

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

147: 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

1. EXT. LAKE SHORE - DAY

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 and life jackets)

1	ELINOR	1	
	I can't wait to see it!		*

2	ARI	2	
	How much farther?		*

3	RANGER RABBIT	3	
	We're very close.		

WIDEN TO REVEAL: the sparkling lake and the narrow sandy beach that surrounds it, and hold for a beat to enjoy the beautiful scenery. The parents and kids exit the forest and walk onto the beach.

4	RANGER RABBIT (CONT'D)	4	
	And here we are, kids: My favorite swimming spot.		*

The kids <SFX: WOW>. Ranger Rabbit puts down her huge bag of swimming stuff. Mr. Rabbit also puts down bags and begins to unfold a beach chair.

5	ELINOR	5	
	This place is amazing!		

6	ARI	6	
	So cool!		

7	OLIVE	7	
	I can't wait to dive in!		

8	RANGER RABBIT	8	
	You know, when I was a kid, I used to come here every morning to practice swimming. I even won a trophy at the Animal Town swim race.		*

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, or we'll never win		*
	a trophy.		*

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. Ari is munching on his snacks really fast.

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

32 OLIVE 32
 (good-humoured and
 giggling)
 Too bad we can't swim as fast as
 you can eat snacks, Ari.

Elinor comes running over.

33 ELINOR 33
 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.

34 ARI 34 *
 Hmm. All I've got between my toes *
 is empty space. *

Elinor also sticks up a foot and wiggles.

35 ELINOR 35 *
 Same here.

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

36 OLIVE 36
 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.

37 OLIVE (CONT'D) 37 *
 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.

38 ELINOR 38 *
 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.

39	ELINOR (CONT'D)	39	
	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.	

40	OLIVE	40	
	There's a robin. Hmm. Let's see.		*

CU: the robin.

41	OLIVE (O.S.) (CONT'D)	41	
	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.

42	ELINOR	42	
	Its toes are joined by skin!		

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

43	ARI (O.S.)	43	
	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.		

44	OLIVE	44	
	(giggling)		
	Ari, it's a worm.		

45	ARI	45	
	(silly)		
	I know! It doesn't have any toes at		
	all... weird, right?		

The kids <SFX: LAUGH>.

46	ELINOR	46	
	Okay some animals have skin that		
	joins their toes, and some don't.		
	But why?		

47 OLIVE 47
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.

48 OLIVE (CONT'D) 48
Okay. Which animals have toes that
are joined by skin?

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

49 ELINOR 49
Ducks have joined toes.

50 ARI 50
Frogs do, too.

51 OLIVE 51
And turtles. Okay, now which ones
DON'T have toes joined by skin?

52 ARI 52
Bats don't.

53 ELINOR 53
And rabbits don't either.

54 OLIVE 54
Or elephants. Or robins.

55 ELINOR 55
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.

56 ELINOR (O.S.) (CONT'D) 56
Oh! Ducks, frogs, and turtles all
live... *

57 ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI (O.S.) 57
IN THE WATER!

BACK ON: The kids.

58 ELINOR 58
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.

59 ARI 59
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>. *

60 ELINOR 60
I've never SEEN frogs high-fiving. *
There's a beat as she thinks. *

61 ELINOR (CONT'D) 61 *
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? *

62 MR. RABBIT 62 *
(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.

63 ELINOR 63
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.

64	ARI	64	
	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.

65	OLIVE	65	
	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.

66	OLIVE (CONT'D)	66	
	Amazing. That frog and that turtle are kicking with their toes, too.		* *

67	ELINOR	67	
	They're using their special feet to SWIM faster.		*

68	ARI	68	
	Hmm. I wonder why joined toes are good for swimming fast?		* *

69	OLIVE	69	
	Da da da! It's a swimming mystery!		* *

Ari raises his wings.

70	ARI	70	
	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>.

71	ELINOR	71	
	Maybe these water animals have skin between their toes so they can push more water...		

72	OLIVE	72	*
	And maybe pushing more water makes you swim faster. That must be it.		

73	ELINOR	73
	This 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.

74	ELINOR	74
	Mom! Dad! We figured out something amazing about duck feet.	

75	MR. RABBIT	75
	Oh? Tell me.	

76	OLIVE	76	*
	Ducks have cool feet with skin between their toes.		*

77	ARI	77
	And they're not the only animals with joined toes. Frogs and turtles and other animals that live in the water have them too.	

78	ELINOR	78
	We think that their joined toes help them swim faster because it lets them push more water.	

79	RANGER RABBIT	79	*
	You're absolutely right, kids! We call those special feet "webbed feet" because the skin stretches between their toes like a spider's web.		*

The kids <SFX: OHHH>.

80	OLIVE	80	*
	(saying the words carefully) Webbed feet. I like those words.		

81	RANGER RABBIT	81	*
	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. *

82	RANGER RABBIT (CONT'D)	82	*
	How'd that get in there?		

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

83	RANGER RABBIT (CONT'D)	83
	Aha! Here they are!	

84	OLIVE	84
	What are THOSE?	

85	RANGER RABBIT	85
	These are called swim fins.	

CU: the swim fins.

86	ARI (O.S.)	86
	Ooh. They look like a duck's feet. They're wide and flat.	

87	ELINOR (O.S.)	87	*
	Yeah. And they look like they have little toes.		*

88	OLIVE (O.S.)	88	*
	With webs between the toes.		

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

89	RANGER RABBIT	89	*
	Yes. These swim fins are a lot like webbed feet. 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?		*

90	ELINOR	90
	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.

91 OLIVE 91
 Can I try them first, Elinor?

Elinor hands Olive the fins.

92 ELINOR 92
 You toe-tally can! Get it? Toes?

The kids <SFX: GIGGLE>.

93 OLIVE 93
 Hmm, how do I put these on?

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

94 OLIVE (CONT'D) 94
 Okay. I'm ready to swim as fast as
 a fish. Or at least, as fast as a
 duck.

95 ELINOR 95 *
 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>.

96 OLIVE 96
 That was fin-tastic!

97 ARI 97
 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.

98 ELINOR 98
 We've figured out how to swim fast!

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

99 ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI 99
 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.

100	MR. RABBIT (O.S.)	100
	Hey kids, time to head home!	

101	ELINOR	101
	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.

102	MR. RABBIT	102
	How were the swim fins?	

103	OLIVE	103
	Fin-credible!	

104	ARI	104
	Now we can all swim fast!	

105	ELINOR	105
	If we keep practicing, maybe we'll win a trophy some day.	

106	MR. RABBIT	106
	Well, your Mom has a special surprise for you.	

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

107	RANGER RABBIT	107
	I just made these awards for the three best question-askers in the whole town. You're the MOST CURIOUS kids I know!	

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

108 ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI 108
(in awe)
Thank you.

109 MR. RABBIT 109
Now who wants to see who can get
home the fastest?

The kids are all yawning and looking tired.

110 ELINOR 110
I think I've had enough speed for
toay. Can we walk home like slow *
snails instead?

111 MR. RABBIT 111
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 rolls her eyes.

END. *