

# The Wild Life #1: A Berry Long Walk

AUTHOR

**LAURA BUNTING**

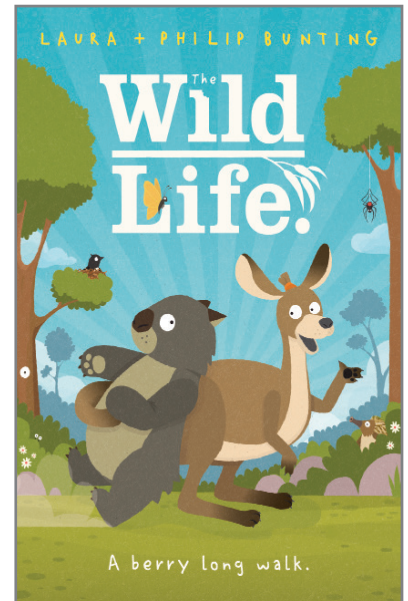
ILLUSTRATOR

**PHILIP BUNTING**

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**RECOMMENDED FOR:** Lower Primary



## SYNOPSIS

Wombat won't leave his Safety Zone. Nope. No way. Not even for his favourite treat...sweet, sweet bush berries. But Roo believes she can do anything if she puts her mind to it. Especially tracking down some delicious berries for dinner. (Even if those berries do happen to be growing at the very top of a massive mountain.)

The Wild Life is a new series of chapter books for picture book aficionados.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Laura Bunting is lucky enough to work alongside her talented husband. Along with making books together, Laura and Philip are busy raising three children in sunny Queensland, and are big believers that reading to your kids is hands-down one of the best things you can do with them in their early years (and beyond).

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Philip Bunting is an author and illustrator, with a soft spot for creating picture books for sleep-deprived, time-poor, raisin encrusted parents (and their children).

Philip's work deliberately encourages playful interaction between the reader and child, allowing his books to create a platform for genuine intergenerational engagement, and fun.

He believes that the more fun the child has during their early reading experiences, the more likely they will be to return to books, improve their emergent literacy skills, and later find joy in reading and learning.

Philip's books have been translated into multiple languages, and published in over 25 countries around the world. Since his first book was published in 2017, Philip has received multiple accolades, including Honours from the Children's Book Council of Australia, and making the list for the Kate Greenaway Medal in 2018.

Philip grew up in the Lake District (England), and accidentally moved to Australia in his early 20s. He now lives with his young family in the hills behind Noosa (Queensland, Australia).

**STUDY NOTES**

- Before reading the story, as a class discuss the book cover and title. Some things to include in your discussion could be:
  - What can you see happening in the image on the cover?
  - What do you think a Berry Long Walk might be?
  - What do you predict might happen in this story?
- Look carefully at the picture of the mountain where Roo is explaining to Wombat that it is not actually so difficult. Draw a picture of a walk you could go on in your local area using a similar style of explanatory drawing. Your walk might be up a large hill, but it could also be through flat countryside, or along city streets. Think of ways to describe the difficult parts as well as the easy parts that make it seem as achievable as possible.
- Do you think Roo is right when she tells Wombat that thinking that you can't do something, is the only reason you actually can't? Why/why not? As a class hold a debate on this topic before coming to a conclusion of your own.
- Carefully copy pictures of Roo and Wombat onto pieces of stiff card. Cut out the pictures and attach them to ice-cream sticks to make puppets. Draw a background (and a foreground) on large pieces of paper, and use your puppets to act out the story in the book as a puppet show. Practise your show, before recording it on a camera, phone, tablet or other device. Screen your show at assembly or for another class.
- Using modelling clay and toothpicks, make a model echidna. Look carefully at photos and pictures of echidnas before you start (including the echidna in the book!), and make sure that the body and head are the right shape and in proportion to each other, and that the spines all go in the correct direction.
- When Wombat and Roo are walking, they see grass trees, cockatoos and eagles. If you went bushwalking in your local area, what plants and animals would you see? Go on a bushwalk of your own, and take notes and photos to record all the different plants and animals you spot along your way. After returning to the classroom discuss what you saw, and talk about which of the plants and wildlife are indigenous to your area and which have been introduced.
- What do you think is the most important lesson or message that the story contains? How might people apply it in their daily lives?
- What is the difference between being ridiculously positive and being positively ridiculous? Can you think of any other words that can be used in contradictory pairs like this? As a class, brainstorm as many different pairs that can be used in this way as you can think of. Hint: this is often easiest if you start off by thinking of individual adjectival intensifiers (such as terribly, awfully, horribly and incredibly) and then try pairing them up and applying them to each other.
- What are all the different emotions (or Feelings) that Wombat experiences throughout the course of the story? Create a crossword puzzle featuring emotions for the answers, both the ones that Wombat struggled with experiencing in the story, and others which aren't mentioned. Be as specifically descriptive in your clues as you can.