

A Common Core State Anchor Standards &
Next Generation Science Standards-Aligned
Discussion/Project Guide for

A READING PARTNER FOR EMERALD

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Written by Patricia Vermillion
Illustrated by Lily Thompson
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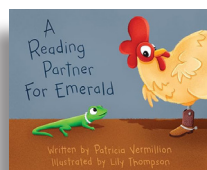
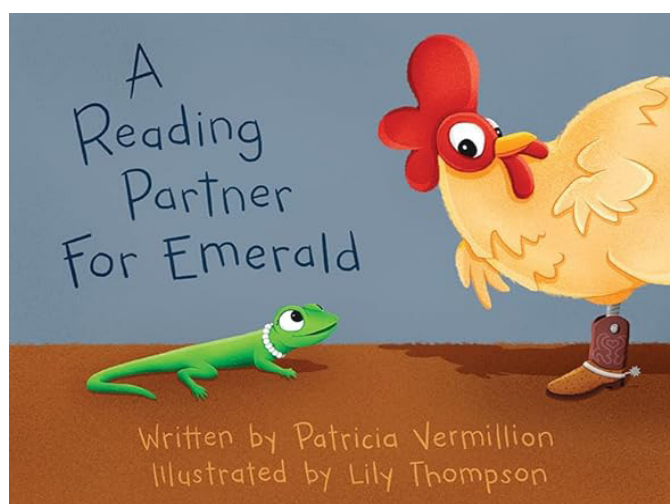
Emerald loves to read. She lives in a library surrounded by books, yet she is lonely. Everyone wants a reading partner. Especially Emerald. Exploring the library bookshelves, Emerald meets friends who ask to read together, but none of their stories have that magic spark. Only when Emerald acts quickly to save a friend in need does she find the perfect reading partner--and the tale she longed to read.

Guide created by
Debbie Gonzales, MFA



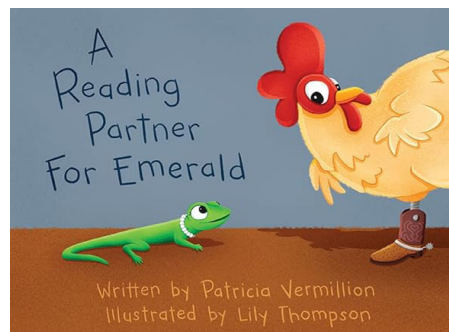
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Pre-Reading Discussion

- When you look at the front cover illustration, what do you see? Predict which animal will be the main character of the story. Explain your reasoning.
- Notice the pearl necklace worn by the lizard. What does the necklace suggest about the lizard's character?
- Identify the type of boot worn by the rooster. What does the boot reveal about the rooster's character?
- Look at the back cover of the book. What do you notice?
Describe the action taking place in this illustration. Do the lizard and the skunk make good reading partners? Explain your reasoning.
- Predict what A READING PARTNER FOR EMERALD is going to be about.



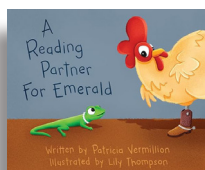
Meet the Author - Patricia Vermillion:

Patricia Vermillion, a librarian and author born in Mississippi, grew up immersed in Nancy Drew mysteries, dreaming of becoming a detective with her best friend Vicki. Although she traded the detective life for a library, she still solves daily mysteries like finding the perfect book. Her writing tips? Read and write every day, constantly rewrite, carry a notebook for ideas, collect words, write about known subjects, research the unknown, and share stories with a friend. Patricia's love for stories shapes her life and work.



Meet the Illustrator- Lily Thompson:

Lily Thompson, a talented concept artist, is making her debut in the world of picture books with A READING PARTNER FOR EMERALD, written by Patricia Vermillion. As a concept artist, Lily specializes in creating visual designs and artwork that lay the foundation for characters, environments, and the overall look in various media projects. Her transition into illustrating picture books brings her unique skills to life, allowing her to craft engaging and imaginative visuals that captivate young readers. Learn more about Lily's art at lilythompsondesign.com



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Post-Reading Discussion

There was nothing she wanted more than to read with a friend. Everyone in the library wanted a reading partner. Especially Emerald.

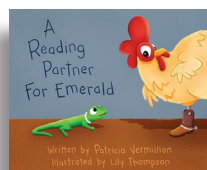
- Describe the feeling of having a friend.
- Consider the difference between *having* a friend and *being* a friend. Is there a difference between the two? Explain your answer.
- The word *partner* is defined as a buddy, a pal, and a friend. Tell why having a partner would make reading together more fun.

Climbing to her favorite section, the Fairy Tales, Emerald saw Slither reading Texas Chili? Oh My!

- Slither is a rattlesnake (Though not the dangerous kind.). Tell all that you know about rattlesnakes.
- Make a connection between Slither's name and the way rattlesnakes move from place to place.
- A *pun* is a funny word game where a word has two meanings at the same time. After hearing Slither the rattlesnake read a passage from TEXAS CHILI? OH MY!, Emerald said, "Your reading rattles me." Determine the two meanings of the word *rattle*. Explain how the pun is like a joke with words.
- Even though Emerald did not choose Slither to be his reading partner, he stated that he wanted to "still be your friend." Is it possible to remain buddies, even though they are not reading partners? Explain your answer.

Continuing to climb, Emerald saw Romeo reading The Little Red Hen Visits Texas.

- Romeo the Rooster is named after a character in a famous play written by William Shakespeare titled Romeo and Juliet. In the play, Romeo is a very romantic character who cares a great deal about someone he loves. When someone acts like a Romeo, it means that they are overly sweet and loving. Notice how Romeo the Rooster speaks to Emerald. Identify the words used that suggest he cares deeply about Emerald.
- Once again, Emerald decided not to choose Rooster as a reading partner yet expressed the desire to remain friends. Is it possible to disagree with someone and still want to be their pal? How so?



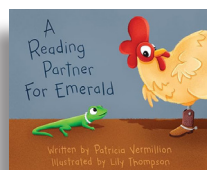
Then Emerald saw Stinker reading Stella and the Starving Bears.

- Tell all that you know about skunks.
- How do skunks protect themselves when they sense danger?
- Explain how Emerald's comment of, "...your story takes my breath away" is a pun.
- Stinker is known for his unpleasant smell. Is it possible to be friends with someone who is not always easy to be with? Explain your answer.



"Thank you for saving me, Emerald," said Cheddar. "Will you please read with me?"

- Determine how Slither, Romeo, and Stinker's reaction to Cheddar's dilemma differed from Emerald's. Who responded with bravery and concern? How so?
- Discuss how Emerald's willingness to help Cheddar was a dangerous situation for both animals.
- Consider how, through the act of being a friend, Emerald was able to find a reading partner.
- What does the word *lonely* mean to you?
- Explain why Emerald is not lonely any more.
- How about you? List ways that you extend friendship to others. Identify ways that you are helpful to others. Make a connection between the kindness you give and the friendship you receive.
- Write a short essay describing the lessons Emerald learned about friendship.



Plot Analysis: Story Sequencing

Objective: To analyze, categorize, and organize plot points sequentially as they occur in the structure of the story.

Materials:

- A READING PARTNER FOR EMERALD, the book
- Plot Point Labels (Guide, pg. 6)
- Story Structure Analysis Template (Guide, pg. 7)
- Story Structure Analysis Answers (Guide, pg. 8)
- Scissors
- Glue stick
- Markers

Procedure:

- Instruct students to use scissors to trim around the borders of the Plot Point Labels.
- Distribute a copy of the Story Structure Analysis Template to the students.
- Using the spaces provided on the Story Structure Analysis Template as a guide, instruct students to place the Plot Point Labels in the sequence in which they occur in the story. Use the Story Structure Analysis Answers to check their work.
- Have students use the glue stick to secure each Plot Point Label in the correct story structure sequencing.
- Instruct students to illustrate each plot point of the spaces provided on the Story Structure Analysis Template.
- Encourage students to share their work with the class.

Plot Point Labels

So Emerald and Cheddar found a peaceful place among the fairy tales.

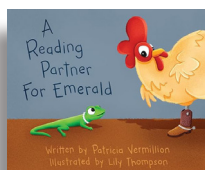
“Someone help me, please, I’m trapped.”

I’m afraid I can’t read with you, but I’ll still be your friend.

And Stinker still did his thing.

There was nothing she wanted more than to read with a friend.

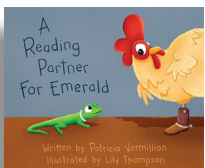
“I have s strong tail,” said Emerald. “I’ll pull you to safety.”



Story Sequencing Template

Arrange the Plot Point Labels in the correct order to retell the story of A READING PARTNER FOR EMERALD. Illustrate each plot point. Share finished work with the class.

1	2	3
4	5	6



Story Sequencing - Answers

1

Illustrate the scene here.

There was nothing she wanted more than to read with a friend.

2

Illustrate the scene here.

I'm afraid I can't read with you, but I'll still be your friend.

3

Illustrate the scene here.

"Someone help me, please, I'm trapped."

4

Illustrate the scene here.

"I have s strong tail," said Emerald. "I'll pull you to safety."

5

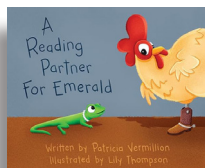
Illustrate the scene here.

So Emerald and Cheddar found a peaceful place among the fairy tales...

6

Illustrate the scene here.

And Stinker still did his thing.



Who Am I? - Animal Match Up

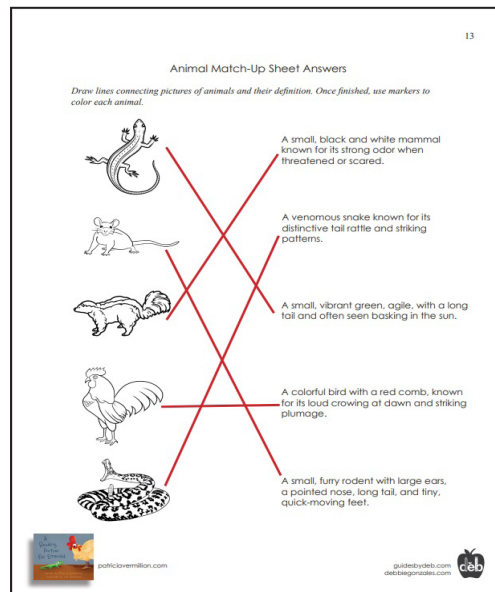
Objective: To associate, identify, and match an animal with its inherited traits.

Materials:

- A READING PARTNER FOR EMERALD, the book
- The Animal Match Up Sheet (Guide, pg. 10)
- The Animal Match Up Sheet Answers (Guide, pg. 11)
- Pencil
- Markers

Procedure:

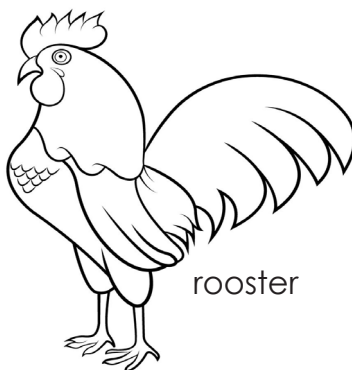
- Print and distribute copies of the Animal Match Up Sheet to the students.
- Instruct students to draw a line from the drawing of each animal on the left to its corresponding definition on the right.
- Use the Animal Match Up Answers to verify answers.
- Have students use markers to color the animals.
- Encourage students to share their work with the class.



lizard



rooster



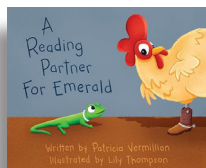
skunk



mouse

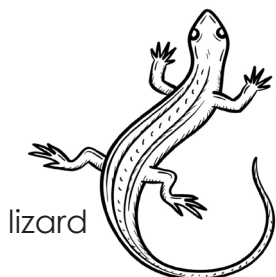


rattle snake



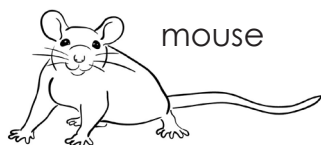
Animal Match-Up Sheet

Draw lines connecting pictures of animals and their definition. Once finished, use markers to color each animal.



lizard

A small, black and white mammal known for its strong odor when threatened or scared.



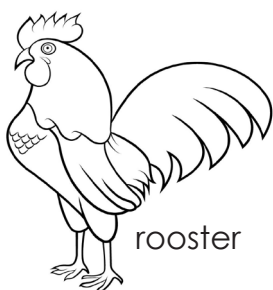
mouse

A venomous snake known for its distinctive tail rattle and striking patterns.



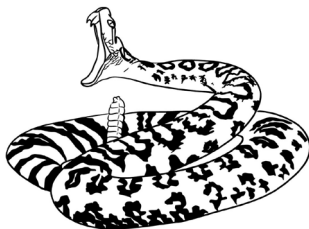
skunk

A small, vibrant green, agile, with a long tail and often seen basking in the sun.



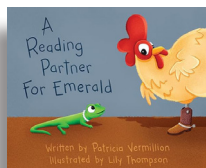
rooster

A colorful bird with a red comb, known for its loud crowing at dawn and striking plumage.



rattle snake

A small, furry rodent with large ears, a pointed nose, long tail, and tiny, quick-moving feet.



Animal Match-Up Sheet Answers

Draw lines connecting pictures of animals and their definition. Once finished, use markers to color each animal.



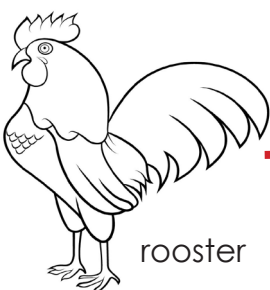
lizard



mouse



skunk



rooster



rattle snake

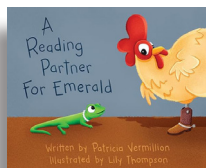
A small, black and white mammal known for its strong odor when threatened or scared.

A venomous snake known for its distinctive tail rattle and striking patterns.

A small, vibrant green, agile, with a long tail and often seen basking in the sun.

A colorful bird with a red comb, known for its loud crowing at dawn and striking plumage.

A small, furry rodent with large ears, a pointed nose, long tail, and tiny, quick-moving feet.



Popsicle Stick Puppets

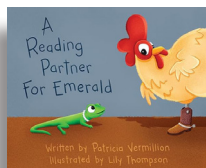
Objective: To retell a story stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of its central message or lesson.

Materials:

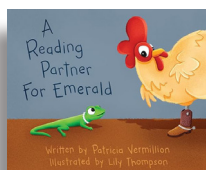
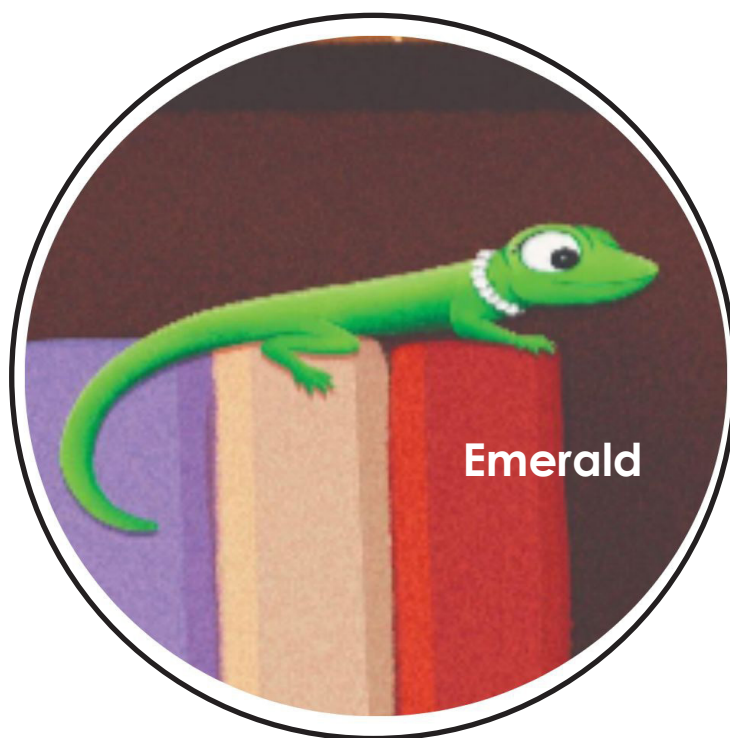
- A READING PARTNER FOR EMERALD, the book
- Animal Character Puppets (Guide, pg. 13-14)
- Popsicle sticks
- Glue sticks or tape
- Scissors
- Markers

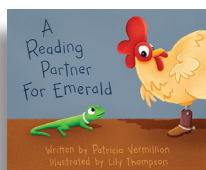
Procedure:

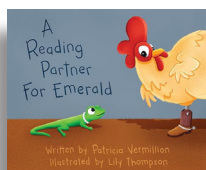
- Print Animal Character Puppets on cardstock.
- Use scissors to trim around the borders of the puppet cards.
- Create Animal Character Puppets by securing a popsicle stick on the back of each animal card.
- Use Animal Character Puppets as Reader's Theater props.



Animal Character Puppets







Reader's Theater Production with Popsicle Stick Puppets

This reader's theater activity is not just a reading exercise, but a creative, collaborative, and imaginative play session that enhances comprehension, speaking skills, and confidence in young learners.

Enjoy the show!

Objective:

To engage young children in a fun and interactive reading activity using the picture book, handmade character puppets, and sound-effect instruments.

Materials:

- A READING PARTNER FOR EMERALD (The text will serve as the script)
- Popsicle stick puppets for the five main characters (Guide, pgs. 13-15)
- Instruments to simulate sounds of each animal:
 - Kazoo (Romeo)
 - Vibraslap (Stinker)
 - Harmonica (Cheddar)
 - Rattle (Slither)
- A simple backdrop (optional, can be a piece of cloth or a large paper)
- Props relevant to the story (optional, simple items found in the classroom or home)

Instructions:

Introduction to Reader's Theater:

- Explain to the children that they will be part of a special storytelling session where they can use puppets and instruments to act out the story.

Assigning Roles:

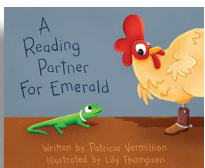
- Assign each child a role. This could be as a character (using the puppets), as a narrator, or as sound effects crew.
- If there are more children than roles, rotate roles or assign helper roles like prop managers.

Familiarizing with the Script:

- Read through A READING PARTNER FOR EMERALD with the children.
- Discuss the characters, setting, and plot.
- For non-readers, focus on retelling the story in simple terms they can remember.

Rehearsing:

- Have children practice their parts. Narrators read from the book. Character role players use the puppets to act out the scenes. Sound effects crew play instruments cued to play when character is mentioned in the story.
- Encourage expression in voices, puppet movements, and instrument playing.



Setting the Stage:

- Set up a simple “stage” area where the children will perform.
- Place the backdrop and arrange any props.

Performance:

- Have the children perform the story. This can be for their own class or invite others such as another class or parents.
- Remind them it’s about having fun and not about perfection.

Discussion Post-Performance:

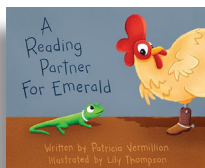
- Talk about the experience. Ask the children what they enjoyed, what they learned about the story, and if they felt differently about the story after acting it out.

Extension Activities (Optional):

- Draw scenes from the story.
- Write a new ending or a sequel to the story using the same characters.
- Have a puppet-making workshop where children create additional characters or props for the story.

Tips for Educators:

- Keep the atmosphere light and fun.
- Encourage creativity and improvisation.
- Assist children who are shy or hesitant.
- Praise their efforts and participation.



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Educational Standards Alignment

Common Core State Anchor Standards

			Discussion	Plot Analysis	Animal Match Up	Popsicle Stick Puppets	Reader's Theater
College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading							
	Key Ideas and Details						
		1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	X	X			X
		2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	X	X			X
		3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	X	X			X
	Craft and Structure						
		4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	X	X			X
	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas						
		7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	X	X	X	X	X
	Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity						
		10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	X	X	X	X	X
College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing							
	Text Types and Purposes						
		2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	X				X
	Production and Distribution of Writing						
		4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	X				X
		5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.	X				X

Next Generation Science Standards

K-LS1-1 From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes							
		Develop models to describe that organisms have unique and diverse life cycles but all have in common birth, growth, reproduction, and death.			X		

