

Guided Reading with  
**I HAD A HIPPOPOTAMUS**  
written and illustrated by Hector Viveros Lee

**Fiction/Fantasy**

**Guided Reading™ :D**

**DRA: 4**

**Reading Recovery®: 6**

24 pages, 119 words

**Focus:**

- using picture clues
- reading patterned sentences
- sequencing events
- using imagination
- recognizing humor in stories

**Supportive Text Features:**

- familiar words and concepts
- repetitive, patterned sentences
- humor used to engage the reader

**High-frequency Words:** I, had, a, but, it, to, my, and, for

**Getting Ready to Read**

1. Introduce the concept and vocabulary by asking open-ended questions:
  - What are some animals that make good pets? Tell me the names of some animals that would not make good pets.
  - What kind of pet might surprise or scare someone in your family?
  - What wild animals do you think might make fun or interesting pets for yourself or someone in your family?

**2. Connect children's past experiences with the book vocabulary:**

- Call children's attention to the title. Read: "I Had a Hippopotamus."
- Ask them to predict what they would expect to see happen in the story.
- Show the back cover and read the copy. Ask children what kinds of creatures they think the boy dreams about.
- Have children suggest some words they might read in the story.
- Give children the book and have them look at the pictures.
- Ask them to tell what happens as they turn each page.

**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 at the picture and say the beginning sound of the word.

**4. Be aware of the following book and text features:**

- The book contains several high-frequency words as well as these familiar words: gave, baby, best, friend girl, next, door, teacher, small.
- Family member words are used: mom, dad, sister, brother, grandma, uncle.
- There are names of familiar animals: kangaroo, snake, elephant, kitten; and less familiar animals: rhinoceros, coyote, wart hog, jaguar.
- There are two alternating patterned sentences.
- The last two sentences do not follow the patterns.

**Reading the Book**

**1. Set a purpose by telling children to read and find out what happened to each animal the boy had.**

**2. Have children read quietly, but out loud. Each child should be reading at his or her own pace. Children should not read in chorus. Listen to children as they read by leaning close or bending down beside each child.**

**3. Look for these reading behaviors during children's first reading:**

- Do they identify more words by sight?
- Do they rely on the print and not just the pictures when reading?
- Do they read with increased confidence?
- Are they self-correcting to get meaning from the story?
- Have they begun to cross-check by using language patterns and letter sounds?
- Do they reread to check accuracy and meaning?
- Are they using chunks of words rather than individual letters when sounding out?
- Do they expect to get meaning from the text?
- Do they make connections between the story and previous experiences?
- Are they asking questions about the story?

4. As children read, suggest reading strategies if they are struggling: “Try saying the beginning of the word. Try looking at the picture for help.” Encourage children to take a guess or read past the unknown word.
5. Possible teaching points to address based on your observations:
  - Call attention to all the high-frequency words children have used.
  - Review how to find a known part in an unknown word.
  - Show children how to use analogies to move from the known to the unknown when encountering new words: “snake” looks like “make.”
  - 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, 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.
  - Talk about the use of the word “but” to show an oppositional relationship.
  - Model how to revisit the text to find specific examples or ideas in the story.

### **After the First Reading**

1. Have children confirm their predictions about what happened in the story.
2. Discuss what the boy did with each the animal. Generate some ideas about why he did these things.
3. Reflect on how the other people in the story reacted to the animals.
4. Explore with children the humor in the story.
5. Brainstorm ideas about where the boy got each animal.

### **Second Reading**

1. Have children reread the book in a whisper voice or to a partner.
2. This is a time for assessment. While they are reading, watch what children do and what they use from the teaching time. Alternatively, you might take a running record on one student as an assessment of the student’s reading behavior.

### **Cross-Curricular Activities**

**Art:** Have children make gift tags to put on the animals the boy gives away. Tell them to draw something to represent the animal and label each tag with the name of the family member who received it.

**Music:** Teach children the following verse: “I had a cat and my cat loved me. Fed my cat by the old oak tree. Cat went fiddle-i-fee, fiddle-i-fee.” Then have children

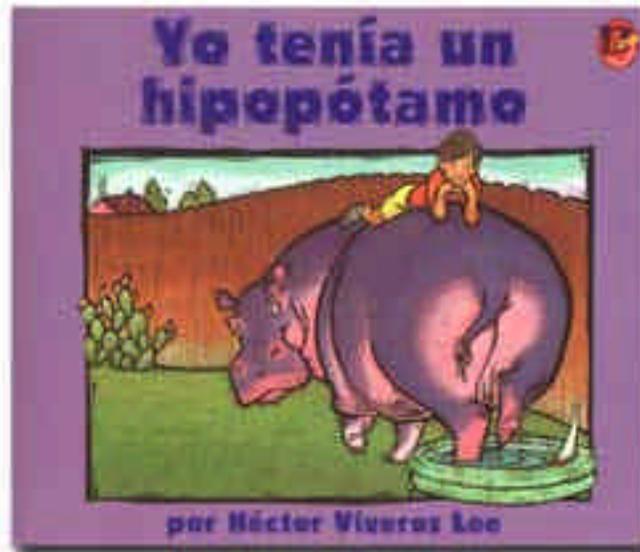
create verses for the animals in the story. For example, “I had a hippo and my hippo loved me. . . .”

**Science:** Investigate the natural habitat of each animal in the story as well as what it eats. Use this information to develop reasons why each animal could not really live in a house or be a family pet.

**Math:** Find out the typical weight and height of each animal in the story. Compare the animals and have children draw two animals using the greater than (>) or less than (<) signs to show which one is heavier or taller. For example, hippo > snake. As an alternative, preprint pictures of the animals to compare their sizes and weights.

**Social Studies:** Explore the rules communities, apartment buildings, or other living areas have about pets. Talk about why each rule is necessary in those particular circumstances. Use modeled writing to create a set of rules for having a pet.

**Writing:** Read CAN I HAVE A STEGOSAURUS, MOM? CAN I? PLEASE!?! by Lois G. Gambling. This is the story of a child who tries to convince his mother to let him have a pet. Have children write their own letters persuading their mothers or other adults to let them have a pet. Encourage children to tell the kind of pet they would like and why.



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**YO TENÍA UN HIPOPÓTAMO**

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**DRA: 4**

**Reading Recovery® : 5**

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.

The Spanish edition has patterned sentences and many familiar words, although some of the animal words may be unfamiliar. The use of the pictures and discussion will support children in their reading.

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.

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