

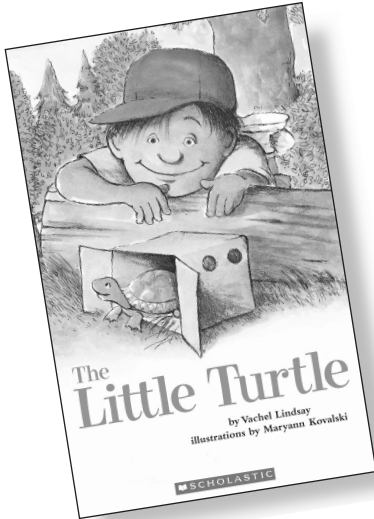
The Little Turtle

Written by Vachel Lindsay

Illustrated by Maryann Kovalski

Text Type: Fiction: Narrative — Poem

Summary: A familiar children's poem, set to music, describes a turtle's actions. The rhyming text is predictable and repetitive, providing several opportunities for students to join in the reading.



Audio Available Online
www.lpey.ca

Text Features

- ▶ sheet music

Print Concepts

- ▶ exclamation marks

First Reading

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ predicting
- ▶ evaluating

Working with Words

- ▶ attending to print (tracking across lines and down pages)
- ▶ Language predictability: associating meanings to words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ join in on repeated phrases and rhyming words
- ▶ vary expression, as indicated by punctuation
- ▶ make predictions about content and events
- ▶ evaluate: state a personal opinion

Teaching Tip: The online audio for this book includes a song version of the text. You may choose to begin the lesson by listening to the song. Alternatively, you may listen to the song after reading the book. Encourage students to sing along once they become familiar with the melody.



BEFORE READING

Making connections: text to self

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Invite students to share, briefly, experiences with turtles. Ask, *Does anyone have a pet turtle? Where does your turtle live? What does your turtle do? Has anyone seen a turtle at the zoo? What did the turtle do?*

Predicting

Look at the front and back covers. Show students how the illustration is spread across the two covers. Ask, *What do you think this book is about?* Read the title and author and illustrator's names. *The title of this book is The Little Turtle, the author is Vachel Lindsay (pronounced vA^l chul) and the illustrator is Maryann Kovalski.* Activate background knowledge by asking students to identify some features of the turtle's surroundings, as shown in the illustration (e.g., cardboard box, pond, log). Ask, *What do you think this turtle will do next?* Record students' predictions in the first column of a T-chart. You could use sentence starters as headings, for example:

We think the turtle will...	The turtle...

Tell students that you will look back to this chart after reading the book to compare their predictions about the turtle to what happens in the text.

Setting a Purpose

Predicting

Let's read the book together and see what the turtle does.



DURING READING

Print concepts

Turn to the first page and ask, *Where do we start reading?*

ESL Note:

Ask an ESL student to stand up with you and point to the first word on each page to indicate the place where the reading begins. *Who can be my helper and show the class where we start reading on each page?*

Tracking print

Read through the text, tracking the print. Slow the pace and track word by word when reading repeated words such as *snapped* and *caught* to emphasize repetition.

Building confidence

Invite students to join in on repeated words *snapped* and *caught*, as well as repeated rhyming word, *me*.

Print concepts

Emphasize the word *me* as indicated by the exclamation mark.

Language predictability

Clarify the meaning of the word *minnow*, using picture clues and students' background knowledge.



AFTER READING

Predicting/infering

Ask, *Did the turtle do what we expected?* Revisit the chart created before reading and fill in the second column, confirming and revising predictions as required.

Ask, *What do you think will happen next? Will the turtle go back in the box or will the boy let it go? What makes you think that?* Record some of the students' ideas.

Evaluating

Ask, *What do you think the boy should do? Should the turtle be in the box?* Discuss whether or not students think the turtle is a pet or a wild animal and whether or not it should go free. Take a vote (e.g., *Do you think the turtle should go free?*) and tally the results.

Second Reading

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ sequencing
- ▶ inferring

Working with Words

- ▶ attending to print (tracking across lines and pages)
- ▶ letter knowledge (“t,” “s,” and “m”)

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ join in on repeated phrases and rhyming words
- ▶ attend to print
- ▶ sequence: retell events
- ▶ inferring: characters' feelings



BEFORE READING

Predicting

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Look back at the chart created and revised during the first reading. Reread and review the students' predictions in the first column, and the revisions and confirmations in the second column.

Sequencing

Setting a Purpose

Say, *Let's read the book again and think about all the things the turtle does in the poem.*



DURING READING

Tracking print/ building confidence

Read the book and track the print. Invite students to join in, especially for pages 6–9 and page 10.

Print concepts

Vary the pace, expression, and volume of your voice to emphasize repeated words and phrases.

Language predictability

Pause at endings of phrases and invite students to provide the words for *mosquito, flea, minnow, and me.*

Sequencing

Remind students as they are reading to think about all the things the turtle does during the day. Say, *I'm remembering the turtle is snapping and trying to catch all these things—a mosquito, a flea, a minnow, and the boy.*

Letter knowledge

Pause two or three times and ask students to locate one of the repeated or accented words beginning with “t,” “s,” or “m” (e.g., *turtle, snapped, mosquito, minnow, me*). Ask students how they knew the word and invite them to frame the word for the group.



AFTER READING

Sequencing

Review the turtle’s actions with students and revisit the illustrations to remind students of the order of the key events. Locate key words in the text with students and record them on a chart. You might use simple illustrations to remind students of key points (e.g., *puddle, rocks, mosquito, flea, minnow, boy*).

Teaching Tip:

Students may need help retelling events in the third person, e.g., *The turtle snapped at the boy*. Use prompts and modelling to assist them.

Letter knowledge

As students locate key words during the above activity, prompt them to verbalize their thinking. Ask, *How did you find that word on the page? What are the letters in that word?*

ESL Note:

When required, review the sounds of initial consonants and blends by pointing to the beginning letter(s) of words and asking, *What sound does this letter (these letters) make? Do you know another word that begins with that sound?*

Inferring

Review the list of key events and look at the illustrations. Ask, *Do you think the turtle and the boy are happy? What makes you think that?*

Third Reading

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ inferring

Working with Words

- ▶ recognizing exclamation marks
- ▶ phonological and phonemic awareness: locating and identifying rhyming words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student’s ability to:

- ▶ join in on repeated words and phrases
- ▶ infer meaning using context clues and personal knowledge
- ▶ identify and locate rhyming words
- ▶ recognize exclamation marks and vary expression accordingly



BEFORE READING

Sequencing

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Review the retelling chart created after the first reading. Highlight key words and ask students to join you in reading them.

Inferring

Setting a Purpose

Revisit students' initial predictions and their thoughts on whether or not the turtle should go free. Say, *We've talked about the boy and the turtle before and what the boy should do. When we read today let's think about some of the questions we have about the boy and the turtle.*



DURING READING

Tracking print/ building confidence

Read with expression and invite students to join in. Track the print and also invite students to track specific pages.

Phonological and phonemic awareness

Pause before reading the rhyming words *box/rocks* and *flea/me*. Invite students to provide the words and comment on the way the rhyming pairs sound. Some students require an explicit explanation: *Box and rocks rhyme because they both end the same way, with an "ox" sound.* Ask students to locate these words on the page.

Inferring

After reading page 9, ask students why they think the turtle snapped at the boy. Encourage students to look at the expressions on the turtle's face and the boy's face. Ask, *What do their expressions tell you?*

Print concepts

Continue reading, varying expression throughout. Emphasize the word *me* and point out the exclamation mark. Model expressive reading and invite students to read with you.



AFTER READING

Inferring

Remind students of their discussion about whether or not the turtle is a pet and whether or not the turtle should go free. Return to the first page of the book. Ask, *Why do you think the turtle was in the box? Why did the boy let him out at the beginning of the poem?* Model inferential thinking for students by saying, *Sometimes we have questions when we read stories and poems. I'm thinking about why the turtle was in the box. I'm using clues from the picture and thinking about what I know about turtles.*

Invite students to share questions about the boy or the turtle that they identified while reading, and invite them to infer answers to the questions.

Use students' ideas to record, in a few sentences, what might have happened before the first page of the poem. Ask, *Where do you think the turtle came from? Did it come from a store? Did the boy catch the turtle? What makes you think that?*



FURTHER READINGS

Many texts benefit from being reread with students. The readings suggested in this plan can be expanded to include further readings. Participation will increase when a book becomes familiar, and students will become more comfortable taking turns and using a pointer to track print.

For each rereading, we recommend that you select a balance of Print Concepts, Comprehension, and Working with Words strategies from the following suggestions. Make your selections based on the needs of students in your class.

Print Concepts, Book Handling, and Text Features

Tracking print

Continue to track print but offer individual students continued opportunities to track the print in the poem, as well as on the charts that have been created from their predictions and retellings. Offer as much support as necessary (e.g., by guiding the pointer with students who need assistance.)

Print concepts

Have students identify capital letters at the beginning of sentences.

Text features

- ▶ Review the title, author, illustrator, back cover text, and sheet music.
- ▶ You may wish to rewrite the text on a chart, and use the sheet music to sing it. Discuss with students how poems and songs “look” different from stories.

Focusing on Comprehension

Inferring

Revisit students’ ideas about why the turtle was in the box, why the boy let him out, or why the turtle snapped at the boy. Create a chart listing students’ ideas and the clues they used to make these inferences.

Sequencing

Cut up the retelling chart created during the second reading and have students rearrange the events in the correct order.

Making connections: text to world

Ask students what they know about turtles. Decide what could be true about the turtle and the boy in the poem. For example, do turtles really eat flies and minnows? Do turtles “snap”?

Working with Words

Word solving and building

Generate and list other rhyming words for *box/rocks* and *me/flea*. Discuss how the words sound the same but may be spelled differently.

ESL Note:

Write *box* and *rocks* and *flea* and *me* on the board. Ask students if they know any other words that rhyme with these pairs. Give them visual clues (e.g., point to someone’s socks) or verbal clues (e.g., *These tell us the time [clocks]*). List a few of these words on chart paper or the board (it may be helpful to draw the picture beside the word) and ask a student to read them.

Letter knowledge

Have students think of, and find around the room, other words that begin with the sounds “t,” “s,” or “m.”

Phonological and phonemic awareness

Orally stretch words (e.g., *climbed*: c–l–i–m–be–d on page 5 and *mosquito*: m–o–s–qu–i–t–o on page 6). Blend to reform the words.

High-frequency words

Invite students to find and frame familiar high-frequency words in the text. Use the text to review particular high-frequency words or to introduce new high-frequency words. (See the list of high-frequency words recommended for kindergarten in the Working with Words Guide.)



RESOURCE LINKS

You may choose to do some of these optional follow-up activities. Choose those that best meet the needs and interests of your students.

Writing

Have students come up with ideas about what could happen after the end of the book (e.g., the turtle goes back in the box). Record each idea as a sentence on a blank page. Ask students to illustrate and include as “final pages” for the poem.

Use rhyming words generated from the rhyming pairs *box/rocks* and *flea/me* to create a new poem. Select from the list and provide substitute words. Keep the word *me* as the ending to the poem. Write the substituted words on a sticky note, cover the targeted word, and read the “new” poem from the book. For example:

*There was a little turtle
He lived in my socks
He swam in a puddle
He climbed on a fox
etc.*

See the Writing Guide for more on text innovations.

Independent Reading

Make the six small versions of *The Little Turtle* and the online audio available for students. Invite students to use these materials to read the book independently.

Teaching Tip: The online audio for this book includes a cloze reading of this text. In this reading, selected words have been omitted. Students listening to the cloze reading have the opportunity to chime in with the missing words.

Place the cut-up retelling chart in the book box so that students can arrange in the correct sequence and reread.

Provide a selection of familiar poems for independent reading.



Home Links

Send home familiar poems for students to read with their parents. Provide tips for parents, such as encouraging students to provide the rhyming words.

Working with Words

Once concepts have been introduced in context, see the focused lessons in the Working with Words Guide for more direct instruction for those students who need it.

See also the specific Building Words lesson (“Snapped”) in the Working with Words Guide.

Read Aloud

Read to the class another example of a familiar poem set to music, e.g., *The Wheels on the Bus*. (There is a version of this poem illustrated by Maryann Kovalski. It is published by Kids Can Press.)