

Happy Birthday, Possum Magic!

Possum Magic turns 25 on 31st March!
All around the country there are going to be *Possum Magic* parties—how is your class or school going to celebrate?

Here are a few ideas to get you thinking . . .

- **Prepare invitations** . . . Ask the children to write and illustrate invitations and/or posters to invite parents, or perhaps another class, to their party.
- **Cook up some magic** . . . We've provided simple recipes for Anzac biscuits, pumpkin scones and lamingtons on page 2.
- **Decorate** . . . your room for a party. Challenge the children to imaginatively decorate tables, make party placemats and maybe even make decorated Minty boxes. Perhaps they could cut stars from coloured paper and bring colourful umbrellas like the ones Grandma Poss had on the beach in Perth.
- **Dress up** . . . Photocopy the mask template provided on page 3 and encourage children to colour it appropriately. Alternatively, face paint possum noses and whiskers. Some students may prefer to make their very own Grandma Poss apron from big sheets or rolls of paper—cut to size and covered with stars.
- **Party games** . . . Try 'Pin the Tail on the Possum' or have a Minty-hunt (you set the rules!)
- **Party food** . . . Include a selection of food from the *Possum Magic* menu (at right).
- **Decorate the cake** . . . Every birthday party needs to have a cake—how will your class decorate this one? Don't forget the 25 candles.
- **Sing and dance** . . . 'Happy Birthday' and 'Here We Go Round the Lamington Plate' just like Hush and Grandma Poss celebrated when Hush became visible again.
- **Older students** . . . might enjoy hosting the party, dramatising the story, or even writing 'The Further Adventures of ...' for the benefit of the younger children.
- **Why not try a progressive picnic party**, with different classrooms representing different cities visited by Hush, and each one providing the food from that location?



Possum Magic Menu & Places

- Anzac biscuits* in Adelaide
- Mornay and Minties in Melbourne—try chicken/tuna mornay vol-au-vents
- Steak and salad in Sydney—maybe a selection of sausages cut into small pieces
- Pumpkin scones* in Brisbane
- Vegemite sandwiches in Darwin
- Pavlova in Perth
- Lamingtons* in Hobart

* Recipes provided on page 2.

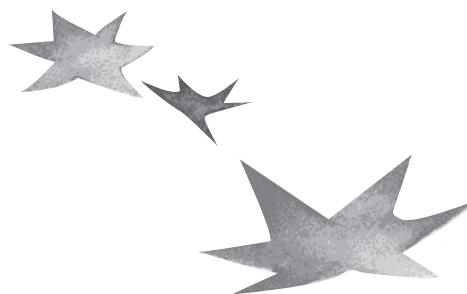
Possum Magic Recipes



Is your class up to the *Possum Magic* cooking challenge?

Different recipes will be suitable for different student groups . . . you need to decide what will work for your class. We would suggest:

- Vegemite sandwiches for Years K–2
- Anzac biscuits for Years 3–4
- Pumpkin scones for Years 4–5
- Lamingtons for Years 5–6



ANZAC BISCUITS

Ingredients:

- 250g butter
- 1 cup desiccated coconut
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup self-raising flour
- 4 tablespoon golden syrup
- 1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees Celsius and line a biscuit tray with baking paper.
2. Place sugar, sifted flour, coconut and oats in a large bowl. Stir to combine all ingredients.
3. Melt butter and golden syrup together in a large pan over low heat.
4. When the butter and syrup mixture has melted, add the bicarbonate of soda. BE CAREFUL, as the mixture will froth up and may overflow the pan.
5. Quickly add the butter mixture to the dry ingredients and stir until all ingredients are well mixed.
6. Place rounded teaspoons of mixture onto the lined tray, and ensure there is room between biscuits for spreading. Dip a fork into a bowl of water and press down on each biscuit to flatten. Keep dipping the fork into water regularly to avoid it sticking to the biscuit mix.
7. Bake for 15 minutes or until golden brown. Transfer to a wire rack to cool. Store in an airtight container.

PUMPKIN SCONES

Ingredients:

- 1 cup mashed pumpkin
- 125g butter
- 3 cups plain flour
- ½ cup milk, plus extra to glaze
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 220 degrees Celsius and line a tray with baking paper.
2. Place butter and sugar in a mixing bowl and beat until it becomes pale and creamy.
3. Add egg and mashed pumpkin and gently combine.
4. Add sifted flour, baking powder and salt to butter mix. Finally, add milk and gently stir until all ingredients are combined.
5. Turn mixture onto a lightly floured board and gently shape until the mixture is approximately 1½ cm thick. Do not knead; dough should come together in clumps.
6. Use a scone cutter or cut into squares and place on the lined tray.
7. Brush extra milk over the top of scones to glaze. Cook scones on the top shelf of the oven for 15 minutes.

LAMINGTONS

A sponge cake needs to be made a day before you make the lamingtons.

Basic Sponge Cake Ingredients:

- 1 cup plain flour
- 3 tablespoons melted butter, slightly cool
- ¾ cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 3 eggs
- 2 teaspoons baking powder

Chocolate Coating Ingredients:

- 1 cup cocoa
- very hot water
- 1¼ cup sugar
- desiccated coconut

Basic Sponge Cake Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees Celsius and line a 28cm x 18cm, lamington tray with baking paper.
2. Place sifted flour, salt, eggs, melted butter and milk in a mixing bowl and beat on a high speed for 3 minutes.
3. Gently stir in baking powder. Mix until just combined.
4. Place mixture into the lined lamington tray and cook for 20 minutes; sponge should spring back when pushed with your finger.
5. Leave cake in tin for 5 minutes before turning onto a cooling rack. Once cool, store in a container or wrap in foil until the next day.

Chocolate Coating Method:

1. Prepare sponge cake for lamingtons by cutting into 5 cm squares.
2. Place cocoa and sugar in a mixing bowl. Gradually add hot water and stir until all sugar has dissolved and the mixture is the thickness of pouring cream. It is essential that all the sugar is dissolved before you proceed.
3. Using gloves, quickly dip each square into the chocolate. Place each dipped square on a cake rack that is standing over a tray until it has stopped dripping.
4. Place coconut in a large bowl or plate and roll chocolate-coated squares in the coconut until completely covered. Place lamingtons on a second cake rack to dry.

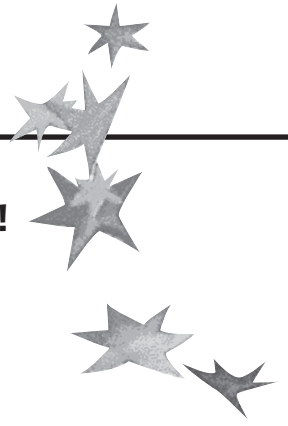
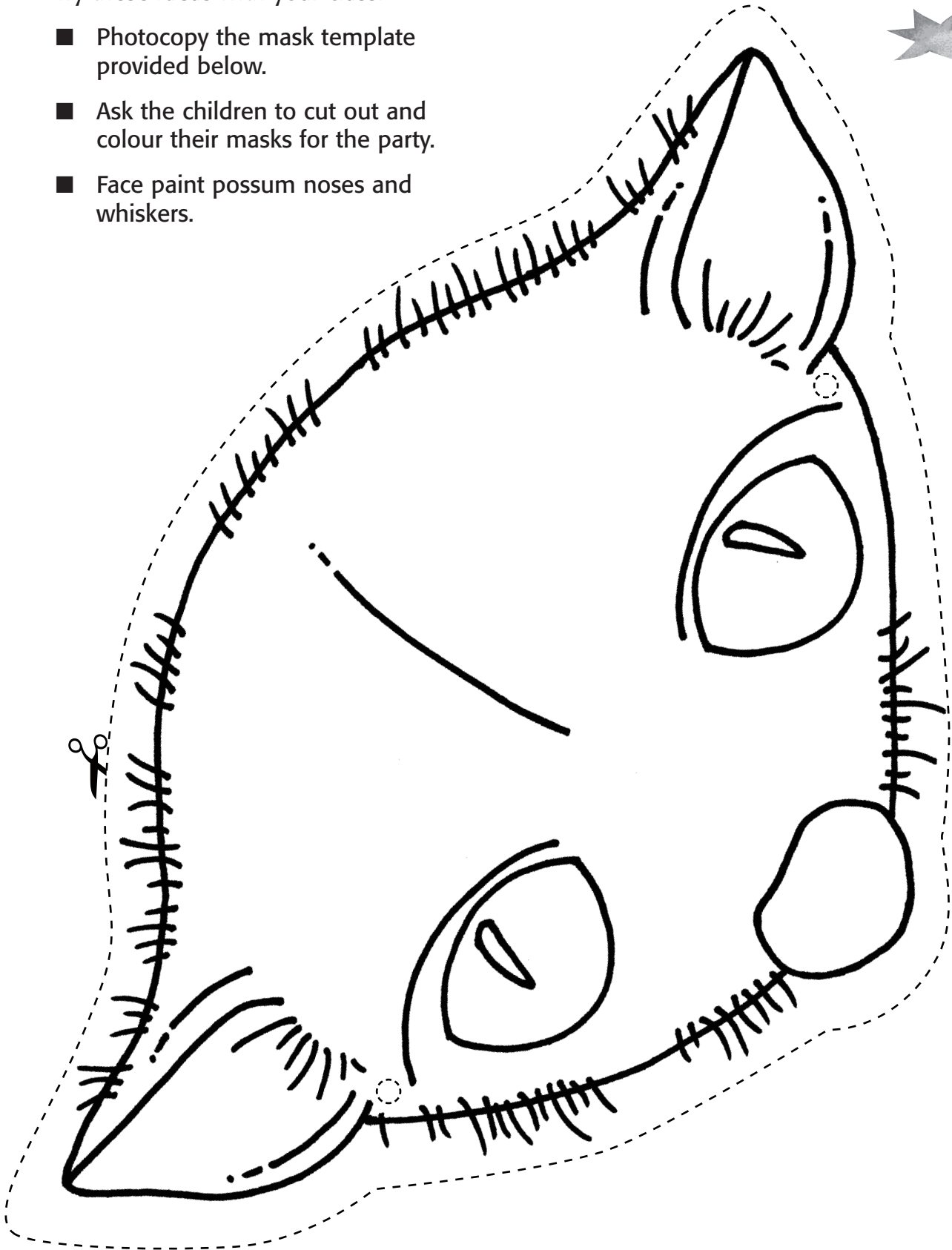


★ Possums Everywhere!

With a little art-and-craft magic, every student can be a possum!

Try these ideas with your class:

- Photocopy the mask template provided below.
- Ask the children to cut out and colour their masks for the party.
- Face paint possum noses and whiskers.



25 Years of *Possum Magic*



Pure Magic

For twenty-five years *Possum Magic* has captivated and enchanted children and adults.

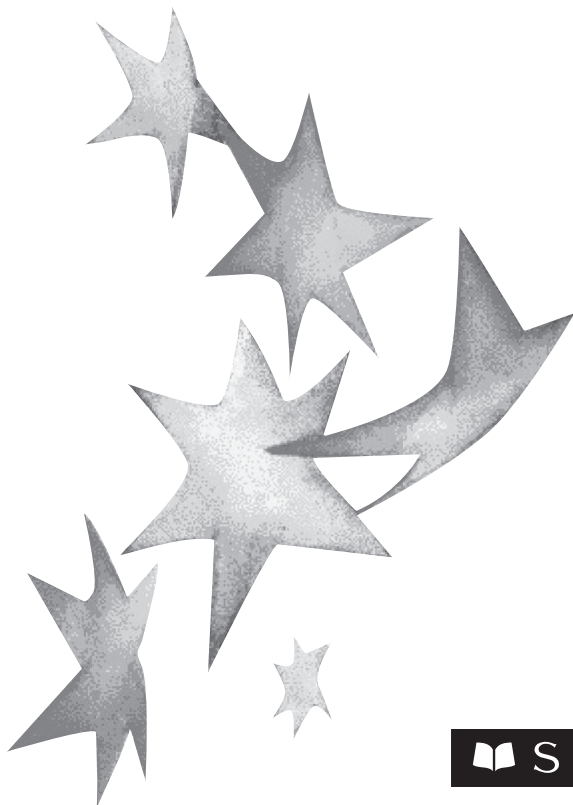
Mem Fox's loveable characters, little Hush and Grandma Poss, and Julie Vivas' exquisite illustrations weave a story of pure magic.

Continuously in print since it was first published by Omnibus Books on 31st March 1983,

Possum Magic has been embraced as Australia's most-loved children's picture book.

Possum Magic has come of age with new editions

Possum Magic is celebrating its 25th birthday and its enduring popularity with special limited editions. Julie Vivas has retouched and recoloured her original illustrations, reviving their richness of colour and definition. With the added bonus of today's technology these new editions are now more true to the original artwork than ever before.



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