



Duck and Cub

Guided Reading Level: D

DRA Level: 4

Lexile Level: 160L

written by Sandra Samatte and illustrated by Julian Grafenauer

Overview: Join Duck and Cub as they play in the mud then splash in a tub of suds! In *Duck and Cub*, young readers will practice reading words with the short /u/ vowel sound as Duck and Cub run in the mud then jump in a tub filled with suds.

About the Book

Drumbeat Decodable Series:

Each book contains a word list, high-frequency words, short vowel words, and fun activities for extended learning. *Duck and Cub* is part of the Drumbeat Decodable Book Collection, a groundbreaking beginning reader series designed to strengthen and advance phonics and reading skills (www.leeandlow.com/books/drumbeat-decodable-book-collection).

The series was written by Sandra Samatte, Anishinaabe, member of Ne-biimiskonaan (Skownan) First Nation, Treaty 2 Territory, and illustrated by Julian Grafenauer, Anishinaabe, member of Ditibineya-ziiibiing (Rolling River) First Nation, Treaty 4 Territory.

Reviews

"Simple text with clear and specific targeted practice for emergent readers reinforce foundational skills like segmenting and blending CVC words. . . Wonderful resources for parents to read together with children. The illustrations are breathtaking and lend themselves to lots of rich conversation." - *School Library Journal*, starred review

Page number: 13, **Word Count:** 116

Genre: Fiction

Focus: Concepts of Print and Reading Strategies

- blend letter sounds to read phonetically regular words
- use high frequency words
- read varied sentences fluently, with expression and stamina

Supportive Text Features:

- illustrations support some text details
- text depicts a series of simple, related ideastext includes some repetitive language

High-frequency/Sight words: *the, is, up, in, on, had, a, puts, of, says, with, too, for*

Note: words based on Dolch Sight Word List and Fry's Instant Words lists

Phonics:

- decode words with short /u/ vowel sound

Lesson plan designed to support foundational language skills and comprehension skills, K-2:

- Common Core Standards
- Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)



Getting Ready to Read

1. For the first reading, focus on decoding the text. Many students might not know the meaning of the words *suds* or *jug*. Teachers can observe a student's ability to decode/sound out without depending on their prior knowledge or relying on the pictures to guess the word. In later re-readings, students can study the story features of the book, the vocabulary, and work on comprehension skills.

2. Remind students of the strategies they know and can use with unfamiliar words: Encourage students to sound out each letter if the word can be phonetically sounded out. Point out any consonant blends, digraphs, word families, and vowels sounds they may know.

3. In subsequent readings, the focus can shift to comprehension practice and vocabulary development. Introduce unfamiliar words and their meanings. Talk about the vocabulary words and ask students what they might mean.

- Jug = a pitcher or container
- suds = bubbles

4. Be aware of the following text features:

- The book contains familiar words, some of the most common words in English that students learn to read on sight without sounding them out: *the, is, up, in, on, had, a, puts, of, says, with, too, for*.
- This story is filled with many short /u/ vowel words, at least three examples per page. Short /u/ vowel words: *up, cub, fun, run, mud, tub, sun, jug, suds, runs, jumps, Duck, jump, yuck*.

- Multisyllable words: *many, splashes*.
- Content-specific vocabulary words and phrases include: *splashes, jug of suds*.

Reading the Book

1. Set a purpose by telling students to read the book to find and practice decoding words with the short /u/ vowel sound. Additional purpose for future re-readings: Learn how two friends, Cub and Duck, spend the day getting dirty and then get clean. Why do Cub and Duck need a bath at the end of the story?

2. Have students read quietly, but out loud. Each student should be reading at their own pace. Students should not read in chorus. Listen to students as they read by leaning in close or bending down beside each student.

3. Look for these reading behaviors during the first reading:

- Do they rely less on the pictures and more on print when reading?
- Do they sound out an unfamiliar new word correctly even if they do not know what it means?
- Do they have a growing sight vocabulary?
- Do they use beginning, middle, and ending sounds to read unknown words?
- Do they easily move from one line of text to the next when making a return sweep?
- Do they use punctuation appropriately and to gain meaning?

4. As students read, suggest reading strategies if they are struggling: Encourage



students to sound out each letter if the word can be phonetically decoded. Point out any consonant blends, digraphs, word families, and vowel sounds they may know.

After the First Reading

1. Possible teaching points to address based on your observations:

- Call attention to all the high-frequency words students have learned and used. Refer to the Word Lists on the last page of the book.
- Practice sounding out the multisyllable words.
- Be aware of the irregular or more challenging words: *many, splashes, says, joins, puts, filled*
- Pick one of the short /u/ vowel words and have students find that word throughout the story.

2. Make a photocopy of or put an overhead projector film sheet over the Read and Review and Fill in the Blanks sections you can find at the end of the book. Using a whiteboard marker on the film sheet, students can follow the directions for both activities focused on words with the short /u/ vowel sound.

Second Reading for Meaning and Comprehension

1. Have students reread the book in a whisper voice or to a partner.

2. Have students confirm their predictions and talk about what Duck and Cub did on their adventure that day.

3. Ask students to retell what happened in the story. Encourage them to share something they found funny, sad, or unexpected.

4. Ask a combination of literal and higher thinking questions, including the following:

- What does Cub do on the sunny day?
- Why does Duck join Cub in the mud?
- What kinds of things do Cub and Duck do to play in the mud?
- Do Duck and Cub mind getting dirty? Why or why not?
- What do Cub and Duck do after playing in the mud?
- Why do Cub and Duck prepare a bath? What is the bath for?
- What is the soap/bubbles for?
- How is playing in the mud and in the tub similar?
- How do you think Cub and Duck feel after the bath?
- What might Cub and Duck do next after the bath?
- What other things can you do in the mud?
- Have you ever played with mud? What is it like? What is fun about mud?
- Where might you find mud?
- What do you know about mud? How is mud different from dirt?
- Do you think Cub and Duck's families mind they play in the mud? Why or why not?
- Describe how Cub and Duck spend their day. Tell what they do first and then what came next and so on.
- If you found a puddle of mud, what would you do?



- What advice do you have for cleaning up after playing in mud?
- Do you prefer to play with bubbles or mud? Why?
- Do you think Cub and Duck have a fun day? Why or why not?
- How do Cub and Duck take care of each other? How do they show they are good friends?
- Do you think Cub and Duck's family trusts them to make good choices on their adventure together? How do you know?
- The story is set in a forest. Why do you think the illustrator set the story in a forest rather than a park or city?
- What are some ways you and your friends enjoy adventures together? Share a time you had a special day with someone. What did you do? Where did you go?
- Has anything similar in one of the story's scenes ever happened to you?

5. This is a time for assessment. While students are reading, watch what they do and what they use from the teaching time. Alternatively, you might take a running record on one student as an assessment of the student's reading behavior.

Cross-Curricular Activities

Language: Make a photocopy of and place in sheet protectors or put an overhead projector film sheet over the Read and Review and Fill in the Blanks sections of the book. Using a whiteboard marker on the film sheet, students can follow the directions for both activities focused on short /u/ words.

List and practice reading multisyllable words and names from the book. Talk about how to divide each word into syllables and how that helps them read the words. Talk about open vs. closed syllables.

Encourage students to make a list of other short /u/ words they know.

Ask students to think of other words that rhyme with *run*, *fun*, and *sun*. Students can illustrate several of the other words they thought of.

Looking at the text, ask students to look for short /i/ words: *in*, *is*, *with*, *fills*.

Write out and cut up the words, *Duck*, *and*, and *Cub*. Encourage students to work in small groups to rearrange only these letters to make new words. How many words can they make? Encourage students to write down their new words or assist them in making a list.

Reading: Read the story, *All My Relations* (<https://goodminds.com/products/all-my-relations-hc-pre-order-for-aug-30-25>), written by Nikki Soliman and illustrated by Julian Grafenauer. In a First Nations, Inuit, and Métis context, this story will help children learn about our connections to each other and the world around us, including: The Winged Ones, The Swimmers, The Crawlers, The Four-Legged, The Two-Legged, and All Our Relations.

Read other books featuring how mud, including: *Mud Tortillas* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/mud-tortillas/>). What is fun about playing in the mud?

Read other books featuring getting messy and then clean, including: *Car Wash* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/car-wash/>), *New Shoes* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/new-shoes/>).



[leeandlow.com/books/new-shoes/](https://www.leeandlow.com/books/new-shoes/)), *Bath Time* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/bath-time/>), *I Don't Want a Bath!* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/i-dont-want-a-bath/>), and *Taking a Bath* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/taking-a-bath/>). Make connections between texts.

Writing: Encourage students to write and sketch a time they played with bubbles or mud.

As a group, make a list of reasons why mud is fun and a list of reasons why bubbles are fun. Compare mud to water and bubbles and make a Venn diagram. Discuss what is similar and different.

Encourage students to write and sketch another adventure of Duck and Cub. What should they do next? What would they find fun?

Ask students to write and sketch which they would rather be for the day: a duck or a bear. Why? Provide a sentence stem if helpful: I want to be a _____(bear/duck)_____because _____. Fill in their responses if students need to dictate their answers to you

Science: Compare a bear to a duck. Point out bears and ducks are both animals but have different features: feathers vs. fur, paws vs. wings. For some Indigenous Peoples, bears are part of the Four-Legged and ducks are part of the Winged-Ones. Read more nonfiction texts about bears and ducks.

Have students use sponges to scrub a dirty desk or table. Discuss the sequence of events and observe how the desk changes as the soap is applied, the sponge scrubs the dirt, the water rinses off the soap and dirt, and the air dries the wet surface. Talk about why some marks or dirt were more difficult to remove than others.

Math: Ask students to vote on whether they like to play with mud or bubbles more. Together ask students to make a prediction which activity is more popular. Count each vote and display the results as a bar graph and pie chart. Discuss the results.

Social Studies: Reach out to your county or state government to connect with local Indigenous and Native American communities. Invite Indigenous and Native American Language Keepers, Knowledge Keepers, librarians, and storytellers to share their stories. A local university or public library may also be a good resource to learn more.

Help students understand the importance of Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island (North America). Share a map of traditional territories. Talk about how different territory and geography influence culture, story, and language. Check out Native Land Digital www.native-land.ca and "Coming Home to Indigenous Place Names in Canada" map from the University of Maine Canada-American Center: <https://umaine.edu/canam/coming-home-map>.

Read more stories in the Drumbeat Decodable Book Collection: www.leeandlow.com/books/drumbeat-decodable-book-collection and the Canadian editions <https://goodminds.com/collections/indigenous-education-press/products/drumbeat-decodable-set-1-5-books>.

Art: Invite students to experiment with bubble painting. Have them blow through a straw across puddles of watercolor paint and a drop of dish soap on their paper to make bubbly paint marks. To create a finished piece of art, when the paint dries, cut out a bathtub shape and glue it on top to make the paint marks look like overflowing bubble bath. Students could also collage on a funny animal



or person face with smudges of dirt to the tub to complete the picture. Check out videos and tutorials online for “bubble painting.”

Multilingual Language Learners: Draw and label a bathtub with what you might find there, including the following terms: *faucet, tub, soap, shampoo, washcloth, toys, comb, brush, towel.*

Draw and label the anatomy of a duck and bear. Include the following terms: *eyes, noses, wings, paws, fur, feathers,* and so on. Compare the parts of these animals to those of a human being.

If safe to do so, go on a walk to find mud at the school or in the neighborhood. Alternatively mix some dirt and water in a plastic container in the classroom for students to observe mud. Make a list together of adjectives to describe mud with each of our senses. This is also a great opportunity to show and practice antonyms: *dark/light, smooth/rough, slippery/sticky,* and so on.

Encourage students in pairs take turns to interview each other about which they like more: playing in mud or bubbles and why. Have each interviewer sketch or write about their partner’s favorite activity with mud or bubbles and volunteer to tell the class about them.

Consider consulting www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org for more ideas on how to support Multilingual Learners.

Additional Resources: Seek out more First Nations, Inuit, Métis, Indigenous Peoples and Native American stories for the curriculum and classroom. From GoodMinds.com, Indigenous book distributor and publisher: “Indigenous stories have familiar connections for Indigenous healing, empowerment and resilience and enhance cultural

understandings, mutual respect, empathy, and reconciliation through shared realities.” Check out:

<https://goodminds.com/>

<https://cynthialeitichsmith.com/>

<https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com>

<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360>

<https://ailanet.org/>

To evaluate Indigenous Peoples and Native American children’s literature, consider this worksheet from the National Museum of the American Indian: <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/pdf/Native-American-Literature-in-Your-Classroom-Worksheet.pdf>.