

Heads and Tails

By John Canty

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You can only see my tail. Which animal am I? A picture book that guarantees endless enjoyment using clues to guess which beautiful animal awaits them on the following page.



Teacher notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher. A full version is available on our website.

Themes:

- Problem solving and deduction
- Visual clues versus descriptive clues
- Imagination and creativity

Discussion Questions and Activities:

- After reading *Heads and Tails*, ask the children to list all the animals in the book. Can they remember them in order?
- Select an animal. Ask the children to discuss which clues helped them identify the animal.
- Which animals were harder to guess, and which were the easiest? Why?
- The author tries to trick the children on a couple of spreads. Get the children to do something similar.
- List some additional clues the children could add to the description of each animal.
- Use pins on a world map to identify where each animal lives.
- Invite children to draw an animal that is not in the book. Ask them to list three descriptive clues to describe it - where does it live? What sound does it make? What makes it different from other animals?
- Discuss the difference between visual clues and descriptive clues.
 - ◇ Which one do the children find most helpful in guessing the animal?
 - ◇ This may vary from animal to animal. Use examples in the book to prompt this.
 - ◇ Which animals would be easier to identify if you saw their heads BEFORE their tails?
- Discuss animals with distinctive heads (e.g. elephants) versus animals with distinctive tails (e.g. crocodiles)
- Group animals to create discussion and encourage analysis of different and common features. Create the categories on a whiteboard and ask the children to help place an animal in each category. Categories could be:
 - ◇ Big/medium/small animals
 - ◇ Furry/scaly/rough skin/prickly
 - ◇ Walking/flying/swimming/slithering
 - ◇ Bird/mammal/reptile/fish.
 - ◇ Habitat (oceans; jungle; farm; sky)
 - ◇ Dangerous vs not dangerous – this will rate discussion.
- Making your own Heads and Tails creation:
 - ◇ Ask each child to draw a picture of a different animal (this exercise is more fun if their waists are a common width).
 - ◇ Cut the picture in half, separating the front half of the animal from the back half.
 - ◇ Now swap halves with other children to create an imaginary hybrid animal with the head of one animal and the tail of another.
 - ◇ Think of hybrid names for these funny animals.