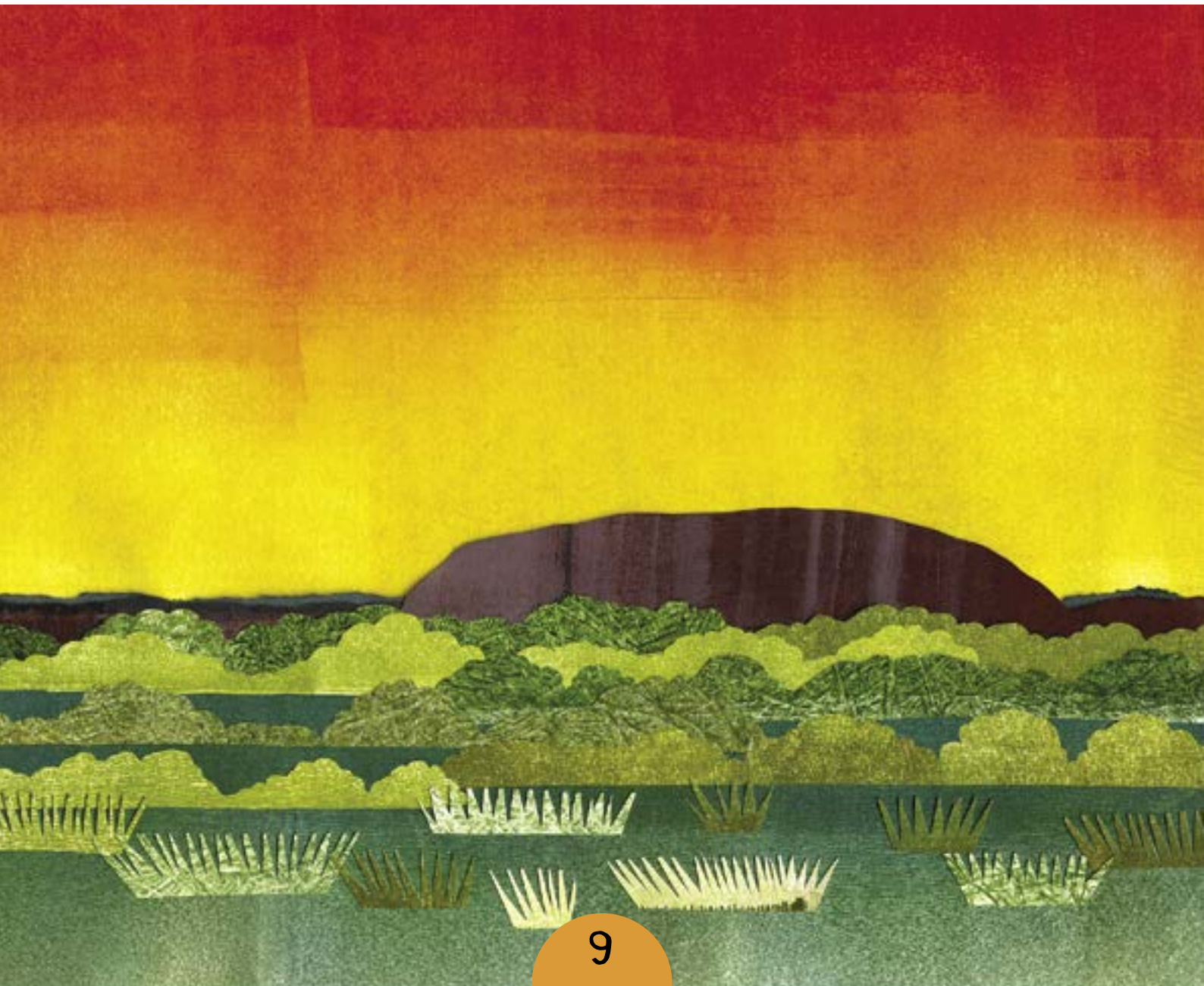
- **Provide equipment** and instructions for painting pictures on paper or stone. Ask students to paint different parts (characters, Uluru, animals, birds) represented in the story, in a logical storyboard sequence.
- **Have students re-tell** parts of the story with their story stones.
- **Paint Australian animals** using small canvas boards or heavy-duty paper. Students draw the image on the board and, using a limited earthy colour palette, paint all large areas first before adding dotted details using sticks or posca pens to create dot paintings.

Acrostic Poem and Cinquain

- **Instruct students** to write short and funny sentences, employing different oo spelling patterns, or to make an acrostic poem. Challenge more advanced learners to write a cinquain.

Collage/Mural

- **Ask students** to draw their own Uluru murals on large white paper to be glued together to create a classroom wall mural.
- **Have students create** collages by finding, in magazines and newspapers, environmental pictures relating to the topics represented in the book. Write difficult words and phonemes on strips of paper to add to the collages. Have students swap collages and discuss them.



CULTURE & CONNECTIONS

- **Discuss** how Aboriginal Australians had been living on and cultivating this land for centuries before European invasion. Across the country there were more than 500 Indigenous nations with over 260 distinct language groups and 800 dialects.
- **Demonstrate** the significance of the Anangu people, and how life and rebirth told through story, dance and song, passed down from generation to generation, underpin Anangu belief systems and society behaviours. Discuss how Anangu must share their oral history to ensure the continuation of their culture for generations to come.
- **What is Country?** Country is all-encompassing. It is the skies, land, seas, and animals, but also much more than this. First Nations languages and cultures are deeply connected to Country, so Country is language, culture, and law too. Country is the stories passed down since time immemorial, as well as the people who keep and share those stories.

Anangu Language

Pitjantjatjara is the language of the Anangu people. The Pitjantjatjara oo sound is the same as in look. Distinguish between the long vowel oo words in Pitjantjatjara and the English language.

Family Words

Child Tjitji (chee-chee)

Mother Ngunytju (ngoon-choo)

Father Mama (mah-mah)

Grandmother Kami (kah-mee)

Grandfather Tjamu (jah-moo)

Big Sister Kangkuru (kan-kooroo)

Big Brother Kuta (koo-tah)

Auntie Kuntili (koo-tu-lee)

Uncle Kamuru (kum-moo-roo)

For more words go to <https://www.awe.gov.au/parks-heritage/national-parks/uluru-kata-tjuta-national-park/culture-and-history/anangu-language>



SUPPORTING READERS WITH PHONEMIC AWARENESS

- **Distinguish** between the short and long vowel sound, focussing on the different pronunciation of the short o and long oo sounds.
- **Highlight** that this spelling pattern has two sounds, long and short, as in to and too.
- **Elicit** the different and various spelling patterns of the oo sound.
- **Draw** a mind map of the different spelling patterns.
- **Review** the vowel digraph oo and display the different spelling patterns ue, u, ou, oe, oo, o, ew, u-e.
- **After** reading the story, identify the different spelling patterns in the book, eg blue, you, shoe, do, to, too, truth, Uluru.
- **This spelling pattern** (oo) has two sounds, long and short, eg to and too.



WHILE THE IMPORTANCE OF PHONICS TEACHING is now universally accepted, the way phonics is best taught continues to be debated. What is agreed, however, is that the teaching of literacy should incorporate evidence-informed practices which include a place for explicit and systematic phonics instruction. As with all literacy learning, phonics instruction should take place within a meaningful, communicative, rich pedagogy, and within genuine literacy events (Hornsby & Wilson, 2011, p.19).

Regardless of which approach is employed, phonics instruction must contain the following:

- explicit teaching of the grapheme and phoneme
- multiple exposures to the grapheme and phoneme through meaningful texts and contexts
- systematic teaching of graphemes and phonemes based on what students need to learn (building on known knowledge)
- explicit links to handwriting and how the upper- and lower-case grapheme is represented.

As noted by Wyse (2010), literacy teaching involves the use of texts ‘to locate teaching about the smaller units of language including letters and phonemes... [This] contributes to contexts that are meaningful to children and enables them to better understand the reading process, including the application of key reading skills’ (pp. 144-5).

Foundation

- Recognise all upper- and lower-case letters and the most common sound that each letter represents (VCELA146).
- Blend sounds associated with letters when reading consonant-vowel-consonant words (VCELA147). For example, blend one syllable words: c-a-t, p-e-g and apply this knowledge when reading.
- Recognise all upper- and lower-case letters and the most common sound that each letter represents (VCELA146).

Level 1

- Recognise short vowels, common long vowels and consonant digraphs, and consonant blends (VCELA181).
- Understand how to spell one and two syllable words with common letter patterns (VCELA182).
- Understand that a letter can represent more than one sound, and that a syllable must contain a vowel sound (VCELA183).

Level 2

- Learn some generalisations for adding suffixes to words (VCELA217).
- Recognise most letter-sound matches including silent letters, trigraphs, vowel digraphs and common long vowels, and understand that a sound can be represented by various letter combinations (VCELA218).

DECODING AS A PATHWAY

IN ORDER TO BECOME

READERS, children learn the systematic relationship between code (letters) and sounds, including knowledge of letter and spelling patterns to correctly pronounce written words. In coming to understand these relationships, children are given the ability to recognise familiar words quickly and to figure out words they haven't seen before. With 44 sounds in the English language and hundreds of ways to spell them, the mind boggles! This series of phoneme-themed stories will help to reinforce the teaching and learning of phonic awareness with the different and various spelling patterns of the long vowels (digraphs) in a fun and meaningful way.



TEN TIPS FOR READING SUCCESS

Some strategies for supporting beginning readers are:

- 1** Use context and pictures to monitor sound, letter and word recognition.
- 2** Sound out letters, identify high-frequency words (common, or sight words) in stories.
- 3** Use repetition often to consolidate the teaching and learning of sounds and letters.
- 4** Support the teaching of spelling by helping children to understand that sounds create different letter combinations.
- 5** Help children to sound out unfamiliar words and encourage self-correction.
- 6** Support children to make predictions, to identify the main idea in paragraphs, and to practise summarising.
- 7** Teach children the separate sounds in a name, eg Sam has three sounds S-a-m.
- 8** Ask your child to clap with you as you sound out the syllables in words, eg wonderful has three syllables won-der-ful.
- 9** Take turns to come up with words that rhyme or sound the same. Play sound and word games, such as I Spy with sounds and letters.
- 10** Provide opportunities for reading a variety of texts, to obtain meaning from sounds, letters, and words.

BOOKS IN THIS SERIES



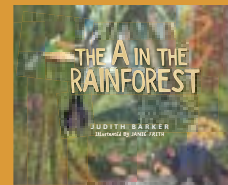
The OO in Uluru



The O in the Snow



The EE in the Deep, Blue Sea



The A in the Rainforest (coming
February 2022)

The I in Island (in progress)
The AU in Dinosaur (in progress)

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