



## Dreamtime Ideas and Cross-Curricular Activities

*Most of these activity ideas are suitable for all ages. Please feel free to use the ideas as a starting point for your own lessons, and to adapt them according to the needs of your class.*

**NB:** This is a small sample of the Dreamtime stories we know. To hear more, and allow your children to experience one of our best story-making workshops, visit [www.snailtales.org/book](http://www.snailtales.org/book) and check out our *In The Beginning* programme!

### Background work

To study the Dreamtime stories, it will help the children to be familiar with the animals and landscapes that appear in them. Have a look at some photographs of Australian creatures, such as echidnas, kangaroos and koalas, and Australian landscapes. For the story *Coral Creeper*, you may also wish to find an example of that plant.

Explain to the children that the stories come from a very long time ago and help to explain how the world was created. We like to begin our Dreamtime stories with the words, "Once, long ago in the Dreamtime, before everything had quite decided what it wanted to be..." You may also wish to look at the lifestyle of the kinds of people and tribes who told the stories, but this should not be necessary for understanding the tales themselves.

### Echidna

- **PE:** Play 'Catching Echidna'. One child is Echidna at the waterhole and stands with his back to the others at the far end of the hall or playground. The other children must creep up step by step from the other end. Echidna can turn round at any time, at which everyone freezes. Echidna must then say who he can see moving, and they go back to the start line. The first child to reach Echidna without being spotted wins and gets to take a turn at being Echidna.
- **Art & Craft:** make an echidna out of plasticine or clay, sticking cocktail sticks in for the spines. Children could investigate ways of doing this while telling the story, as a means of illustration.

### Coral Creeper

- **Art & Craft:** make a coral creeper to decorate the classroom, by sticking red tissue-paper droplet shapes onto a long piece of green garden twine. This could also be used as a prop for retelling the story, perhaps in the form of a play.
- **Numeracy (Shape, Space & Measure):** Give out squared paper with a start square marked, then read directions to represent Yoonda and Boojin's escape route. Tailor these according to the ability of the children, eg "Go North (or forward, or to the right) three squares, turn 90 degrees (or a quarter turn) clockwise..."etc. The children listen and mark the route with a red dot in each square. Afterwards, they compare their 'coral creepers' to see if they have left a trail with the same shape as yours.

## Pindari and Mowan

This story is about the origin of the case moth, a breed which builds a case from natural materials. You may want to show the children some examples of these before studying the story.

- **Science/Art & Craft:** Challenge the children to build their own 'cases' using only natural materials (though it might be fair to allow them to use glue or sellotape, since the moth uses its own sticky silk!) If possible, let the children go outside to choose and collect the materials themselves. Hang all the finished cases from a tree-shaped display, or branches in a vase.
- **Class display, Numeracy (symmetry):** the story also explains why moths fly towards the light. Help each child to make a symmetrical moth by painting one wing, folding the paper over while the paint is still wet, then cutting out the finished moth when dry. Create a wall display with a central candle flame, and arrange all the moths around it, attaching them by the fold in the paper so that the wings stand out from the wall and flutter.

### After reading all the stories:

- **Art:** Have a look at some Aboriginal dot paintings, and try using the style to create an illustration of your favourite story.
  - **Drama, Storytelling:** In groups, choose one of the stories and have a go at remembering and telling it using the Story Tag method (one child begins, and 'tags' the next when they get stuck; this can also be done by passing an object around.) Make freeze-frames of scenes from the story, or prepare a short performance of storytelling or a play.
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Want to hear more Dreamtime stories?

Want to witness your children learning how to create and tell their *own*?

Then visit [www.snailtales.org/book](http://www.snailtales.org/book) and check out our *In The Beginning* programme!