

Randal the Elephant

written and illustrated by Ciara Gavin

Educational Guide

Curriculum Connections

STEM

- Life Science – Behaviors and characteristics of elephants and otters
- Environmental Science: Wetlands; Forests

Reading and Language Arts

- Story elements – Setting, plot and character development; problems and solutions
- Illustrations enhance meaning and tone
- Writing – Letter writing
- Comprehension strategies – Cause and effect, compare and contrast, making inferences, sequencing events

GUIDED
READING
LEVEL

K

GRADE
LEVEL
EQUIVALENT

2

RPL

1.8

LEXILE

600

Common Core State Standards/Instructional Strand

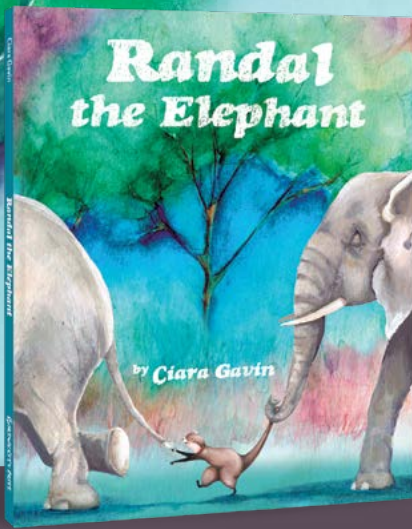
W 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8

SL 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5

RF 2.3, 3d, 4, 4a, 4c

L 2.3, 4, 4a, 4c, 4d, 5, 5a, 5b, 6

RL 2.1, 2.3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10



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About the Book

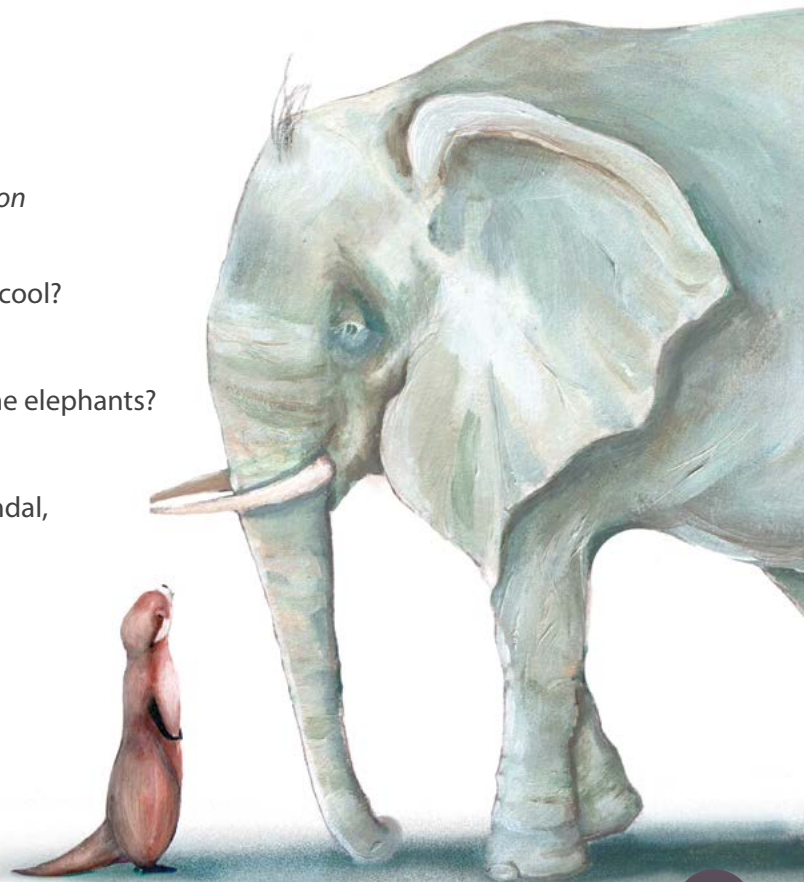
Randal is an otter who lives near the Big Pond with his friend Clive and the other otters. But Randal dreams of being something bigger, much bigger than himself – an elephant. His friend Clive encourages him, telling Randal: “My Mam said you can be anything you want to be.” So off Randal goes to live with the elephants. He imitates what they do, and he tries to think elephant thoughts. After a while Randal misses his life as an otter. He returns to the Pond happy to be home, but he continues to dream...Children will share Randal’s lesson about self-identity and friendship, as they also learn about elephants in this charming picture book.

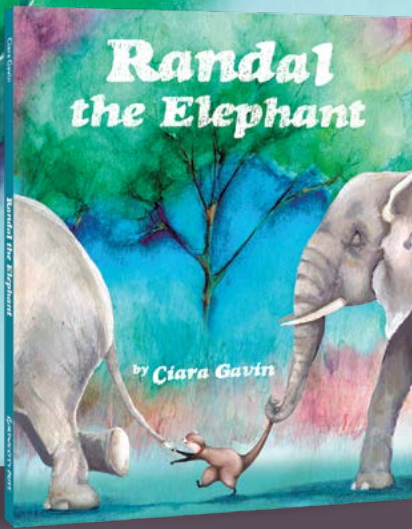
Follow-Up Questions

Science: *Animals*; **Language Arts:** *Reading Comprehension*

- What two things about elephants does Randal say are cool?
- What are things that otters like to do?
- What name does Randal have when he is living with the elephants?
- Why do the otters decide to visit Randal?
- When the otters find an elephant that they think is Randal, what do they do? How does the elephant respond?
- Why does Randal return to the Big Pond?

RL 2.1, 2.3; RI 2.1





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Class Discussion

Language Arts: *Critical Thinking, Speaking and Listening*

- Clive tells Randal that if he wants to be elephant he has to spend time with them. Randal imitates what he sees the elephants do. Does acting like an elephant make him an elephant? What do your students think makes animals what they are? What makes people what they are?
- Randal tells the otters that the elephants play a game where they pretend that they don't notice him. Do the children believe this is a game or do they think the elephants really do not notice him? Discuss.
- Why do your students think Randal asks his otter friends to send him pond water, mud and pictures of the pond? Is it for the elephants or for another reason?

RL 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7; SL 2.1

Activities

1 Science: *Nature, Animals; Language Arts:* *Research; Speaking and Listening; Cooperative Learning*

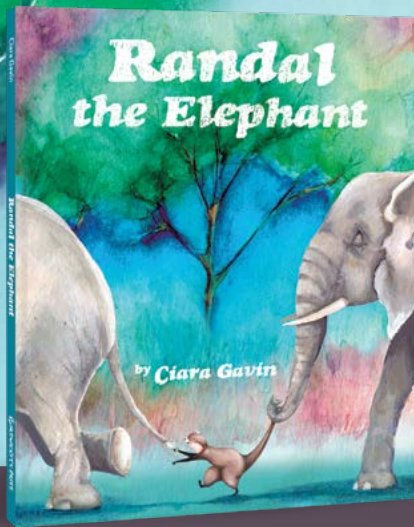
- There are many amazing facts about elephants listed at the end of the book. Now, have your students learn amazing facts about otters. You should explain to them that there are sea otters and river otters. Randal is a river otter. As a class do a research study of river otters. There are many websites they can draw information from. If they have trouble, here are some that will be useful:

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/river-otter/#river-otter-swimming.jpg>

<http://www.factzoo.com/mammals/river-otter.html>

http://www.riverottterecology.org/uploads/5/3/0/9/5309962/4_kids_pages.pdf

You might also want add a study of sea otters and compare and contrast the two kinds of otters.
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Then create a “Did You Know” poster for otters with illustrations and facts similar to the one about elephants at the end of the book. Set aside a “Did You Know” area in your classroom for all the animals you study during the course of the year.

RI 2.1; W 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8; SL 2.1, 2.5

2 Science: Nature, Animals; Language Arts: Writing, Research

- Your students know that Randal was homesick when he wrote a letter asking Clive to send him mud and water from the pond. Letter writing was important to Randal, and it should be important to your students. Have your students imagine they are on a trip away from home or have moved to a new neighborhood. Each student should think about the things they miss about home. Then just like Randal, they should write to a friend or relative asking them to send them things that remind them of home. The letters can include illustrations of the things that they ask for. Set aside time for your students to read their letters aloud and to respond to each other’s work.

W 2.3, 2.7, 2.8, SL 2.1, 2.3, 2.4

3 Science: Nature, Animals; Language Arts: Writing, Critical Thinking, Research; Cooperative Learning

- Both African elephants and Indian elephants are on the endangered animals list. Discuss with your class what it means to be an endangered animal. Then, divide your class into two teams. One team will study African elephants and the other team Indian elephants. They should learn why they are endangered and what is being done to save these animals. Each team should come up with a slogan and poster advocating saving elephants from extinction.

W 2.2, 2.7, 2.8; SL2.1, 2.5

