# LESSON 6 TEACHER’S GUIDE

## A Busy Beaver

by Michael Falcon

Fountas-Pinnell Level I

**Informational Text**

**Selection Summary**

Beavers build dams in streams and then build homes in the ponds made by their dams. They use their teeth for cutting branches to use for building materials and for food. Life underwater protects beavers from most of their predators who cannot swim. Both younger and older beavers are kept busy building and rebuilding their dams.

### Characteristics of the Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Informational Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text Structure</td>
<td>Information is presented chronologically, showing the process of a beaver first building a dam and then building and maintaining a home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Amazing abilities of a beaver: cut trees, build a dam, build a home, gather food, warn of danger, repair its dam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes and Ideas</td>
<td>Beavers work hard to build dams and homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and Literary Features</td>
<td>Conversational language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Complexity</td>
<td>Some long sentences with clauses, one with an introductory phrase (In the fall, it puts branches in the pond so it can eat them in the winter.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Terms specific to a beaver’s life: branches, stream, dam, pond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>Mostly one- and two-syllable words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td>Photographs that are closely linked to the text; one half-page photo per page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book and Print Features</td>
<td>Nine pages of text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Busy Beaver by Michael Falcon

Build Background
Tell children that beavers are furry animals that build homes in the water. Build interest by asking questions such as the following: “What do you know about beavers? What might they use their strong teeth for?” Read the title and author’s name and talk about the cover photograph. Tell children that this book is informational text, so the words and photos will give factual information about the topic.

Introduce the Text
Guide children through the text, noting important ideas, and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions:

Page 2: Explain that this is a book about what beavers do. Suggested language: Turn to page 2. Here is a picture of a beaver. The label on the photo says: Beaver. What is this beaver doing? A beaver has very strong teeth to cut down a tree this big!

Page 3: Direct children to the photo. Explain that trees have small parts called branches that come out from the trunk. Look at this photo. What does a beaver make with the branches from trees? Look at the label. A beaver makes a dam that stops the water in the stream.

Page 5: Tell children that the photo shows a beaver home in the pond made by its dam. Explain that the home is on the top of the photo. Why do you think the beaver builds its home on the pond and not in the flowing water of the stream?

Page 8: Point out the label for this photo: Broken dam. How do you think the stream might break the beaver’s dam? What do you think the beaver does when its dam breaks?

Now turn back to the beginning of the book and read to learn about all the different things that beavers do.

Target Vocabulary
beaks – hard, pointed parts of birds’ mouths
branches – tree parts that grow from a tree’s trunk, p. 3
break – to make something come apart into two or more pieces, p. 8
deepest – the farthest depth from the surface
hang – something attached to something else at the top and does not touch the ground,
shaped – formed something in a particular way, p. 7
pond – a body of water that is smaller than a lake, p. 3
winding – moving one way and then another
Read
As the children read *A Busy Beaver*, observe them carefully. Guide them as needed, using language that supports their problem-solving ability.

Remind children to use the Question Strategy and to think of questions as they read.

Discuss and Revisit the Text

Personal Response
Invite children to share their personal responses to the book.

Suggested language: *What facts about beavers do you find the most interesting?*

Ways of Thinking
As you discuss the text, help children understand these points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking Within the Text</th>
<th>Thinking Beyond the Text</th>
<th>Thinking About the Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A beaver works hard to build a dam and then a home on the pond made by its dam.</td>
<td>• Beavers stay busy building and fixing dams and homes.</td>
<td>• The photographs show the kinds of things that beavers do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A beaver uses its teeth to cut branches both as building material and for food.</td>
<td>• Different animals have specific ways to build the homes they need, to find food, and to protect themselves.</td>
<td>• The labels help describe what is shown in the photos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A beaver uses its tail to make a warning sound when danger is near.</td>
<td>• A beaver’s sharp teeth and flat tail are important to its survival.</td>
<td>• The author includes lots of details about the lives of beavers.</td>
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<td>• Beavers stay busy building and fixing dams and homes.</td>
<td>• Different animals have specific ways to build the homes they need, to find food, and to protect themselves.</td>
<td>• The author’s opinion about beavers is that they are very interesting animals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A beaver’s sharp teeth and flat tail are important to its survival.</td>
<td>• The photographs show the kinds of things that beavers do.</td>
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Choices for Further Support

- **Fluency** Invite children to choose a page from the text and demonstrate phrased fluent reading. Remind them to group words into phrases that show meaning.

- **Comprehension** Based on your observations of the children’s reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind children to go back to the text to support their ideas.

- **Phonics/Word Work** Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Have children change words to add simple inflectional endings (-s, -es, -ing) Remind children that the final consonant has to be doubled to add –ing to one-syllable words with the CVC pattern (*cut, cutting*). Remind them that words ending in –ch form a plural by adding –es (*branch, branches*).
Writing about Reading

Critical Thinking
Have children complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 6.7.

Responding
Have children complete the activities at the back of the book. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill.

Target Comprehension Skill

Text and Graphic Features
Remind children that text and graphic features work together to give more information. Model the skill, using a “Think Aloud” like the one below.

Think Aloud
How does the label on the photo on page 5 help me understand what is in the photo? I see a set of branches in the middle that is a dam. I see a set of branches with a round shape near the top of the photo. The label near the top tells me that this set of branches is a beaver home.

Practice the Skill
Have children write a sentence telling how the label on the photograph on page 8 helps them understand the photo.

Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text
Have children write a response to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use what they know and their own experience to think about what happens in the story.

Assessment Prompts
• What is the selection mainly about?
• Which words in the first sentence on page 7 help the reader understand the meaning of the word warn?
English Language Development

**Reading Support** Help children compose a group summary of the book. Remind them to include new information they have learned about beaver dams.

**Idioms** Explain that a person who is working hard is sometimes described as being busy as a beaver. Discuss with children the meaning of this idiom in the light of the book they have just read.

**Oral Language Development**

Check children’s comprehension, using a dialogue that best matches their English proficiency level. **Speaker 1** is the teacher, **Speaker 2** is the child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning/Early Intermediate</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Early Advanced/ Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> What is the animal in the picture on page 2?</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> Why is the book called <em>A Busy Beaver</em>?</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> How do beavers use their teeth and tails?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> a beaver</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> It shows how hard beavers work to make dams and homes.</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> Beavers use their sharp teeth to cut down trees and to cut off branches. They use their tail to slap the water and warn other beavers that an enemy is near.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> What is the animal cutting down?</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> What are some things the beaver does with branches?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> a tree</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> The beaver builds a dam, builds a house, and cuts branches to use for food.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Speaker 1:** What is the beaver’s dam made of? | **Speaker 2:** **| **
| **Speaker 2:** mud and branches |

**Responding**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photos</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>What They Show</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beaver</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chewing a tree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Text to World** Write a few sentences that summarize why beavers are so busy. Use some ideas from the chart above. Remember that a summary tells the most important ideas in just a few sentences.

**Think About It**

Read and answer the questions.

1. What does a beaver use to cut down a tree?
   - A beaver uses its teeth to cut down a tree.

2. What happens to a stream when a beaver builds a dam?
   - The stream water stops and forms a pond.

3. Why do you think this book’s title is *A Busy Beaver*?
   - Possible response: Beavers are always busy. They have a lot of work to do because they build their homes and have to search for food.

**Making Connections** Beavers live in ponds. Do you know any other animals that live in ponds? What makes a pond a good home for these animals?

**Write your answer in your Reader’s Notebook.**
Thinking Beyond the Text

Think about the questions below. Then write your answer in one paragraph.

Beavers have special teeth and tails that make them different from other animals. How do they use these body parts to help them? Use details from the book in your answer.

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2. What happens to a stream when a beaver builds a dam?

3. Why do you think this book’s title is *A Busy Beaver*?

Making Connections  Beavers live in ponds. Do you know any other animals that live in ponds? What makes a pond a good home for these animals?

Write your answer in your Reader’s Notebook.
A Busy Beaver • LEVEL I

A beaver uses its tail to warn others when an enemy comes too close. A beaver will slap its tail on the water. The tail’s flat shape makes a loud smack! That slap says “Danger!” to other beavers.

Sometimes the stream will flood and break the beaver’s dam. Then the pond disappears! The beaver must get to work and build its dam again.

Behavior Code Error
Read word correctly ✓ cat 0
Repeated word, sentence, or phrase ☐ cat 0
Omission ❌ cat 1

Accuracy Rate (% words read correctly)/63 × 100
Self-Correction Rate (# errors + # Self-Corrections)/Self-Corrections
1: _____

Lesson 6: A Busy Beaver
Grade 2
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