



DAWDLE DUCKLING by Toni Buzzeo

Introduction

Launch a lively water birds, ducks, or wetlands unit with the help of this curriculum guide to **Dawdle Duckling**, a story in verse about a little duckling who swims to the beat of his own drummer, paying attention to the small details and fun that can be had at every turn. Engage your students in an array of content-based Science and Language Arts activities linked to the story for students in preschool through early elementary grades.

National Science Education Standards Content Standards K-4

Dawdle Duckling has curriculum connections in both Science and Language Arts content areas. It may be used to address three of the six Science Content Standards K-4 as published by the National Research Council in **National Science Education Standards**:

- A—Science as Inquiry
- C—Life Sciences
- F—Science in Personal and Social Perspectives

Standards for the English Language Arts

Dawdle Duckling also offers many curriculum connections in the Language Arts. It may be used to address 5 of the 12 standards as published in **Standards for the English Language Arts** by the NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) and the IRA (International Reading Association):

- Standard 3—Applying a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts.
- Standard 5—Employing a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
- Standard 6—Applying knowledge of language structure, language conventions, media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
- Standard 7--Conducting research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems.
- Standard 8--Using a variety of technological and information resources to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Curriculum Summary

Many of these Science and Language Arts content standards can be addressed when working with **Dawdle Duckling**. In addition, **Mapping the Cove** addresses Social Studies standards, while many of the activities, particularly **Researching Ducks**, address Information Literacy standards.

Book Pairing

Most students are familiar with ducks from their earliest days. Yet there are many facts to learn about ducks, their habitats, their adaptations, and their life cycles that will extend children's knowledge. To learn more about ducks in the wild, read **Ducks Don't Get Wet** by Augusta Goldin (Revised Edition, HarperCollins, 1999) and **Ducks** by Gail Gibbons (Holiday House, 2001). For more suggestions of excellent duck books, see the author's website at www.tonibuzzeo.com/booksdawdleducklingbooks.html.

Find Out More

About the Author: Students may wonder what life experiences led Toni Buzzeo to write a duck story. Read more about her friend Mike and her son Chris and view photographs, at her website at www.tonibuzzeo.com/booksdawdleduckling.html.

About Teaching about Ducks: Explore the topic of duck teaching from the links on the author's webpage at www.tonibuzzeo.com/booksdawdleducklingduckcurriculum.html.

About Wetland Habitats: Consider subscribing to **Ducks Unlimited Puddler** magazine for children up to age 11. For only \$10 a year, your class can join as a *Greenwing* member and receive four issues of the magazine. https://secure.ducks.org/join/join_greenwing.asp

Hands-on Activities

Duck Adaptations: As are all animals, ducks' bodies are specially adapted, allowing them to live successfully in their watery environment. Begin by discussing animal adaptation in general, brainstorming with students about animals they know and what their special adaptations are. Then, focus closely on duck adaptations. Ask them to think about a duck's body and its environment. What features of its body are perfectly matched to the place it lives? Read more about duck adaptations in nonfiction books from the library media center or at these two websites and . Now create a chart that lists the body part (with student illustration provided) next to the function it serves. To reinforce and extend student learning, ask them to redesign each body part (e.g. feet, bill, feathers, bones, wings, etc.) and discuss the corresponding change in environment that would be required in order for the duck to survive. Read **Do Like a Duck Does** by Judy Hindley (Candlewick, 2002) to culminate the activity.

An Oil and Water Experiment: One of a duck's important adaptations is its waterproof feathers. Oil is produced by a gland near the duck's tail which the duck spreads over its feathers when it preens, making its feathers waterproof and allowing it to stay warm and dry in the water. Begin by sharing **Ducks Don't Get Wet** by Augusta Goldin (Revised Edition, HarpersCollins, 1999). Students can then experience this adaptation first hand with a simple experiment. Cut two duck shapes out of a heavy paper grocery sack. Using vegetable oil, ask students to lightly coat the first duck with oil, just as a duck would when preening. Leave the second duck uncoated. Now, immerse the ducks in a tub of water and allow them to soak for a few minutes. Remove the ducks from the tub to a paper towel. Ask students to observe differences first by looking. What does the water do on the oiled duck? What about the uncoated duck? Now have students rip the top edge of the duck's back. Note how soggy and easily ripped the uncoated duck is. However, the coated duck is drier and tougher to rip. Its body is protected from the water!

Researching Ducks: When Toni Buzzeo wrote **Dawdle Duckling**, she researched mallards, a common duck where she lives in Maine, and included details about them in her story. But there are many different kinds of ducks in the world. Ask students, in groups, to research four different ducks that live in the United States: mallard, wood duck, ring-necked, and American black.

Ask each group to find information on its duck's physical appearance, summer and winter nesting areas, size of clutch and incubation period, and facts about raising young in the library media center. A helpful website can also be found at www.utm.edu/departments/ed/cece/ducks.shtml. Each group may record its information on a large wall display matrix with an illustration highlighting the physical differences from the other ducks. On a large, blank map of the United States, each group may color the range of its duck.

A Field Guide to Dawdle's Home Waters: Support students as they research the flora and fauna of a chosen coastal habitat. When Toni Buzzeo wrote **Dawdle Duckling**, she set the story in Maine coastal waters. Margaret Spengler's illustrations, however, have a much more southern feel. Using a map of the United States, help students to decide where they think Dawdle lives. Then, in the library media center, use reference books (**Wildlife and Plants of the World**, published by Marshall Cavendish, 1999, is an excellent reference set for use by primary students), field guides, and online resources to conduct research. Encourage them to create a field guide to the fictional cove where Dawdle lives. The field guide might contain a student drawing of each animal and plant found in the cove with its physical characteristics, life span, and habitat.

Save the Wetlands!: Wetlands, home to many ducks, are in danger in America. Luckily, preservationists are actively involved in saving them before it is too late. If you are working with primary grade students, read **Life in a Wetland** in the Rookie Read-About Science series by Allan Fowler (Childrens Press, 1999). Intermediate grade students will enjoy **Wetlands** in the True Books-Ecosystems series by Darlene R. Stille (Children's Press, 2000). All ages will be inspired by this hopeful book about wetland preservation: **The Shape of Betts Meadow: A Wetlands Story** by Meghan Nuttall Sayres (Millbrook, 2002).

Now, lead students in researching and discussing wetlands. Use your library media center or the National Wildlife Federation website www.nwf.org/wetlands/learnmore.html. Make a list of the plants and animals, in addition to ducks, that live in America's wetlands. Now make a list of the benefits of wetlands. If you live in an area with threatened wetlands, students may write letters to the local newspaper supporting their protection. If not, consider supporting another wetland protection effort. Visit <http://www.nwf.org/wetlands/howtohelp.html> and click to learn more about helping to protect these four special wetlands: Everglades, Lower Mississippi Basin, Copper River Delta, and Okefenokee. (If you are interested in creating a mini-wetland area, visit www.nwf.org/nationalwildlife/1997/yardas7.html.)

Invite A Speaker (Live or Virtual): There are many people who might come to your classroom to talk to your students about ducks, waterfowl, and wetlands. You might contact Ducks Unlimited www.greenwing.org/greenwings/du_facts/dufactsframe.html to ask about having a speaker come to talk about ducks and duck habitats: Or invite a wildlife biologist from your state fish and game agency. You can search for contact information by state at www.waterfowler.net/organization.html. Finally, consider contacting a naturalist at an Audubon Society sanctuary or nature center in your state www.audubon.org/states/index.html. If it is not possible to find a speaker to come in person, ask someone to join you in an online chat using AOL Instant Messenger (download the software for AOL IM at www.aim.com/index.adp).

Animal Actions: Dawdle is a duckling. In the story, he:

- dawdles and dreams
- preens and plays
- splashes and spins
- dunks and dips

Ask students to create an animal character with an alliterative name (e.g. Lazy Lion, Grouchy Giraffe). Now discuss the likely actions of that animal and create a list of these verbs. (You may need to do some research about the animal using a good nonfiction book or a reference book from the library media center.) Brainstorm as many alliterative verb pairs as possible. Explain to students that this is the process Toni Buzzeo used to create **Dawdle Duckling**.

If You Give a Duck A Hat: The text of **Dawdle Duckling** makes no mention of a hat. Yet illustrator Margaret Spengler gave Dawdle, his siblings, and his mother hats. In addition to the humor these hats add to the story, discuss the role the hats play in revealing character. Now, consider the character students created in the previous learning activity. What article of clothing or accessory could each animal be given to reveal his or her character? Would it need to be altered, like the broken brim of Dawdle's hat? In what way?

Quacky Vocabulary:

Dawdle Duckling is rich in interesting vocabulary. Make a class glossary for the book, using your favorite dictionary to define the words and student illustrations. For primary grades students, words you might consider including are:

- * dawdles * dips * downy * dreams * dunks
- * flaps * fluff * flutters * foamy * leaps
- * nibbles * nips * paddles * plays * preens
- * quacks * spins * splashes * splatters * spray
- * sprouting * tasty * trail * zigzag

Mapping the Cove: Encourage students to create a wall map of Dawdle's habitat by drawing the various locations in **Dawdle Duckling** on a large piece of chart paper. Before beginning, study the geographic terms in the story with students (bay, cove, shore, marsh, island). As a group, work to define these terms using context clues and a dictionary. When the map is complete, students may practice reciting the story and retracing the ducks' routes. As an introduction to mapping for young children, you may want to begin by reading **Me on the Map** by Joan Sweeney (Dragonfly, 1998) and **Mapping Penny's World** by Loreen Leedy (Henry Holt, 2000).

School and Library Visits

Toni Buzzeo is a frequent visitor at schools and libraries. If you would like to host her and learn more about her books, visit her website at www.tonibuzzeo.com/speaking.html.

Find more teaching guides and tips at: <http://us.penguinroup.com/youngreaders>.

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