

# PRESCHOOL

## READ

### In English

*Beware of the Crocodile* (2019) by Martin Jenkins and Satoshi Kitamura. A playful, STEM-friendly story about one of the world's most dangerous animals.

*The Biggest Frog in Australia* (1996) by Susan L. Roth. Striking illustrations and zany antics that beg to be shared in a group read-aloud.

*Dogosaurus Rex* (2017) by Anna Staniszewski and Kevin Hawkes. A funny story about a very special dog that is sure to be a storytime hit.

*Duck, Duck, Moose!* (2014) by Sudipta Badhan-Quallen and Noah Z. Jones. With only two words, toddlers and preschools can have fun reading along.

*Fabulous Frogs* (2018) by Martin Jenkins and Tim Hopgood. A great nonfiction read-aloud for a frog theme.

*Flight School* (2014) by Lita Judge. Storytime hit about a penguin with the soul of an eagle.

*Get off that Camel!* (2019) by A.H. Benjamin and Bala Shenoi. A little girl learns empathy through an obsession with her unique new pet. A catchy refrain will entice children to join in.

*Giraffes Can't Dance* (2012) by Giles Andreae and Guy Parker-Rees. Inspiring rhymes and rhythm for the read-aloud crowd.

*Great, Now We've got Barbarians!* (2017) by Jason Carter Eaton and Mark Fearing. A messy room attracts all kinds of pests; a goofy read-aloud for older preschoolers.

*Hero Cat* (2011) by Eileen Spinelli and Jo Ellen McAllister Stammen. Based on a real story about a cat who saved her kittens from a burning building. Good for heroic animal-themed read-alouds.

*Hippos Are Huge* (2017) by Jonathan London and Matthew Trueman. This title stands out as a solid nonfiction read-aloud about the deadliest animal in Africa.

*Hoot Owl, Master of Disguise* (2015) by Sean Taylor and Jean Jullien. Striking illustrations and tongue-in-beak narration. Recommended across the board.

*Koala Lou* (1994) by Mem Fox. An Aussie read-aloud favorite that is perfect for an Australia theme.

*Lion Lessons* (2016) by John Agee. Engaging read-aloud about what it takes to be a lion.

## STORYTIME TIP:

For children transitioning to kindergarten, emphasize what it means to be a good student. Practice the school rules of raising hands, listening to the teacher, and being kind to each other. *We Don't Eat Our Classmates* (2018) by Ryan T. Higgins is a good companion book for this theme.

## PRESCHOOL

*Never Let a Unicorn Scribble* (2019) by Diane Alber. A little girl has trouble teaching a unicorn to scribble, with magical results.

*Not Quite Narwhal* (2017) by Jesse Sima. This highly recommended update on “The Ugly Duckling” story makes for a whimsical storytime.

*Ocean Animals from Head to Tail* (2016) by Stacy Roderick and Kwanchai Moriya. A playful ocean-themed guessing game that makes for a lively read-aloud.

*Possum Magic* (1991) by Mem Fox. Magic bush possums. Another Aussie favorite.

*The Skunk* (2015) by Mac Barnett and Patrick McDonnell. Tight pacing and charming story makes this a good storytime choice that both children and grown-ups will enjoy.

*Snap!* (1996) by Marcia Vaughan and Sarah Hutchinson. A playful, fast-paced classic about animals Down Under.

*Stubby: A True Story of Friendship* (2018) by Michael Foreman. An Army dog becomes a hero in WWI; a starred SLJ selection.

*Unicorn Thinks He’s Pretty Great* (2013) by Bob Shea. Vivid illustrations and a silly storytime.

*We Don’t Eat Our Classmates* (2018) by Ryan T. Higgins. A fun read-aloud about Penelope the dinosaur’s first day of school. Great for preschoolers transitioning to kindergarten.

*You Don’t Want a Unicorn!* (2017) by Ame Dyckman and Liz Climo. A crowd-pleaser about how a pet unicorn might ruin your life.

*The Wonky Donkey* (2009) by Craig Smith and Cowly Katz. A rhyming cumulative read-aloud sure to elicit laughs.

## Bilingual/Spanish

*Adoptar un dinosaurio* (2019) by José Carlos Andrés and Ana Sanfelippo. After listing a cacophony of potential pets, a little girl ends up with a pet dinosaur. Charming art. (Spanish; also available in English)

*Frida Kahlo and Her Animalitos* (2017) by Monica Brown and John Parra. Lively book about Frida Kahlo’s unique pets. (English with Spanish words)

*La Princesa and the Pea* (2017) by Susan Middleton Elya. A Peruvian twist and a bilingual retelling of the classic fairy tale, with many beautifully illustrated animals as peripheral characters. Lively rhymes for a fun read-aloud. (English with Spanish words)

*Waiting for the Biblioburro* (2011) by Monica Brown and John Parra. This fun story about a library donkey in rural Columbia, with onomatopoeic Spanish words, is perfect for read-alouds. (English with Spanish words)

## STORYTIME TIP:

For children transitioning to kindergarten, emphasize social skills and empathy. Pass out simple animal faces with different expressions and ask, for example, how the animal would feel if you broke its favorite toy. How would the animal feel if you painted it a beautiful picture? How would the animal feel if it did not know anyone in the class?

## EARLY LITERACY TIP:

When reading picture books with children, almost 95% of their focus is on the pictures. To keep them engaged, stop reading occasionally and ask open-ended questions about the pictures.

## APP RECOMMENDATIONS:

Miximal, Loopimal, Drawnimal, and Bandimal by YatatoY. These apps all use humorous animals to engage children in different activities, such as drawing, wordplay, or music. Because each activity is open-ended, adults can engage with children as they play and explore.

## PRESCHOOL

### SING

#### Song: Down by the Bay

Down by the bay where the watermelons grow  
 Back to my home I dare not go  
 For if I do, my mother will say,  
 “Did you ever see a bear combing his hair  
 Down by the bay?”

*Repeat, adding different rhymes each time:*

“Did you ever see a whale with a polka dot tail?”

*Now add your own rhymes with animals or children’s names!*

#### Movement: Mother Gooney Bird

A traditional song with cumulative movement; sing to the tune of “Father Abraham.”

One wing, ready now! (flap one arm)

*Chorus:*

Mother Gooney Bird had seven chicks.  
 Seven chicks had Mother Gooney Bird.  
 And they couldn’t fly, and they couldn’t swim,  
 But they all could go like this

*Verses:*

Two wings, ready now! Chorus	(flap both arms)
Two wings, one foot, ready now! Chorus	(flap arms and one foot)
Two wings, two feet, ready now! Chorus	(flap arms and both feet)
Two wings, two feet, one head, ready now! Chorus	(flap arms, feet, and head)

*To end:*

Turn around, sit down!

#### Movement: Pajaritos a Bailar

Also known as “Chicken Dance” in English, there are many versions of this classic song worldwide. Play an audio version and let the children dance along.

Pajaritos a bailar,	(hands like beaks, snap four times)
Cuando acabas de nacer	(flap wings four times)
Tu colita has de mover.	(shake behind four times)
¡Pío, pío, pío, pío!	(clap hands four times)

### MORE DANCE PARTY SONGS!

For a Down Under theme, try “Thumpalina” by I Have a Go. Sample or purchase here: <https://amzn.to/2ycNus4>

For a frog theme, “Bean Bag Pretend” by the Learning Station leads children through different animal movements. Tape lily pads to the floor for children to hop on. Sample or purchase here: <https://bit.ly/36ccXi7>

## PRESCHOOL

## PLAY

**Frozen Sea Creatures**

Freeze narwhals, sea lions, walruses, and other plastic arctic creatures in ice, then put them in a sensory bin or table. Add blue food coloring to ice cubes to create depth and make the display more interesting.

**Parachute Duck, Duck, Moose**

Follow a reading of *Duck, Duck, Moose* with a parachute game of Duck, Duck, Goose! While the “goose” is running around the circle, the other children shake the parachute.

**Kindergarten Readiness**

Help preschoolers and caregivers prep for kindergarten! See Printables for a color-by-letter worksheet and a caregiver handout on kindergarten readiness

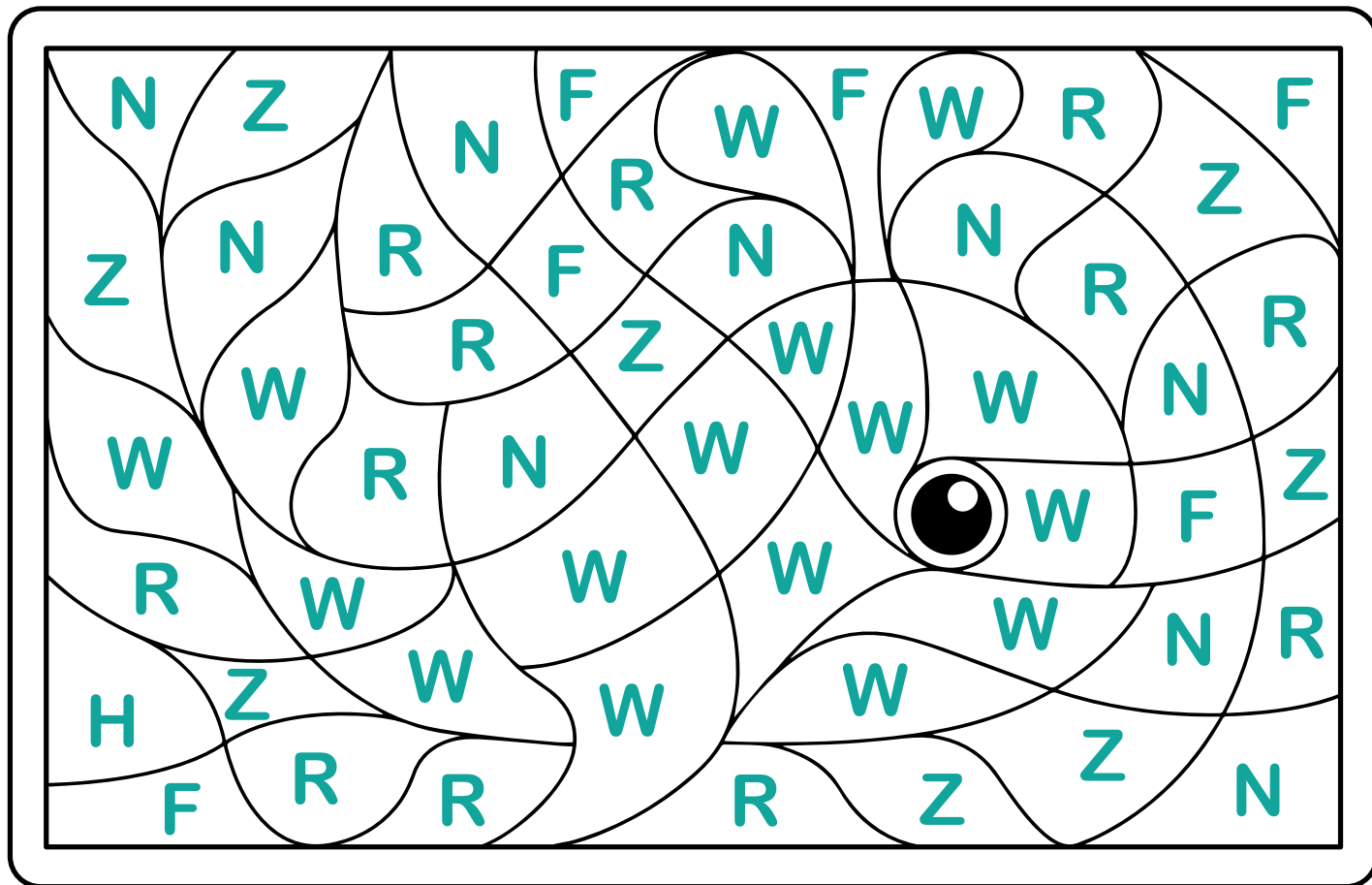
**TIP:**

See Chapter 05: Scrub a Dub Dub for more preschool activity ideas.

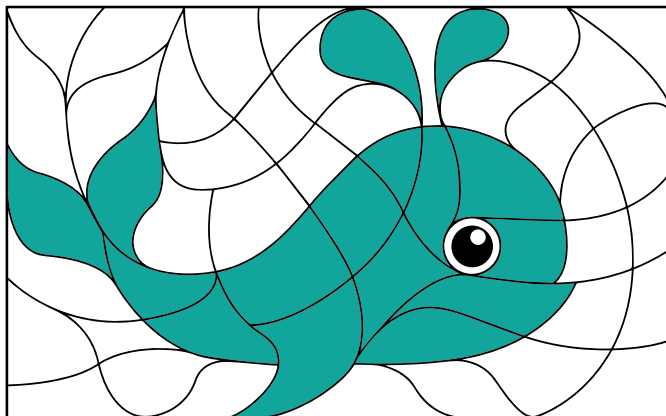
**EARLY LITERACY TIP:**

To build subject-level knowledge and vocabulary, include information postcards for each animal in the sensory bins.

# COLOR BY LETTERS



Answer  
WHALE



## KINDERGARTEN READINESS

**Simple activities to prepare your preschooler for kindergarten!**

- Check off items on a list of daily activities.
- Cross off days from a monthly or weekly calendar.
- Play an alphabet searching game: Choose a letter of the day and search for it out in the world (on license plates, in store names, etc.)
- Decorate a large envelope and designate it the “family mailbox.”  
Family members can write and draw letters to each other.
- Practice cutting out shapes.
- Practice tracing lines and letters.
- Practice counting similar objects.
- Sing rhyming songs
- Draw pictures.
- And, of course, read their favorite books every day!

