The Hermit Crab

by Carter Goodrich
About JLG Guides

Junior Library Guild selects the best new hardcover children's and YA books being published in the U.S. and makes them available to libraries and schools, often before the books are available from anyone else. Timeliness and value mark the mission of JLG: to be the librarian’s partner. But how can JLG help librarians be partners with classroom teachers?

With JLG Guides.

JLG Guides are activity and reading guides written by people with experience in both children's and educational publishing—in fact, many of them are former librarians or teachers. The JLG Guides are made up of activity guides for younger readers (grades K–3) and reading guides for older readers (grades 4–12), with some overlap occurring in grades 3 and 4. All guides are written with national and state standards as guidelines. Activity guides focus on providing activities that support specific reading standards; reading guides support various standards (reading, language arts, social studies, science, etc.), depending on the genre and topic of the book itself.

JLG Guides can be used both for whole class instruction and for individual students. Pages are reproducible for classroom use only, and a teacher’s edition accompanies most JLG Guides.

Research indicates that using authentic literature in the classroom helps improve students' interest level and reading skills. You can trust JLG to provide the very best in new-release books, and now to enhance those selections by giving your school the tools to use those books in the classroom.

And in case you think we forgot the librarians, be sure to check out the Library Applications page, shown on the table of contents in each guide.

From all of us at Junior Library Guild, we wish you and your students good reading and great learning . . . with JLG Selections and JLG Guides.
The Hermit Crab
Written and illustrated by Carter Goodrich
JLG Guide written by Jennifer Bishop

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Book Summary

We get a feeling that something big is going to happen to the main character when the story starts: “The hermit crab in this story didn’t set out to be a hero.” As it is for all hermit crabs, this fellow is shy and becomes nervous if anyone notices or talks to him. He certainly wouldn’t want to be a hero!

When the hermit crab’s ocean neighbors are all together one morning, a cage drops from above. They all speculate about what it could be, and the bluefish warns “It smells like there’s something good to eat inside, but don’t be fooled; it’s just a trap!” Then the sea creatures realize their friend, the flounder, is trapped beneath the trap and needs their help.

In typical hermit-crab fashion, the main character is off exploring by himself and has missed these events. He gets distracted from looking for food when he sees “the most beautiful shell he’d ever seen.” This “shell” is actually the top of a discarded toy robot, but the hermit crab wants it to be his new home.

When the hermit crab returns from his adventure wearing his new “shell,” his friends don’t recognize him. They carefully watch from the seaweed as he circles the trap. Then they think he must be trying to save the flounder, and they cry out, “Our HERO, come to save us!” When the trap moves and floats back to the surface, they are convinced he is their hero, and the flounder wants to thank the “stranger.” By this time, the hermit crab has retreated and remains out of view as he is celebrated “right where has was most comfortable.”

About the Author/Illustrator

“Years ago I began to play with the idea of a simple hermit crab who finds something that might pass for an exotic shell,” Mr. Goodrich says. “He tries it on and unknowingly transforms his identity in the eyes of others.”

Once Mr. Goodrich found the right shell, “the story seemed to tell itself,” he says. “Anyone who’s ever had the chance to observe a hermit crab will know how terribly shy they are. This hermit crab chooses a ‘shell’ that is everything he isn’t and never wants to be.”

The Hermit Crab is not Goodrich’s first creation. He also worked on the character design of the Pixar film Finding Nemo, as well as on designs for Dreamworks, including Shrek, Sinbad, and The Prince of Egypt.

Mr. Goodrich lives in Los Angeles.
Building Background

What do we know about hermit crabs?

A hermit crab is a type of animal that is about the size of a golf ball. Some hermit crabs live on land near water, and other kinds live in the water all the time, like the one in this story. Some people even keep hermit crabs as pets. Even though it sounds like they would be closely related to true crabs, they really are not.

Hermit crabs are decapod crustaceans, which means they have ten feet and a hard shell, or exoskeleton. Hermit crabs also have antennae they can use to feel, smell, and taste and pincers on the ends of their legs to protect themselves, to balance, and to gather food. Their eyes are on long stalks on the front of their heads.

Although hermit crabs have a hard surface on the front part of their bodies, the back part is soft and needs protection. This is why a hermit crab carries a shell on its back. As the hermit crab grows, it gets rid of its old shell and finds a new one that fits. The shell also keeps the hermit crab from dehydrating, which is important because hermit crabs have gills to breathe, and the gills must stay wet.

Hermit crabs will eat almost anything they find – plants, plankton, or even dead sea animals. When kept in a zoo or as a pet in someone’s home, they usually eat vegetables, fruit, or special food for fish or crabs.

Even though hermit crabs can be “shy,” they do like to be with other hermit crabs and in the wild actually live longer in a colony of at least one hundred. They also enjoy climbing and digging. Hermit crabs usually live to be about ten years old.
Prereading Activities

Using Prior Knowledge
Before you read the story with your students, take some time to preview the book and make connections with its theme.

1. Display the book’s cover and read the title aloud, tracking the words with your finger as you read.

2. Point to the hermit crab in the bottom right corner and ask students what they think this is. Students may need help in identifying the hermit crab.

3. Use page 4 of this guide to give them the facts about hermit crabs as they color the hermit crab using the coloring activity found on page 15 of this guide.

Beginning Discussion Questions
After showing them the cover, ask your students:

Where do you think the hermit crab lives? (in the ocean, sea, etc.)
What other animals live in the ocean? (answers will vary: fish, octopus, etc.)
Where can you see ocean animals? (at the zoo, aquarium, beach)

Next, use chart paper or a white board to classify and categorize the animals listed below as Ocean Animals or Other Animals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ocean Animals</th>
<th>Other Animals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fish</td>
<td>shark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>squirrel</td>
<td>monkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jellyfish</td>
<td>lobster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>panda</td>
<td>shrimp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Library Applications

Books about Hermit Crabs
Create a display of other books about hermit crabs. In addition to The Hermit Crab, you could use the following titles in your display and encourage children to read them:

A House for Hermit Crab by Eric Carle
Herman, The Hermit Crab by Elaine Fantle Shimberg
Is This a House for Hermit Crab? by Megan McDonald
Kermit the Hermit by Bill Peet
Hermit Crab’s Home: Safe in a Shell by Janet Halfmann
Does Anyone Know Where a Hermit Crab Goes? by Michael Glaser
Pet Hermit Crab by Robin Nelson

For a fun activity, talk about how hermit crabs have to find their own homes. Then give the students the Animal Homes activity found on page 16 of this guide and discuss how other animals find or make their homes.

Fine Arts Connection

My Own Shell

Using art smocks, old short-sleeved button-up shirts, or old T-shirts from home, have children decorate their own “shells” to wear. Provide child-safe fabric paints/markers and glue, glitter, sponge stencils, and other decorations for students to use as they design their shirts/shells with ocean-themed images. You can participate, too!

Allow time for each child to share his or her finished product with the other students. Have a fashion show where the children wear their shells and talk about what they used to decorate them, what they like best, and how having a shell would be fun. Encourage children to wear their shells as you read and discuss The Hermit Crab or the other books listed above.
Note: The pages of The Hermit Crab are not numbered. We are counting them from the first page of story text as page 1, starting with “The hermit crab in this story . . .” through the last page with the sign that reads “He didn’t want to be noticed” (book page 32).

Concepts About Print

Print and Book Awareness
Display The Hermit Crab for students. Have a volunteer show or remind everyone where the front and back covers and the title page are. Then read the title page, tracking the print from left to right and top to bottom to emphasize print directionality.

While displaying the title page, model reading the title and author’s name. Invite students to “read” them aloud with you. Then:

✔ Ask: What do you see in the title that’s different? (A: Some letters are capitals, and some are small letters.)
✔ Say: Titles usually begin with a capital letter, but here they mixed up the capital and small letters for fun.
✔ Point out how the author’s first and last name correctly begins with capital letters.

When you turn to page 1:

✔ Ask: What is special about the first letter in this sentence? (It is really big!)  
✔ Say: Sometimes on the first page of a story, the first letter is bigger than the rest. Just remember it goes with the first word.

As you turn to page 2, model again sweeping your hand under each letter and word as you read. Ask: In what directions do we read? (A: left to right and top to bottom)

In advance, copy the text from page 3 onto a sheet of paper for each student. Have them track the print left to right and top to bottom as you model reading the page.

Then explain to students that some pages have one paragraph and sometimes the text moves with the art. Show pages 21–22 in the book. Ask: What does the text look like here? (A: Help them see how the text is almost “floating” in the water the way on the page.)
Print and Alphabetic Awareness

Go Fishing Letter Match Activity
In advance, make or purchase a toy fishing pole with a magnetic end. Give each student a copy of the fish-shaped letter cards on page 17. Encourage them to color each letter card with a different colored crayon. Then have them cut out the fish, helping as needed, and spread the cards in front of them.

You will need to make your own set of fish cards, too. Attach a paper clip to each of your fish. Place this set in a large bowl or plastic pool.

Say the name of each letter on the cards with students before you begin. Then explain the game to students.

Have students take turns “going fishing” by pulling out one of your letter cards with the fishing pole. A volunteer should say the name of the letter on the card, and the other students should hold up the appropriate matching letter card from their own set and repeat the letter’s name. Continue until all the letters have been pulled out and named.

Remind students that letters make words. Say: When we look at the book, we can see many different letters that are put together to make the words in the story. Let’s try to match our letter cards to the letters in the story.

List some of the key words from the book on the board or on large paper so all the students can see. Some words might include:

- crab
- hermit
- fish
- eat
- sand
- trap
- move
- happy
- down
- nobody

An extension of this activity would be to have students match their fish letter cards to environmental print in the classroom or library.
Phonemic Awareness

Syllable Clapping
Using The Hermit Crab, go through the story pages pointing out the words listed below. As you come to each word, read it and ask students to clap and count each syllable as you say the word. Finish the activity by calling on volunteers to clap and count the syllables in their first and last names.

- together (page 1) to/ge/her (3)
- contraption (page 4) con/trap/tion (3)
- bluefish (page 8) blue/fish (2)
- shell (page 12) shell (1)
- flounder (page 15) floun/der (2)
- seaweed (page 18) sea/weed (2)
- hero (page 19) he/ro (2)
- excitement (page 25) ex/cite/ment (3)

Beginning Sound Shell Game
Materials you will need:

✔ 3 large shells (or bowls)
✔ cut out letters below
✔ tape
✔ objects cut from page 18

Give each student at least one cutout from page 18. Then tape any three of the letter squares below onto the shells/bowls. Make the sound the letter stands for and have the student put into the bowl any image whose name begins with that sound. Repeat using all of the letters/sounds/images.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ff</th>
<th>Hh</th>
<th>Ss</th>
<th>Tt</th>
<th>Bb</th>
<th>Cc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nn</td>
<td>Pp</td>
<td>Ll</td>
<td>Rr</td>
<td>sh</td>
<td>Dd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“I Say, You Say” Rhyming Activity

Remind students that rhyming words have the same ending sound, as in fish and wish. Explain to students that you are going to say a word (“I say _______. You say _______.”), and you will choose one of them to say a word that rhymes with your word. Model using the words above:

I say “fish.” You say “wish.”

Use these words in the activity and feel free to add more:

1. I say sand. You say __________.
2. I say eel. You say __________.
3. I say beach. You say __________.
4. I say crab. You say __________.
5. I say claw. You say __________.
6. I say shell. You say __________.
7. I say shark. You say __________.
8. I say sea. You say __________.
9. I say wave. You say __________.
10. I say eat. You say __________.
11. I say sky. You say __________.
12. I say box. You say __________.
13. I say trap. You say __________.
15. I say ocean. You say __________.
Word Recognition and Decoding

Sight Words Read It-Write It
Some of the most common words are not decodable for students but provide a necessary and important base for reading. Often referred to as sight words, many of these words do not follow standard phonics rules, and students must learn to read them by recognizing them.

Give each student a copy of pages 19 and 20. On the page are two columns. The first column is a list of beginning sight words. The students should write the sight word on the lines in the second column.

Follow the “teach-model-read” format as you go over the word list with your students. First, teach them about sight words, then read aloud each sight word. Finally, have them read aloud with you each of the sight words.

Complete the exercise by taking one word at a time and have the students “read it” (silently) and “write it.”

Bulletin Board Connection

Decoding Words
Start a bulletin board with a few simple consonant-vowel-consonant story words, such as set or did, written on individual index cards. Model to students how to read each word by sounding out each individual sound and sweeping your hand beneath each letter as you do so. For example, say: /s/ /e/ /t/ /set/. This is the word set.

As students encounter words they can read, encourage them to copy the word on a card and attach it to the bulletin board. Because students may be at varying literacy levels, some may be more capable of decoding words than others. Encourage students to help each other.
Vocabulary

Talk About the Words
The *Hermit Crab* contains some words that will not be familiar to students. Discuss these words, definitions, and examples with students so they can get the most from their reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>particularly</td>
<td>especially</td>
<td>It has been particularly hot for May.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>linger</td>
<td>to be slow in leaving</td>
<td>He didn’t want to go to bed, so he lingered in the kitchen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contraption</td>
<td>device, invention</td>
<td>My dad made a contraption to catch mice in our house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aroma</td>
<td>sweet or good smell</td>
<td>I love the aroma in the bakery!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mysterious</td>
<td>secret, unknown</td>
<td>Something mysterious was hiding under the porch.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social-Emotional Connection

**Being a Friend**
This story contains many opportunities to encourage students to make social and emotional connections. From the beginning of *The Hermit Crab*, readers see that the hermit crab is shy but he has a unique way of relating to his neighbors. As in most settings, some people like to spend more time alone and others prefer being with a group. And both of those choices are okay. Lead a discussion that deals with some of the following statements:

- Sometimes I just want to play by myself.
- Hanging out with a few friends is fun.
- Being in a large group of people can be scary.
- I like going to place where lots of people are.
- I mostly like people who are ___________________.
Reading Comprehension

Making Predictions
Confirming Predictions
Read *The Hermit Crab* aloud and pause at various points to ask the following questions, make and check predictions, and discuss details and ideas.

1. **Make Predictions:**
   After reading page 4 of the story, ask: *What do you think the contraption is that falls to the bottom of the ocean?*
   Answer: It could be a cage or trap. Maybe someone is delivering something.

2. **Check Predictions:**
   After reading page 8, ask: *What does the bluefish say the contraption is? Do you think he is right? Why do you think so?*
   Answer: He thinks it’s a trap. I think he is probably right.

3. **Make Predictions:**
   After reading page 11 of the story, ask: *What do you think the hermit crab is going to do with the new “shell” he finds?*
   Answer: I think he’ll try to put it on like hermit crabs do with other shells they find.

4. **Check Predictions:**
   After reading page 22, ask: *Did the hermit crab do what you thought he would with the new shell?*
   Answer: Yes, he put the shell on. But I didn’t predict that he would get the contraption to move and save the flounder!

Write All About It
Use the reproducible sheet found on page xx to allow students to draw and write about the following:

I think a hero is

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________

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Reproducible Pages
Animal Homes

These animals need to find their homes! Help them find the way by drawing a line from each animal on the left to its home on the right.
Fish Letters
Color the fish and the letters inside each one. Then cut out the fish to use in the game.

H h  C c  D d
F f  S s  E e
T t  N n
Sight Words
Read It-Write It
from the Dolch 220 List (Kindergarten Level)

the

am

are

but

was

have
with
into
went
they
our
that
out
I think a hero is
# Correlations to National Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Standard Number</th>
<th>Standard Objective</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>NL–ENG.K–12.1</td>
<td>Reading for Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.2</td>
<td>Reading for Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.3</td>
<td>Evaluation Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.4</td>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.5</td>
<td>Communication Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.6</td>
<td>Applying Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.11</td>
<td>Participating in Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.12</td>
<td>Applying Language Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>NPH.K–12.6</td>
<td>Respect for Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>NS.K–4.3</td>
<td>Life Science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Answer Key

Page 5: Ocean Animals: fish, shark, dolphin, whale, jellyfish, lobster, shrimp, octopus, turtle (both); Other Animals: dog, squirrel, monkey, lion, rabbit, cat, panda, turtle (both).


Page 9: Possible answers: Bb = box, basket, bucket, bananas, birthday; Cc = crab, cake; Dd = dog, ducks; Ff = footprint, fish, fan; Hh = horse, heart; Ll = lion, lamb; Nn = net; Pp = picnic basket, pinchers, pail, print, pony, pie; Rr = ring, rocket; Ss = starfish, snowman, shovel, sheep; Tt = tree, turtle; sh = shovel, sheep.

Page 10: “I Say, You Say” Rhyming Activity: Many answers will be correct. Listen carefully for the correct ending sounds.

Page 12: Social-Emotional Connection: Discussions will vary.

Page 13: Making Predictions: Answers are on the page; Write All About It: Answers will vary. Finish activity with a discussion about heroes.