

NELLY: THE TURTLE THAT WENT TO SCHOOL AND FOUND A HOME

Teacher's Guide

Publisher Information

Paperback: 40 pages

Publisher: Memories Publishing

(December 9, 2019)

ISBN 978-0-999762257

Genre: Narrative Nonfiction

Audience: Middle Grade

Readers, Ages 8–12

Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



Summary

Nelly: The Turtle That Went to School and Found a Home is an intriguing narrative nonfiction chapter book for readers ages 8 through 12 who can follow scene-by-scene the teacher, Mrs. M, on her true adventures as a beginning reptile-keeper of a rescue red-eared slider turtle. One late afternoon, the growing turtle whacked the inside of its aquarium glass. Water streamed down the front of the old chest of drawers soaking the carpet. Mrs. M came to feed the turtle and gasped. Then she sighed as she prepared her pet for a car ride to a nearby lake where she had once canoed with her husband.

Theme

This book is a narrative nonfiction chapter book for middle grade readers who empathize with a teacher's goal of caring for a rescue turtle at her home and solving problems that arise. The author's true experiences of friendship and caring for Nelly show readers that we can all care for the world's turtles one rescue at a time.

Introduction to the Narrative Nonfiction Genre

Lee Gutkind, who is founder and the editor of the magazine, *Creative Nonfiction*, describes this genre as telling a true story well. Narrative nonfiction or literary nonfiction are also names for this kind of writing. Narrative nonfiction is factual and actually happened, but it is written using elements of fiction which tells a made-up story. This genre includes memoir writing, the essay, the research composition, and writing for a magazine.

Stoddard combined extensive research about red-eared sliders with facts from her original informational nonfiction manuscript. She also recreated a very meaningful experience at a turtle pond which became the opening scene of the *Nelly* book. Photographs of this scene and of red-eared sliders in the turtle pond at a local university reminded her of specific details, sensory

images, characters, dialogue, and actions. She used the narrative arc to diagram the plot and write a sequence of scenes. In her draft, she made sure that each scene ended with a carefully crafted sentence which would entice the reader to turn the page to read the next scene.

Facts about Turtles

Scientific Classification of Red-eared Slider

Scientists classify groups of living things into categories according to similar characteristics: domain-kingdom-phylum-class-order-family-genus-species. Here is the scientific classification for the Red-eared Slider turtle (*Trachemys scripta elegans*).

<u>Kingdom:</u>	<u>Animalia</u>
<u>Phylum:</u>	<u>Chordata</u>
<u>Class:</u>	<u>Reptilia</u>
<u>Order:</u>	<u>Testudines</u> (contains about 250 turtle species or types) This is a sub-species of <i>Trachemys scripta</i> : t.s. elegans (red-eared slider) <u>Testudines</u> (tēs tū' dī nēz).
<u>Suborder:</u>	<u>Cryptodira</u>
<u>Superfamily:</u>	<u>Testudinoidea</u>
<u>Family:</u>	<u>Emydidae</u>
<u>Genus:</u>	<u>Trachemys</u>
<u>Species:</u>	<u>T. scripta</u>
<u>Subspecies:</u>	<u>T.s. elegans</u>

The class of Reptiles includes turtles, tortoises, and terrapins.

- The turtle spends much time in fresh water. Most have webbed feet.
- The tortoise lives on land in hot, dry places. They have round feet and strong front legs.
- The terrapin lives near fresh or coastal marsh water and on land.

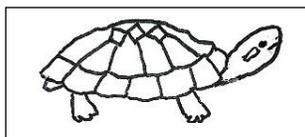
The red-eared slider is named for the small red patch behind each eye. It is able to slide off of logs into the water very quickly. An updated report finds more than 356 turtle species.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red-eared_slider#Taxonomy;

http://www.issg.org/database/species/reference_files/ausriskassessments/trascr.pdf



GLOSSARY



- aquarium:** indoor glass tank for keeping pet fish or other water animals
- bask:** to stay warm in a heated place
- burrow:** tunnel-like space dug in the dirt for shelter
- carapace:** bony cover on an animal's back
- ceramic:** object made from baked clay
- collectible:** any item collected by an interested person
- eardrum:** layer inside of a vertebrate's ear that senses heard sounds
- endangered:** put into a harmful situation, such as a species of animal in danger of disappearing
- habitat:** surroundings where a living thing survives
- hatchling:** baby animal which has just left its egg
- hibernate:** resting of an animal during cold weather
- marble:** a kind of shiny limestone rock
- marine:** living in the sea
- plastron:** bony lower section of the shell of a turtle or tortoise
- pollute:** to cause something to be dirty or unusable
- predator:** animal that hunts, kills, or eats other animals
- rehabilitate:** to return unhealthy animals to good health
- replica:** detailed copy of another object
- reptile:** a cold-blooded animal having a backbone, scales or bony pieces covering its body, and the female which lays eggs
- salmonella:** a kind of bacteria that makes people sick
- stress:** being tense in mind or in body
- threatened:** condition where survival is in danger, such as for a species of animal
- tortoise:** kind of turtle which lives mostly on land
- turtle:** kind of reptile with a beak and bony shell and which lives in fresh or salty water or on land
- UVB:** a kind of ultraviolet rays in sunshine that can affect human skin as sunburn, but helps a turtle's shell
- veterinarian:** a person trained in medicine to treat diseased or injured animals
- wildlife refuge:** a place where wild animals are cared for and kept safe

Vocabulary Study

1. Create a set of cards in which half of the deck shows a vocabulary word and the other half of the deck displays definitions of the words. Shuffle and place all cards face down in rows. Players take turns turning one card face up and turning another card face up. If the word card and the definition card selected match, the player takes the cards and has another turn. If the word card and the definition card do not match, player turns both cards face down and the game continues.
2. Using the deck of vocabulary word cards from #1, deal an equal number of these cards to players. Then use the definitions cards deck from above and place them in rows face up. Players take turns looking at the vocabulary word cards in their hand. Then each player at his turn correctly places one the vocabulary cards on the matching definition card. If the player chooses the wrong definition card, he picks his word card back up and his turn is over. Play continues until all players have correctly put their word cards on the matching definition cards.
3. Design a page of vocabulary words which shows each word with its letters in scrambled order and a blank line beside each one. Students try to unscramble the words and write them correctly on the lines.
4. Put the vocabulary word card stack face down. Draw marker lines dividing a poster board into five equal sections. Label each part with one of these categories: People, Animals, Places, Things, Actions. Players take turns drawing the top card and placing it in the correct category. The game continues until all word cards have been played.
5. Use the squares on a sheet of graph paper to arrange the letters of each of 15 vocabulary words and fill in remaining empty squares with other letters to create a hidden word puzzle. Trade with a friend and see if each of you can mark the hidden vocabulary words.
6. Choose one student to be “It” to sit in a chair facing the other students. The teacher stands behind “It” facing the class and holds up a card showing a vocabulary word to the class. Without seeing what word is on this card, the “It” asks fellow students questions that can only be answered “yes” or “no” for clues about the mystery word. If “It” identifies the mystery word, he gets another turn, another word. If “It” cannot guess the mystery word after 20 tries, he chooses a student to take his place and the teacher shows another card.
7. Provide opportunities for students to use the different vocabulary words on the Word Map for Vocabulary Words graphic organizer. Encourage students to share responses.

Word Map for Vocabulary Words

Synonym

Part of Speech

Word

Illustration

Definition

Used in a Sentence

Curriculum Connections

The content of the book, *Nelly: The Turtle That Went to School and Found a Home*, connects with correlations of Next Generation Science Standards (www.nextgenscience.org) which support the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Literacy Anchor Standards:

*Science and Engineering Practice: Asking Questions and Defining Problems/CCR Reading Anchors 1, 7, 8; CCR Writing Anchor 7; CCR Speaking and Listening Anchors 1, 3.

*Science and Engineering Practice: Planning and Carrying Out Investigations/CCR Reading Anchor 3; CCR Writing Anchors 7, 8; CCR Speaking and Listening Anchor 1.

*Science and Engineering Practice: Analyzing and Interpreting Data/CCR Reading Anchors 7, 9; CCR Speaking and Listening Anchors 2, 5.

*Science and Engineering Practice: Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions/CCR Reading Anchors 1, 2, 8; CCR Writing Anchors 2, 8, 9; CCR Speaking and Listening Anchor 4.

*Science and Engineering Practice: Engaging in Argument from Evidence/CCR Reading Anchors 6, 8, 9; CCR Writing Anchor 1; CCR Speaking and Listening Anchors 1, 3, 4.

*Science and Engineering Practice: Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information/ CCR Reading Anchors 2, 7, 9, 10; CCR Writing Anchors 2,8; CCR Speaking and Listening Anchors 1, 4, 5.

Steps BEFORE Reading

Teacher reads aloud to students this excerpt from the book: “Head up, head down. Head up, head down. Head up, head down. A ten-year-old boy named Luke watched a line of turtles circle around in the cloudy, green water like merry-go-round horses. He sat cross-legged on the sun-warmed rock rim of the turtle pond, encircled by water plants and oak trees and he watched the turtles’ varied behaviors in the pond. As each turtle approached him, the boy softly touched its raised head with his fingertip.”

Discussion questions:

- What do you think is the subject of this book? Why do you think that?
- What do you already know about this subject and how did you learn this information?
- After looking at the front and back covers of the book, what do you wonder about and what other information would you like to know?
- What details help you imagine the book’s setting in the opening scene?

Steps DURING Reading

- Make a prediction what might happen next. What evidence makes you think that?
- What has influenced the actions of the character or characters in the book?
- What scene in the book shows you emotions that a character is feeling? Explain.
- Describe a problem the character or characters face and how the problem is solved.
- Put yourself in the place of a character and tell what actions you would take.
- Have you ever had an experience like that of one of the characters? Explain.
- Identify examples of elements of fiction (simile, metaphor, sensory images, dialogue, characterization, plot, point of view) as you read. How do these contribute to the reader’s understanding of the narrative nonfiction story?
- What is the big idea or message from what you have read so far?

Steps AFTER Reading

- What is the sequence of important events in the story?
- Why did the author begin with a flashback?
- What happened to the main character in the story?
- What happened to the animal character in the story?
- What does the main character realize is the value of being a collector?
- Describe what might be another ending for this story.
- Name examples of science facts in the content of the book.
- What is a topic from the book which you would like to research? What resources could you use? How would you share your findings with the class?

Group Work

Students who participate in cooperative learning groups (1) internalize facts learned, (2) develop skill in critical thinking and teamwork toward accomplishing a common goal, (3) increase self-esteem, (4) develop respect for other people's opinions, and (5) practice life skills from interacting within groups of students.

Cooperative groups should follow definite guidelines. These should be explained by the teacher, then role-played by one sample group to model behaviors for the rest of the class. Guidelines should also be displayed on a chart in the classroom listing:

- (a) Stay on the topic, (b) Respect others' beliefs and points of view by not interrupting or arguing, (c) Make an effort to understand both the for and against sides of an issue, and (d) Allow all members of the group a chance to share and participate.

Each group should have a designated **leader** who focuses members on the task and includes input from each member, a **recorder** who writes down the group's ideas about the topic, a **presenter** who shares the group's recorded ideas and decisions, and a **timekeeper** to remind the group when time is almost up.

Source: ReadWriteThink, Copyright IRA/NCTE. ReadWriteThink materials may be reproduced for educational purposes.

Group Discussion Prompts for a narrative nonfiction book might be:

- What was the author's purpose for using a flashback in the opening chapter of the book? Why was this important for the rest of the book?
- Compare and contrast two characters using evidence from the book to support your choices.
- How is the book structured to make it in narrative nonfiction form? Why is the use of a sequence of scenes effective? Give an example from the book to support your answer.
- Identify and describe a problem that occurs in the book. What evidence supports the cause of the problem? How could you investigate possible solutions?
- How does a main character use past experiences to shape future actions?
- If you were the author, what might you change in this book and why?
- As you read the book, what connections did you make with feelings and events in your life?
- Name science facts learned from reading the book and ways you can use this information.
- What is a true experience in your life which you might tell about using fiction elements?

Group Investigation

The Texas Parks & Wildlife website allows the download of *Turtle Hurdles* from its magazine as part of Resources for Teachers and Students, Issue 10, June 2009. See www.tpwd.texas.gov.

Print the download. Each of the four pages contains illustrations and factual information about red-eared sliders, other water turtles, and tortoises. Give a page to each group to read, discuss, and respond to what is read, especially regarding difficulties faced by the turtles or tortoises. Have groups use their collaborative process and communicate their scientific findings to the class.

Interview with the Author, Martha Stoddard



Visit her website: www.mstoddardwrites.com

- What is your writing background?

Always interested in paper and pens and books, I started writing poetry when I was eight. Writing was my favorite subject throughout school. As a mostly visual learner, I liked to see a plan for a piece of writing before drafting it. In college classes, I would take notes about all of the needed research, then write an introduction and my proposition statement. Then I'd outline the piece and start writing.

I also valued opportunities to meet authors whose work I had read, including Marguerite Henry, Eve Bunting, Jack Prelutsky, Bill Martin, Jr., and John Erickson. As a teacher, I used many books in my instruction. I was a certified teacher trainer for a state writing project and discovered my own writing process. I passed this learning on to both students and colleagues.

- What strategies do you use to plan a piece of writing?

I believe that each of us is the sum of our life's experiences. I draw upon my own related to a topic and write my introduction. Then I outline the content of the body of the piece, usually using a graphic organizer, and write details about each part to use in drafting. I imagine what questions a reader would ask about my experience and my topic. I write each of the subtopics at the top of an index card. Since I write mostly nonfiction, I research my topic thoroughly—noting the information for each source to use for the bibliography. Then I use my cards. Under each subtopic, I write the facts I learned about it. Finally, I place the cards on a table and arrange them like an outline to use when I write a draft. This strategy matches my visual and kinesthetic learning styles.

- What do you believe is the important last step before a piece of writing is finished?

The most important last step before a children's book manuscript is finished is to read it out loud, listening for unclear passages, accuracy of order and facts, and ways to make it better. Parents appreciate this last step in choosing books to read aloud to their children.

Audience Feedback:

- Thank you for sending me a copy of your new book! It was outstanding...in fact, so outstanding that I wanted to look up information about turtles! A.R.
- I was so excited to get your book in the mail! I still have the turtle you gave me all those years ago! J.M

Online Resources for Educators and Parents

<https://readingrockets.org>

“Children’s Books and Authors”

“Video Interviews with Authors”

“For Teachers: Literacy in the Sciences”

“For Parents: When School is Closed: Learning at Home”

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/> ReadWriteThink materials may be reproduced for educational purposes.

“Internalization of Vocabulary Through the Use of a Word Map”

“Introducing Ideas and Vocabulary with the Concept Sort”

“Shared Writing – ReadWriteThink”

“Acquiring New Vocabulary Through Book Discussion Groups”

“Group Work Rubrics and Checklists”

“Textmasters: Shaking Up Textbook Reading in Science Classrooms”

“Sample Collaborative Reasoning Participation Guidelines and Conversational Moves”

“Cooperative Group Role Cards”

<https://www.creativenonfiction.org/online-reading/what-creative-nonfiction>

“What is Creative Nonfiction?”

<https://www.k5learning.com/vocabulary-worksheets/fifth-grade-5>

“Fifth Grade Vocabulary Worksheets”

“Jumbled Words”

www.nea.org/tools/lessons/spelling-and-vocabulary-6-8.html

“Spelling and Vocabulary, Grades 6–8” by Phil Nast

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red-eared_slider#Taxonomy

“Red-eared slider” http://www.issg.org/database/species/reference_files/ausriskassessments/trascr.pdf

<https://www.freespirit.com/files/original/Differentiating-Instruction-Regular-Classroom-preview-1.pdf>

Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom: How to Reach and Teach All Learners, Grades 3–12 by Diane Heacox, Ed.D., updated Copyright © 2014. Permission given for use in education. Free Spirit Publishing Inc., Minneapolis, MN.

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/education/resources/keep-texas-wild/turtle-hurdles>

Activities and Lesson Plans “Turtle Hurdles” Permission given to be printed at

<http://www.tpwmagazine.com/ktw/media/june-09-issue10.pdf>

<http://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/species/slider/>

TPWD Wildlife Fact Sheet/Red-eared Slider

<https://www.nextgenscience.org> Next Generation Science Standards/Common Core State Standards

“Supporting CCSS Literacy Anchor Standards and Relevant Portions of the Corresponding Standards for Science and Technical Subjects”

- “Science and Engineering Practice:
 - Asking Questions and Defining Problems
 - Planning and Carrying Out Investigations
 - Analyzing and Interpreting Data
 - Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions
 - Engaging in Argument from Evidence
 - Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information”