

# Diprotodon: A Megafauna Journey

AUTHOR

**BRONWYN SAUNDERS**

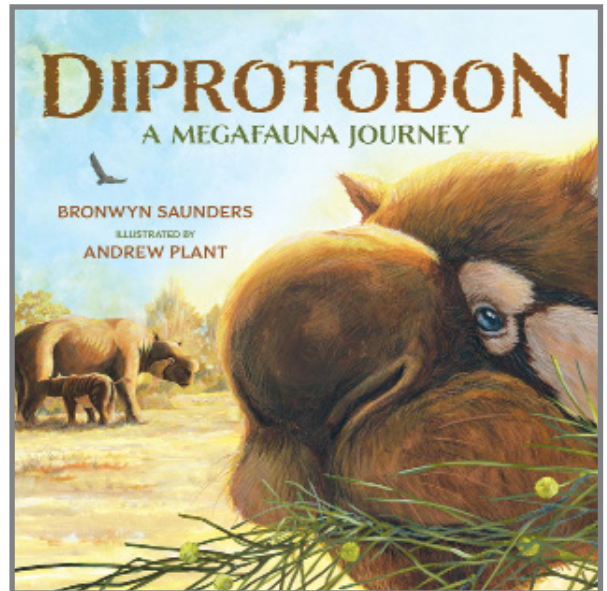
ILLUSTRATOR

**ANDREW PLANT**

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**RECOMMENDED FOR:** Lower to Mid Primary



## SYNOPSIS

Follow in the giant footsteps of Diprotodon, as he finds his own place in the world. Explore his Ice Age environment, encounters with other megafauna and the challenges he faces to survive.

*Diprotodon: A Megafauna Journey* features the largest marsupial that ever lived. Brought to life through fabulous illustrations, this story will captivate and enthrall readers.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bronwyn Saunders is a passionate citizen scientist who delights in sharing facts about Australia's natural history with readers.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Andrew Plant is a Melbourne-based illustrator, author and science educator. He loves creating books about almost any subject, and is passionate about sharing that creativity with kids.

## THEMES

- Extinct animals
- Australian environment
- Earth in prehistoric eras

## STUDY NOTES

### BEFORE READING

- Before reading the book, talk to the students about the last Ice Age and discuss the following questions as a class:
  - How long ago was it?
  - What do students think about when they think of the term 'Ice Age'?
  - What might Australia have been like at that time?
  - What might other parts of the world have been like?
  - What would have been different about the landscape compared with what it looks like now?
- Ask students what extinction means. Can they think of any other animals that are now extinct? What kinds of animals would have found it too difficult to survive the change that came with the end of the Ice Age?

**AFTER READING****Science**

- The book describes an animal that existed during the last Ice Age. What things about the diprotodon remind students of animals that exist today? What things are different?
- Some plants are mentioned in the book. Do you recognise any that exist today?
- The diprotodon was a marsupial. What marsupials can students identify? What do they know about marsupials? Make a list on the whiteboard.
- Discuss whether any of the animals that existed during the Ice Age might still exist today. Can they recognise any animals from the book that exist today? Why might these animals have been able to survive?
- We don't know exactly what diprotodons looked like. How do you think scientists work out what animals that no longer exist looked like? What do you think they use to guide them?
- Research another animal that existed in Australia during the Pleistocene era's Ice Age. Choose one of the other animals that appears in the story (see the list of other species at the end of the glossary) and find out as much of the following as possible:
  - what it looked like
  - where it lived
  - how it lived
  - what it ate
  - which predators may have hunted it, or if it was a predator, what animals it hunted
  - whether it was related to any animal that exists now.

Make a poster outlining all of the facts you have learnt.

- Research the Pleistocene era, during the time of the most recent Ice Age, from an environmental perspective. Find out what the world was like during this era; include temperature, ice coverage, animals, etc. Include answers to the following questions:
  - What was the average temperature in the Southern Hemisphere?
  - What was the average temperature in the Northern Hemisphere?
  - Which parts of the world were colder?
  - Which parts of the world were covered by ice?
  - What animals existed then?

**English**

- What does the word 'megafauna' mean?
- Talk about some of the words in the book that might not be familiar to students, but which don't appear in the glossary. As a class, discuss what they mean; does reading the whole sentence help? Examples include the following:
  - retreated
  - trampled
  - scours
  - vulnerable
  - flightless
  - plods.
- Have the students make up a new animal that might have existed at the time of the diprotodon. Write a story about that animal, and how it might have interacted with the diprotodon. Then, draw or paint what that animal might have looked like, and draw it in the environment in which it lived.
- Imagine you are an explorer who is able to go back in time. Write a journal entry about your experience travelling back to the time of the Ice Age in Australia. Include the animals you see, what happens and what the landscape looks like.

**COMPREHENSION**

- What is the name of the animal this book is about? (Answer: Diprotodon)
- What does Diprotodon eat? (Answer: Plants)
- Name an animal with three letters in this book that still exists today. (Answer: Emu)

- What did Diprotodon drink when he was a baby? (Answer: Milk)
- What was a group of diprotodons called? (Answer: Herd)
- Where were the rainforest trees found during the Ice Age? (Answer: Mountains)
- Diprotodon had two of these in his lower jaw. (Answer: Tusks)

AUTHOR OF NOTES  
**BROOKE CLARK**