

## Wombat Can't Sing

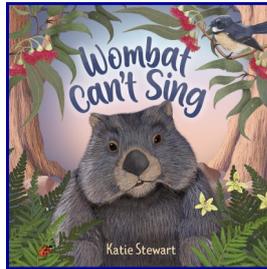
By Katie Stewart

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Wombat loves to listen to Fantail sing, especially when Fantail says that her songs make everyone happy. Wombat wants to make others happy, too. But his attempts at singing - even with lots of advice and assistance from friends - fall woefully short. Then Wombat discovers his own unique way to make others just as happy.



Teacher Notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher. A full version is available on our website.

### Themes:

- Australian flora and fauna
- Personal strengths and talents
- Self-esteem and self-discovery
- Friendship

### Discussion Questions

- Wombat wants to sing – is there a particular skill or talent that you would like to learn? Turn to a partner and share. How might you begin learning it and who could help you?
- What does the word 'unique' mean? What are some of the qualities that make each animal in the story unique? What are some of the qualities that make you unique? (E.g. What are some things you are good at or enjoy?) Brainstorm a list of your personal strengths and talents. How can you share these with your community? (E.g. hold a class talent show!)
- Wombat feels sad when he compares his singing to the other animals. Why is it important not to compare yourself to others? At the end of the story, Wombat discovers his own special way to make others happy. Create a list of different ways that you could use your strengths to make others happy.
- Wombat gives Fantail a hug when she is miserable. What makes you feel better when you are sad?
- Throughout the book Wombat repeatedly says 'I can't do that.' How might repeating negative self-talk influence how someone feels about their abilities? As a class do the following:
  - ◇ Discuss with a friend one skill you have that you are proud of. How are your skills different?
  - ◇ Make a list of things you enjoy and/or are good at.

### *Biological sciences:*

- What is a 'marsupial'? Create a list of animals that belong to this category.
- Which species of wombat is critically endangered? What are some of the reasons for this and what can you do to help? (Hint visit: [bushheritage.org.au/species/wombats](http://bushheritage.org.au/species/wombats))
- How many different species of native flowers can you find illustrated throughout the story? What are their Indigenous and scientific names? Can you spot any of these flowers on a bushwalk in your local area? What other native plants can you find? Take a sketchpad along.
- As a class, listen to some audio clips of frogs, fantails, crickets and kookaburras on YouTube. Which is your favourite 'singer' and why? What other species of animals/insects around the world are famous for their 'singing'? Why do each of these creatures 'sing'? (I.e. how does it help them survive?)

### Activities:

- Create pop-stick puppets of the characters using recycled materials and a variety of geometric coloured cardboard shapes, felt and cellophane. Use them to read along with/act out the story.
- Animal Portrait: Design your own illustration of an Australian animal (not already included in the book) in the style of Katie Stewart. Below, add a sentence about a special skill this animal might share to make others happy.
- Create a sculpture of your favourite animal from the story using plasticine, clay or recycled materials.