



## About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational Page Count: 14 Word Count: 342

### Book Summary

*Life at the Pond* is a look at plants and animals that live in and around a pond. It provides an overview of this ecosystem and focuses on how insects, birds, reptiles, and mammals move, eat, raise their young, and build homes. Photos support the text.

## About the Lesson

### Targeted Reading Strategy

- Connect to prior knowledge

### Objectives

- Connect to prior knowledge to make sense of text
- Identify main idea and details
- Discriminate initial consonant *sp*-blends
- Identify initial consonant *sp*-blends
- Recognize adjectives as words that describe
- Place words in alphabetical order

### Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Life at the Pond* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Word journal (optional)
- Main idea and details, initial consonant *sp*-blends, alphabetical order worksheets
- Discussion cards



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

### Vocabulary

\*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on [VocabularyA-Z.com](http://VocabularyA-Z.com).

- High-frequency words: *here*, *they*, *what*
- Content words:
  - Story critical: ***heron*** (n.), ***insects*** (n.), ***springtail*** (n.), ***tadpoles*** (n.), ***water strider*** (n.), ***whirligig beetles*** (n.)
  - Enrichment: *beavers* (n.), *bullfrog* (n.), *lily pads* (n.), *reptiles* (n.), *turtles* (n.)

## Before Reading

### Build Background

- Discuss with students what they know about ponds. Ask them whether they have ever seen a pond and what types of animals and plants they have seen in and around a pond.

## Book Walk

### Introduce the Book

- Show students the front and back covers of the book and read the title with them. Ask them what they might read about in a book called *Life at the Pond*. (Accept any answers students can justify.) Ask students what they know about frogs.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name). Ask why there is no illustrator's name on the cover. Explain that pictures are a feature often used in nonfiction text.
- Ask students about the times they have seen ducks. Ask: *Have you ever been to a pond in a park and fed the ducks? How might life for ducks in a park be different from their life in a pond in the countryside?*

### Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Connect to prior knowledge**

- Explain to students that good readers make connections between what they already know and new information they read. Remind them that thinking about what they already know about the topic of the book will help them understand what they read.
- Model making connections to prior knowledge.  
*Think-aloud: As I read this book, I am going to look at the pictures and think about what I have read. Then I will think about what I already know about ponds and the animals that live there. On the back cover, I see a picture of a frog. This reminds me of how frogs hop as they move from place to place. When they jump into the water, they kick their legs out to move through the water. It seems like they can be under water for a long time. Frogs are good swimmers.*
- Ask students to preview the covers and title page of the book. Invite them to share how they connected to something they already knew.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

### Introduce the Vocabulary

- Use the book preview as an opportunity to introduce unfamiliar vocabulary to students and model language patterns. For example, on page 6, say: *I have watched heron around a pond before. They like to gobble insects and dive for fish. I have seen the baby heron follow their mama around as they learn to swim.*
- Reinforce new vocabulary by incorporating it into the discussion of the pictures. For example, on page 8, say: *Look carefully at the picture and you might see some whirligig beetles spinning on the water around the lily pads.* Continue by having students repeat the language you used. Say: *Whirligig is a funny sounding word. Say it with me. Where are those whirligig beetles spinning?*
- As vocabulary words are mentioned, have students point to the corresponding word to help them make the picture/word connection. For example, on page 9, point to the word *tadpoles* and ask students how they might figure out the word. Have them look at the picture and break the word into parts they can read (*tad* and *poles*). Ask: *When you put together the sounds made by tad and poles, does the word tadpoles match the picture?*
- Encourage students to add new vocabulary words to their word journals.

### Set the Purpose

- Have students read the book to find out what kinds of plants and animals live in and around a pond. Remind them to use what they already know about ponds to help them understand and enjoy the book.

## During Reading

### Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Give students their copy of the book. Ask them to place their finger on the page number at the bottom corner of page 3. Have students read to the end of page 8, using their finger to point to each word as they read. Encourage students who finish before the others to reread the text.
- **Model connecting to prior knowledge.**  
*Think-aloud: As I read page 5, I thought about the ducks I've seen swimming in the water. Ducks use their webbed feet to move through the water. I've seen mother ducks swim with their babies. The babies usually follow in a line behind the mother.*
- Ask students to share additional ways they connected to something they already knew while reading.
- Have students read the remainder of the book to find out what other animals live in and around the pond. Remind them to use what they know about ponds to help them understand what they are reading.



Have students make a small question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. These can be addressed in the discussion that follows.

## After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

### Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Discuss how thinking about what they knew about ponds helped them understand and enjoy what they read. Invite students to share additional examples of how they connected to prior knowledge.
- **Think-aloud:** *When I read page 10, I thought about the loud croaks of bullfrogs. Bullfrogs are so large that they make a loud splash when they jump in and out of the water. Stopping to think about what I already know made it easier for me to make meaning from the text, and it even helped me figure out words I didn't know.*

### Teach the Comprehension Skill: **Main idea and details**

- **Discussion:** Discuss the difference between fiction and nonfiction texts. Ask students whether they think *Life at the Pond* is a fiction or nonfiction book and help them explain why.
- **Introduce and model:** Explain to students that books they read have a main idea that tells what the book is about. The title of the book and the pictures can be clues to identify the main idea. Have students identify the main idea of this book by asking them to look at page 3 and find a sentence that tells the main idea. (*Many things live in the pond.*) Make a large web on the board and write the main idea in the center circle. Explain that there are details in the book that tell about the main idea.
- **Think-aloud:** *On page 5, I read that ducks live in ponds. Ducks are living things. This is a detail that tells about the main idea.*
- **Check for understanding:** Ask students to point to another detail in the book that tells about the main idea. Discuss their responses.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [main-idea-and-details worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.



**Extend the discussion:** Have students use the last page of their book to draw a picture of the animal they learned the most about from the story. Then have them write what they learned under the picture.

## Build Skills

### Phonological Awareness: Initial consonant sp-blends

- Say the word *spin* aloud to students, emphasizing the initial /sp/ sound. Have students say the word aloud and then say the initial /sp/ sound.
- Read pages 7 and 8 aloud to students. Have them raise their hand when they hear a word that begins with the /sp/ sound.
- Say the following words one at a time and have students give the thumbs-up signal if the word begins with the /sp/ sound: *sun, sponge, fish, spear, beetle, spaghetti*.

### Phonics: Initial consonant sp-blends

- Write the word *spin* on the board and say it aloud with students.
- Have students say the /sp/ sound aloud. Then run your finger under the letters in the word as students say the whole word aloud. Ask students which two letters together stand for the /sp/ sound in *splash*.
- Write the following words that begin with the *sp* blend on the board, leaving off the initial blend: *spit, spot, spin*. Say each word, one at a time, and have volunteers come to the board and add the initial *sp*-blend in each word. Have students practice blending the sounds together to say each word.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [initial-consonant-sp-blends worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

### Grammar and Mechanics: Adjectives

- Review or explain that there are special words called *adjectives* that are used to describe other words. Explain that these words tell about people, places, or things, such as *tiny, big, or blue*.
- Have students turn to page 7. Ask them to find an adjective that describes the water strider's legs (*long*). Ask students to look at the picture and tell other adjectives that could be used to describe the water strider's legs (*thin, skinny, fragile*). Write these words on the board and read them aloud with students. Ask students to use the words in sentences to describe something other than a water strider's legs.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students turn to page 9. Ask them to find the adjectives (*tiny, wiggly*) and tell what they describe (*eggs, tadpoles*).



Have students work with a partner to locate the adjectives in the book. Encourage students to highlight adjectives as they find them if the books are not reusable. When finished, discuss their responses.

### Word Work: Alphabetical order

- Write the words *tadpoles* and *insects* on the board. Underline the first letter in each word. Ask students which letter comes first in the alphabet: *t* or *i*.
- Review or explain that words are sometimes placed in a list by ABC, or alphabetical, order. Words are placed in alphabetical order by looking first at the initial letter in each word and deciding which letter comes first in the alphabet. Explain that *insects* would come first in an alphabetical list.
- Write the words *heron* and *tadpole* on the board. Underline the first letter in each word. Ask students which letter comes first in the alphabet: *h* or *t*. Explain that *heron* would come first in an alphabetical list.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following content vocabulary words on the board: *turtles, bullfrog, insects, reptiles*. Have students write the words in alphabetical order on a separate piece of paper.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [alphabetical order worksheet](#).

## Build Fluency

### Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, allow partners to take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

### Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends.

## Extend the Reading

### Writing and Art Connection

Have students think about what they know about ponds and write one or two sentences describing an animal or a plant that lives in or around a pond. Ask them to illustrate their description. Put the pages together to form a class book called *Life at a Pond*.

### Science Connection

Have students use the library or Internet to research one of the animals in the book. As a group, or individually, share the information on a visual organizer.

### Skill Review

**Discussion cards** covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

## Assessment

### Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently use background knowledge to help them understand a story
- accurately locate and record details that support the idea that many different animals live in and around a pond during discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately discriminate the initial consonant *sp*-blends
- consistently recognize the initial consonant *sp*-blends during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly locate adjectives in the book
- accurately place content vocabulary words in alphabetical order during discussion and on a worksheet

### Comprehension Checks

- **Book Quiz**
- **Retelling Rubric**