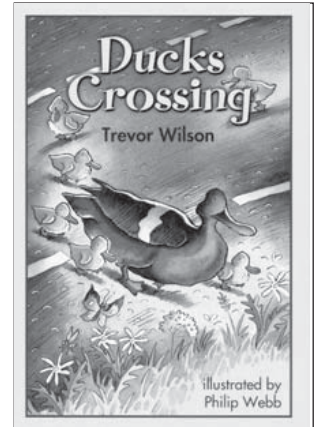


Ducks Crossing

by Trevor Wilson

illustrated by Philip Webb



Book Summary

This is the story of a family of ducks who are trying to cross a newly-built highway. The ducks finally succeed, with the help of some concerned motorists.

Features of the Book

- The environmental theme
- Repetition in the dialogue – “*Stop the traffic!*” *shouted the crowd.*
- The descriptions of the city, the mayor, the chief of police
- Verbs used as an alternative to “said” – *shouted, yelled, cried*
- Challenging vocabulary – *rattletrap, accident, secretary*

Purpose

Ducks Crossing can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** using prior knowledge to predict meaning and make sense of the text;
- S** making judgments about the actions of characters;
- S** identifying cause and effect in the story line;
- S** determining the author’s purpose in writing;
- S** recording the responses of different characters to a problem;
- S** determining similarities and differences in characters.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Using prior knowledge to predict meaning and make sense of the text
- S** Making judgments about the actions of characters
- S** Identifying cause and effect in the story line

Introducing the text

Ask the students to look at the cover of the book and discuss the setting.

- *Where do you think the story takes place?* (There is a road. There are ducks, so there could be water nearby. It looks as though the road is in the countryside.)
- *Can you see a possible problem?* (The ducks are on the road. There could be traffic.)
- *Why are the ducks walking on the road?* (The ducklings are too young to fly.)

Read the back cover text with the group. This is a good summary of the first two chapters and it also outlines the beginning of the problem. Encourage the students to ask questions to clarify anything they are unsure of, for example, the position that a mayor holds.

Ask the students for predictions about how the story will develop.

- *What do you think will happen to the ducks?*
- *What kind of trouble might they cause for the mayor?*

Record these predictions so that they can be revisited later in the lesson.



Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read the first chapter.

- *As you read, think about the way the author has written about the mayor and the way the illustrator has drawn him.*

As the students read independently, note any difficulties they may be having and offer help where it is needed. Encourage them to clarify the meanings of new vocabulary by asking you, marking the word with a sticky note and coming back to it later, or using a dictionary.

When everyone has finished reading, draw a large hat like Buck Handy's. On the hat, write the students' ideas about the mayor. They could include:

- big man
- wears a big hat
- talks a lot
- likes people to know what he has done
- likes to feel important
- doesn't care about the ducks.

Discuss the students' ideas.

- *Have you ever met someone like this?*
- *Have you ever acted like this character?*
- *How does the picture on page four make you feel about Buck Handy?*
- *Would you draw him any other way? Why?*

When you feel confident that the students have a good understanding of the theme, ask them to read to the end of the book independently. You could use the following purpose-setting questions. Write them up clearly for the students to refer to.

- *As you read, think about the character of the chief of police. How does the author describe him? How does the illustrator draw him?*

When the students have finished reading, they could go back and find the part of the story that tells them something about the chief of police.

When you can see that every student has finished, discuss the outcome of the story with the group.

- *Why did the mayor change his mind about the ducks?*
- *What was he worried about? Was it really the safety of the ducks?*
- *Can you find the sentence on page twenty-four that tells you why he decided to stop the traffic?*

Revisiting the Text

The suggested activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson if appropriate or could be taken as a mini-lesson at a later time.

S Determining the author's purpose in writing

Talk about why the author might have written this story. Suggestions could be:

- So that we can enjoy reading it.
- To make us laugh.
- So that we can learn from it.

Show the students some other examples of writing such as a nonfiction book and an advertisement.

Discuss why these may have been written. Now think of other reasons the author may have had for writing *Ducks Crossing*:

- To make us think about looking after the environment.
- To show what can happen if you try to be important all the time.

S Recording the responses of different characters to a problem

- *How do we know that someone is speaking?*

Look at each character's exclamation and write them clearly, modeling the use of the different punctuation marks.

"Careful, careful!" said the old man.

"Stop the traffic!" shouted the crowd.

"No way!" shouted the chief.

"But they might be killed!" cried the little girl.

"What's going on here?" he demanded.


"Get this on film," said the reporter.

Ask the students to read these with appropriate phrasing and intonation.

S Determining similarities and differences in characters

Focus on the characters and actions of the mayor and the chief of police. Then draw the chief's hat and write on it the students' words or phrases that describe the chief.

- *How were the mayor and the chief of police the same/different?*

 The students could use the blackline master on page 68 to combine the descriptions from the two hats in a Venn diagram. The diagram should show the similarities and differences.