

Australia: Animal Detectives

Teacher guide and answer support | Foundation-Year 2

Release candidate 0.9 | Reviewed 11 August 2026 | Curriculum verified; venue scene confirmation pending

Program purpose: Students observe represented Australian animals and habitats, group animals by visible features, connect external features with functions, and explain how a habitat helps meet an animal's needs.

At a glance

Item	Guidance
Audience	Foundation-Year 2; use oral, pointing, drawing and scribed responses as needed.
Primary learning area	Science - Biological sciences and Science Inquiry.
Resource timing	Brief pre-visit prediction; visual observation during the show; 25-40 minute post-visit worksheet.
Evidence collected	Grouping by feature; habitat-needs connection; feature-function-survival explanation.
Technology statement	The show uses projected digital imagery and special glasses to create a room-scale 3D illusion. The images are representations, not live animals or true volumetric holograms.

Learning intentions

- We are learning to observe animals and habitats carefully.
- We are learning that animals need air, water, food and shelter.
- We are learning how an external body feature can help an animal survive.
- We are learning to sort and share what we notice.

Success criteria

- I can group or match an animal using something I can observe.
- I can identify something an animal needs from its habitat.
- I can explain how one body feature helps an animal move, eat, breathe or stay safe.
- I can share an observation by speaking, pointing, drawing, labelling or writing.

Victorian Curriculum F-10 Version 2.0

This excursion supports selected parts of the Foundation-Level 2 Science curriculum. It does not assess the whole achievement standard.

Code	Curriculum connection	Evidence in this pack
VC2S2H01	Scientific knowledge begins with observations using senses and suitable tools.	Students observe visible movement, body features and habitat cues in a digital representation.
VC2S2U01	Observable features can be used to group plants and animals.	Habitat Hunt and Feature Detective matching.
VC2S2U02	Plants and animals need air, water, food and shelter; habitats help meet these needs.	Needs task and animal-in-habitat drawing.
VC2S2U03	External features perform functions that enable survival.	Feature-to-function choices and Animal Expert explanation.
VC2S2I03	Observations can be made and recorded.	One remembered observation recorded through talk, pointing, drawing, labels or writing.
VC2S2I04	Data and information can be sorted and ordered to show simple patterns.	Animals are sorted or matched using habitat and feature information.
VC2S2I06	Observations, findings and ideas can be communicated using everyday and some scientific vocabulary.	Student explains one animal, feature, function and need.

Optional inquiry extension

Use the 'My thinking changed' prompt before and after the visit to support VC2S2I01 and VC2S2I05. These codes should be claimed only when students make a prediction and then compare it with an observation.

Do not reuse the old VCSSU042, VCSSU043, VCSIS050 or VCSIS051 codes. They belong to Victorian Curriculum Version 1.0.

Teaching sequence

Before the visit - 10 minutes

- Introduce the words habitat, external feature, function and survive.
- Ask students to predict one animal they may see and one feature they might notice.
- Explain that the show contains projected digital representations. Students are observing the representation, not a live animal.
- Agree on a quiet noticing signal so students do not need to write while walking through the show.

During the experience

- Keep the group moving with venue staff and prioritise safety cues over questions.
- Invite students to notice one body feature and one habitat clue.
- Do not require continuous note-taking or call-and-response while the visual sequence is moving.
- Offer advance reassurance before the close crocodile, shark and spider moments without building extra suspense.

After the visit - 25 to 40 minutes

1. Complete Habitat Hunt and Feature Detective together or independently.
2. Ask students to circle air, water, food and shelter in the needs task.
3. Use the Animal Expert page as the main evidence task.
4. Return to the pre-visit prediction and record what changed.
5. Invite students to explain their drawing to a partner or small group.

Sensory and access planning

Plan ahead: Confirm the current venue procedure for glasses, moving floors or routes, lighting, sound, flicker, sudden movement, breaks and emergency access. Offer a non-wearing or alternative viewing option where the venue permits it.

- Provide the worksheet after the moving experience rather than during it.
- Accept speech, gesture, pointing, drawing, symbols, labels, writing or adult scribing.
- Pre-teach vocabulary with real photographs or objects where possible.
- Use paired choices and reduced options for students who need additional processing support.
- Allow extra challenge through comparison: two features, two habitats or two grouping rules.

Answer and discussion guide

Worksheet task	Expected answer or acceptable evidence
Habitat Hunt	Koala - eucalypt forest; platypus - freshwater river; dolphin - ocean; kangaroo - open grassland.
Feature Detective	Echidna spines - stay safe; platypus webbed feet - swim; koala claws - grip branches; dolphin blowhole - breathe air.
Animal needs	Air, water, food and shelter. A safe place can be discussed as part of shelter or habitat, but it must not replace air.
Animal Expert	Accept any show animal when the habitat, need and feature-function link are reasonable. The student may explain orally.
Thinking changed	Accept a simple comparison between a prediction and a later observation. There is no single correct response.

Assessment record

Evidence	Beginning	Developing	Secure
Groups by observation	Needs a model or paired choices.	Makes one correct match with support.	Groups or matches and gives an observable reason.
Connects habitat and need	Names a need or a place.	Links one need to a habitat with support.	Explains how the habitat provides one or more needs.
Explains feature function	Names an animal or feature.	Matches a feature with its job.	Explains how the feature's job helps survival.
Communicates observation	Responds through gesture, choice or copied word.	Shares a drawing, label or short statement.	Uses everyday and relevant scientific vocabulary to explain an idea.

Fact-check notes for educators

- Koalas eat selected eucalypt leaves and obtain much of their water from their food. Do not say they never drink.
- Short-beaked echidna spines are modified hairs used in defence; strong claws and a long sticky tongue support feeding on ants and termites.
- Platypuses use webbed front feet for propulsion in water and their bills help detect prey. They live in freshwater habitats.
- Southern cassowaries are large flightless rainforest birds. They eat mainly fallen fruit and disperse seeds.
- The crocodile may be described as an estuarine crocodile, also called a saltwater crocodile, once the operator confirms the visual identification.
- Do not identify snake, frog, kingfisher, wallaby, dolphin, glider, funnel-web or seed species until a venue representative confirms the visuals.

Sources

- [Victorian Curriculum F-10 Version 2.0 - Level 2](#)
- [Australian Museum - Koala](#)
- [Australian Museum - Short-beaked Echidna](#)
- [Australian Museum - Platypus](#)
- [Australian Museum - Estuarine Crocodile](#)
- [Queensland Government - Southern Cassowary](#)
- [Australian Museum - Shark bodies and senses](#)

Sources checked 11 August 2026. Recheck before annual republication.