

## Teacher's Guide

for use with a performance of

# GOBSMACKED!

and for use with a unit on Australia

by Lynn Ruehlmann, storyteller

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**About Storyteller Lynn Ruehlmann:**

Lynn has been a professional storyteller since 1990. She has taught storytelling at Old Dominion University, she was named Artist of the Year by Young Audiences of Virginia, and she won a Folio Award for Best Actress in a Comedy. Her CDs, "Spy! The Story of Civil War Spy Elizabeth Van Lew," "It Happened in the White House," and "Mischief: Tales of a Daydreamy Child" have won four national awards.

1. One of the delightful creatures unique to Australia is the wombat.



You can see by this photo that wombats are round and cuddly, and that they don't move very quickly!

Wombats are herbivores, which means that they eat grasses, sedges, herbs, tree barks and roots and soft mosses. They are marsupials and give birth to a single joey, or baby. The joey uses its mother's pouch for 6-10 months.

Wombats in general move slowly, but when they are threatened they can run as fast as 25 miles per hour, but only for one and a half minutes!

Wombats are nocturnal, which means that most of the day they sleep in their burrows. In the evening or nighttime they go out to look for food. Because they have to dig their burrows, they have very long claws. So watch out ... they may be very shy, but they can kick with both of their hind feet at the same time!

2. The audience saw an emu egg during the show. Which of these is the emu?

From left to right they are:  
Ostrich, emu, pheasant, chicken



3. Language. Australians speak English, but they have some charming words all their own.

Gobsmacked means surprised or amazed.

Back in a tic means return quickly.

Sprogs are children.

A lie down is a nap.

If someone is fair dinkum, they are really genuine and trustworthy

Tucker is food

A bickie is a biscuit

4. The Aboriginal people or Aborigines are the native people of Australia. They date back 40,000 years. When they talk about long, long ago at the beginning of time, they call it The Dreamtime or The Dreaming.



Here are two examples of Dot Paintings in the style of Aboriginal paintings.

Originally, Aboriginal men would draw in the ground with a stick while they were telling a story. These drawings were actually maps of the landscape as well as story illustrations.

Below are a few symbols and their meanings. Students can make their own dot paintings by choosing symbols for a story they want to illustrate. Start with paper that is black or dark brown. Using a dowel or a pencil eraser, dip into poster paint and then press it onto the paper, one dot at a time, to paint in the story with the symbols.

