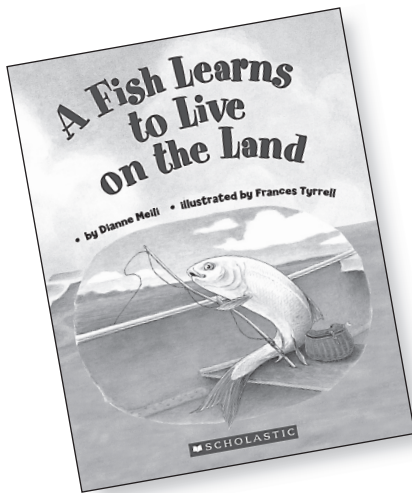


A Fish Learns to Live on the Land



Written by *Dianne Meili*

Illustrated by *Frances Tyrrell*

Text Type: Fiction: Narrative — Tall Tale

Guided Reading Level: P

Summary: This is a tall tale about a young girl who spends the summer with her Granny on Mirror Lake in Alberta. She and Granny love to fish and Granny shares her tall tales while they wait for the fish to bite. When they land a big whitefish, Granny decides he is smart enough to learn to live on the land. At summer's end, Granny decides Silver must return to the water. In later years, the girl continues to return to the lake, secretly hoping to see the fish.

Text Supports

- ▶ illustrations support the text

Possible Text Challenges

- ▶ longer sentences
- ▶ multi-syllabic words (e.g., *holidays, particular, beginner's, pretending, terribly, disappeared*)
- ▶ compound words
- ▶ hyphens
- ▶ dash

First Session (pages 3-11)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ analyzing
- ▶ evaluating

Working with Words

- ▶ use syllabication, familiar word parts, and picture cues to solve multi-syllabic words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ analyze text to find facts
- ▶ evaluate: state personal opinions
- ▶ solve unfamiliar words using syllabication, familiar word parts, and picture cues

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ discussing with a group
- ▶ discussing with a partner
- ▶ think-pair-sharing

Teaching Tip: As examples of other tall tales, prior to this lesson, gather stories about characters such as Johnny Appleseed or Paul Bunyan, and folklore books such as *The Mitten* by Jan Brett.



BEFORE READING

**Making connections:
text to self**

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Ask, *How many of you have gone fishing?* Have students turn to a partner and share a story about a time when they went fishing, or talk about what they know about fishing. If students reveal limited or no knowledge of fishing, share a personal fishing story with the class, if you have one.

ESL Note: Ask ESL students to share their stories about fishing in their native countries with their partner, if they have any. Give them some suggestions about what to talk about. Say, *Tell your partner who you fished with where you fished, how many fish you caught, what you used to catch the fish, and so on.* If they have never fished, ask them to share what they know about fishing with their partner.

Inferring

Explain that this book is an example of a tall tale. If students are unfamiliar with the term, explain that a tall tale is a short story about a real or imagined event that includes impossible, exaggerated happenings told in a realistic, matter-of-fact, and often humorous way. Relate other examples of tall tales and encourage students to share any examples of tall tales they may know.

Read the title of the book, then the names of the author and illustrator. Display the front cover and ask, *Are there any clues in the title that prompt us to think that this is a tall tale? Does the front cover illustration provide any clues? What is the fish doing?* Talk with students about the improbability of a fish learning to live on the land.

Direct students' attention to the back cover and explain that this is an excerpt from the story. As you read the back cover text, ask students to listen for more clues that this is a tall tale. Discuss the new information.

Overcoming Text Challenges

Ask students to turn to page 5 and note the hyphen in *great-grandmother*. Say, *This is another way of writing a compound word. You will notice other compound words in the story.*

**Print concepts/
word solving and building**

Print concepts

Direct students' attention to the first sentence in the back cover text. Ask students to listen as the sentence is read and clap each time they hear a pause. Read the sentence, taking a brief pause at the comma and a longer pause at the dash. Say, *Close your eyes. This time, as I read the first sentence, listen for the description about the size of the fish.* Exaggerate the pauses and emphasize the sentence "I couldn't believe how big he was—twice as big as I'd ever seen before." Ask, *How does the longer sentence help you see this big fish?* Encourage students to explain their thinking. Tell students that they will come across other longer sentences while reading this tall tale.

Teaching Tip: You may wish to record the sentence “When we finally landed the whitefish, I couldn’t believe how big he was—twice as big as I’d ever seen before” on word cards, punctuation included. Each phrase separated by the comma and dash can be rearranged further, revealing to students how using a longer descriptive sentence can help create a clearer mental image.

Analyzing/evaluating

Setting a Purpose

Provide students with sticky notes. Say, *Read pages 3–11, and when you find proof that this story is either true or a tall tale, place a sticky note on the page.* Remind students to be prepared to support their opinions.



DURING READING

Ask students to read the text to page 11 independently, thinking about the purpose of their reading.

Observe and listen to students as they read the text, assisting them with word-solving strategies, vocabulary, punctuation, and comprehension queries. Offer prompts, such as, *What rescued Granny’s great-grandmother? Do you think a giant whitefish rescued her?*

Take note of students’ successful use of strategies and any difficulties they encounter.

If students finish before others have completed the reading, ask them to share with a partner their reasons for thinking this story is either a tall tale or a true story.



AFTER READING

Analyzing/evaluating

Ask, *Could this be a true story? Why do you think so?* Allow sufficient time for students to share their reasons. Then ask, *What proof do you have that this story is a tall tale?* Have students refer to the pages in their texts that have been marked by sticky notes. Encourage them to read the sentences aloud, reminding them to pause as indicated by the punctuation.

Inferring

Ask, *How did Granny decide this fish was smart?* Have students refer to the text for evidence that supports their thinking. Ask students what they would think if they were the girl in the story and had just seen a fish learn to live on the land and do its first “walk.”

Print concepts

Discuss with students the descriptive language the author uses that helps describe both the scene and the characters. Read a sentence from page 5: “. . . the water is so deep, so dark, and so cold that they grow to a huge size—half the length of this boat.” Point out how the author used punctuation and the repeated word *so* as emphasis. Ask students to look through the first 11 pages, looking for similar examples. Have students share their findings and explain the reasons for their choices. You may wish to make a list of these examples so students can refer to them when writing.

Word solving and building

Model positive reading strategies you observed during the session. For example, say, *I noticed when Clare came to the word motorboat, she recognized boat and sounded out the syllables mo-tor. She looked at the illustration and then blended the word and sounds together to read motorboat. That's what good readers do.*

Second Session (pages 12-24)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ predicting
- ▶ analyzing

Working with Words

- ▶ using syllabication and familiar word parts to solve unfamiliar words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ make predictions
- ▶ analyze text for specific facts and new information
- ▶ solve unfamiliar words using syllabication and familiar word parts

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ discussing with a group
- ▶ discussing with a partner
- ▶ retelling



BEFORE READING

Synthesizing/predicting

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Invite students to recount what has happened so far in the story. Encourage students to refer to the text to aid in their retelling. Then ask, *What do you think might happen next? What else is Granny going to teach Silver?* Record students' predictions in a list.

Word solving and building

Overcoming Text Challenges

Revisit some multi-syllabic words from the first session, such as *pretending*, *terribly*, *disappeared*, *cautiously*, and *determination*, and write these on the board or on chart paper. Point out the prefixes (“pre-” and “dis-”) and the suffixes (“-ly,” “-ing,” and “-ed”). Discuss with students how knowing these word parts helps with reading unfamiliar words. Then ask students to demonstrate how to break these words into syllables by stretching the word so it breaks into parts.

Point out the word *resuscitation* on page 18 and ask students how they would go about reading the word. Encourage students to use multiple strategies, including looking for familiar word parts and using syllabication when reading the word.

Analyzing

Setting a Purpose

Have students read the rest of the story to find out what other things Granny taught Silver.



DURING READING

Ask students to read the rest of the story independently, thinking about the purpose of their reading.

Observe and listen to students as they read the text, assisting them with word-solving strategies, vocabulary, punctuation, and comprehension queries. Offer prompts, such as, *Can you show me where it says that Granny walks with Silver?*

Take note of students' successful use of strategies and any difficulties they encounter.

If students finish before others have completed the reading, ask them to reread the story independently or with a partner.



AFTER READING

Analyzing/predicting

When students have finished their reading, ask, *What other things did Granny teach Silver?* Compare or eliminate predictions from the chart with supported evidence from the text.

Inferring

Ask, *Why do you think it was so important for Granny to teach Silver these activities that people do?* Talk about the sequence of events that led to Silver going overboard into the lake. Ask, *Why do you think Granny shouted at the girl to jump in?*

Word solving and building

Select a few of the challenging words, such as *determination*, *groceries*, *reflecting*, *emergency*, and *mysterious*, or any other words that were challenging for students. Ask them what strategies they used to work these out, referring to the illustrations, if the strategy involved visual cues.

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 the needs of your students.

Drama

Synthesizing

Have students work in pairs to select a scene from the story to create a tableau. Explain that a tableau is a group of people who are silent and motionless, arranged to represent a scene from the story. If desired, students can use readily available props in the classroom, such as a chair, desk, or table. Allow sufficient time for each pair to practise before performing their tableau for the rest of the class. The class will try to identify the demonstrated scenes.

Word solving and building

Descriptive Words

Have students look through the text for words and phrases the author used to help paint pictures for the reader, such as *sparkled*, *blurred*, *murky*, *slithered*, *stone-cold*, *cautiously*, *unexpectedly*, and *look of terror*. Have students sort the words and phrases into groups. Such groupings can be made based on their learning. Students can sort according to the number of syllables, or whether they are adjectives or adverbs.

Word solving and building

Word Endings

Hand out copies of the “Word Endings” BLM and have students go through the text to write all the words that end with “-ly” in the appropriate column. Ask students to highlight “-ly” endings, then write the root word. Once the task has been completed, have students discuss the changes to the words.

Synthesizing

Story Organizer

Provide students with a copy of the “Story Organizer” BLM. Ask them to write sentences under each of the five headings. Ensure that students understand the headings “Characters,” “Setting,” “Events,” “Problem,” and “Solution.”

Word Endings

Name: _____

Words ending in “-ly”	Root words

Story Organizer

Name: _____

Characters: _____

Setting: _____

Problem: _____

Events:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Solution: _____
