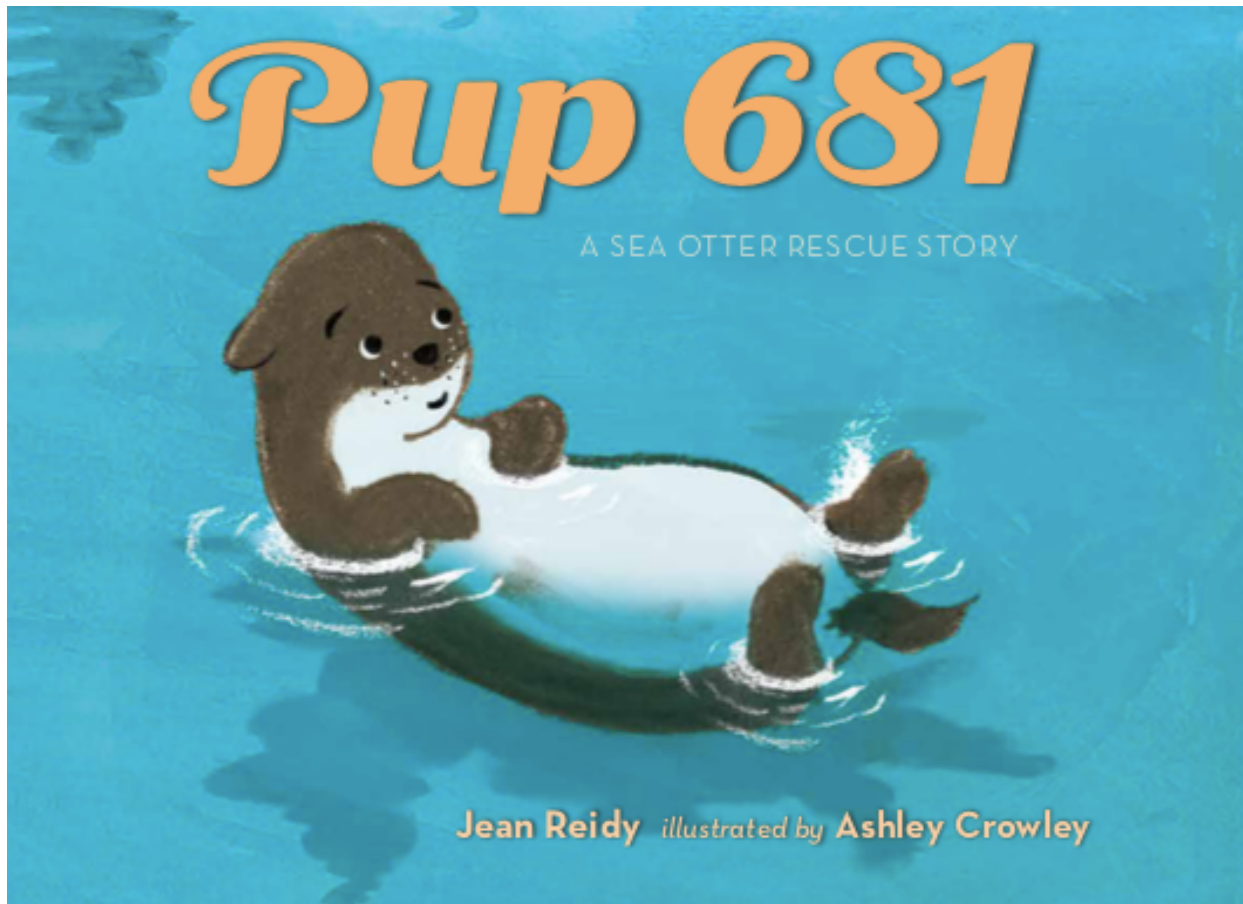


A Storytime and Curriculum Guide for

Pup 681: A Sea Otter Rescue Story

by Jean Reidy, illustrated by Ashley Crowley



PUP 681: A SEA OTTER RESCUE STORY

©2019 by Jean Reidy; Art by Ashely Crowley; Henry Holt and Company

Praise for Pup 681

"Unabashedly adorable" ~ Kirkus Reviews, starred review ★

"...otter enthusiasts will likely enjoy the tender relationship between 681 and her attentive caregiver." ~ Publishers Weekly



Learning activities align with CCSS (Common Core State Standards) and NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards) where applicable.

Story Summary

Washed ashore alone, a tiny sea otter pup needs help! Soon, a rescuer is there to take her in and keep her warm and fed. The pup faces challenges in her new life without her sea otter family. But with the love and care of her rescuer, she flourishes in her new home. Inspired by a true story, this is a heartwarming and hopeful tale about family and love.

About the Author

Jean Reidy's fun, lively and award-winning picture books have earned their spots as favorites among readers and listeners of all ages and from all over the world. She is a frequent presenter on writing and reading and at schools and storytimes across the country—in person and virtually. Jean is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, the National Council of Teachers of English, the Colorado Council International Reading Association and she has served on the board of Reach Out and Read Colorado. She writes from her home in Colorado where she lives right across the street from her neighborhood library ... which she visits nearly every day.



About the Illustrator



A former police officer, Ashley Crowley found his passion in children's books. IN addition to illustrating Jean Reidy's *Pup 681: A Sea Otter Rescue Story*, he is the author-illustrator of the Officer Panda books and the illustrator of *The Boy and the Blue Moon*, by Sara O'Leary, and *One Wave at a Time*, by Holly Thompson. Ashley lives with his son, Frankie, in Suffolk, United Kingdom. Visit him at ashleycrowley.com.

Storytime Ideas



Invite children and their stuffed animals to storytime. How do they care for their furry friends? For big brothers and sisters, how do they help care for younger siblings? How do their adult family members take care of them?



Wear a baseball cap with an "Aquarium Staff" label like the girl in the story. What does an aquarium staff member do? Wear your cap as you read aloud *Pup 681*.



Invite children to loosely wrap each other in "kelp" (purple and green crepe streamers) before you read. Otter mothers wrap their pups in sea kelp to prevent them from drifting away while they are out hunting for food. Ask children to share what their parents and caregivers used to wrap them as babies, and why. How do adults ensure that their children are safe when they go to the grocery store?



Show illustrations of Pup 681's "speech" bubbles. What do her sounds mean? Hear the real Pup 681's sounds on the Shedd Aquarium playlist: <https://goo.gl/3XqmyF> ("A Pup's Life" and "Playtime with Pup 681"). Let children share the noises they make when they're hungry, cold, scared, happy, surprised, or frustrated.

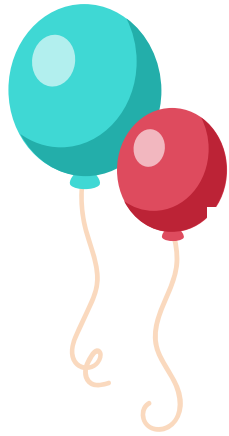


Lead a chorus of otter motions (to the tune of *Head and Shoulders, Knees, and Toes*):

DIVE AND GLIDE AND SWIM AND SLIDE
SWIM AND SLIDE
DIVE AND GLIDE AND SWIM AND SLIDE
SWIM AND SLIDE
I CAN EAT AND SLEEP AND PLAY/RAFT/SEEK AND HIDE
DIVE AND GLIDE AND SWIM AND SLIDE
SWIM AND SLIDE!

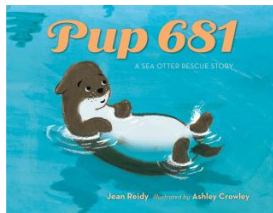


When sea otter Pup 681 (Luna) was found, she was so young and so tiny, the Shedd Aquarium staff has to teach her how to act like an otter. Now it's your turn to go to otter school. Lead your listeners through a few of the fun and funny behaviors and activities they'll need to learn to be a successful sea otter - dive, glide, bounce a beach ball with your nose, wrap in kelp, make a raft, hide a shell - and maybe award them an Otter School Diploma (see following page).



Pup 681 Sea Otter School Congratulations!

has completed all the required activities to earn this certificate.

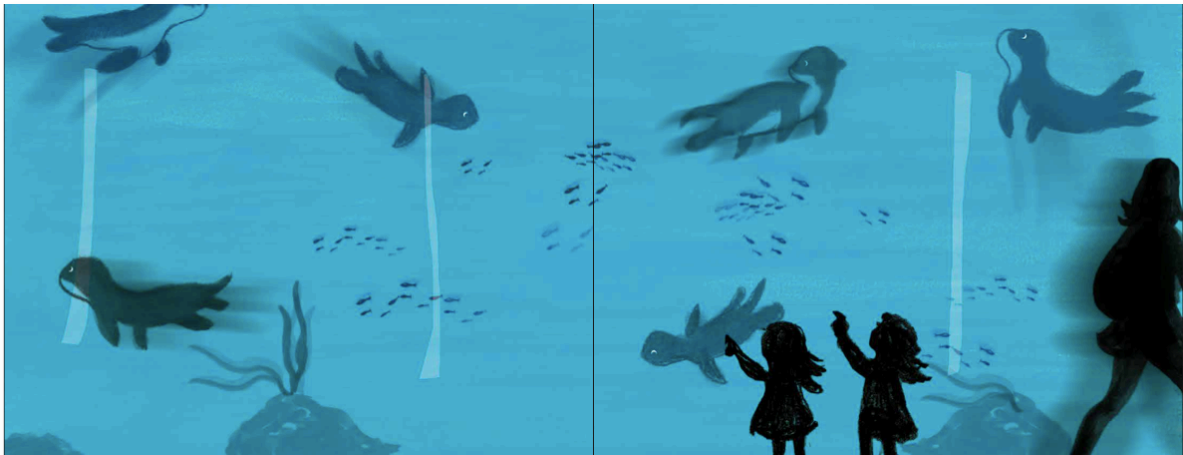


Pup 681, Luna

Pre-Reading

ACTIVATING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

1. What are some of the ways that our parents or caretakers take care of us? What are ways that we take care of younger siblings or friends? What kind of care do newborn babies need?
2. Have you ever gotten lost or accidentally separated from a parent or caretaker? Who helped you? How did you feel? How did your parents/caretakers feel?
3. Have you ever found a baby animal alone in the wild? What should you do if you find one? (Make sure children know not to ever touch a wild animal, even a baby animal. During the reading, point out the "Aquarium Staff" hat that the girl wears, and explain that she is an expert in handling wild sea otters.)
4. Have you ever visited an aquarium? What is happening in this scene (shown in the book's endpapers)?



For students who have never visited an aquarium, most offer virtual tours, including the National Aquarium in Baltimore (search “virtual tour” at aqua.org). Others offer “live cams” of animals and marine habitats, including a “sea otter cam” and a “kelp forest cam” at the Monterey Bay Aquarium (search for “live cams” at montereybayaquarium.org). Through the Shedd Aquarium, where Pup 681 (Luna) currently lives, teachers can sign up for a virtual field trip led by the Shedd staff (search for “virtual field trip” at sheddaquarium.org).

WORDS TO THE WISE



The words above may be new to your students within the context of this story. Words like *dozed*, *kelp*, and *pup* have picture clues throughout the story to help with understanding (students may think of “pups” only as baby dogs). Context clues may help with *surf* as a noun for children who have experienced a visit to the ocean. Videos like this 1-minute clip <https://safeYouTube.net/w/qvbj> offer an excellent illustration of how the surf rocks otters to sleep!

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.4

Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.

TAKE A BOOK WALK

Before reading, show students the book's cover and ask what a “pup” is. Discuss what the title might mean and how the cover illustration and subtitle provide context for the word “pup.” Who is the author? Who is the illustrator? What are their jobs in creating the book?

Use a document camera to give all children a close-up view of these pre-story images on the title, verso, and dedication pages:



What is happening in these pictures? What is the girl doing? What is the sea otter doing?

Share the book illustrations up to this page where the van is on the road to the aquarium:



What might be the problem in the story?



Point out the road sign on the page. On a map, show students the distance between Monterrey, California and Chicago, Illinois. Explain that this trip can take several days by road.

Ask students if they have ever been on a long trip. How did they feel? What are the pros and cons of traveling far?

Why is the sea otter being taken on such a long trip? What might happen when the sea otter arrives?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.6

With prompting and support, name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.5

Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.7

With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.10

Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

After Reading

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Based on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy)



1. How was Pup 681 found? (*remembering*)
2. Why do you think Pup needed to be rescued? At the end of the story, why do you think Pup's empty heart was finally filled? (*understanding*)
3. What might you do if you if you were to find a baby animal alone in the wild? (*applying*)
4. How does the girl take care of Pup? How is this similar or different to how you are cared for by the adults in your life? (*analyzing*)
5. Do you think Pup would have been happier in the wild? Why or why not? (*evaluating*)
6. If Pup could meet her otter family, what do you think she would feel/say? Pretend that sea otters can talk like humans do and create a dialogue between Pup 681 and her family. (*creating*)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.1

With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

Learning Activities

SOUND SURFING

Reread this part of the story aloud:



Until suddenly,
she began to feel the rhythm of the surf rocking her,
so, so gently, rocking her.

Play a recording of the sound of waves in the surf. Talk about what “rhythm” means and its repetitive quality. As the recording plays, invite students to close their eyes and listen for a rhythm in the surf. While it may not be a regular rhythm, they should be able to hear the louder build-up of the waves followed by the softer recession of water.

Allow students to experiment with hand-held instruments. On your direction, lead them to create a crescendo of sound, followed by a decrescendo back down to the softest volume.

NGSS 2-PS1-1: Patterns in the natural and human world can be observed.

NGSS 2-PS1-4: Events have causes that generate observable patterns.

MAKING WAVES



Ask students how waves are formed in oceans, seas, rivers, lakes, and even puddles. (Wind is the main source of waves in water.) To illustrate this, let students work in groups with a small amount of water in flat, open containers. Give them straws to blow on the surface of the water. What happens when they blow directly down into the water? Across the surface? How do the waves act when students blow with more force? Less force? What conclusions can students reach about the force of air and the size and speed of waves?

NGSS 2-PS1-2: Simple tests can be designed to gather evidence to support or refute student ideas about causes.

MAKING MORE WAVES



The sun's and moon's gravitational pull on the earth causes the oceans closest to the sun and moon to bulge, creating solar and lunar tides around the world. To mimic this bulging action, have students place a drop of water on a penny or another object with a small surface area. What do they predict will happen when they place a finger on the water drop and gently pull up? Have them give it a try, viewing the water drop at eye level and observing how the water temporarily clings to their fingers. What happens when the tension is broken? The water will jiggle, or move, in tiny waves. Help students to make the link between this activity and the gravitational pull between the earth, sun, and moon that causes waves (called tidal waves) to form when water is "pulled up" and then released.

1-ESS1-1: Use observations of the sun, moon, and stars to describe patterns that can be predicted.

NGSS 2-PS1-2: Simple tests can be designed to gather evidence to support or refute student ideas about causes.

SORT IT OUT

Set up a station with a container of plastic sea creatures. Challenge students to work in pairs or in small groups to sort the creatures by any attributes they choose (size, color, body shape, fins/no fins, etc.). When each pair/group has finished, take a picture of their sort before they put the creatures back in the container. Once all groups have had a turn, project the photos of the sorts onto a whiteboard. Can students guess how each sort was categorized? Keep track of the sorts with tallies or a bar graph. Did most groups sort by color? Size? Shape? Which sorts were unique? Allow students to revisit the sorting station to try new sorts.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.MD.B.3

Classify objects into given categories; count the numbers of objects in each category and sort the categories by count.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.1.MD.C.4

Organize, represent, and interpret data with up to three categories; ask and answer questions about the total number of data points, how many in each category, and how many more or less are in one category than in another.

LOST AND FOUND

The author's note at the end of the story tells us that sea otters have a pocket of loose skin under their forelegs where they store toys, food, and their favorite rocks, which they use as tools. Where do your students keep their treasures?

Review these lines from the story with the class:

So she tucked a treasure
safely away
in her pocket...

and also:

And she perked.
And she poked.
And she pulled out a treasure.

Ask students the following questions:

- Why did the pup tuck away this treasure in the first place?
- What made it special to her?
- Why did she bring it back out at the end?

Ask students to bring in an item (or a photo of something) to share that reminds them of a special place or person. Have them write about what makes it special and share in partners or in the whole group.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.8

With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.



ALL IN A NAME

In 2014, the Shedd Aquarium held a contest to choose a new name for Pup 681. They didn't want the public to vote on just any name; they wanted a name that held a special meaning. Since Pup 681 was found in California, the Shedd Aquarium's suggestions are inspired by the area where the pup was found:

- ☒ **Aña** (or **Anya**) – Inspired by the name of Año Nuevo State Park
- ☒ **Cali** – Pup 681 is a California otter
- ☒ **Ellie** – Año Nuevo State Park is famous for the elephant seals that visit its shores. Nearby Elkhorn Slough is home to many sea otters.
- ☒ **Luna** – Spanish for “moon,” as in the name Half Moon Bay, where the pup was found
- ☒ **Poppy** – California's state flower

Hold a vote in your classroom before revealing the pup's name (Luna!). Students can build their own bar graph individually or as a class, or you can project the graph (below) to let students cast their votes. If the majority votes for Aña/Any, hold a run-off to choose the spelling.

Ask students to share how their names were chosen, or if their names have a special meaning. From which language does their name come? Poll students about where they were born. If they had to choose a name for themselves based on the location of their birth, what would they choose?

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.1.MD.C.4

Organize, represent, and interpret data with up to three categories; ask and answer questions about the total number of data points, how many in each category, and how many more or less are in one category than in another.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.2.MD.D.10

Draw a picture graph and a bar graph (with single-unit scale) to represent a data set with up to four categories.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.CC.B.4.A

When counting objects, say the number names in the standard order, pairing each object with one and only one number name and each number name with one and only one object.

Cast Your Vote!

Aña or Anyá	Cali	Ella	Luna	Poppy

ALL HANDS ON DECK

The author's note at the end of the story tell us:

Sea otters often hold hands to make a "raft"—sometimes with hundreds or thousands of other otters—while they sleep, so that they don't drift out to sea.

Invite your students to join hands and play the Human Knot game:

1. Have students get into small groups (start with groups of 4 for very young children, and up to 10 people for older children).
2. While facing each other, ask children to reach their right arm into the circle and take the hand of a classmate (someone who is not standing next to them). Next, ask them to cross their left arm over their right and take the hand of a different person.
3. Without letting go of each other's hands, challenge students to untangle their "human knot" by gently ducking under and over each other's arms until they are standing in a circle facing each other.

When they've finished, ask them how it felt to work as a team:

- What was challenging about this activity?
- What was fun?
- How did you work as a team (what strategies did your team use)?
- Did anyone let go of someone's hand? If so, why? What happened next?
- How do otters work as a team?
- If an otter becomes separated from the "raft of other otters, what happens?



681: A VERY BIG NUMBER!

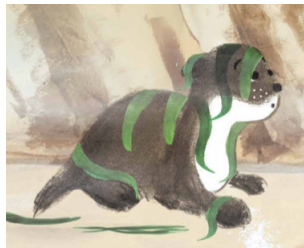
Pup 681 received her original moniker because she was the 681st sea otter to enter Monterrey Bay Aquarium's sea otter program. As author Jean Reidy writes:

Six-hundred eighty-one was a very big number for a very small otter.

Help students to conceptualize how many 681 really is by having them count objects and group them by 10, and then gather ten groups of ten to make groups of 100.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.CC.A.1
Count to 100 by ones and by tens.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.1.NBT.B.2
Understand that the two digits of a two-digit number represent amounts of tens and ones.



PUPS BY ANY OTHER NAME

According to the Oxford dictionary, many types of baby animals are called pups aside from otters and dogs, including coyotes, rats, seals, and wolves. Can your students (and you!) group these animals according to these common baby names?

Copy the cards from the answer key on page 17 of this guide (note that animals with more than one baby name have two cards, such as wolves, whose babies are called pups or cubs). Give students the chart of page 16 and let them make predictions by placing their cards on the chart or do this activity as a class using an interactive whiteboard where students can slide the animal names into the columns. Once students have checked their predictions with the answer key, ask them what patterns they see, and why some animals might be grouped together with the same baby names, while others might not.

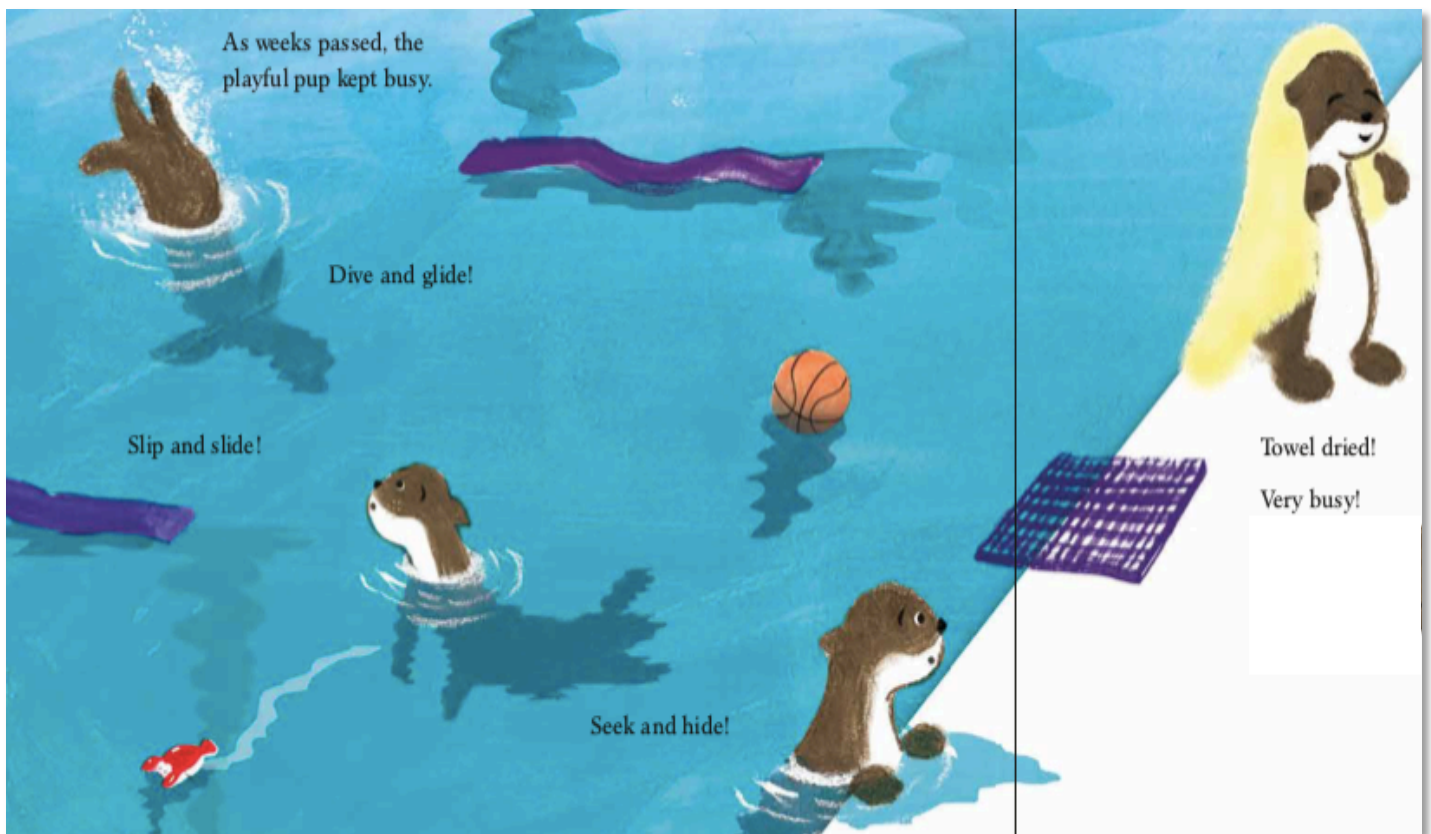
Calf	Chick	Cub	Foal	Kitten/Kit	Pup

Answer Key

Calf	Chick	Cub	Foal	Kitten/Kit	Pup
buffalo	chicken	badger	horse	beaver	coyote
camel	hawk	bear	zebra	bobcat	dog
cattle	pheasant	leopard		cat	otter
elephant		lion		cougar	rat
giraffe		tiger		fox	seal
rhinoceros		walrus		rabbit	wolf
seal		wolf		skunk	
whale				weasel	

PLAYTIME WITH PUP 681

Illustrator Ashely Crowley used details from the pup's real-life setting at the Shedd Aquarium to create the illustrations in the book. Project the following page on an interactive white board, and then show this video of the pup playing: [safeYouTube.net/w/Ljbj](https://www.youtube.net/w/Ljbj). As students spot items in the video that match the illustrations, pause the video and let students circle the objects in the illustration. Ask students how their play compares with the pup's way of playing.



CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7

Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.7

With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts).

SEPARATING FACT FROM FICTION

Pup 681: A Sea Otter Rescue Story is a work of fiction based on a real event. Before reading the author's note at the end of the book to your students, see if they can predict which events are factual and which are fictional. Project the following Venn diagram to record students' predictions or have them work in pairs to place the statements on the next page onto the diagram (copied onto 11" x 17" paper).

Now read the author's note and have students adjust their answers accordingly. Finally, show these short clips of Pup 681's arrival at the Shedd Aquarium ([safeYouTube.net/w/IWDg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWDg)) and of Pup 681 with her caretakers ([safeYouTube.net/w/Ljbj](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ljbj)). Have students make final adjustments to their Venn Diagrams.

Discuss how the sources they used helped them to refine their predictions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.5

Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.7

Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of "how-to" books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.8

With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.



Pup 681 was orphaned.	Pup 681 was found on a beach.
When she was found, Pup 681 was tiny.	Pup 681 was driven in a van from her home to an aquarium far away.
One person took care of Pup 681.	After arriving at the aquarium, Pup 681 got sick.
A national contest was held to choose Pup 681's name.	Pup 681 was fed from a bottle.
Pup 681 played with toys.	Pup 681 wondered if she was a fish, or a fox, or a falcon.
A wet Pup 681 was fluffed and towel-dried.	Pup 681 shook her wet body to try to dry her fur.

In Real Life



In the Story

AN INTERVIEW WITH AUTHOR JEAN REIDY



How did you get the idea for *Pup 681: A Sea Otter Rescue Story*?

While the expected answer might be that I've always loved sea otters, or that I'd been introduced to Pup 681 on one of my many trips to Chicago, or that I'd heard of this popular pup on *Good Morning America*, my introduction to this sweet sea otter was none of those. She first came to me through an illustration. My agent, Erin Murphy, had come across illustrator Ashley Crowley's adorable rendering of Pup 681 and shot me an e-mail which said, "I think this pup has a story." I was immediately drawn to Ashley's art. It had that "AWWWW" factor. How could I resist? And sure enough, when I did a quick search, I found out that Pup 681 did have a story, that she was a bit of a celebrity, and that she made her home at the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago ... one of my favorite places. It felt like a picture book I was meant write.

Once the idea came to you, what happened next?

After I decided to give the picture book text a try, I read everything I could find about Pup 681 (whose name is now "Luna") and her amazing journey. And I watched videos ... a lot of videos. That was the fun part. The Shedd Aquarium has hours of Luna footage on their website. You can watch her eating, swimming, and playing. She is SO DARN ADORABLE! I became a devoted fan. As I read and watched, I began to jot down words or phrases or feelings that came to me – bits and pieces of inspiration – that might eventually give light to my own version of Luna's story.

What was the most challenging part of writing this book?

Perhaps the hardest part of writing Luna's story was deciding what this story was *really* about, the emotional core, the story that seemed universal. I try to do that early in my process in order to establish the right voice and tone, and most importantly, to write a story that will resonate with readers. But Luna's real story was a little unexpected. I had assumed that rescued sea otters were somehow reunited with their mothers or reintroduced to their families or somehow reintroduced in the wild. But with Luna, that wasn't the case. Like I mentioned

above, she still lives at the Shedd Aquarium. And while some rescued otters can be reintroduced into the wild, I learned that Luna would likely not have survived if that had happened. I also read about the potentially sad and possibly tragic suppositions regarding what might have happened to Luna's mother. This story was more complicated than I had originally thought.

I tried to work with some of those deeper underlying themes, remaining true to Luna's story, but with a little creative license. That's when I decided to write it as fiction with a close, third-person narrator. I wanted to get inside Luna's head a bit and explore the emotional side of her story.

What do you want readers to take away from PUP 681's story?

I'm a big believer that families can come in all shapes and sizes. And that if there is even just one person in your life who loves you unconditionally, that's all you need. While I generally don't like conspicuous messaging in picture books, in this case it made a lot of sense to drop one right into the story. And it's one of my favorite lines from the book. Can you guess which it is?

What is your writing process?

When a spark for a story comes to me – whether through inspiration or imagination – I immediately write it down – maybe in an e-mail, maybe in an old notebook (I keep them everywhere), maybe in a Word document. And I do a bit of an initial brain dump of everything that might have presented with that idea – phrases, themes, words, images – which often isn't much.

Over time – like maybe weeks, or even months – if that idea won't leave me alone, if my mind and my imagination keep going back to it, then I give it time and space to grow. I scribble down words and phrases and thoughts and images and endings without the constraints of a story structure. I give myself the freedom to play, to make a mess, to make mistakes. Because I know that once I start titling and formatting and formulizing, it's often hard to go back to that play state – when my brain is most rich with ideas and most open to experimenting. And as I cross out and fill in and keep the process as free as I possibly can, the structure begins to form organically.

When I do finally have a story-worthy structure, I play with it in manuscript form. Picture books are like poetry. So, I play with breath spaces and line spaces and

word choices and lots and lots of white space. I also read it out loud – over and over again – to make sure that the story sings. After all, picture books are meant to be read out loud. And after I've read it out loud about a million times, then I might let someone else read it, to get some fresh eyes on it. Those usually come from my amazing critique group and my online writer friends who offer me brilliant revision suggestions. Then I read, revise and repeat until my trusted readers tell me it's ready.

What advice do you have for young writers?

Whether you love to write or hate to write, my advice is the same: First, read, read, read. Read a lot. Read often. Comic books, magazines, cereal boxes, funny books, sad books, adventures, fantasies, poetry – whatever you like ... and some things you don't. Reading can be the best teacher of writing. I actually schedule reading time into my work day.

Then write. Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid of the blank page or the blank computer screen. Don't be afraid of sounding stupid. Don't worry about perfection. Just do it. Get it down. Write fast. Really fast. Write when you're not expecting to write. There are a million different ways to write. Start with something you enjoy. You might make lists, doodle, rant, rap, write poems, scribble wacky stories, compose diary entries. But just write. And if you want to, you can always go back and revise or get feedback from your own trusted readers. The more you write, the easier it becomes, AND the better writer you will be.

When you aren't writing, what are some of your favorite things to do?

Chatting or Skyping with my mom, kids and grandkids (they all live far from me). Hiking, biking and skiing in these beautiful Rocky Mountains. Reading – yes! Books. Magazines. Fiction. Non-Fiction. But especially Children's Books. Playing cards ... or just about any games for that matter. Traveling to see family and friends – I'm a huge fan of trains and road trips. Supporting a fabulous non-profit called Reach Out and Read – which essentially makes reading and books part of medical care. A no-brainer, right? And finally, working alongside amazingly selfless and generous people at a refuge for the homeless here in Denver. My co-workers and our guests fill my well with compassion on a weekly basis. Oh, and I almost forgot – chatting with other writers about writing, of course!

AN INTERVIEW WITH ILLUSTRATOR ASHLEY CROWLEY



When did you begin to think of yourself as an artist?

I think I have always thought of myself as an artist. I enjoyed drawing from a very young age, and Art was always my favourite subject at school. I eventually specialised in Graphic Design at university, but it wasn't until I became a father that I considered children's book illustration as a career. Whilst working as a full-time police officer, I studied part-time for an MA in Children's Book Illustration at

Cambridge School of Art. After graduating, I was lucky enough to achieve a 2-book deal with Harper Collins. At this point, I definitely took myself more seriously as an artist and illustrator.

What types of media do you like working with the most, and why?

I always start with just a pencil and paper for sketching characters. I enjoy storyboarding just to get a visual idea of how my illustrations and text will work together. When working with final art, I use a mixture of inks, coloured pencils, and graphite sticks. I then scan these images into Photoshop and layer the images on top of each other. At this point I will add colour to the illustrations.

How long did it take to illustrate PUP 681?

Pup 681 took approximately 6 months to illustrate.

What was the most challenging thing about this project? The most rewarding?

I felt the most challenging thing about illustrating *Pup* was drawing the caregiver. I often asked my wife to pose whilst holding a cuddly toy to represent Pup. I would then use these observational sketches as a reference for the caregiver's interactions with Pup in the story. These sketches were valuable in creating a convincing visual relationship between both characters. For Pup, I studied the movement and characteristics of baby otters in zoos and through watching videos of otters playing.

Did you collaborate with the author while creating the illustrations?

As I live in the UK and the author of *Pup*, Jean Reidy, lives in the U.S., it was difficult for us to work physically together on this book. I worked from the author's text and she also gave me an idea of the characters and scenes she visualised.

There were various stages and changes to the artwork whilst making the book, and the author and I would email back and forth with notes on what we thought was working or what scenes needed any changes.

You've illustrated several books written by other people, and some that you've written yourself. How does your process differ from one book to the other?

I feel that writing and illustrating a picture book on your own does give you a sense of freedom to create whatever you want. Whilst working on *Officer Panda*, I created the character first. The story sort of happened by accident whilst I was experimenting with fingerprints for the end papers. When working with another author, they usually have a vision of how they want the book to look, and this allows you to focus purely on the illustrations.

Pablo Picasso once said, "All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up." Do you agree?

Yes, entirely. Many illustrators become illustrators because they have never stopped drawing since they were a child. This was definitely the case with me, but I feel children are the most confident artists; you rarely hear a child say they cannot draw.

When you're not illustrating, what do you like to do in your free time?

When I am not being a full-time police officer or illustrating, I enjoy spending time with my family. I also enjoy going to football games, watching live music, reading, cycling and travelling.