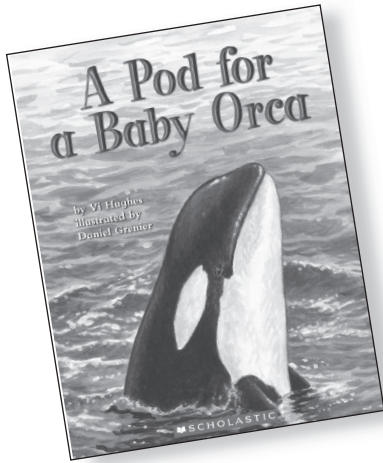


A Pod for a Baby Orca



Written by Vi Hughes

Illustrated by Daniel Grenier

Text Type: Non-fiction: Retell — Account

Guided Reading Level: H

Summary: Based on a true story, this book is about a young orca whale that is lost at sea. Scientists care for it and then reunite it with its pod. Students learn about orcas and maritime life through descriptive vocabulary and realistic illustrations.

Word Count: 193
 (264 including page 16)

Text Features

- ▶ epilogue at the end that explains the true story of the whale rescue

Visual Literacy

- ▶ photos of the real whale at the end of the book

Text Supports

- ▶ illustrations highly supportive of the text
- ▶ familiar sentence structures and vocabulary
- ▶ each sentence begins on a new line

Possible Text Challenges

- ▶ some difficult or unfamiliar words: *hungry, alone, danger, scientists, thirty-five, wondered, people, join, cheered, reunited, worried, and taught*
- ▶ several lines of text on a page

First Session (pages 2-7)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ analyzing
- ▶ inferring

Working with Words

- ▶ using letter cues across words to make predictions
- ▶ using picture cues to read unfamiliar words
- ▶ using word parts to solve unfamiliar words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ analyze to recognize the problem in the story
- ▶ make inferences about how the whale feels at different points in the story
- ▶ use letter cues across words to make predictions
- ▶ use picture cues to read unfamiliar words
- ▶ use word parts to solve unfamiliar words

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



BEFORE READING

Making connections: text to world

Note: Prior to the lesson, place sticky notes or other bookmarks at page 7 of the books. This will indicate the end of the first Guided Reading session.

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Hand out copies of the book. Read the title, and the author and illustrator names. Ask students what type of animal is pictured on the front cover. If students know that it is a whale, explain, *This is an orca, which is a type of whale.* If they do not identify the animal as a whale say, *It is a whale. This type of whale is called an orca.* Lead a discussion to find out what students know about whales, such as where they live. Make sure you discuss that whales travel in groups called *Pods*.

ESL Note: If possible, bring in pictures and/or video images of orca whales to introduce ESL students to them.

Predicting

Overcoming Text Challenges

Ask students, *Why do you think the book is called A Pod for a Baby Orca?* After a brief discussion, have students turn to the back cover and look at the illustration, and then invite them to read the text chorally with you. Ask students who they think might help the orca find its family.

Text features

Return to the front cover and instruct students to open the book to the title page. Invite students to chorally reread the title, along with the author and illustrator names, and then draw their attention to the group of whales in the illustration. Remind students that the term for a group of whales is *pod*.

Making connections: text to self

Tell students to turn to pages 2–3. Ask, *Who has been to the ocean? Who has seen boats like the ones in the picture?* Discuss. If any students know the names of the types of boats, have them share their knowledge.

Inferring

Draw attention to the whale in the illustration, and then lead a discussion about the fact that it is alone and seems small in comparison to the large boats around it. Discuss that the whale is not with a pod. Ask who they think the people in the boat on page 2 might be and what they may be trying to do.

Tracking print/word solving and building

Invite students to join in with you as you read page 2. Model tracking print to assist students in navigating the multiple lines of text. Point out to students that each sentence starts on a new line. Provide support with difficult words such as *hungry, alone, and danger.* Model solving one or two of the words using letter and picture cues.

Analyzing

Setting a Purpose

Say, *I want you to read to the end of page 7 to find out what problem the scientists have.*

Teaching Tip:

Write the purpose for reading on chart paper or the board so that it is visible to all students in the group. This will help them focus as they read and encourage independence when they finish reading.



DURING READING

Ask each student to read independently to the end of page 7, thinking about the purpose that has been set.

Observe and listen to each student read, assisting as needed with word-solving strategies, vocabulary, punctuation, and comprehension strategies. Monitor for use of letter cues across the word to make word predictions, use of word parts, use of picture information to see what word would make sense, and self-monitoring to fix any misread words. Through individual questioning, note whether or not each student understands the problems in the story up to page 7 (i.e., the baby orca is alone without its pod; the scientists need to find the orca's pod). Also note any difficulties students may have.

Tell students that if they finish early, they should list the things that people do to help the baby whale. Encourage them to justify their answers with direct references to the book.



AFTER READING

Sequencing: retelling

Ask students to recall what has happened in the story so far. Encourage them to refer back to the text when recalling specific events.

Inferring/evaluating

Invite students to share their thoughts about how the whale was feeling when it was lost in the harbour and to give reasons for their responses (e.g., it is afraid because of the large, fast-moving boats; it is lonely without its pod). Record students' responses on chart paper or the board.

Analyzing

Ask, *What problem do the scientists have at the end of page 7?* Discuss.

Word solving and building

Note positive reading strategies that you observed students using as they read, e.g., *Reena had a good idea when she had trouble reading the word alone. She looked at the picture and she made the letter sounds and then she was able to figure out the word.*

Tell students that they will continue reading during their next Guided Reading session to find out if the scientists find the baby orca's pod. Ask them to leave their sticky note or bookmark in the book at page 7.

Second Session (pages 8-15)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ inferring
- ▶ sequencing: retelling

Working with Words

- ▶ using word parts to solve unfamiliar words

Assessment Opportunities

- ▶ make inferences
- ▶ sequence: retell
- ▶ use word parts to solve unfamiliar words



BEFORE READING

Sequencing: retelling

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Lead students as they recall the events that occurred on pages 2–7. They need to remember that the baby orca was lost and became separated from its pod. They also need to understand that the scientists have worked hard to bring the whale back to health. Remind students of what the scientists have to do at the end of page 7 (i.e., find the baby orca’s pod).

Word solving and building

Overcoming Text Challenges

On the board or chart paper, print the following words from the book: *wondered, sailed, looked, waited, cheered, and shouted*. Have students look at these words and identify what is common among them. They should identify the “ed” ending. Ask students what they might do to help read these words. If they’re unsure, demonstrate how they can break the words into chunks by looking at the root word and then the “ed” ending. Encourage students to use this strategy to support their understanding of these new words.

Inferring

Setting a Purpose

Explain to students, *You are now going to read to page 15 to answer the questions: How was the whale feeling at the end of the story? How were the people feeling at the end of the story?* Write these new questions on chart paper or the board.



DURING READING

Observe and listen to each student read up to page 15. Assist as needed with word-solving strategies, vocabulary, punctuation, and comprehension strategies. Possible prompts to aid in comprehension might include: *Read the rest of the sentence and think what would make sense and what might sound right. Why did the people behave that way when the orca joined its pod?*

If any students finish reading earlier than the others, suggest that they continue on to read page 16.



AFTER READING

Analyzing/infering

Discuss what happened in the second part of the story. *What different groups of people were involved with the release of the whale? Why do you think so many people from the whole community came out?*

Infering

Invite students to share their answers to the questions you posed before the reading. Expand the discussion to include the feelings the whale may have had at other points in the book (e.g., when it was found in the harbour, when it was being carried on the boats). Refer back to the notes you made during the first session about the whale's feelings. Model how students can go back to the pictures and text to justify their answers.

Word solving and building

Point out reading strategies that students used, e.g., *When Simon came to the word sailed, he recognized the word sail, and he saw the "ed" ending. When he put them together, he could read the word, sailed.*

Text features

Direct students to the epilogue on page 16. Point out how the pictures are photographs rather than illustrations. Ask students to give their ideas about why the pictures have changed in this way. Invite them to join you in choral reading page 16. Lead a discussion about how the story about the orca is true and that the whale's name is Springer. Talk about how this epilogue gives more information about what happened to the whale.

Infering

Discuss how the scientists, animal doctors, and other people would feel about Springer's situation a year later.

Sequencing: retelling

Have students retell the events of the story, allowing them to refer to the book as necessary. Record a simple sentence on a strip of paper for each of the six main events. Invite students to join you in chorally reading the sentence strips. If the events are not in the same order as they occur in the book, ask students to help you to rearrange them until they are. Reread all generated sentences when they are in the correct order.

Rereadings

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

Focused Follow-up

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

How the Baby Orca Felt

Infering

Have students use the BLM to describe how the baby orca felt at different stages in the rescue (at the beginning, when she was lost in harbour; in the middle, when she was being carried out to sea on the boat; and in the end, when she joined her pod). Students may also wish to draw a picture to illustrate how the baby orca was feeling. Encourage them to share their responses with a partner.

Sequencing: retelling

A Pod for a Baby Orca Retelling

Give students a copy of the BLM and ask them to record the six events from the book in order using pictures. Students who are able to do so may print the appropriate sentences below the pictures, either supplying their own sentences or copying the modelled sentences from the After Reading activity. Some students may need assistance with printing. The sentence strips may remain visible for reference during this activity.

Word solving and building

Onset and Rime

The rime “ale” (from the word *whale*) is one that students can build on to help them read new vocabulary and create new words when they are writing. Give students magnetic, plastic, or card letters for “wh” “m,” “p,” “b,” “s,” and “t, and have them manipulate the letters to form new words. These words can be recorded and read aloud at sharing time. Another rime that can be taken from this text is “od” from *pod*. The letters “p,” “c,” “g,” “n,” “t,” and “s” will help them to make new words with this rime. The materials for these activities can be made available to students for use at the Literacy Centre.

How the Baby Orca Felt

Name: _____

When the baby orca was lost she felt

When the baby orca was being carried on the ship she felt

When the baby orca joined her pod she felt



A Pod for a Baby Orca Retelling

Name: _____

3	6
2	5
1	4