

***Josephine Wants To Dance***  
Written by Jackie French  
Illustrated by Bruce Whatley



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**Book Description**

From the award-winning duo of *Diary of a Wombat* comes another hilarious tale of a bush animal you'll never forget.

Josephine is a kangaroo - who loves to dance ballet. Her little brother, Joey, tells her that kangaroos don't dance, they hop - but Josephine continues to point her toes and leap through the air.

When a ballet troupe comes to town and both the lead ballerina and understudy are injured, Josephine's talents are called upon to help save the day. Can she do it and, more importantly, does it matter that she's a kangaroo?

A very funny picture book that looks at the importance of believing in yourself and realising your dreams.

Ages 4- 9

### **Author and illustrator biographies**

**Jackie French** is a full-time writer and lives in the Araluen Valley in New South Wales. Her book *Hitler's Daughter* won the Children's Book Council's Younger Reader Award in 2000 and her best-selling *Diary of a Wombat*, illustrated by Bruce Whatley, was named an Honour Book in the 2003 Children's Book Council Awards, as well as winning the Australian Booksellers' Association/Nielsen BookData Book of the Year Award. Jackie has won numerous other awards for her books, both here and overseas, and they have been translated into over twenty-one languages.

To learn more about the author follow these links:

<http://www.harpercollins.com.au/jackiefrench/>

<http://www.jackiefrench.com/>

**Bruce Whatley** is one of Australia's best-loved and most-respected author/illustrators. *The Ugliest Dog in the World* and *Tales from Grandad's Attic*, were named as Notable Books by the Children's Book Council in 1993 and 1996 respectively. *Detective Donut and the Wild Goose Chase*, co-written with Rosie Smith, was named an Honour Book by the Children's Book Council in 1997. He has illustrated over forty books, and his award winning collaboration with Jackie French has proved extremely popular.

To learn more about the illustrator follow these links:

[http://www.harpercollins.com/authors/12885/Bruce\\_Whatley/index.aspx](http://www.harpercollins.com/authors/12885/Bruce_Whatley/index.aspx)

<http://www.laterallearning.com/authors/whatley.html>

<http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/cmis/eval/fiction/authors/at23.htm#whatley>

### **Themes**

Believing in yourself, striving for and fulfilling dreams, ballet, dance, performance.

### **Characters**

Josephine, Joey, other animals, the director, the costume designer, the ballerinas, the audience.

### **Reading together**

- Discuss the front cover to stimulate interest in the story before reading.
- Read the book to the whole class as a daily shared reading; stop at key moments to discuss events, characters, issues, language features.
- Students to check their predictions as you read - ask them to note surprises as well as things they expected.
- Students to construct character and theme wall charts.

- Students to keep a record of interesting words and phrases and use them in their own sentences.
- Ask students to explain how the book made them feel. Happy? Hopeful?
- What sort of place do the students think Shaggy Gully is? Describe it. Would you like to live there? Do you think the characters from Jackie and Bruce's other books *Diary of a Wombat* and *Pete the Sheep* might live there too?
- How many characters do you recognise from Jackie and Bruce's other picture books?

### **After reading**

Activities during this phase involve students in analysis, synthesis and creative exploration. After reading, students could answer some of the following questions and then undertake some of the activities below.

### **Discussion questions**

- What did Josephine love to do?
- Who said kangaroos don't dance and how did Josephine respond?
- Josephine learnt how to point her toes from the \_\_\_\_\_.
- Who showed her how to soar to the music of the wind?
- What was Josephine's dream?
- Where did Josephine find a poster about the ballet?
- What did Josephine say after she saw the poster?
- A week later, Josephine went into town. Describe how she got there and what she did once there?
- After watching the dancers rehearse, Josephine was inspired to \_\_\_\_\_ at night.
- Why was the ballet company in trouble on the first day of the performance?
- Which injuries affected the prima ballerina and the understudy? What other things might have gone wrong?
- How did Josephine respond to the ballet company's problems?
- What did the director say about Josephine?
- Who prepared Josephine's costume for the ballet performance?
- Which words would you use to describe Josephine's performance?
- In the beginning of the performance, how did the audience respond to Josephine? Then what happened?
- Describe some of the faces in the audience?
- How did Josephine feel at the end of the performance and why did she finally feel like a real dancer?
- What followed the ballet performance?

### **Further language activities**

- Children to create a self-portrait and add five words to describe the things they like about themselves.
- Tape children reading the story.

- Construct a story map, retelling or summary of the story to share different interpretations of the text.
- Undertake research into an issue raised in the text.
- Children present a reading of their favourite passage from the text, giving reasons for their choice.
- Discuss connections with other shared texts with a similar message. (See book list at the end of these notes.)
- Discuss what would happen if the characters in the text were placed in a new situation.
- Discuss the author's purpose in writing the text and the message she wanted to convey.
- Interview characters from the text (in role) and find out how they felt.
- Create a class phrase collage of extracts from the text and use these phrases to create spelling and sentence structure games.
- Interview an older or younger reader about the text.
- Compose a poem using one of the themes from the book.
- Study other books by the author and illustrator.
- Research and write a biography about one of the members of the Australian Ballet.

### **SOSE activities**

- Children to discuss their aspirations for the future and then investigate a special interest, creating a project or presentation on their interest and the potential for a future career.
- Discuss non-mainstream jobs such as that of a ballet dancer. Find out about the difficulties of training and travelling as a full-time ballet dancer.
- Brainstorm other unusual interests, hobbies or careers. Talk about the sorts of things children do as after school activities. What makes these activities special and can children imagine them as a career?
- Read about, visit or watch a video of the ballet and write a report on what you've learnt. (See web links at the end of these notes.)
- "Put your character shoes on" and write about how Josephine might have felt when she became the lead dancer in the ballet.
- Discuss the different animals in the book. Research your favourite animal and create an illustrated and informative poster describing the animal's habitat, diet, and daily life and present it to the class.
- Mini facts can be collected on little cards and stuck on photos or illustrations of Australian animals.
- Investigate animal movement and the purpose of dance-like movement as ritual or courtship behaviour in animals and birds.
- Discuss issues related to believing in yourself and following your dreams. Engage children in a discussion about the things they like to do and the effects peer pressure might have on their decisions.

## Arts activities

- Redesign the cover of the text.
- Ask the children to design a pair of super fantastic ballet shoes for an Australian animal. They can then write about the special affects these shoes have on the animal's life. E.g. they might be able to run faster, jump higher etc.
- Older children can design whole outfits with the same intention. They can write about the special powers or the advantages of wearing these clothes. Ask them to write a short piece that they can then use to sell the idea of their outfit to the class.
- Groups could be given newspaper, fabric, ribbons, collage materials and garbage bags and asked to make their own dance costumes to model.
- Download the application form for *Josephine Wants to Dance: the play* from the HarperCollins website and perform for parents and friends. Children assist in making props and costumes for the play.
- Make animal masks or draw animals onto a card to hang around the neck for role-play activities.
- Ask children to paint or collage a scene from the story for a wall story.
- Paint or illustrate a portrait of Josephine or the audience dancing at the end of the story. Experiment with different medium such as pastel, charcoal, watercolour etc.
- Look at famous paintings of ballet dancers and discuss.
- Create a class dance based on another story and perform for other classes.
- Explore other forms of dance and illustrate a poster depicting the different kinds or a favourite one.
- Construct a portrait gallery of characters from the text

## Useful resources and links

### Ballet

[http://www.australianballet.com.au/education/balletlibrary\\_whatisballet.htm](http://www.australianballet.com.au/education/balletlibrary_whatisballet.htm)

[http://encyclopedia.kids.net.au/page/ba/Ballet\\_dance](http://encyclopedia.kids.net.au/page/ba/Ballet_dance)

### Australian native animals

<http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/npws.nsf/Content/Native+animal+fact+sheets+by+title>

<http://www.zooquarium.com.au/natives.htm>

<http://ausinternet.com/ettamogah/kids.htm>

[http://education.qut.edu.au/~masters/EC\\_projects/Abeya/assignment.htm](http://education.qut.edu.au/~masters/EC_projects/Abeya/assignment.htm)

Australian animal word search

<http://ausinternet.com/ettamogah/search.htm>

**Craft**

Make a hopping kangaroo

<http://www.wangps.vic.edu.au/kangaroo.htm>

<http://www.kangaroo-industry.asn.au/curr/techvis/Techno.html>

Make some of the costumes suggested in the play version of Josephine.

**Books**

**Jackie French and Bruce Whatley picture book collaborations**

*Diary of a Wombat*

*Pete the Sheep*

**Coming soon:**

*Shaggy Gully Times*

**Self-esteem**

*Arthur* by Amanda Graham

*Musical Harriet* by Meredith Costain

*The Most Colourful Frog in the World* by Julie D. Morris

*Hippos Can Swim* by Pablo Bernasconi

**Ballet**

*I Wish I'd Danced with Anna Pavlova* by Carol Hughes

*Angelina Ballerina* series by Katharine Holabird

*Inside the Australian Ballet* by Diana Lawrenson

## Activity masters

**Please use these activity masters for the following five activities.**

- Cloze Activity
- Complete the sentences
- Vocabulary list for word study
- Word search
- Crossword puzzle

## Cloze activity

**Cut out the sentences and place the words in the correct order.**

with the She brolgas. Bounced
She the leapt lyrebirds. With
Josephine on dancing. kept But
watched She dancers the hours. For
role? Who dance lead will the
kangaroo stage. There's on a the
dress kangaroo! can't a I
magnificent A dancer! truly

### Complete the sentences

- 1) Josephine whirled like the clouds \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) The emus showed her how to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3) But she still \_\_\_\_\_ of somehow finding \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4) A week later Josephine \_\_\_\_\_ into town.
- 5) Who will \_\_\_\_\_ the lead role?
- 6) Who else can leap so \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7) There's a \_\_\_\_\_ on the stage!
- 8) The \_\_\_\_\_ quickly altered a tutu for Josephine.
- 9) I'm going to \_\_\_\_\_ than any other dancer in the world.
- 10) She twirled through the air like \_\_\_\_\_.



## Vocabulary list

**Use these words to create flash cards, make sentences, to play spelling games and more.**

E.g. choose a word and ask groups of three students to make as many words as possible in three to five minutes. Share with the class and place the lists up around the room.

**understudy** = under, study, dust, stud, trusty, trust, udder, sturdy, yes, rest etc.

Josephine	pirouetted	swishing
Joey	curtsied	
lyrebird	performance	
brolga	ballerina	
emu	understudy	
eagle	prima	
soar	stage	
toes	director	
wind	wardrobe	
clouds	costume	
gully	designer	
trees	orchestra	
dance	audience	
jump	silk	
ballet	roses	
tutu	bounding	
spun	pouncing	
swirled	thumping	

**Josephine wants to Dance - Word Search**

a n i r e l l a b c z d b p a  
e s g c p b g d n i w e g i r  
j n n n a e i u e x b s n r t  
s a i l i r r c l o o i i o s  
d w l h e c n f r l p g p u e  
a e i c p e n d o u y n m e h  
t m t r i e r u n r p e u t c  
c o i d l a s d o s m r h t r  
r u r w e e o u b t a t e o  
s a r m p r d n j e h a n d t  
e d j t s b o u n d i n g c r  
s n u t s d r i b e r y l e e  
o b u o o i k m c o s t u m e  
r d m p l e e a g l o r b m s  
y e o j s c s d e a g l e p e

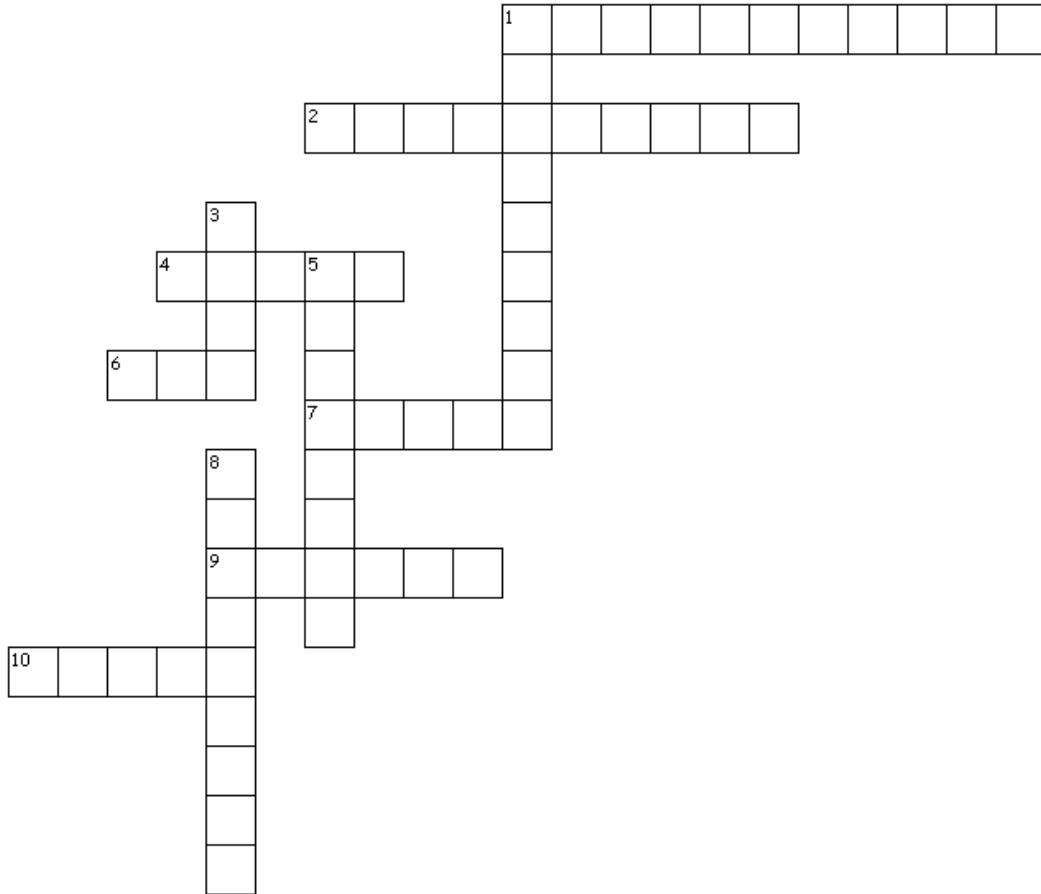
audience  
ballerina  
ballet  
bouncing  
bounding  
brolga  
clouds  
costume  
curtsied

dance  
designer  
director  
eagle  
emu  
gully  
joey  
josephine  
lyrebird

orchestra  
performance  
pirouetted  
prima  
roses  
spun  
stage  
swirled  
thumping

toes  
trees  
tutu  
understudy  
wardrobe  
wind

## Josephine Wants to Dance Crossword



### **Across**

1. An event in which one group of people performs for another group of people.
2. Someone who replaces the leading person in a dance or play if the lead is unable to perform.
4. A large ditch or small valley created when running water erodes the land.
6. The largest ground-dwelling bird native to Australia.
7. A large bird of prey.
9. A gesture of greeting, in which a woman bends her knees while bowing her head.
10. A form of movement.

### **Down**

1. One of the most famous ballet movements where the dancer spins around on one leg.
3. A type of frilly skirt often worn as dancewear in the ballet.
5. Another ground-dwelling bird known for its ability to mimic sounds.
8. A group of musicians with different instruments playing together.

## ***Josephine Wants to Dance Crossword - Solution***

### **Across**

1. Performance
2. Understudy
4. Gully
6. Emu
7. Eagle
9. Curtsey
10. Dance

### **DOWN**

1. Pirouette
3. Tutu
5. Lyrebird
8. Orchestra