Curriculum Guide

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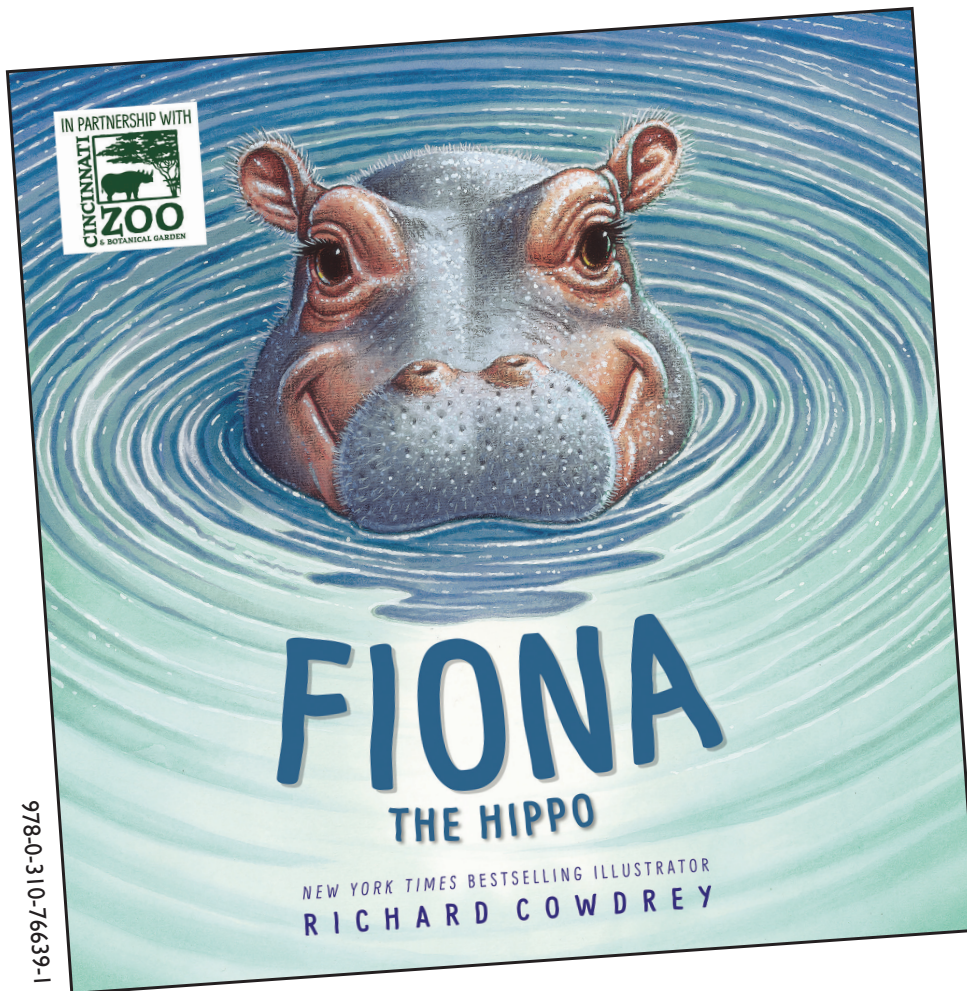
FIONA THE HIPPO

BY

Richard Cowdrey

BORN PREMATURELY at only 29 pounds—which is small for a baby hippo—Fiona was not expected to live. But her spunk and determination, along with lots of love and support from her caregivers at the Cincinnati Zoo, helped her to thrive and become an internet sensation. With every challenge she faced, Fiona let out a snort, wiggled her ears, and said, "I've got this." And she did!

New York Times bestselling illustrator Richard Cowdrey brings Fiona's inspiring story to young readers in this whimsical and heartfelt picture book.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Unless otherwise noted, all discussion questions address the following standards:

- Where does the story of Fiona the hippo take place?

- What was so unusual about Fiona's birth?

- What things did Fiona have to learn with help that other baby zoo animals learn naturally?

- Look at the illustration of Fiona joining the otters in the water. Describe the facial expressions of the animals. How does each animal feel about sharing the water?

- After Fiona learned some basic life skills, who did she want to join?

- What things did Fiona notice about her parents when she swam with them?

- Many people wrote Fiona fan mail. Why do you think so many people were interested in her?

- While Fiona was happy to see her parents, what was she still missing?

- What was your favorite scene in the story? Describe the scene and give reasons for your opinion.

- What was the author's message in the story about Fiona the baby hippo?

ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

Fiona's Story

Research more about Fiona the baby hippo and her miraculous beginnings at the Cincinnati Zoo. Organize your facts into an informative paragraph about Fiona's birth and how the zookeepers and other medical professionals helped nurse the premature hippo to health.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2

Dear Friends

Imagine that Fiona was able to respond to the tons of fan mail she received. What would she tell her fans about her life at the Cincinnati Zoo? Write a friendly letter from Fiona to her fans describing a day in her life at the zoo.

"I've Got This!"

Every time Fiona faced a challenge, such as learning to walk or to swim, she would say, "I've got this!" Think of a time when you were learning something new, like riding a bike or learning to tie your shoes. What steps did you have to take to learn this new thing? How did you feel at each step of learning? Create a three-panel comic strip and draw colored illustrations about your journey to accomplishment. Add speech bubbles to let readers know what you were thinking and feeling.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.8; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.8; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.8

A Home for Hippos

Find out about a hippo's natural habitat. What does a hippo need to have in order to survive and thrive? Pretend that you have been hired to create the hippo enclosure for a zoo. Create a labeled diagram that details what you have in the hippo enclosure to keep the hippos happy and healthy.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2

Weigh In

Fiona was born prematurely and at 29 pounds weighed less than half of what a normal baby hippo would weigh at birth. Locate the typical birth weights of the following zoo animals featured in the book: elephant, giraffe, camel, polar bear, and sea lion. Create a bar graph comparing the birth weights of the baby zoo animals. Label the X axis with the animals and the Y axis with weight in pounds from 0 to 200 at 25 pound increments (0, 25, 50, etc.). Note the birth weight of each animal by coloring a bar at the correct pound increment. Make sure to include a title for your bar graph.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.MD.B.3; CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.1.MD.C.4;

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.2.MD.D.10

A to Z with Fiona's Zoo Friends

Fiona's friends are excited to swim with her! Identify eight animals in the illustration below and list them in the first column. Then rewrite your list of animals in alphabetical order.

Animals	Alphabetical Order
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Sequencing Story Events

Number the following events from *Fiona the Hippo* in the order in which they happened in the story.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2

◯ Fiona finally met her parents and was able to swim with them.

◯ Fiona learned how to take milk from a bottle.

◯ Fiona was born prematurely at the Cincinnati Zoo.

◯ Fiona wobbled and wobbled and finally learned to walk.

◯ Fiona had a pool party with all of her animal friends at the zoo.

◯ Fiona grew strong enough to learn how to swim.

Word Study With *Fiona The Hippo*

When writing this story, the author of *Fiona the Hippo* used words that have SUFFIXES— endings such as "-ed," "-ing," and "-est" added to root words. Look at the words from the story in the chart below. Complete the chart by writing the root word and the suffix. Remember, sometimes the spelling of the root word changes when a suffix is added to it!

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.4.B; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.2.3.D

Word from the story	Root word	Suffix
snuggled		
slimy		
babies		
stronger		
amazing		
swimming		
finally		
daddy		
biggest		
whispered		

ANSWER KEY

Sequencing Story Events

(5) Fiona finally met her parents and was able to swim with them.

(2) Fiona learned how to take milk from a bottle.

(1) Fiona was born prematurely at the Cincinnati Zoo.

(3) Fiona wobbled and wobbled and finally learned to walk.

(6) Fiona had a pool party with all of her animal friends at the zoo.

(4) Fiona grew strong enough to learn how to swim.

Word Study

Word from the story	Root word	Suffix
snuggled	snuggle	-ed
slimy	slime	-y
babies	baby	-ies
stronger	strong	-er
amazing	amaze	-ing
swimming	swim	-ing
finally	final	-ly
daddy	dad	-y
biggest	big	-est
whispered	whisper	-ed