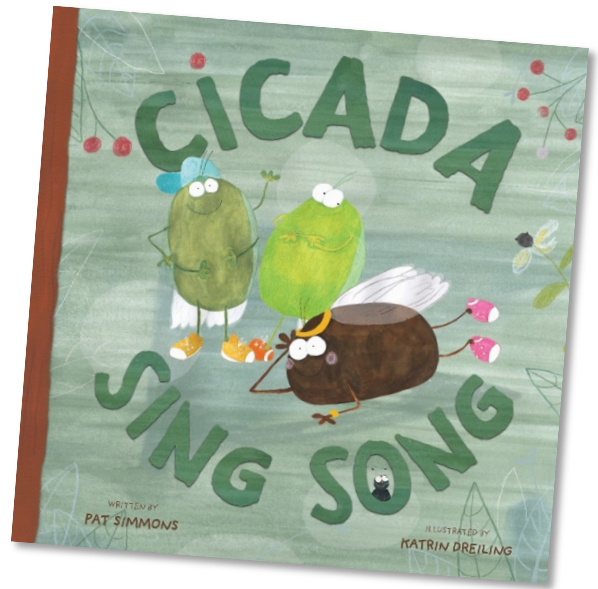


## TEACHING NOTES: CICADA SING SONG

Written by Pat Simmons  
Illustrated by Katrin Dreiling  
Published by Little Steps Publishing

Notes prepared by Kellie Nissen (Just Right Words)



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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Living on the south coast of New South Wales with her menagerie of critters, Pat Simmons' world is all about reading, writing and animals. Her books almost always feature animals – cats, dogs, snails and lots and lots of insects.



### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Born in Germany and influenced by the European literature she grew up with, Katrin Dreiling is a self-taught artist known for her quirky style. She believes children are the perfect grown-ups and creates illustrations to inspire them to go out and be creative themselves.



### BOOK SUMMARY

If you live anywhere near cicada habitat, you'll know how noisy they can be but did you know how many different types of cicadas there are? Were you aware of their lifecycle and the dangers they face? Join Pat Simmons as she explores cicada life in fact and fiction and through a unique blend of haiku and rap. Meet the Floury Baker, the Green Grocer, the Orange Drummer and a host of other cicadas as they get their tymbals ready for the Festival of Sound.

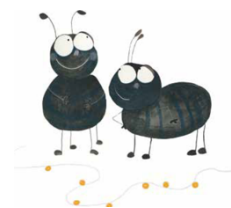
### HOW TO USE *CICADA SING SONG* AND THESE TEACHING NOTES

*Cicada Sing Song* is perfect just to read (and reread) and enjoy for its lyrical and rhythmic nature and quirky illustrations. Children may also be intrigued to follow the secondary story of the ant colony as they prepare for the 'sing-song show'.

Pitched at an audience of children aged 5-9 years, *Cicada Sing Song* can of course be enjoyed by all ages, however, these teaching notes are designed to cater for students in Foundation (Kindergarten) to Year 3, according to the Australian Curriculum.

Teachers can use *Cicada Sing Song* in a variety of ways, selecting relevant activities from the following notes and adapting them to suit their individual classes. Possibilities include:

- poetry study – specifically haiku and rap
- visual literacy – the ant story
- a unit in The Arts – drama, music and visual arts
- hook into a unit of study in biological sciences – living things
- lead into a unit of study in geography – habitat and the geography of Australia.



## LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

The story and poetry in *Cicada Sing Song* can be used to inspire lessons and facilitate learning for primary school and early secondary school students in all grades. The activities contained in this teaching resource are designed specifically for the Foundation to Year 3 Primary School levels, although are easily modified for older students. All activities are linked directly to the Australian Curriculum and include:

- General Capabilities (literacy, critical and creative thinking)
- Cross-curriculum Priorities (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, sustainability)
- Learning Areas (English; The Arts: Drama, Visual Art, Music; Science: Biological Sciences; HASS: Geography)

Specific outcomes are identified in square brackets after each activity and give the content description code, e.g. [ACELA1478].

Each content description code is marked according to year level

- Foundation - F: [ACELA1234]
- Year 1/2 - 1-2: [ACELA1234]
- Year 3 - 3: [ACELA1234]

This code can be entered into the search bar on the Australian Curriculum website for more information: <https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/>



## TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES THAT SING

Picture books are not just for young children. There are multiple opportunities to read a picture book to and with all year levels, whether for enjoyment, to study a written form or to introduce a concept.



Regardless of what approach you are taking with *Cicada Sing Song*, the following 'before reading' activities will be useful to orient students to the book and the style of writing.

Check out the cover:

- **Identify** the title, author, illustrator, publisher, blurb and any other relevant information.
- **Predict** what you think the story will be about. Is the book fiction or non-fiction? How can we tell? Is the story going to be serious or humorous? Flick through the book and use clues from the front and back covers, illustrations, words that jump out and what you know about the author and the illustrator to help with predictions and to justify responses.

English (Literacy) F: [ACELY1648]; 1: [ACELY1658]; 2: [ACELY1668]; 3: [ACELY1678]

Draw on prior knowledge and connections:

- **Discuss** different types of poetry. What do students already know about haiku and rap?
- **Brainstorm** known information about cicadas.
- **Share** experiences with cicadas and other insects (including personal encounters and books read).

Research:

- **Read** other books by Pat Simmons and Katrin Dreiling.
- **Watch** videos about cicadas and other minibeasts.
- **Observe** cicadas or other minibeasts in your area.
- **Ask questions** about cicadas and other minibeasts

Science (Inquiry Skills) F: [AC SIS014]; 1: [AC SIS024]; 2: [AC SIS037]; 3: [AC SIS063]

# English

## RESPONDING TO LITERATURE

**Read** *Cicada Sing Song* and **discuss** reactions to the story, acknowledging differing opinions. Use some of the following prompts:

- *Cicada Sing Song* made me feel ... because ...
- While I was listening, I wanted to ...
- Now, I want to know more about ...
- I liked / didn't like the part of the story when ...
- My favourite cicada was ...
- [Cicada name] reminds me of ...
- The story made me think about ... [a different story, a particular event]
- I think *Cicada Sing Song* is about ...
- I think the author's intention was to ...



Accept all responses (even the negative ones) and encourage justification of opinions and deeper exploration of ideas with the use of relevant metalanguage.

English (Literature) F: [ACELT1577]; 1: [ACELT1582]; 2: [ACELT1589]; 3: [ACELT1596]

**Respond** to the text as a whole, or one specific haiku or rap, through another medium. For example:

- Draw a favourite part of the story.
- Create an invitation or flyer for the 'festival of sound'.
- Perform a selected haiku or rap.
- Write a newspaper article, letter, narrative continuing the story of one of the cicadas etc.
- Construct a new character (and write a haiku or rap to describe their role)
- Create a percussion piece to set the mood.

On completion, students should discuss or write a brief analysis of the reasons for their choices, or an explanation of their response.

English (Literature) F: [ACELT1783]; 1: [ACELT1583]; 2: [ACELT1590]; 3: [ACELT1598]

## EXAMINING LITERATURE

**Compare and contrast** the haiku form and the rap form Pat Simmons has used to tell this story. Is there a pattern to how they are used? Do they serve a specific purpose in the story? What are the similarities and differences between haiku and rap poetry?

English (Language) F: [ACELA1430]; 1: [ACELA1447]; 2: [ACELA1463]; 3: [ACELA1478]

**Identify and analyse** the use of rhyme, rhythm and other literary devices in different parts of the story.

- Locate rhyming words
- Classify and categorise types of rhyme (perfect, end, internal, near rhyme)
- Explore syllable or beat counts, clap rhythms
- Locate alliteration and onomatopoeia

Discuss the effects these devices have on the mood and pace of the story.

English (Literature) F: [ACELT1579]; 1: [ACELT1585]; 2: [ACELT1592]; 3: [ACELT1600]

**Discuss** the narrative elements of *Cicada Sing Song*. Consider the following:

- Characters – list the main characters and their features; are all the characters ‘written’ about?
- Setting – consider where in Australia the story might take place, what is the habitat, what time of year/day might it be?
- Plot – list the main events in the story; consider sub-plots (e.g. each cicada’s story, the ants)

**Create** character profiles (charts, labelled illustrations etc.)

**Describe** the sequence of events using a story map.

English (Literature) F: [ACELT1578]; 1: [ACELT1584]; 2: [ACELT1591]; 3: [ACELT1599]

**Classify** the information in *Cicada Sing Song* as ‘imaginative’ (fictional) or ‘informative’ (factual) For example:

- *Mantis waits, watches / crunchy, crispy cicadas / make a tasty meal* (A mantis eats cicadas – informative)
- *Cicadas searching / lots more choristers needed / safety in numbers* (Cicadas congregate and ‘sing’ together to confuse predators – informative)
- *Floury baker / cooking up a noise fest / baking my very best / recipe of cool sound / shaking up the soft ground* (imaginative)

How would students classify this book? Why? Where would it sit in the bookstore? Who is the audience?

Compare the text with other texts featuring cicadas or minibeasts. Is there more or less fact?

Make a glossary of technical words found in the story and display these on a word wall.

English (Literacy) F: [ACELY1645/1648]; 1: [ACELY1658]; 2: [ACELY1665/1668]; 3: [ACELY1678]

## CREATING TEXT

**Retell** the story, including key characters, setting and events:

- in written narrative form (either individually or as a class book)
- using a storyboard or 'beginning, middle, end' chart
- orally, or as an improvised dramatic performance
- as a Readers' Theatre
- using a digital platform, such as Puppet Pals or iMovie
- through drawing (e.g. as a class mural)
- from a different point of view, or in a different setting

English (Literature) F: [ACELT1580]; 1: [ACELT1586]; 2: [ACELT1593]; 3: [ACELT1601]

**Innovate** on a favourite section of *Cicada Sing Song*, experimenting with elements of structure, voice, imagery, word choice and purpose.

- Take on the role of a favourite character and have a conversation with other characters (either from *Cicada Sing Song* or another character in stories by Pat Simmons or Katrin Dreiling).
- Change one aspect of the story, add a new event or write a new ending.
- Move the story to the next level by adding sound effects or digital imagery.

English (Literature) F: [ACELT1831]; 1: [ACELT1832]; 2: [ACELT1833]; 3: [ACELT1791]

**Create** original written, oral or visual pieces using *Cicada Sing Song* as inspiration and incorporating digital technology.

- Illustrate and write about a day in the life of another insect.
- Add text to the ants' story ('told' visually throughout *Cicada Sing Song*).
- Compose a haiku or rap about another creature, real or imaginary.
- Present a news commentary on the 'festival of sound' or a documentary about the life of cicadas.

English (Literacy) F: [ACELY1651/1654]; 1: [ACELY1661/1664]; 2: [ACELY1671/1674];  
3: [ACELY1682/1685]



*Cicada Sing Song* can be used as a springboard to start a science unit of work on lifecycles of insects, the production of sound, how things move or for further investigation using science inquiry skills.

#### SCIENCE UNDERSTANDING: BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

**Read** the text of *Cicada Sing Song* and identify factual and fictional information about cicadas (as well as other featured minibeasts, including ants, mantis and snail, if relevant.)

**Create** a retrieval chart or list factual information under categories (appearance, behaviour, diet, habitat, needs and so on).

**Research** to find missing information about a cicadas in general, or a specific type of cicada. This may include watching a selection of the YouTube clips listed in the additional resources section of these notes.

**Observe** minibeasts in the local environment. Make sketches, record sounds and take images and notes of habitat.

**Present** collected information (e.g. a media presentation, diorama, artwork, story, report etc.)  
(Biological Sciences) F: [ACSSU002]; 1: [ACSSU017]; 2: [ACSSU030]; 3: [ACSSU044]

#### SCIENCE UNDERSTANDING: PHYSICAL SCIENCES (F-2 ONLY)

##### **Movement (Foundation, Year 2)**

- Ask students how they think cicadas move (discuss how they emerge from underground, how they move once above ground, flying).
- Watch a selection of YouTube clips (additional resources) and observe the movements of different insects. If possible, observe the movements of live samples.
- Compare and contrast the movements of different insects and draw conclusions about the reasons for the differences (e.g. size, shape, body features)
- Design a model of a cicada (or other insect) and describe how it moves.





## Sound (Year 1)

- Go on a 'sound walk' outside – what sounds can students hear? List them, including a description of the sound and where it seemed to come from. Ask students to classify these sounds according to whether they are made by nature or by humans (e.g. cars)
- Explore sound making – use instruments and other devices to make sound. How is this sound made? Explore the concept of vibration producing sound. Ask students to see if they can replicate some of the 'nature' sounds they heard.
- Watch relevant YouTube clips (additional resources) on how cicadas make their sounds.
- Discuss why cicadas 'sing'. Is this information told in *Cicada Sing Song*?

(Physical Sciences) F: [ACSSU005]; 1: [ACSSU020]; 2: [ACSSU033]

## SCIENCE INQUIRY SKILLS

**Ask questions** and **investigate** to find out the answers in areas including:

- general information about cicadas (e.g. Where do they live? How big are they?)
- how they make their sound
- how they move (e.g. how do they fly?)

These investigations may be through observation, research or making prototypes to explore sound or movement.

(Science Inquiry Skills) F: [AC SIS014/011]; 1: [AC SIS024/025]; 2: [AC SIS037/038]; 3: [AC SIS053/054]

**Discuss, represent and share observations** made when investigating questions. Ways to do this may include:

- creating a cicada habitat (a model or diorama)
- using lego technics or similar to design a moving insect
- writing a story or presenting a report from the point of view of a cicada
- producing a brochure or video explaining how to care for the cicada environment
- using unpitched percussion and found objects to replicate how a cicada makes its sound.

(Science Inquiry Skills) F: [AC SIS233/012]; 1: [AC SIS027/213/029]; 2: [AC SIS040/041/042];  
3: [AC SIS057/058/060]

# Geography

## WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF DIFFERENT PLACES?

**Read** *Cicada Sing Song* and pay particular attention to the setting. What features do students notice?

Where do they think this place may be?

**Look** at a range of different maps and discuss their features (e.g. labels, key, symbols etc.)

**Create** a map of the cicadas' habitat in *Cicada Sing Song* and add other features discovered through research and observation of local habitats.

**Describe** natural features observed during a nature walk.

**Identify** where cicadas are found on a map of Australia and label these areas. Ask why cicadas may not be found in certain areas.

**Locate and describe** other natural features in and around Australia, especially those in relation to cicada habitats.

Geography F: [ACHASSK015]; 1: [ACHASSK031]; 2: [ACHASSK047]; 3: [ACHASSK066]

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

This cross-curriculum priority can be explored separately or within other curriculum areas as follows:

## English

- Read *The Cicada Dreaming* and other Dreamtime stories you may find.
- Explore cicadas in dreamtime stories (see additional resources) as well as other folklore and compare these to *Cicada Sing Song* and other non-fiction texts featuring cicadas. Compare the purpose of these stories.

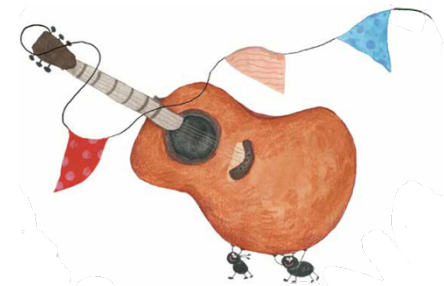


## Science

- Discuss the ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples care for living things.
- Explore the artwork and dance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to discover more about their observations of animal features.
- Explore the musical instruments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to investigate how they produced sound.
- Research instructive toys used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to investigate movement properties.

## Geography (+ The Arts and Literature)

- Read and view a range of Dreaming and Creation stories and discuss how the sense of place (setting) is portrayed.
- Investigate how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples represented features of place in artwork and other inscriptions, as well as through performance.



**Watch** a range of YouTube clips (or real-life observations if possible) showing the ways in which animals and insects move. Guide students to observe leg movements and direction, and to discuss the types of movements using descriptive vocabulary (e.g. smooth, jerky, jumping etc.)

**Explore** ways to replicate the movements of different animals in *Cicada Sing Song* (cicadas, mantis, ants, snail) using the body and the available space, or puppets.

**Experiment** with voice and expression to recite selected haiku and rap from *Cicada Sing Song*

The Arts (Drama) F-2: [ACADRM028]; 3: [ACADRM032]

**Discuss** how the story told through the haiku and rap could be adapted for a short performance. What would need to be modified? How many character parts would be needed? What about costuming, props, set and musical accompaniment? As a class, work on modifying the script.

**Rehearse and perform** the modified script. This may be a whole class performance or groups of students may be responsible for selected sections or haiku/rap.

The Arts (Drama) F-2: [ACADRM029]; 3: [ACADRM033]



**Compare & Contrast** different artworks (from different artists and cultures, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) that depict the natural world. The illustrations in *Cicada Sing Song* are very cartoon-like. Discuss how this adds to the story.

The Arts (Visual Art) F-2: [ACAVAM106]; 3: [ACAVAM110]

**Predict & visualise** what is going to happen the day after the 'Festival of Sound' – draw this. Draw what might have been happening the day before.

**Choose** a favourite haiku or rap to illustrate. Encourage exploration of different media and techniques and ask students to explain why a specific technique or media was chosen, and how the illustration adds to or emphasises the poem's message.

The Arts (Visual Art) F-2: [ACAVAM107]; 3: [ACAVAM111]

**Brainstorm** words to describe the Yellow Monday cicada as it is depicted in the story – appearance, personality, skills, behaviours/actions. Ask students to sketch their version of Yellow Monday. Do the same for Black Prince and other cicadas mentioned in *Cicada Sing Song*.

**Display** the created cicadas and other artworks as a class mural or collage depicting the 'Festival of Sound'. Discuss where the cicadas should be placed. What other elements are needed? How can the background be created?

The Arts (Visual Art) F-2: [ACAVAM108]; 3: [ACAVAM112]

### USING DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGIES IN VISUAL ART

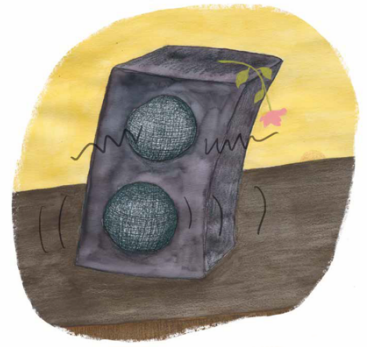
**Discuss** the features of the cicada.

**Brainstorm** materials that could be used to create a cicada sculpture.

**Design & construct** a giant cicada for the classroom, making sure it has moving parts.

Design and Technologies (Process and Production) F-2: [ACTDEP007]; 3: [ACTDEP016]





**Identify** the different instruments that appear in *Cicada Sing Song*.

**Develop** understandings of rhythm and beat. Clap out the rhythm in the rap and count haiku syllables.

**Investigate** the emergence of rap. Discuss its cultural background, purpose, meaning and performers. Compare rap to other forms of music, discussing the relevance to story and purpose.

**Explore** different styles of music. Which pieces of music, or particular instruments, could be used to accompany different parts of the story, or represent the various characters?

**Experiment** with body percussion, voice and unpitched percussion instruments, to create a soundscape to accompany *Cicada Sing Song*.

**Watch** YouTube clips about cicada sounds and songs. Discuss elements of music represented, such as pitch.

**Collaborate** with a small group, or the whole class, to create a 'cicada band'. Use body percussion, pitched and unpitched instruments.

The Arts (Music) F-2: [ACAMUM080, 081, 082]; 3: [ACAMUM084, 085, 086]



#### OTHER BOOKS BY PAT SIMMONS

- The Cat Thief (illustrated by Liz Duthie)
- Gargoyle's Garden
- George (illustrated by Katrin Dreiling)
- Little Spiral (illustrated by Patrick Shirvington)
- Ziggy's Zoo (illustrated by Vicky Pratt)

## OTHER BOOKS BY KATRIN DREILING

- A Perfect Pig (written and illustrated by Katrin Dreiling)
- If You Ever Meet a Skeleton (written by Rebecca Evans)
- Bedtime Daddy (written by Sharon Giltrow)
- The World's Worst Pirate (written by Michelle Worthington)
- Johnny's Beard (written by Michelle Worthington)
- How to Get a Fat Fairy Flying (written and illustrated by Katrin Dreiling)

## ONLINE RESOURCES

### More about Pat & Katrin

Pat Simmons' website: <https://www.patsimmonswriter.com.au/>

Katrin Dreiling's website: <https://www.katrindreiling.com/>

### Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander resources

The Cicada Dreaming: <https://starlore.com.au/2018/05/09/the-cicada-dreaming-tweed-caldera-australia/>

Traditional Aboriginal Foods: <http://www.watarrkafoundation.org.au/blog/traditional-aboriginal-foods>

### English

- Cicadas in folklore: <https://www.cicadamania.com/cicadas/category/folklore/>

### Science

- Billions of cicadas emerge after 17 years underground (YouTube):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpsIE8E7XZY&t=104s>
- Cicadas (Australian Museum): <https://australian.museum/learn/animals/insects/cicadas-superfamily-cicadoidea/>
- How a stick insect walks (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24P0NzjdBig>
- How animals move (Vimeo): <https://vimeo.com/41446127>
- How do cicadas make their sound? (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-nxPvIQHf0>
- Insects (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijfBNyBKQA>

### Music

- The song of summer: <https://www.lfwseq.org.au/cicadas-seq-song-summer/>
- Cicada symphony (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-iB8wnZH14>
- Summer cicada sound (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mah26og11ms>