

RESPONSIBILITY

Australian Supplement to the Character First Education Curriculum

I Will:

- Keep my promises
- Not make excuses
- Do all my work to the best of my ability
- Make things right when I do wrong
- Know my duty and do my duty



Definition

Knowing and doing what is expected of me

Illustration

Responsibilities fill the life of father emus as they are left solo to rear a brood of chicks. From sitting on the eggs, to providing food, protecting from predators and sheltering from the elements – a male emu must take the leadership if his young are to survive. Read the nature story and follow the days of an emu as he tenderly cares for and nurtures his brood of chicks, protecting them from all the dangers of the outback.

Governor Lachlan Macquarie found a feeble colony in disarray when he arrived at Sydney-Town in 1810. Buildings were rundown, streets narrow and crowded, and conduct was disorderly. Governor Macquarie didn't sit around; he dived headfirst into the challenges and set about restoring New South Wales to become a free, prosperous land. Read the history story to find out how this outstanding man became known as the "Father of Australia."

Responsibility in Nature

The Emu

The arid desert outback of Australia, is a harsh, dry, untamed place with hot, endless summers and very low rainfall. Home to animals like dingos, owls and other small rodents, only the toughest can survive the unforgiving elements of the desert. One such animal is the emu, the world's second largest flightless bird. It is part of the *ratite* family which includes ostriches, cassowaries, kiwis and other flightless birds.

This amazing bird is an Australian icon, most famously known for its appearance on the Australian Coat of Arms, along with the kangaroo. The emu is known for being a tough, sturdy creature, able to endure the harsh desert conditions, and research shows that this bird is also

known for showing incredible responsibility.

It is early winter in the outback, after receiving some early rain, the red-dirt plains are now a carpet of green shrubs. It is also the beginning of the emu breeding season. After spending five months or so together, a male and female emu are now ready to begin a family of their own. The pair build a nest of grass, leaves and twigs in a shallow depression in the ground and the female emu lays the eggs. Clutches range from 7 to 11 eggs, each weighing about 700 grams. After the female has laid the eggs, it is now the male's turn to take charge. From this point on, the responsibility of incubating, raising and protecting the young chicks rests on the father's shoulders.

For about eight weeks, the male emu sits on the clutch of eggs. During this period, he will not leave the nest, he will not eat, drink or even go to the



bathroom! The father emu lives off the body fats stored inside him from feeding through spring and summer. Occasionally, he gets up to turn the eggs with his beak, but apart from that, he takes waits patiently for his precious eggs to hatch. The male emu gives up all he has and puts aside his own desires to protect his clutch from predators and to keep them warm through the bitterly cold desert nights.

At last, the eggs begin to hatch, but the job isn't over for the male emu. In fact, it's about to get a whole lot harder. Now that the chicks are moving freely around, they become all the more vulnerable to predators. One day, a hungry dingo comes snooping around near the nest. The dingo eyes the emu chicks wandering around, and knows they would certainly be a nice tasty meal! Stealthily, the dingo crouches behind some shrub and waits for the unsuspecting chick.

But the dingo isn't the only one who is looking around!



Suddenly, in a flurry of feathers, the poor dingo finds himself being attacked by the male emu! He hisses ferociously and charges at the dingo, fluffing up his feathers to make himself look more threatening. The dingo growls back at the emu, but the determined bird won't budge. With a swift kick from the emu's long muscular leg, the dingo gives a frightened yelp and capers off across the plain at top speed. The responsible emu knows that he has to be bold if he is to protect his chicks so, when threatened he won't move, but will fight any predator, even to the death.



Apart from dingos, the father emu must protect his defenceless chicks from the harsh, wild weather of the outback.

When the conditions get tough, they must look to their *responsible* father for protection.

CRACK! Vivid forks of lightning momentarily split the dark, stormy sky in two. It is immediately followed by the deafening *BOOM* of thunder!

Slowly, pelting rain begins to fall upon the red earth. The frightened chicks huddle under the protection of their father's feathers, where they are dry and warm.

Suddenly, the male emu spots vague movement through the curtain of driving rain. There



appears a sorry sight: two baby emus are lost and defenceless without their father. The male emu knows that these chicks won't last much longer without their protector, so he makes a steady drumming sound in this throat.

The chicks run straight to it, and they huddle under the emu's wing with the other babies. The male emu knew that if he hadn't taken responsibility, those chicks would have soon perished.

From now until they leave the clutch, he will be the one responsible for looking after and caring for those chicks. When they reach at least six months of age, the chicks will leave the protective wing of their father and go out, ready to be responsible for the families they will raise. The chicks are dependent on the father being responsible in his role as incubator, protector and provider for them.

Responsibility in Australian History

From Colony to Country

From the deck of the sailing ship, *Hindostan*, Lachlan Macquarie gazed at the sprinkling of houses and wooden buildings dotted along the grassy hillside. People bustled along the narrow streets, while others stopped on the dock to shade their eyes as they looked toward the approaching ship.

"Is this Sydney-Town?" asked Lachlan's wife, Elizabeth.

Lachlan put his arm around his wife. "Yes, dear, it is," he said. "After seven months at sea, we are here at last. The colony shall no longer suffer under the grip of the tyrannical Rum Corps."

Lachlan was a man of vision and purpose. He had been sent to the penal colony on the shores of Port Jackson in January 1810 to get Sydney-Town back on its feet. He knew his duty and he wasn't going to let anyone stop him from fulfilling it.

Did you spot the "I will"? Lachlan knew his duty as governor and intended to do it.

Lachlan and Elizabeth disembarked from the ship and mounted a carriage for the ride to Government House. The stone building sat on a hill and had a pleasant view of the town.

However, since the deposition of Governor Bligh two years before, Government House had fallen into disrepair. Cobwebs straddled the windows, weeds overran the

garden and some of the beams were starting to rot.

"I'll do my best to see its fixed up for you," Lachlan said to Elizabeth.

Government House wasn't the only thing that needed fixing. The Rum Rebellion had left a shocking social mess that Lachlan set to work cleaning up.

"Amongst the biggest problems are the public houses," he told Elizabeth. "Rum addiction destroys a person's life."

Lachlan issued a proclamation condemning the "licentious and disorderly" inns of the colony, reducing the number of public houses from 75 to 25!

"There's simply no excuse in the

St James church in the centre of Sydney was built during the Macquarie age. It was designed by convict architect, Francis Greenway.



matter," Lachlan told objectors. "Morality must be raised in Sydney-Town and, if closing the inns will help, then so be it."

Did you spot the "I will"? Governor Lachlan didn't make any excuses when he closed the public houses.

Governor Lachlan then turned his attention to transforming the face of Sydney-Town. A casual afternoon ride through the inner streets reaffirmed his ambitions.

The main thoroughfare was dangerously narrow and steep. "Move on!" rowdy soldier's yelled to dirty convicts. Tumbledown stores and houses were sagging. The smell of rubbish dumped down alleys made Lachlan gag.

"I've got to do something to lift the morale of Sydney-Town," he thought.

A man of order and neatness, Lachlan realigned and widened several streets. He encouraged and supervised the construction of schools, bridges, a new hospital and over 200 public buildings. He employed a convict architect named Francis Greenway to



Sydney-Town as it looked during Lachlan Macquarie's rule as Governor of the New South Wales colony.

design several new buildings, including a lighthouse at South Head, St James Church and the Convict Barracks.

As governor of New South Wales, Lachlan didn't do a half-hearted job; he did all his work to the highest standard possible.

Did you spot the "I will"? Governor Lachlan did all his work of improving Sydney-Town to the best of his ability.

New South Wales had a population of 11,000 people when Lachlan Macquarie became governor. Nine-tenths were



The South Head lighthouse stands as a testament to Macquarie's responsibility as Governor.

convicts, who had committed a crime and were condemned to hard labour. The other tenth were free settlers, who had chosen to take up land in the colony.

"Once convicts have served their sentence or received a ticket-of-leave, I want him to thrive and

make a prosperous living for himself," Lachlan told a group of farmers in the outer settlement of Parramatta. "No matter what background they

come from, I will honour my promise to grant all ex-convicts land to pioneer into a successful farming industry.

Did you spot the "I will"? Lachlan kept his promise when giving land to ex-convicts.

However, not everyone agreed with Governor Lachlan's efforts to give free convicts, or 'emancipists', the same rights as free settlers. The settlers felt that were entitled to higher honour than those ragged convicts, no matter how well-behaved they were. Many ex-convicts were, therefore, unfairly mistreated.

The petty, surly behaviour exasperated Governor Lachlan, who wanted equal rights for both emancipists and free settlers. So, he continued to grant them more privileges. He elected some to do jury

duty in court and held eloquent balls at

Government House for all sections of society.

"I believe the key to a peaceful country is to have equal rights between free settlers and emancipists alike," Governor Macquarie said passionately. "Many ex-convicts have been

mistreated, but would thrive if they were just given a chance. From now on, we will continue to encourage those law-abiding ex-convicts."

Did you spot the "I will"? Governor Lachlan made the unequal rights for ex-convicts right and sought to start afresh.

Lachlan Macquarie remained Governor of New South Wales for 12 years. In this period, the population grew from 11,000 to 40,000 people. New South Wales went from a feeble colony to the beginning of a prosperous country. Heralded as one of Australia's great governors, Lachlan Macquarie was given the title the 'Father of Australia.'

References:

Australia's Heritage: the Making of a Nation
Parts 14 and 15
Paul Hamlyn Pty Ltd

Great Australians: Lachlan Macquarie
Marjorie Barnard

Project Ideas

Language

Hats are a symbol of responsibility. Have a 'Hat Day' and get the students to wear hats that represent different vocations – i.e. fireman's hat, hard hat, stockman's hat, policeman's hat, etc. How is responsibility necessary for these jobs.



Maths

Banks are responsible for people's money. Study the role of bankers and set up your own mock bank system in the class. Discuss the importance of responsible saving and spending.

Science and Technology

Talk about the responsibilities involved with keeping a pet. Invite a representative from the RSPCA or local animal shelter to speak to your class about the commitments of keeping a pet. Do a project on your choice of pet. Have a class Pet Day.



Study the lifecycle of the emu and the indispensable role of the father emu as provider and protector of his chicks.

Society and Environment

Study Lachlan Macquarie's 12 years as Governor of New South Wales. Make a list of the ways his foresight improved the colony of Sydney. Make a model of one of his famous public works, like the South Head lighthouse or St James church.

Health

Professional athletes are responsible for their lifestyles, exercise and diet as they train for events such as the Olympics. Talk about how responsibility is essential for athletes if they are to succeed.

Sports such as football, soccer, volley ball and others rely on responsible teamwork to succeed. Discuss what would happen if team members put in a half-hearted effort and failed to do their best.

The Arts

Make a Responsibility-Tree and pin it on the class wall. Get the students to write something they can be responsible for on the leaves.

Do you play a musical instrument? Responsibility is required to practise regularly and be punctual to lessons. Have a music recital where students nominate, practise then play their pieces.

Lachlan Macquarie



In what year did Lachlan Macquarie become Governor of New South Wales?

List two ways that Governor Lachlan improved the New South Wales colony:

1.

2.

What title was Governor Lachlan given after his term as Governor?

How can YOU show Responsibility...

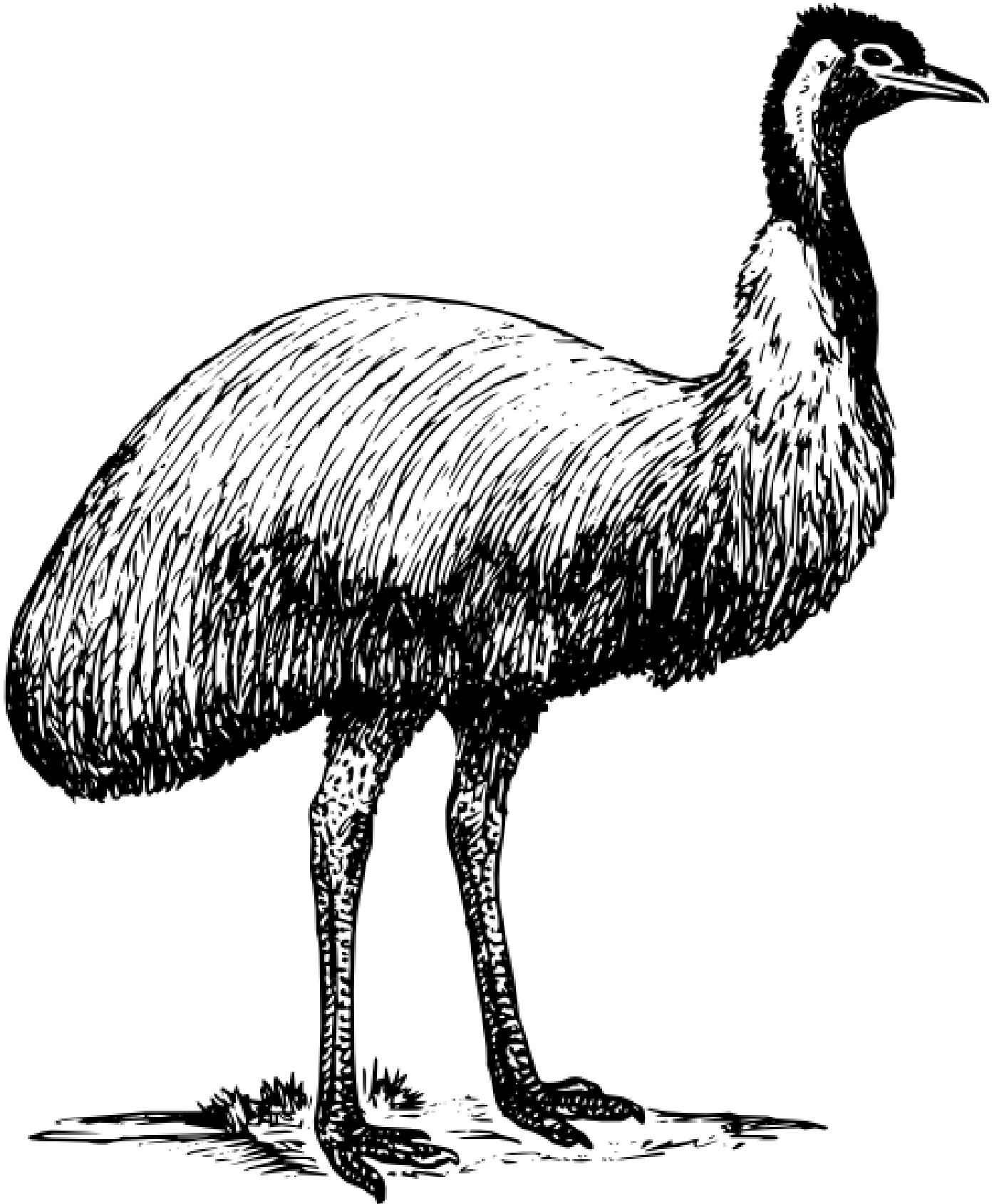
At school?

At home?



RESPONSIBILITY

Knowing and doing what is expected of me.



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