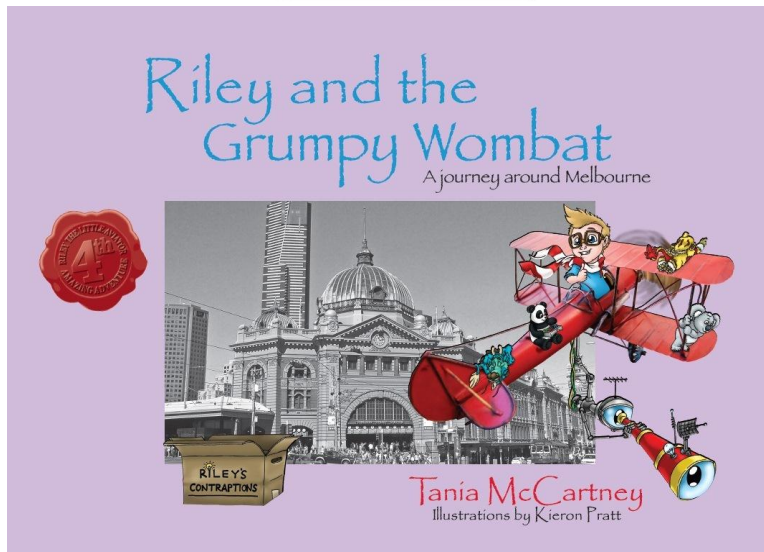


Teaching Notes

Riley and the Grumpy Wombat

by Tania McCartney, illustrations Kieron Pratt

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Background

Riley and the Grumpy Wombat: A journey around Melbourne is the fourth book in a unique series of multimedia travelogue books for pre- and primary school aged children. It follows the journey of little aviator Riley as he flies around Melbourne in search of a very grumpy wombat. From Bourke Street Mall to the Great Ocean Road, children will be entranced by the sights and contraptions featured in Riley's remarkable adventure—and the warm ending about the importance of Home.



Rich with the black and white photos of the capital and surrounds, as well as adorable illustrations by Kieron Pratt, Riley's magical discovery will captivate readers of all ages—particularly adventuresome animal lovers.

About the author and illustrator

Tania McCartney is a travel-loving Aussie who has been writing since her teens. She is an experienced editor and magazine writer, runs her own small publishing company and is the founder of Kids Book Review. Her first book in the Riley series—*Riley and the Sleeping Dragon*—was featured in the ABA's Kids' Reading Guide 2009/2010 and by 2013, Tania will have a dozen books in print. She lives in Canberra with her husband, two kids and a pile of books.
www.taniamccartney.com

Kieron Pratt is a Canberra-based illustrator with an extremely well-developed funny bone. This is his third book in the Riley series.

Lesson 1 – Exploring Melbourne and Wombats

Riley and the Grumpy Wombat is set in modern-day Melbourne and surrounds, and features an iconic Australian animal. Read the book and ask the following questions or discuss the following elements with children, either during or post-reading:

Where is Melbourne located?

Are there wombats in Melbourne? Where do you think they would live?

How would you like to jump in your own plane and fly anywhere in the world? Where would you go?

Bourke Street Mall is located right in the heart of Melbourne city. It has trams running through it. What is a mall? Who can use it? Bourke Street is named after Sir Richard Bourke, the Governor of New South Wales (1837). The city centre of Melbourne is laid out in a block-like fashion which is called the Hoddle Grid. Can you see anyone interesting in this picture? You may just see a certain illustrator!

Federation Square was built to commemorate 100 years of Federation in Australia (1901-2001). Two large office towers had to be torn down to make way for the Square which is now a centre for multimedia including a cinema, function centre, restaurants, cafés, street theatre and music. The sandstone used in construction was mined and quarried from the Kimberley Region in Western Australia. Who has been to Federation Square? What did you do there?

Flinders Street Station is located at the southern end of the city centre, right next to the Yarra River. What is the station used for? Every day, over 110,000 people and 1,500 trains pass through the station. People wanting to meet near Flinders Street Station often say “I’ll meet you under the clocks.” What do you think they mean? The Station is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register. What is a Heritage Register?

The **Southbank** area is named because it runs along the south bank of the Yarra River, right in Melbourne city. The area is an entertainment hub for Melburnians with shops, cafés, restaurants, a riverside food court, and also features the Crown Casino and the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art. Tall columns line the river along Southbank. What do you think might come blasting out of these columns at night time? (Fire.)

St Kilda Beach used to be a seaside resort and is now one of Melbourne's most famous beaches. It is fringed by very tropical trees; can you guess which kind? (Palm trees.) Fairy penguins are sometimes seen at St Kilda Beach. The Melbourne Marathon passes through St Kilda and its beach is used for State and International volley ball tournaments. What other sports could you play on St Kilda Beach?

Melbourne's **Royal Botanic Gardens** are one of the world's most famous gardens and cover 36 hectares right near the centre of the city. The gardens were originally built on marshland and swamp. In 1877, Australia's first prime minister, Sir Edmund Barton, was married in the gardens (to Jane Ross). The gardens now host over 10,000 floral species. The 300-year-old ‘Separation Tree’ can be found in the gardens. What kind of native tree do you think it might be? (River Red Gum.)

Lygon Street in the inner city suburb of Carlton is one of Melbourne's most famous restaurant, café and shopping strips. The street is particularly famous for Italian restaurants and cafés, and hosts the

annual Lygon Street Festa, one of Australia's largest street festivals. Toto's Pizza House was Australia's very first pizzeria. What kind of sporting events do you think might be celebrated in this Italian-influenced street? (FIFA World Cup and Ferrari Festival.)

The **Dandenong Ranges** were formed more than 300 million years ago by a major volcanic eruption near the town of Olinda. When white man arrived in Australia, the ranges were inhabited by the Wurundjeri tribe who called the area Corranwarrabul, meaning a desirable place where birds sang, kangaroos jumped and lyrebirds perform. What kind of plants do you think might enjoy the rich volcanic soil of the Dandenong Ranges and high rainfall? (Indigenous plants, ash forests, fern gullies.)

Mount Hotham in the Victorian Alps north of Melbourne stands 1861 m high and has the highest natural snowfall of any other resort in Victoria. The first ski run was developed by 1900 and there are now a number of resorts available to skiers. Have you been skiing? Would you see many wombats in the snow?

Situated at Ballarat, north of Melbourne, **Sovereign Hill** is an outdoor museum which presents the story of one of Australia's most historical events. Do you know what kind of precious metal was found at Sovereign Hill? The first gold was discovered in the area in 1851, when people from all over the world flocked to Victoria to find their fortune. Sovereign Hill museum attracts over 750,000 visitors a year. Visitors can explore the area indoors, outdoors, above ground and even below ground!

The Great Ocean Road lies west of Melbourne and is one of the most beautiful coastal drives in the world. One of its major attractions is The Twelve Apostles – does anyone know what they might be? These massive limestone stack formations were once named The Sow and Piglets but were renamed The Twelve Apostles in 1922 for tourism purposes. The road stretches for 243 kms and was actually built by returned soldiers between 1919 and 1932. The rate of erosion at the base of the limestone pillars is approximately 2 cm per year.

Phillip Island is located 140 kms south-east of Melbourne and was named after the first governor of New South Wales, Arthur Phillip. The island is visited by 3.5 million people every year, who come to see a nightly beach parade of which animal? (The Fairy Penguin or Little Penguin.) Which other animal might you see on Phillip Island? (Fur seals, which settle on Seal Rock and form the largest colony in the Southern Hemisphere.)

Wombat Facts

Discuss the following wombat facts and what they might mean.

- Wombats are mammals. They are also marsupials. What is a marsupial? (A mammal that births very small young that continues its development within the mother's pouch.)
- They are native only to Australia
- There are three species of wombat: the Common wombat, the Northern Hairy-Nosed wombat and the Southern Hairy-Nosed wombat. The Common wombat is larger, stocky, tailless and has thick, coarse fur. The Hairy-Nosed wombats have longer, pointed ears, soft, silky fur and a hairy muzzle
- The Northern Hairy-Nosed wombat is now an endangered species – more endangered than China's giant panda
- Wombats are nocturnal feeders. What does this mean?
- Their diet comprises mainly grasses, roots and herbs
- They live in large burrows that can be as much as 30 metres in length

- Wombats are powerful diggers and are extremely strong
- They lie on their back or side to enlarge their burrows by scratching
- Wombats spend a lot of the day asleep in their burrows
- Young are usually born between September and December, and spend six to nine months in the pouch
- The wombat pouch opens towards the back of its body so dirt can't get kicked inside when the animal burrows (and burrow, it frequently does)
- Wombats can be anything from a sandy colour to brown or black to grey
- The average wombat is about one metre long and weighs about 25 kgs, as much as a five-year-old child
- Wombats are very smart, like to play and can run up to 40 kph
- They have been known to chase after a packet of chocolate biscuits
- Wombats can live from about five years to over 30 years
- Wombats have poor eyesight but excellent senses of smell and hearing
- Their teeth never stop growing
- The most common wombat is the Common wombat!
- Most Australians have never seen a wild wombat.

Lesson 2 – Story Writing Elements and Structure

Read the book and ask/integrate the following questions:

What is the title of this book? What does the title tell you about the story?

What is the subtitle of this book? What does 'subtitle' mean?

Who is the author? What does the author do?

Who is the illustrator? What does the illustrator do?

What are the end papers? What picture do they have on them?

Who took the photos in this book?

Where can you find more information about the publication of this book?

What does multimedia mean? (text, illustrations, graphics, photographs)

Where is this book set?

Who are the main characters?

Why does Riley want to fly around Melbourne?

What problems and conflict does Riley encounter?

Does he find the wombat straight away?

Why do you think the wombat was upset?

What drives the momentum of this story? What pushes it along and makes you want to turn the pages?

What do the photos in this book offer the reader?

Why do you think the photos are black and white?

When is the climax of this story? What happens?

How does the story resolve?

What is your favourite part of the story and why?

What did you learn from this story?

Lesson 3 – Book Making Activity

Read the story.

Have children take B&W photographs around the classroom or school.

Create a main character and a friend.

Choose a vehicle.

Write a storyline where the character and friend search for an object or animal.

Draw pictures of the vehicle and characters that can be cut out and placed on the photos.

Add text to the pages. Print out and staple together.

Discuss the multimedia elements used in the construction of these books.

Further activities like colouring sheets and mazes can be found at www.taniamccartney.com/4kids.html.

Tania can visit your school with a variety of fun, interactive readings and presentations aimed at children from Grade 1 to 6. For more information see www.taniamccartney.com or email books@taniamccartney.com.

See Tania's site, Kids Book Review, for more teachers' resources and lesson plans – www.kids-bookreview.com.