



ELEPHANTS SWIM

AUTHOR: LINDA CAPUS RILEY

ILLUSTRATOR: STEVE JENKINS

See a video of the book read aloud here: [Elephants Swim](#)

**** REMEMBER: HAVE FUN AND THE KIDS WILL TOO! ****

OVERVIEW

ABOUT THE BOOK

Animals move in water differently from one another. They do different things while in the water. There are sixteen animals from elephant to platypus to whale, depicted in paper collages, moving and playing in the water. Each animal is allotted a two-page spread depicting its particular movement.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Linda Capus Riley is the author of three non-fiction children's books, two of which focus on aquatic subjects. She is a certified SCUBA diver who has swum with sharks, giant rays, and sea lions, come face-to-face with an octopus, and would rather be underwater than most other places.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Steve Jenkins was born in Hickory, North Carolina. When he was young, he worked with his father (a scientist) on a book about the Solar System. Wherever he lived, he kept a menagerie of lizards, turtles, spiders, and other animals, collected rocks and fossils, and blew things up in his small chemistry lab. His wife, Robin Page, is an author and illustrator and a frequent collaborator. (They've made sixteen children's books together.) They now live in Boulder, Colorado, with their three children in a house that was built in the 1880s. His children ask him a lot of questions, which give him ideas for stories.

THE READ ALOUD

BEFORE READING

Use these before reading the story to help students activate background knowledge and make predictions:

- Can you tell what this story might be about by looking at the cover?
- What's on the back cover of the book? What happens if we open the book and look at the front and back covers at the same time?
- The illustration on the cover is done with torn paper, called paper collage. As we read the story, let's see if the rest of the illustrations are done the same way.

DURING THE STORY

Use these while reading the story to help students interpret the action and content:

- (p.5) What does a rudder do?

ELEPHANTS SWIM

TOPICS & THEMES:

- Animals
- Movements
- Vocabulary
- Swimming

Tips for every book!

POWER PHRASES:

I WONDER...

I NOTICE...

TELL ME MORE...

DIGGING DEEPER:

"Tell me more, why do you think that?"

"How do you know that?"

"Why do you think they feel like that?"

"Interesting, did you notice anything else?"

- (p.9) Where might tigers live that it would be hot enough for them to want to swim in the water?
- (p. 12) Can you show me how a jaguar might scoop up the fish?
- (p.13) Who else sleeps in a cradle? Is it made of kelp? Would that be comfortable for a baby?
- (p.20) What's the difference between wading and swimming?
- (p.21) What does plunge mean?
- (p.24) Can you show me what glide means using your hand?
- (p.33) If you sing when you swim, put your hand on your nose.

AFTER READING

Use these after reading the story to help students understand what they just read:

- Go back through the book to find out if all the images are made of torn paper.
- Was this story true (non-fiction) or made up (fiction)?

BRINGING THE BOOK TO LIFE!

- How many places in San Diego can you find water to play in? (ocean, fountains, swimming pools, bathtub, sink, lake, etc.)
- Can you wade, dive, glide, etc. in all of them? Why or why not?

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- Out of all the animals in the story, think of your favorite. Turn to your partner and share the animal you chose, telling your partner one thing you like about that animal. Raise your hands if you and your partner have the same favorite animal.

SMALL-GROUP IDEAS

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

- How many other animals can you think of that move or play in the water? Describe how each animal you think of moves in the water. Model an example of your choosing (such as, "Dogs swim in the water by using their legs like this.")

WRITING ACTIVITY

- Let's look through the book again and copy the name of one animal and how it moves (walk, glide, plunge, etc)

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

- create an animal using torn paper (provide students with an outline of the animal)

COMMON CORE LINKS

Common Core links: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.1, K.2, K.4, K.5, K.7, K.10