



NSS Activity Ideas: Teacher Librarians & Primary Teachers (Foundation – Year 6)

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Use #LibraryStorytime to share your National Simultaneous Storytime (NSS) events and follow readers across the country.



About the Book

I am a collector. Always looking, finding... and keeping! This picture book stars a beautiful Satin Bowerbird on the search for blue! It's a moving story of longing and connection, that unfolds as the bowerbird's search sends him soaring across the sea, sky and city. He swoops and snatches vibrant treasures for his collection, and soon his 'bower' attracts something greater and more fulfilling than he could ever have imagined.

Story Themes

- Emotions (happiness, joy, sadness, loneliness, longing)
- Persistence
- Sustainability/ recycling
- Natural & constructed environments
- Plastic pollution
- Friendship/ companionship
- Love
- Goal setting
- Bird behaviours
- Bird habitats
- Counting
- Patterns
- Collections

Overview of Text Features

Alliteration:

- Swooping, snatching, scouring, scavenging
- Peeping, peering
- Searching, seeking
- Sliding, slipping
- Wanting and wandering
- Fluttering, fidgeting
- Bibs and bobs building
- Smiling, soaring
- Floating, feeling



Preposition Words:

- Over
- Into
- Through
- Of
- Above
- Up
- Down
- At

Adjectives:

- Perfect
- Magnificent
- Brilliant
- Vibrant
- Wonderfulness
- Strong
- Marvellous
- Icy
- Sparkling
- Glistening
- Strong
- Tiny
- Full
- Crackling
- Rustling

Rhyming Words:

- Blue/ hue
- Prancing/ dancing
- Cuddling/ snuggling



Colour Language:

- Cobalt
- Hue
- Blue
- Grey
- Light
- Deeper

Active Verbs (Bird Behaviours):

- Looking
- Finding
- Keeping
- Sliding
- Fidgeting
- Tinkering
- Sharing
- Swooping
- Snatching
- Scouring
- Freefalling
- Gliding
- Weaving
- Nesting
- Peeping
- Peering
- Soaring
- Fluttering
- Diving
- Sinking
- Cuddling

Characters:

- Male Bowerbird
- Female Bowerbird
- Chicks



Activity 1: Multimodal Storytelling Puppet Theatre

- Be a [visual literacy critic](#) by closely viewing story setting illustrations in the book- sky, city of Sydney, sea and bower. Build [visual metalanguage](#) by analysing ways the author uses different colours to influence the mood of the story e.g. pink for happiness; grey for sadness/loneliness; and diverse shades of blue. Explore how the author has used a range of visual semiotic (*meaning making*) choices including symbols, lines, angles, salience, vectors and size to represent the characters and events in the story e.g. curved lines to indicate the bird is flying; animal tracks to draw attention (*reading path*) to the image of the sad bowerbird in the bottom right-hand corner of the page. Aura Parker shares details about her process of crafting both the text and illustrations in this [video](#). Create a [Venn diagram](#) to compare and contrast the use of [visual meaning](#) with other picture books.
- Provide students with watercolour paints, markers and paper to re-create story settings, considering the [composition and structure of images](#), and paste onto cardboard boxes to use as backdrops for a puppet theatre. Use the [Bowerbird Blues colouring page](#) to create character puppets by attaching to craft sticks, together with other hand-drawn moments from the story. In small groups, compose a [digital multimodal text](#) by filming your re-telling of the storyline in a puppet theatre performance.

Curriculum mapping (English, Visual Arts)

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|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • ACEL1580 | • ACEL1581 | • ACEL1604 | • ACEL1795 | • ACAVAM108 |
| • ACEL1584 | • ACEL1586 | • ACEL1794 | • ACEL1618 | • ACAVAM111 |



Activity 2: Emotive Stories and Shape Poetry

- Engage in conversations about the range of emotions experienced throughout the character's journey in the story by exploring language patterns (alliteration, rhyme, repetition) and illustrations. Ask students to find words that describe what the Bowerbird was searching for and the different feelings he had along the way e.g. *'But something is missing'*; *'Into wanting and wandering'*; *'Smiling, soaring'*. Reflect upon why the Bowerbird had *'The Blues'* and how he may have felt at the end of the story - *'Was he content? How does the author portray this emotion?'*.
- Younger students can further respond to the literature by comparing the Bowerbird character's adventures to their own friendship or family experiences. Use the [emotive writing worksheet](#) to create a short story about someone you love and reasons why they enjoy spending time with them, together with an illustration for your story.
- Older students can create shape poetry by using this [worksheet](#) to write a poem about the story's themes of companionship and love, including an appreciation of the natural world. Arrange words, lines and spaces to resemble a heart shape. Experiment with [literary devices](#) by studying ways emotive imagery is featured in the book e.g. *'Oh, how I love the sky... and moving through the marvellous BLUE!'*; *'Fluttering, fidgeting in all this grey'*.

Curriculum mapping (English, Health & Physical Education)

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|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| • ACPPS005 | • ACELY1661 | • ACELY1651 | • ACEL1581 | • ACEL1611 |
| • ACPPS020 | • ACEL1605 | • ACELY1670 | • ACEL1596 | • ACEL1617 |



Activity 3: Bower Building STEM Challenge

- The Satin Bowerbird is an amazing artist and architect who builds and decorates his 'bower'. Research [facts](#) about the [natural habitat](#) of this Australian bird species and view an [informative video](#) showing how several Bowerbird species cleverly construct different shaped [bower](#) structures using sticks. Discuss elements of construction and engineering such as building for stability, incorporating mortar for strength and making shapes with different materials. Examine this [author video](#) about the ways male bowerbirds collect and carefully arrange blue coloured natural and processed objects around their bower to attract a female. Engage students in conversation about the impact of plastic pollution on the environment, and sustainability concepts of recycling and upcycling waste.
- Next, students can work in pairs to design and engineer their own 3D model 'bower' using natural, recycled and craft materials (e.g. pop sticks, twigs, leaves, masking tape, plasticine, milk bottle lids, patty pans, ribbon, pipe cleaners, straws, pom poms). Provide paper for students to first draw a plan for their 'bower' and then follow when building their structure. Ask students to consider the aesthetics of their design by arranging items in different patterns around the construction e.g. spirals, rows or waves. Older students can also propose actions to reduce plastic pollution, preventing harm to both sea and land animals and the impact on ecosystems. *What upcycled items could you make?* For example, turn a plastic bottle into a hanging pot plant or collect bottle caps to make a mosaic.

Curriculum mapping (Science, Mathematics, Humanities & Social Sciences)

- [ACSSU211](#)
- [ACSSU031](#)
- [ACSSU074](#)
- [ACMMG063](#)
- [ACHASS1081](#)
- [ACIS025](#)
- [ACSHE035](#)
- [ACMNA005](#)
- [ACHASS1042](#)
- [ACHASSK113](#)



Upcycled mosaic artwork using plastic bottle caps. Image: Courtesy of Pxhere

Activity 4: Design a Sustainability Board Game

- Invent a board game in small groups. Ask students to create a design brief, write the rules, draw the art on a sheet of A2 cardboard and make the pieces. Consider ways to count and collect objects (just like the Bowerbird in the story) as part of your game. Perhaps the winner could be the first person to collect enough items for their 'bower'? Consider- *How can you include the natural and constructed environments featured in the book e.g. city, sea and sky? What sustainability messages will you include? What will the board look like? What colours and images will you use? What perspective will you draw them from? How many players is it for? What challenges will players come across? Do you need other items to play (e.g. dice, cards, counters)?* Play some popular board games for inspiration!
- Students can use the [Bowerbird Blues colouring page](#), [printable illustrations](#) or [stickers](#) to create pieces and cards for their board game. Older students can use digital software such as [Canva templates](#) or PowerPoint to design and build their game by using symbols, shapes, images and sound. Encourage students to test their game designs and modify along the way by asking peers for feedback about what they liked and what they found hard to understand.

Curriculum mapping (Mathematics, Technologies, Health & Physical Education)

- [ACMNA002](#)
- [ACMNA054](#)
- [ACMMG065](#)
- [ACMMG084](#)
- [ACTDEP006](#)
- [ACTDEP015](#)
- [ACTDEP025](#)
- [ACTDIP019](#)
- [ACPPSO33](#)
- [ACPPSO04](#)

