

Silva the Seal

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alphakids



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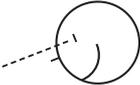
How to use this book

Before reading: Talkthrough



Talk through the book with the children. Encourage them to predict the text from the cover and the pictures, and to think about the information they provide. Direct the children's attention to aspects of the text that may challenge them. Support the children to deal with these challenges by asking the Talkthrough questions on each page.

During reading: Observe and support



Observe the children as they read. Encourage them to monitor their own reading as they comprehend the text. As needed, support children by assisting them to discover and use reading strategies and cues to solve problems and respond to reading challenges that arise in the text. Interruptions to the child's reading should be minimal and focused on a specified learning need.

After reading: Comprehension, returning to the text, responding and writing links



To further develop children's understanding of the text, select from activities found on page 12 and the inside back cover. These whole text, sentence and word level activities reinforce the teaching focus of this book. Assessment ideas are provided to assist with planning for further teaching.

Text highlights

- Full-colour photographs show Silva's rehabilitation
- Raises issues related to pollution and animal welfare

Vocabulary

Silva, Australian, fur, keepers, vets, train, scar, zoo, ocean, fishing net, dying, wild

Setting the context

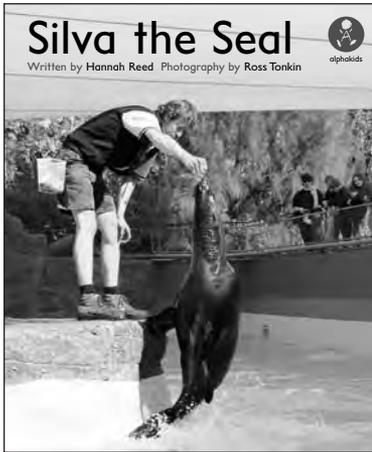
Ask: *Have you ever seen seals at the zoo? How did the zoo get the seals? Will the seals live all of their lives at the zoo? Why do zoos have animals?*

Background information

This is a true story about a seal that lives at Melbourne Zoo. Silva's story has a happy ending. But many other seals and sea animals are injured and killed each year after becoming entangled in or swallowing rubbish that has been carelessly discarded.

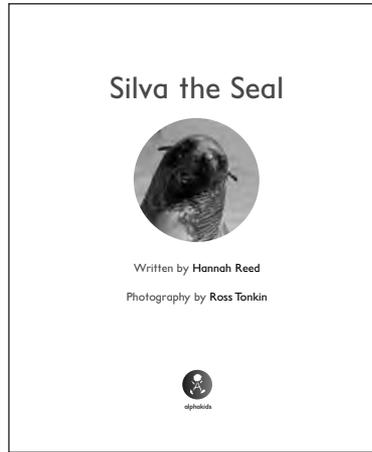
Introducing the book

This is a book about a seal called Silva. She lives at Melbourne Zoo. She used to live in the ocean but was very badly hurt. The zoo saved her.



Front cover

This book is called 'Silva the Seal'. This is a photograph of Silva doing a trick with her keeper. Who wrote this book? Who took the photographs? How do you know?



Title page

Discuss the features of the title page. Point out the author and photographer.



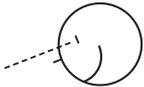
Talkthrough

Look at the photographs and read the text on pages 2–3.

This is Silva the seal. Where were these photographs of Silva taken? The book tells us that Silva didn't always live at the zoo. Where else might she have lived?

Look at the next spread.

Can you see the fishing net in the photograph? A net like this got stuck around Silva's neck. She couldn't get it off.



Observe and support

Does the child use an understanding of letter/sound relationships to check words?

You read, 'Silva was born in the ocean.' How did you know that word said 'ocean'? What did you look at? What did you think about?

This is Silva.

She is an Australian fur seal.
She lives at the zoo.

But she didn't always live there.



Silva was born in the ocean.
When she was young she swam
into some fishing net that
someone had thrown into the sea.

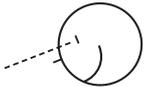
The net got stuck around her neck
and Silva couldn't get it off.





Talkthrough

As Silva grew the net didn't. What would that do to Silva's neck? How would that make Silva feel? Silva got very sick. She almost died. Some people found her and called the zoo. The keepers took Silva to the zoo.



Observe and support

Does the child monitor their own reading and notice when errors occur?

What did you notice? Why did you read that again? How do you know that you are right this time?

As Silva got bigger the net cut into her neck and made her very sick.

Silva got so sick that she couldn't look after herself or find food. She lay dying on the rocks.



Some people found her and wanted to save her. They called the zoo.

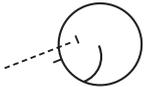
Keepers from the zoo came and took Silva back to the zoo with them.





Talkthrough

How do you think Silva would have felt about being taken to the zoo? Would she have been frightened? How might she have acted? What do the photographs tell us about how the keepers trained her?



Observe and support

Does the child use contextual information to understand the meaning of new vocabulary?

What does 'train' mean? How did you work that out? What information on the page helped you to work it out?

At the zoo the vets and the keepers
tried to help Silva to get better.

But Silva was a wild seal and she
was frightened of the keepers.

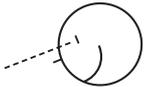
They had to train Silva so that
they could help her.





Talkthrough

Eventually Silva got better. But then there was a new problem. What do you think it was? Why couldn't Silva look after herself anymore?



Observe and support

You may ask the child to re-read this section. Does the child modulate their voice to indicate drama in the text?
How could you change the way your voice sounds to show that it took a long time for Silva to get better?

It took a long time for Silva to get better.
By the time she was better
she could not go back to the ocean.
She could not look after herself anymore.

Silva had to stay at the zoo.

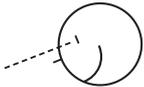




Talkthrough

Look at pages 14–15.

What is Silva's keeper doing? Why might he be playing with Silva? What does he feed her?



Observe and support

Can the child interpret the text?

What do you think people who visit the zoo might think about Silva? How might seeing Silva change the way these people act when they are near the ocean?

Every day Silva's keepers look after her.
They feed her and play with her.



People who visit the zoo can watch Silva swimming. And they can see the scar from the net that almost killed her.

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Being a meaning maker

Encourage the children to support their answers with evidence from the book as they discuss these questions:

Why did Silva get sick?

Why did the keepers train Silva?

Why couldn't Silva look after herself once she was better?

Why shouldn't people throw rubbish into the sea?

Being a code breaker

Children may like to explore the following language features:

- Words with double letters: zoo, off, bigger, look, called, keepers, better, feed, swimming, killed.
- Changes to spelling when words are written in the past tense: swim/swam, throw/thrown, stick/stuck, find/found, come/came, call/called, try/tried, kill/killed.

Being a text user

What kind of book is this? Fiction or information? How do you know?

What did you learn about zoos from reading the book?

What did you learn about pollution by reading the book?

Being a text critic

Do zoos save all injured seals?

Should the keepers have saved Silva and kept her at the zoo?

Responding to text



Children could work in cooperative groups to develop and practise a role-play about saving Silva the seal. Some children could play the people that found Silva on the beach, others could be zookeepers and vets, and others could be visitors to the zoo. One child might like to tell it from Silva's point of view.



Children could design a poster advertising Silva's story. Or they could make a poster explaining why litter should not be dropped in the ocean.



Children could work in cooperative groups to complete a Plus, Minus and Interesting (PMI) chart about the story of Silva the seal.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of living at the zoo? And what is interesting?

Writing links

Shared writing

Discuss the features of a recount: A recount usually tells the reader what happened, who was involved, where it happened, when it happened and is usually chronological. Recounts often conclude with a personal comment. Plan a recount of a class experience together.

Independent writing

Have the children write a recount of something that they have experienced.

Assessment

Can the child:

- Explain why this book is a recount?
- Recall the details of the story in sequence?
- Identify words with double letters?
- Explain how they feel about Silva's story?



whole text activity



sentence activity



word activity



Teacher Edition

Topic: Living things

Curriculum link: Science; Studies of Society and the Environment

Text type: Recount

Reading level: 15

Word count: 230

Vocabulary: Silva, Australian, fur, keepers, vets, train, scar, zoo, ocean, fishing net, dying, wild

Possible literacy focus

Understanding the features of a recount.

Recalling details of a story in sequence.

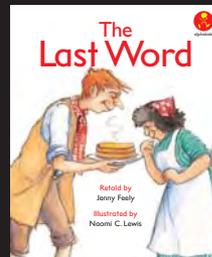
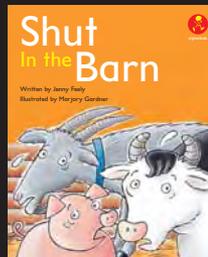
Identifying words with double letters.

Providing a personal response to Silva's story.

Summary

This book tells of how an injured wild seal was saved and came to live at the zoo.

Other books at this level



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