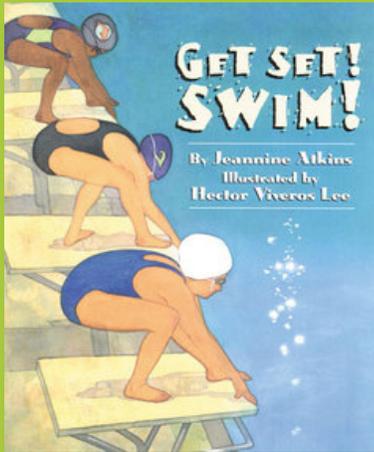


TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

Get Set! Swim!

written by Jeannine Atkins

illustrated by Hector Viveros Lee

Reading Level

Reading Level: Grade 3–4

Interest Level: Grades PreK–3

Guided Reading Level: N

Accelerated Reader® Level/
Points: 3.4/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: 580L

Genre: Realistic Fiction

Themes: Sports (Swimming), Identity, Self-Esteem and Confidence, Responsibility, Overcoming Obstacles, Persistence and Grit, Emotions (Embarrassment), Families (Siblings), Poverty, Optimism and Enthusiasm, Pride, Puerto Rico, Latino/Hispanic/Mexican Interest

Synopsis

The day of the big swim meet has finally arrived, and Jessenia is excited, but a bit worried too. It's her first meet away from home, and the other team is on a winning streak. Her coach tells the team that everyone is equal in the water, but Jessenia wonders if their team spirit is really enough to lead them to victory.

Readers of all ages will root with Jessenia's mother and little brother, Luis, for the team as they dive into the challenge of competition. *Get Set! Swim!* is the perfect reminder for young athletes that teamwork and pride are sometimes the truest victories of all.

Title is available in Spanish: *Preparadas... listas... ¡Ya!* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/preparadas-listas-ya>)



BACKGROUND

Competitive Swimming: Swimming is a lifesaving skill, a recreational pastime and form of exercise for many people, and also both an individual and team competitive sport. At a swim meet, swimmers participate in individual or relay races of different lengths in each of four strokes: freestyle, breaststroke, backstroke, and butterfly. Each swimmer participates in some of the events (not all), which are usually divided by age and gender. For events that include swimming more than one length of the pool, swimmers usually do a flip turn at the end of each length. A brief video showing a flip turn is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=8EL3v1saCQw>. For more detailed information about kids' competitive swimming and what a swim meet is like, see <https://www.verywellfamily.com/youth-sports-profile-kids-swimming-1257359> and <https://myswimpro.com/blog/2018/03/16/swim-meet-terminology-faqs/>.

Puerto Rico: Puerto Rico, an island located about 1000 miles (1600 kilometers) southeast of Miami, Florida, is a commonwealth of the United States. Puerto Ricans possess all the rights of U.S. citizens except for the right to vote in presidential elections, and they can move to and from the U.S. mainland without any immigration restrictions. The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico receives assistance and protection from the United States, but has its own government for local matters and a constitution modeled after the U.S. Constitution.

The original inhabitants of Puerto Rico were Taino Indians, who came from South America. Puerto Rico's Spanish heritage dates back to the arrival of Christopher Columbus on his second westward voyage in 1493. Today, Spanish is the main language spoken, although both Spanish and English are the official languages.

Analysis of census data from the Pew Research Center in 2013 reports that about 3.6 million people live on the island of Puerto Rico; the island's population has been declining due to peoples' outbound migration. The same report estimates there are 5.1 Hispanic people of Puerto Rican origin living in the United States, making this group the second largest group of people of Hispanic origin in the US after Mexicans. About two

thirds of this group was born in the United States. "Puerto Rican" is the most frequently used identity term. For more demographic information see <https://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/09/15/hispanics-of-puerto-rican-origin-in-the-united-states-2013/>. For student-friendly information on Puerto Rican geography and culture, see: <https://www.coolkidfacts.com/puerto-rico-facts/> and for many images of Puerto Rican beaches and other sites, visit <https://www.discoverpuertorico.com> or <https://welcome.topuertorico.org> (pre-screen images as some include alcohol).

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. Do you like to swim? Why or why not? Where do you like to swim?
2. How does it feel to be in a competition? What might someone in a competition think or feel?
3. How are team competitions and individual competitions the same? How are they different?

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Talk about the title of the book. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?

Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, author and illustrators' dedications, and illustrations.



VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below. Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

Content Specific

swim team, rival team, community center, Puerto Rico, stilts, palm leaves, swim meet, lizards, earlobes, dive, platform, goggles, lane

Academic

dreamy, brilliant, cling, compete, equal, mutter, advise, surface, thundering, recognize, triumphantly, marvelous, frothy, stream, gulp, gasp, nervous

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- what happens at Jessenia's swim meet
- what motivates Jessenia to do her best

Encourage students to consider why the author, Jeannine Atkins, would want to share this story with young people.

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. Where is Jessenia's family going? What do they each bring? How do they get there?
2. What does Mami talk about on the bus?
3. What does Jessenia think about on the bus?
4. What are the girls worried about as they get ready for the meet? What does Coach say to reassure them?
5. What's the older girls' race like? What does Jessenia see?
6. What does Jessenia think about as her race starts? What happens during her race?
7. What does Jessenia do after her first race?
8. What does Jessenia think about as she gets ready for her second race? What happens in the race?
9. How does Jessenia's team react after the race? How does Mami react?
10. What does Mami give Jessenia after the meet?



Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. Why is Jessenia scared on the bus? What does the author mean, “As the space between the houses widened, so did the empty space inside Jessenia?” How is Weston different than Jessenia’s neighborhood?
2. Why do you think it was important to Jessenia’s mother that her children learned to swim?
3. What do you think Coach means by, “Everyone is equal in the water?”
4. How does Coach respond after Jessenia gets distracted in her first race? How does her family respond? How else could they have responded and how might that have impacted Jessenia’s feelings?
5. Why do you think Jessenia “cheered even louder and hugged her friends even harder” as the meet when on, even though her team was losing?
6. How is Jessenia’s second race different than her first? What do you think helped her win?
7. Why is Mami’s gift significant? Why do you think she gave the earrings to Jessenia? Do you think she would have given the earrings to her no matter how the meet turned out? Why or why not?
8. Why is the ending of the book —when the sky had “turned a brighter blue” and Jessenia calls, “We’ll be back!”— significant?
9. Why do you think the author wanted to share this story with young people?

Reader’s Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. Suggest that students respond in reader’s response journals, essays, or oral discussion. You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. Why are family stories like Mami’s important for both the storyteller and the listeners?

2. Make a list of reasons Jessenia is motivated to do her best in swimming, based on evidence from the book. Make a list of reasons you’re motivated to do your best in an activity that is important to you.
3. *Mindset* is how one thinks about oneself and one’s ability to handle a situation. Why is mindset important when trying to achieve something challenging? Give examples from the book and your own life.
4. What is good sportsmanship? How do Jessenia and her teammates show good sportsmanship during their meet? Why is sportsmanship an important part of competitive sports?
5. How can competition be both positive and negative? Give at least one example from the book. How do you feel about competition? Does it positively or negatively impact your performance?
6. How does support from others help Jessenia do her best? Share specific examples from the story. Write about a time when support from others helped you do your best, or about a time when you supported someone else so they could do their best.
7. What does it mean to feel proud? Write about how Jessenia was proud in the story. Write about a time you felt proud.

ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students’ level of English proficiency, after the first reading:



- Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
 - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about a favorite activity. Or, have students share stories or memories told by their own parents or other family members.
 5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.
 6. This book contains many specific references to competitive swimming. Act out several sample scenes if students are not familiar with swimming (e.g., diving off the starting block, tapping the wall.)
 7. Title is available in Spanish: *Preparadas... listas... ¡Ya!* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/preparadas-listas-ya>)

Social and Emotional Learning

(*Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6*)
(*Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6*)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships. Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of *Get Set Swim*:

1. Have students chart Jessenia's emotions over the course of the story. How does she feel when she's

interacting with each character in the story? Use the illustrations as a visual reference and way to tap into students' visual literacy skills.

2. What Social and Emotional Learning skills does the narrator exhibit over the course of the book? (some examples include problem-solving, grit and perseverance, and perspective taking) How do they influence her character? Why was it important for her to demonstrate those skills?
3. Encourage students to think about Social and Emotional Learning skills they have used to achieve something that they are passionate about. How does it relate to how Jessenia accomplished her goal?
4. Have students in an essay argue whether Jessenia is a role model for young people or not. What evidence can students find in the text that demonstrates Jessenia's character and whether the author encourages young people to emulate her or draw caution from her.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(*Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably*)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English/Language Arts

(*Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3 and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 9*)

(*Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6*)

1. Compare this title to other books about characters striving to succeed at activities they love, such as *Allie's Basketball Dream* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/allie-s-basketball-dream>), *The Hula-Hoopin' Queen* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-hula-hoopin-queen>), or *Catching the Moon: The Story of a Young Girl's Baseball Dream* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/catching-the-moon>).



leeandlow.com/books/catching-the-moon). What challenges do the characters experience? What or who helps them triumph?

2. Use this text as a mentor text when working on narrative writing. List and study example of craft moves such rich descriptions, sensory details, dialogue, internal monologue, and comparisons. Encourage students to incorporate these techniques in their own writing.
3. Read the author's note about her inspiration for writing this book found on her website (http://www.jeannineatkins.com/books/get_swim.htm). Have students write persuasive essays about the qualities of a good coach, why it is important for all children to have opportunities to participate in sports and other activities.

Math

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)

1. Measure out the distances of common swim races (e.g. 50, 100, 200, 500 yards.) Have students figure out how many lengths of a 25-yard pool each distance would be.
2. Look up winning times or records (local, national, or world) for various swim events. Have students practice timing that amount of time on a stopwatch or clock to get a sense of how long a race feels. Or, write story problems featuring Jessenia and teammates to help students practice adding or comparing amounts of time.

Art

*(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3)*

1. Re-read sections from the book in which Mami describes Puerto Rico. Have students paint or draw what they imagine.
2. Study how the illustrator included images of Puerto Rico in his illustrations of the pool. Talk about why he may have chosen to do this. Have students create realistic drawings or paintings that also show meaningful imaginary details.

Social Studies

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)

1. Locate Puerto Rico on a map or globe and talk more about its geographical positioning and features. Share images from one of the websites in the background section of this guide and have students choose aspects of Puerto Rican geography or culture to research in more detail and report back to the class.
2. Have interested students help research local options for swim lessons, community swim teams, or water safety courses and share information with the class and families. Talk about why learning to swim is an important skill whether you choose to swim recreationally or competitively or not.

Science

*(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)
(Writing Standards, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)*

1. Have students pose science questions related to the story, such as “What makes water look blue?” “What are the differences between a pool and the ocean?” or “What makes the sky look blue?” Guide students in forming hypotheses, researching their questions, and sharing their findings.
2. Invite interested students to do more research about lizards and share their findings with the class.

Physical Education

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)

1. Show students the arm movements of various swim strokes. Hold relay races in which participants run or walk forwards or backwards while doing the different arm strokes.

School-Home Connection

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)

1. Compose interview questions as a class and ask each student to interview an older person about where they grew up. Include questions about the landscape and the person's childhood pastimes. Share and compare responses as a class.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jeannine Atkins is the author of numerous books, including *Aani and the Tree Huggers* and *Get Set! Swim!* which was named a “Choices” selection by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center. Many of her books highlight achievements of real or fictional girls and women. She lives in Massachusetts with her husband and their daughter. Visit her online at jeannineatkins.com.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Hector Viveros Lee was born in Calexico, California. He attended the Academy of Art in San Francisco, where he lives and works as an elementary school teacher. His hobbies include photography, jogging, and travel. Lee has also written and illustrated the Lee & Low titles, *I had a Hippopotamus*.

ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

LEE & LOW BOOKS is the largest children’s book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, “about everyone, for everyone,” is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company’s goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at leeandlow.com.

ORDERING INFORMATION

On the Web:

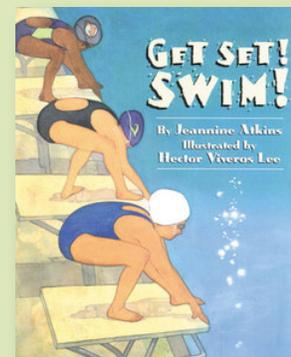
www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering (general order information)

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/get-set-swim> (secure online ordering)

By Phone: 212-779-4400 ext. 25 | **By Fax:** 212-683-1894

By Mail: Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Book Information for *Get Set! Swim!*



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*Reading Level: Grade 3-4

Interest Level: Grades PreK–3

Guided Reading Level: N

Accelerated Reader® Level/
Points: 3.4/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: 580L

THEMES: Sports (Swimming), Identity, Self-Esteem and Confidence, Responsibility, Overcoming Obstacles, Persistence and Grit, Emotions (Embarrassment), Families (Siblings), Poverty, Optimism and Enthusiasm, Pride, Puerto Rico, Latino/Hispanic/Mexican Interest

RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/get-set-swim>

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.