



MUDDY AS A DUCK PUDDLE AND OTHER AMERICAN SIMILES

Laurie Lawlor

illustrated by Ethan Long

GRADES
1–4

About the Book

Real American similes are brought to life in this laugh-out-loud language arts picture book.

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SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Language Arts

Figurative Language—Students can use dictionaries or online resources (see below) to discover how similes differ from other types of figurative language: metaphors, alliterations, hyperboles, and idioms. They can make a classroom chart showing examples of each of these figures of speech.

Language Logs—Once students have become clear on the various types of figurative language, they can create their own logs—one for each type—in which they can record examples they find in their reading. These can be shared with other classes.

Oral Tradition—As the author states in the end notes, the similes in this book were handed down orally from generation to generation. Students can share similes or other expressions that they have heard from their parents, grandparents, or others.

Folklore—Students may enjoy reading well-known American folk tales about Paul Bunyan, Mike Fink, and Pecos Bill, all of which contain various colorful figures of speech.

Song Lyrics—Many song lyrics contain similes, metaphors, or alliteration. Have students “keep their ears open” for these, jot them down, and share them with the class.

Art

Illustration—The book’s illustrations show a literal interpretation of the words in each simile. Students can illustrate (literally!) the figures of speech they have found or heard (see above). These can be used in a bulletin board display or collected into a book that can be shared with other classes.

Geography

Map Location—The similes in *Muddy as a Duck Puddle and Other American Similes* were taken from the oral tradition of Indiana, Mississippi, Virginia, Wisconsin, and the West. Students can locate all of these places on a U.S. map.

Online Resources

<http://languagearts.mrdonn.org/figurative.html>

Presents a short, easy-to-read chart defining and giving examples of various types of figurative language.

www.sedl.org/afterschool/lessonplans/index.cgi?show_record=45

Presents a detailed lesson plan for exploring the oral tradition further.

For More Language Arts Picture Books for the Classroom

Go to www.holidayhouse.com: under “Find Books,” click on “By Theme” and then “Language Arts.” For an educators’ guide with lots of online activities, go to Free Materials and scroll down to Language Arts Educators’ Guide / *Teach Language Arts: Picture Books for the Classroom*.

About the Author and Illustrator

Laurie Lawlor is the author of children’s books in many genres. She has won the Carl Sandburg Award for Nonfiction and the Golden Kite Honor Book Award.

Her books for children have been named ALA Notable Children’s Books, ALA Best Books for Young Adults, Bank Street College Best Children’s Books of the Year, and *School Library Journal* Best Books of the Year. She lives in Evanston, Illinois. Visit her online at <http://www.laurielawlor.com/>.

Ethan Long is an illustrator and cartoonist. He is the creator the animated cartoon *Tasty Time with ZeFronk* and other cartoons. He wrote and illustrated the best-selling book *Tickle the Duck* and illustrated *Mañana*, *Iguana*, *Fiesta Fiasco*, *Count on Culebra*, and *Tortuga in Trouble*, all by Ann Whitford Paul. He lives with his family in Florida. Visit Ethan online at www.ethanlong.com.

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Classroom activities prepared by Sandy Schuckett, school library consultant.