

# Will They Float?

by Feana Tu'akoi



## Shared reading

Shared reading provides students with opportunities to behave like readers and to engage in rich conversations about texts that they are initially not able to read for themselves. It encourages enthusiasm for and enjoyment of reading, builds knowledge, strengthens comprehension, and fosters understanding of the features of a wide range of texts (including narrative, poetry, and non-fiction).

Shared reading involves multiple readings of a text, led by the teacher, with increasing interaction and participation by students. After many shared reading sessions, students become able to read, with increasing independence, the small books that accompany the big books.

## Overview

This non-fiction text explores the topic of floating and sinking and encourages students to “think like scientists”. As well as reading this book for interest or to support specific curriculum topics, you can use it to build students’ awareness of the features of non-fiction, including the use of tables to present information.

There is an audio version of the text (excluding the tables) as an MP3 file at [www.readytoread.tki.org.nz](http://www.readytoread.tki.org.nz)

## Cross-curriculum links

Science (level 1 and 2) – Physical World: Explore everyday examples of physical phenomena.

Investigating in science: Extend their experiences and personal explanations of the natural world through exploration, play, asking questions, and discussing simple models.

Communicating in science: Build their language and develop their understandings of the many ways the natural world can be represented.

For further information about the science content in this book, see Building Science Concepts Book 37: *Floating and Sinking – How Objects Behave in Water* and the online teachers’ guide at: <http://scienceonline.tki.org.nz/What-do-my-students-need-to-learn/Building-Science-Concepts>

## Related texts

Non-fiction texts that include asking questions: *Stick Insects*, *Camouflage*, *What Does the Tide Bring In?* (shared)

## Text characteristics

Unlike guided texts, shared reading texts are not levelled and may be used with a wide range of students. Many of the text characteristics of *Will They Float?* as described here, are similar to but more complex than those in texts for guided reading.

Most content explicitly stated but also some implicit content that provides opportunities for students to make inferences (for example, what it means to “be like a scientist”)

Visual language features (a contents page, headings, photographs, tables, thought bubbles and speech bubbles, and bold print for key vocabulary)

Some concepts that may be outside the students’ prior knowledge but can easily be related to it


The frequent use of questions, some of which are answered and some of which are left for the reader to answer or think about

Many high-frequency words

**Floating and sinking**

Some things **float** and some things **sink**.

The leaf floats.  
It rests on top of the water.



The stone sinks.  
It falls through the water  
to the bottom of the container.

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**Will these objects float?**

nail	toy car	apple	pencil
block	marble	tennis ball	
potato	toy boat	modelling clay	

Look at these **objects**.  
Will these objects float?  
What do you think?  
We can be like scientists.  
We can **test** the objects.  
We can put them in water  
to see if they will float.

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Some features of the language of non-fiction:

- precise descriptive language (for example, “bigger than”, “falls through the water”, “rests on top of the water”) including noun phrases (for example, “heavy things”, “small things”, “the objects that floated”)
- the use of words such as “to”, “but”, and “because” to link ideas within sentences
- the use of the simple present tense (“The leaf floats ...”, “... the potato sinks”)

Subject-specific vocabulary (for example, “container”, “floats”, “light for its size”, “heavy for its size”, “objects”, “scientists”, “sinks”, “table”, “test”, “water”), the meanings of which are supported by the context, the sentence structure, visual language features, and/or by explanations

## Reading purposes and learning goals

(What opportunities does this text provide for students to learn more about how to “read, respond to, and think critically” about texts?)

**Select from and adapt** the suggestions below according to your students’ strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for years 1-8*, Knowledge of the learner, page 6).

Each reading purpose is accompanied by learning goals. The learning goals are the sorts of behaviours that you want your students to demonstrate after multiple readings of this text.

Often the first reading of a shared text will be with the whole class. The focus is on making meaning. The teacher leads the reading, with students invited to join in as they feel confident, so that they can focus on responding to the content and thinking about the topic or main idea. Further reading to develop the understanding of the topic and deeper exploration of word and text features can be left for subsequent readings.

### A suggested purpose for the initial reading

(What can the students expect to find out or think about as a result of reading this text?)

To find out about floating and sinking

#### Possible learning goals

During the first reading, the students can:

- **make connections** to their prior knowledge in order to **ask questions** and **form and test hypotheses** about floating and sinking
- **identify** some main ideas
- **notice** some ways the text and visual language features work together to help the reader.

### Introducing the text

- Before the first shared reading, set up a science inquiry table with some of the objects featured in this text and a large container of water, giving students the opportunity to explore the concepts of floating and sinking.

To provide vocabulary support for English language learners, talk with them as they experiment with objects, paying special attention to the pronouns (“it”, “we”, “you”). Use the photographs in the book to introduce and practise some subject-specific vocabulary. If possible, provide the names of the objects in their first language.

- For the reading, have a marble, a tennis ball, and an apple and a potato of similar size handy to provide support for the concepts of weight (“heavy” and “light”) and size.
- Read the title and ask the students to predict the answer. Clarify that the pronoun “They” refers to the objects the girl is holding (not the children). *How will the children find out?* Your students’ responses will help you find out what they know about floating and sinking.
- Ask: *What do you think we might find out in this book?* Look through some of the pages, briefly noting such features as the contents page, headings, and photographs. Confirm that this is a non-fiction text about floating and sinking. Share the purpose for reading.
- Turn to the contents page and briefly discuss its purpose. Read the first heading and point out the link to the page number. Turn to page 2 and prompt the students to notice that this has the same heading.

### Reading and discussing the text

- Many of the ideas in this book are likely to be new and of great interest. Allow plenty of time for discussion and to explore the photographs and visual language features. You might want to spread the first reading over more than one session.
- Page 2 – Discuss what the photograph shows about the question on the cover, then read the heading, using a pointer to help the students track the print as you read. Explain that the words “float” and “sink” are in bold print because they are important. Support the students to identify the main ideas: *What does this page tell you about floating and sinking?*
- Page 3 – Draw attention to the question mark in the heading. Check that the students understand that “these objects” are the items in the photographs. Encourage the students to join in as you read the names of the objects and to share their responses to the question “What do you think?”
- Read page 4, including the labels in the photograph. Clarify the link to page 3 by asking: *What did the children find out?* Encourage the students to predict where the boys will put the boat and the car.
- Page 5 – Clarify that “table” has more than one meaning. (You may also need to explain what a “tick” is.) Discuss the connections between the “ticks” on the table and the objects the children tested. Help the students use the table to find out what happened to the boat and the car.

- Pages 6 and 7 – Read the heading and discuss what scientists do (for example, they think about things, ask questions, and find ways to look for answers). As you read, explain that the “clouds” are thought bubbles, showing questions the children have thought of. Your students could think of some questions of their own. At the end of the page, model your thinking: *I wonder what the children will do next?*
- Pages 8 and 9 – The students may notice that three of the questions on page 8 are from the thought bubbles. Use the photographs on pages 8 and 9 to draw out the idea that the boy is testing the questions. *What do you think will happen?* Note that it may take several readings (and experiments) before the students fully grasp the concept of “heavy for its size” and “light for its size”. (If you want to explore the more complex concepts of density and displacement, see *Floating and Sinking: How Objects Behave in Water* – Building Science Concepts, Book 37.)
- Pages 10 and 11 – You could use an apple and a potato of similar size to support the concepts of “heavy/light for its size” (for example, that “big” doesn’t always mean “heavy”). Use the photo of the boy to remind the students about thinking like a scientist: *I wonder what the boy is thinking.*
- Pages 12 and 13 – Clarify that the girl is testing another question from pages 6 and 7. Use the photographs to track the change in shape of the modelling clay. After reading page 13, reread the header question and ask: *What did the girl find out?*
- Pages 14 to 16 – Encourage the students to respond to the questions. After the reading, provide an opportunity to try out the activity using similar objects. Deciding on an appropriate replacement for the toy dinosaur provides a great opportunity to “think like a scientist”. You could use their investigations for language experience writing (and reading).
- Remind the students of the reading purpose. *What are some things we found out about floating and sinking? What else did we find out?* Draw out the idea that this book is also about being like a scientist.
- Either now or during a subsequent reading, look at the table on the inside back cover. Clarify that it’s the same version as the children are using on page 15. Use the headings on the table to support your students in summarising what the children did. (They thought about what might happen and then tested the objects to find out what *did* happen.) After the reading, you could select some objects and model how to fill in the table. Make photocopies available for students to use while they carry out their own investigations at the science inquiry table.

## Suggested purposes for subsequent readings

You can return to this text many times with the same purpose or with a different purpose. Subsequent readings of the big book may be with a group of students who have similar learning needs rather than with the whole class.

**Select from and adapt** the following suggestions.

### Suggested reading purpose

To notice the parts of this book that help us find information

### Learning goals

Over a number of sessions, the students can:

- **explore** the links between the information on the contents page and the rest of the book
- use the headings to help identify and **summarise** main points.

Choose one of the suggestions below for each session.

- Discuss the purpose of the contents page. Practise reading a heading and turning to the relevant page number. If necessary, explain that the blue subheadings on pages 8 and 12 are both linked to the main page 8 heading “How can we find out more?”
- As you reread *Will They Float?*, for each page or section, ask: *How does this heading help us know what this page (or section) is about?* Support the students to summarise the main ideas at the end of one or two sections: *What was the heading? What did we find out?* Over several readings, you could build up a summary chart.

### Suggested reading purpose

To notice some things that help us think about and understand the ideas in this book

### Learning goals

Over a number of sessions, the students can:

- **identify** words in bold print and discuss what they mean
- **explore** how the author describes and explains things
- **explore** how information and ideas can be shown in more than one way
- **identify** some questions and think about them.

Select from and adapt these suggestions. You will find that several of them overlap.

- Focus on the words in bold print. As you reread *Will They Float?* show the students how the surrounding sentences and/or the photographs help with the word meanings. For example, on page 2, the photo and the phrases “rests on the water” and “falls through the water” support the meaning of “float” and “sink”; on page 3, the labelled photographs show the “objects”, and the phrase “put them in water to see if they will float” explains what “test” means. Build familiarity with these new words by using them often as you read and discuss the text, and encourage the students to use the words too.
- Draw attention to how the author helps the reader understand ideas, both by her use of descriptive language and by the way she uses linking words when explaining things. For example:
  - You could focus on the noun phrases (such as “some objects”, “heavy things”, “light things”, “modelling clay”, “small things”, “tennis ball”, “toy boat”). Discuss how the combinations of words make it easier to understand exactly what the author means; for example, on page 3, discuss the difference between a “car” and a “toy car” or between a “tennis ball” and a different sort of ball. Encourage the use of precise language by having the students follow instructions or sort objects and describe them; for example: “purple felt tips”, “long skipping ropes”, “wooden building blocks”.
  - Explore the adjectives and comparative phrases (“small”, “smaller than”, “bigger than”, “the same size”) on pages 8–11. Provide opportunities for the students to practise this language as they sort objects by size (or other features, such as weight or length).
  - Draw attention to how the author uses words such as “to”, “but”, or “because” to link ideas. For example, on page 3, read the first part of the sentence (“We can put them in water”) and ask the students why the children are going to put the objects in the water. Then read the rest of the sentence (“to see if they will float”) to show that it provides the answer. There are similar examples on pages 5 and 15. You could also discuss the use of “but” on pages 9 and 10 to show surprise and the use of “because” on pages 10 and 11 to show cause and effect.
- Explore how the visual language features can show information in different ways. You could:
  - Draw attention to how the photos match and support the ideas and information in the text. For example, they show what the children are doing; they help students read the names of the labelled objects on pages 3 and 5; they clarify terms such as “bigger than” and “smaller than”; and on pages 12 and 13, they show how the ball of modelling clay has been formed into a different shape.
  - Explore the use of the thought bubbles on pages 6 and 7, and the speech bubbles on page 15. Prompt the students to notice the use of these features in other texts and provide opportunities for the students to create their own examples.
  - Use pages 4 and 5 to explore the different ways in which the children are showing what they found out. Discuss the use of the labels “Floated” and “Did not float” to show the children where to put the objects after they have tested them. Prompt the students to notice that the headings in the table match the labels in the page 4 photograph. Explain that writing the information in a table meant that the children didn’t have to keep the objects in a pile and that it was the information in the table that helped the children think of more questions. Have the students use the table to identify what objects floated (or what objects did not float).
- Focus on the use of questions in the book. Note that some of the questions are answered but most are not. Draw out the idea that questions have different purposes – sometimes they help to find a specific answer and sometimes they are ways of thinking more deeply about an idea. Prompt the students to notice different ways of asking questions (for example, “Will”, “Did”, “How”, “Does it matter ...”, “What”). Together, create a list of key words and phrases to help the students formulate their own questions.