



The Ugly Duckling

The classic folk tale, *The Ugly Duckling*, provides many opportunities for fun learning activities across the curriculum.

Active Play

Duck, Duck, Swan!

Play this game like the favorite “Duck, Duck, Goose.” Have children sit in a circle. One child walks around the outside of the circle gently touching each child on the head saying, “Duck, duck...” When he comes to someone he wants to chase him, he touches that child’s head and says, “swan.” The “swan” gets up and chases the other child around the circle back to his spot where the first child sits back down. The second child begins the game again.

Science

Name That Baby!

Remind children that a baby duck is called a duckling. Discuss the names of other animals and their babies: cat/kitten, dog/puppy, cow/calf, hen/chick, horse/foal, sheep/lamb, goat/kid, bear/cub, and so on. Read simple nonfiction books about animals and their babies to children. Talk about how the adult animals and their babies are the same and how they are different.

Ducks and Swans

Show children pictures of ducks and swans in picture books. Discuss how the two birds are alike (feathers, webbed feet, etc.) and how they are different (neck, color, size, etc.).

“Egg Babies”

Talk with children about how some animals hatch from eggs, such as birds, snakes, lizards, turtles, and frogs, and how other animals, such as dogs, cats, horses, elephants, and so on are born alive from their mothers’ bodies. Hold up pictures of animals from magazines or in books and have children guess whether they are “egg babies” or not.

Art

Handprint Swan

Have children paint the palm, fingers, and thumb of one hand with white paint. Then, with their fingers held together and their thumb spread away from their fingers, have them press their hands on a piece of blue construction paper. When the prints are dry, provide orange and black markers for children to add eyes, beaks, and feet.

Language Arts

Everyone Is Special

Talk with children about how the duckling felt with all the other farmyard animals teasing him. Ask children if they have ever been teased and how they reacted to it. Tell children that one way people deal with teasing from others is to have confidence that they themselves are special in various ways. Then have children draw pictures of themselves featuring something that is special about them—from being good at a game or sport to being able to tell a joke, sing, dance, draw, or take care of a younger sister or brother. Gather the children’s work in a class book.

Using the Make-Your-Own Puppets Reproducible

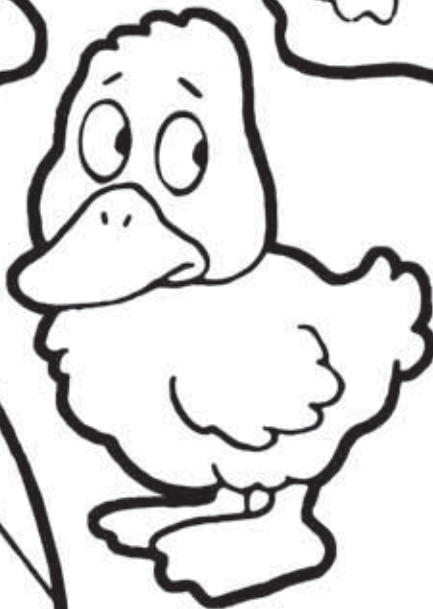
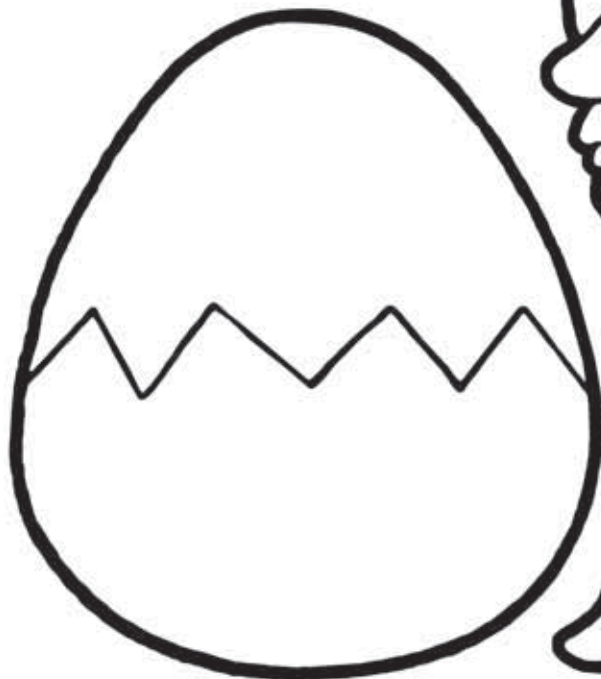
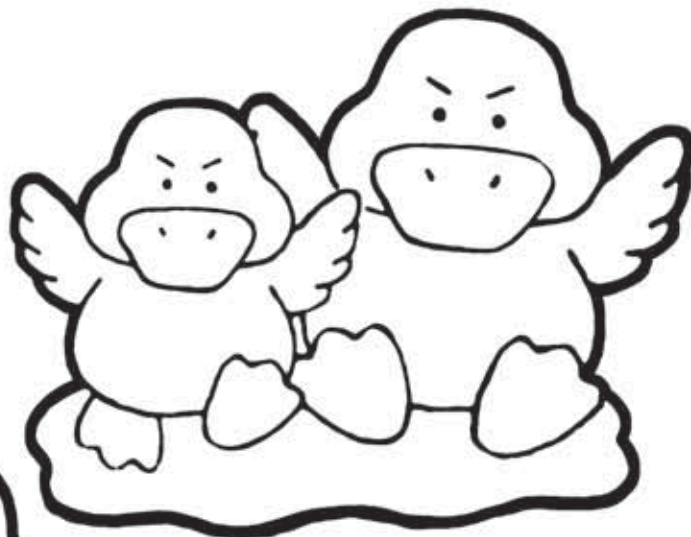
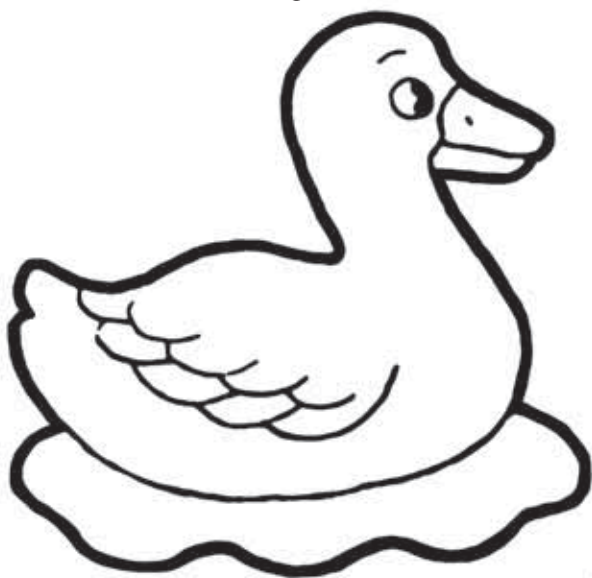
Send the FingerTale puppet fun home with your students! Just reproduce the included story and puppets for each child. It’s a great way for children to continue building language arts skills, from vocabulary development to listening

MAKE-YOUR-OWN FINGERTALE PUPPETS

The Ugly Duckling

You and your child can make your own puppets and then use them to retell the familiar story your child enjoyed at school. Here's how:

1. Provide crayons or markers for your child to color the puppets.
2. Help your child cut the puppets out along the outside edge, or cut them out yourself.
3. **To make "stick puppets":**
Glue or tape the puppets to craft sticks or drinking straws.
4. **To make "finger puppets":**
Trace the outline of each of the puppets onto a second piece of paper. Cut the outline out and staple it to the back of the puppet along the edges, leaving the bottom open to allow room for your finger.





The Ugly Duckling

Once upon a time, a mother duck sat on her eggs. “How tired I am of sitting on all these eggs,” she complained. “I just wish they would hatch already!”

Several days later, she got her wish. The eggs cracked and cute, fuzzy little ducklings emerged. “Peep, peep,” they cried.

“Quack, quack,” their mother greeted them in return.

But the largest egg refused to crack. The mother duck sat on it for several more days. Finally, it cracked, and a huge, ugly duckling waddled out.

His mother looked at him in surprise. “He is so big and very gray. He doesn’t look like the others at all!” she exclaimed. “I wonder if he really is a turkey chick as the old barnyard duck predicted.”

But when the mother duck brought her children to the pond for their first swimming lesson, she jumped the ugly duckling with his sister and brother. He splashed and paddled about just as nicely as they did. “That is no turkey chick. He is my very own son and quite handsome when you look at him properly,” the mother duck said proudly.

The other farmyard animals, however, did not agree. They hissed and gobbled and made fun of him day in and day out. Even his sisters and brothers were unkind to him. “You are very ugly,” they quacked.

The poor creature was so unhappy. “I wish I looked like them,” he thought to himself. One day, he ran away and hid in the bushes of a nearby pond. Through the cold and snowy winter, the poor, sad duckling lived alone.

Finally, the hard winter passed, and the spring flowers began to bloom. One warm and sunny day, the duckling was swimming in the pond when he saw three large white swans swimming toward him. “Oh dear,” he said. “These beautiful birds will laugh and peck at me, too.” But the swans did not attack him. Instead, they swam around him and stroked him with their bills. As he bent his neck to speak to them, he saw his reflection in the water. He could not believe his eyes. “I am not an ugly duckling but a beautiful swan!” he exclaimed.

He was very, very happy. But he was also a little sad. Others had hurt him and hated him because of how he had looked. He made a promise to himself, “I will never judge others by their appearance.” From that day on, he swam and played with his new friends and was happier than he had ever been.

