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## Gross Things Animal Eat

**Dr Claire Stevens & Adele K Thomas**

### Book Summary

#### WARNING!

This book is so **OUTRAGEOUS** you'll never complain about soggy vegetables again. You thought broccoli was **YUCK**? Wait until you hear the **GROSS** things animals have been eating!

I'm Dr Claire, vet and lifelong animal lover, and I have discovered that every day around the world, animals eat strange and **REPULSIVE** things. I'm talking really wacky stuff, like poo, dirt and even vomit!

Come on an adventure with me and my dog, Frankie, as we tell you all about animals and the **DISGUSTING** things they eat!

Dr Claire Stevens and Adele K Thomas join scientific and creative forces to bring you an incredible, fully illustrated and truly **REVOLTING** book!

**Recommended Reading Age:** 5+

**Resources Created For:** Middle primary



## Vocabulary

- **Aquatic:** growing or living in water.
- **Atrocious:** very bad, horrible.
- **Bizarre:** odd and unusual, strange.
- **Cringe:** feeling very embarrassed or revolted.
- **Deficiency:** not having enough of something you need.
- **Disclaimer:** statement denying responsibility or knowledge.
- **Ecosystem:** a community of plants and animals living together in a particular environment.
- **Gnawing:** chewing repeatedly with small bites.
- **Gorge:** eat a lot of food very quickly.
- **Outrageous:** unacceptable or very shocking.
- **Repulsive:** horrible and disgusting.
- **Squeamish:** feeling shocked, offended or sick.
- **Toxins:** poison that comes from a natural source.
- **Unsustainable:** can't continue; using too many resources or causing too much environmental damage.

## Questions & Activities

1. Have students seen an animal, perhaps a pet, eat anything disgusting?
  - a) Start a list of all the gross things animals eat, and add to it as they read *Gross Things Animals Eat*.
2. As humans, there are many foods that some people find delicious but others find disgusting. Are there any foods that students think are gross, but are often enjoyed by others?
  - a) You could start by discussing some 'controversial' foods like olives, oysters and anchovies.
3. Coriander is enjoyed by millions of people across the world, but a genetic difference means that for many, coriander tastes horrible, like soap.
  - a) Who in the class enjoys coriander, and who finds it repulsive (and may have the 'soap' gene)?
  - b) What are other reasons people have extreme reactions to food?
    - (i) You might consider texture, smell (e.g., brussel sprouts or cooked cabbage), spiciness/chilli, sensitivity or allergy, conditioning (e.g., if you haven't grown up eating Vegemite, you probably don't enjoy it).





# Classroom Resources

4. Human babies need have different nutritional needs to older children or adults. Construct a timeline that shows how students' food needs evolve from infancy to the present.
  - a) Choose an animal baby and construct a similar timeline for them. How does their diet change from infant to adult?
5. In the 'Garbage-Guzzlers' section, Dr Claire discusses how some animals eat human rubbish. In some instances, this is accidental, when animals mistake rubbish for things they eat; and for others, it's because garbage has become a plentiful source of food. No matter why they do it, eating rubbish is bad for animals.
  - a) Have students seen animals eating rubbish in their school or community?
  - b) Are there particular kinds of rubbish that seem to attract animals?
  - c) Can students think of any ways to minimise this type of rubbish, or make it harder for animals to get at?
6. Ibis and crows are very smart and can work out ways to access rubbish in bins. Some bird-proof bins have been invented and marketed, but many of them can still be accessed by these birds. Work with a partner to invent a bird-proof bin design that can still be used by humans.
  - a) Consider things like: what is it made of (you don't want to create a different rubbish problem!); ease of putting garbage in; how the bin will be emptied and how easy it is to make.
  - b) The class could have a competition for the best bird-proof bin.
7. What nutrients does your pet need? (For those who don't have a pet, choose the pet you would most like!) Research the food available for your pet and analyse its diet to check it is getting everything it needs to be healthy and happy.
  - a) Create an ideal weekly menu for your pet.
  - b) Other than food, what else does your pet need to stay healthy and happy?
8. *Would You Rather...* Use information from the book to create hypothetical questions about the gross food animals eat. For example, would you rather eat an eggcup full of mud or a lunchbox full of bark? Would you rather eat a whole python skin or a bucket of horse poop?
9. *True or False?* Using facts from *Gross Things Animals Eat* and students' own research, put together some true and false questions to test students on their knowledge of the wide range of things animals eat.



# Classroom Resources

10. *Talk Like a Scientist!* Scientists use special terms to talk about animals, including how they eat. For example, rather than saying an animal's diet consists of wood, scientists would say that the animal is 'xylophagous'. Divide students into pairs and allocate each pair a different diet/animal from *Gross Things Animals Eat*. Ask students to research and present:
- The scientific term/s for the diet.
  - How to pronounce the term.
  - Examples of animals (or other animals) with that diet.
  - An interesting or gross fact about animals with that diet.
11. *Get Creative!* Invent a restaurant for your favourite gross-food-eating creatures. You might choose the ones who eat poo or the ones who eat skin.
- What would your restaurant be called?
  - Design the menu and name the dishes served up – go all out with puns and word play.
  - Illustrate your menu.

For example:

***The Grain and Gnaw Bistro***, 'Where the Bark is Always a Better Bite'.

**Appetiser/Entrée:** Slender striplings of willow layered over a juicy thick paperbark segment, lightly seasoned with splinters of eucalypt. A favourite of the Beaver set.

**Matched beverage:** Root Beer.

## About the Author & Illustrator

Dr Claire Stevens is a veterinarian, and an avid animal and nature lover with a passion for educating children about the fascinating world of science. Inspired by her two sons, Koa and Kai, Dr Claire writes funny and engaging books about science for young readers, which feature her beloved Golden Retriever, Frankie. Dr Claire is an in-demand animal expert on TV, magazines and social media, runs online courses on raising puppies, and is the author of popular animal care book *Dr Claire's Love Your Dog*.

Adele K Thomas has a background in TV and feature animation and covers areas of design for animation production, children's books, apps, education & brand advertising including mascots. She has worked in-house on animated productions as a feature film director, art director and production design lead, and has twenty years' industry experience, including projects for Disney, Dreamworks Animation and Warner Brothers TVA, as well as Cartoon Network and Nelvana. Adele has illustrated books for Scholastic, Hardie Grant & Penguin Australia, and is currently illustrating books for Harper Collins Australia. Her experience in animation film and TV design allows Adele to bring a lively personality and movement to a book's characters, expressive faces and a versatility in style & colour application.

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