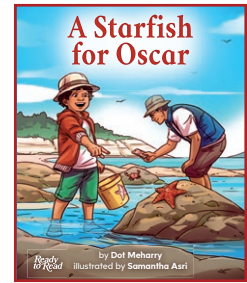# A Starfish for Oscar

by Dot Meharry
illustrated by Samantha Asri

This text is levelled at Red 1.

Overview

Oscar is looking in the rock pools for a starfish, but when he finds one, instead of putting it in his bucket, Dad tells Oscar to leave it where it is. He suggests they take a photo of the starfish instead. The final illustration shows that Oscar is quite happy with this option.

This story supports students to develop a self-extending reading processing system by helping them to "make meaning of text by applying their increasing ability to attend to the print detail and their growing knowledge of sentence structures and also by using their expanding vocabulary and the illustrations" (*The Literacy Learning Progressions*, page 10).

There is an audio version of the text as an MP3 file at www.readytoread.tki.org.nz

Cross-curriculum links

Science (levels 1 and 2, Living World: ecology) – Recognise that living things are best suited to their particular habitat.

Related texts

- Texts with links to the Living World: *Watch Me!* (shared); *At the Beach, Old Tuatara* (Magenta); *In the Bush* (Red 3)

- Texts about the beach: *What Does the Tide Bring In?* (shared); *At the Beach* (Magenta)

- Texts about family activities: *What Does the Tide Bring In?* (shared); *At the Beach, The Waterslide* (Magenta); *The Race* (Red 1); *Rain, Rain* (Red 2)

Text characteristics

The students are working towards the standard for after one year at school. Many of the characteristics of Green texts are also in texts at earlier levels but in simpler forms. These characteristics, as they relate to this text, are shown in the boxes.

The familiar setting at the beach and the familiar context of a family outing

Most content explicitly stated but also some implicit content that provides opportunities for students to make simple predictions and inferences (for example, why Oscar is not interested in the crab on page 3)

Illustrations that support and extend the meaning (for example, Dad's hand signal on page 6)

A range of punctuation, including speech marks, exclamation marks, and commas, to support phrasing and meaning

Some sentences that run over more than one line but do not split phrases, supporting return sweep and phrasing

Dialogue between easily identified speakers

"The starfish is not for you. The starfish lives here," said Dad.

6

"We can take a photo of the starfish," he said. "Here is my phone."

7

To support word recognition, many high-frequency words, several of which ("a", "Dad", "for", "Here", "is", "said") are repeated often, and common verbs ("Look", "looking", "shouted")

Interest words ("crab", "lives", "phone", "photo", "shouted", "starfish", "take") that are likely to be in the reader's oral vocabulary and are strongly supported by the context, the sentence structure, and the illustrations

Reading standard: After one year at school

The Literacy Learning Progressions

Suggested reading purpose

(What can the students expect to find out or think about as a result of reading this text?)

We are reading this book to find out if Oscar gets a starfish.

Possible learning goals

(What opportunities does this text provide for students to learn more about how to "read, respond to, and think critically" about texts?)

The behaviours listed below link to *The Literacy Learning Progressions*. **Select from and adapt** them to set your specific learning goal. Be guided by your students' particular needs and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for years 1–8*, Knowledge of the learner, page 6).

This text provides opportunities for students to:

- make connections between their own experiences and information in the text and illustrations to make predictions and inferences

- make meaning by drawing on more than one source of information, for example, meaning (context and illustrations), structural (sentence structure and word order), and visual information (print information including punctuation)

- continue building a reading vocabulary of high-frequency words

- read groups of words together in phrases and gain control over using a return sweep with multiple lines of text

- notice some errors in their reading and take action to self-correct.

Introducing the story

Use your knowledge of your students to ensure that the introduction to the text activates their prior knowledge and supports them for a successful first reading. This story uses vocabulary and language ("I am", "Here is", "Look") that students are likely to be familiar with from previous reading and writing.

- Before the lesson you could read the Ready to Read shared book *What Does the Tide Bring In?* to reinforce the setting and the context.

- For English language learners, use the cover of *A Starfish for Oscar* to introduce some of the topic-specific vocabulary ("crab", "starfish", "photo"). Provide the words in their first language as well as English and practise using them in conversation about the illustration.

- Tell the students the title and use the cover illustration to clarify the setting. Encourage the students to share any experiences they have of going to the beach, especially of looking in rock pools. Some students may be familiar with collecting kai moana.

- Ask them to infer who the characters are and what they are doing. *Why does Oscar have a bucket? What does he want to put in his bucket?* Expect them to predict that Oscar is looking for a starfish. Draw attention to Dad using his phone to take a photo of the crab.

- Share the purpose for reading.

- Use the illustration of the starfish on the title page as an opportunity to discuss where starfish live and the importance of them living near seawater.

- Browse through the illustrations on pages 2–7, discussing what Oscar and Dad are doing. Draw attention to the speech marks and explain that this shows that the characters are talking to each other.

- As part of the discussion, rephrase the students' responses or use prompts to elicit any new language structures and vocabulary. For example:

  – on pages 2 and 3, draw attention to the speech marks and clarify that this shows that the characters are talking. To support Oscar's dialogue, ask: *What is Oscar looking for? What do you think he's saying to Dad?*

  – on page 6, to support the students with "not for you", draw attention to Dad holding his hand up and ask: *Is the starfish for Oscar? What do you think Dad is saying?*

- On page 7, encourage the students to predict Dad's plan and what Oscar thinks of it, but leave them to confirm this when they read the text for themselves.

Monitoring the reading

- Watch and listen as the students read the text quietly to themselves, noting their ability to read the high-frequency words and groups of words together, their control of return sweep, and any instances of self-monitoring and self-correction. Provide support to individual students as necessary. For example:

  – page 2 – If a student has trouble getting started, ask: *What is Oscar telling Dad?*

  – page 6 – If necessary, ask: *Is the starfish for Oscar?*

  – page 7 – To support "take a photo", prompt the student to look at the illustrations to clarify what Dad is doing with his phone.

▯▯▯ **Sounds and words**

▯▯▯ **The Literacy Learning Progressions**

- If a student makes an error without noticing a problem, wait till the end of the sentence or page before intervening, unless they have stopped reading. Waiting gives students the opportunity to notice the error and fix it themselves.

- Use appropriate prompts to draw their attention to the error. For example:

Text	Student reads	Teacher prompt
"Here is a starfish for me," he said.	"Here is a starfish for me," **said Oscar.**	Prompt the student to attend to visual information. *That made sense, but have another look at this word* ("said"). *Read that again.*
"We can take a photo of the starfish," said Dad.	"We can **photo** a photo of the starfish," said Dad.	Prompt the student to use meaning and structure. *You said … does that make sense? Try that sentence again.*
"We can take a photo of the starfish," said Dad. "Here is my phone."	"We can take a photo of the starfish," said Dad. "Here is my **photo**."	*You're nearly right. This word starts the same way. What is Dad holding? … That's right, his phone. He's taking the* **ph**oto *with his* **ph**one (emphasise the initial digraphs). *Now try that again.*

- Other prompts you can use to encourage monitoring include: *You said … did that sound right to you?; Were you right?; Does that make sense?; This word starts like … ; Look at the beginning of the word. Would … fit in there?; Read that sentence again.*

- Remember to base these types of prompts on what you know about the students' prior knowledge. For example, asking an English language learner if a word sounds right may not be useful if they are not familiar enough with English phonemes and vocabulary to know the answer. In this case, an explanation and further examples would be more effective.

- Reinforce attempts to problem-solve whether a student is successful or not, for example: *When you got stuck on this word* ("photo")*, you went back and started again. That was a good thing to do.*

- For further suggestions about ways to support students to self-monitor (to cross-check, confirm, and self-correct), see *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4*, page 130.

- As students finish reading, they can quietly reread the story until everyone has finished.

Discussing the text after the first reading

- Remind the students of the reading purpose. *Oscar looks happy* (on page 8). *Did he get a starfish? What do you think he will do with the photo?*

- Prompt the students to think critically. *Why does Oscar want the starfish? Is it a good idea for him to take it away?*

- Have the students reread the text, stopping to discuss points of interest. You could draw attention to a text feature, such as particular high-frequency words, the digraph "ph" in "phone" and "photo", or the use of speech marks to indicate who is talking. Encourage the students to read the dialogue with expression.

After reading: practice and reinforcement

After-reading tasks should arise from monitoring the students' needs during the lesson and should provide purposeful practice and reinforcement. Where possible, make links to other reading texts, including texts generated from language experience and shared writing, and to the wider literacy programme (oral language, writing, handwriting, alphabet and word games and activities) and other curriculum areas.

Select from and adapt these suggestions, according to the needs of your students.

- After the discussion, ask the students to reread the story to a partner. Listen in, providing feedback and making notes about aspects that may need further attention. You may also use this time to do a quick running record with a student to provide more information on an aspect you have noticed.

- The students can build their comprehension and fluency by rereading the story while listening to the audio version. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.

- Provide many opportunities for the students to enjoy reading this story and other stories and poems about similar topics, particularly *At the Beach* and *What Does the Tide Bring In?* (see Related texts).

- Use resources from the school library and the Internet to provide some simple information about starfish. Students could make a pencil drawing and write two facts about starfish.

- The students could go for a walk with the teacher or a class helper and take some photos of the interesting things they see. They could create a group photo book or slide show with captions based on the language in the story (for example, "Look! Here is a red leaf for me," said Cara; "Look at my photo of the car," said Finn).

- Focus on the verb "looking" on pages 2 and 3. Have students work with a partner and take turns to find "looking" and read the sentence to their partner. Write "looking" and mask the ending to expose the root word. With the students, create a word family by adding "ed" and "s". You could repeat this with "shouted" on page 4.

- Have word games and activities available that reinforce automatic recognition of high-frequency words, for example, matching games and making words with magnetic letters. Provide bilingual word games and activities where appropriate.

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