

For students reading at **Literacy Level E/8**, including:

- English-language learners
- Students reading below grade level
- Kindergarten and first grade emergent readers

Objectives at a Glance

COMPREHENSION

Students will:

- Identify characters and setting
- Make predictions
- Monitor their reading by making connections
- Utilize text and graphic features
- Summarize the story
- Answer text-dependent questions
- Respond to the book

GENRE STUDY

Students will:

- Recognize the characteristics of realistic fiction
- Determine the story's message

VOCABULARY

Students will:

- Recognize high-frequency words
- Develop robust (Tier Two) oral vocabulary
- Develop academic content (Tier Three) vocabulary

LANGUAGE

Students will:

- Recognize the sentence structures *He saw a _____ and That _____ is _____*
- Identify regular past tense verbs

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Students will:

- Listen for initial /b/

PHONICS

Students will:

- Use middle-letter cues to solve words
- Recognize initial "b" in words

FLUENCY

Students will:

- Read with appropriate stress or emphasis

WRITING

Students will:

- Write to a picture prompt

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Explorers™

TEACHER'S GUIDE

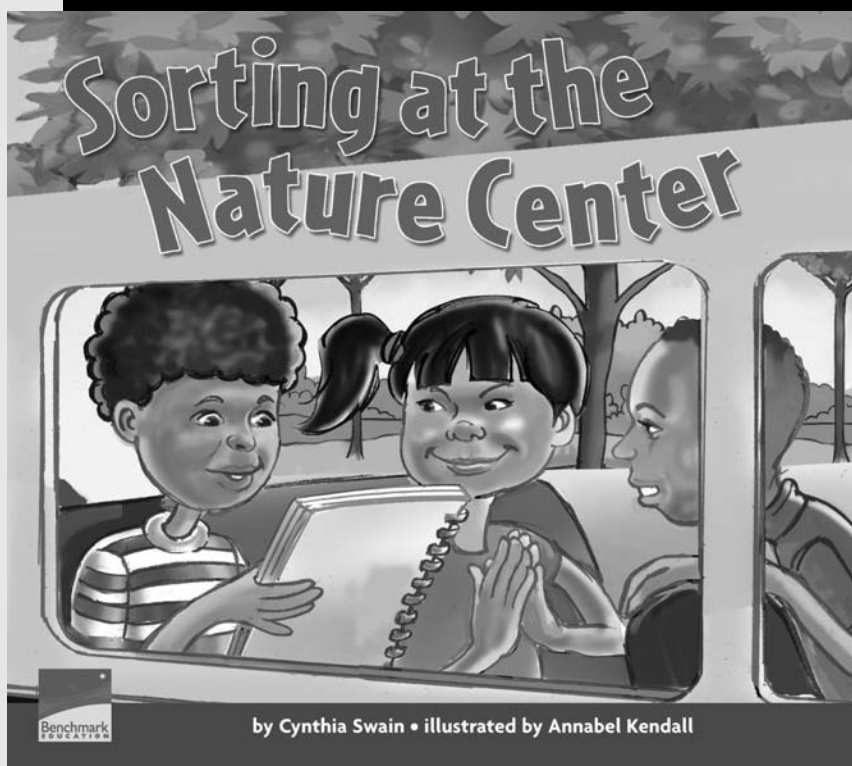
Sorting at the Nature Center

THEME: Sort and Classify

- Sorting at the Park (Level C/4)
- Can We Have a Pet? (Level C/4)
- You Can Sort Boats (Level E/8)
- **Sorting at the Nature Center (Level E/8)**

GENRE/SUMMARY:

In this realistic fiction story, Amir makes a plant/animal chart on a school field trip to the nature center.



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BENCHMARK EDUCATION COMPANY

Related Resources

The following Benchmark Education Company resources support the skills and strategies taught in this lesson.

Early Explorers Partner

- *You Can Sort Boats* (Nonfiction, Level E/8)

Emergent Comprehension Strategy Poster

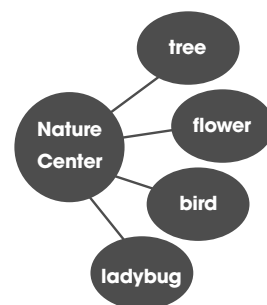
- Make Predictions

Text-Dependent Comprehension Resources

- *Sorting at the Nature Center* Comprehension Question Card
- Power Tool Flip Chart for Teachers
- Student Bookmark

Assessment

- *Early Explorers Overview & Assessment Handbook*
- *Grade K or 1 Comprehension Strategy Assessment Book*



Introduce the Book

- **Preview Cover and Title Page** Give each student a copy of the book. Point to the front. **Say:** *This story is about a class trip to a nature center.* Read the title and author and ask students to echo-read. Invite them to tell what they see in the illustration. **Say:** *This is the book's cover.* Repeat the process with the title page. **Say:** *The cover and title page get us ready to read the book.* Using the think-aloud strategy, model how to make predictions about the book based on the cover and title page information: *The title mentions sorting at the nature center. The boy has a notebook that says "Plants" and "Animals." I think the boy will sort plants and animals at the nature center.* Allow time for students to share their own predictions about the story.

- **Introduce Characters and Setting** **Say:** *The people in the story are called characters.* Ask students to turn to pages 2 and 3 and point to each character as you read the matching name. Repeat the process, inviting students to echo-read. Then **say:** *The setting is where the story takes place. What is the setting of the story?* Help students use the illustrations to determine that the story takes place outdoors at a nature center.

- **Preview Illustrations and Vocabulary** Revisit the illustrations on the cover and title page. **Say:** *The pictures in fiction books are called illustrations. Illustrations help us understand the words in the book.* Take students on a picture walk, emphasizing the words **sort, plants, animals, chart, notebook, path, and pond** as you talk about the illustrations and what is happening in the story. Make sure students can pronounce each vocabulary word.

Make Connections and Build Background

- **Use Art** Give each student a pencil and paper. **Say:** *We will read a book called *Sorting at the Nature Center*. The boy in the story goes to a nature center with his class. The kids see many plants and animals. I will draw something I might see at a nature center.* Sketch a simple drawing of a tree. Show your drawing to the group and name the plant you drew. Then invite each student to sketch a picture of a plant or animal they might see at a nature center.
- **Use a Graphic Organizer** Draw a circle on the board and write **Nature Center** in the middle. Read the phrase. **Say:** *You drew plants and animals you might see at a nature center. What plants and animals did you draw?* As students respond, create a concept web about nature centers. Then read each word and ask students to echo-read.

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- **Locate High-Frequency Words to Monitor Meaning** Ask students to turn to page 6 and locate the word **some**. Ask them to frame the word and check it by running their finger under the word in a left-to-right motion. Then ask students to locate the word **some** on pages 8 and 10. **Say:** *Some is an important word. Use the word **some** to help you while you read.*
- **Preview Sentence Structure** For students who need additional support, write *He saw a _____* on the board. Read the sentence structure aloud and ask students to repeat it several times. **Say:** *The words "He saw a" are in the book. Page 12 has a sentence with the words "He saw a".* Model how to frame the sentence between two fingers. Then read the sentence aloud and ask students to echo-read. **Ask:** *Can you frame another sentence with the words "He saw a" on page 12?* Assist as needed, and then read the sentences aloud and ask students to echo-read. Then repeat the process with *That _____ is _____* in two sentences on page 8.
- **Use Graphophonic Cues** **Say:** *Another word in this book is **bus**. Say the word **bus**. What letter do you expect to see in the middle?* (Allow time for students to respond, assisting as needed.) *Find the word **bus** on page 4.* Once students locate the word, repeat the process with **frog** on page 10. **Say:** *Use middle-letter sounds to help you when you read.*
- **Scaffold Spanish-Language Speakers** Say the word **class**. **Ask:** *Does **class** sound similar to a word you know in Spanish?* (Allow time for students to respond.) *The English word **class** sounds similar to the Spanish word **clase**. **Class** and **clase** mean the same thing. The words look similar, too.* Write the word **class** on the board and ask students to locate it on page 4 in the book. Repeat the process with **plant/planta** and **animal/animal** (page 8) and **rock/roca** (page 12). Then point out that the word **to** on page 4 sounds like the word **tu** in Spanish but does not mean the same thing. Finally, invite students with other first languages to share their cognates.

Set a Purpose for Reading

- Direct students' attention to the nature center web. **Say:** *Now it's time to whisper-read the book. Read to find out what the students see at the nature center.*

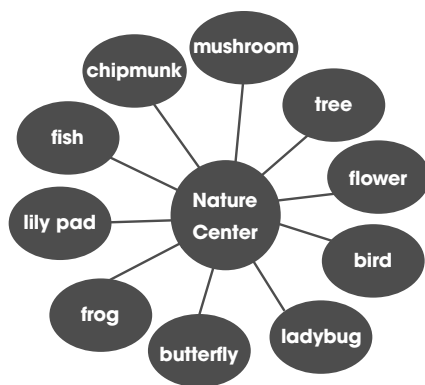
Observe and Prompt Reading Strategies

- After the supportive introduction, students should be able to read all or most of the book on their own. Observe students as they read. Take note of the graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic cues they use to make sense of the text and self-correct. Prompt individual students who have difficulty problem-solving independently, but be careful not to prompt English-language learners too quickly. They may need more time to process the text as they rely on their first language for comprehension.

Strategic Reading Prompts			
Cue Source	Prompt	Example	Page
Graphophonic	Look at the middle letter.	rock	12
Syntactic	Think about the sentence structure.	"That butterfly is an animal," said Amir.	8
Semantic	Check the picture.	lily pad	10

Use the Graphic Organizer to Summarize

- Ask students to think about their reading. **Ask:** *What did Amir see at the nature center? Look at our web. Do we need to add any more plants and animals? Add any new words from the book that students call out, and then choral-read the web. Ask students to use the graphic organizer to tell the story to a partner.*



Genre Study

- **Say:** *This story is realistic fiction. You could meet people like Amir, his teacher, and the class in real life. The things the characters do could really happen. What are some ways the story is realistic?* Guide students to mention story events such as going to a nature center, making a chart, and seeing plants and animals.
- **Say:** *Realistic fiction stories have themes. A theme is like a message from the author. I notice in *Sorting at the Nature Center*, Amir tries his best. How do we know Amir tries his best? (Amir finds many plants and animals to sort.) The theme for *Sorting at the Nature Center* could be “Try your best.” The author uses the characters to send readers a message. The author is telling us to try our best, too.*

Reading Strategy Mini-Lesson: Make Connections

- **Reflect** Ask students to think about the parts of the book that were hard for them to understand. **Ask:** *What did you do to help yourself understand what you read?*
- **Model Say:** *I want to make sure I understand what I read. One way is to connect the story characters, setting, and events to my own experiences. Page 4 makes me think of a connection. Read the page aloud, and then say: I rode a school bus with my class one time. We went to a tree farm. We sketched pictures of the different kinds of trees we saw. We had fun! Thinking about my trip to the tree farm helps me understand the story. Making this connection shows me how the kids in the story might feel.*
- **Guide** Ask students to turn to page 10. Read the page aloud together. **Ask:** *Have you ever been to a pond? Did you see frogs? Did you see fish? What else did you see?* Allow time for students to share their connections. Then invite them to tell how making connections helped them better understand page 10.
- **Apply** Ask students to read their favorite page to a partner and then make a connection to their own experiences. Observe students as they share their connections, providing assistance if needed. See the *Early Explorers Overview & Assessment Handbook* for an observation chart you can use to assess students' understanding of the **make connections** monitor-reading strategy. Then **say:** *You can make connections any time you read. Remember to make connections to help you understand.*

Answer Text-Dependent Questions

- **Explain** Remind students they can answer questions about books they have read. **Say:** *We answer different kinds of questions in different ways. I will help you learn how to answer each kind.* Tell students today they will practice answering *Take It Apart!* questions. **Say:** *The answer to a Take It Apart! question is not stated in the book. You must think like the author to figure out the answer.*

- **Model** Use the *Take It Apart!* question on the Comprehension Question Card. **Say:** *I will show you how I answer a Take It Apart! question. I will read the question to figure out what to do. The question says: The author showed the chart on page 16 to . . . The question asks me to figure out the author's purpose. I know because the question has the words **the author** and **to**. What other information do you think will help me? (Allow student responses.) Yes, I need to look at the **chart** on **page 16**. On page 6, we read that Amir made a chart. Amir looked for plants and animals and recorded them on his chart. I think the author wants to help the reader understand what Amir saw. I am thinking like the author. The answer makes sense.*

- **Guide** Ask students to answer the other questions on the Comprehension Question Card. Use the Power Tool Flip Chart and Student Bookmark to provide additional modeling as needed. Remind students to ask themselves: *What is the question asking? How can I find the answer? Does my answer make sense? How do I know?*

Build Comprehension: Make Predictions

- **Explain** Create an overhead transparency of the “Sorting at the Nature Center” graphic organizer on page 8 or draw it on the chalkboard. **Say:** *Before reading a story, we make predictions. We use the title and cover illustration to think about what might happen. Then we check our predictions. While we are reading, we make new predictions. We use what we have already read to guess what might happen next. We check these predictions, too. After we read, we still make predictions. We think about what might happen to the characters after the story is finished. Making predictions helps us stay connected to the story and enjoy it more.*

- **Model Say:** *Let's think about a prediction I might make before reading Sorting at the Nature Center. First I read the title. I know someone is going to a nature center. Then I look at the illustration on the cover. I see a boy with a notebook. Students use notebooks at school. Maybe the boy will go to a nature center with his class. I will write this prediction in the first box on the graphic organizer. I check the prediction by reading the story. I can mark **Yes** because the prediction comes true.*

- **Guide Say:** *Now let's think about a prediction in the middle of the story. What might someone predict about Amir's chart? (Allow time for students to respond, assisting if needed.) Some readers might think Amir will put more plants than animals on his chart. Readers know a nature center has many plants. Let's write this prediction in the second row of the graphic organizer. We check the prediction by reading the story. We cannot mark **Yes** because the prediction does not happen. Instead, we find out Amir puts more animals than plants on his chart. I will write about the animals in the **No** column.*

- **Apply** Ask students to work with a partner to make a prediction about what might happen after the story ends. Remind them that they will not be able to check this prediction. After each partnership shares, agree on how to word the entry on the graphic organizer. Finally, read the completed graphic organizer aloud and invite students to echo-read.

NAME _____ DATE _____	
Sorting at the Nature Center Make Predictions	
	Yes No
Before-reading prediction: A boy will go to a Nature Center with his class.	✓
Middle-story prediction: Amir will put more plants than animals on his chart.	Amir puts more animals than plants on his chart.
After-reading prediction: The class will share their charts when they get back to school.	

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Teacher Tip Use Benchmark Education Company's K–2 Emergent Comprehension Strategy Poster Set to provide additional instruction in making predictions. Use BEC's *Comprehension Strategy Assessment* books to assess students' ability to make predictions in other brief, grade-level texts.

Home Connection

- Give students the take-home version of *Sorting at the Nature Center* to read to family members. Encourage students to work with a friend or family member to make a chart of plants and animals they have seen. Invite them to bring their charts to share with the group.

Reader Response

Invite students to respond to the book in a way that is meaningful to them. Model and use think-alouds as needed to scaffold students before they try the activities on their own.

- Tell about a plant or animal Amir saw in the story. Start by saying *Amir saw a _____*.
- Draw a picture of an animal in the story. Then invite a partner to add a setting for the animal.
- Think about the theme of the story. Tell about a time you did your best.
- Act out the story with two partners.
- Write something you wished would have happened in the story.
- Write a question you would like to ask Amir.

Write to a Picture Prompt

- **Analyze Characters' Feelings** Tell students they will describe the feelings shown by a character in the story. Then they will write about the feelings. **Say:** *I like the pictures in this book. I like to look at the characters' faces to figure out their feelings. Look at page 5. I will describe the characters: All the students have smiles. I think the students are excited about their trip to the nature center. What do you notice about the students' faces? How would you describe the students' feelings? Allow time for students to respond. Ask: Which picture do you like best? How would you describe the character's feelings in that picture? Allow time for students to respond, prompting further if needed. Say: You have described a character's feelings in the picture you chose. Now write about the feelings. After you are finished, read your description to a partner.*

Phonemic Awareness: Listen for /b/

- Tell students you will read a sentence from *Sorting at the Nature Center*. Ask them to listen for words that begin with the **/b/** sound: "*Amir and his class got back on the bus*" (page 14). Reread the sentence if needed so students can identify the words **back** and **bus**.
- **Say:** *I will name some animals. Some begin with the /b/ sound and some do not. Please listen carefully. Pat your back if you hear a word that begins with /b/: squirrel, bear, beaver, wolf, toad, bee.*

Phonics: Initial "b"

- Write the letter **"b"** on the board. Tell students they will go on a letter **"b"** hunt in *Sorting at the Nature Center*. Ask them to locate words that begin with **"b"** on pages 4, 8, 12, and 14.
- Ask students to brainstorm words beginning with **/b/**. Make a list on the board. Read each word, inviting students to echo-read.
- **Say:** *I will make up riddle about one of the words. You can guess which one it is. I will circle the letter "b" in the word. Then you will know you guessed correctly. Model the process using one of the words on the list, such as I hit a baseball. What am I? (bat). Then invite each student to make up a riddle about one of the words and circle the letter that makes the /b/ sound.*

Vocabulary

- **Academic Content Vocabulary** Review the story with students and record the words **sort**, **plants**, **animals**, **chart**, **notebook**, **path**, and **pond** on index cards. Invite student partners to choose two words and use them to describe an illustration in the book.
- **Robust Oral Vocabulary** **Say:** *In the story, Amir is **observant**. To be **observant** means to look carefully and notice many things. Say the word with me: **observant**. Here are some ways people are **observant**: Ben noticed his dog walking funny. Ben found a sticker in the dog's paw. Samantha wanted to learn to shoot free throws. Samantha watched her big brother and learned how to hold the basketball. Kaya wanted to do something nice for Dad. Kaya looked around and saw weeds she could pull from the garden. Now, tell about a time you were **observant**. Try to use the word **observant** when you tell about it. You could start by saying, "I was **observant** when ____." (Allow time for each student to respond, assisting if needed.) What is the word we've been talking about? Yes—**observant**. Let's try to use the word **observant** many times today. We can use the word at school and at home.*

Language Development: Regular past tense verbs

- **Model** **Say:** *Authors often write about events that have already happened. Sometimes we add **-ed** to the end of a word to show something happened in the past. Choral-read the second sentence on page 6 with students. **Say:** Today Amir could **walk** around the nature center. Amir and his class **walked** when the story happened. The ending **-ed** is added to the word **walk** to make the word **walked**. I can use the words **walk** and **walked**, too. Use the classroom clock to support the concept of past tense as you model sentences such as:
At 8:00 I **walked** to the office to check my mailbox. I can **walk** to the office now to see the principal.
At 9:00 I **walked** to my desk and sat down. I can **walk** to my desk now to get a pencil.
At noon I **walked** the class to the cafeteria. I can **walk** to the cafeteria now to talk to the cook.*

- **Guide** Invite students to turn to page 10 with you. **Ask:** *What words end in **-ed**? (**stopped**, **jumped**) What do these words tell you about Amir's visit to the pond? (The visit to the pond already happened. The event took place in the past.)*
- **Apply** Ask pairs of students to read pages 14 and find two **-ed** words. Ask them to figure out how the words are different. (The **-ed** in looked sounds like /t/. The **-ed** in sorted sounds like /ed/.) Then invite the students to pantomime a situation and make up a sentence about it using the words **looked** and **sorted**.

Fluency: Read with Appropriate Stress or Emphasis

- **Say:** *Good readers do not read every word the same way. Instead, good readers watch for important words to stress or emphasize. Emphasizing important words helps readers understand the author's ideas. It also helps listeners better understand readers.*
- Ask students to turn to page 10. First, read the page in a flat voice. Discuss how this makes the listener feel. Then read the page again, emphasizing the word **more**. Point out that the sentence with **more** is followed by an exclamation point. **Say:** *Sometimes an exclamation point shows us what to emphasize.* Read the page again, asking students to echo-read.
- Ask students to turn to page 14. Help them locate some words they might want to emphasize, such as **so many**. Choral-read the page with them, emphasizing the words discussed.
- Invite students to take turns rereading *Sorting at the Nature Center* with a partner. Remind them to stress or emphasize important words as they read.

NAME _____

DATE _____

Sorting at the Nature Center

Make Predictions

	Yes	No
Before-reading prediction:		
Middle-story prediction:		
After-reading prediction:		