

Bear's Hiccups

Marion Dane Bauer, illus by Diane Dawson Hearn ♦ Classroom Guide

Teachers, librarians, and parents, feel free to choose from the questions below, all of which prepare the readers for the ideas brought forth in the book.

Pre-Reading Questions

1. What is a hiccup? Have you ever had the hiccups?

For teachers, here is a bit of background about hiccups. For this age group, you may find especially useful that hiccups were once thought to be caused by elves. You may also find a short discussion of onomatopoeia fun, using "hiccough" as a word that mimics a sound, such as buzz or chug or cluck or pitter-pat.

Hiccups are officially "A spasm of the diaphragm resulting in a rapid, involuntary inhalation that is stopped by the sudden closure of the glottis (the opening at the vocal chords at the upper part of the larynx) and accompanied by a sharp, distinctive sound." [American Heritage Dictionary]

The etymology of the word is: 1580, *hickop*, earlier *hicket*, *hycock*, considered imitative of the sound of *hiccupping* (cf. French *hoquet*, Danish *hikke*, etc.); modern spelling first recorded in 1788; *hiccough* (1626) is by mistaken association with cough. Replaced Old English *ælfsgoða*, so called because hiccups were thought to be caused by elves. [quoted from the Online Etymology Dictionary www.etymonline.com]

2. You may wish to use this *Anticipation Guide* to help the students focus on the animal world in and around a pond.

Depending on the age of your students, you'll want to modify this page to reflect their vocabulary and instruction-reading abilities. This might best be used as a blackboard exercise or you could have each child prepare their individual ranking.

The characters in this story are Otter, Turtle, Bear, Frog, Deer, and Squirrel.

One of these characters will claim the pond where they live as his property. Who do you think that's most likely to be?

Anticipation Guide: Write the numbers 1 through 6 next to your choices, with the "1" written next to the character you think will say "this pond is mine" and the "6" written next to the character you think is least likely to say that.

- _____ Otter
_____ Turtle
_____ Bear



Holiday House Reader
Level 2
ISBN 0-8234-1339-X

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Pre-Reading Questions (cont'd)

(Continued from page 1)

- _____ Frog
- _____ Deer
- _____ Squirrel

How did you decide on the order you wrote down?

3. Have you ever heard frogs singing? What do they say? Let's make a list of the sounds frogs sing.
4. How do you stop the hiccups? Let's make a list of all the ways you know. You might also wish to have the children interview their families to make a list of all the ways they've heard of for stopping hiccups and then bring their lists back to class to share.
5. Do you have brothers? Sisters? Cousins? A best friend? Name something they have shared with you.

While Reading the Book

1. [After reading page 26] Do you have any guesses about where Frog might be?
2. [After reading page 36] What on earth does "cup-hic" mean?

After Reading the Book

1. What is the main theme of (or idea in) this book? [Is this about friendship? Bravery? Being selfish? Being stubborn? Hiccups?] Once you've chosen the theme, find examples in the book that support the theme.
2. Why do you think Bear wanted the pond to be all his?
3. The animals near the pond were quite brave in suggesting cures for the hiccups to Bear. He is much bigger than they are. What do you think made them so brave?

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Activities

1. **Sharing:** Make a list of five things that are yours. Make a list of five things that belong to someone else in your family. Make a list of five things that everyone in your family shares. Place a checkmark next to the things on your list that you would be willing to share with other members of your family. Take your list home and ask your family members what they'd be willing to share. Did you predict this correctly? Discuss why you would be willing to share some of the things on your list but not other things.
2. **Similes:** A simile is a comparison using like or as. In this book, the author says "The pond lay flat and still, like a scarf dropped in the grass." Bring a scarf with you to school and let it drop on the floor. Prepare similes using other items in the classroom and comparing them to something in nature.
3. You'll find other useful examples of similes in books such as *As Big as You*, *Quick as a Cricket*, and *John Henry*.
4. Make use of the included sheet, "I am like the world around me," to conduct a poetry activity. Have the students compare parts of their body to something in nature. Next, have them draw a facial self-portrait on a regular sheet of paper using these similes. You could make masks out of the portraits or stick puppets by using a heavier construction paper or tag board. These could be posted around the room.
5. **Music:** You might take the list of sounds frogs make from the Pre-Reading exercises and have the children make a Frog Chorus. Different groups can make one sound accompanied by a particular type of instrument. Be sure to include one group with the main refrain, "This is my pond, my pond, my pond. Mine."

About Marion Dane Bauer

Marion Dane Bauer writes books for children and teens, from picture books to long novels. Among her newest books are *The Blue Ghost* and *A Bear Named Trouble*, as well as board books celebrating the holidays. Her beginning readers feature nature themes, among them animals and weather and geography. *On My Honor*, a book about making decisions and doing what you believe is right, won a Newbery Honor Award from the American Library Association. Ms. Bauer has written more than 50 books and teaches writing in the MFA program at Vermont College. She lives in Minnesota, where she is close to nature, animals, her children, and her grandchildren.



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Possible Companion Books

- Bauer, Marion Dane. *Frog's Best Friend*. Holiday House, 2002.
- Berger, Melvin. *Why I Sneeze, Shiver, Hiccup, and Yawn*. HarperCollins, 2002.
- Brown, Marcia. *Stone Soup*. Atheneum, 1947. or Muth, Jon J. *Stone Soup*. Scholastic, 2003.
- Chrustowski, Rick. *Hop Frog*. Henry Holt, 2004.
- Cuyler, Margery. *Skeleton Hiccups*. McElderry, 2002.
- Greenstein, Elaine. *As Big as You*. Knopf, 2002.
- Lester, Julius and Jerry Pinkney. *John Henry*. Dial, 1994.
- Lionni, Leo. *It's Mine!* Knopf, 1986.
- Willems, Mo. *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog*. Hyperion, 2004.
- Wood, Audrey and Don Wood. *Quick as a Cricket*. Child's Play, 1990.



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I Am Like the World Around Me

My nose is like _____ .

My eyes are like _____ .

My ears are like _____ .

My chin is like _____ .

My eyebrows are like _____ .

My hair is like _____ .

My heart feels like _____ .

My mind is like _____ .