

Teacher's Notes



Windy Hollow Books



Author's Notes

"Growing up with rivers in my backyard made me the luckiest kid on earth. Splashing and exploring the unexpected, the untamed and the creatures that call them home - from the creek on my childhood farm to rivers around the world - instilled in me a deep appreciation for all life that thrives in these waters.

"Rivers bring wonder, delight and endless adventure, but they're also critical lifelines, weaving through communities and ecosystems, shaping lives and connecting us wherever they flow."

Vikki Conley



Activities

Fun pop quiz for little river explorers!

1. Q: What funny animal has a duck bill and closes its eyes to find food in the water?

A: The platypus!

Fun fact: It's like they have a secret superpower to find yummy bugs underwater!

2. Q: What colorful bird loves to drink sweet juice from flowers by the river?

A: The rainbow lorikeet!

Fun fact: Their tongues are like little brushes to get all the sweet stuff!

3. Q: What buzzy little helper flies around and makes flowers grow?

A: The bee!

Fun fact: They wiggle their bodies really fast to shake the flower dust, called pollen. Did you know Australia has SO MANY native bees? More than 2,000 different kinds! Some are big and fuzzy, and some are teeny-tiny, some have blue stripes, but they're all important for making our flowers grow big and bright. They're like little flying gardeners and they love landing on the edge of rivers to sip the water.

4. Q: What slippery creature can live even when the river gets all muddy and low?

A: Fish!

Fun fact: Some fish are super tough and can hide in the mud until the water comes back! Eels can even travel over the land to seek out other water sources when their river dries up.

5. Q: What furry animal looks like a big rat but loves to swim and hunt in the water? A: The Rakali (water rat).

Fun fact: They have special fur that keeps them dry when they swim.

6. Q: What yucky things can make fish sad and sick in the river?

A: Nasty fish from other places and when the water changes too much from pollution. Fun fact: Some fish come from far away and make the water dirty, so our fish can't see or eat. And yucky things that wash into the water, like detergents, fertilizers from farms and plastic bags can harm fish and the clean water that they depend on to stay alive.

7. Q: What teeny tiny bugs live in the river and are yummy snacks for other animals? A: River insects!

Fun fact: Baby dragonflies live underwater for a long time before they grow wings and fly!

8. Q: What tricky thing does the boy platypus have on his foot?

A: A pointy spur!

Fun fact: It has a special poke that can hurt if you touch it, so we leave platypuses

Poetry & creative writing

Have students write a poem or story from the perspective of a river creature, inspired by *Where The River Runs Free*, using descriptive language to capture the sights and sounds of the river.

- Focus on strong use of onomatopoeias (repurpose some of the below copy to insert for this section). Spot all the onomatopoeia in the story and write them on the board to inspire the children.
- Use drama to experiment with these sounds eg be a duck, move like a platypus, be a fish! What sounds could they make?
- Be creative and make up your own original onomatopoeia words. Vikki loves doing this! Here are a couple of Vikki's favourites from the story:

Johnny's found something.

Wiggle, wiggle, slop.

1, 2, 3.

Giggle, giggle, plop.

Screechy-screechy wings that soar over green.

Trickle-wickle stream that blinks in the sun.

Scratch. Scratch. Crack. Crunch.

What a tasty lunch!



Activities

Flowing River Art

This activity allows children to explore their creativity and express their understanding of rivers through art. It encourages experimentation, collaboration and appreciation for the natural world.

Objective:

To encourage creative expression and explore the visual representation of rivers through art.

Materials:

- Long roll of paper or several sheets taped together.
- Variety of art materials (paint, crayons, markers, coloured pencils, pastels, aquawash brushes and watercolour pencils)
- Sponges, brushes, rollers or other tools for applying paint
- Optional: natural materials like leaves, twigs and sand

Art

Procedure:

1. River inspiration: Read aloud the story to inspired the artwork. You can also show images or videos of different rivers.
2. Flowing colours: Encourage students to experiment with different art materials and techniques to represent the flowing movement of a river. They can use long, sweeping strokes with brushes or create swirling patterns with sponges.
3. Adding texture: Introduce natural materials like leaves and twigs to create texture and depth in their artwork, the rocks, the edge, sandy islands. They can use these to print patterns, create outlines or build up layers in their river scene.
4. Collaborative mural: Have students work together on a large collaborative mural of a river. Each student can contribute a section of the river, showing different aspects of its journey or the creatures that live in and around it.
5. Reflection and discussion: Once the artwork is complete, encourage students to share their creative choices and discuss what they were trying to express through their art. Discuss how the different colours, textures and techniques contribute to the overall feeling of the artwork.

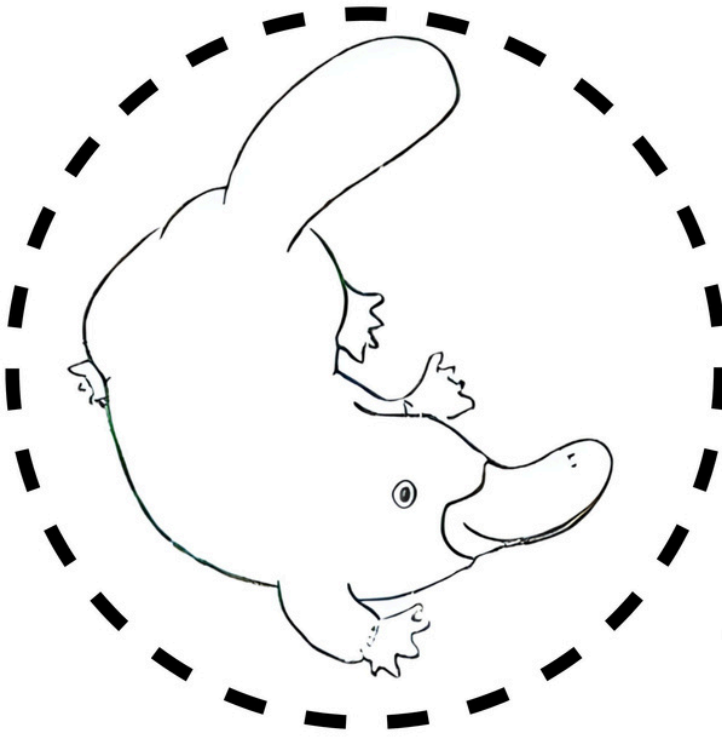
Where the River Runs Free



Colour in the characters,
cut them out along the
dotted lines and stick an
icypole stick to the back to
make your puppet.



Where the River Runs Free



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River Collage

Hey there! Ready to create your own river adventure?

Cut out the creatures and kids to make a collage. Add twigs, petals or leaves to bring it to life. Draw a river, a platypus or new friends. Add speech bubbles to tell your story!

