

Over and Under the Pond

READ ALOUD GUIDE

Themes: Nature, Habitats, Observation

Book Brief: Come along on a peaceful paddle across a pond! As a boy and his mother travel through the water, they discover a busy world of plants and animals living all around them.

Author:
Kate Messner

Illustrator:
Christopher Silas Neal



BEFORE READING

The Cover: Ask, “What do you think we might discover over the pond? What might be living underneath the water?”

The Pictures: Take a quick picture walk and encourage students to look closely for creatures that might be easy to miss.

Prior Knowledge: Ask, “What plants or animals might you see if you visited a pond?” (Think-Pair-Share)

Vocabulary: Frontload Tier 2 words using the accompanying [Vocabulary Guide](#).

Purpose for Reading: “As we read, pay attention to the different plants and animals the boy and his mother discover over and under the pond. Think about what we learn about how they live.”

DURING READING

Check for understanding & make connections:

- What plants and animals do the boy and his mother notice over the pond?
- What creatures do they discover underneath the water?
- What do we learn about what some of these animals are doing?
- What details in the words and pictures help you understand life at the pond?



Think Aloud: “I’m noticing that while the boy and his mother can easily see some creatures above the water, there is also a lot happening underneath them. I’m going to pay attention to what each new detail tells me about the animals and how they live in and around the pond!”

AFTER READING

Our Purpose: “What plants and animals did the boy and his mother discover over and under the pond? What did we learn about how some of them live?”

Extending Our Thinking: Ask students, “What surprised you most about life over or under the pond?” Revisit some of the plants and animals from the book and discuss what students learned about them. Have students choose one creature they found especially interesting, draw it in its pond habitat, and write or share one detail they learned about it.

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.



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KEEP READING & EXPLORING

Explore Your Community

Take a walk around your school, neighborhood, park, or another outdoor space. Look closely for plants, insects, birds, and other animals. Ask students to notice what is happening **above them**, **at their level**, and **below them**. Record discoveries through drawings, labels, or short notes.

Create an Ecosystem Adventure

Imagine you are exploring a habitat like the boy and his mother in the book. Choose a pond, stream, forest, garden, or park and create an illustrated scene showing what you might discover. Include details about what could be living **above**, **below**, and **around** you.

Look Closer

Choose one plant or animal from *Over and Under the Pond* that you want to know more about. Research it and record:

- Where does it live?
- What does it eat?
- How does it move?
- What is one interesting fact you learned?

Read More About Nature

Continue exploring nature, outdoor adventures, and the world around us with these book collections:

- [Rally to Read: Nature Collection](#) — Discover books and resources that encourage readers to explore and learn about the natural world.
- [Great Outdoors Collection](#) — Head outside with books and activities that celebrate outdoor exploration, discovery, and adventure.
- [Under the Stars Collection](#) — Explore stories and resources inspired by nighttime, nature, and adventures under the stars.