



**Classroom Guide for
WATER ROLLS, WATER RISES/ EL
AGUA RUEDA, EL AGUA SUBE**

Written by **Pat Mora**
Illustrated by Meilo So

Reading Level

*Reading Level: Grade 3
Interest Level: Grades 1–6
Guided Reading Level: R

*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Themes

Water, Earth Systems, Natural Resources, Environment/Nature, Geography, Cultural Diversity, Global Cultures, Bilingual Texts, Poetry, Nonfiction

Synopsis

Here is a poetic ode to the beauty of the natural world as expressed by the movement, moods, and majesty of water on Earth. In a series of poetic verses in English and Spanish, readers learn about the movement and moods of water around the world and the ways in which water affects varied landscapes and cultures.

From the Grand Canal of Venice to Qutang Gorge in China, from the Sahara in Morocco to the Andes of Chile, from the canals in Holland to the coast of Mexico, readers learn about the world through the lens of water, our most precious, life-giving resource.

With each evocative verse, we visit one of fourteen different water landscapes and cultural areas around the world, places of beauty shaped or carved by water. Readers glimpse the endless grandeur, power, and serenity of water. Every landscape is stunningly illustrated to convey a sense of the drama, joy, power, serenity, grandeur, or peacefulness of water.

BACKGROUND

Author's Note: Water fascinates me, perhaps because I've spent most of my life in the Southwest desert region of the United States. The sound of rain is welcome music on a dry and thirsty landscape. Creeks and rivers refresh desert dwellers, and lakes—so much water—seem a surprise. Lightning and downpours startle. Snow softens

mountains, hills, cactuses, rocks. I've also had the good fortune to travel to and savor varied landscapes, cultures, and water features in the United States, and in India, China, Holland, Peru, Finland, Canada, Greece, and Mexico. Oceans always astound me. I've marveled at grand waterways and at children splashing in pools and brooks. Water—essential, cleansing, soothing—is a research interest of my husband, Vern Scarborough, a professor of archaeology. I have benefited from his knowledge, and also from his enthusiasm about the wonder of water and the importance of valuing this glorious natural resource.

Water Cycle: The water cycle refers to the continuous movement of water on, above, and below the surface of the earth. Water is always changing states between liquid, gas (vapor), and solid (ice). NBC Learn and the National Science Foundation collaborated at Science360.gov to create a six-minute video exploring the stages of the water cycle.¹ The same amount of water exists today as millions of years ago, although the breakdown of water in each of the states has varied over time. The US Geological Survey provides a detailed graphic available [here](#)² and younger student-friendly version is available [here](#).³

According to the [U.S. Geological Survey](#), more than 97% of all water on Earth is salty.⁴ Of the less than 3% that is freshwater, 68% is locked up in ice and glaciers and 30% is underground. Yet it is from the remaining 2% of freshwater that most people get their water every day. Water can move through the cycle immediately or over the course of millions of years. For example, water can evaporate from a puddle relatively quickly compared to glaciers melting into the oceans. Water moves between the oceans, land, and atmosphere. [NASA's Precipitation Measurement Missions](#) offers a Water Cycle curriculum with lesson plans and videos exploring the water cycle in depth.⁵

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

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

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

1. Take a look at the front and back covers. Take a picture walk. Ask students to make a prediction. Do you think this book will be fiction or nonfiction? What makes you think so? What clues do the author and illustrator give to help you know whether this book will be fiction or nonfiction?
2. What do you know about texts that are written in poetry format? What are the typical text features of poetry? What are some things that you might not find in poetry? Why do you think some authors write books using poetry? How do you think their reasons differ from authors who write prose?
3. What do you know about water? What do you know about the water cycle? Describe water using your five senses. What are some ways people use water? How is water important to life on Earth?
4. Why do you think I chose this book for us to read today?

¹ <http://science360.gov/obj/video/e540c490-739f-47d4-b03e-f52e04918fcb/sustainability-water-water-cycle>

² <http://water.usgs.gov/edu/watercycle.html>

³ <http://water.usgs.gov/edu/watercycle-kids.html>

⁴ <http://water.usgs.gov/edu/watercycle.html>

⁵ <http://pmm.nasa.gov/education/water-cycle>

Exploring the Book

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

Read and talk about the title of the book. Ask students what they think the title means. Then ask them what they think this book will most likely be about and who the book might be about. What places might be talked about in the text? 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, illustrations, author's note, about the images in the book section, and dedications.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

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

Have students read to find out about:

- how humans and cultures use and interact with water
- how water affects different environments
- the different ways and places water is found on Earth
- to what the book title, *Water Rolls, Water Rises*, refers

Encourage students to consider why the author and poet, Pat Mora, would want to share this story with young people. Have students also read to determine why the text is written in both English and Spanish.

VOCABULARY

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

The story 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 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

plumes	canyons	twilight	canals	tulips	wisps
marsh	reservoirs	shimmers	bubbles	spangle	sloshes
moss	gurgles	bends			

ACADEMIC

slithers	quenches	dawn	smooth	gliding	scattered
lonely	bare	plunges	brash	whisper	careening
murmur	slumbers				

If your class has Spanish-speaking students, encourage them to volunteer to read and translate the words for their classmates. In doing so, these students can feel proud of sharing the role of teacher to their peers. Students may also discuss how the meanings of the words compare between the Spanish and English versions.

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 and 3)

1. What forms, or states, of water are mentioned in the different geographic locations? Which place(s) has more than one state of water in it? List all the states of water you see depicted in the illustrations (fog, river, mist, etc.).
2. What is an example of a verse, or stanza, in the book? What is an example of a line in a verse?
3. Select one of the verses/stanzas in the poem and focus on the description words. What adjectives are used to describe the place? How do those words make you feel? What images do they bring to mind?
4. Study one of the illustrations in the book. How do the people or animals in the scene use and/or interact with the type of water shown?
5. List all the words in the book that the author, Pat Mora, uses to describe water moving quickly. List all the words that she uses to describe water moving slowly. Is *slithers and snakes* a description of water moving quickly or slowly? Is *careening down cliffs* a description of water moving quickly or slowly? What makes you think so?
6. Explain the ways humans are shown using water in the book.
7. Describe the main idea of *Water Rolls, Water Rises*.

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

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

1. Describe how water connects humans across cultures and continents based on *Water Rolls, Water Rises*.
2. How are the verses in the book arranged? Why might the lines and stanzas be arranged this way/in this order?
3. For the verse about the oasis in Morocco, what does the author, Pat Mora, mean when she describes the water there as *drowsy*? For the verse about the water near the village in Greece, what does she mean when she describes the water there as *seeking the sea*?
4. Compare and contrast the verses and illustrations about water moving through the Grand Canyon and moving through northern Minnesota. How is the movement of water similar or different in both places? How are people using the water in each? How does the water's movement impact its environment in each place? Which would be a better place to teach someone to swim? Why do you think so?
5. How are all the featured places with water similar to one another? How are they different from one another? What elements make each of them unique?
6. The author, Pat Mora, uses figurative language in throughout the book. Identify an example of a metaphor, a simile, and personification.
7. Study how people in the book interact with the water around them. What states of water are most useful to people? Why? What are the benefits of living near water?
8. How do the types of water impact how people use the water around them? For example, how does water in a river influence how people use it compared to water underground or in an ocean?
9. Why does the author choose to begin and end the book with describing water under the sun and the moon? How do these lines relate to the central idea of the book?

10. Why do you think the author titled the book, *Water Rolls, Water Rises*? Do you think this is the best title for the book? Why? If not, describe what a better title might be and why you think it would be better.
11. The author, Pat Mora, has spent most of her life in the Southwest desert region of the United States. How do you think living in that environment influenced her to write a book about water?
12. What would happen to the places in this book if all the water in the world became frozen, evaporated, or overly polluted? Why? What would happen to all life? Why do you think so?
13. How do the author, Pat Mora, and the illustrator, Meilo So, use the different places in the book to show the dependency of humans on water and the interconnectedness of different cultures around the world?
14. What does this book teach us about humans' place in the global ecosystem? What does this book teach us about the water cycle?
15. The text of the book is presented in both English and Spanish. Why do you think the author chose to share the story in two languages?

Reader's Response

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

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. What kinds of water environments described in the book are most interesting to you? Why do you find them interesting? Write a short passage about what you like about the place or places you chose.
2. What is your favorite place with water? Write a letter to a friend or relative about a time you visited a body of water. Was the body of water natural or human-made? Who was with you? What did you do?
3. If you could visit one place featured in the book, which would you choose? Why?
4. April 22 is Earth Day. What parts of *Water Rolls, Water Rises* make this book a great example for an Earth Day read aloud? Why? How does this book advocate for protecting and celebrating the environment?
5. Think of a time you or someone you saw demonstrated respect toward water. Describe how this moment involved respecting water. What are ways that people might harm water sources? Why is it important to conserve, clean up, and not pollute water? What advice would you give someone who could do a better job respecting and conserving water?

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. Students who speak Spanish can help with the pronunciations of the Spanish words in the book.

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 how humans use and rely on water or a special place they have been to that has water.
5. The book contains some 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.

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.

Science

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writings Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. Have students research the water cycle. How does water travel from one part of the world to another? Now take a look at *Water Rolls, Water Rises* again. Which verses and illustrations demonstrate precipitation? Evaporation? Collection? etc. Check the resources included in the background section to help students get started.
2. Have students research the risks the water cycle and water environments face. How have humans affected the water cycle, water environments, and water quality? Why is it challenging to protect water resources?
3. Pair *Water Rolls, Water Rises* with [Cycle of Rice, Cycle of Life](#),⁶ [Everglades Forever: Restoring America's Great Wetland](#),⁷ or [The Mangrove Tree: Planting Trees to Feed Families](#)⁸ to learn study different ways humans use and rely on each stage of the cycle. How do humans use water to acquire food? What is the impact of humans on bodies of water, the water cycle, and/or water habitats? How do humans help protect the bodies of water featured in the texts? What suggestions do these books offer to take care of water and water environments?
4. Try some of the in-class [science experiments](#)⁹ about water that the American Museum of Natural History created for its "[Water: H₂O=Life](#)" exhibit.¹⁰ There is an educator's guide and activities for grades K–4, 5–8, and 9–12.

⁶ <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2704>

⁷ <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2390>

⁸ <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2747>

⁹ <http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/water-h2o-life/promos/for-educators-water>

5. Have students explore how we use and get running water. Check out the "[New York City Water Story: An Interactive Animation](#)" created by the American Museum of Natural History, which explores the largest water system in the world.¹¹

Geography/Social Studies

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

(Writings Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)

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

1. Review the information on the About the Images in the Book page at the back of the book. Have students pick one of the places featured to research further. In what country and/or on what continent is the place located? What type of body of water is shown (lake, river, ocean, etc.)? How do humans use this body of water? How are humans protecting it? What challenges does it face? What is the climate like? Describe the animals and plants found there.
2. Have students either use the largest city in their state or one of the places featured in *Water Rolls, Water Rises* to study the geography of the place and its proximity to water. When was this place first settled? What body of water does this place rely on for consumption and trade? What makes the geography and location important for the city? What role has the body of water had in the place's history? How has the body of water influenced the success (in wealth and growth) of the city over a period of time? What challenges does the water source face today and how is the city addressing these issues?
3. Provide students with a world map. (An outline of a Robinson projection world map can be downloaded [here](#) for reproduction.)¹² Ask students to mark on the map the location of each place featured in the book. In addition, have students identify and label the seven continents, five major oceans, and the largest lake and river on each continent. Students should also mark their location on the map. Discuss what a compass rose is and the purpose it serves on a map. Students may also build their own maps at [National Geographic Education's MapMaker 1-Page Maps](#).¹³

Writing/English Language Arts

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

(Language Standards, Conventions of Standard English, Strand 1)

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 5)

1. Have students write a letter to the author, Pat Mora, recommending another place she could feature in the book. Students should make a case as to why their special water place should be in the book and how it adds to the verses already included.
2. Have students study the structure and word patterns of the verses in the book so they can write their own verses. Suggest that students select three to five water places of their own choosing to illustrate and describe how the water moves (or doesn't move) there. Consider bringing in pictures of other famous bodies of water or water environments for students to observe and select. Each place should be written about and illustrated on a separate piece of paper and stapled together with a cover to present to their families or assembled into a classroom book about water environments.
3. Imagine an alien from a planet without water is visiting your classroom. How would students explain what water is? Have them describe, in a letter to the alien guest,

¹⁰ <http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/water-h2o-life>

¹¹ <http://www.amnh.org/education/resources/rfl/web/nycwater/?p=1>

¹² <http://www.worksheetworks.com/geography/world/robinson.html>

¹³ http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/map/?ar_a=3&map_types=55

what water is and the features of water. How do humans use water? Where do humans get water? What makes water special? What would happen to people, plants, animals, and weather if Earth didn't have water?

4. The author, Pat Mora, uses a lot of verbs, adverbs, and adjectives to describe the movement of water. Have students look for and list words she uses that describe water moving quickly and then list words she uses for water moving slowly. What other descriptions can students think to add to both lists to describe the movement of water? A dictionary and/or thesaurus may be helpful for finding synonyms.
5. Ask students to make a chart with a column for the following literary techniques: simile, metaphor, personification, assonance, and rhythm. Review or teach what each of these literary techniques is and its purpose. In the chart, have students find and record an example of each that they find in *Water Rolls, Water Rises*. For definitions of the literary devices, check out [Literarydevices.net](http://literarydevices.net).¹⁴

Art

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

1. Try to provide watercolor paints for students to use. Allow students to study a photograph or clipping of a place of natural beauty and then try to paint it. Have students first sketch in pencil and follow up with watercolors.
2. Have students try two different methods of painting with watercolors. Like above, let students paint with watercolors on dry paper (as normal). Then have them try painting with watercolors on a second piece of paper, "painting" it first with water and then painting on the wet paper with the watercolor paints. Compare the two methods and how the paint moves on the dry versus wet paper.
3. Using either the wet or dry painting method, allow students to put a small amount of salt on their still wet watercolor paintings. Discuss what happens. How does the salt affect the paint and overall image? Alternatively, have students draw a picture with crayons and then add watercolor paint. What interactions do they notice between the crayons and watercolor paints?
4. Encourage students to sketch, draw, or collect images from magazines or newspapers that show the ways in which their family, school, or community uses water. Make sure to include images of where you get water, including the types of bodies of water where the water originates or where in a building you get the water.

Physical Education

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

(Language Standards, Conventions of Standard English, Strand 1)

In each verse in the book, have students identify the main action verbs. What action of water is described in each verse? With students, create and practice a specific action for each verb. As you re-read the text, have students act out those movements, having students move as the water moves. Great verbs to try include: *rolls, rises, weaves, twists, twirls, plunges, races, rests, slumbers*. Discuss and share with students which was their favorite action of water.

Home-School Connection

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 2 and 3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strand 7)

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

1. Encourage students to interview a parent, a guardian, or an adult mentor about their experiences with water. What does the person know about water? What places with

¹⁴ <http://literarydevices.net/>

water are special to her or him? What memories does the person have about water in some form? How do humans use water? What ways to take care of and show respect toward water would the person recommend?

2. Have students with their families make a list of all the things that they do in day that require water. If you suddenly didn't have water at your home, where could you go to get water? Estimate how much water you use in a day and reflect on what you would do if you had to live without running water.
3. Illustrator Meilo So painted scenes of water in natural states. If possible, go to a park with a stream, lake, or river. What is happening around the water? Create a drawing on paper of the scene. How would your picture change based on changes in the time of day? The time of year?
4. Ask students to work with a family member to research a well-known place in their community, city, or state that has a large body of water. Where is it located? What type of water is there? What types of animals and plants live in or near this water? What challenges or risks does the place, the animals, and/or the plants face?
5. Have students select one of the places featured in the book (including the places on the front and back covers) and research a recipe from that country or region of the world. Encourage students to try making the recipe at home (with adult supervision) and bringing it to school to share with classmates. Have students write down their recipes to include in a class recipe book.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pat Mora, poet and author, has written more than thirty children's books, among them the award-winning *Gracias~Thanks* and *Yum! ¡MmMm! ¡Qué rico! Americas' Sproutings*, both published by Lee & Low Books. Mora is a popular national speaker and the founder of the family literacy initiative *El día de los niños/El día de los libros* (Children's Day/Book Day), sponsored by ALA. Mora's books have won many honors, including the Pura Belpré Award, ALA Notable Books, Américas Award, Texas Bluebonnet Masterlist, Notable Social Studies Trade Books, and Notable Books for a Global Society. Mora has always been fascinated by water, and international travel with her archaeologist (water expert) husband expanded her interest in water environments around the world. She lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Visit her on the web at patmora.com.¹⁵

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Meilo So has illustrated numerous award-winning picture books. Her work is consistently praised for its spontaneity and ability to capture the essence of a person, animal, place, or object with very few brush strokes. Animals and birds feature prominently in many of her books, and they appear wherever it seemed appropriate in *Water Rolls, Water Rises*. A native of Hong Kong, So now lives with her husband and their daughter in the Shetland Isles, Scotland, where they are surrounded by water. Visit her on the web at meiloso.com.¹⁶

Book Information

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*Reading Level: Grade 3

*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Interest Level: Grades 1–6

¹⁵ <http://www.patmora.com/>

¹⁶ <http://www.meiloso.com/wordpress/>

Guided Reading Level: R

Themes: Water, Earth Systems, Natural Resources, Environment/Nature, Geography, Cultural Diversity, Global Cultures, Bilingual Texts, Poetry, Nonfiction

RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

Learn more about *Water Rolls, Water Rises* at: <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2865>

ORDER INFORMATION

On the Web:

<https://www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering> (general order information)

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