

# Book Notes

## Little Critters

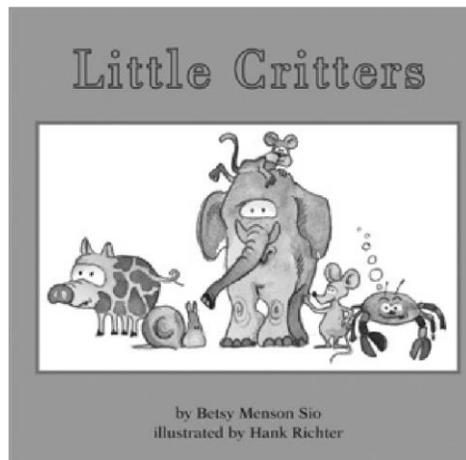
Author Betsy Menon Sio

Illustrator Hank Richter

16 pages ■ 127 words

Fountas and Pinnell Level I

Reading Recovery Level 14



Little Critters

### SYNOPSIS

A mom compares her two children's actions to those of different creatures.

### WHAT THE BOOK OFFERS

- Fiction with characteristics of both narrative and repeated pattern
- First person plural
- Present tense
- Both similes and metaphors
- Repetition of sentence beginning using the words “When we...” as a dependent clause, followed by either a simile or metaphor in an independent clause until last page, where conjunction “but” is used to indicate transition
- Contrast of illustrations—left-hand pages show children's behaviors; right-hand pages show animal simile or metaphor

### POSSIBLE SKILLS EMPHASIS

- Plural nouns
- Understanding how to compare two things through illustrations, similes, and metaphors
- Coping with complex sentence structure (two parts) with time indicator (“when”)
- Adding -y ending to nouns to construct adjectives (grump/grumpy; grouch/grouchy; noise/noisy)

### INTRODUCING THE BOOK

*The title tells us that this is a story about little critters. I wonder who or what little critters might be in this book.*

*What is unusual about the illustration on the cover?*

# Book Notes

## Little Critters (continued)

### FOCUS OF INSTRUCTION

- Draw attention to the bordered illustrations on the left and the comparative illustration on the right of each double-page spread through page 15. Note that the illustrations on the left show the children's behavior and the right-hand pages provide the comparison discussed in the text.

Pages 2 to 5: *As you read from page 2 to page 5, what do the author and illustrator want you to think about? Did you notice the words that describe how the children's behaviors compare to animals/critters? Let's keep a list of the words that compare the children to the critters.*

Pages 6 and 7: *What two words are used as a comparison? What is being compared? How does the illustration further support this comparison?*

Pages 8 to 12: Draw students' attention to the minor differences among the comparisons. *Let's look at our list of words that are comparing the children. How does Mom feel about her children? What comparisons does your mom or dad make about your behavior? What do you expect the last pages to tell you? Why?*

Pages 14 and 15: *What is different about the comparison on this page? So what message is the author trying to convey in this story?*

### FOLLOWING THE READING

- Using self-stick notes, have the group go back and create different comparative language. What other words might be used to describe the behaviors of the children, or what other critters/animals might the children's behaviors be like?

- Using the nonfiction note on the inside back cover, create a writer's support chart for other ways to compare objects in our writing.

Post discussion of the book allows the group to identify where the comparisons first appear. *Link the author's craft to your own writing. Where in your writing notebook might you use a comparison to further create an image for the reader?*

- Look for comparisons in other books.
- Compare *Little Critters* with *Quick as a Cricket*.

## Little Critters (continued)

Additional Comprehension Prompts For Oral or Written Use Before, During, and After Reading	
<b>FINISH THIS THOUGHT</b>	<i>I think critters are . . . Kids can be very . . . because they like to . . .</i>
<b>USE YOUR MEMORY</b>	<i>What did Mom call the kids when they were bothering her while she was on the phone? What did Mom call the kids when they were grumpy and grouchy? When did Mom miss the kids?</i>
<b>WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?</b>	<i>Were the kids noisy or quiet when they go up and down the stairs? How do you know? Why do you think the kids' Mom thought the kids were like snails when they were getting ready for bed? Why do snails move slowly?</i>
<b>BE CREATIVE</b>	<i>Let's change this book! Turn to page 2 and copy the words you see on that page. <b>BUT</b>, change the words, <b>we are</b> to: <b>Mom is</b>, and change the words, <b>Mom says</b> to: <b>the kids say</b>. On page 4, change, <b>we thunder</b> to: <b>Mom thunders</b>. Change <b>she tells us that we sound</b> to: <b>we tell her that she sounds</b>. Keep going until you have switched the whole book around so that Mom is doing what the kids did and the kids are comparing Mom to critters. Then read it back to see if it makes sense. What a silly book!</i>
<b>VOCABULARY AGENT</b>	<i>A simile is when we use words to compare one thing to another. For example: The boys were as busy as bees. Finish the following similes and use the book if you need help:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>The kids were as grumpy and grouchy as ...</i></li> <li>2. <i>The kids were as noisy as ...</i></li> <li>3. <i>The kids were as sloppy as ...</i></li> <li>4. <i>The kids were as annoying as ...</i></li> <li>5. <i>The kids were as noisy as ...</i></li> <li>6. <i>The kids were as slow as ...</i></li> <li>7. <i>The kids were as quiet as ...</i></li> </ol>