

In the Small, Small Pond

by Denise Fleming

This easy-to-read Caldecott Honor Book (1994) has it all from minimal text, rhyming, and unique illustrations.



Read

Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow that with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *How many of you have ever been to a pond?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an "I wonder" statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder what that green thing is?

During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out "rare words" (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

Rare Words in *In the Small, Small Pond*

- wiggle: a small quick side to side movement
- jiggle: to move with small rapid movements in any direction
- tadpoles: the larva of a frog or toad that has a limbless rounded body, gills, and a tail
- wriggle: to make small quick twisting and turning movements with the body
- waddle: to walk with short steps while causing the body to tilt slightly from one side to the other, especially because of having short legs
- wade: to walk against the pressure of water or mud
- geese: long-necked water birds
- parade: a large number of people or things in succession
- hover: to float or flutter in the air without moving very far from the same spot
- shiver: to tremble or shake slightly because of cold, fear, or illness
- quiver: a repeated small rapid shaking movement
- drowse: to be in a state partway between sleeping and waking
- doze: to sleep lightly for a short time, especially during the day
- lash: a movement like that of a whip
- lunge: a sudden strong attacking movement forward
- herons: a freshwater wading bird with a long neck, tapered beak, and often a crested head
- plunge: to move suddenly downward or forward

Rare Words in *In the Small, Small Pond*

- splitter: to make a group divide
- splatter: to splash something
- minnows: a small silvery freshwater fish, commonly used as fishing bait
- scatter: to separate and move suddenly in different directions
- swirl: to turn around and around with a circular motion
- whirligigs: something that spins or turns very quickly
- twirl: to turn lightly and rapidly around in a circle
- sweep: to move quickly, smoothly, and forcefully
- swoop: to descend quickly and suddenly with a sweeping movement, usually from the air
- swallows: a small graceful songbird
- scoop: to lift somebody or something up swiftly
- click: a short sharp sound
- clack: to make a short hard loud noise
- claws: a pointed curved nail on the end of each toe in birds, some reptiles, and some mammals
- crack: a sudden loud sound
- dabble: to paddle, play, or splash in water
- dip: to put something briefly into a liquid
- flip: to move something with a small sharp quick motion
- splash: to scatter a liquid in large drops or amounts
- paws: the foot of a four-legged mammal
- flash: to move quickly
- pile: to heap or stack things one on top of another
- pack: to compact a substance such as snow or soil into a dense mass
- muskrats: large rodent
- stack: to put things on top of another to form a pile
- chill: a moderate but often unpleasant degree of coldness
- breeze: light to moderate wind
- winter: the coldest season of the year
- freeze: turn liquid into solid through cold

After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- How big is a pond? Is it bigger than a lake?
- Has anyone ever seen a tadpole?
- Who knows what reptile tadpoles turn into?
- Do frogs eat insects and bugs?
- Do turtles make good pets? Why or why not?
- What do you think the herons are looking for?
- Who knows the name of the animal in the book with the claws?
- What kind of feet do ducks have?
- What was the raccoon doing at the edge of the water?
- Let's see if we can find the frog on each page.



Do

Identify Initial Sounds

Read the book a second time. Pause and point out the repeated initial sounds and their rhyming words throughout the book.