



Look at the tails!

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Focus phonics

or as in short, shorter, sort, or, for, sorts

sh as in shark, short, shorter, shark's, shoal, fish, shed, sheds, shoo

ure as in secure

ar as in farmer, Arctic, hard

Tricky words

all, are, as, be, by, do, has, have, he, her, his, I, into, is, no, of, one, out, she, so, the, there, they, to, was, we, you

Book summary

Animals can convey many different messages with their tails. This book looks at a selection of animal tails, including tails of cats, dogs, cockatoos, sharks, rats and bats.

Learning intention

Phonics: To decode words with the /or/ r-controlled vowel sound that feature in the book. Extend this learning to other words with the same sounds that aren't in the text. Also discuss words in the text containing the /sh/ consonant digraph, the /ure/ vowel trigraph and the /ar/ r-controlled vowel sound.

Comprehension:

- Summarise main ideas
- Explain the meaning of words in context

Fluency:

- 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: Why do you think there's an exclamation mark in the title? (to emphasise that there are many interesting tails to look at in the book) Share any prior knowledge of the topic. Ask: Do you think this is a fiction or a non-fiction text? Ask students to share what kind of information might be given in a non-fiction text. Ask: What tails do you think you might learn about in this text? Keep a note of predictions and return to them later. Look at the back cover. Ask: Do you recognise any of these tails? Read the blurb on the back cover and discuss what it means. Flip through the book to get an idea of the contents.

Quick phonics warm-up: Use Elkonin boxes to demonstrate the three sounds in the word *short*. (/sh/ /or/ /t/) Mention how the /or/ sound is one of the r-controlled vowels which means the r (sometimes called bossy r) controls the o to make /or/. When you say or, the r sound is quite

dominant. Ask students to find words in the book with the /or/ sound as you flip through it. Do the same for the /ar/ phoneme demonstrating the word *hard* in the Elkonin boxes. Move on to /ure/ and /sh/, revising the sounds of the trigraph and digraph. Then find words with these sounds and practise reading them.

Vocabulary check:

sorts p 24 types, kinds, or groups

shoal p 15 a group of fish. Say the word emphasising the consonant digraph /sh/. Ask: Can you think of a word that rhymes with *shoal*, e.g. *foal*, *coal*.

Morphology: Point out the word *hairless* on p 20. What could the suffix *less* mean? (without) What part of a rat might look as though it has no hair? (Check the picture) (the tail) What would a hairless rat look like?

Etymology: The root word of *hairless* is *hair*. The word *hair* has been known since before the 12th century. Ask: Can you think of another word that includes the word *hair*? (*hairy*) What does the new word mean?

Tricky word practice: Display the word *have*. Ask students to identify the tricky part. (ve which says /v/) Practise writing and reading this word. Do the same with *as*. (s is the tricky part which says /z/)

During reading

Read the story: If two reading sessions are needed to read the text, then the end of p 12 would be a good place to break. Students could read the remainder for homework or on day 2.

- Start by reading the text to students, then ask them to take over, reading aloud at their own pace. On p 3 ask: What words tell you how the cats are feeling? (going to fight; feels secure) How do the cats show their feelings? (puff out their fur; tail up in the air) Students continue reading, aiming for a smooth and fluent reading, but pausing to sound out and blend any words that they cannot read on sight. Practise segmenting and blending the word *secure* /s/ /e/ /k/ /ure/.
- Divide the book up between students; there are nine sections (cats, dogs, cockatoos, bats, pigs, sharks, lizards, Arctic foxes and rats). The sections could be shared in pairs. Ask each pair to read a section and then report back on it.

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 in words with the phonemes /or/, /ar/, /ure/ and /sh/.

Comprehension support: Pause occasionally to talk about the book and encourage students to find and retrieve key details from the text, e.g. on p 5 what kind of cat has a short tail? (a bobtail cat) How could a cat with no tail show how it is feeling?

After reading

Apply learning: Discuss the book. Ask: What can you say about tails? Do you think it would be fun to have a tail? Which animal tail is your favourite?

Comprehension: Ask: Which animals wag their tails to say they feel good?

What clever thing can a shark do with its tail fin? (hit a shoal of fish to catch dinner)

How does a lizard's tail protect it from predators? (it breaks off so the lizard can run away)

Find the words *lizard's tail* on p 17. What does the apostrophe mean? (the tail belongs to the lizard) Find other examples of this in the text, e.g. rat's, dog's, shark's, pig's.

What should a farmer do if they see a pig without a curly tail? (call the vet as the pig may not be well)

Discuss the questions on the inside back cover.

Fluency: Choose a page from the book and model how to read it fluently with appropriate emphasis and intonation to convey the meaning of a non-fiction text. Students read the same passage, copying your reading. Students then choose another brief passage and read it fluently with expression to a partner. Students also could practise speed-reading a list of the focus words from the inside front cover to encourage automatic recall.

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.

(page 10)

Bat tails

Look at the tail on a short-tailed bat.

The bat wags its short tail to get up into the air.

This is a long-tailed bat. This bat can feel things to the rear of it with its tail.

Follow-up activities

Students complete the follow-up activities:

Worksheet 1: Phonics

Read the or and sh words.

Complete sentences using short or shorter.

Worksheet 2: Comprehension

Pet body language: choose one of the suggestions to write about and label.

Worksheet 3: Science

Compare groups of animals – mammals, reptiles, fish and birds. Complete the table.

Worksheet 4: Science/Written language

Learn what a topic sentence is and use this knowledge to write at least one topic sentence about one of the animals from Worksheet 3.

Look at the tails!

Worksheet 1: Phonics

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Read the /or/ and /sh/ words.
 - Count the sounds on spelling fingers.
 - Write the letters for the different sounds in the boxes.

For example: short

sh	or	t
----	----	---

sort

--	--	--

shark

--	--	--

for

--	--

shoo

--	--

fish

--	--	--

sheds

--	--	--	--

shoal

--	--	--

Look at the tails!

Worksheet 1: Phonics - continued

Name: _____ Date: _____

2. Words that end with er.

Finish the sentences using *short* or *shorter*.

Some cats have _____ tails.

A bobtail cat has a _____ tail than most other cats.

Finish the sentence using *big* or *bigger*.

A cat can puff up its tail to make it look _____ .

Finish the sentences using *better* or *dinner*.

A vet can make a poorly pig feel _____ .

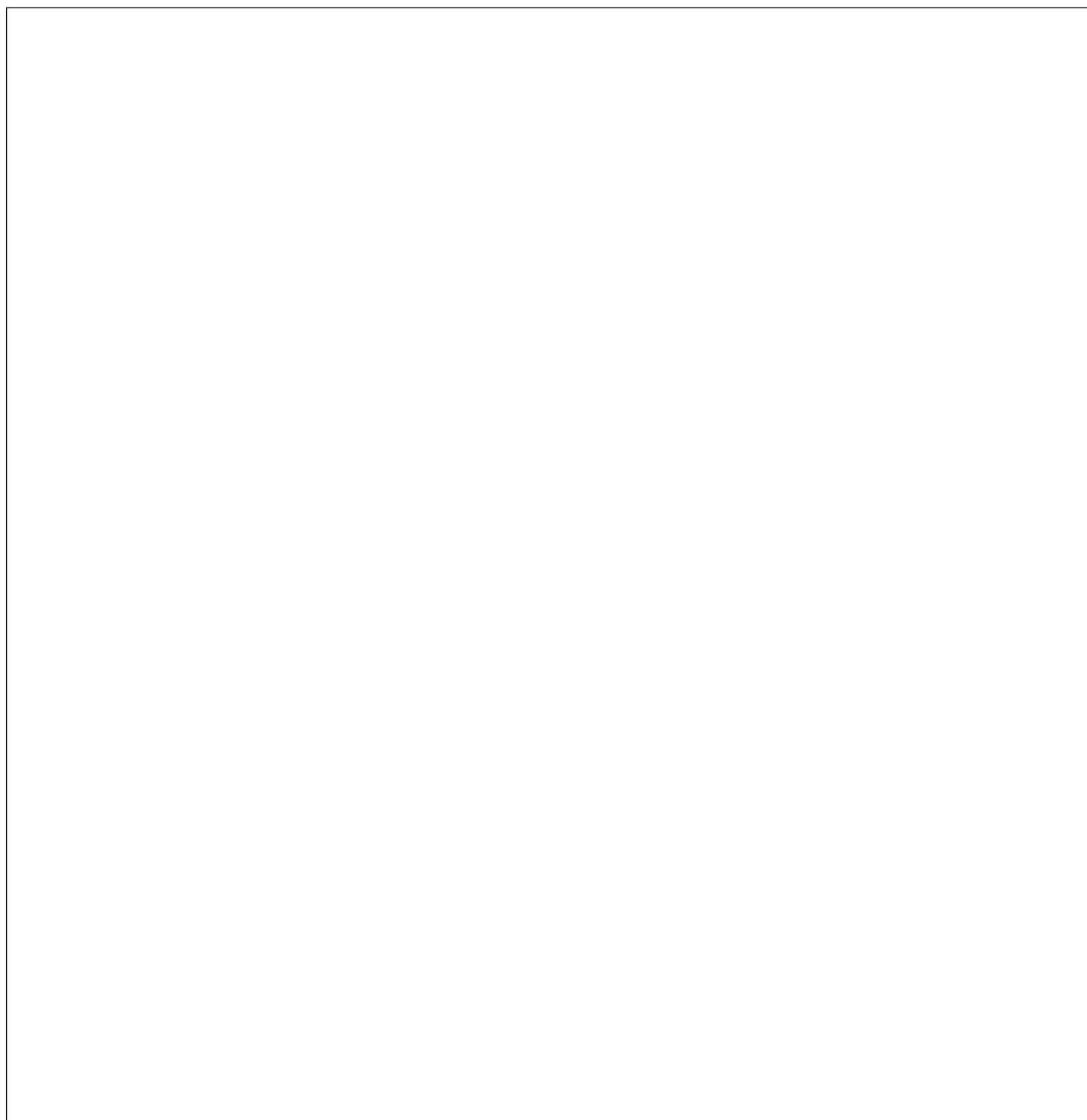
A shark feeds on fish for its _____ .

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Worksheet 2: Comprehension

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Your job is to teach people about how pets use their tails to tell us things.
 - Choose cats or dogs.
 - Make a poster showing two different tail actions for the animal you choose.
 - Write a sentence under each picture to tell people what the tail tells us.

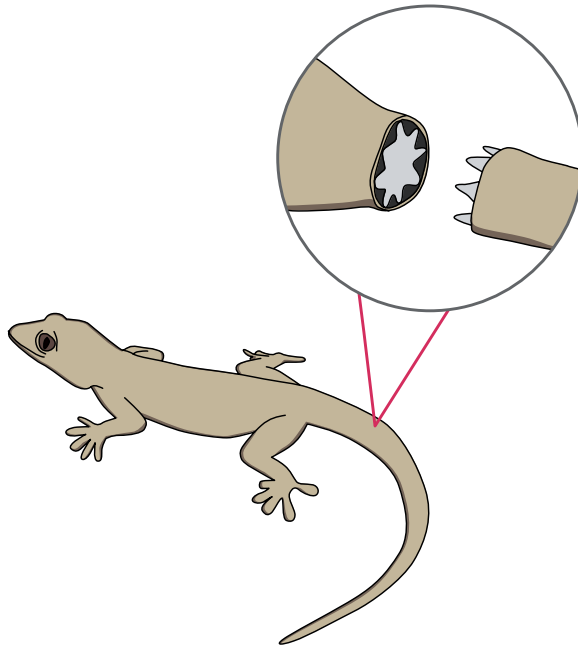


Look at the tails!

Worksheet 2: Comprehension - continued

Name: _____ Date: _____

2. Look at page 17. A lizard can shed its tail because its tail is connected by pillars which fit into sockets. Label this diagram to show which are the pillars and which are the sockets.



3. Which is your favourite animal from the book? Draw a picture of it and list three things that you like about it.

Look at the tails!

Worksheet 3: Science

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Scientists think about animals as belonging to certain groups. The group is sometimes called a 'class'.

In *Look at the tails!*, we meet animals that are in the following 'classes':

mammals, reptiles, fish and birds.

Read the definitions of these classes with a teacher or friend.

Mammals are warm blooded. They have a backbone. They have hair or fur. Mammal mothers give birth to live young. They feed their babies milk.

Reptiles are cold blooded. They have backbones and scaly skin. They breathe air and crawl or move on their bellies. Reptiles lay eggs.

Fish are cold blooded. They have backbones but no limbs. Fish have fins and gills and live in water.

Birds are warm blooded. They have backbones. They have feathers, wings and a beak. Birds lay eggs.

2. Using the information you read above, complete the table to show which class animals from the book belong to.

Where do these animals go? **cats, bats, pigs, dogs, cockatoos, sharks, lizards, rats, foxes, peacocks, stingrays, skunks, whales**

Mammals	Reptiles	Fish	Birds

Look at the tails!

Worksheet 3: Science - continued

Name: _____ Date: _____

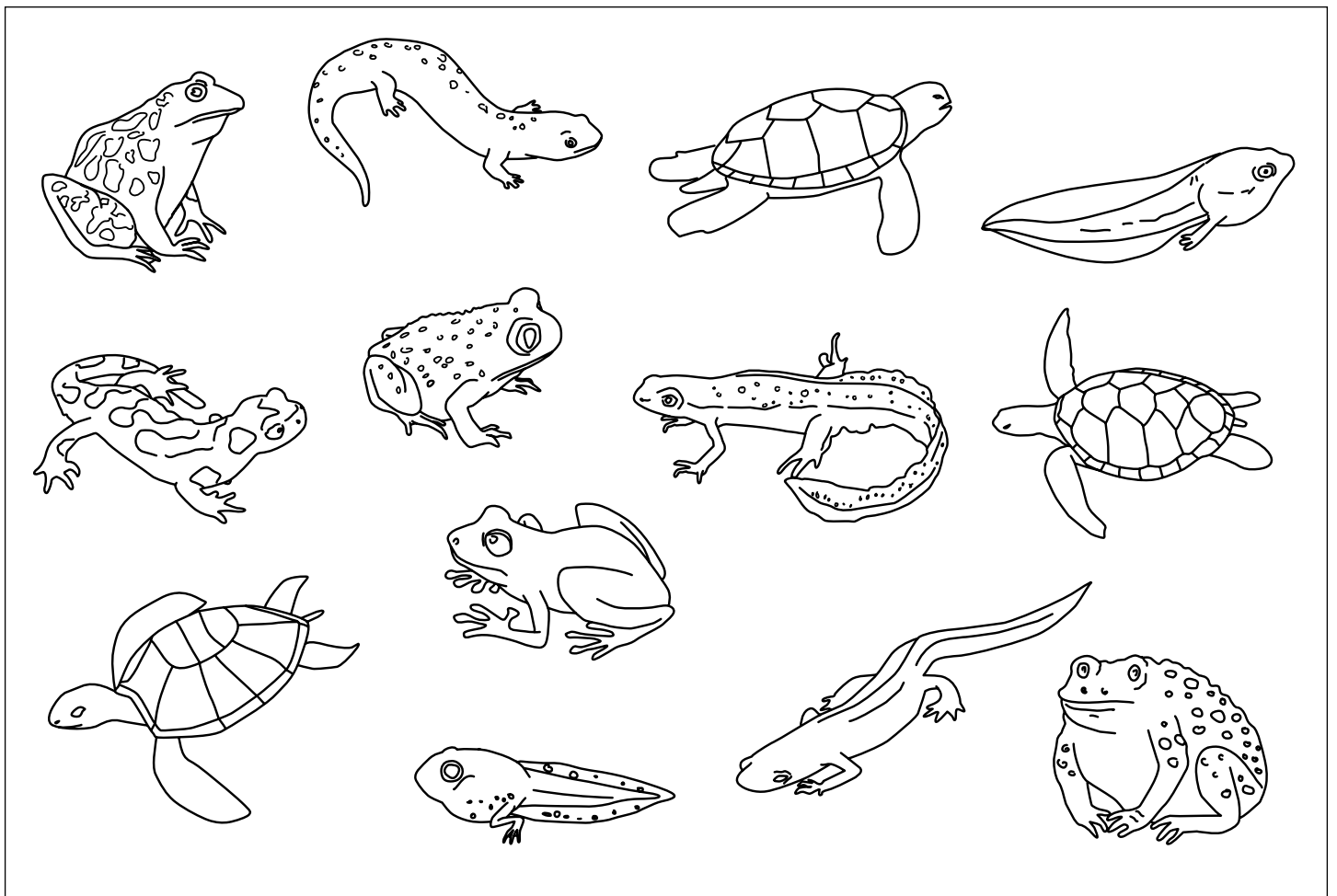
3. There is another class of animal. This is 'amphibians'. There are no amphibians in the book.

Here are some facts about amphibians:

Amphibians

- Have cold blood
- Live on land and in the water
- Lay eggs
- Do not have scales
- Have webbed feet

Look at the pictures of the amphibians below. Circle pictures of the amphibians with tails. They are: salamanders, newts, tadpoles, turtles. Frogs and toads are amphibians without tails. See how many you can label.



Look at the tails!

Worksheet 4: Science/Written language

Name: _____ Date: _____

Write a report to explain how animals use their tails. Choose three different animals to focus on.

You are writing to teach your classmates about the topic. Your writing needs to be true, clear, and interesting.

Use the **introduction** to tell the reader what they will be learning about.

Use the **three middle paragraphs** for each of the three animals. Start each paragraph with a topic sentence. This is a sentence that introduces the main topic of the paragraph, so use it to introduce each animal.

Use the **conclusion** to remind your reader of something interesting, or to ask a question for further research.

1. Plan your writing using the boxes below.

Introduction
Subtopic 1/Animal 1 (Start with a topic sentence, then add details).
Subtopic 2/Animal 2 (Topic sentence + details).
Subtopic 3/Animal 3 (Topic sentence + details).
Conclusion

Look at the tails!

Worksheet 4: Science/Written language - continued

Name: _____ Date: _____

2. Write your report here.