

# If I Ran the Zoo

by Dr. Seuss

Another classic by the master of rhyme – “a Russian Palooski, whose headski is redski and belly is blueski” is a much more interesting animal than a lion.



## Read

### Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow that with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *Out of all the animals in the zoo, which do you think would be the most fun to take care of?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an “I wonder” statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder if that creature is friendly or fierce?

### During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations and ask questions. Point out “rare words” (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

### Rare Words in *If I Ran the Zoo*

- old-fashioned: out of date and belonging to a time in the past
- unusual: remarkable or out of the ordinary
- keen: sharp and intense
- gawk: stare stupidly
- roosts: a place where a bird sleeps
- topknot: a small tuft of feathers on the head of some birds
- squeal: a short high-pitched cry
- slant: set at an angle
- custard: a dessert made of sugar, eggs and milk
- brooks: small streams
- crannies: small narrow cracks or holes
- nooks: a private quiet place
- geography: the study of the Earth's physical features (rivers, mountains, etc.)
- clever: smart
- heaps: very much
- meek: mild or quiet
- sleek: smooth and shiny
- queer: unusual or eccentric
- puzzled: confused
- scrawny: skinny and small
- blistering: very hot
- chieftains: a leader of a group of people
- capture: to catch and lock up
- vicious: mean and aggressive
- expensive: costing a large amount of money
- propeller: a revolving shaft on a ship or aircraft
- pout: a bad mood
- coax: persuade gently
- rhubarb: pink stalks cooked as fruit
- vigor: great physical or mental strength
- gasp: breathe in and out sharply
- astounding: impressive and overwhelming
- marvelous: extraordinarily good

## After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- Let's name as many zoo animals as possible.
- Gerald wants to have a zoo with new and unusual animals. What do you think of that?
- Which animal – an orangutan or a camel – do you think is more interesting?
- How do new animals get to the zoo? By truck? By airplane? By boat?
- Let's name as many zoo animals as possible that have horns.
- Would it be more fun to ride an elephant or an ostrich?
- If the zookeeper needed to put a bear in a cage, how would he/she do that?
- Let's name as many zoo animals as possible that fly.
- Who feeds the animals at the zoo? Is there a chef?



**Do**

## Rhyme Time!

Review the list of words below found in *If I Ran the Zoo* and ask the children to think of more words that rhyme.

Zoo  
Stuff  
Find  
Beast  
Walk  
Hat  
Gum  
Mustard  
Goats  
Sleek  
Found  
Ride  
Hand  
Say  
Toe  
Paste  
Belly  
Park  
Cheer