

Too Many Ducks

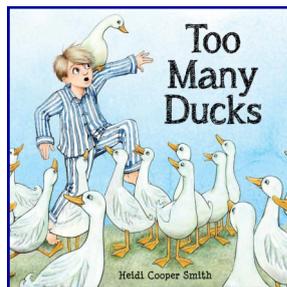
By Heidi Cooper Smith

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One morning, Alexander wakes to find a duck waiting for him. As more and more ducks arrive, Alexander's life fills with fun and friendship. However, there comes a day when there are simply TOO MANY DUCKS for one boy to handle. A whimsical story about appreciating what you have and working out how to make things right when friendship seems lost.



Teacher Notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher. A full version is available on our website.

Themes:

- Friendship
- Caring for living things
- Appreciation
- Problem-solving and flexible thinking

Discussion Questions and Activities:

While reading:

- What did Alexander find on Tuesday Morning?
- How did he begin a friendship with the duck?
- What did Alexander find out and how did he feel?
- Look at the images of Alexander's day. What does he do as part of his daily routine? Do you do any of those things in your daily routine? Does everyone have the same routines?
- What happened on Wednesday morning? What didn't he ask?
- What happened on Thursday morning? What did Alexander think? Do you agree?
- Why couldn't Alexander catch the school bus? What was the consequence?
- What was the worst thing? How do the ducks feel? How does Alexander feel? How can you tell?
- How does Alexander try to solve his problem? Look at the size, font, capitalisation and punctuation of 'TOO MANY DUCKS!' What does this tell us about Alexander's tone of voice?
- What happened on Friday? How does this make Alexander feel and how can we tell?
- In bed that night, Alexander is not only lying awake, he is also problem-solving. What shows you this?
- What did Alexander create for the ducks? Was it hard work or an effort? How did the ducks respond?
- Which words describe the activities in the backyard water park? Why has the author chosen these words?
- It seems to end happily, with Alexander and the ducks being friends, but there's another problem – what is it? Why has the author created a new problem?
- Does Alexander solve the new problem? How do we know?

After reading:

- Introduce theme: problem-solving and flexible thinking. In pairs, create or design a solution for the chickens. This can include multimodal elements, such as illustrations, diagrams, text or video. Share your solution with the class.
- Arts and crafts: choose from the following ideas to intersperse throughout the lessons.
 - ◇ Duckling finger puppets – made from cut-up yellow rubber gloves. Glue on felt beaks, boggle eyes and a few small feathers. Draw feet using markers. The puppets could be used to perform poems about ducklings.
 - ◇ Ducks made from paper plates or curled paper.
 - ◇ Pop stick ducklings, with numbered pop sticks to use for counting.
 - ◇ Model ducks and chickens from playdough or similar.
- Reflection: friendship. Looking after his friends helped Alexander feel happier. What did we learn? How can I be a good friend? What does it mean to appreciate our friendships? How can I show appreciation to others? Record the answers on a chart or whiteboard.