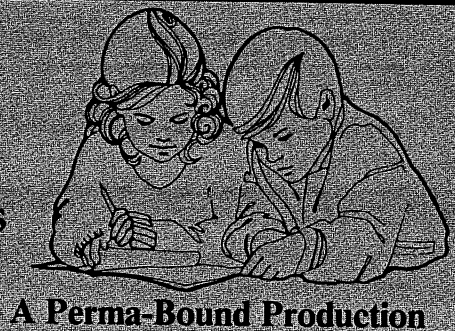


# Animalia

by Graeme Base

## Classroom Favorites

Teacher's Guide by Jennifer Lee Richards



A Perma-Bound Production

### Synopsis

"Animalia" is a magical place where beasts and birds gather together alphabetically among the pages of this alliterate book. Animals are not always represented in their natural coloring, in fact some are shown dressed in clothing. Creatures are doing activities that begin with the letter they are representing. Lazy lions lounge in the local library on the "L" page, while yaks yodel in yellow yachts upon the "Y" page.

Hidden around the bird or beast featured in the text is an array of things that begin with the same letter. It is easy to miss some pictures at first as they are almost translucent, as those on the butterfly's wings on the "B" page, within the background colors of the "A" and the "E" pages, or in the waves of the water on the "N" page.

There are make believe creatures such as unicorns and mermaids pictured. Actions, time periods, and places are scattered among the alphabetical objects. For example, on the "D" page someone is drowning and on the "P" page the sights of Paris can be seen in the background.

Even more fun than counting up all the various items, is trying to discover where the author, Graeme Base, has hidden a picture of himself as a little boy on each page. Sometimes you can see all of the boy, and sometimes just a part of his body can be seen peeking from behind another part of the drawing.

*Animalia* is a book version of the game of "hide-and-seek." It provides education and entertainment to all ages for hours upon hours.

### Biographical Sketch

Graeme Base was born in England in 1958. *Animalia* is dedicated to Graeme Base's wife. He has lived in Australia since 1966. He graduated from Swinburne College of Art in Melbourne in 1978. He and his wife Robyn are currently renovating their home in Melbourne, Australia. They have no children.

Base "published his first book in 1983, and encountered international fame in 1987 with his amazing alliterate alphabet book, *Animalia*."

In 1989 the illustration for the L page in *Animalia*, "Lazy Lions Lounging in the Local Library," was chosen by the American Library Association to be used as one of the organization's posters.

Also in 1989, Graeme Base was chosen as the keynote speaker at the International Reading Association Conference.

1990 is "United Nations International Literacy Year." Graeme Base was commissioned to create the illustrations for the commemorative poster-sized announcement of the event. It features many of the animals seen in *Animalia*. The poster is being given to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Day Program. To get one, send \$6.00 to: ALA Graphics, Dept. L 90, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. Call: (800)545-2433 (outside of Illinois) or (800)545-2444 (in Illinois) for more information.

### Critic's Corner

*Animalia* took Graeme Base over three years to complete. "*Animalia* represent(s) a firm break with contemporary children's literature which since the 1950's has been characterized by bold, simple graphics and easy-to-understand text. Adults have assumed that such books are easy for children to grasp and appreciate, but Graeme Base cautions that they often fail to educate the reader. Says Base, 'I don't believe in talking down to children. I want to challenge them to rise to the occasion of my books and push them to learn new words and appreciate new nuances. I absolutely don't want to give readers something on a platter; I think people learn when they're pursuing a challenge and get bored if something is too easy.' "

Base created *Jabberwocky*, a book-form rendition of Lewis Carroll's poem of that name from the book *Through the Looking Glass*."

He has also written *Dragons, Draaks, and Beasties*, "a calendar with hosts of otherworldly creatures for every month of the year."

"In 1987 Base and his wife, Robyn, traveled extensively in Asia, Africa and Europe gathering ideas and images that crowd the pages of Base's newest book, *The Eleventh Hour: A Curious Mystery*."

### Objectives

1. To learn alphabetic clusters of words
2. To increase vocabulary development
3. To gain a different artistic perspective of illustrations

### Discussion Questions

1. Do the students feel "Animalia" is a real or make believe place?

2. Ask if all the creatures shown in the book are real. *(No, there is an alien, a mermaid, some unicorns, and many other make believe creatures shown in the drawings.)*
3. Discuss the actions the animals are shown doing. Are they all realistic? *(No, such as when hogs are riding horseback.)*
4. Notice that the book is dedicated to "Robyn." Do the students think that is Base's wife?
5. Notice the variety of text sizes and designs Base uses. How do they affect the book?
6. The illustrations are not only of words that have the natural phonetic sound of the letter being represented. Find examples. *(Such as the charm bracelet on the "C" page and the pheasant on the "P" page.)*
7. Comment on the translucent pictures on the butterfly's wing on the "B" page. Have the students discuss the way they think Base organized creating that part of the drawing. Then add the illustrations that are blended into the backgrounds of the "A" and "E" pages, along with those drawn into the white cap waves on the "N" page.
8. Some letters were illustrated on the same page as others. *(Such as "N" and "O" being doubled up.)* Why do the students think Base did this?
9. Discuss the word "queuing." *(A common British word meaning "to wait in a line")*
10. Notice where Base has hidden himself on the "I" page. Could it be he is representing an inmate?
11. Point out the tiny pictures in the oval decoration sections of the wall on the "P" page. Do the students think such a wall exists?
12. On the "T" page the time 10:20 is shown as 10.20. Why?
13. Explain that on the "V" page the vegetables thrown onto the stage are to be labeled as a group, not named individually. Discuss any similar pictures.
14. Although the pictures are similar, on the "T" page there are tepees represented, and on the "W" page there are wigwams. Discuss any other similar duplicate pictures. *(On the "K" page there is a kangaroo, on the "W" page a wallaby.)*
15. Ask how the students feel about Base's clever "X words."
16. The British spelling of "yoghurt" is used instead of yogurt. Discuss any other spelling differences found.
17. Notice how there are some words from the story text that are out of the reader's view and yet they are predictable. *(EX: the letters "i" and "n" are missing on the "S" page.)* How does this affect the story?
18. Discuss how most of the animals shown in the middle of the cover of the book are drawn in a natural pose. Compare those pictures to the ones in the square border pictures. How are they different? Which animals are shown in the same way both places?
19. Notice the letters of the alphabet are shown in alphabetical order on the cover of the book with each letter in the box in which the main book character written about in the text is shown. Discuss how this format can "introduce" the reader to the book.

### Student Activities

1. Read other books written and/or illustrated by Graeme Base.
2. Read other ABC and animal books. Sing the traditional "ABC" song.
3. Read other "hide-and-seek" type books such as the *Where's Waldo?* books by Martin Hanford or Hilary Knight's book, *Where's Wallace?*
4. Be sure and read the poem Base wrote that is on the title page. Look for the little boy who is hidden on every page. *(Hint: Not all of his body is always visible.)*
5. Keep a tally of the amount of various types of animals found. Use a blackboard that is divided in sections with the headings of: mammals, birds, amphibians, fishes, insects, reptiles, and make believe/mythical to list the names of various creatures found. First find the animal that is named in the text of that page, then look for others.
6. Notice the elephants on the "E" page have been given names. Give some of the other characters in the books names. *(Such as the hairy hogs who could be Harry, Horace, and Henry.)*
7. Graeme Base's dated signatures show that the book took him over three years to complete. Ask the students what projects they have done over three years. List which of Base's pictures were done during which year. Which year did he do the most? The least? Were pictures of one year similar?
8. Go to the zoo. Compare Base's pictures to the real thing. How do they rate? How many of the animals he shows are at the zoo? Make a tape recording of sound of the various creatures illustrated. Either use real recordings or create them. Have students listen to the tape and try to identify the creatures. Who guessed the most? Research the various natural origins of some of the animals shown. *(Ex: Panda from China, puffin from Arctic waters.)*
9. Use some of the varieties of print that Base uses in some other way. Maybe as a poster announcing a class play. Invent other designs for different texts of student-made books.
10. Eat some of the foods shown in the book. Some would need to be prepared, such as an onion omelette. Others: donuts, jelly, ice cream, a Kit Kat bar, asparagus, lemon, lettuce and lobster.
11. Notice in which time period the "K" page is set. *(looks like the*

*Roaring 20s*) Research this time period and what a “kiosk” is. (*a theatre*) Create a kiosk and have a Charleston dance contest and play jazz music of that era.

12. Sing the song, “Kookaburra Sits in the Old Gum Tree.”
13. Notice the Greek mythological creature, a Pegasus, a flying horse, on the “P” page and the character Icarus who is trying to fly on the “I” page. Research Greek mythology and look for other related pictures.
14. Make a list of literary characters found in the book (*Ex: the Mother Goose character Humpty Dumpty on the “H” page and the folktale character the Pied Piper on the “P” page.*) Think of others who would fit on a specific page well (*such as putting Red Riding Hood on the “R” page.*)
15. In the parade on the “P” page there are several careers represented such as a professor, the Pope, a politician, and a policeman. Look for other careers represented in the book. What do the students want to be in the future? Is their career choice shown?
16. Have pairs of students use the book for a game of “point and tell.” Have one student close their eyes and point to any place in the book. Have them open their eyes and name what they have pointed to. Race to see which person does the best.
17. Choose a letter of the alphabet and list as many things as you can that begin with that letter. Then look at Base’s illustration for that letter. How many of your ideas correspond?
18. Discuss how Base must have created this book. What resources do you think he had to use to find so many alphabetic groupings? Make a list of these possible resources and learn how to use them.
19. Create your own alliterate sentences and alphabet book (*Ex: Pink Pigs Panting after Playing Ping Pong.*)
20. Read other alliterate books such as *A Snake is Totally Tail* by Judi Barrett, illustrated by L.S. Johnson.

OR

Read the animal poems collected by William Cole in the book *An Arkful of Animals*. Write poems about animals.

21. Make a chart showing the nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs found in the book.
22. Play different instruments shown in the book such as a guitar, a gong, a piano. Create some “impossibly impractical instruments” and have a concert with them.
23. Research grapes and then eat some. Visit a greenhouse.
24. Research about the various monuments and famous buildings that are shown in the book such as the Leaning Tower of Pisa and the Parthenon, both on the “P” page.
25. Locate pictures of or the names of movie characters hidden in the book. Such as Frankenstein on the “F” page, Superman on the “S” page and Tarzan on the “T” page. List other movie characters and the page on which they could have been included.
26. Research quicksand which is shown on the “Q” page. (*A quail is sinking into it!*)
27. Notice the names on the street signs on the “R” page. They are names of artists. Learn about these artists. Research other artists whose names begin with the letter “R” in order to guess who the street sign that reads “Ra” could be for. Name other artists and study their works.
28. On the “U” page the university is the “University of Utopia.” Define what a utopia is and have students create their own “Utopia City.” Have them write a report explaining the qualities of their city and construct them with various art materials. Invite other classes to come see these.
29. Research zeppelins.
30. Research the countries from which different cultural things originate. Note the British guard on the “G” page, the double decker bus on the “D” page, and the rickshaws on the “R” page.
31. Try to say the text for each of the pages quickly over and over. Decide which of the pages has the text that is most like a tongue twister. Create tongue twisters. Illustrate these and place them in a folder. Tape record them and have the tape and folder out at a listening center.
32. Make a chart listing places that are named or shown in the book. Try dividing the information by places according to their continent. Research the various places and locate them on both a map and a globe (*Ex: Norway, Paris, Timbuktu, and Zaire.*)
33. Notice the flags of Ireland, Israel and Italy shown in the “I” page. Look at pictures of flags of other countries. Vote for a class favorite. Create a flag for “Animalia.”
34. Look at the titles of the books on the “L” page. Read some of them. Write limericks like Edward Lear’s.

### **Bibliography**

Bookjacket covers for *Animalia* and *The Eleventh Hour*, published by Harry N. Abrams Inc.

Some information obtained from a phone call to the publicity department of Harry N. Abrams Inc. and from “News from Abrams” data sheets about the release of the book, *The Eleventh Hour*.

# TEST

## Vocabulary Test

A. Synonyms are words that have similar meanings. Match the following words from the book *Animalia* listed on the left, to their synonyms listed on the right. Use a dictionary or thesaurus for help. Place the letter of the synonym in the space to the right of the numbered word.

- |                    |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| _____ 1. jovial    | a. gulping, eating      |
| _____ 2. plumage   | b. old, shaky, unsteady |
| _____ 3. basking   | c. cheerful, merry      |
| _____ 4. rickety   | d. feathers             |
| _____ 5. ingenious | e. sunbathing           |
| _____ 6. devouring | f. clever, smart        |

B. Now try to list to what each word refers in the book.

- |              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| 1. jovial    | _____ |
| 2. plumage   | _____ |
| 3. basking   | _____ |
| 4. rickety   | _____ |
| 5. ingenious | _____ |
| 6. devouring | _____ |

## Comprehension Test

Circle the correct answer for each of the questions below.

1. Who is lazily lounging in the local library?
  - a. leopards
  - b. lions
  - c. lizards
  
2. What were crimson cats trying to catch?
  - a. crayfish
  - b. cobras
  - c. crickets
  
3. Where were hairy hogs hurrying?
  - a. to a hotdog stand
  - b. homeward
  - c. heavenward
  
4. How were the two tigers getting to Timbuktu?
  - a. by train
  - b. by tugboat
  - c. by trolley
  
5. What were the youthful yaks doing in their yellow yachts?
  - a. yelling
  - b. yawning
  - c. yodeling

## ANSWER KEY

### Vocabulary Test

A. 1. c      2. d      3. e      4. b      5. f      6. a

### Comprehension Test

1. b      2. a      3. b      4. a      5. c

**TEACHER'S NOTES**



**PERMA-BOUND  
VANDALIA ROAD  
JACKSONVILLE, ILLINOIS  
62650**

**PHONE  
1-800-637-6581**