



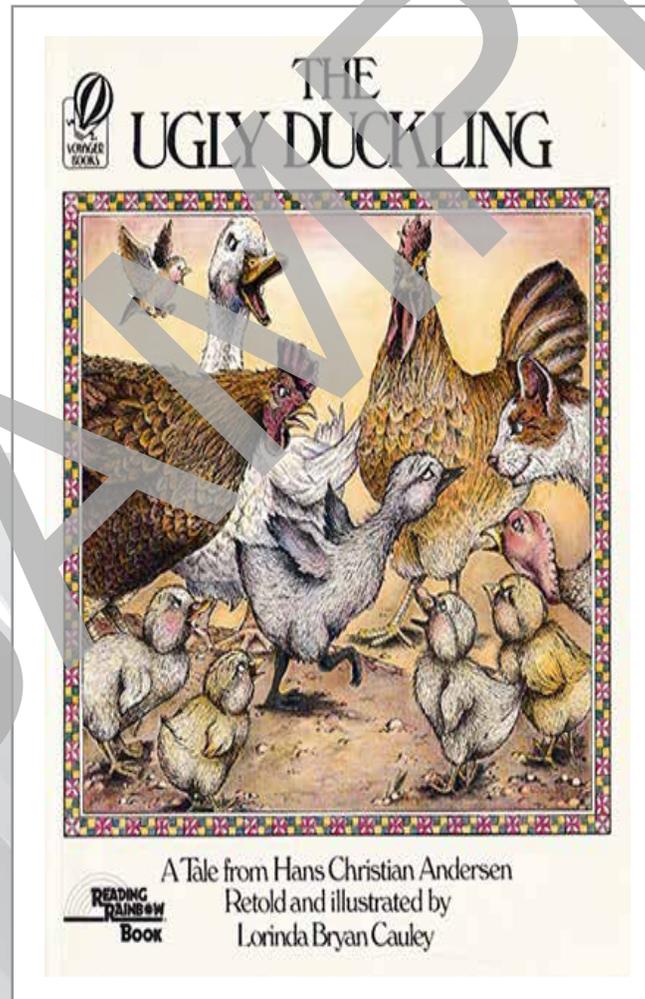
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES K-3**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# The Ugly Duckling

Lorinda Bryan Cauley



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# The Ugly Duckling

Lorinda Bryan Cauley

## TEACHER GUIDE

**NOTE:**

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Brainstorming, visualization

### Comprehension

Predicting, inference,  
comparison/contrast,  
cause and effect

### Writing

Narrative, poetry

### Vocabulary

Analogies, semantic analysis

### Literary Elements

Characterization, setting,  
story elements

## Summary

In the moat of an old manor house, a mother duckling waits impatiently for her eggs to hatch. Finally five babies emerge, but the largest egg remains. The mother disregards the advice of an old duck, who tells her to ignore the “turkey egg,” and sits on the egg awhile longer. When the last baby appears, the mother finds it large and ugly, but at the same time “quite pretty if one looks at it properly.” She takes her babies to the duck yard, and, at first, defends her “ugly duckling” against the bites and insults of the other ducks and chickens. Even the girl who feeds the chickens kicks him, and soon the mother, too, wishes him far away. At last, he flies away into the marsh, where the wild ducks warn him not to marry into their family. After two days, he meets two friendly wild ganders who invite him to go to another marsh. Sadly, the duckling soon loses his new friends; hunters shoot them dead, and the terrified duckling hides beneath his wing for several hours. That evening he goes to a run-down farmhouse where an old woman mistakes him for a duck and takes him in for three weeks. The cat and the hen call him stupid and bid him good riddance when he goes back out into the world. Autumn finds the lonely duckling still friendless, and when a flock of swans flies overhead, he cries out in longing for those beautiful happy birds. One winter morning a kind farmer finds him half-dead, frozen in the ice, and brings him back to the farmhouse. There he is restored to life, but, terrified by the boisterous children, he soon flies out the door. The winter is long and hard, but he survives, and finds himself in a garden with three lovely swans that spring. Certain that they will kill him, but preferring death to further hardship and loneliness, he swims toward them. To his dismay, the swans stroke him with their beaks and he sees his own reflection in the water—that of a lovely swan. Children gather round, calling him the most beautiful swan of all, and his happiness is complete.

## Prior to Reading

You may wish to choose one or more of the following prereading discussion questions/activities. Each is designed to help students draw from their store of background knowledge about the events and themes they will meet in the story they are about to read.

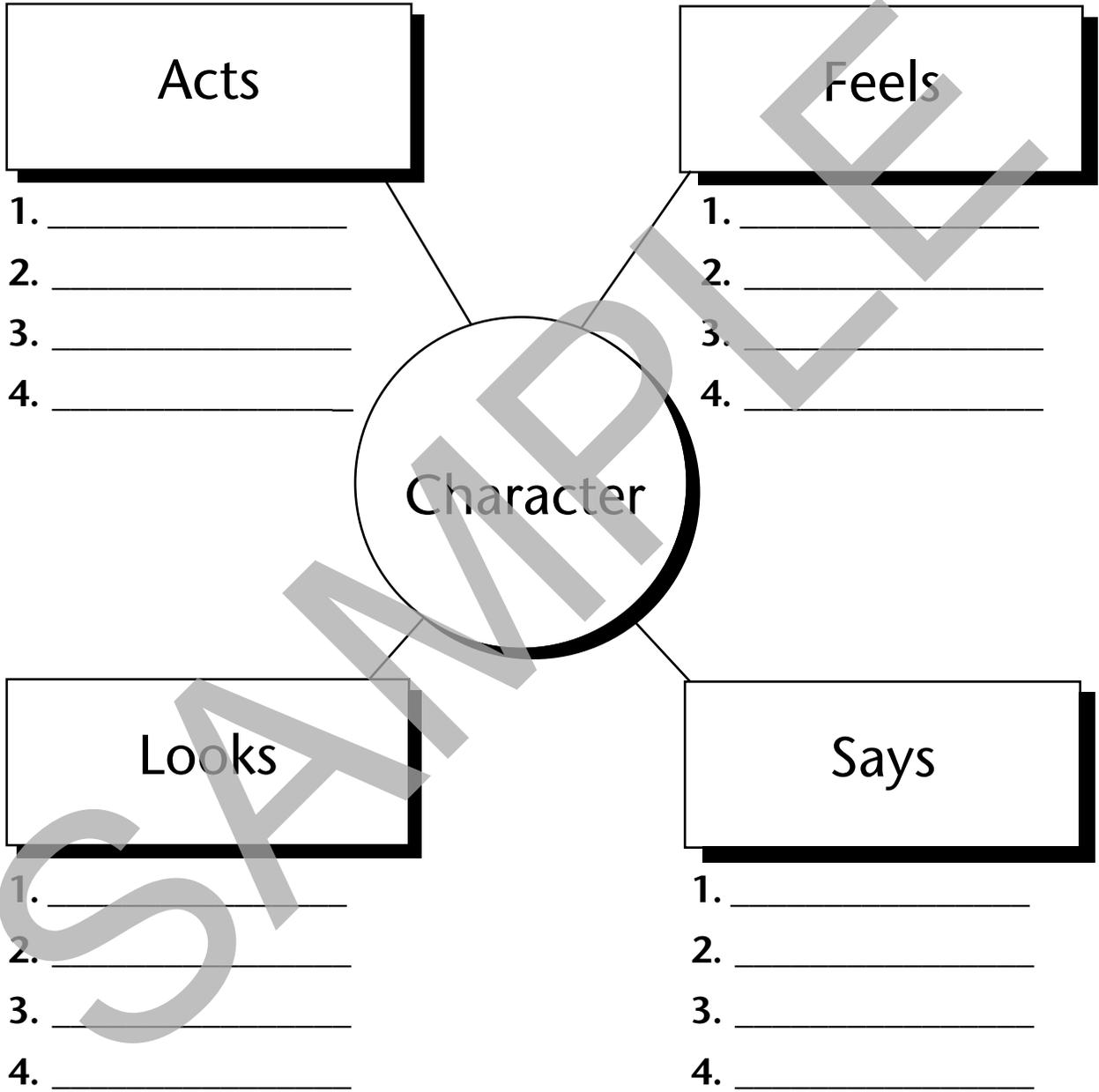
### Prereading Discussion Questions

**About Being Different:** What are some of the ways a person can be “different” from others? How do children treat someone who is different? Do students at your school ever tease or put down someone who is different? What sorts of differences are most likely to result in teasing? How would you act if someone teased you about being different? What would you do? Why do some people put others down?

**About Loneliness/Isolation:** Why do some people have more friends than others? What should you do if you feel left out? If someone has no friends, is it his or her fault?

**About Ugliness:** What does it mean to be ugly? What does the expression “Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder” mean? Do people usually agree on what or who is ugly? Would you rather be ugly than mean? greedy? unkind?

## Attribute Web



7. Did you like the illustrations? How would the story have been different without them? Compare Cauley's illustrations with those in other versions of this story.

## Post-Reading Extension Activities

### Writing

1. Write a story about what happens when the duckling (now a beautiful swan) returns to visit his mother.
2. Write a story about a time you or someone you know felt like the ugly duckling and were treated in a similar way.
3. In small groups, plan a "What if" story. For example, what if the father had returned to visit his babies and found how the duckling was being treated? or what if the duckling had stayed ugly all his life?

### Art

4. Illustrate a scene not shown in the book, such as something that happened during the long cold winter.
5. This book might be used as a springboard for a unit on children's book illustrators. The teacher could gather other books illustrated by Cauley (see the inside book cover), as well as other illustrators' pictures of the ugly duckling. After a week of display and discussion, children could participate in art projects using the media of the illustrator and write notes to the illustrator. The teacher might then bind the notes and mail them to the illustrator. (Often illustrators will send back a letter and drawing, which can be placed in a photo album in the class reading center.)
6. Have students make a shoebox diorama of a scene from the story and label it.
7. After a discussion of what "setting" is (where the story takes place and when), have students help make a chart of the settings in the story.

#### Settings We Have Discovered

the moat  
the pond  
the duck yard  
the swamp

the poor farmhouse  
the farmer's house  
the garden

### Drama

8. Have students retell the story as a puppet play; students can make sock or paper bag puppets.
9. Pantomime: Have students pretend to go on the duck's travels with him, miming the actions and trying to imagine the sounds, sights, smells, and feelings they would

have. (Explain that students should imagine the answers to your questions, not call them out.) **Say:** You are hatching out of your egg now. What sounds do you hear? What can you smell? What can you feel? You are finally out! What do you see? What are your brothers and sisters doing? It's the next day and you are at the water. How do you feel? What is your mother doing? Let's go meet the other animals now. What are the other ducks saying? How do you feel when they bite you?

[Deleted For Sample]

### Music

13. Ask students: If you were going to add music to the story, where would you use fast music? (e.g., when the children are chasing the duckling) Where would you have the music slow down? Where should the sounds be high? low? loud? soft? The children can use rhythm instruments (or recorded rhythms) to make background music for your oral reading of the story. Record on tape. Play back and ask the children if/how the music improves the story.