

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

124A: SPEEDY SWIMMING

Written by
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Elinor's Question: *Why do ducks have webbed feet?*

Logline: *When the kids see Ranger Rabbit swimming speedily in the local lake, they take inspiration from a duck's webbed feet and learn why fins can help them swim fast.*

Curriculum Goals: LS2c. Compare how the external body parts of animals and plants are the same and/or different. [The kids compare their feet to the webbed feet of aquatic animals.]

LS2d. Explore how different external features of an animal help it survive in its environment. [The kids discover that webbed feet help aquatic animals move through the water.]

ET2b. Use a variety of low-tech tools including writing, drawing and painting utensils, scissors, magnifiers, balance scales, ramps, pulleys, hammers, screwdrivers, sieves, tubing, binoculars, whisks, measuring cups. [The kids use swim fins to enhance their swimming ability.]

ND3. Understand that structures and materials in the natural world can be used or can inspire the engineering of structures with similar function in the designed world. [The kids discover that webbed feet and swim fins use the same principles. Swim fins give them "webbed feet" and help them push more water.]

SEP1c. Ask and/or identify cause and effect questions that can be answered by an investigation. [The kids wonder if fins help push more water, and they investigate this by running their hands through the water.]

SEP3b. Compare and contrast objects and events by describing similarities and differences in detail. [The kids compare swim fins to webbed feet.]

SEP3d. With guidance, plan and conduct simple investigations using simple tools. [Elinor runs her open hand and closed hand through the water to see which one pushes more water.]

Main Characters: Elinor, Olive, Ari, Mr. Rabbit, Ranger Rabbit (in bathing suits)

Props: Beach chair, pinecone, trophy, ducks, turtle, frog, goggles, life jackets, goggles, slipper, cookie swim fins, handmade medals

Locations: Lake shore, lake water

FIRST DRAFT: 30-Aug-19
SECOND DRAFT: 23-Sep-19
POLISH DRAFT: 23-Oct-19
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It's a beautiful summer day. MR. RABBIT and RANGER RABBIT are taking ELINOR, OLIVE, and ARI to a new place: A lake that's perfect for swimming. Ranger Rabbit is carrying a ratty-looking bag (it's her old swim bag from when she was a kid). Mr. Rabbit is carrying bags and a folded beach chair. (DESIGN NOTE: All are in bathing suits (or beach wear) and the kids are wearing life jackets)

3 RANGER RABBIT 3
We're very close.

4 RANGER RABBIT (CONT'D) 4
And we're here. My favorite
swimming spot.

9 ELINOR 9
Really, Mom?

10 RANGER RABBIT 10
Yup! Here, let me show you. It's in
my old swim bag somewhere...

ANGLE ON: Ranger Rabbit reaches into her swim bag and fumbles
around. She pulls out a pinecone.

11 RANGER RABBIT (CONT'D) 11
Nope, that's not a trophy.
(A frog jumps out. With a
<SFX: RIBBIT>, it hops
away.)
How'd YOU get in there?
(She pulls out a small
trophy and holds it up.)
Aha!

CU: The trophy, which has a bronze swimming rabbit on top.
BACK ON: the kids, who are impressed.

12 ELINOR 12
Wow! Awesome, Mom.
(to her Dad)
Hey Dad, have you ever won any
trophies?

Mr. Rabbit has set up the beach chair.

13 MR. RABBIT 13
Not yet. Do they give out trophies
for "Silliest Dad"?

He makes a funny face, then does a silly dance that
culminates in his plopping down on the chair <SFX: AHHH>. The
kids <SFX: LAUGH>. Ranger Rabbit reaches into her swim bag
and takes out goggles to hand out to the kids.

14 ELINOR 14
I'm gonna swim really fast, just
like you, Mom.

15 ARI 15
Me too. Fast as a fish.

16 OLIVE 16
I'm gonna swim as fast as TWO fish
in a fish race!

The kids, now in their goggles <SFX: GIGGLE>. (NB: The kids
can keep their goggles on and move them to their foreheads
when necessary - whatever is easiest) Ranger Rabbit puts on
her goggles.

17 RANGER RABBIT 17

Okay, kids. I'm going to go swim in the deep part of the lake. You stay in the shallow part. Mr. Rabbit will keep an eye on you.

Mr. Rabbit waves, he's on the case. The kids all <SFX: YAY>
as they scramble into the water.

2. EXT. LAKE WATERS - A MINUTE LATER

The kids are about waist-deep in shallow water.

18 ELINOR 18
Okay, who's ready to swim really
fast? On your marks... get ready...
get set... GO.

The kids jump in and swim a bit, with flailing and <SFX: SPLASHING>. Then they stand up.

19 OLIVE 19
 Hmm, we didn't get very far.

20 ARI 20
I don't think we went very fast,
either.

ANGLE ON: Elinor, who looks thoughtful and turns to watch her Mom swim. PAN to Ranger Rabbit, who's swimming speedily in the deeper part of the lake.

21 ELINOR (O.S.) 21
Wow. Look at my Mom go. She sure is
fast.

BACK ON: The kids. A flock of 2-3 ducks paddle into view and swim swiftly in front of them.

22 OLIVE 22
She's not the only speedy swimmer.
Look at these ducks go.

CU: The ducks paddling along. We can't see their feet.

23 ELINOR 23
How do they swim so fast?

24 OLIVE 24
(loudly)
Hey ducks, what's your secret?

A duck <SFX: QUACKS> back to Ari as it goes by. Elinor and Ari <SFX: LAUGH>.

25 ELINOR 25
I wish WE could find a way to speed
up our swimming.

ANGLE ON: Mr. Rabbit waving at the kids.

26 MR. RABBIT 26
Hey speedy swimmers, are you ready
for a snack break?

BACK ON: the kids, who <SFX: YEAH>. They run towards the sand.

3. EXT. LAKE SHORE - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Rabbit meets the kids with towels so they can dry off. Elinor rubs herself so vigorously with the towel that her goggles come flying off. ANGLE ON: the goggles land in the sand next to a resting duck. The duck stands up and shuffles aside, <SFX: QUACKING> in alarm.

27 ELINOR 27
 Oops, sorry, duck.

Elinor runs over to get the goggles. As she bends down, she looks more closely at the duck and is immediately distracted. CU: the duck's webbed feet.

28 ELINOR (CONT'D) 28
(to herself)
Hey. This duck's feet are SO
INTERESTING. It has 1, 2, 3 toes,
and they're joined together by the
skin in between them! Why does the
duck have feet like that?

29 MR. RABBIT (O.S.) 29
Come have your snack, Elinor!

Elinor grabs the goggles.

30 ELINOR 30
 Oops. Coming.

ANGLE ON: Ari, Olive, and Mr. Rabbit sitting on a towel, eating a healthy snack of veggies and dip.

31 ARI 31
 (mouth full)
 These veggies are tasty.

Elinor comes running over.

32 ELINOR 32
 Olive! Ari! I just saw a duck
 standing on the sand, and its feet
 were SO COOL. It had lots of skin
 between its toes.

Ari holds up his foot, his toes separated, and wiggles his toes.

33 ARI 33
 Hmm. All I've got between my toes
 is empty space.

Elinor also sticks up a foot and wiggles.

34 ELINOR 34
 Same here.

Olive sticks up her foot and looks at it, puzzled.

35 OLIVE 35
 My toes are too short to wiggle.
 Maybe I should check the other
 foot?

She lifts her other foot too, and falls backwards, sending a carrot flying into the air. <SFX: WHOOPS WALLA>

The kids all <SFX: GIGGLE>. PAN follows the carrot arcing through the air and landing in the sand next to a frog, which croaks and hops about a foot away.

36 OLIVE (CONT'D) 36
 Hey, what about that frog? I wonder
 if it has skin between its toes.

The kids get up and go look at the frog. CU: the frog, which hops down the beach and into the water to swim away.

37 ELINOR 37
 Yes, its toes are joined together
 with skin, too! Wow! That is so
 interesting. I wonder why some
 animals have toes like that, and
 others don't.

Elinor thinks about it for a beat.

38 ELINOR (CONT'D) 38
We need MORE OBSERVATIONS! Let's go
find some more toes.

The kids separate to look around the immediate area, within
sight of Mr. Rabbit. ANGLE ON: Olive stands under a tree
where a robin is perched.

39 OLIVE 39
There's a robin. Hmm. Let's see.

CU: the robin.

40 OLIVE (O.S.) (CONT'D) 40
Its toes aren't joined by skin.

Elinor notices a turtle basking on a rock in the water. She
crouches down next to it. <SFX: HMMMM>

CU: the turtle. We see it basking happily, and then we see
Elinor's face pop up behind it, her eyes wide as she looks at
the turtle.

41 ELINOR 41
The turtle's toes are joined by
skin!

The turtle is startled. It scrambles into the water and swims
away. Elinor thinks. <SFX: HMMM>

42 ARI (O.S.) 42
Elinor, Olive! I found an animal
with really weird toes.

47 Elinor and Olive rush over to Ari, who's crouched down, 47
looking at a worm.

43 OLIVE 43
(giggling)
Ari, it's a worm.

44 ARI 44
(silly)
I know! It doesn't have any toes at
all... weird, right?

The kids <SFX: LAUGH>.

45 ELINOR 45
Okay some animals have skin that
joins their toes, and some don't.
But why?

46 OLIVE 46
Let's make a list and see if we can
figure it out.

The kids <SFX: YEAH>. ANGLE ON: Olive picks up a long stick to draw in the sand, and Ari and Elinor watch her draw a couple of lines. CU: Olive's list, a T-chart. One side has a webbed foot at the top and one has an un-webbed foot.

47 OLIVE (CONT'D) 47
Okay. Which animals have toes that
are joined by skin?

Olive makes quick drawings under the columns as the kids list the animals.

48 ELINOR 48
Ducks have joined toes.

49 ARI 49
Frogs do, too.

50 OLIVE 50
And turtles. Okay, now which ones
DON'T have toes joined by skin?

51 ARI 51
Bats don't.

52 ELINOR 52
And rabbits don't either.

53 OLIVE 53
Or elephants. Or robins.

54 ELINOR 54
Okay, some animals have skin
between their toes, and some don't.
So, what do the animals with joined
toes have in common?

THOUGHT BUBBLE MOMENT: The kids think about the times they saw those animals. They imagine the ducks swimming by, the turtle diving into the water and swimming, and the frog hopping into the water and swimming.

55 ELINOR (O.S.) (CONT'D) 55
Oh! Ducks, frogs, and turtles all
live...

56 ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI (O.S.) 56
IN THE WATER!

BACK ON: The kids.

57 ELINOR 57
All the animals with skin between
their toes live in the water. But
why? Why do water animals have toes
like that?

Ari lifts up a foot.

58 ARI 58

Maybe they high-five with their
feet, and it helps them make a
louder slap!

Elinor tries to "high five" him with her foot. It's difficult, and they <SFX: GIGGLE>.

59 ELINOR 59
I've never SEEN frogs high-fiving.

There's a beat as she thinks.

60 ELINOR (CONT'D) 60
I know. Let's go observe those
animals in the water. C'mon, we
need MORE OBSERVATIONS!

(to Dad)
Dad, can we go find some more
animals and check out their toes?

61 MR. RABBIT 61
(momentarily puzzled)
That's a funny request. But sure!
Just stay close where I can see
you.

Elinor, Olive and Ari excitedly run back to the water.

4. EXT. LAKE WATERS - A MINUTE LATER

The kids are standing in the water, observing the creatures around them. A few ducks glide into view.

62 ELINOR 62
Here come some ducks. Let's DUCK
under the water and see what
they're doing.

The kids pull their goggles over their eyes and duck their heads under the water.

UNDERWATER POV: They watch ducks swim by. The ducks are paddling their webbed feet. The kids lift their heads above the surface.

63 ARI 63

Those ducks aren't just floating
along. They're pushing the water
with their feet, and they're going
really fast. That's so cool.

A frog pokes its head out of the water nearby.

64 OLIVE 64
I see a frog. Let's hop to it!

The kid wade over to the frog then duck their heads under the water again.

UNDERWATER POV: They see the frog swim past them, kicking its webbed feet. The kids look amazed. Then a turtle swims by, doing the same thing. The kids point excitedly. They surface again.

65 OLIVE (CONT'D) 65
Amazing. That frog and that turtle
are kicking with their toes, too.

66 ELINOR 66
They're using their special feet to
SWIM faster.

67 ARI 67
 Hmm. I wonder why joined toes are
 good for swimming fast?

68 OLIVE 68
Da da da! It's a swimming mystery!

Ari raises his wings.

69 ARI 69

Well, my wings are made of skin,
and they help me push more air so I
can fly really fast.

Ari flaps hard and rises a little into the air, splashing Elinor and Olive, who <SFX: LAUGH>.

70 ELINOR 70
Maybe these water animals have skin
between their toes so they can push
more water...

71 OLIVE 71
And maybe pushing more water makes
you swim faster. That must be it.

72 ELINOR 72
That is SO INTERESTING. Let's go
tell my Mom and Dad.

With a <SFX: YEAH>, the kids splash their way to shore.

5. EXT. LAKE SHORE - CONTINUOUS

Ranger Rabbit is now standing on the shore, too, toweling
herself off. The kids gather around the Rabbits.

73 ELINOR 73
Mom! Dad! We figured out something
amazing about duck feet.

74 MR. RABBIT 74
Oh? Tell me.

75 OLIVE 75
Ducks have cool feet with skin
between their toes.

76 ARI 76
And they're not the only animals
with joined toes. Frogs and turtles
live in the water and they have
them too.

77 ELINOR 77
We think that their joined toes
help them swim faster because it
lets them push more water.

78 RANGER RABBIT 78
You're absolutely right, kids! We
call those special feet "webbed
feet" because the skin stretches
between their toes.

The kids <SFX: OHHH>.

79 OLIVE 79
(saying the words carefully)
Webbed feet. I like those words.

80 RANGER RABBIT 80
Oh, that reminds me! I have a
special surprise for you in my swim
bag. Do you want to see what it's
like to have webbed feet too?

The kids <SFX: GASP> and say <SFX: YEAH>. Ranger Rabbit
kneels down and rummages in her swim bag. She pulls out a
fluffy teddy bear.

81 RANGER RABBIT (CONT'D) 81
How'd that get in there?

She pulls out a pair of kids' swim fins and holds them
triumphantly in the air.

82 RANGER RABBIT (CONT'D) 82
Aha! Here they are!

83 OLIVE 83
What are THOSE?

84 RANGER RABBIT 84
These are called swim fins.

CU: the swim fins.

85 ARI (O.S.) 85
Ooh. They look like a duck's feet.
They're wide and flat.

86 ELINOR (O.S.) 86
Yeah. And they look like they have
little toes.

87 OLIVE (O.S.) 87
Like webbed feet!

BACK ON: the kids and Ranger Rabbit. Ranger Rabbit holds out
the swim fins.

88 RANGER RABBIT 88
Yes. And if you put them on your
feet, you can push more water and
you'll swim faster. Do you want to
give them a try?

89 ELINOR 89
Yes please!

Elinor takes the fins. With a <SFX: YEAH>, the kids run into
the water.

6. EXT. LAKE WATERS - A MINUTE LATER

Excited, the kids stand in the water.

90 OLIVE 90
 Can I try them first, Elinor?

Elinor hands Olive the fins.

91 ELINOR 91
 You toe-tally can! Get it? Toes?

The kids <SFX: GIGGLE>.

92 OLIVE 92
 Hmm, how do I put these on?

Olive reaches down and puts on one fin, than the other.

93 OLIVE (CONT'D) 93
 Okay. I'm ready to swim as fast as
 a fish. Or at least, as fast as a
 duck.

94 ELINOR 94
 Let's race! On your marks... get
 set... GO.

The kids jump in and swim. This time, Olive is much faster,
and she pulls out ahead. As they stop and stand up again,
they all <SFX: WOW>.

95 OLIVE 95
 That was fin-tastic!

96 ARI 96
 My turn! My turn!

CROSSFADE TO: Ari winning a race, then Elinor winning a race.
The kids stand up in the water, catching their breath.

97 ELINOR 97
 We've figured out how to swim fast!

As they look around at the water and the creatures moving
through it, they sing:

98 ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI 98
 Want to swim real fast?
 Want to feel the speed?
 Swim fins and webbed feet,
 Those are what you need.

OLIVE: Ducks, frogs and turtles
 (MORE)

ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI (CONT'D)

Have skin between their toes.

ARI: They hop into the water,
And ZOOM! Away they go.

ELINOR: Get yourself some swim
fins.

Put them on like so.

OLIVE: Then jump into the water,
And ZOOM! Away you go.

ALL THREE: Want to swim real fast?
Want to feel the speed?
Get some fins or webbed feet,
Those are what you need.

99 MR. RABBIT (O.S.) 99
Hey kids, time to head home!

100 ELINOR 100
Okay, Dad. We're coming.

The kids run back to shore.

7. EXT. LAKE SHORE - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Rabbit meets the kids with towels. Ranger Rabbit has her hands behind her back - she's hiding something.

101 MR. RABBIT 101
How were the swim fins?

102 OLIVE 102
Fin-credible!

103 ARI 103
Now we can all swim fast!

104 ELINOR 104
If we keep practicing, maybe we'll
win a trophy some day.

105 MR. RABBIT 105
Well, I have a a special surprise
for you.

Mr. Rabbit brings his hands out from behind his back. He's holding three round "medals" made of broken pieces of bark and string. He carved "question marks" on them.

106 MR. RABBIT (CONT'D) 106
While you were swimming I made
these awards for the three best
question-askers in the whole town.
(MORE)

MR. RABBIT (CONT'D)
You're the MOST CURIOUS kids I
know!

The kids <SFX: WOW> as Mr. Rabbit puts a medal around each
kid's neck.

107 ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI 107
(in awe)
Thank you.

108 RANGER RABBIT 108
Now who wants to see who can get
home the fastest?

The kids are all yawning and looking tired.

109 ELINOR 109
I think I've had enough speed for
today. Can we walk home like slow
snails instead?

110 MR. RABBIT 110
That sounds more my speed!

Mr. Rabbit begins to walk along comically, as if in slow
motion. The kids <SFX: GIGGLE> and join him in walking slo-mo
while Ranger Rabbit smiles.

SEGMENT 2.

1. EXT FROG POND -- DAY

Open on six TURTLES sitting on top of a ROCK, basking in the
sun. One turtle hops off, <PLOPS> into the water and
disappears.

On the shore, Señor Tapir and a group of kids watch the
turtle swimming.

111 ELINOR 111
(giggling) Where did that turtle
go?!

Elinor watches the water by the rock for a few seconds in
great anticipation, and suddenly a little turtle head pops up
out of the water. The turtle swims at the surface.

112 OLIVE 112
There it is! It's swimming with
its flippers!

113 SEÑOR TAPIR 113

(smiling)

Indeed it is!

(strums his guitar)

Let's sing a song about a scientist
who discovered some other animals
that used their flippers to
swim...animals that lived long ago -
and swam with the dinosaurs!

Señor Tapir starts to sing. After a line or two, we transition to a simpler style of animation that describes what he is singing.

114 SEÑOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 114
Mary Anning lived by the sea in the
English countryside.

2. EXT ENGLISH COAST SEASIDE -- DAY

MARY ANNING (a badger) walks along the beach of England's Jurassic coast, next to sandy, rock cliffs. She wears a long dress with a cardigan, and she carries a small basket along with a rock hammer and small brush. She leans down to pick up a shell and inspect it.

Cut to a close up of an ICTHYOSAUR SKULL poking out from the sand in the cliff. Mary's face enters the scene as she looks closely at the skull, as if truly wondering what else is underneath it.

115 SEÑOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 115
She liked to walk along the beach
to see what she could find.
Then one day she saw a skull with
very pointy teeth,
And Mary wondered what else was
buried underneath.

Close up on a small BRUSH that Mary uses to brush dirt away from the fossil.

Mary digs until she stands up to admire that she has uncovered a FULL SKELETON of an ICTHYOSAUR. We see an ichthyosaur (which looks a little like a dolphin) swimming in water.

116 SEÑOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 116
Mary started digging to see what
she'd uncover,
And at the age of twelve, you know
what she discovered?
An ich-thy-o-saur,
(MORE)

SEÑOR TAPIR (CONT'D)
[note: drawn out for clarity]
An animal that swam with the
dinosaurs!

Mary's head dramatically pops up into frame as she looks around. She walks along the seaside, reaches down and picks up an ammonite fossil to put in a basket. Then she sits near the ichthyosaur skeleton and sketches a drawing of it in her sketchbook.

117 SEÑOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 117
(singing)
Mary kept...
Digging down,
and she found,
Amazing new animals
Buried down in the ground!

Mary walks along the same seaside as before.

Close up on a small BRUSH that Mary uses to brush dirt away from the fossil. Mary keeps digging until she stands up to admire that she has uncovered a FULL SKELETON of a PLESIOSAUR. We see a plesiosaur (which is a long-necked reptile) swimming in the water.

118 SEÑOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 118
Mary grew up and kept searching in
the ground,
And at the age of twenty-two, you
know what she found?
A ple-si-o-saur,
[note: drawn out for clarity]
Another animal that swam with
dinosaurs!

Mary's head pops into frame. Cut wide to reveal she is showing other folks (a couple other badgers) her discovery. They look surprised and amazed.

119 SEÑOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 119
Mary kept..
Digging down,
and she found,
Amazing new animals,
Buried down in the

3. EXT FROG POND -- DAY

Señor Tapir finishes singing the song in front of the kids.

120 SEÑOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 120
Groooooooooooooooooound!

Señor Tapir plays one final loud chord, which scares the five turtles still sitting on top of the rock. The turtles each <PLOP> into the water quickly, one after another.

The kids <giggle>.

(Music Note: It would be fun to have an accompanying percussion with the strumming pattern of a washboard, so that the animation of Mary using the paleontology brush, and brushing at dirt, syncs up with that rhythm).

END.

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