

Book Notes

Mirounga's Pup

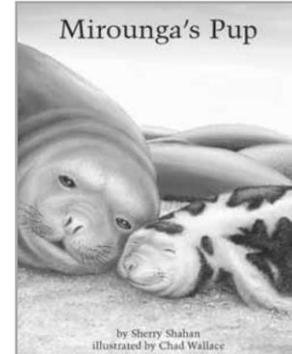
Author Sherry Shahan

Illustrator Chad Wallace

16 pages ■ 467 words

Fountas and Pinnell Level L

Intervention Level 20



Mirounga's Pup

SYNOPSIS

A realistic narrative describing the birth and early life of an elephant seal pup.

WHAT THE BOOK OFFERS

- Realistic narrative – [fictionalized nonfiction]
- Accurate informational facts about elephant seals in a fictionalized presentation
- Third person, present tense
- Detailed, descriptive writing
- Additional information and photographs on inside back cover
- Range of simple and compound sentences structures
- Variety in sentence lengths
- Meaning carried over longer and more complex structures
- Strong verbs
- Story within a story
- Commas used to set off explanatory phrases (pages 2 and 6)
- Use of semi-colon instead of conjunction to separate compound clauses of sentence (page 13)
- Participial phrases
- Adjectival and prepositional phrases

POSSIBLE SKILLS EMPHASIS

- Maintaining meaning over longer, more complex sentence structures
- Setting a purpose for reading
- Comparing and contrasting new information with what we already know
- Identifying key information; taking notes
- Asking “I wonder” questions
- Using punctuation to aid fluency and comprehension

Book Notes

Mirounga's Pup (continued)

INTRODUCING THE BOOK

Tell students this story will give them information about how mother elephant seals care for their pups. (You may want to use the information from the nonfiction note on the back cover.) Discuss with students what they already know about how more familiar land mammals care for their young...dogs and/or cats, for instance. *As we read this book, let's compare how the elephant seal mother raises her pup to the animals we just discussed.*

Looking at the cover and title page, do you see any inconsistencies you are wondering about? (Pup is different colors.) Let's keep these questions in mind as we read as well.

FOCUS OF INSTRUCTION

Break the text into the following chunks: pages 2 to 5, 6 to 9, 10 to 12, 13 to 16. At each point, have students summarize what they learned regarding mother and baby elephant seals. Compare this information with what was discussed about mother and baby cats or dogs. *What did you find out about mother and baby elephant seals? How does this compare to a mother and baby cat or dog?*

Consider how the pup is changing in appearance. *What did you find out about our other purpose for reading – why the pup has different kinds of fur on the cover and title page?*

Anticipate the kind of information that will follow. *What kind of information will we read about next?*

FOLLOWING THE READING

- Brainstorm with students other “I wonder” questions generated by the text. For example: In which states are northern elephant seals seen? Do mother seals return to the same cove every year to give birth? Where do the adult seals go when they leave the pups and journey north? How often do mother elephant seals give birth? Help students research and publish the answers to their questions.
- Discuss the author's use of strong verbs and how this creates images in the reader's head. Help students revise their own writing for stronger verbs.
- Teach students how to write comparison/contrast paragraphs describing how elephant seal mothers are alike and different from mother cats and dogs. Teach the commonly used words and phrases that signal this kind of writing: alike, same as, similarly, on the other hand, different, unlike, in contrast.

Book Notes

Mirounga's Pup (continued)

Additional Comprehension Prompts For Oral or Written Use Before, During, and After Reading	
FINISH THIS THOUGHT	<i>This story made me feel . . . because . . . After ten days from birth, Mirounga's pup . . .</i>
USE YOUR MEMORY	<i>Which coast of the United States do elephant seals live in? If you can't remember, check in the Nonfiction Note box on the inside cover. After you answer the question above, answer this one: Do elephant seals swim on the east coast or the west coast?</i>
WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?	<i>Why do you think Mirounga left her pup in the cove? What makes you think that? What do you think of the alpha bull? Reread pages 5 – 7 before you answer this question.</i>
BE CREATIVE	<i>By the end of the story, Mirounga's pup was ready to begin his life in the open sea. Write an adventure about Mirounga's pup after he left the cove. Give him a name. Make sure your adventure story has a problem and solution. Draw a picture for the front cover so it matches your title.</i>
VOCABULARY AGENT	<i>Find each word below in the story. Write the page number it appears on and then read the sentence that has the word in it. After you do that, write a sentence using the word. Don't copy the sentence in the book. Think of your own sentence. For example: bobs: page 9. Seals like to bob up and down in the waves.</i> WORDS <i>*protect *splash *beach *sleeps *together</i>