

About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Narrative Page Count: 16 Word Count: 710

Book Summary

One cold winter day in Poland, a dog walked to the river's edge and found himself suddenly floating away on a sheet of ice. Trapped on his raft of ice, the dog drifted down the river for four days, traveling more than 75 miles from where he started. Finally, a research ship on the Baltic Sea spotted him and rescued the dog, soon to be known as *Baltic*. Illustrations, maps, and photographs support the text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Visualize

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of visualizing to understand text
- Analyze the problems and solutions in a story
- Fluently read words containing the *r*-controlled /ur/ sound
- Recognize and use interesting verbs
- Identify concept words—time order

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Baltic Rescue* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- World map
- Thesauruses
- Visualize, problem and solution, verbs, time-order words 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

- Content words:
 Story critical: *adopt (v.), injuries (n.), investigate (v.), mascot (n.), research (n.), veterinarian (n.)*
 Enrichment: *Baltic Sea (n.), drifting (v.), praise (v.)*

Before Reading

Build Background

- Using a large world map, point to the Baltic Sea area. Ask students if they have ever heard of Poland or any neighboring countries, such as Germany, Denmark, Sweden, or Norway. Write the phrase *Baltic Sea* on the board. Have students share what they know about the subject.
- Encourage students to look at the map and tell whether they think the Baltic Sea is a warm or cold body of water. Discuss their ideas and have students share the reasoning behind their decision.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, fiction or nonfiction, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Visualize**

- Explain to students that good readers often visualize, or create pictures in their mind, while reading. Visualizing is based on what a person already knows about a topic. Explain that one way to visualize is to draw a picture.
- Read page 3 aloud. Model how to visualize using a drawing.
Think-aloud: Whenever I read a book, I always pause after a few pages to create a picture in my mind of the information I've read. Doing this helps me organize the important information and understand the ideas in the book. For example, the story begins on page 3 with a dog walking to the edge of an icy river. I imagined the dog sniffing the ground and biting playfully at the snow. I imagined the dog not even realizing how close he had gotten to the icy river because he was busy having fun in the snow. When I imagined this, the river looked freezing cold with big, white chunks of ice floating by.
- Introduce and explain the **visualize worksheet**. Have students draw what they visualized about from page 3 on the worksheet. Invite them to share their drawings.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Problem and solution**

- Explain that writers have reasons for what they write. Write the following words on the board: *problem* and *solution*. Review or explain that a *problem* is something that is difficult to deal with or hard to understand and must be worked out or solved (such as being cold and wet). A *solution* is an act or a process of solving the problem (such as getting out of the cold and putting on dry clothes).
- Tell students that in nonfiction writing, an author often discloses a problem and the solution is explained before the end of the book. Explain that in fictional stories, the author typically poses a problem to one or more characters and that the rest of the story evolves around solving the problem. Ask students whether they think this book is fiction or nonfiction.
- Read to the end of page 4. Write the headings *Problem*, *Possible Solutions*, and *Consequences* on the board. Discuss with students what the dog's problem was (the ice he was standing on broke away from land, and he was swept down the river). Write this information on the board under the *Problem* heading. Discuss the possible solutions that the dog might have for his problem, and list them on the board under *Possible Solutions*. Have students also consider a positive and a negative consequence for each of their solutions, and record them on the board under the *Consequences* heading. Circle the possible solution that the class thinks is best. Have students look for what solution the dog is presented with as they read.
- Explain to students that good readers look for problems and solutions as they read. Model finding problems and solutions.
Think-aloud: I know that I will learn about more problems that the dog might face as I continue through the book. I know that it is necessary to continue reading to find out about the solutions as well. I learned that good readers do this, so I'm going to look for problems and solutions in this book as I read.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Write the following words from the content vocabulary on the board: *injuries*, *veterinarian*, and *investigate*.

- Give groups of students three pieces of blank paper. Have them write or draw what they know about each word. Create a definition for each word using students' prior knowledge.
- Review that the glossary contains a list of vocabulary words and their definitions. Model how students can use the glossary or a dictionary to find a word's meaning. Have them locate the glossary at the back of the book. Invite a volunteer to read the definition for *investigate* in the glossary. Have students compare the definition with their prior knowledge of the word. Then have them follow along on page 9 as you read the sentence in which the word *investigate* is found to confirm the meaning of the word. Repeat the exercise with the remaining vocabulary words.
- Invite students to review the photograph on the back cover of the book. Have them utilize all three vocabulary words to write a short paragraph about the dog and man pictured. Repeat the activity after reading the book to check for student understanding of the vocabulary.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about the dog's problems and the solutions that he encountered. Remind them to stop after every few pages to visualize the most important information and to draw on their worksheet what they visualized about it.

During Reading

Student Reading

- ✎ **Guide the reading:** Have students read from page 5 to the end of page 8. Ask them to put an asterisk or a star next to information where they visualized. Encourage students who finish before everyone else to go back and reread.
- Model visualizing.
Think-aloud: *When I read about the dog floating down the river on a sheet of ice, I pictured the size of the piece he was standing on. The author said that, at first, the ice sheet was as big as half of a football field. I visualized a humungous football field and then thought about half of that. I thought that was a really big sheet of ice to break away from the shore! Next, I thought about how the ice sheet was melting and breaking up into hundreds of smaller pieces. I visualized the size of a small bedroom and imagined how scared the dog must have been to watch his ice raft disappear around him. Lastly, I pictured the size of a picnic table. I visualized a cold, hungry, scared dog sitting on this small piece of ice, floating from the mouth of a river and into the Baltic Sea. Have students share the pictures of what they visualized while reading. Have them explain their drawings aloud.*
- Invite students to share problems they have identified so far (page 4: the river was too cold for him to swim to safety; page 6: people tried to help him but were unsuccessful; page 7: the hungry dog grew colder, weaker, and more scared; page 7: his ice raft was melting and breaking up; page 7: if he slipped off, he might get trapped under the ice and drown; page 8: the dog passed the mouth of the river and was swept out to sea; page 8: he was moving farther from land and any hope of rescue; page 8: his ice chunk was getting even smaller).
- Introduce and explain the **problem-and-solution worksheet**. Point out that the first problem was worked out aloud and written on the board. Ask students to write a new problem on their worksheet (the river was too cold for him to swim to safety). Evaluate possible solutions aloud with students, discussing a positive and negative consequence of each possible solution and recording all of their ideas on the board under the columns for *Problem*, *Possible Solutions*, and *Consequences*. Have students record the information on their worksheet. Ask them to circle the possible solution they think would be best for the dog.
- Talk about the dog's chosen solution (staying on the ice sheet and not trying to swim to the shore). Point out the last column on their worksheet—*Evaluation*. Explain the process of evaluation (carefully thinking about the options and deciding if the one chosen was best). Encourage students to fill in the final column, writing their feelings about whether they think it was a good decision for the dog to make and their reasoning.

- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 10. Have them visualize the information in the text as they read. Ask students to draw what they visualized on their visualize worksheet. Invite students to share what they visualized.
- Ask students what new problem was presented to the dog (page 9: he was facing a deadly end to his adventure). Have them cite examples from the text to support their thoughts (*he had traveled more than 75 miles, his piece of ice was shrinking, he had been swept out to sea, and so on.*) Have them fill out the first three columns of their worksheet—*Problem, Possible Solutions, and Consequences*. Remind them to look for what solution the dog is given as they read and to stop and fill in the *Evaluation* column.



Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to visualize as they read, and have them continue to put an asterisk or a star next to information where they visualized.

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

- Ask students to explain or show how the strategy of visualizing helped them understand and remember important events in the story.
- **Think-aloud:** *When I read about the crew trying to rescue the dog, I pictured the dog shaking and being so scared that he couldn't do anything to help. I pictured the shivering cold, wet dog—too weak to even move—and thought about how scared he must have been after all he'd gone through. I pictured him falling into the freezing cold water when the men tried to help him, and I pictured him struggling bravely to climb back onto the slippery ice. This helped me to understand how horrible the rescuers must have felt and to remember that part of the book.*
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the visualize worksheet. If time allows, have them share their pictures when finished.


Reflect on the Comprehension Skill


- **Discussion:** Talk about the other problems the dog encountered as the story continued. Invite students to identify and discuss them (page 11: the dog slipped and fell into the water while being rescued; page 13: the dog was too weak to stand; page 14: the crew wanted to make sure that the dog hadn't suffered serious injuries; page 14: the crew couldn't find the dog's owners).
- Ask students to write another problem on their worksheet (the dog slipped into the icy water while the crew tried to rescue him). Evaluate possible solutions aloud, discussing a positive and negative consequence of each possible solution and recording all of their ideas on the board under the columns for *Problem, Possible Solutions, and Consequences*. Have students record the information on their worksheet.
- Talk about the crew's chosen solution for getting the dog into the boat (the ship's mechanic lowered a raft, grabbed the dog, and pulled him in). Have them cite examples from the text to support their thoughts (*they were afraid the dog would drown, the dog was too scared to help himself, and so on*). Have students fill in the final column, *Evaluation*, writing their feelings about whether they think it was a good decision for the crew to make and their reasoning.
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete their problem-and-solution worksheet, working with a final problem (the crew couldn't find the dog's owner). Discuss their responses aloud once students have finished.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you learned about a dog who found himself in a deadly adventure because he was swept into the river on a sheet of ice. Now that you know this information, how does it make you feel about the importance of river safety? How might you learn more about unpredictable river currents and the dangers surrounding ice on a river?

Build Skills


Phonics: **R-controlled /ur/ vowel**

- Have students look at the cover of the book. Ask them to name the piece of water that this dog might be on (river). Write the word *river* on the board and point to the letters *er*. Tell students that the letters *e* and *r* together stand for the vowel sound they hear at the end of the word *river*.
- Explain that the *er* letter combination is one of the letter combinations that stand for a group of sounds called *r-controlled* vowels. These vowel sounds are neither long nor short, and are sometimes difficult to hear. The other *r-controlled /ur/* letter combinations are *ar*, *ir*, and *ur*.
- Write the words *lowered* and *lowest* on the board and say them aloud. Ask students which word contains the same vowel sound as in *river*. Make sure students can differentiate between the two vowel sounds. Point out that, in *lowest*, the /s/ follows the /e/ but doesn't control it. Give other examples if necessary.
- Ask students to name other words with the same *r-controlled* vowel sound as in *river* and *shirt*. Write each example on the board and invite volunteers to circle the *r-controlled* vowel spelling in each word.

 Have students turn to page 7. Ask them to reread the first sentence and circle the word *colder*. Write the word *colder* on the board. Point out the letter combination that stands for the *r-controlled* vowel sound and ask students to blend the letters *e* and *r* together to make the same vowel sound as in *river*. Point out that the *r-controlled* vowel sound comes at the end of this word, too. Next, run your finger under the letters as you blend the five sounds in *colder*: *c/o/l/d/er*. Point out that even though there are six letters, five sounds are blended together to form the word. Then have students blend the word aloud with you as you run your finger under the letters.

 Have students return to page 7 and read the last sentence. Have them circle the word *under*. Point out the letter combination that stands for the *r-controlled* vowel sound at the end of the word. Ask students to blend the letters *e* and *r* together to make the same vowel sound as in *river* and *colder*. Run your finger under the letters as you blend the sounds in *under*. Have students work with a partner to identify and circle all the words on page 7 with the *r-controlled /ur/* combination (*colder*, *weaker*, *smaller*, *larger*, *under*).

Grammar and Mechanics: **Verbs**

- Review that a *verb* names an action. Explain that some verbs make sentences sound much more interesting than others. Point out that this book is rich in language that shows action in an interesting way. Write the following sentences on the board:
Adam took the dog by the back of the neck.
Adam grabbed the dog by the back of the neck.
- Ask a volunteer to come to the board and circle the verb in each sentence (*took*, *grabbed*). Ask students which sentence sounds more interesting. Explain that an author's choice of interesting verbs can make a book more fun to read. Point out that the sentence with the word *grabbed* paints a more vivid picture in the reader's mind. It helps the reader know that Adam was acting quickly and with force. Ask a volunteer to act out the difference between the way one would take a dog by the back of the neck versus how one would *grab* the dog by the back of the neck. Point out that using more exciting verbs in their own writing will help make their work more interesting to read.
-  **Check for understanding:** Have students turn to page 4 and read the second sentence silently while you read it aloud. Ask them to identify the verb (*swept*). Write the following sentence on the board: *The dog was swept down the river*. Ask a volunteer to give an example sentence using a verb that means the same thing but isn't as interesting. (The dog *went* down the river.) Write the new sentence on the board.

- Review how to use a thesaurus. Model using a thesaurus to find words that mean the same or nearly the same as another word. Point out that students may look up words to find other words that mean the same thing. These words can be used in place of the verb when writing their own thoughts.



Independent practice: Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [verbs worksheet](#). Encourage them to consult a thesaurus if necessary. After everyone is finished, have them discuss the verbs. Point out that answers may vary since students were using their opinion, creativity, and personal preference to complete the worksheets.

Word Work: Time-order words

- Review or explain that writers present the events of a story in a particular order. Signal words are often provided to help readers identify the order of the events. Ask students to identify examples of signal words (*today, first, then, while, dates, times of the day, and so on*).
- **Think-aloud:** *I know that a process, like a story, has a sequence of events. For example, when I brush my teeth, first I take the lid off the toothpaste. Next, I put the toothpaste on the toothbrush. Then, I put the toothbrush head in my mouth and begin wiggling the bristles against my teeth. After that, I spit out the foamy toothpaste. Last, I rinse my mouth with clean water.*
- Have volunteers explain the order of a simple process, such as making a sandwich or getting ready for school. Use time order words (*first, next, and so on*) to record the steps on the board.
- Point out that Baltic's adventure happened in a very specific order, so the author had to be sure to retell the story in that same order. Have students recall the details. (*First*, the ice that the dog was standing on broke away from land. *Next*, he drifted down the river on his sheet of ice. *For three days*, people tried to help him as he passed through different cities. *During this time*, he was growing colder, weaker, and more scared. *On the fourth day*, the dog passed the mouth of the river and was swept out to sea. *After that*, the piece of ice he was standing on continued to get smaller. *While* the dog continued to float further out to sea, a research ship spotted him. *At first*, the crew thought the animal was a seal. *Then* they tried to rescue him, and he fell into the freezing water. *Eventually*, they lowered a raft down and grabbed the dog, and *finally*, the dog was safe.) Write the example sentences on the board, underlining the sequencing words and phrases (*First, Next, For three days, During, On the fourth day, After that, While, At first, Then, Eventually, finally*).



Check for understanding: Have students review the book, using a highlighter to mark all of the time-order words or phrases used. Remind students to look carefully because some time-order words, such as *at first* and *once*, are used more than once time in the text.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [time-order-words worksheet](#). Discuss their responses aloud once students have finished.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can 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. Have them visualize with someone at home when they read the book.

Extend the Reading

Narrative Nonfiction Writing Connection

Provide print and/or Internet resources for students to research other animals that have been rescued and adopted. Have them choose their favorite story to retell, as Baltic's story was told in this book. Remind them to include details, such as the problems and solutions that the animal encountered along the way. Place students in small groups and have them read their writing aloud. Require a final copy and bind them together into a class book titled *Animal Adventures and Rescues*.

Visit [Writing A-Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on narrative writing.

Social Studies Connection

Print copies of a map that shows Poland with its major rivers and the Baltic Sea highlighted. Have students study the route that Baltic the dog took, talking about the events along his adventure. Give students sticky notes to write the major events in his journey, and have them stick them on the map where they think each event occurred.

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.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently use the strategy of visualizing to comprehend the text during discussion and on a worksheet
- identify and effectively analyze the problems and solutions in the story in a discussion and on a worksheet
- fluently read the *r*-controlled /ur/ vowel sound during discussion and independently
- successfully recognize and use interesting verbs during discussion and on a worksheet
- identify time-order words in discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)