

Animal Force

AUTHOR

CERISE MADSEN

ILLUSTRATOR

SALLY HEINRICH

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

Adopted twins Leo and Kelly are spending their 11th birthday camping on Ember Island when their holiday fun takes a wild turn. Strange dreams, school bullying, and growing threats to the island's fragile ecosystems begin to collide. Leo is quiet and cautious; Kelly is fearless and fast. When the twins uncover a hidden family secret and awaken a magical connection to endangered animals, they must work together to protect the island and its wildlife.

With the help of their cousin Amos and their adventure-loving Grannie, Leo and Kelly discover their ability to transform into glowing animal lights - from Leopard Shark to Manta Ray to Tassie Tiger - and unlock a deeper connection to both their birth and adoptive families through the ancient magic of the Animal Force.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cerise Madsen is an Australian speech pathologist in Brisbane, where she runs her own practice supporting language development through speech, storytelling, and sign. Fluent in Norwegian, French, and the ever-evolving language of tweens and teens, Cerise has shared her love of communication by teaching English to international students, Norwegian to refugees, and now supporting children, teens and adults with disabilities. Her writing is inspired by her passion for nature, her work with diverse communicators, and the joyful chaos of raising two adventurous boys. Cerise weaves her expertise in alternative communication methods, like key word sign, into stories that celebrate the many ways we connect and express ourselves.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Sally Heinrich works in a number of mediums, primarily watercolour and graphite pencil, pen and ink and lino-prints. Her work includes illustrations for more than forty books, as well as writing and illustrating her own picture books, novels and non-fiction. Her artwork ranges in scale from greeting cards to murals, including for the Singapore Zoo and a number of schools. Her artwork and lino-prints are widely exhibited and collected. When not in her studio, Sally is most often out walking in the bush.

THEMES

- Belonging and identity: Adoption, family, heritage, self-discovery.
- Courage and standing up for what's right: Personal growth, facing fears, fighting for the planet.
- Bullying and empathy: Understanding and responding to bullying, supporting others.

- Environmental conservation and stewardship: Protecting habitats, endangered species, sustainable living.
- Neurodiversity and disability: Inclusion, overcoming challenges, adaptive communication.
- Sense of place: Connection to the natural world, understanding ecosystems, play in nature.

CURRICULUM LINKS

English

- Character development and comparison (Leo and Kelly as foils)
- Narrative viewpoint and transformation as metaphor
- Vocabulary development across Tier 1–3
- Themes of belonging, courage, and responsibility
- Visual language and imagery, particularly light and fire

Science

- Ecosystems: mangroves, wetlands, marine environments
- Native vs feral species
- Animal adaptations and behaviours
- Fire ecology and human impact
- Conservation and endangered species

Geography

- Sense of place and connection to land
- Human impact on environments
- Natural hazards (fire, tides)
- Comparing environments (Australia and icy northern regions)

Health and Personal Development

- Bullying and resilience
- Emotional regulation and empathy
- Identity, family diversity, and adoption
- Working collaboratively under pressure

Civics and Citizenship

- Advocacy and speaking up
- Environmental responsibility
- Community action and consequences

STUDY NOTES

SUGGESTED WHOLE-TEXT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Understanding the Story

- What kind of story is *Animal Force*? What clues tell you this?
- Which moments felt the most exciting, funny, or surprising to you? Why?
- How does the island settings affect what happens in the story?
- What challenges do Leo, Kelly, and their family and friends face on Ember Island?
- How does the story change once magic is introduced?

Characters & Relationships

- How are Leo and Kelly similar, even though they seem very different?
- Why do you think Leo avoids conflict while Kelly runs towards it?
- How do Leo and Kelly's differences help them survive and succeed?
- How do Amos, Sousa and Wallum contribute to the group?
- How do the adults (Mum, Dad, Grannie) support the children in different ways?

Identity, Adoption & Belonging

- Why does Kelly want to learn about their birth family, while Leo does not?
- What does the story suggest about what “family” really means?
- How do the twins learn they can belong to more than one family or culture?
- Can you belong somewhere even if you are different? How does the book answer this?

Standing Up to Bullies

- Who are the bullies in the story, and what makes them powerful at first?
- What risks do Leo and Kelly take when they stand up for themselves and others?
- How does Leo change when he finally decides to take a stand?
- Do the bullies ever show fear or vulnerability? Why is that important?
- What message does the book send about power and courage?

The Animal Force & Magic

- What do the animal transformations represent?
- Why do you think each character’s animal force suits them?
- Which animal force did you find most interesting or meaningful? Why?
- How is the magic connected to responsibility rather than just power?
- Why do you think the author chose light as the symbol for transformation?

Nature, Conservation & Responsibility

- How does the story show that nature needs protecting?
- What happens when people treat the environment carelessly?
- Why is Ember Island worth fighting for?
- How do the children work with nature rather than against it?
- What real-world environmental problems does the story reflect?

Themes & Messages

- What does the story teach about courage?
- How does the book show that differences can be strengths?
- Why is teamwork so important in *Animal Force*?
- What does the phrase “one force” mean in the context of the story?
- Which message from the book feels most important to you?

Personal Reflection & Creative Thinking

- Which character do you relate to most? Why?
- If you had an animal force, what would it be and what would it protect?
- How might this story encourage kids to speak up in their own lives?
- What would you do if you were faced with the same choices as Leo or Kelly?
- How do you think the story might continue in the next book?

Extension / Deeper Thinking

- Why do you think the author chose humour alongside serious themes?
- How does the book challenge stereotypes about strength and bravery?
- What role does fear play in both heroes and bullies?
- How does the story balance fun adventure with important ideas?
- Why do stories like *Animal Force* matter for kids today?

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES**Year 4-6 English Discussion and Activities***Character Analysis*

- Compare and contrast Leo and Kelly using examples from the text. How do their personalities complement and challenge each other?
- How does Leo's understanding of courage change from the beginning to the end of the book?

Vocabulary Development

- Create a vocabulary map of words related to animals and their characteristics (e.g., shark, koala, snake, dolphin).
- Use Tier 2 words from the text (e.g., courage, empathy, resilience) in your own sentences to demonstrate understanding.

Creative Writing

- Imagine you could transform into any animal like the characters in the book. Which animal would you choose and why? Write a short story about your adventure.

Assessment and Creative Response Ideas

- Create-Your-Own Animal Force: Students design an animal force linked to a personal value (e.g., patience, kindness, courage) and explain the connection.
- Environmental Action Pitch: Write a persuasive speech convincing others to protect a local ecosystem.
- Character Diary: A journal entry from Leo before and after the island trip showing his internal change.
- Science Connection Poster: Choose one ecosystem from the book and explain why it needs protection.

Year 4-6 Science Activities*Exploring Ecosystems*

- Research ecosystems mentioned in the book (e.g., mangroves, wetlands, coral reefs) and identify the plants and animals that live there.
- What role do these ecosystems play in maintaining balance in nature?

Environmental Impact

- Discuss how human actions in the book (e.g., littering, development, habitat destruction) impact the local wildlife and the environment.
- What are some things we can do in real life to protect these ecosystems?

Year 4-6 Geography Activities*Map the Island*

- Draw a map of Ember Island, labelling key locations such as the beach, dunes, mangroves, and the campsite. Identify where different animals in the story live and explain why these animals thrive in these areas.

Conservation Debate

- Hold a class debate on whether development should take place in natural areas such as wetlands or protected coastal environments. Use examples from the book to support your arguments.

Year 4-6 Health and Physical Education Activities*Managing Emotions*

- Discuss how the characters manage emotions such as anger, fear, and courage in the story.
- What strategies do Leo and Kelly use to support each other? How do they stay strong in tough situations?

Physical Safety

- Discuss the importance of safety in outdoor activities like camping, swimming, and participating in rescues. What are the key safety measures Leo and Kelly should follow?

Year 4-6 Civics and Citizenship Activities*Advocacy and Environmental Action*

- Write a letter to your local council or government advocating for the protection of a natural environment, using arguments from the book and your own ideas.

Inclusion and Empathy

- Discuss how different characters in the story support each other. How does Wallum's use of key word signs help him communicate? How do Leo and Kelly show empathy for each other and the animals?

Introduction to Tier 1 Vocabulary

Tier 1 vocabulary consists of basic words that are commonly used in everyday speech and are typically understood by most students without the need for explicit instruction. In *Animal Force*, the Tier 1 vocabulary focuses on words that are essential for understanding the story and its characters, as well as key actions and settings. These words are foundational for students as they build their language skills and engage with the narrative.

The following table provides a list of **Tier 1 vocabulary** from the story, along with suggested activities to help students become familiar with these words. These words serve as the building blocks for more complex concepts explored throughout the text and can be easily integrated into classroom discussions, reading exercises, and activities.

Tier 1: Basic and familiar, useful for establishing context or clarity in key scenes	Example Words from Text	Sample Classroom Activity	Theme Link	Curriculum Link
Games Exploration Objective: Explore the importance of play in social development. Playing in Nature - Outdoor Objective: Explore outdoor activities that relate to the book's themes of nature and play.	play tag, make friends, play, sand (build), camp, friendship band, games	Games We Play: Students discuss games in the story (party games like <i>Would You Rather?</i> , tag, building sand sculptures, making friendship bracelets), and share games they enjoy playing with family or friends. Discuss how play supports friendships and cooperation. Playing in Nature Students participate in outdoor play activities inspired by the story and discuss how outdoor play connects people to nature.	Play, friendship, belonging	Health & Physical Education – Personal, social and community health ACPPS045: Practise personal and social skills to interact positively with others. ACPPS048: Explore strategies to include others in play and physical activity. AC9HPFM03 – Making Active Choices participate in a range of physical activities, including in natural and outdoor settings, to identify factors and settings that make physical activity enjoyable and beneficial.
Food from Our World Objective: Introduce students to Australian foods and explore cultural practices related to food.	food, mango, sausages, hot chips, ice cream, marshmallows, Milo	Food from Our World: Introduce the food items mentioned in the story (e.g., Milo, mango, sausages, marshmallows). Ask students if they've ever tried these foods and what their favourite food traditions are. Curriculum Extension: As an extension, students could create a "Food Culture Project" where they share a food that is significant to their own family or culture.	Culture, family, identity	Geography – Places and Cultures: Students will explore food as part of a cultural study, comparing different countries' foods and how food shapes cultural identity. ACHGK029: The influence of people's cultural backgrounds on their daily lives ACHGK030: How people's connections to places and environments influence cultural practices.
Talking Aussie - Colloquial Language Objective: Learn how language reflects	brekkie, mozzies, zonked, yeah-nah	Understanding the Australian Vernacular (English) – Students explore how language is used informally in different cultures and regions. They learn to understand idiomatic phrases and the cultural context behind them.	Language, cultural identity	English (Years 4–6): Language – Understanding informal and regional language use AC9E4LA02 Understand how language features vary in informal and formal contexts and how language can be adapted for different audiences and purposes.

Tier 1: Basic and familiar, useful for establishing context or clarity in key scenes	Example Words from Text	Sample Classroom Activity	Theme Link	Curriculum Link
culture and regional identity.		Students learn Australian colloquial words from the text and practise using them in sentences and short dialogues. Curriculum Extension: Students could compare Australian colloquialisms with phrases from other regions or languages and discuss how language changes in different places.		AC9E5LA02 Understand how language features, including idiomatic and colloquial expressions, are used in spoken and written texts to shape meaning and relationships. AC9E6LA02 Understand how language varies according to context, purpose and audience, including the use of informal, colloquial and regional language features.
Exploring Northern Places Objective: Introduce students to concrete elements of Northern Hemisphere environments and cultural practices. Connect to personal identity, sensory experience, and global awareness.	snow, ice, icicles, snowflakes, cold, freezing, polar bear, snow rabbit, <i>geitost</i>, jam, ice fishing, cosy cabin, beach shack	Winter Adventures & Tastes of Norway – Students explore the cold northern setting of Leo and Kelly's origin. They match words from the story (e.g., snow, polar bear, <i>geitost</i>, <i>fiskesuppe</i>) to images or their own experiences. Students discuss what life might be like in these environments and compare it to their local environment.	Belonging, Identity, Environmental Awareness	Geography (Years 4–6): AC9GEO03 – The influence of climate and natural features on people's lives and activities in different parts of the world. Science (Years 4–6): ACSSU074 – Adaptations of plants and animals to different environments. English (Years 4–6): ACELY1697 – Using descriptive language to compare familiar and unfamiliar settings. Health & Personal Development: ACHP401 - Reflecting on identity and personal preferences in relation to environment and culture.
Match the Scene Objective: Reinforce vocabulary comprehension and deepen text understanding by connecting words to their context in the story.	beach, dunes, rockpool, waterfall, mangroves, campground	Word-to-Scene Match: Students match Tier 1 words to scenes from the story using images or text excerpts and create a labelled scene collage. Curriculum Extension: Students could create a map of Ember Island: a "scene and vocabulary" collage, where they illustrate scenes from the book and label them with Tier 1 vocabulary words.	Sense of place, comprehension	English Reading and viewing – Using images and text to build meaning ACELY1693: Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning about events, ideas, and information in texts. ACELY1701: Analyse how visual elements contribute to meaning in texts.

Tier 1: Basic and familiar, useful for establishing context or clarity in key scenes	Example Words from Text	Sample Classroom Activity	Theme Link	Curriculum Link
My Connection to the Story - Personal Connection Objective: Encourage students to connect the text to their personal experiences and emotions.	beach, camp, swim, friends	Students reflect on places or activities from the story they have experienced and describe how these made them feel. Encourage students to reflect on their own memories of beaches, camping, or spending time outdoors. Curriculum Extension: As an extension, students could create a "memory map" of their favourite outdoor places or activities and write a short narrative about it using Tier 1 words.	Personal response, emotion	English – Creating texts – Personal and reflective writing ACELY1699: Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative, and persuasive texts. ACELY1702: Use knowledge of text structure and language features to compose texts.
Tell the Story Oral Language (Retell a Favourite Scene): Objective: Strengthen oral language skills and comprehension through retelling.	beach, sand, rescue, friends, swim, run, play, fire, light, hot, cold, fast, slow, brave, scared	Students orally retell a favourite scene using Tier 1 vocabulary and simple sensory details. Encourage them to include sensory details such as what they saw, heard, and felt in that scene. Curriculum Extension: For more advanced learners, students could record their retelling as a podcast or video to practice storytelling and presentation skills.	Oral language, comprehension	English - Speaking and listening – Oral storytelling and retelling ACELY1708: Plan, rehearse, and deliver presentations using appropriate tone, pace, and expression. ACELY1709: Use interaction skills to discuss texts and share ideas.

Introduction to Tier 2 Vocabulary

Tier 2 vocabulary consists of **high-frequency words** that are more **academic** and used across a variety of subjects. These words are crucial for building **students' language skills** and help deepen their understanding of the story's themes and concepts. In *Animal Force*, Tier 2 vocabulary includes words that describe emotions, actions, and key themes such as **courage, transformation, and advocacy**, which are central to the characters' development.

The following table provides a list of **Tier 2 vocabulary** from the story, along with suggested activities to help students practice and use these words in context. Mastering this vocabulary will not only enhance their comprehension of *Animal Force* but also equip them with important language tools for expressing **ideas** and **analysing** texts across subjects. *Words in italics are inferred but not expressly written within the text.*

Tier 2: High-value words that deepen understanding of themes	Example Words from Text	Sample Classroom Activity	Theme Link	Curriculum Link
Caring for the Environment Environmental Vocabulary Objective: Deepen students' understanding of wildlife, environmental issues, ecological balance and the importance of protecting natural habitats	ecosystem, habitat, environment, <i>conserve</i> , protect, <i>fragile</i> , extinct, species, wetlands, mangroves, endangered, <i>pollution</i> , <i>sustainability</i> , climate change, <i>biodiversity</i> , <i>restoration</i> , <i>adapt</i> , <i>adaptation</i> , migration, <i>preserve</i> , and native, <i>stewardship</i> , prey, predator,	Ecosystem Mapping Students map ecosystems featured in the story (wetlands, mangroves, ocean, cave). Discuss how each habitat supports different species and why these environments are fragile and need protection. <u>Discussion Prompt:</u> What does it mean to conserve and protect our environment? How do human activities cause habitat destruction and pollution? How can we create a more sustainable world? Environmental Activity (Wetlands) Research and Poster Activity: Research an endangered animal or ecosystem (e.g., Ramsar Wetlands or Green Sea Turtle). Create a poster using Tier 2 vocabulary like <i>conserve</i> , <i>protect</i> , <i>conserve</i> , mangroves, endangered, and species and learn the importance of protecting endangered species and fragile habitats. Should We Build Here? Debate on Conservation: Hold a debate on the importance of protecting ecosystems like mangroves and wetlands. Use words like "conserve," "protect," and "fragile" in the	Environmental Conservation and Stewardship	Science – AC9S4U01 Ecosystems / Ecology Understanding relationships between living things and environments Students will investigate the impact of human activities on the environment (e.g., deforestation, pollution) and learn the importance of protecting endangered species through conservation efforts. Geography – AC9HS4K04 Natural Environments Exploring why environments are important and how they are protected Learning about the importance of wetland ecosystems and their role in climate change mitigation.

Tier 2: High-value words that deepen understanding of themes	Example Words from Text	Sample Classroom Activity	Theme Link	Curriculum Link
		discussion. Students can argue whether or not a new development should be allowed to encroach on these ecosystems.		
Understanding Feelings and Relationships Social and emotional vocabulary Objective: Explore how characters respond emotionally to challenges Crucial for exploring characters' emotional growth and social dynamics. These words foster discussions on themes of identity, relationships, personal growth, and overcoming challenges, and understanding the world around us	<i>empathy, resilience, courage, bullying, inclusion, exclusion, conflict, identity, belonging, independence, patience, understanding, compassion, support, self-discovery, self-esteem, kindness, cooperation, tolerance, and integrity</i> are crucial for exploring characters' emotional growth and social dynamics. Other: adoption,	Role-Playing Resilience 1 – Bullying and Empathy Activity: Discuss instances of bullying and empathy in the story. Have students reflect on how characters like Wallum and Leo demonstrate resilience, empathy and courage to stand up for themselves or others. Discussion Prompt: How did Leo overcome the challenge of bullying? How did he demonstrate courage and showing empathy for others? Standing Up for Others: Bullying Role-Play and Reflection Students act out bullying scenes from the text using terms like Bruised Banana Boy, sook, creep, and toad. Afterward, discuss how these words impact others and how the characters in the book use courage and strategies to stand up for themselves and for what's right. Discuss how characters show courage and empathy. Reflect on how students can respond to bullying in real life. Empathy Role-Play Activity: Have students role-play a situation where they show empathy and courage to help a friend facing bullying or exclusion.	Bullying, Friendship, Inclusion and Identity, Emotional Growth	Health and Physical Education AC9HP4P05 – Social Skills and Emotional Learning Developing strategies for resilience, empathy, and respectful relationships and strategies for overcoming social challenges. English AC9E4LE03– Vocabulary development and character description. Characters' actions and feelings shape meaning in texts. English – AC9E4LA01: Language choices vary to support meaning and inclusion. Health – AC9HP4P04 Social and emotional learning, self-expression

Tier 2: High-value words that deepen understanding of themes	Example Words from Text	Sample Classroom Activity	Theme Link	Curriculum Link
	<i>communication, nature, safety (animal and human safety measures, fire safety, surf safety), conservation, empowerment, expression, awareness, struggle, and change.</i>	Signs and Strengths: (AAC) using Key Word Sign (Auslan) Students connect animal signs to descriptive and emotional vocabulary. Using Auslan signs, students describe animal traits (e.g. leopard shark = gentle, tough, dolphin = clever) and relate these traits to characters and themselves.		
Identity and Perspective Through Place Objective: Deepen understanding of identity, belonging, and empathy by exploring how environment shapes people's lives and choices.	identity, belonging, cultural practice, perspective, northern, climate, adaptation, conservation	<i>Would You Rather: Northern Choices</i> Students engage in a <i>Would You Rather</i> game inspired by Kelly, choosing between different northern climate activities (e.g., reindeer herding in Greenland, Antarctic research). They discuss why characters like Leo and Kelly have different preferences and what this reveals about their identity and personality. How does it change at the end of the story and why? Students write a short reflection using Tier 2 vocabulary.	Belonging, Personal Growth, Empathy, Identity	English (Years 4–6): AC9E5LE02– Explore how texts depict characters' experiences and perspectives. Health & Personal Development (Years 4–6): ACPPS049 – Examine how identity and culture influence personal preferences and decision-making. Geography (Years 4–6): AC9GEO03 – Understanding human-environment interactions in different climates.
Wonder of Nature through Sensory Language Objective: Use descriptive language to show emotion, courage, and joy	Light / Visual Sensory glow, shimmering, sparkling, illuminate, flicker, twinkle, bright, glare, flash, sparkle,	Paint with Words Highlight examples of light and sensory words in the text and link to characters' emotions (e.g., Leo's courage, Kelly's fierceness, happiness in play, connection to others and nature). Map sensory descriptions to character transformation and mood.	Wonder and imagination, courage, advocacy, empowerment, action, belonging, happiness, transformation,	English – AC9E5LE02: Explore how texts depict characters' experiences and perspectives. English – AC9E5LE03: Analyse how characters change in response to events. English – AC9E4LY05: Create imaginative texts using descriptive language.

Tier 2: High-value words that deepen understanding of themes	Example Words from Text	Sample Classroom Activity	Theme Link	Curriculum Link
through sensory experience Wonder of Nature through Sensory Language continued Objective: Use descriptive language to show emotion, courage, and joy through sensory experience	foamed, bubbling, electric, tingling, zinged, glowing ember, glimpse, warm orange heat haze Heat / Temperature / Touch heat, warm, hot breeze, zinged, tingling, sweat, tingled, alive, damp, muddy, slippery, sticky, gooey, swampy gloom Sound / Auditory buzzed, drone of cicada, deafening, muffled, fading, thunderous roar, screeched to a halt, buzzed to life, snarled to halt, loud blast	Students select a natural setting from the text (ocean, sand dunes, smoke haze). Describe how sensory elements (sight, touch, movement) reflect character emotions, e.g., Leo's joy in water. Write a reflection connecting environment, sensory imagery, and mood. Rewrite a short action scene using sensory language to show joy, courage, or empowerment. Students select a natural setting from the text (ocean, sand dunes, smoke haze). Describe how sensory elements (sight, touch, movement) reflect character emotions, e.g., Leo's joy in water. Write a reflection connecting environment, sensory imagery, and mood. Discussion Prompt: How does the author use sensory language to help us imagine the environment in the story? What sensory words make a setting feel real?	character growth	English – AC9E5LE02: Explore how texts depict characters' experiences and perspectives. English – AC9E5LE03: Analyse how characters change in response to events. English – AC9E4LY05: Create imaginative texts using descriptive language.
Personal Growth and Standing Up for What's Right	Transform, brave, <i>advocate</i>,	Character Transformation Analysis Students examine how Leo and Kelly change across the story, focusing on their personal growth,	Personal Growth, Courage and	English – AC9E5LE03 Narrative and Character Development Exploring how characters change in response to

Tier 2: High-value words that deepen understanding of themes	Example Words from Text	Sample Classroom Activity	Theme Link	Curriculum Link
Action and character development vocabulary Understand how individuals can influence change. Objective: Students analyse character growth and advocacy to understand how individuals influence change	<i>support, challenge, defend, inspire, overcome, empower, protect, strength, courage, stand up for (confront), battle, encourage, rally, resist.</i>	courage, and willingness to stand up for others and the environment. Discussions link character actions to themes such as transformation, resilience, and environmental protection. Character Courage Tracker Working in small groups, students analyse key moments where characters like Leo, Kelly, and Wallum demonstrate bravery and resilience. Students are encouraged to use Tier 2 vocabulary (e.g. <i>advocate, transform, empower</i>) to explain how characters grow and take action. Be an Advocate Students identify an important cause from the story and explain how characters advocate for people or nature. They describe the actions taken and how those actions empower others or protect the environment, reinforcing the concept of standing up for beliefs.	Standing Up for What Is Right	events and the role of resilience and courage in overcoming challenges. Reflecting on personal growth and how they can empower others in real life situations. Civics and Citizenship AC9HC4K02 Students learn about advocating for a cause and the importance of protecting rights and empowering others.

Introduction to Tier 3 Vocabulary

Tier 3 vocabulary consists of **subject-specific, domain-specific terms** that are often unique to particular subjects or fields of study. These words are less common in everyday language but are essential for understanding specific concepts in the story. In *Animal Force*, Tier 3 vocabulary includes terms related to **wildlife, environmental science, and animal behaviour**, as well as **Australian Sign Language** (Auslan) signs used throughout the text.

The following table provides a list of **Tier 3 vocabulary** from the story, along with suggested activities to help students engage with these more specialized terms. By mastering this vocabulary, students will gain a deeper understanding of the themes of **environmental sustainability** and **conservation** explored in the book, as well as a richer connection to the world of animals and nature.

Tier 3: Subject-specific words used to understand and talk about specialised topics.	Example Words from Text	Sample Classroom Activity	Theme Link	Curriculum Link
<i>Caring for Fragile Environments</i> Objective: Understand how living things depend on each other within ecosystems.	ecosystem, habitat, biodiversity, conservation, endangered species, ecological balance	Build and Ecosystem Web Students create a visual ecosystem map showing interdependence between plants, animals, and humans using Tier 3 vocabulary. Optional Extension: Explore diverse habitats and/or bioluminescence in the natural world. Take a virtual tour of diverse habitats (e.g., Australian outback, coastal wetlands) and discuss the animals listed in the vocabulary (e.g., koalas, turtles, sharks, shorebirds, humpback whales). Students can research bioluminescent organisms like plankton or fireflies and simulate glowing effects using glow sticks or luminescent paint.	Responsibility for the natural world	Science: Living things rely on relationships for survival AC9S4U01 – Living things depend on each other and the environment to survive
<i>Special Places Worth Protecting</i> Objective: Explain why some environments require legal protection.	wetlands, Ramsar wetlands, mangroves, estuary, brackish water	Should We Protect This Place? Persuasive writing or class debate on protecting Ramsar wetlands from development.	Stewardship and sustainability	Geography: Environmental importance and sustainable management AC9HS4K04 – Describe importance of environments & sustainable resource use
<i>Changing Earth, Changing Lives</i> Objective: Identify how	climate change, habitat destruction,	Cause & Consequence Students create a cause-and-effect chart linking human activities to environmental change.	Human impact on nature	Science: Human activity affects Earth's systems

Tier 3: Subject-specific words used to understand and talk about specialised topics.	Example Words from Text	Sample Classroom Activity	Theme Link	Curriculum Link
human actions impact environments and species.	erosion, deforestation, pollution			AC9S4U02 – Human activity affects Earth’s surface and living things
Life Along the Coast and Sea Objective: Describe how marine organisms survive in coastal ecosystems.	marine life, phytoplankton, bioluminescence, nursery, breeding grounds	Secrets of the Sea Virtual coastal tour followed by labelled diagrams explaining marine survival strategies.	Wonder and curiosity	Science: Adaptations of marine organisms AC9S5U01 – Structural and behavioural adaptations support survival
Animals and How They Survive Objective: Explain animal survival strategies using scientific vocabulary.	predator, prey, nocturnal, migration, adaptation, survival, survival of the fittest	Survival Strategy Match-Up Match animals to survival strategies and justify choices using Tier 3 terms. Create Ecosystem Dioramas /Kinetic Animal Movement: Students create dioramas representing different ecosystems (e.g., mangroves, wetlands) mentioned in the text, using correct vocabulary to describe each part. They can explore how animals move in their habitats (e.g., snake muscular wave to slither, shark use of ram ventilation to breathe, frogs’ muscles for elastic leaping) and create kinetic sculptures or drawings to show how these animals move.	Survival and adaptation	Science: Behavioural and physical adaptations AC9S3U01 – Observable features and behaviours support survival
Australia’s Unique Wildlife Objective: Investigate threats to native species and conservation efforts.	green sea turtles, grey nurse sharks, koalas, dugong, humpback whales, shorebirds	Saving Our Species Research and present an Australian endangered species profile.	Valuing native species	Science & Geography: Conservation of native fauna AC9S6U01 – Biodiversity supports ecosystem health and resilience

Tier 3: Subject-specific words used to understand and talk about specialised topics.	Example Words from Text	Sample Classroom Activity	Theme Link	Curriculum Link
When Nature Becomes Dangerous Objective: Understand natural hazards and community safety responses.	bushfire, fire ban, drought, flood, tinderbox, rip, current, shark siren, hazard warning drown, lifeguard,	Ready, Set, Stay Safe Design a community bushfire , surf or flood safety or evacuation plan using correct terminology. E.g. They explain safe and unsafe beach behaviours, identify warning systems (flags, sirens), and describe the role of lifeguards in rescues.	Safety and responsibility	Civics & Citizenship: Community safety and laws AC9HS5K05 — Explain management of environments including hazards like bushfires/floods AC9HS5K07 – How citizens with shared beliefs and work together to achieve a civic goal
Conservation and Global Awareness Objective: Introduce more technical or abstract concepts related to environmental science, sustainability, and global ecosystems	conservation, endangered species, ecosystem, habitat, polar regions, sustainability, climate adaptation	Northern Conservation Connections – Students research an animal from the northern hemisphere mentioned in the story (polar bear, reindeer, snow rabbit) and explore its habitat, adaptations, and conservation status. They create a poster or presentation explaining the importance of protecting these species and habitats, linking this to local conservation challenges.	Environmental Stewardship, Responsibility, Global Awareness	AC9HS5K08 — Describe nature of resources and how they meet needs/wants Science: ACSSU094 – Living things depend on each other and the environment to survive. Geography: AC9GEO04 – The impact of human activity on environments and species globally. English: ACELY1701 – Presenting information on topics using appropriate vocabulary, diagrams, and explanations.
Belonging in Different Environments Objective: Recognise how environments can be adapted for inclusion.	neurodivergent, sensory processing, inclusion, communication, sensory overload	Design for Everyone Students discuss or design adjustments that make environments more inclusive.	Empathy and inclusion	Health & Civics: Respect for diversity AC9HP4P05 – Strategies to support respectful and inclusive relationships
Exploring and Surviving in the Wild Objective: Apply environmental knowledge to real-world survival situations	wilderness, tide, king tide, shoreline, escape, survival	Survive the Scenario Problem-solving task where students plan how to stay safe in a coastal or bush setting.	Resilience and problem-solving	Science: Applying knowledge to real-world contexts AC9S4I02 – Apply science knowledge to solve real-world problems