



The Fish Tank

Written by Roderick Hunt. Illustrated by Nick Schon, based on the original characters created by Roderick Hunt and Alex Brychta.

Teaching notes written by Teresa Heapy.

Information about assessment and curriculum links can be found at the end of these Teaching Notes.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

- These wordless stories allow children to learn how stories work, including the order and direction in which they are read. Children will enjoy talking about the story and discussing what is happening in the pictures; this will help prepare them for their first steps as readers. The pictures provide lots of opportunities for playing with environmental sounds. Respond to children's ideas by repeating them back and adding to them, using new words to increase their word banks.
- Look at the cover together. Ask: *What do you think this story is about? Do you think the Robinsons are looking at this tank in a shop – or is this their own, new fish tank?*
- Now look at the back cover and read the blurb for them. Ask: *Were you right?*
- Talk about keeping fish in tanks. Ask: *Have you ever seen fish in tanks, in someone's house, or in a shop? What was the tank like? What were the fish like?*

Reading the story

- Ask the children to point to the title as you read it to them.
- Ask the children to turn the pages of the book and describe what they see in the pictures, telling the story together.
- Before you turn the page, talk about what might happen next in the story.
- Encourage the children to add sounds to accompany the action in the story and talk about any sounds that might be found in the story setting.

Returning to the story

- Look at page 1 and check that the children understand that Dad is making a funny face because the tank is heavy. Ask: *Do you think Dad would be saying anything or making any noise?*
- Turn to pages 2 and 3 and talk about all the different things the family have got to put in the fish tank.
- Look at pages 6 and 7 and ask the children to describe the sort of fish that Biff, Chip and Kipper each chose. Ask: *What did Dad want? Why did the children look shocked when Dad suggested getting an octopus? Why couldn't they have an octopus in their fish tank?*
- Look again at page 8. Talk about what is going on here. Ask: *Why has Mum bought Dad a blow-up octopus? Can you see all the different kinds of fish that the children chose, now in the tank?*

Speaking, listening and drama activities

- Look at pages 4 and 5. Ask the children to pick their favourite fish from the various tanks.
- Ask each child to tell the group why they have picked their particular fish. Is it a special colour, or is it scary?

- Now ask the children to imagine what the characters are thinking and saying in this picture.
- Ask: *What would the shopkeeper say? What might he say to encourage them to buy a particular fish? What might the cat think about all these fish?*

Writing activities

- Draw a simple picture of a fish on the board, giving it fins, eyes, a mouth and a tail. Talk to the children about the different parts of the fish. Model writing the word *fish* next to it.
- Now ask the children to draw a picture of their own fish. Tell them that they can make it whatever colour and design they like.
- Help them to write their name on their picture. They could also write the word *fish* as a label.

Cross-curricular suggestion

Science – Find pictures of different types of fish in books or on the Internet. Talk together about how there are lots of different kinds of fish – there are scary ones, deep in the ocean, there are small, brightly coloured ones, like the ones we keep in tanks, and there are the ones that we eat, like cod, tuna or salmon. Show that, although they may look quite different, all fish have common features (eyes, mouth, fins and tail).

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The Fish Tank (Oxford Level 1 More A) curriculum coverage chart

Links to Oxford Reading Criterion Scale:

- Can hold books the right way up and turn the pages. (READ) [ORCS Pre-reading Standard, 1]
- Handles books carefully. (READ) [ORCS Pre-reading Standard, 2]
- Shows curiosity about books and chooses to look at books independently. (READ) [ORCS Pre-reading Standard, 3]
- Can recognise familiar titles and signs such as their own name, advertising logos, other common words (e.g. 'mum' or 'dad'). (READ) [ORCS Pre-reading Standard, 5]
- Can gain simple meaning from texts using illustrations, when not yet able to read the text itself. (D) [ORCS Pre-reading Standard, 7]
- Shows curiosity about content of texts, e.g. may begin to discuss content and answer basic questions about the story (How? Why?). (D) [ORCS Pre-reading Standard, 9]

Letters and Sounds: Phase 1

- *Decode and Develop* titles are designed to support children with the transition from phonic readers to richer reading with highly decodable stories. This title is approximately 60–70% decodable when read alongside *Letters and Sounds* Phase 1.

ENGLAND The National Curriculum in England: Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage

EYFS

The activities in this book develop all areas listed within the following Early Learning Goals: 01, 02, 03, 09, 10.

SCOTLAND Curriculum for Excellence: Literacy and English experiences and outcomes – Early Level

Listening and talking

Within real and imaginary situations, I share experiences and feelings, ideas and information in a way that communicates my message (LIT 0-09a)
 I enjoy exploring and playing with the patterns and sounds of language, and can use what I learn (LIT 0-01a / 0-11a / LIT 0-20a)
 As I listen and take part in conversations and discussions, I discover new words and phrases which I use to help me express my ideas, thoughts and feelings (LIT 0-10a)
 I enjoy exploring events and characters in stories and other texts, sharing my thoughts in different ways (LIT 0-01c)
 I enjoy exploring and choosing stories and other texts to watch, read or listen to, and can share my likes and dislikes (LIT 0-01b / LIT 0-11b)

Reading

I enjoy exploring and playing with the patterns and sounds of language, and can use what I learn (LIT 0-01a / 0-11a / LIT 0-20a)
 I enjoy exploring events and characters in stories and other texts, sharing my thoughts in different ways (LIT 0-19a)
 I use signs, books or other texts to find useful or interesting information and I use this to plan, make choices or learn new things (LIT 0-14a)

Writing

Within real and imaginary situations, I share experiences and feelings, ideas and information in a way that communicates my message (LIT 0-26a)
 I enjoy exploring and playing with the patterns and sounds of language and can use what I learn (LIT 0-01a / LIT 0-11a / LIT 0-20a)
 I explore sounds, letters and words, discovering how they work together, and I can use what I learn to help me as I read or write (ENG 0-12a / LIT 0-13a / LIT 0-21a)

WALES Foundation Phase Framework: Nursery

Oracy

Express some enjoyment or interest (N_OracSpea.1)
 Retell, in simple terms, an event or experience (N_OracSpea.3)
 Use sentences with five or more words with some grammatical immaturities (N_OracSpea.4)
 Take part in activities alongside others (N_OracColl.2)

Reading

Show an interest in books and enjoy their content (N_ReadResp.1)
 Recognise familiar words (N_ReadStrat.7)
 Make meaning from pictures in books, adding detail to their explanations (N_ReadStrat.8)

Writing

Experiment with a range of mark-making instruments and materials across a range of contexts (N_WritMean.1)
 Begin to recognise the alphabetic nature of writing and understand that written symbols have meaning (N_WritMean.5)
 Write letters, numbers and/or symbols randomly (N_WritMean.6)
 Identify letter sounds through exploration of their shape using tactile letter forms and multi-sensory play activities (N_WritGPSH.3)

NORTHERN IRELAND Levels of Progression in Communication across the curriculum: Primary Level 1

Talking and listening	Talk about their experiences (L1_com_talk.4) Use vocabulary from within their experience to describe thoughts and feelings (L1_com_talk.3) Follow short, straightforward instructions (L1_com_talk.1iv) Make eye contact and take turns whilst engaging in conversation (L1_com_talk.6)
Reading	Understand that words are made up of sounds and syllables and that sounds are represented by letters (L1_com_read.2i) Show understanding of the meaning carried by print, pictures and images (L1_com_read.1)
Writing	Express thoughts, feelings and ideas, from within their experience, using symbols, pictures, words, phrases and simple sentences (L1_com_writ.2) Write words using sound-symbol correspondence (L1_com_writ.4i) Write personal and familiar words (L1_com_writ.4ii)