



# PEEK, OTTER!

AUTHOR: SHIRA EVANS

ILLUSTRATOR: VARIOUS

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

## OVERVIEW

Readers might consider reading the book through once with the children listening and looking at the photos before handing each child a book to take home. Then as a group, you could read the book again together, having the children turn the pages, look at each picture and guess, especially with single word text, what word(s) the author wrote.

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Meet the funny and adorable river otter! This National Geographic Kids pre-reading level book uses a simple text to help young readers learn some interesting facts about these amazing animals. Following the title page is a "Vocabulary Tree" that diagrams important words found in the book. The text clearly narrates and explores each accompanying photograph. At the back of the book is a "Your Turn" section where children can relate their own daily activities to those of the otters.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Shira Evans** started her career in educational publishing in 2001 after teaching English in several countries around the world. Since then, she has written and edited a wide variety of materials for K–12 students, including books, teacher's guides, and online activities. Evans has two adventurous young boys and enjoys exploring and learning more about the world with them.

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

This book uses photographs of river otters in action to illustrate the book. A list of photographers who contributed pictures to the book appears on the final page of the book.

## THE READ ALOUD

### BEFORE READING

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

- Notice the photograph and have the children guess what the book will be about. **Have any of you seen an otter before (perhaps sea otters at Sea World or river otters at the Zoo)?**
- Comment on the difference between typical illustrations which are usually drawings and these illustrations which are photos of real animals. **Does this animal look like it's real or pretend?** Mention the words "**fiction**" (pretend) and "**non-fiction**" (giving real information) as they relate to this book.
- Wonder about the meaning of the word "**Peek**"; see if the kids can demonstrate how to peek and then wonder how an otter might do that.
- Print awareness: **Can we count the number of words in the title?**

PEEK, OTTER!

### TOPICS & THEMES:

- Wild animals
- Daily activities

### *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?"*

- Alphabetic knowledge: **What letter starts the word “Peek” – what sound does the letter P make? What letter starts the word “Otter”? What sound does the O make in this word?**

## DURING THE STORY

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

- On the title page: **How did the otter get so tall?**
- (p.3) **I notice that those words look the same as the words in the book’s title. Where do you think the otter is?**
- Throughout the text: **Can we predict/guess what word describes what the otter is doing?** (These actions are listed on the Vocabulary Tree page.)
- (p.6) **What happened to the otter’s fur?**
- (p.7-8) **These aren’t pictures of otters... I wonder why they are in this book?**
- (p.12-13) Otter characteristics: **How does a strong tail help the otter? How about webbed feet?** *Webbed feet are where toes are connected by thin pieces of skin – sort of like kids wearing swim fins... other animals with webbed feet include ducks, geese, swans, flamingos, beavers, muskrats, platypuses. Most animals with webbed feet are aquatic animals who live in, on, or near the water. Webbed feet help them move quickly through the water when they're chasing food or trying to escape from predators; they also help animals walk on muddy ground which can be slippery.*
- **When we look at the photographs of otters, what other things do we notice about how otters look?:** whiskers, small ears, fur, 4 legs/feet, can stand on back feet.
- (p.18) **I wonder what the otter is doing with its mouth open? Can you imagine what noise an otter might make? Do you think the otter says, “come here, baby?” What does the baby do when its mother calls?** *Mothers rather than fathers care for the babies.*
- (p.23) **Can you think of some other things their parents have taught them to do?** Show the children where the action words from the family pictures are written on the last page of the book, where there is also a final otter picture to describe (pg.24).

## AFTER READING

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

- **Who remembers some of the words that describe what the otter knows how to do?**
- **What was your favorite thing for the otter to do?**

## BRINGING THE BOOK TO LIFE!

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- **How does your mother/father let you know they want you to come to them?**
- **If you could touch a real otter, how do you think it would feel?**
- **If you have pets, how are they like an otter – or different from an otter? Do you think an otter would like to be a pet and stay at your house or would it rather live out by a river and find its own food?** (Wild animal concept).

## COOPERATIVE LEARNING

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- Have the children stand in place to demonstrate through movements the various action words used in the book to describe otter movements. (Children can suggest actions they remember, or groups can use pictures to recall action words (i.e.: run, jump, dive...)).
- Re-read the book with each child holding their own copy and turning pages independently. Perhaps the children will be able to touch each word in the title as Reader says title name and find where the author’s name is written. Perhaps with single words in the text, children can use picture clues to remember/guess what action word is written. Suggest to the children that they “read” some of these words to their family members when they take the book home.