

Fiction

A Little World



by Betsy Hebert
illustrated by Liza Woodruff

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PAIRED
READ

Poetry

STRATEGIES & SKILLS

Comprehension

Strategy: Visualize

Skill: Theme

Vocabulary

drops, excite, outdoors,
pale

Phonics

r-controlled vowels /âr/:

are, air, ear, ere

Vocabulary Strategy

Similes

Word count: 904



Education

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A



Essential Question

What excites us about nature?



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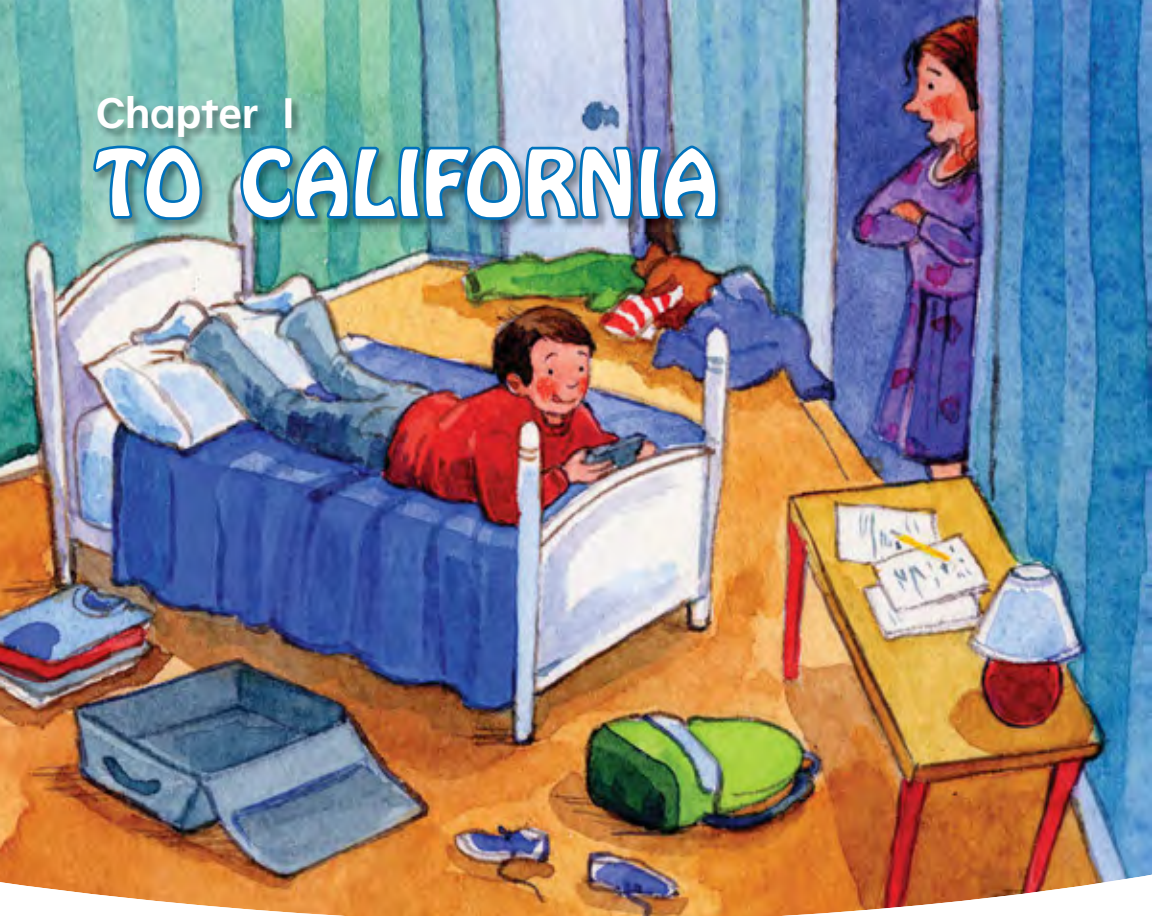
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Chapter 1

TO CALIFORNIA



Jack was supposed to be packing. Instead, he was trying to get to the next level of his game. He had spent hours playing already.

“Jack,” Mom said from the doorway of his bedroom. “For the last time, turn off the game and pack your bag. And can you please pick up in here? Your room is like a pig pen.”

“Okay, okay,” Jack grumbled. He turned off the game. He put his suitcase on the bed and started piling clothes into it.

Mom said, “Thank you. We’re leaving for the airport in 20 minutes. We’ll be at Aunt Karen’s in California tonight.”

Jack nodded. He was excited about going on the plane. He loved machines. But he wasn’t so sure about staying at Aunt Karen’s. At least Mom was letting him bring his games along.



But Mom had also said they would spend a lot of time exploring the outdoors. Jack was a little worried about that. He wished they were going to explore a factory that made electronic games instead.

Well, Aunt Karen lives right on a beach, he thought. At least building sandcastles will be fun.



Chapter 2

AT AUNT KAREN'S



That night, Jack and Mom settled in at Aunt Karen's house. Jack was glad that at least she had a TV and a computer and not just a shelf of nature books. But when he poked around looking for video games, there weren't any.

Jack looked out the window toward the beach. *Well, it's too dark to see the sand now,* he thought. *But I'll get to go there first thing in the morning.*



The next morning, Jack ran downstairs. He couldn't wait to see the beach. "Good morning," Mom said. "We thought you were never getting up!"

"Hey, there's the ocean!" Jack said as he walked by a big window. He stopped and stared at the waves crashing along the shore. "But where's the beach? I just see a bunch of big rocks."

"That *is* the beach," Aunt Karen said.



"Oh, so there's no sand?" Jack said.

"Nope," Aunt Karen said cheerfully.

Well, I guess I can forget about building sandcastles, Jack thought. He tried not to look too disappointed.

"But we can go down right after breakfast," said Aunt Karen. "It will be low tide then so we can check out the tide pools."

"What are tide pools?" Jack asked. He wanted to be polite, but he didn't really care that much.

“They’re pools of water that are trapped by the rocks when the tide goes out,” Aunt Karen said. “When it’s low tide, you can walk out on the rocks and look in the pools. During high tide, the whole area is covered by water.”

“What’s in the pools besides water?” Jack asked, starting to feel curious.





"All kinds of stuff," Aunt Karen said. "It's like a whole sea world in one little space. It's really cool."

"Hmmm," Jack said. He couldn't really imagine a tide pool, but right now, he was hungry. *Breakfast first, nature later*, he decided.

Chapter 3

IN THE POOL



After a big bowl of cereal, Jack went to get dressed. He thought people always wore flip-flops and shorts at the beach. But Aunt Karen had said to wear long pants and sneakers since the rocks were wet and slippery.

Walking down the wooden steps to the rocks, Jack was grateful for the warm clothes. Drops of cold water sprayed him from nearby waves. Jack balanced carefully as he walked.

Aunt Karen crouched down. "Here's one of my favorite things to see," she said.

Jack crouched beside her. "Whoa!" he said, gazing into a clear pool where tiny sea animals wriggled.

Aunt Karen grinned. "I told you it was cool." She pointed to a pale green creature. "That's a sea anemone. Those are its tentacles waving. Try not to touch the water. If we do, we might excite it. And there at the bottom is a sea star."



Jack watched the orange, five-armed sea star crawl across the bottom of the pool. "What are those things sticking to the side of that rock?" he asked. He pointed at a clump of closed black shells above the water line.

"Those are mussels," Aunt Karen said. "They use tiny threads to stick to the rocks. They filter little particles out of the ocean water to eat. When the tide is out like this, they close up tight so they don't dry out."





“What does the sea star eat?” Jack asked.

“Mussels,” Aunt Karen said.

“That’s perfect!” Jack said. “You were right. This really is a whole little world all in one place. How long can we stay down here?”

“Until the tide starts to come back in,” Aunt Karen said. “It’s a good place for the mussels then, but not such a good place for us.”



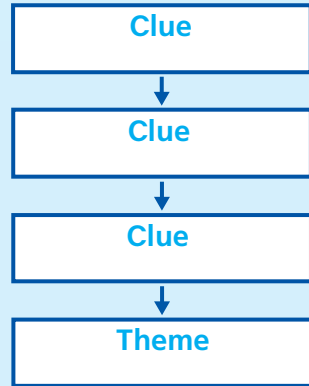
“Then let’s keep going,” Jack said.
“I want to look at as many pools as we
can today. I want to come back down
tomorrow, too, and every day until we
have to go home. This is the coolest
beach I’ve ever seen!”



Respond to Reading

Summarize

Use the chart to help you summarize *A Little World*.



Text Evidence

1. Is *A Little World* fiction or nonfiction? How do you know? **Genre**
2. How does Jack feel about nature at the beginning of the story? How does he feel at the end? **Theme**
3. Find the simile on page 2. What two things are being compared?
Similes
4. Write about the author's message about nature. **Write About Reading**

Compare Texts

Read a poem about a sea star.

See a Star

I see a star.

It's not shiny or shimmery.

I see a star.

It's not burning or bright.



I see a star.
It is not in the dark sky.
I see a star.
It is as black as the night.



I see a star.
I think it might like me.
It seems to be waving,
the sea star I see.
Oh, the sea is so splendid!



Make Connections

What does Jack get excited about?

Essential Question

How are Jack and the girl in the poem alike? [Text to Text](#)

Focus on Literary Elements

Repetition Repeating something, like a sound, word, or phrase, is called *repetition*. Poets use repetition to make a poem sound more interesting.

What to Look for In *See a Star*, the line “I see a star” is repeated. In some of the lines, sounds are repeated too. In line 2, the *sh* sound is repeated. What sound is repeated in line 4?

Your Turn

Write your own short poem about nature. Use repetition in at least two ways: a sound, a word, or in a phrase or sentence. Then read your poem to a classmate.

Thinkmark

Setting

Where does most of *A Little World* take place?

Characters

Who is the main character in *A Little World*? Who are the other characters?

How does Jack change from the beginning to the end of the story?

Sequence of Events

What happens at the **beginning**, **middle**, and **end** of *A Little World*?

Make Connections

Have you seen the ocean? How does the ocean make you feel?