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Overview of this Inquiry

This Inquiry will lead the children to investigate the characteristics and needs of the possum. Students will find out about the type of environment the possum needs for its well-being and survival. They will gain knowledge about possible threats to the possum.

Children will explore the different and similar characteristics of other Australian animals, and compare these to the features of the possum. They will learn about the interdependence of living things and what can be done to preserve possums and their environments.

They will make strong links between caring for the environment and the survival of Australian wildlife. Students will think of ways they can spread the knowledge they have gained, develop solutions to problems and put these into action.

This is not a new model for Inquiry; rather, the material in this book follows the general lines of Inquiry models and moves through the stages of:

- Tuning In
- Setting Up the Investigation
- The Main Investigation
- Where to Now?
- Concluding the Inquiry
- Celebrating Learning.

The following understandings form the basis for this Inquiry:

There is an interdependent relationship between living things on Earth (people, plants and animals).

The impact of humans on the natural environment has an effect on the balance of this relationship.

Humans have the power to play a part in protecting and sustaining the relationship between Australian animals and their environment. It is people's responsibility to care for Australian animal environments and make lifestyle choices that preserve the natural environment for the benefit of all.

There are similarities and diversity among Australian animals and their uniqueness is valuable.

Australian animals have special features and structures to support their functioning and surviving in their environment.



Possum Feelings (*Possum Magic* by Mem Fox)

Tell the children that this fantasy story is about a young possum called Hush who lives in the Australian bush with her grandmother, Grandma Poss.

Create interest in the story by displaying the front cover of the book and discussing the illustration.

Ask the children what they think might happen in the story.

Read the story and invite the children to give their responses to the story.

How did you feel at the beginning of the story? How did you feel at the end of the story?

Which part of the story did you like most? What made you feel happy/sad?

Focus on the feelings from another point of view. What were the possum's feelings at the beginning, middle and end of the story?

Children use the **Possum Feelings** activity sheet (page 12) and draw expressions on the faces of the possums to show their feelings in the:

beginning.....when Grandma Poss could not make Hush visible again.

middle.....when Hush's tail became visible.

end.....how Hush and Grandma felt every year on Hush's birthday.

Task Card 3



English

Activity 1: Describing a Possum

- i. Each child will need a **Describing a Possum** activity sheet (page 48).
- ii. Explain that only one box per statement can be ticked.
- iii. Read the statements to the children if you think it necessary.
- iv. Correct the children's work when it has been completed.

Activity 2: Word Study – The Shape of Words

- i. Write a simple word on the whiteboard. Ask the children to read it to you. For example, cat.
- ii. Tell the children that each word has its own special shape. Demonstrate this with the word:

c	a	t
---	---	---
- iii. Write some other simple words on the board and repeat step 2.
- iv. Write three or four simple words on the board. Draw the shape of one of them on the board and ask the children to guess which word it is. Write the word in the shape after they guess correctly.
- v. Provide each child with a copy of **The Shape of Words** activity sheet (page 49).
- vi. Read the words at the bottom of the page and explain to the class that each word fits into one of the frames above.
- vii. Tell the children to look carefully at the letters to see if they go down or up, count the number of letters in the word and spaces in the shape to see if they match before writing in their answer.
- viii. Demonstrate with one word by writing it in the correct frame and then ask the class to continue with the remaining words.

Going Further

When the worksheet is completed, ask the children to draw pictures of the words on the back of their page. The more able children could cut out the words, paste them in alphabetical order on another page and then draw pictures for them, if time permits.

Activity 3: The Story of Possum Magic

- i. Provide each child with a copy of **The Story of Possum Magic** activity sheet (page 50).
- ii. Ask children to draw the start of the story, the middle of the story and the end of the story.

Activity 4: Possum Book

- i. Give each child one copy of the **Possum Book** activity sheet (page 51).
- ii. Tell the class that they are going to design a cover for a book about possums. It can be fiction or nonfiction. They are to make the cover colourful. They can name the author and the illustrator, then write a short blurb about their book on the back cover.

Art

Activity 1: Party Hats

Children will make a party hat to wear at the possum party.

Materials

- photocopy one **Party Hats** sheet (page 82) per child onto coloured or white cover paper
- length of hat elastic or similar per child (30 cm)
- stapler to staple elastic to finished hats
- scissors
- textas, coloured pencils

Activity

- Children colour in party hat and cut it out.
- Fold along the dotted lines, and attach elastic at marked places on hat.
- Staple the hat closed.

Going further

Supply the children with a variety of materials; for example, cardboard, coloured paper, magazines, and let them make their own party hats out of materials supplied.

Learning outcomes

Children will be able to:

- draw upon play and imagination in making visual artworks.
- use basic elements in the visual arts and explore them in making visual artworks.

