



# Odd fish countdown

Verity Croker

## Focus phonics

ee written as y as in body, thorny, jelly, only, baby, oddly, sticky, quickly

oi written as oy as in annoyed

## Tricky words

anything, many, people, school, their, there, two, wants, where

## Book summary

This book counts down from 10 to 1 to find the oddest fish there are. We look at where they live, what they eat, what they look like, that they do and some odd facts about each one.

## Learning intention

**Phonics:** To decode words with the phonemes /ee/ spelt y; and /oi/ spelt oy that feature in the text and extend to other known words with the same phonemes. Also mention adjacent consonants when appropriate, e.g. sticky, /s/ /t/ /i/ /k/ /ee/, sticky.

## Comprehension:

- Retrieve and record information/key details from the text
- Explain the meaning of words in context
- Summarise main ideas
- Make predictions
- Ask questions

## Fluency:

- Read at a natural speaking pace with minimal sounding out
- Read with appropriate emphasis and intonation to support the meaning of the text

## Before reading

**Story discussion:** Look at and discuss the cover and read the title together. Ask: What do you think the title means? (odd means different. The text counts down 10 fish in order of how odd they are) Is this a fiction or non-fiction text and why? (non-fiction because these fish are real, the text has real facts, and it is illustrated with photos) Ask: Why would odd fish be a good topic to write a book about? Why are fish important? What do you know about fish? Discuss the photo on the cover. Ask: What is odd about this fish? Compare this with the title page photo. Ask: What is odd about this fish? There are 10 odd fish in this book, what do you think some of them might be? Record the predictions to return to later. Ask: Who is the author? (Verity Croker) What would Verity have needed to know before writing this book? Have you read any other books by Verity? What are the titles? (in Reading Road, Verity has written Ticking-clock quicksand, Go, Eve, go!) Read and discuss the back cover blurb. Flip through the book to get a sense of the contents.

**Quick phonics warm-up:** Read the words on the inside front cover together, with the focus phonemes of /ee/ and /oi/. Flip through the text to find and read words with the focus phonemes of /ee/ and /oi/.

**Vocabulary check:**

blunt p 4 not sharp, rounded

scales p 7 the skin of a fish which are thin layered plates

**Morphology:** suffix -est means "most" when added to a short adjective or adverb. "Oddest" means the most odd, which is the superlative of odd.

**Etymology:** mimic p 18 imitate closely – late 16th century (as noun and adjective): via Latin from Greek mimikos, from mimos "mime".

**Tricky word practice:** Display the tricky words *people* and *two*. Ask: What are the tricky parts of these words?

people – the tricky part is eo which says /ee/ and le which says /l/.

two – the tricky part is wo which says /oo/ as in moon.

Practise reading and spelling these tricky words.

## During reading

**Read the story:** This book may not fit into a single reading session. The end of p 15 is a good point to break the reading. Students can finish the book in a second group session or for homework.

Reading could follow one or more of the following approaches:

- Start by reading the text with students, then invite them to take over the reading. On p 3, ask: What is odd about Triggerfish? What does toxic mean? (poisonous) On p 5, what can you say about Horn Sharks' teeth? (if one falls out, another grows back in 4 weeks) What is odd about their snout? (wide and blunt)
- Students read silently at their own pace; listen to each student in turn as they read a brief passage.
- Divide the book up between students; they read a section each and then report back on it, summarising main ideas.

**Phonics support:** Remind students to sound out and blend the letters as necessary to read any unfamiliar words, but encourage them to read words with familiar letters and sounds fluently on sight if they can, without sounding out. If students get stuck on a word, model how to sound out and blend the sounds in the word. Encourage students to help each other with sounding out and blending and praise good use of this strategy especially with words containing the focus phonemes /ee/ written as y and /oi/ written as oy. Locate words in the text that have these phonemes. Blend and decode them aloud.

**Comprehension support:** Pause occasionally to talk about the text and encourage students to look for the main ideas. On p 7, skim the text about Thornback Cowfish. Read it together. What is the main idea here? (they look odd – they have spines, their lips stick out, they are box shaped, they can blend into the background) Pause at the end of p 9. What's another fact you now know about this odd fish? (they are poisonous to other fish)

## After reading

**Apply learning:** Discuss the text. What have you learned about odd fish? What are the main ways that fish are odd? (e.g. where they live, what they look like?) Do you agree with the author's opinion of what is the number one oddest fish? If not, which did you think was the oddest fish?

**Comprehension:** Return to the predictions and discuss if they were correct or how the text differed. Were there any surprises? Did students know any other odd fish? Encourage students to retell parts of the text. Read and discuss the questions on the inside back cover. Which odd fish is on the cover (Jawfish) and which one is on the title page (Clown Frogfish)? Can students find them in the book? Ask: What is odd about Catfish? (have whiskers and no scales)

How many syllables are in the words Triggerfish, seaweed, and reefs? Clap and say the syllables. Trig/ger/fish (3); sea/weed (2); reefs (1). Find and list words from the text with 1, 2 or 3+ syllables. Practise clapping and saying them.

Say the title, Odd fish countdown. What do you notice about the word *countdown*? (It has 2 spellings of the same sound /ow/ – ow and ou.) Look for other words in the text and in other books with the /ow/ phoneme written as ou, e.g. mouth p 6, found p 13. See who can find the most.

Find and list compound words in the text that have the word *fish* or *sea* in them, e.g. seabed, jawfish. Read them. Clap and say the syllables.

In pairs, students ask questions about the different odd fish. They give the page number for their partner to find the answer. This could be made into a class quiz for fun fact finding.

**Fluency:** Choose a passage from the book and model how to read it fluently with appropriate emphasis and intonation to support the meaning of the text. Students read the same passage, copying your reading. (echo-reading) Students choose another brief passage and read it with expression to their partner, then swap over. Choral-read part of the text together to build fluency and self-confidence. Students practise speed-reading the focus words from the inside front cover to encourage automatic recall (words that can be recalled automatically have been orthographically mapped to students' long-term memory).

**Spelling and writing through dictation:** Read out the following passage for students to write. It uses words and sentences from the text as these are decodable. The focus is on encoding (spelling) rather than creating content.

(pages 4-5)

Horn Shark

Horn Sharks have a wide, blunt snout. They have two fins with sharp spines on their back. They have dark spots on their body.

Where are they found?

They are found in seaweed and reefs near to shore. Some can be found in deep sea caves.

Dinner time

They can smell well, which helps them hunt at night. They crush small fish and shellfish with their strong teeth.

What do they do?

In the daytime, Horn Sharks hide in caves and seaweed. Their fins help them crawl on the seabed. If they are annoyed, Horn Sharks will bite.

Odd fact file

Horn Sharks can get up to 50 years old. If a tooth falls out, one grows back in 4 weeks.

## Follow-up activities

Students complete the follow-up activities:

### **Worksheet 1: Phonics**

/ee/ spelt y. /oi/ spelt oy.

Suffixes.

### **Worksheet 2: Comprehension**

Answer questions about the text.

Fill in a "same and different" diagram.

Write a fact.

### **Worksheet 3: Science – The Living World**

Plan and write a fish report.

### **Worksheet 4: Maths**

Answer fish fact maths questions.

Create a bar chart to show fish habitats.