

## ***The Bog Baby* by Jeanne Willis**

### **Reasons for selection and synopsis**

*When two small sisters go fishing to the magic pond, they find something much better than a frog or a newt. They find a bog baby. Small and blue with wings like a dragon, the girls decide to make him their secret. I won't tell if you won't.*

*But the bog baby is a wild thing, and when he becomes poorly, the girls decide they must tell their mum. And she tells them the greatest lesson: if you really love something, you have to let it go.*

### **Before reading...**

Ask the children to look at the front cover. What do you think the book will be about? What things can you see on the front cover?

What sort of story will it be? Who might enjoy it?

Who might a bog baby be?

Predict what you think might happen in the story.

### **Reading Vipers**

**V**ocabulary  
**I**nfer  
**P**redict  
**E**xplain  
**R**etrieve  
**S**equence or Summarise



*The following questions are designed as prompts only – allow the children to come up with their own questions and ideas. They will be much more engaged this way!*

### Double Pages 1 and 2

Vocabulary	What synonyms for allowed can you think of?  How big is the puddle? What synonyms for this word can you think of?
Infer	Why might the girls have lied?  Why do you think the girls weren't allowed to go fishing by themselves?  What deal do the girls make with each other?
Predict	Predict where they go instead of to Annie's.
Explain	Why do you think the girls are surrounded in pink?  Do you like this opening? Why?
Retrieve	What was the bad thing they did?  What did the girls do?  What did Chrissy say was in Bluebell wood?  What happens when it rains?
Summarise	Sum up your first impression of the girls in one word and explain your choice of word.

### Double Pages 3 and 4

Vocabulary	What does squelchy mean? How can you tell the children fished for ages?
Infer	What can you see in the pictures? Why might they think a bog baby is better? What mood does the bog baby look in?
Predict	Predict what a bog baby is. Predict what the girls will do with or to the bog baby.
Explain	What do you think of the bog baby? Is it safe?
Retrieve	What squeaked? Why? What did they catch? What did the bog baby look like? How does the bog baby move?
Summarise	Summarise the girl's fishing trip in less than twenty words.

**Double Pages 5 and 6**

Vocabulary	Find a simile. Why is blew in big letters? What does 'we daren't' mean?
Infer	Was the girl afraid of the bog baby? How do you know? Why can't the bog baby fly? Do you think the bog baby is scared of the girls? Why? Why do you think they hid the bog baby?
Predict	Predict if mum will find the bog baby.
Explain	Would you have taken the bog baby? Explain why.
Retrieve	What did the bog baby feel like? How did the bog baby look at the girl? How do they try and get the bog baby to fly? How does the bog baby react? Where did they put the bog baby?
Summarise	Summarise these pages in less than ten words.

### Double Pages 7 and 8

Vocabulary	What word shows they think their home for the bog baby is nice? Find words and phrases on these pages that show secrecy?
Infer	Does the bog baby like the girls? How do you know? Why do they love the bog baby? Why did they have to sneak the bog baby in? How do you think they scared the crow away?
Predict	Do you think they can keep the bog baby secret forever?
Explain	Do you think they are making the right decision by keeping the bog baby a secret? Why?
Retrieve	Where do they make the bog baby a home? What do they put in it? What do they feed the bog baby? What did they sneak the bog baby into school in? Where did the bog baby play? Where does he sleep?
Summarise	Summarise these pages in less than twenty words.

**Double Pages 9 and 10**

Vocabulary	How is 'at least' effectively used? What word on DP10 shows the girls were hiding? What does blabbed mean?
Infer	How did the girls feel when bog baby got sick? Why might the bog baby be spitting stuff out? Why do you think mum wasn't angry?
Predict	Predict if mum can save the bog baby.
Explain	Do you like the character of mum? Why?
Retrieve	How does bog baby change when he's sick? Why didn't they dare tell mum? How could they tell he was really sick? When was the last time mum saw a bog baby?
Summarise	Summarise the bog baby's illness in three words.

**Double Pages 11 and 12**

Vocabulary	What words could be used to describe mum? Why do you think the author says 'real love'?
Infer	Why are the girls desperate for mum to make the bog baby better? What is real love?
Predict	Predict what mum will do with the bog baby. Do you think the bog baby will get well?
Explain	Why do you think the illustrator doesn't involve many pictures on DP11? Do you think the authors description of real love is right? Do you think the children made the right decision to let the bog baby go?
Retrieve	Why does mum say bog baby is sick? Where does mum take the bog baby?
Summarise	

**Double Pages 13, 14 and 15**

Vocabulary	What words show that it's a nice place for the bog baby?
Infer	What do they assume happened to the bog baby? Where do you think all the bog babies came from?
Predict	If there were a sequel to bog baby, what might it be about?
Explain	Did you like the book? Why? What is the message of this book?
Retrieve	Where do they put the bog baby? What did her daughter find?
Summarise	Summarise this book in less than forty words.