

Written by Barbara Flores, Elena Castro, and Eddie Hernandez
Illustrated by Mary Ramirez-Greene

16 pages, 510 words

Genre: Fiction (Folktales)

Focus: Concepts of Print and Reading Strategies

- use context to predict unknown words; confirm by attending to letter sounds
- blend word parts to read phonetically regular words, including content-specific vocabulary, relying on a wider variety of spelling patterns
- use a wide variety of high frequency words to support fluent reading
- read varied sentences fluently, with expression and stamina
- use text and illustrations to visualize story events
- use background and vocabulary knowledge to help read and comprehend unknown words
- read and comprehend dialogue in various formats
- maintain comprehension over more text episodes
- determine author’s message using evidence from the text

Supportive Text Features:

- some details supported by illustrations
- text includes some repetitive language and phrasing
- most vocabulary is familiar, with some more varied word choices, literary and content-specific language
- varied sentence lengths and formats

Phonics:

- vowel digraph “ai”

Common Core Standards:

- RF.2.3, RF.2.4
- RL.2.1, RL.2.2, RL.2.3, RL.2.5, RL.2.6, RL.2.9, RL.2.10

ELL/ESL

La sirenita Ari

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Guided Reading with

Ari The Mermaid

Guided Reading Level: K

DRA Level: 20

by Barbara Flores, Elena Castro, and Eddie Hernandez, illustrated by Mary Ramirez-Greene

Overview: Things changed for Ari the mermaid when Cassie the mermaid arrived. Read this story to find out what happened.

Getting Ready to Read

1. Introduce the concept and vocabulary by asking open-ended questions:

- What’s a mermaid? Are mermaids real? What do you know about mermaids in stories?
- What’s a “fib?” What might people fib about?
- What’s a “potion?” How could potions be used?

2. Connect children’s past experiences with the story and vocabulary:

- Hold the book. Call children’s attention to the title. Read: “*Ari the Mermaid.*”
- Ask children to use the title and picture on the cover to predict what the book will teach them.
- Show the back cover and read the copy. Ask children to predict what might happen when Cassie the mermaid arrives.
- Have children suggest some words they might read in the book.
- Give children the book and have them look at the pictures. Ask them to notice what each one shows. Ask them to share questions they have about the illustrations that might be answered as they read.

3. Remind children of the strategies they know and can use with unfamiliar words:

- Ask them, “What will you do if you come to a word you don’t know?”
- Encourage children to look for chunks of words they know and to blend the sounds quickly.



- Suggest that children read on past an unfamiliar word in order to use the context of the story and sentence to unlock the meaning of the word. Encourage children to return to the word after completing the sentence or section.
- Tell children to think what they know about the subject or topic of this book. Then encourage them to choose a word that makes sense in the sentence.

4. Be aware of the following text features:

- The book contains familiar words, including a variety of high frequency words.
- Potentially unfamiliar vocabulary words include: sea, mermaid, coral reefs, fib, punished, advice, prepared, potion, miserable, huge, realized, desperate, promise.
- The story follows a typical narrative structure, including an introduction of characters/setting, problem, related events, and resolution. The final sentences include a clear moral about honesty.
- The amount of text on each page and placement of text vary throughout the book.
- The illustrations support and extend the text, but most of the meaning is contained in the text.

Guided Reading Note: Children reading at level K are becoming more fluent, and the focus emphasizes comprehension and independent reading. Most of the reading should be done silently. Children are also encouraged to: 1) independently apply their reading skills and strategies, 2) make connections between their own experiences and the story, and 3) “get” the author’s message and be able to discuss it with other readers. Most importantly, children should feel confident and eager to read. This is a time to build fluency and independence as children read a variety of genres and develop a sense of reading for different purposes.

Reading the Book

1. Set a purpose by telling children to read the book to find out about how things change for Ari the mermaid when Cassie the mermaid arrives.

2. Have children read the book silently. Each child should be reading at his or her own pace. Listen to children as they read by leaning close or bending down beside each child. After the group has read a few pages, check for understanding with simple questions, such as: “What is the book about?” or “Tell me how the book begins.” Then direct children to continue reading. As they read, watch for indications of comprehension: changes in facial expression, giggles, audible comments, rereading, turning back a page. You may want to make notations about what you observe.

3. Look for these reading behaviors during the first reading:

- Do they rely on the print while reading?
- Do they have a strong sight vocabulary?
- Do they use known sound chunks to read unknown words?
- Are they monitoring meaning and rereading when they lose meaning? Are they showing signs of understanding the story?
- How are they dealing with following a longer, more complex story? Do they easily move from page to page? Are they reading fluently?
- Are they using punctuation and any text features to gain meaning?
- Do they make accurate predictions?
- Are they connecting the text to their own experiences?
- Do they react to the text even though they are reading silently? Do they laugh? smile? frown?
- Are they drawing conclusions and making inferences?
- Do they react to the text even though they are reading silently? Do they laugh? smile? frown?

4. As children read, note what they are doing. Help them build independence by being available, but not intervening too quickly.

- Watch for changes in children’s facial expressions and use these signals to ask questions, such as: “What made you smile?” or “Where do you need some help?”
- Encourage children’s attempts by making



comments, such as: “I like how you are using a different strategy when the first one you tried didn’t work.”

- If children are struggling with deciding which strategy to use, suggest a specific strategy that would help them get meaning in the most efficient way, such as, “Did you think about chunking the word?”

5. Possible teaching points to address based on your observations:

- Call attention to all the high-frequency words children have learned and used.
- Review how to find a known part or sound chunk in an unknown word.
- Show children how to use analogies to move from the known to the unknown when encountering new words.
- Work with suffixes and prefixes.
- Review using grammar (syntax) to unlock words by considering the sentence structure or parts of speech in the sentence.
- Explore the story grammar—characters, setting, problem, solution, and so on.
- Review how to determine what is important in a picture or sentence.
- Model asking questions or making “I wonder...” statements to extend comprehension.
- Review using punctuation marks to guide the meaning-making process. Discuss the use of question marks, exclamation points, and commas as clues to reading with a particular kind of expression or inflection.
- Call attention to the sequence of events in the story.
- Model how to revisit the text to find specific examples or ideas in the story. Encourage them to think about what they know of other *Little Mermaid* and *Pinocchio* versions.

After the First Reading

1. Have children confirm their predictions and talk about what happened when Ari met Cassie. Pay special attention to reviewing characters’ responses to story events.

2. Ask questions like:

- How does this story share similarities with other versions of *The Little Mermaid*? How does this story share similarities with *Pinocchio*?
- Who is Ari? Where does she live? What does she like to do?
- Who is Cassie? What was she like as a character when the story started?
- Why do you think Cassie told so many fibs?
- How do you think Cassie’s friends and Ari feel when Cassie fibs all the time? Why might they want her to be truthful?
- How did Ari respond to Cassie’s fibbing? Why do you think she went to see Mrs. Rutila?
- What advice did Mrs. Rutila give? What happened when Cassie drank the potion?
- What happened after Cassie realized why her tail was growing?
- How did Mrs. Rutila respond when she found Cassie crying? Why do you think she decided to give Cassie the second potion?
- How did the story end? What did Cassie learn? What can this story teach readers?
- Do you agree with Ari’s choice to give Cassie the potion? Why or why not? How do Ari’s actions relate to the story’s lesson?
- Do you think it is acceptable for Ari and Mrs. Rutila to give Cassie a potion without her knowledge? Why or why not? How are Ari and Mrs. Rutila action also a form of fib/lying? Do you think their fibbing is justified? Why or why not?
- If Ari didn’t have access to magical potion to help Cassie learn to stop telling fibs, what other ways could Ari help Cassie?
- Do you think this is the best title for the story?



What other titles would recommend for the story? Why?

- Do you think Cassie learned that telling fibs is wrong? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Ari wanted Cassie to stop telling fibs?
- Have you ever had a friend or family member who kept fibbing? How did it make you feel?
- Have you ever felt that you needed to fib? How did it make you feel? How did you stop?
- Why do you think the authors want to share this story with young people today?

Second Reading

1. Have children reread the book silently or to a partner.

2. This is a time for assessment. Keeping notes on children's progress during a guided reading session will be a helpful resource for giving children on-going feedback about themselves as readers as well as helping you record how they develop over time.

- While they are reading, watch what children do and what they use from the teaching time.
- You might also take a running record on one child as an assessment of the child's reading behavior.
- You might also listen in on each individual reader, observing as children use appropriate or inappropriate strategies. This information will be valuable for any additional strategy discussions after the second reading.

Cross-Curricular Activities

Language: Beginning with the word "mermaid," brainstorm words that include the long vowel pattern "ai." Have students practice reading and writing some of them in context. Review other long a patterns, such as -ay and a/silent e.

Have students use sticky notes to add speech bubbles

to the illustrations. Ask them to focus on including characters' words or thoughts not already written as dialogue in the text.

Review some of the key vocabulary words from the book — words students are likely to see and use elsewhere (e.g. advice, miserable, desperate, promise). You might also include the word "honest" from your discussion, even though it isn't written the text. Have students develop brief skits to act out the meaning and use of each word.

Have students practice summarizing the text orally or in writing, making sure to include information about the characters, setting, problem, and resolution.

Orally or in writing, have students retell the story from a different character's point of view. How would the story sound if Cassie told it? If Mrs. Rutila told it?

Have students read, or read aloud, other books about honesty, such as *Under the Lemon Moon* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/under-the-lemon-moon>). Make connections between texts.

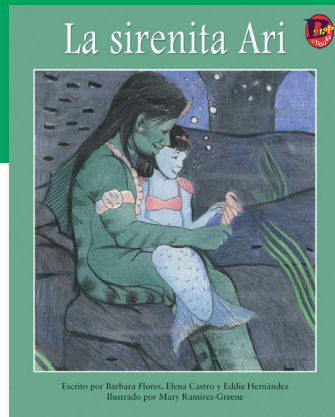
Read other folktales and determine their morals or messages. Compile various messages on an ongoing chart.

Have students write their own stories or persuasive essays that encourage others to be honest.

Social Studies: Ask students to brainstorm other social problems they'd like to solve. Ask them to respond to the writing prompt: "If you could create a potion to teach someone an important lesson, what would that lesson be? What would happen to the person who drank it, and how would the experience help them learn? After sharing responses, discuss real-life strategies for encouraging pro-social behavior.

Read other versions of *The Little Mermaid* and *Pinocchio*. Work with students to investigate the original story—which country or culture is it from? Who wrote it? When? Compare other versions to these stories.

Art: Have students make mermaid puppets and ocean scenery to act out this story. Challenge them to come up with a creative way to depict Cassie's tail changing size.



Guided Reading with **La sirenita Ari**

The directions given for the introduction, first reading, and second reading of the English edition can be used with the Spanish edition of the book. To read the book successfully, children need the same kinds of support as their English-speaking classmates. Second language learners often benefit from acting out new words, seeing pictures, and talking about them using concrete examples.

Guided Reading Level: L
DRA Level: 24

Adjective Support

Photocopy the pages from the book so that students can examine the different adjectives throughout (amistosa, buena, lista, grande). With a colored marker, have students go through the photocopied pages and highlight different adjectives (i.e. enojada). Students can explain how these words describe the noun, and provide another sentence using the same adjective.

Verb Support

Using the same photocopied pages from the book, students can examine the different tenses that are presented in the text. Students can go on a verb tense scavenger hunt and use different colored highlighters to indicate which verbs are in the preterit (usó), which verbs are in the imperfect (estaba). Ask students to notice why the verbs are used in specific places, and how they change the meaning of the sentence.

For students engaging with both English and Spanish texts, have students note that there are several questions and exclamatory statements throughout the text. In Spanish, the question marks and exclamation points come before the sentence in an upside-down orientation and after the sentence in the opposite orientation.

The book language used may differ from children's oral language. Comparing any differences will help children read and understand the story. Also help children understand that we often speak differently than we write, and that both ways of using language are important.

Guided Reading Guided reading levels were assigned by literacy experts and certified Reading Recovery® teachers using the guidelines identified in Guided Reading and Matching Books to Readers by Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell.

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DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) and **EDL (Evaluación del desarrollo de la lectura)** DRA and EDL levels were determined using information in the Developmental Reading Assessment Resource Guide and EDL Resource Guide by Joetta Beaver.

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