



Once upon a time there was there was a mother duck whose nest was in a warm, safe spot under some large leaves that grew beside Sky Blue Lake.

It was late spring, and already the days were getting longer and warmer after the cold, dark winter.

It was a very busy time on Sky Blue Lake. Water-bird parents were busy teaching their baby birds how to swim and hunt for food.

Bees were buzzing, dragonflies were darting and birds were singing.

The mother duck was still sitting on her clutch of nine eggs, wondering if they would ever hatch.

One egg was bigger than the rest, but she sat patiently, keeping them all dry and warm.

On the day when the tadpoles started turning into frogs, there was a sound of egg-shells breaking. Only the big egg was yet to hatch.

But just as the sun rose above the horizon the next day, the big egg finally cracked open.

Out came a large baby duckling with soft grey down.

'At last! And what a handsome big baby you are!'

'But oh deary me. I wonder why you are a grey colour. All my other ducklings are fluffy yellow.'

'Well, I can't worry about things I can't change.'

So she didn't worry, and she looked proudly at all her babies.

'It is time to take you down to the pond for your first swim and show you off to all the other mother water-birds.'

So down through the water reeds they went until they came to the Sky Blue Lake.

Ways to read this story

This story is suitable for school and home. Some 'how to read' ideas are below.

- With a partner or small group, take it in turns to read the rows.
- Don't rush! This helps you to say each word clearly.
- Think of yourselves as actors by adding lots of facial and vocal expression. Small gaps of silence also create dramatic energy. These techniques will bring the story to life.
- If you meet a new word, try to break it down and then say it again. If you have any problems, ask your teacher or a reading buddy.
- Don't be scared of unusual words. They will become your new best friends. (New words strengthen your general knowledge and enable you to become vocabulary-rich in your day-to-day life.)

Have fun!