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**Pausing Point** *(Stories for Assessment and Enrichment)*

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Meet Vern

My name is Vern, and I have the best job! My job is to take you kids in to see the Green Fern Zoo.

We will see things with wings and things with scales, things that bite and things that sting, things that creep and things that swim.

I have lots of fun facts and tales to share with you. So let’s see the zoo and have some fun!
Things That Swim

I hope you kids like things that swim, because this is the room where we keep all the fish.

The fish here are trout. A trout is a fish that swims in cool lakes and creeks. You can see that they have lots of spots and marks. The spots and marks help the trout hide. They make the trout look a lot like the sand on the bed of a creek.
Here’s a big fish that makes all of the wee fish run and hide. This is a reef shark. It has that name because it likes to make its home close to a reef, where there are lots of fish.
You can see that the reef shark has fins and a set of gills on its side. You can not see them from here, but this shark has lots of sharp teeth in its mouth.

Would a reef shark bite you? Well, you are not the lunch that this shark would like best. A reef shark likes to feed on squid, crabs, and shrimp. But it would be smart not to get the reef shark mad at you all the same!
Chimps

Next, let’s see the chimps. We have ten chimps here at the Green Fern Zoo. You can see them all out there if you look hard.

The one you see here is Bess. She has a snack in her mouth. Bess and the rest of the chimps like to munch on plants, nuts, and seeds.
Do you see that chimp with the stick? That’s Bart. Bart likes to have ants for lunch. To get the ants, he takes a stick and sticks it in an ant hill. Then he lifts it up and licks off the ants. Yum, yum!
The chimp with the rope in his hand is Max. He’s just a babe. He was born in March. Bess is his mom.

Max is a lot of fun. He likes to swing on the rope and splash in the pool.
The two chimps up on the rocks are Carl and Norm. Carl is the one on the left. Carl and Norm are pals. But they were not pals last week.

Last week we gave them a branch from a fig tree for lunch. Norm took the branch and ran off with it. He ate all of the figs. Carl was mad at Norm all week.

But that was last week. This week the two of them are pals.
Mandrills

Here you can see two man·drills. Man·drills are a lot like chimps.

Do you like the red nose? The man·drill with the red nose is a male.

The man·drill on the left is groom·ing the male with the red nose. She is look·ing for ticks and bugs. Man·drills like groom·ing be·cause it makes them look good and feel good, too.
Look! One of the man·drills is yawn·ing! You can see that he has long, sharp teeth. Those sharp teeth help him chop up his food.
Man·drills like a lot of foods. We feed our man·drills ants, grass, nuts, bark, plant shoots, and roots.

Man·drills have sacks in·side their cheeks. They can stuff food in the sacks and keep it there un·til they need a snack. Then they pop the food out and munch on it!
Things with Wings

Next, let’s see some things with wings.

This is a puff·in. He makes his home up north, not too far from the North Pole.

Look at those cute feet! But they are not just cute. The puff·in’s feet help him swim.

Note, as well, his big bill. The puff·in can use his bill to get fish.
Puff·ins are born from eggs. The puff·in mom and dad sit on their egg. The mom sits. Then the dad sits. In the end, the chick pops out of the shell. The mom and dad take care of the chick un·til it can care for it·self. Look! That puff·in has fish in her bill! She will feed those fish to her chick.
In this next room, we have a finch. Unlike the puffin, the finch makes a home in woodlands. He can use his bill to snap up grass seeds for food.

I’m sad to tell you that the finch is getting to be quite rare. We are proud to have five of them here at the Green Fern Zoo.
Big Cats

Do you like cats? If you do, look there in the grass. Do you see the cat?

That is not the sort of cat that you keep in your home and feed cat food. That is a bobcat.

Bobcats are good hunters. They hunt rabbits, rats, and sometimes deer and sheep.

That bobcat’s name is Robert, or Bob for short. Get it?
If you look up on that rock, you will see a cat that’s bigger than a bob-cat. It’s a pan-ther.

Pan-thers can have spots. They can be tan, too. Here at the Green Fern Zoo, we have two black pan-thers. The name of this one is Jet.
That’s Jet’s sis·ter, Flash, up on the tree branch. Flash has strong legs that help her run fast. She has sharp teeth and sharp claws that help her hunt rabb·its and deer. She can use her claws to scam·per up a tree if she needs to.

You can see that she is not all black like Jet. She has some spots.
Groundhogs

Here you can see a ground-hog.

Ground-hogs have sharp claws that help them dig holes in the ground. They spend a lot of time down in those dark holes.
Ground-hogs like to feed on grass and plants. But when they run out of their holes to get food, they have to be on the look-out. Some critters, like bob-cats and snakes, like to dine on ground-hogs. This ground-hog here is sitting up to see if there is a snake or a bob-cat close by.
This ground-hog is named Pepper. We feed her grass, tree bark, and insects, but the food that she likes best is corn. We found that out yesterday morning when she got out from her pen.

We found her in the petting zoo. She ate a lot of the corn that was there for the ducks and hens.
The Reptile Room

Who likes snakes? Hands up if you like them!

Some kids like snakes best of all, and some kids can't stand them. If you do not like snakes, you can skip this next room because it is the reptile room.
This is a gar·ter snake. Gar·ter snakes feed on slugs, in·sects, and frogs. For those crit·ers, the gar·ter snake is a kill·er. But for us, it is harm·less. A gar·ter snake could bite you, but its bite would not make you sick.
This is a ratt·ler. He is a des·ert dwell·er that hunts for rats and rabb·its. He has a patt·ern on his scales that helps him blend in and hide in the des·ert sands. When the ratt·ler is hid·den, it is hard for rats and rabb·its to see him.
A ratt·ler is not harm·less like a gar·ter snake. If you ev·er see this snake hiss·ing and coil·ing up, you bett·er stand back and let it be. The ratt·ler has sharp fangs, and a bite from a ratt·ler could kill you. But we are safe here in the rep·tile room. There is a sheet of glass keep·ing us safe from the snakes.
Termites

What do you kids like to have for lunch? Hot dogs? Chicken nuggets?

What if I gave you a lump of wood or a big tree stump for lunch? Would you like that?

Well, if you were a termite, you would like it. Termites are insects that like to munch on wood.
See this big spike sticking up from the ground? It looks sort of like a rock, but it is a termite mound. If you could look inside, you would see lots of termites.
If you would like to see what termites look like, take a peek in this box.

As you can see, termites look a lot like ants. They have six legs like ants. A termite mound has a queen who makes eggs, just like in an ant-hill. Here you can see that the termite queen is much bigger than the rest of the termites.

Would a termite munch on your home? It would if your home is made of wood. The termites from a big mound could have your living room for lunch and your bedroom for dinner!
River Otters

Do you like to run and jump? Do you like to chase your pals? Do you like to splash in the pool in the summ·er? Do you like to slide down hills in the win·ter?

Well, if you like to do those things, you would make a good ott·er! You can see three of our riv·er ott·ers up on the rocks: Al·ex, All·en, and Ag·nes. That’s Al·ex up on top of All·en. The last one is Ag·nes.
Ott·ers have short, strong legs with webbed paws and sharp claws. The webbing helps the ott·ers swim fast and get their food. Riv·er ott·ers hunt for fish, frogs, and crabs.

When it is time for bed, the riv·er ott·ers scam·per to their den. They have nests on land that are lined with grass, moss, and bark.
Cranes and Spoon-bills

Here you can see two sandhill cranes.

A sandhill crane has long legs, a dark, pointed bill, and a red spot next to its bill. Sandhill cranes are found in wetlands. They like to hunt for frogs, snakes, and insects.
Those are sand-hill cranes, too. In fact, that’s a mom and a dad with their chicks. When sand-hill cranes mate, they tilt their bills up and make hooting sounds. Then the mom and dad make a nest. The mom sits on the eggs for 4 weeks until the chicks are born.
That’s a spoon·bill. He has that name be·cause his bill is shaped like a spoon.

The spoon·bill wades in pools to get his food. He swings his bill back and forth. If he feels an in·sect swimm·ing in·side his bill, he snaps it shut.

When spoon·bills mate, they make a nest. When the chicks are born, they can’t see. The mom and dad have to care for them until they can see.
The Ostrich

This is an os·trich. He is a big one. He tips the scales at close to two hun·dred pounds.

An os·trich has wings that it can flap, but it can’t get off the ground. Still, an os·trich can run fast on land. It can run as fast as a car!

If it gets mad, an os·trich can kick you. My pal Fred here at the zoo got kicked by an os·trich. The os·trich broke Fred’s leg in three spots! Ouch!
Deer

Look there! Do you see the two deer in the woods? The one who is looking at us is named Hope.

Hope was not born in this zoo. I found her by my home one morning after a storm. A tree fell on her and broke her leg. She could not stand up.

I drove her here and the vet fixed up her leg. We named her Hope and found a spot for her in the zoo. Today her leg is fine and she is as strong as ever.
The Petting Zoo

Well, kids, the last thing that you all get to see is the petting zoo.

You can’t pet the os·trich, the ott·ers, or the spoon·bills. And it would not be wise to pet the pan·ther or the bob·cat! But in this part of the zoo, you can pet all of the crit·ters.

This rabb·it’s name is Hoss. He likes it when you rub his neck.
Here are two chickens. They like it when you toss them seed corn.

You can pet the chickens, too. But sometimes they get scared. It’s best if you do not run up to them because running scares them.
There’s Pam, our pet pig. You can pet her, too. Pam likes to be petted.

Well, kids, that’s it for me. I hope you had a good time at the zoo today. I had fun pointing out some of the critters that I like best.

I hope some of you can visit with your moms and dads. There is so much to see here at the Green Fern Zoo. You could visit us five times and still see lots of cool things!
About this Book

This book has been created for use by students learning to read with the Core Knowledge Reading Program. Readability levels are suitable for early readers. The book has also been carefully leveled in terms of its “code load,” or the number of spellings used in the stories.

The English writing system is complex. It uses more than 200 spellings to stand for 40-odd sounds. Many sounds can be spelled several different ways, and many spellings can be pronounced several different ways. This book has been designed to make early reading experiences simpler and more productive by using a subset of the available spellings. It uses only spellings that students have been taught to sound out as part of their phonics lessons, plus a handful of Tricky Words, which have also been deliberately introduced in the lessons. This means that the stories will be 100% decodable if they are assigned at the proper time.

As the students move through the program, they learn new spellings and the “code load” in the decodable Readers increases gradually. The code load graphic on this page indicates the number of spellings students are expected to know in order to read the first story of the book and the number of spellings students are expected to know in order to read the final stories in the book. The columns on the inside back cover list the specific spellings and Tricky Words students are expected to recognize at the beginning of this Reader. The bullets at the bottom of the inside back cover identify spellings, Tricky Words, and other topics that are introduced gradually in the unit this Reader accompanies.

Visit us on the web at www.coreknowledge.org
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### Tricky Words:
- a, i, know, so, of, all, some, from, word, are, were, have, one, once, to, do, two, who, said, says, was, when, where, why, what, which, here, there, he, she, we, be, me, they, their, my, by, you, your, could, would, should, down, because

### Code Knowledge added gradually in the unit for this Reader:
- Beginning with “Meet Vern”: the sound /er/ spelled ‘er’ as in her
- Beginning with “Things That Swim”: the sound /ar/ spelled ‘ar’ as in car
- Beginning with “Chimps”: the sound /or/ spelled ‘or’ as in for
- Beginning with “Mandrills”: two-syllable words
- Beginning with “Groundhogs”: the Tricky Words today, yesterday, tomorrow; /t/ as in asked, /d/ as in filled
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