

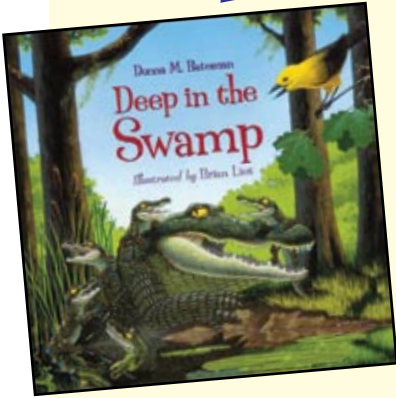
Read-Aloud Activity

Deep in the Swamp

Written by Donna M. Bateman
Illustrated by Brian Lies

Reader Notes and Book Summary

- ✧ This author fits the names and accurate information about animals indigenous to the Okefenokee Swamp into the rhyming lyrics of a familiar counting song. The richly detailed illustrations accurately portray the animals and their environments, and a glossary with additional information about plants and animals is also included.
- ✧ Read the story in advance so you are familiar with the rhythm and rhyme, prepared for pronunciations and ready to help children understand new words.



Set Read-Aloud Stage

- ✧ Open the book to show the front and back covers and after reading the title, ask children to describe what a swamp is. Has anyone ever been to a swamp? According to the glossary, "In a swamp, shallow water covers almost all the land. Trees, bushes, and other plants grow in the water." The cover shows alligators, a blue heron, and the flame bird. Ask children to identify some of the animals they might expect to see "deep in the swamp."
- ✧ Ask if anyone knows the counting song "Over in the Meadow." If familiar, you can take a moment to say or sing one verse. Then invite children to look for similarities to this old favorite as you read this book. Connecting the story to something children already know helps them predict what to expect and prepares them to listen with a purpose. Preparing children to look for specific things in a story encourages them to be more attentive and engaged listeners.
- ✧ Have chart paper or a chalkboard available to use during discussion/wrap-up time.

During Read-Aloud!

- ✧ As you read this story, be sure to give children enough time to look at the beautiful illustrations and notice details about the plants and animals shown.
- ✧ The repetition in this lyrical rhyme provides an opportunity for children to participate by completing predictable phrases. When you read what the mother animals say, pause and encourage the children to chime in with the young animals' responses. Involving children in the story promotes listening and oral language skills. Hearing the repetition and rhyme supports phonological awareness. Engaging in oral language and developing phonological awareness promote reading achievement.
- ✧ This story embeds very specific vocabulary into each verse. The vocabulary serves as clues for information about the plants and animals. Emphasize some of these new words as you read and point out supporting details in the illustrations. Pause briefly to discuss word meanings and encourage children to build understanding from the context in which the words are used.
- ✧ In addition to words defined in the glossary, several words that might be new include river otter pup (a young river otter), trill (a bird's warble), snooze (nap or sleep), thicket (thick growth of bushes), shore (water's edge), thrive (live and grow), bask (sunbathe), soar (fly), froglets (young frogs), shallows (areas in water that are not deep), twine (twist and wind around), den (home or lair for animals), scurry (run quickly), and tadpoles (early stage of a developing frog, before it grows legs). Explaining new words in context helps build vocabulary.



Keeping Your Audience Connected With Books and Reading

Connecting
Connecting story events to kids' own experiences helps them understand and relate personally to the characters and events in the story.

Listening
Help kids listen and join in with predictable words and phrases to actively engage them in the story.

Retelling
Retelling the sequence of story events strengthens comprehension.

Read-Aloud Activity

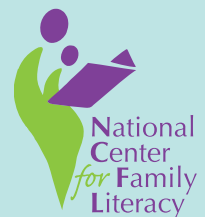
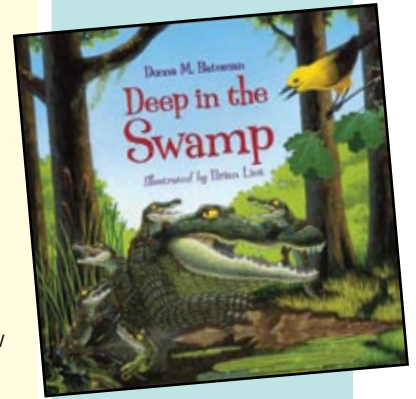
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Read-Aloud Discussion and Wrap-Up

- ✧ Using chart paper or chalkboard, number one to ten. Ask children to recall the sequence of events in the story and name the swamp animals. This also gives you a chance to encourage children to recall and use some of the new vocabulary words. If need be, show story illustrations to help children remember.
 - ◆ 1 river otter pup, splashing and playing in the warm morning sun
 - ◆ 2 little snapping turtles, swimming through the prairies where the neverwets grew
 - ◆ 3 flame bird chicks, trilling loudly in their hollow cypress knee
 - ◆ 4 marsh bunnies, snoozing in their thicket on the shore
 - ◆ 5 little gators, basking in the sun where the water lilies thrive
 - ◆ 6 blue heron chicks, soaring near their nest built of sticks
 - ◆ 7 little damselflies, drying their wings on a cypress branch
 - ◆ 8 froglets jumping through the shallows where the cattails grow
 - ◆ 9 little rat snakes, climbing up a tree where the bamboo vines twine
 - ◆ 10 little crayfish, scurrying after tadpoles near their underwater den
- ✧ Recalling the sequence of events strengthens understanding. Giving children an opportunity to use newly learned words helps them become more competent in using language and more likely to incorporate those words into their working vocabularies.
- ✧ Encourage families to get this book and read it together many times, remembering information and discovering new details in each reading.



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