

The Floatingest Frog – Teacher’s Notes

Introduction: *The Floatingest Frog* is a picture book based on an Aesop Fable. When a cow visits the pond home of two frog brothers, Frankie thinks it is the biggest animal he has ever seen. His brother Ferdinand is not impressed. Surely he can be as big as this mysterious visitor. He desperately puffs himself out bigger and bigger. In the end, he may not be the biggest animal – but he is certainly the floatingest.

The Floatingest Frog is both entertaining and educational, with its gentle message and humorous storyline. The bright illustrations of well-known artist Simon Bosch are a perfect complement to the writing of emerging author, Sally Murphy.

Classroom Usage

Reading

- Before reading the story, take the time to discuss the title and cover with students. Look at the cover illustration. Discuss students’ first impressions of the two frogs pictured. What might their relationship be? Do they look friendly? Timid? Proud? What else can children see in the picture?
- Talk about the title. Focus on the word ‘floatingest’. Ask students if it is a real word. What might it mean? Why would the author use a word that isn’t in the dictionary? Ask students to make predictions about the story.
- Read the story through. Discuss students’ reactions. How do students feel about the ending? What lesson has Ferdinand learnt? Has the relationship between the two brothers changed?

Exploring

- In groups or individually create a feelings table. List the following events in the first column. In three subsequent columns have students record how Frankie, Ferdinand and the Reader feel when that event happens. Events: Ferdinand’s boasting BEFORE the cow appears; the frogs hearing the cow coming; the cow leaving; Ferdinand trying to be bigger than the cow; Ferdinand starting to float; Ferdinand coming back to Earth; the ending. Discuss students’ completed tables.
- Explain to students that *The Floatingest Frog* is based on the fable *The Frog and the Ox*. Read this fable to the students. Discuss the similarities and differences between the fable and the picture book. What changes has the author made? What effect have the changes had?
- Reread the book, focussing on the illustrations. Ask students to look out for places where the picture tells the story – ie where the illustration shows something the words do not. Ask students if the ‘big animal’ is ever

- named as a cow in the text. Discuss why the writer may have chosen to do this. How does the reader know it's a cow? Look at the final illustration with the two frogs on one lily pad – in contrast with separate lily pads at the beginning. What does this tell us?
- Discuss the use of the word 'floatingest" in the title and at the end of the story. Ask students if it is correct English. Why/why not? Discuss why the author may have chosen to use it.

Extending

- Have students select another of Aesop's fables and rewrite it as a story of their own.
- *The Floatingest Frog* is written in third person. Discuss the differences between third person and first person narrative. Then have students retell the story from the point of view of either Frankie or Ferdinand. Or, for students who like a challenge, from the point of view of the cow.