

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Astro the Alien

By Emily Sohn



A Beginning-to-Read Book

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- Reading
- Vocabulary
- Science

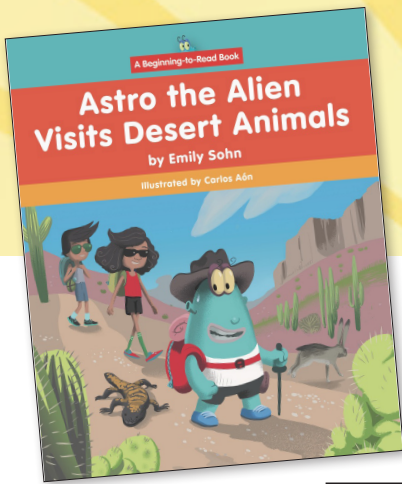
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Astro the Alien Visits Desert Animals

Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-59953-920-1

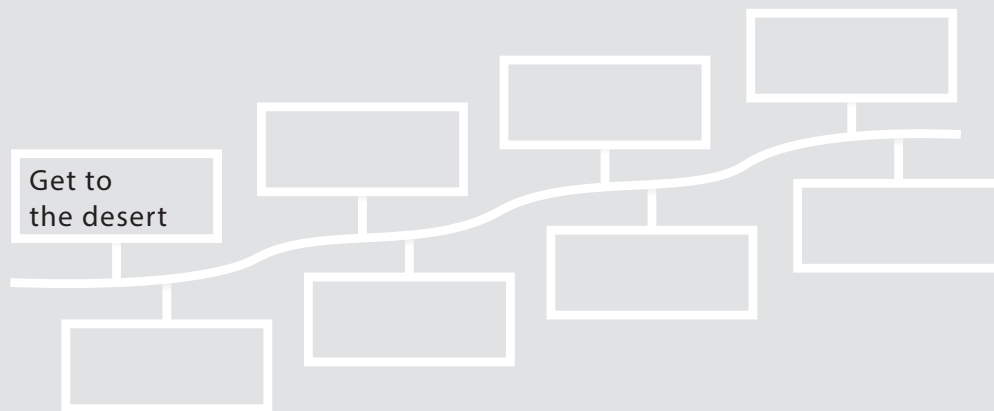
Paperback ISBN: 978-1-68404-185-5

READING REINFORCEMENT



Comprehension Strategy

To check your child's understanding of the book, recreate the following sequence of events diagram on a sheet of paper. After your child reads the book, ask him or her to fill in the rectangles with animals or events that the kids and Astro encountered as they hiked up a mountain in the desert. Try to fill in six things they saw or did during their day.



Vocabulary Lesson

Content words are words that are specific to a particular topic. All of the content words for this book can be found on page 32. Use some or all of these content words to complete one or more of the following activities:

- There are lots of animals in this book. Ask your child to group animal content words in two or three different ways.
- Have your child find content words that describe the environment in some way.
- Challenge your child to pick an animal from the book and draw it.
- Have your child identify words that are hard to spell. Can they write the words without looking at the book?
- Name a few characteristics that describe one of the content words. See if your child can guess the word.

Astro the Alien Visits Desert Animals



Close Reading

Close reading helps children comprehend text. It includes reading a text, discussing it with others, and answering questions about it. Use these questions to discuss this book with your child:

- Why does Ben say they should leave some of the animals alone?
- Astro is afraid of spiders. Are there any animals that make you feel scared?
- What do you think makes some animals afraid of people?
- Have your child look around the house or library for other books or magazines that show pictures of animals in this book.



Foundational Skills

Consonant blends are groups of two or three consonants that are blended together when pronounced, with each consonant being heard in the blend (for example, bl and nd as in blend). Have your child identify the words with consonant blends in the list below. Then help your child find words with consonant blends in this book:

pigs	spiders	dry	dung	desert
insects	bird	snorting	monster	river



Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read accurately with speed and expression. Help your child practice fluency by using one or more of the following activities:

- Reread this book to your child at least two times while he or she uses a finger to track each word as you read it.
- Read the first sentence aloud. Then have your child reread the sentence with you. Continue until you have finished this book.
- Ask your child to read aloud the words they know on each page of this book. (Your child will learn additional words with subsequent readings.)
- Have your child practice reading this book several times to improve accuracy, rate, and expression.

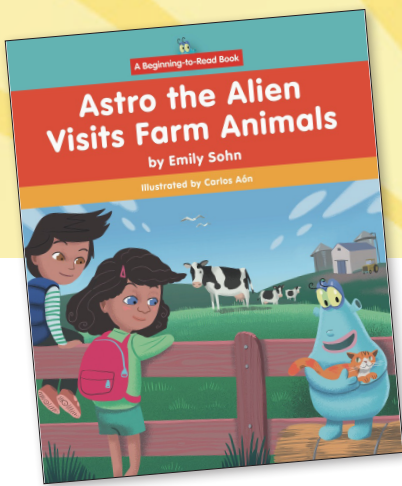
Astro the Alien Visits Desert Animals

WORD LIST

Astro the Alien uses the 135 words listed below. The words bolded below serve as an introduction to new vocabulary, while the unbolded words are more familiar or frequently used. You may wish to write the words on index cards and use them to help your child build automatic word recognition. Regular practice with these words will enhance your child's fluency in reading connected text.

a	cactus	fast	I	many	rain(s)	stay	warm
afraid	camping	floods	I'd	might	raining	stopped	was
alone	can	for	if	monster	rattles	sun	watch
am	come	found	in	morning	rattlesnake		we
an	cottontail	from	insect(s)	mule	ready	tarantula	when
and	coyote	fun	is		real	that	will
animals			it('s)	nest	rising	the	with
are	dark	get(ting)	its	night	river	them	worry
asked	dawn	Gila		no	roadrunner	there	wren
Astro	deer	go	jackrabbit	not		they	
at	desert	good			safe	this	you
	did		leave	of	said	to	
beetles	does	had	like	oh	saw	toad	
Ben	don't	hear(d)	live	out	scared	today	
bird	dry	here	lizard	over	see(ing)	too	
bite	dung	high	look	owl	should	tortoise	
bobcat	dusk	hot	lot		so		
builds		hunt	loud	packrat	some	up	
but	Eva	hurt		phew	something		
butterfly	even			play	sometimes		
	exciting			pretty	spider(s)		





Astro the Alien Visits Farm Animals

Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-59953-918-8

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READING REINFORCEMENT



Comprehension Strategy

To check your child's understanding of the book, ask your child to draw a map of the farm on a piece of paper after he or she reads the book. There is not one correct answer for what the map should look like. But your child should clearly label all the places the characters go in the story: barn, hen house, Lila's farm, etc.

Hen House



Lila's Farm



Barn



Vocabulary Lesson

Content words are words that are specific to a particular topic. All of the content words for this book can be found on page 32. Use some or all of these content words to complete one or more of the following activities:

- Ask your child to make a list of content words that are related to farms or farm animals.
- Have your child find content words that refer to the sounds that animals make.
- Piglet is a word for a baby pig. Have your child find other content words about animals and ask them what the babies of those animals are called.
- Challenge your child to count all the content words in the book that name animals.
- Have your child find content words that refer to foods or products that come from animals.

Astro the Alien Visits Farm Animals



Close Reading

Close reading helps children comprehend text. It includes reading a text, discussing it with others, and answering questions about it. Use these questions to discuss this book with your child:

- What do animals that live on farms share in common?
- Astro asks about zebras, but Eva says that zebras don't live on farms. Why not?
- What are some jobs the animals in this book do on the farm?
- Have your child find two or three examples in the book where Astro says something funny. Why is it funny?
- Where did Astro and the kids find the piglet? Why do you think it went there? How do the kids feel about finding the piglet?



Foundational Skills

Some verbs end in “-ing” when the story is in the middle of the action. Have your child identify the verbs that end with “-ing” below. Then help your child find “-ing” words in this book.

eating	running	go	found	missing
make	grow	milking	going	catch



Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read accurately with speed and expression. Help your child practice fluency by using one or more of the following activities:

- Reread this book to your child at least two times while he or she uses a finger to track each word as you read it.
- Read the first sentence aloud. Then have your child reread the sentence with you. Continue until you have finished this book.
- Ask your child to read aloud the words they know on each page of this book. (Your child will learn additional words with subsequent readings.)
- Have your child practice reading this book several times to improve accuracy, rate, and expression.

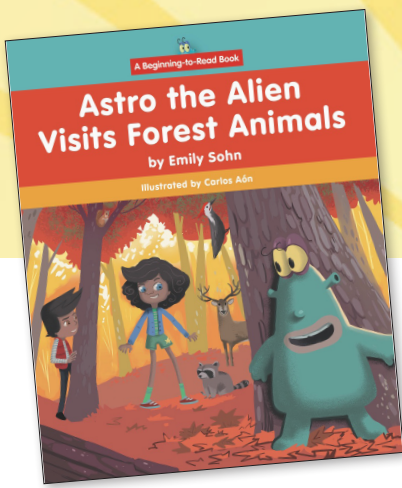
Astro the Alien Visits Farm Animals

WORD LIST

Astro the Alien uses the 141 words listed below. The words bolded below serve as an introduction to new vocabulary, while the unbolded words are more familiar or frequently used. You may wish to write the words on index cards and use them to help your child build automatic word recognition. Regular practice with these words will enhance your child's fluency in reading connected text.

a	chase(d)	give	house	mice	pod	take	we
all	cheese	glad	hungry	milk	pond	thank	wear
am	chickens	go		missing		that	were
and	come	goats	I	mom	raises	the	what
animals	cookie(s)	good	in	my	ran	them	where
any	cows	Grandma	is		real	there	who
are	creamy	Grandpa	it	neighbor	ride	they	will
arrived		grandparents		no	rode	this	with
asked	did	grow	keeps	not		time	wool
Astro	do		kids		safe	to	work
at	don't	happy		of	said	too	would
away		has	let's	oink	see(ing)	try	
	Eva	have	like(d)	on	she	two	yes
Ben		help	Lila('s)	or	shed		you
but	farm(s)	hen	live	other	sheep('s)	up	your
	field	her	look(s)	our	some	us	
came	fish(ing)	here			soon		zebra(s)
can	for	hi	make	people	space	vegetables	
carry	found	home	maybe	piglet	stuff		
cat(s)	fruits	horse	me	playing	sweater	warm	
catch	fur		meat			way	





Astro the Alien Visits Forest Animals

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Paperback ISBN: 978-1-68404-184-8

READING REINFORCEMENT



Comprehension Strategy

To check your child's understanding of the book, recreate the following cause and effect diagram on a sheet of paper. After your child reads the book, ask him or her to fill in the empty boxes with the cause or effect that is missing.

CAUSE	EFFECT
Astro, Ben, and Eva want to play hide-and-seek.	
	Eva runs away from the skunk.
Astro and Ben want to be harder for Eva to find.	



Vocabulary Lesson

Content words are words that are specific to a particular topic. All of the content words for this book can be found on page 32. Use some or all of these content words to complete one or more of the following activities:

- Ask your child to find content words that refer to foods animals eat.
- Have your child pick out content words for animals they would or would not like to get close to.
- Challenge your child to find content words that are categories for kinds of animals.
- Use content words to describe an animal. Have your child name the animal and imitate it. Switch roles.
- Pick 10 content words and write each word or draw a picture of it on two pieces of paper. Turn the 20 pieces of paper upside down and place them in a grid. Turning just two over at a time, see if you can use your memory to match all 10 words as fast as possible.

Astro the Alien Visits Forest Animals



Close Reading

Close reading helps children comprehend text. It includes reading a text, discussing it with others, and answering questions about it. Use these questions to discuss this book with your child:

- Do you think it would be fun to play hide-and-seek in a forest? Why or why not?
- Why didn't Eva want to upset the skunk?
- Have you ever been to a forest or seen one on TV? What kinds of animals did you see there?
- How can you tell the difference between a male and a female deer?
- Play a game of hide-and-seek. Each round, have every player who is hiding pretend to be one of the animals in the book. Can you find them all?



Foundational Skills

A pronoun replaces a noun in a sentence. Have your child identify the words that are pronouns in the list below. Then help your child find pronouns in this book.

she	a	bear	he	and	I
Astro	it	close	slug	are	they



Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read accurately with speed and expression. Help your child practice fluency by using one or more of the following activities:

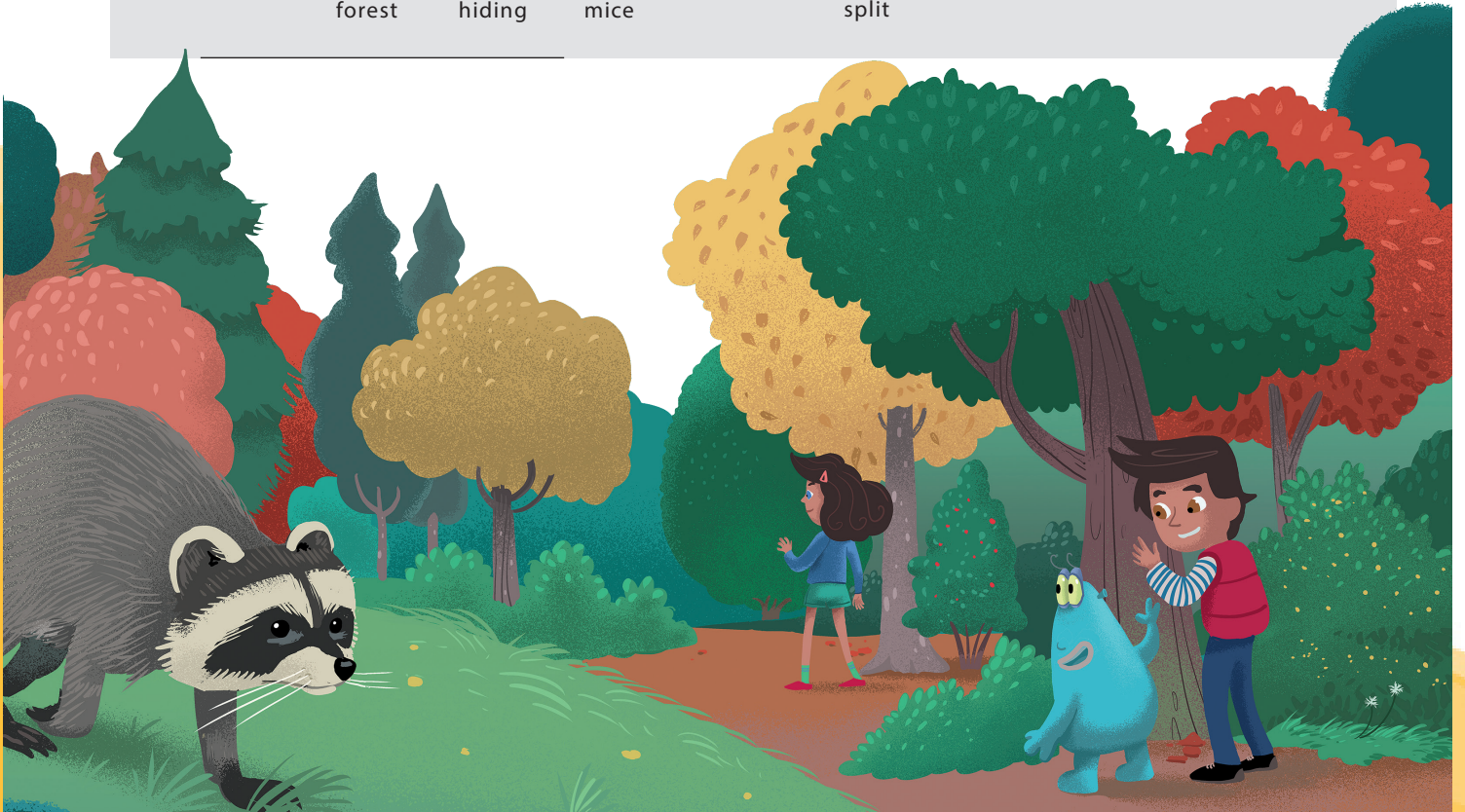
- Reread this book to your child at least two times while he or she uses a finger to track each word as you read it.
- Read the first sentence aloud. Then have your child reread the sentence with you. Continue until you have finished this book.
- Ask your child to read aloud the words they know on each page of this book. (Your child will learn additional words with subsequent readings.)
- Have your child practice reading this book several times to improve accuracy, rate, and expression.

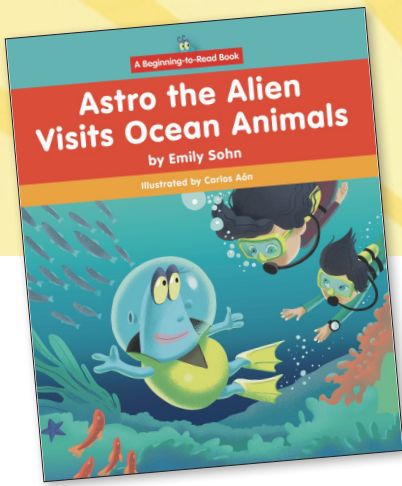
Astro the Alien Visits Forest Animals

WORD LIST

Astro the Alien uses the 145 words listed below. The words **bolded** below serve as an introduction to new vocabulary, while the unbolded words are more familiar or frequently used. You may wish to write the words on index cards and use them to help your child build automatic word recognition. Regular practice with these words will enhance your child's fluency in reading connected text.

a	can	found	him	might	raccoon	sprayed	underground
and	climbers	fox	holes	move	ready	squirrels	up
animals	close	from	home	must	rodents	stay	usually
antlers	come	fun	hope	my		stinky	
are	could		hunts		said		wake
asked		get		never	saw	that	want
Astro	day	go(ing)	I	night	see	the	way
at	deer	good	I'll	no	she	there	we
	digs	got	if	noise	should	they	where
badger	do		in	not	skunk	things	will
be	doe	had	is		sleeps	think	wonder
bear	drill	harder	it	of	slimy	this	wood
bed	during	has		off	slithery	those	woodpecker
Ben		have	landed	one	slug	three	would
black	eat	he	let's	or	snake	to	
buck	else	heard	looks	out	some	today	yes
bugs	Eva	hearing	lot	owl	something	too	yet
busy		hears			somewhere	took	you
but	far	here	me	play	soon	trees	
	find(ing)	hide	meet	pod	space	two	
	forest	hiding	mice		splitted		





Astro the Alien Visits Ocean Animals

Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-59953-916-4

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-68404-181-7

READING REINFORCEMENT



Comprehension Strategy

To check your child's understanding of the book, recreate the following main ideas and details diagram on a sheet of paper. After your child reads the book, ask him or her to connect parts of the ocean with animals that live there. There may be more than one answer for each habitat zone.

Part of the Ocean

Animal



Vocabulary Lesson

Content words are words that are specific to a particular topic. All of the content words for this book can be found on page 32. Use some or all of these content words to complete one or more of the following activities:

- Ask your child to make a list of content words that relate to water. Which of these words would be different if the book were about a lake or pond?
- Have your child find words that show an animal in action. Can he or she act out those words?
- Ask your child to look for words that describe animals. What other types of animals in the world could be described with those words?
- Challenge your child to find phrases that are comparisons. Can he or she come up with comparisons for objects you see around you?
- Have your child think about a real or imaginary day at the beach. What animals did he or she see? What animals would he or she like to see on a future trip?

Astro the Alien Visits Ocean Animals



Close Reading

Close reading helps children comprehend text. It includes reading a text, discussing it with others, and answering questions about it. Use these questions to discuss this book with your child:

- Eva says the ocean is very deep. Much of it has never been explored. Would you rather explore outer space or the deep sea?
- Why do you think Astro might be surprised when he tastes the ocean water for the first time?
- Ben points out that dolphins are mammals. What makes them different from other mammals that you know about?
- What do you think it would be like to see a giant squid or blue whale up close? How would you feel?



Foundational Skills

An adjective is a word that describes a noun. Have your child identify the words that are adjectives in the list below. Then help your child find adjectives in this book.

star	heart	shallow	animal	water
Earth	giant	white	salty	deep



Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read accurately with speed and expression. Help your child practice fluency by using one or more of the following activities:

- Reread this book to your child at least two times while he or she uses a finger to track each word as you read it.
- Read the first sentence aloud. Then have your child reread the sentence with you. Continue until you have finished this book.
- Ask your child to read aloud the words they know on each page of this book. (Your child will learn additional words with subsequent readings.)
- Have your child practice reading this book several times to improve accuracy, rate, and expression.

Astro the Alien Visits Ocean Animals

WORD LIST

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a	can	found	him	might	raccoon	sprayed	underground
and	climbers	fox	holes	move	ready	squirrels	up
animals	close	from	home	must	rodents	stay	usually
antlers	come	fun	hope	my		stinky	
are	could		hunts		said		wake
asked		get		never	saw	that	want
Astro	day	go(ing)	I	night	see	the	way
at	deer	good	I'll	no	she	there	we
	digs	got	if	noise	should	they	where
badger	do		in	not	skunk	things	will
be	doe	had	is		sleeps	think	wonder
bear	drill	harder	it	of	slimy	this	wood
bed	during	has		off	slithery	those	woodpecker
Ben		have	landed	one	slug	three	would
black	eat	he	let's	or	snake	to	
buck	else	heard	looks	out	some	today	yes
bugs	Eva	hearing	lot	owl	something	too	yet
busy		hears			somewhere	took	you
but	far	here	me	play	soon	trees	
	find(ing)	hide	meet	pod	space	two	
	forest	hiding	mice		split		





Astro the Alien Visits Polar Animals

Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-59953-915-7

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-68404-180-0

READING REINFORCEMENT



Comprehension Strategy

To check your child's understanding of the book, recreate the following main ideas and details diagram on a sheet of paper. After your child reads the book, ask him or her to fill in the circles in the inner ring with names of polar animals. In the outer circles, write a fact about each animal from the illustrations or the text.



Vocabulary Lesson

Content words are words that are specific to a particular topic. All of the content words for this book can be found on page 32. Use some or all of these content words to complete one or more of the following activities:

- Ask your child to sort the content words into three or four categories of their own choosing. Then have him or her explain what the words in each category have in common.
- Act out one of the animal content words. Challenge your child to guess what animal you are. Switch roles.
- Ask your child to pair animal words with adjectives that describe each animal.
- Have your child find three active verbs, like "fix" or "breathe." What character or animal is doing the action?
- Challenge your child to find pictures in magazines or books that remind him or her of three content words. Discuss the similarities and differences between the word in this book and the pictures they choose.

Astro the Alien Visits Polar Animals



Close Reading

Close reading helps children comprehend text. It includes reading a text, discussing it with others, and answering questions about it. Use these questions to discuss this book with your child:

- Why do Eva, Ben, and Astro put on mittens and coats on their way to the Arctic?
- Imagine if it never got dark for a week where you live. What would you do differently?
- Which polar animals would you most like to see up close?
- How did Eva and Ben feel about the polar bear? What did Astro think?
- Would you like to go to the Arctic? Why or why not?



Foundational Skills

A noun is a person, a place, or a thing. Have your child identify the words that are nouns in the list below. Then help your child find nouns in this book.

friends	polar bear	stopped	flew	water
live	tusks	white	buttons	Arctic



Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read accurately with speed and expression. Help your child practice fluency by using one or more of the following activities:

- Reread this book to your child at least two times while he or she uses a finger to track each word as you read it.
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Astro the Alien Visits Polar Animals

WORD LIST

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a	big	fix	in	morning	said	to
again	breathe	flew	is	move	see	too
air	but	for	it		seeing	tusks
also	buttons	friends	its	nervous	she	
an		fun		no	soon	up
and	called	fur	jump	not	space	
animals	can				still	very
any	changed	get	kids	oceans	stopped	
Arctic	changing	go	killer	of	summer	wake
are	claws	gone		oh	sun	walrus(es)
around	coats	good	land	on		was
arrived	cold	got	let's	orca(s)	teeth	water
asked			liked	other	that	we
Astro	day(s)	hare	live	over	the	whale(s)
at	dig	have	long		there	what
	do	he	look	paws	they	white
beach		help(s)	lot	pod	this	why
bear(s)	Eva	hide		polar	those	will
began	even		mittens	pushed	though	world
beluga		I	more	put	through	
Ben		I'll			time	yes





Astro the Alien Visits Pond Animals

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READING REINFORCEMENT



Comprehension Strategy

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Part of the Ocean

Animal



Vocabulary Lesson

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Astro the Alien Visits Pond Animals



Close Reading

Close reading helps children comprehend text. It includes reading a text, discussing it with others, and answering questions about it. Use these questions to discuss this book with your child:

- Astro and the kids spend much of this book looking for a frog. Why are they looking for it?
- What kinds of animals do they discover when they are searching?
- What kinds of clues do they find along the way?
- Where did you think they were going to find the frog? Did you think they would find it at all?
- What do you think will happen to the frog after the kids and Astro go home?



Foundational Skills

A question word is a way to start a question. Have your child identify the words that start questions in the list below. Then help your child find question words in this book. Some might surprise you!

where	the	why	how	was
it	what	that	some	is



Fluency

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- Reread this book to your child at least two times while he or she uses a finger to track each word as you read it.
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Astro the Alien Visits Pond Animals

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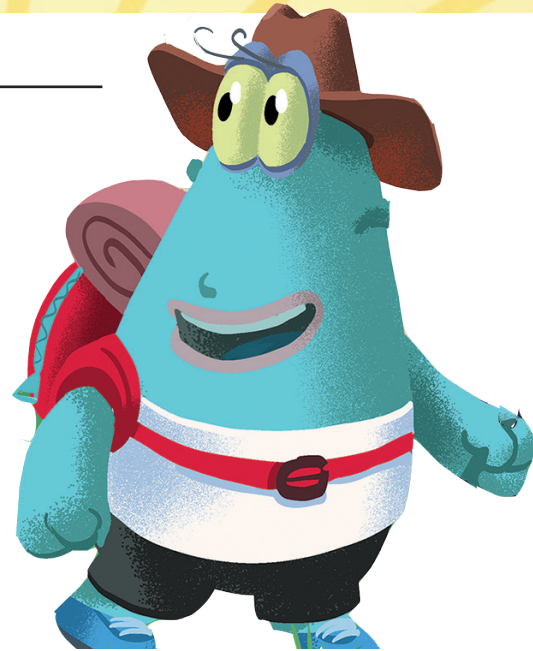
a	big	fix	in	morning	said	to
again	breathe	flew	is	move	see	too
air	but	for	it		seeing	tusks
also	buttons	friends	its	nervous	she	
an		fun		no	soon	up
and	called	fur	jump	not	space	
animals	can				still	very
any	changed	get	kids	oceans	stopped	
Arctic	changing	go	killer	of	summer	wake
are	claws	gone		oh	sun	walrus(es)
around	coats	good	land	on		was
arrived	cold	got	let's	orca(s)	teeth	water
asked			liked	other	that	we
Astro	day(s)	hare	live	over	the	whale(s)
at	dig	have	long		there	what
	do	he	look	paws	they	white
beach		help(s)	lot	pod	this	why
bear(s)	Eva	hide		polar	those	will
began	even		mittens	pushed	though	world
beluga		I	more	put	through	
Ben		I'll			time	yes



Astro the Alien

ABOUT THE SERIES

Meet Astro the Alien! Astro landed on earth and now lives in Ben and Eva's backyard in a space pod. Together they take fun trips so that Astro can learn more about the world he now lives in! Written at a slightly higher level than the introductory *Dear Dragon* series, *Astro the Alien* books help early readers build on previous skills; expanding vocabulary and learning more complex concepts. Readers will have fun as they go along on adventures with Astro, Ben and Eva to learn interesting things about science, geography and history!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Emily Sohn is an award-winning journalist in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She writes for many magazines and newspapers and has written dozens of graphic novels and other books for kids. She started her career as the science writer on an expedition team that produced interactive, educational content for a website that was viewed by hundreds of thousands of students in classrooms around the world. She is also the author of the *iScience* series books.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Carlos Aón was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He studied in a comic book art academy for four years. In 2000, he graduated as a graphic designer. Aón's work appears in dozens of graphic novels, story books, and educational projects in the United States, Argentina, Europe, and Asia.

SUGGESTED TITLES

Astro the Alien is for readers who have graduated from the *Dear Dragon* series. For lower level readers check out these *Dear Dragon* titles!



INFORMATION:

Interest level: Grade 1-2 Size: 6.25" x 7.75" Pages: 32 Dewey: E
F&P: 1.25-2.0 | AR: I | Lexile: 360L
Available in Hardcover, Paperback, and Ebook.