

The World That We Want by Kim Michelle Toft
University of Queensland Press, 0 7022 3248 3 Hb

The World That We Want is a picture book structured on a modified 'This is the House that Jack Built' formula. It is a satisfying device, which works well for this particular book as the cumulative nature of the story makes it perfect for reading aloud at the same time emphasizing the interdependency of all living things. Toft's 'house' is the tropical rainforest of Northern Queensland and Jack and his various co-inhabitants of the house are the animals, birds and fish that live in the forest and related habitats.

Beginning with the skies over the adjacent ocean, moving to, and through, the forest via a river down to mangroves; onto the beach and out to the reef and atolls and ocean the text moves to a rhythm of cumulative interdependency. The accompanying illustrations are alive with creatures that inhabit each habitat; every fourth double-page spread an accumulation of the habitats shown to date, until immediately following the ocean, the book opens into a four-page-spread that celebrates the diversity of life of the whole. A five page wrap-up gives easily followed keys to identification of the animal life of each habitat accompanied by explanatory notes.

The illustrations have been produced in Toft's trademark silk paintings which give an additional sheen and depth of colour to the work

Themes:

- The need to support and protect the world that we want, and need, by:
 - encouraging Diversity of life;
 - recognising wet rainforests and adjacent coastal areas;
 - sustaining ecosystems by being aware of how they work and by protecting them from damaging influences including the destruction of habitat by clearing, pollution and introducing non-indigenous species.
- To celebrate the unique flora and fauna of the North Queensland rainforest.

After reading/sharing the book:

Research:

1. The animals featured. Students can choose one or more animals, research its physical characteristics, habits, and habitat and write a report, including a drawing, picture or photograph.
2. The water cycle from ocean to ocean
3. One ecosystem and work out why it has developed as it has:
 - For example, mangroves
 - exist in brackish water, therefore need a mechanism to cope with salt;
 - exist in areas affected by tides, therefore need to be able to cope with being partially submerged at times

- are inhabited by fish, birds and animals that have either adapted to the special conditions or take advantage of those conditions. For example Fiddler Crabs burrow into the sand closing a door over them when the tide comes in; many fish breed in mangrove swamps because of the security offered by the root systems and because of the nutrient rich waters. Other animals are drawn to the area because it offers suitable conditions for nesting, hunting, etc.

Share results by displaying all work on the classroom or library wall or posting results onto the school website

Art:

Drawing:

Produce sketches of animals and plants from all the habitats depicted in the book. Invite an artist to the class to demonstrate silk painting and help students produce one piece.

Craft:

Make models of the animals, birds and fish mentioned in the book (and add others if wished) and place them in dioramas of each ecosystem.

Make half-masks of the birds and fish from the book. For example, bird masks could end above the student's eyes and have a beak protruding out over their nose.

English:

Write a short poem about any of the animals in the books.

Drama/oral presentations

After completing research into the various animals and ecosystems divide the class into nine groups each one responsible for one of the habitats shown in the book. Each group appoints a narrator. Other students choose one animal and present a short monologue from its viewpoint. With help from the librarian identify poems, folktales or Dreaming Stories about the animals.

For example:

Narrator: I am the air that circles the earth. I am made up of different gases, one of which is oxygen; and another is carbon dioxide. All living creatures breathe in oxygen and expel carbon dioxide. Trees absorb the carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen. Neat, hey!
As well as gases I hold the water that has evaporated from the ocean and other large bodies of water and carry it with me until I drop it. In Northern Queensland that is mainly over the rainforest and I help to keep it strong and healthy.
Here are some of the creatures that live in my domain.
Please welcome the Australian Pelican (can wear mask made in craft)

Aust. Pelican: Good morning, I am the largest pelican in the world. I have a wingspan that can grow to 3 metres and I can weigh up to 8 kilograms. The reason I can fly when I am so large is that my skeleton is very light. I have a huge beak and eat mainly fish. I can live up to 20 years. I live near water.
Here's a poem you might like to hear about me:

(Recite a poem written by one of the students about pelicans or choose a poem such as Max Fatchen's *Inside Story*)

Narrator: Thank you Pelican. And now a round of applause for the Sea Eagle...

Students construct remainder of their presentation.

Junior school students can present a cumulative vocal performance of the text accompanying a visual presentation of the book. Using an OHP of each double page illustration would make the presentation more exciting.

Start with one child reading the first page, different children introduce each of the following habitats joined by the preceding children as their section is repeated.

For example

Voice One: This is the air that circles the world that we want

Voice Two: This is the forest that filters the air (*Voice one joins*) that circles the world that we want

Voice Three: This is the River that weaves through the forest (*Voice two joins*) that filters the air (*Voice one joins*) that circles the world that we want.

...

Science:

Living science:

The author has described a world that exists and which is one we want to survive for the good of the area and the world in general.

Research the health of the various habitats shown in the book and list some of the dangers they are facing:

Examples:

Reef: The Great Barrier Reef is in danger from bleaching because of climate change and from being covered by mud and sand from run-off from the mainland. Fertilizer run-off containing excess nitrogen is unbalancing the ecosystem of the reef. Sea creatures are threatened by pollutants; floating discarded fishing nets can entangle whales, turtles and fish causing them to die by drowning; turtles die by swallowing plastic bags; corals are broken by boats; over-fishing is putting some species in danger of extinction; oil spills are devastating to all sea life.

Rainforest: Over clearing may cause loss of habitat with resulting loss of species and damage to the ecosystem. Introduced species may take over nesting places of native species and reduce their food supply. Rivers may become polluted, etc.

Maths

Compare the sizes of birds or fish that occur in the book.

Mapping

Map the rainforests of Australia (note: some are not tropical). Highlight the rainforest depicted in **The World That We Want**