

# 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  
RECORD DRAFT: 05-Nov-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 (or beach wear) and the kids are wearing life jackets)

1 ELINOR 1  
I can't wait to go swimming.

2 ARI 2  
Me too... (thinking)... this seems  
like a long walk. How much further?

3 RANGER RABBIT 3  
We're very close.

WIDEN TO REVEAL: the sparkling lake (Mossy Lake as in EWW143 Frozen Fish) 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 we're here. 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 is my favorite swimming spot  
too!

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 <sup>amazing</sup> 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.

18A

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.

ARI  
(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 Same here. ELINOR 34

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: Hrrrrrrrr>

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.

43 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.

46A 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.

62A 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.

64A

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?

80A

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!

96A 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 special surprise  
for you.

~~105~~

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!

Sum fms ALT

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 ICHTHYOSAUR. 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.

\*