

THE EMU THAT LAID THE GOLDEN EGG TEACHER'S NOTES

Written by Yvonne Morrison
Illustrated by Heath McKenzie
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SYNOPSIS

Emma is an excitable emu who lives in the city with her emu friends. They eat leftover scraps that they find in the city rubbish bins, but Emma is sick of always eating the same things and longs to eat something new. So when she sees a juicy, delicious, looking beetle she can't help chasing after it!

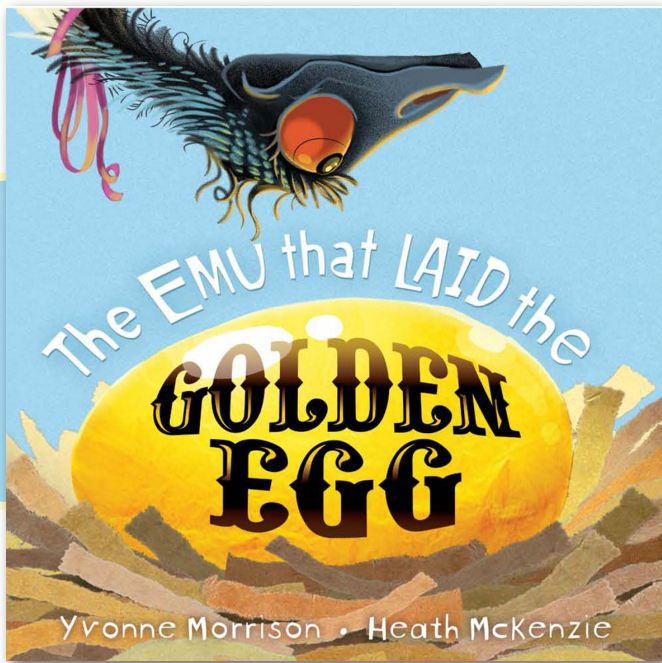
But the beetle is too fast for Emma and she ends up chasing it all the way out into the bush before she eventually gives up the chase. Too tired and hungry to work out how to get home, she needs to find something else to eat. To her delight she stumbles across what looks like some corn kernels and she gobbles them up. However, poor Emma was a little bit confused and has accidentally eaten gold nuggets instead of corn kernels. Feeling a bit sick from the gold nuggets she decides to make a nest and have a sleep.

When Emma wakes up in the morning she has laid a shiny golden egg, thanks to the gold nuggets she ate the night before. Unfortunately for Emma some mean and greedy scoundrels come across the egg and mistakenly think that Emma always lays golden eggs. They decide to kidnap her so they can steal all her eggs and make a fortune. When they leave her alone in a hotel room poor Emma is so hungry that she starts eating all the objects she can find in the room. Just like the golden nuggets, these objects also have an effect on her eggs - they come out looking like the things she has eaten!

When the kidnappers come back and see the eggs they realise that Emma can only lay golden eggs when she is fed gold! Luckily for Emma, in all the commotion she is able to escape back to her home in the city where she decides she'll stick to the leftovers she is used to!

THEMES

- Rhyming/Verse
- Greed
- Fables/Morals
- Australian animals
- Food & Habitats



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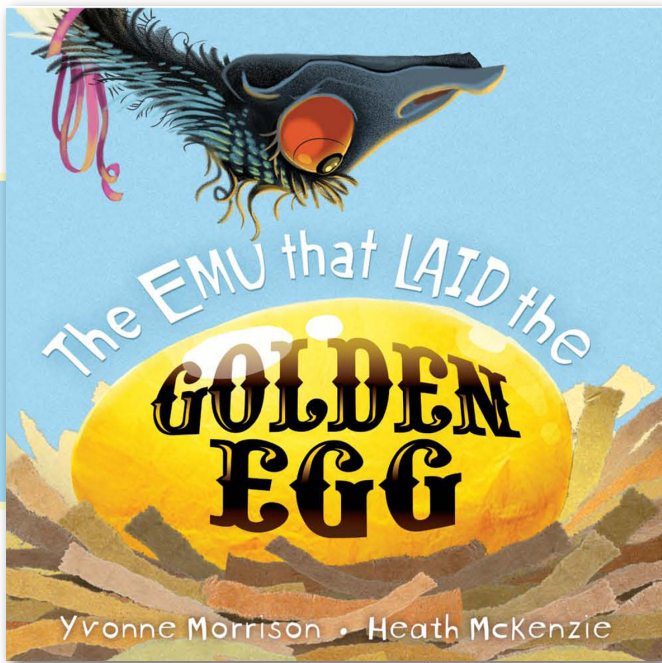
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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- Why does Emma end up getting lost in the bush?
- Why does Emma lay a shiny, golden egg?
- What are Ned and Pete planning to do before they stumble across Emma and her golden egg?
- What type of animal are Ned and Pete?
- Why do Ned and Pete decide to emu-nap Emma?
- How does Emma escape back to the city?
- What lessons do you think Emma has learnt by the end of the story?
- Ned and Pete are mean and greedy but are they the only characters who are greedy in the book?
- Do you think an emu could really lay a golden egg from eating gold? If it's not true, why did the author put it in the story?
- Even though there are lots of things that happen in the book that couldn't happen in real life do you think there are still lots of useful things we can learn from the story? What are they and how can we learn from them?
- In the book it says that Ned and Pete are "rotten scoundrels" but it's not just the words that tell us they are villains. How do the illustrations give us the impression that they are the bad guys? How can we tell from the illustrations that Emma is a good character?

ACTIVITIES

1. Read the Aesop fable The Goose Who Laid the Golden Egg. Discuss the similarities and differences in the two stories. Discuss what a fable is. How is The Emu That Laid the Golden Egg like a fable? Let students have a go at writing their own fables based around the topic of greed and its consequences



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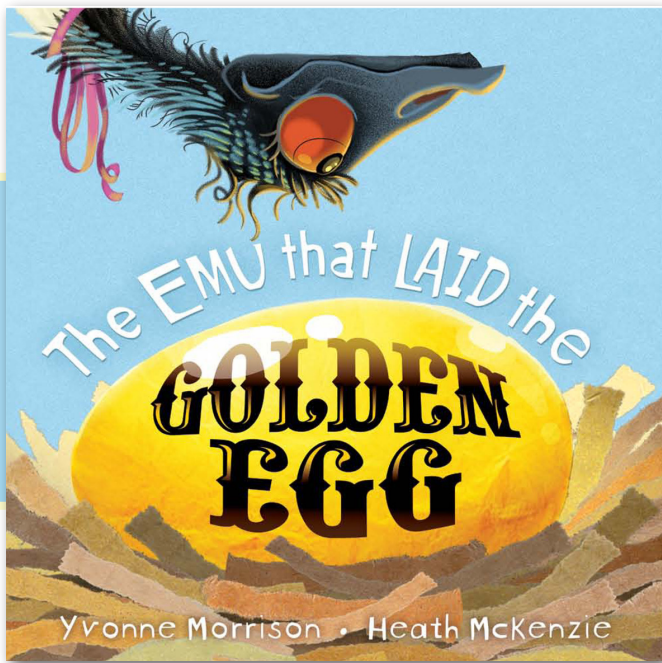
2. Re-read the story advising students to listen for words that rhyme with one another. Have the words written on flashcards before reading the story. As students identify the words that rhyme, place them together on the floor. Once all rhyming words have been found, place them on a pre-prepared chart illustrating their relationship. Assist students to examine and add to the words where possible

ground	rhymes with	sound	and	found hound round	These words all end in 'ound'
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- 3 When Emma is in the hotel room she eats a shoe, cushions, a glass chandelier and a brass bed-knob and ends up laying eggs that look like these items. Discuss how the illustrator has made the eggs look like the things Emma has eaten. Imagine Emma is stuck in your classroom. What things might she eat? Get everyone to choose an object and create their own illustrations of how that object might look like if it was one of Emma's eggs.

- 4 As a class research and discuss what an actual emu egg is like. Find out the answers to the following questions: What size is it? What colour is it? How long does it take to hatch? What are baby emus called? Where do emus live? Where do they make their nests and what do they make them from?

Get students to each choose another bird and research the same questions on their own. Get them to make a poster with their findings.



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- 5 In the story it says that Ned and Pete were on their way to the goldfields. Explain what this means and then get the students to research the Australian gold rush. As a class discuss why the gold rush happened and what life was like on the goldfields. After this discussion, get the students to each write a diary, a poem or a letter home from someone who was living on the goldfields.
- 6 In the story Emma is an emu and Pete and Ned are possums. What other Australian animals can you think of? As a class make a list of Australian animals. Once this is done, get students to each pick two animals and draw a cartoon of one as a good guy and the other as a bad guy. Get students to think up fun names for each character and then present them to the class explaining how they decided to draw each character.

