

Is It Alive?



Written by Nicholas Kouncar

Text Type: Non-fiction: Description — Comparison

Guided Reading Level: B

Summary: The text and supporting photographs compare live animals with inanimate things (e.g., toys, a garden ornament, and a statue) that look like them.

Word Count: 49

High-frequency Words: *cat, is, not, this*

Text Supports

- ▶ repetitive language pattern on pages 2–11
- ▶ photographs strongly support the text
- ▶ one line of print on each page
- ▶ consistent placement of text on each page

Possible Text Challenges

- ▶ photo of lamb on page 8 may be misinterpreted as a sheep
- ▶ change in language pattern on page 12
- ▶ question marks

Reading Strategies

Comprehension Strategies

- ▶ making connections: comparing
- ▶ predicting

Working with Words

- ▶ using photo cues to support word recognition and word solving
- ▶ using initial letters/sounds to read unfamiliar words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ track print and show understanding of print concepts
- ▶ make connections: comparing
- ▶ make predictions
- ▶ use photo cues and initial letters/sounds to read unfamiliar words
- ▶ recognize high-frequency words

Teaching Tip: When assessing students' learning, make sure you observe them throughout the Guided Reading session and not just at the end.



BEFORE READING

Predicting

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Show the front cover of the book, and read the title and author's name, finger tracking under the text as you read. Ask, *What's the animal in the photograph? Yes, it's a frog. Is it alive? Why do you think so?*

Making connections: comparing/predicting

Read the back cover text to students, finger tracking under the text as you read. Encourage students to talk about the characteristics of each duck and about what a live duck can do that a toy duck can't do (e.g., The live duck can breathe, eat, swim, walk, and fly.). *So, it says, "This duck is alive. This duck is not alive." Let's look at the first two pages in the book (finger tracking as you read). "This horse is alive. This horse is not alive." There is a pattern here. We're going to see that same pattern through most of this book. What other animals do you think we're going to see and read about?*

ESL Note: ESL students may be unfamiliar with some of these animals. Focus on a single attribute (e.g., movements, sounds, or skin/fur) when initially comparing and contrasting.

Word solving and building

Overcoming Text Challenges

Remind students that they should look at both photographs and words if they are having difficulty with a word. Tell them that the language pattern you have identified helps the reader to read the book, but that they should be ready for the pattern to change, especially near the end of the book.

Making connections: comparing

Setting a Purpose

Tell students that, as they read the book, they are to think about how each pair of animals is the same and how each pair is different.



DURING READING

Give each student a copy of the book, ask them to locate the first word on page 2, and direct them to read the book independently.

Listen to each student read, observing their print tracking and word-solving behaviours. Provide prompts, as needed, and positive reinforcement for the use of effective strategies (e.g., *I liked the way you checked the photo to help you figure out _____*). Record your observations on each student's Reading Behaviours and Strategies Record Sheets (see the Reading Guide).

Note students' successful use of reading strategies and any difficulties they encounter.

If students finish before others have completed the reading, ask them to go back and reread, then discuss with a partner the similarities and differences they noted in the animal pairs.

Teaching Tip: With early-level books, it's important to hear all of the students read two or three pages of text to ensure that they are using effective reading strategies.



AFTER READING

**Making connections:
comparing**

Facilitate discussion about the similarities and differences noted with each featured animal. Finish this segment of the lesson by asking each student, *Tell us one of the things you thought about that shows when an animal is alive.*

Predicting

Ask, *Were all the animals that we thought might be in the book in it? Were there any animals in the book that we didn't think of?*

Word solving and building

Talk about any challenges you observed while students were reading the text. For example, have them look at pages 8 and 9. Say, *I noticed some of you called this animal a sheep. Let's check the word you thought said sheep. We'd need an "s" and an "h" to make the "sh" sound at the beginning of the word sheep. (Print sheep on the board.) Can someone tell me what sound this first letter makes (pointing to the "l" in lamb). Yes, it's "l." That's a baby sheep, isn't it? What word, starting with the sound "l" means a baby sheep? Right, a lamb. Always check the beginning letter of a word you're not sure of when you're using a picture or photo for clues about what a word might be.*

Talk about effective strategies that you observed as you heard students read. For example, *When Sophie was reading this last page (show page 12), she read "This cat is alive." That's the way the author always describes a new animal, isn't it? Then she noticed the question mark at the end, and knew something wasn't quite right, so she reread the page very carefully. Well done, Sophie. You noticed that something was different, and you reread the sentence to fix the problem.*

Rereadings

Provide opportunities for each student to reread the book with a partner.

Focused Follow-up

The following activities are optional. Choose those that best meet your students' needs.

Animal Actions

Ask students to talk with a partner about what they might see each of the book's live animals doing in real life (e.g., a frog jumping onto a rock in the pond, a lion roaring at other animals in the jungle). Leave enough time for sharing ideas with the whole group.

What Can These Animals Do?

Ask students to complete each sentence on the BLM, by writing their ideas about what each of the live animals can do. Have them draw lines to connect each animal's picture with the sentence that describes it. They can draw a picture of their favourite idea on the back of the page or on a separate page, and write a new sentence about the animal they have drawn. Completed pages could be made into a big book for a Literacy Centre.

Word Building

Students can practise building high-frequency words (e.g., *is, this, not*), and animal nouns (e.g., *frog, duck, cat*), using card, magnetic, or plastic letters.



Home Links

Have students take home a reproducible version of this text. See www.lpey.ca.

**Making connections:
comparing**

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**Making connections:
comparing**

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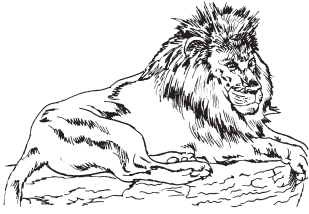
High-frequency words

Word Building

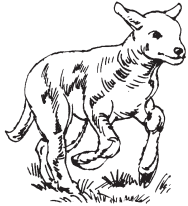
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What Can These Animals Do?

Name: _____



A horse can _____



A frog can _____



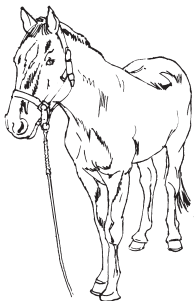
A lion can _____



A lamb can _____



A duck can _____



A cat can _____

Is It Alive?



Text Type: Non-fiction: Description — Comparison

Summary: The text and supporting photographs compare live animals with inanimate things (e.g., toys, a garden ornament, a statue) that look like them.

For more information on Small-Group Shared Reading, see the Reading Guide for grade one.

Text Features

- ▶ back cover text

Print Concepts

- ▶ repetitive language patterns
- ▶ question mark
- ▶ one line of text on each page

First Reading

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ making connections: comparing
- ▶ inferring

Working with Words

- ▶ tracking print

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ join in the shared reading
- ▶ make connections: comparing
- ▶ make inferences
- ▶ track print



BEFORE READING

Inferring

Activating and Building Background Knowledge

Hold up your copy of the book, so that everyone can see the text and photographs clearly. Finger track along the text as you read.

Read the title and author, using prompts to highlight concepts, e.g., *The author is the person who wrote this book.* Ask students to name the animal and answer the title's question, "Is it Alive?" Encourage students to give reasons to support their inference that the frog on the front cover is alive.

ESL Note:

This might be a difficult concept for ESL students. Extra modelling may be necessary. If possible, bring in a live animal and non-living model. Compare and contrast using simple observations and yes or no answers.

Predicting/text features

Turn to the back cover and point out the text that is printed there. Ask students why an author might write material on the back cover of the book. Read the back cover text, finger tracking as you read. Invite students to talk about the characteristics of each duck on the back cover, and ask, *What can the live duck do that the toy duck can't do?* The live duck can breathe, eat, swim, walk and fly. Tell students that they're going to be reading about other animals. Ask, *What other animals do you think might be in this book?*

**Making connections:
comparing****Setting a Purpose**

Tell students that as you read the book together, you want them to think about how each pair of animals is the same and how each pair is different, just as they did when they read about the ducks on the back cover.

**DURING READING****Tracking print/
print concepts**

Model print concepts as you get ready to read, e.g., *Let's start on the first page, and find the first word on the page.* Track the print on each page as you read with the group.

Building confidence

Tell students that the author uses the pattern they have already read in the back cover text ("This ____ is alive. This ____ is not alive.") on most of the book's pages. Invite them to join in when they feel comfortable with the pattern.

**Making connections:
comparing**

Pause to talk about the photographs of some of the animals, and about the similarities and differences observed, e.g., *Let's take a closer look at the frogs on these two pages (pages 4 and 5). What do you see that looks the same? What's different about the way they might feel if you touched them?*

**AFTER READING****Making connections:
comparing**

Say, *Let's talk about what you noticed that was the same or different about each pair of animals.* Turn to the pages that are being talked about as specific animal similarities and differences are raised.

Inferring

Ask, *How can you tell if something is alive? What does it mean to be alive?* Ask each student to think about, then verbalize, one thought that shows their understanding of what it means to be alive. Ask, *How do we know, for sure, when something or someone is alive?* Some students might comment on the fact that none of the animals in the book are actually alive, as they are just pictures of the animals, so they can't move or breathe or eat or do any of the things a live animal can do. Help students to see that our own experience helps us to recognize the difference between a real animal and a drawing or photograph of one. Have them consider photographs of themselves or their pets.

Second and Further Readings

For rereadings of the text, give each student a copy of the book, but continue to choral read the text. Support the development of print concepts and tracking behaviours by modelling using your own copy of the book and by assisting individual students when necessary.

For each rereading, we suggest 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 your students.

Print Concepts, Book Handling, and Text Features

Print concepts

Provide opportunities for students to develop print concepts and to practise tracking print. Note students' ability to do one or more of the following:

- ▶ move from left to right pages, and turn to the next page
- ▶ locate specific words or phrases on a page (e.g. *alive*, *not alive*)
- ▶ eye-voice match some words (i.e., one-to-one matching)

Text features

Review the title and author, and ask students to point out the same information on the title page. Review the function of the question marks on the front cover, title page, and page 12. Have a student read those sentences. If they do not read the sentences as questions, model reading for them and ask what the difference is. Point out that a sentence with a period is read differently from a sentence that ends with a question mark.

Focusing on Comprehension

Making connections: text to self

Have students work in pairs and select a live animal in the book about which they have experiential and/or book knowledge. Ask them to talk about details that show that the animal is alive (e.g., the texture of the real horse's hair, the warmth of its breath, its neighing and snorting sounds, the different sounds its hooves make on soft and hard surfaces). Invite them to share their thoughts with the group before the end of the session.

Making connections: comparing

Have students look at illustrations of children in some of their books and tell what the differences are between themselves (or photographs of children) and the illustrations.

Working with Words

Letter knowledge

Ask students to locate all of the words that begin with the letter "l" in the book (*lion* and *lamb*). Invite them to find more "l" words around the room.

Phonological and phonemic awareness

Look at, and talk briefly about, the cat on page 12. Ask students to think of words that end with "at" like the word *cat* (e.g., *cat*, *bat*, *fat*, *hat*, *mat*, *pat*, *rat*, *sat*). Jot the words on the board, reread them chorally, then ask students, *Which of these words is the name of a live animal? Say the word when you show us its name on the board.*



Home Links

Have students take home a reproducible version of this text to read chorally with family members.

See www.lpey.ca.

Making connections:
comparing

Making connections:
comparing

High-frequency words

Rereadings

Provide opportunities for each student to reread the book with a partner.

Focused Follow-up

The following activities are optional. Choose those that best meet your students' needs.

Animal Actions

Ask students to talk, with a partner, about what they might see each of the book's live animals doing in its own habitat (e.g., a frog jumping onto a rock in the pond, a lion roaring at other animals in the jungle). Have them share their thoughts with the group before the end of the session.

Writing a Story

As a class, write a story about one of the non-living animals in the book. What would it like to say to the living animal? Would it like to be a real animal, too, or does it like being a toy or a statue?

Animal Discussion

Tell students they are going to be thinking about what each of the book's six live animals can do that toy, garden ornament, and statue animals can't do. Write the sentence starter, "A horse can _____" on the board and say, *Tell me something that a live horse can do that a rocking horse can't do.* Take a vote on which response to use, and finish writing the sentence. Direct students to use the same sentence pattern to write about each of the book's animals. If there is time, they could provide an illustration of one of their responses.

Word Building

Students can practise building high-frequency words (e.g., *is, this, not*), and two or three of the animal nouns (e.g., *frog, duck, cat*), using card, magnetic, or plastic letters.

Teaching Tip: Make copies of "Is it Alive?" available for reference/modelling purposes during Focused Follow-up sessions. Encourage students to refer to the text, if needed, as a useful resource.