

The Amazing A to Z Thing Teacher Notes

Written by Sally Morgan
Illustrated by Brownwyn Bancroft

Published by Little Hare

SYNOPSIS

This beautifully written and illustrated story follows an array of Australian animals as they attempt to get the attention of each other to discover 'The Amazing Thing'.

It is never mentioned what 'The Amazing Thing' is, rather the emphasis is on the gorgeous illustrations and the emotions of the responses of the animals within. They all have plenty of time to discover the 'Amazing Thing' and be amazed.

The animals that feature in this book range from a very Australian Kookaburra to a Jellyfish – even the Velvet Worm boasts a mention. It is a great tool for young children to learn about unusual animals they may not have heard of before.

THEMES

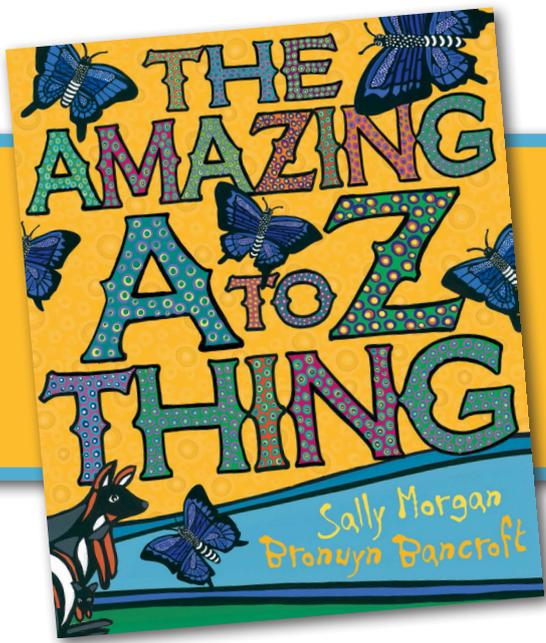
This multi-layered story is about many things: it is about the alphabet; it is about Australian animals; it is an exploration of the spectrum of emotions; it is a story about sharing, indifference, perseverance and community.

Ultimately, it is a book about books, and about the rich variety of emotional experiences that books can offer.

WRITING STYLE

Sally Morgan's passion is to promote reading and literacy, especially among Indigenous boys, and this text represents one of her many thematic approaches.

For this book, she has chosen a repetitive form, within which form she varies the emotion, action and characters. Each segment begins with a simple alphabetical statement, followed by Anteater trying to interest an idle character in her 'amazing thing', and finishes with the character passing on the offer and sending her along to the next idle character. This repetition underscores the apathy of each creature, and also highlights Anteater's enthusiasm and perseverance in her ongoing attempt to share her 'amazing thing'.



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ILLUSTRATION STYLE

Bronwyn Bancroft has followed the style established by the text, of variation within repetition. A coloured band runs throughout the book, linking each opening and dividing each spread into a top and bottom half. The dot-within-a-dot motif is also repeated with multiple variations and colour combinations. This pattern changes at the high point of the narrative, indicating the change of pace, Anteater's change of attitude and, finally, the animals' change of attitude.

AUTHOR BACKGROUND

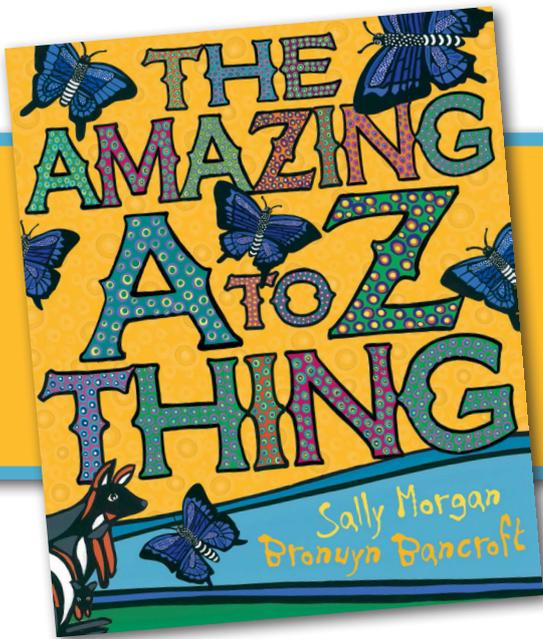
Sally Morgan is an Indigenous writer and artist who was born in Perth in 1951. She belongs to the Palkyu people of the eastern Pilbara in Western Australia. Sally is best known for her award-winning book, *My Place*, which charts the history of her family.

Sally now specialises in writing and illustrating books for children and young people. Her personal interests are reading, taking her dogs for a walk, and gardening.

ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND

Born in Tenterfield, northern New South Wales, Bronwyn Bancroft is a descendant of the Djanbun clan of the Bundjalung nation. Bronwyn is a leading Indigenous artist, illustrator and art administrator whose work is held at the National Gallery of Australia, the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the Australian Museum.

Bronwyn has illustrated several award-winning books for children and has a long history of involvement in community activism. She is also the mother to three children: Jack, Ella and Rubyrose. Jack was awarded NSW Young Australian of the Year in 2010 for his work mentoring Indigenous school and university students.



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MARKETING & PROMOTION

This book will be widely reviewed and available where all good books are sold.

STUDY NOTES:

- Sally Morgan never mentions the word 'book'. How can we tell that this is a story about books?
- When Anteater wants to show each animal her 'amazing thing', the animals are always too busy. What does this make you feel about each animal? How does it make you feel about Anteater?
- Emotions can be listed under five main headings. They are:
 - Fear
 - Happiness
 - Anger
 - Sadness
 - Amazement

The author has mentioned nearly twenty different emotions or feelings. Under which main heading would you place each of these different emotions or feelings?

- Why do you think Sally Morgan has chosen to use the theme of emotions in this book?

