

The Ugly Duckling – Lesson Guide



Book List:

1. *The Ugly Duckling* by Hans Christian Anderson
2. *A Story House Book; The Ugly Duckling* by Sebastien Braun
3. *The Ugly Duckling Dinosaur* by Cheryl Bardoe
4. *You're Not Ugly, Duckling* by Steve Smallman

Videos:

1. Silly Symphonies, Disney, *The Ugly Duckling* (1939)
2. *Honk! The Musical*
3. Hans Christian Anderson Animated Classic; *The Ugly Duckling*

Activities:

1. Color/ Trace worksheet (below)
2. Maze (below)
3. Learn about Ducks and Swans
4. Duck and Swan paper plate crafts



The Ugly Duckling

A retelling of the classic Hans Christian Anderson story

By Kendra Bott



Once upon a time a mother duck sat on her nest waiting for her eggs to hatch. One by one her eggs jostled and shook and cracked open. All except one, the big one. Three beautiful ducklings came out of the other eggs, but the big one sat still.

“I will sit on it a while longer,” said the mother duck.

“Quack, quack. Mama, can we go swimming?” her ducklings asked.

“We must wait for your brother to hatch,” she told them.

A few days later, the big egg did hatch. “Yay! We can swim now!” the other ducklings said. But when they got a good look at their new brother, they laughed.

“He looks funny!”

“Why are his feathers so dirty?”

“Look at his crazy long neck!”

But the mother duck nuzzled her new son and put her wing around him.

“Don’t you listen to them. You’re my son and I love you.”

From the near-by farm, two older ducks came by to view the new ducklings.

“My, my,” said one. “They are all beautiful little ducks. Except that one.” She pointed a feather to the newest little duckling. “He is quite ugly.”

“I agree,” said the other old duck. “His feathers are all grey and his neck is too long. Is he even a duck?”

“Honk!” said the ugly duckling. The old ducks laughed.

“He even sounds ugly.” The first old duck said. They laughed again and flew away.

“Don’t listen to those old birds,” said the mother. “You are my son and I love you.”

The mother duck gathered her four ducklings and led them to the pond. Each duckling hopped in and started paddling their webbed feet. Even the ugly duckling jumped right in and started to swim.

“He is a duck,” thought the mother. “Look at him swim even better than his siblings. And if I look hard enough, he might even look handsome.”

As the days passed and more of the farm animals came by to gawk at the ugly duckling, he started to get sad. His brother and sisters kept teasing him, and the farm animals all laughed at how ugly he was. Big tears would roll down from his eyes as he snuggled next to his mother at night.

“There, there. You will be a terrific duck when you grow up. It’s no matter to me that you’re ugly,” she told him.

But after a few weeks, the mother duck started getting teased herself. The old ducks came by all the time to laugh and say mean things.

“Your son is so ugly. You must have done something wrong.”

“Why can’t you clean him properly? He always looks so dirty.”

One night when her ugly duckling came to snuggle in for the night, she pushed him away. She didn’t mean to hurt his feelings, but that is what happened.

That night the ugly duckling ran away.



Early the next morning he found a flock of geese in a marsh. He asked them if he could join them.

“Sure, you can,” said one. “We don’t care if you’re ugly.”

Suddenly there was a loud popping noise and two geese that were flying hit the marsh with a loud splash. It scared the ugly duckling and he hid in the reeds.

“Bark! Bark!” A dog splashed through the marsh looking for the downed geese. He spotted the ugly duckling but turned away and ran off.

“At least being ugly makes the dog not want to eat me,” the ugly duckling thought.

After the dog left and the place became quiet, the ugly duckling traveled on. He came to a hut with a hen and a cat out front.

“Oh goody!” a woman said, lifting the ugly duckling. “Now we shall have duck eggs to eat.” She took him inside.

But after weeks of waiting, no eggs came. The hen and the cat complained to him, calling him useless and unimportant.

“You can’t lay eggs like the hen. You can’t stretch or purr like me. What good are you?” said the cat.

That night the duckling left the hut and traveled on. In the morning he saw a flock of the most beautiful birds he'd ever seen flying in the sunrise. They had shining, white feathers and long, elegant necks.

"I wish I was beautiful," the ugly duckling said to himself.



The weeks went on and the days got colder. One night while swimming in a small lake, the water began to freeze and the ugly duckling found himself trapped. He was not yet strong enough to fly out of the water, and soon the water froze up to his feathers.

A kind farmer spotted the duckling and took pity on him. He broke the ice and took the ugly duckling home to be cared for by his children.

The winter passed and the duckling grew. The farmer's children were rough when they played with the duckling, but he had survived the cold season. As the days grew warmer, the duckling decided to leave the farmhouse. He traveled on.

His wings had grown strong, so he flapped them. His body lifted from the ground and soon he was flying over the countryside. That afternoon he came upon a large body of water by a lovely garden. In the lake were the majestic birds he had seen the year before.



“They are so beautiful, and I am so ugly. They won’t want me near them.” But he wanted to be near them so bad, so he took a chance and flew down into the water.

The other birds came at once to the newcomer. He bent his neck, shyly looking into the water. He then noticed something he hadn’t before. His feathers were now shining white. His neck was long and elegant. He looked just like these birds in the lake.

“Hello,” said one.

“I’m like you!” the duckling said.

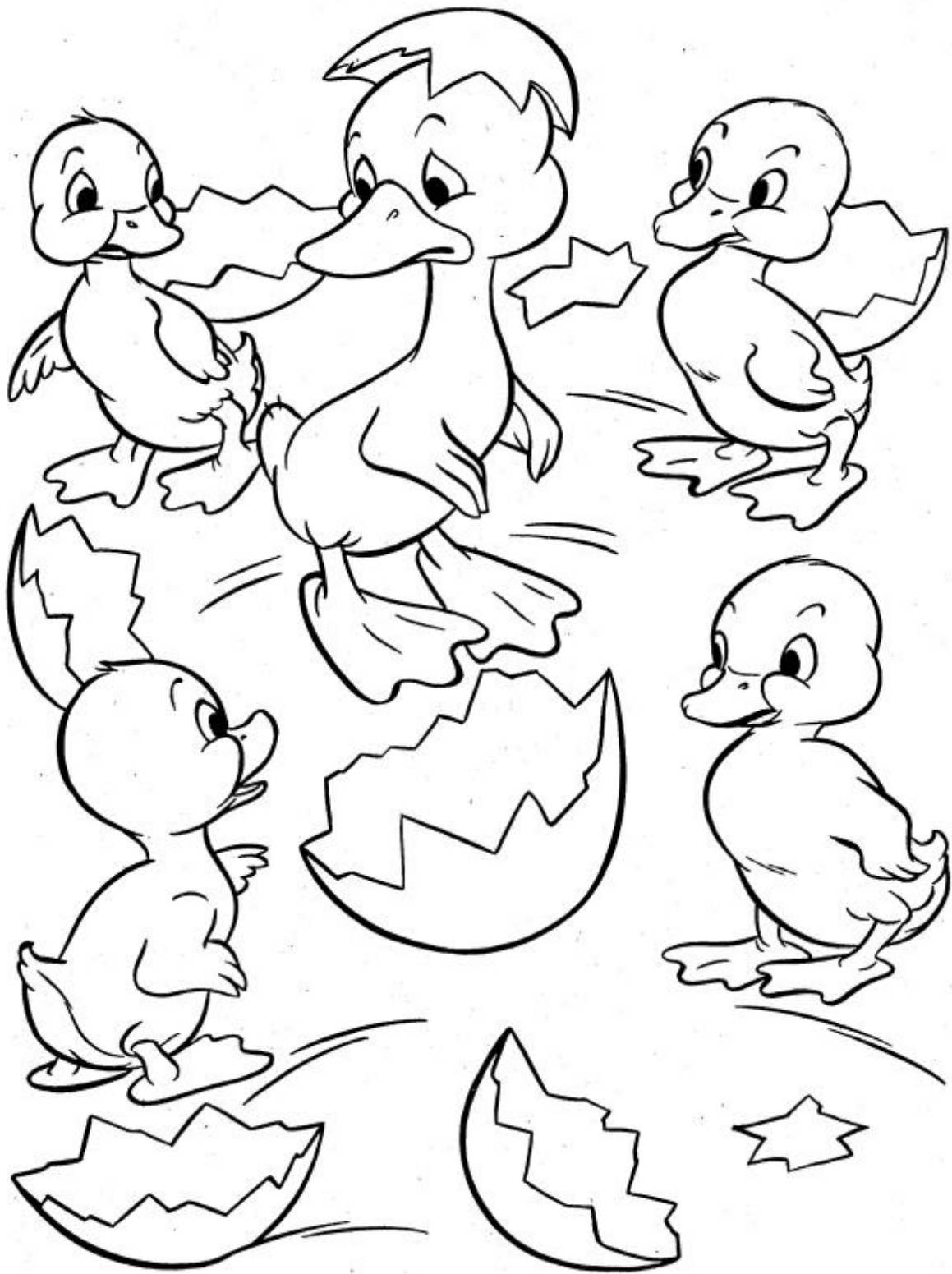
“Yes, you are. We are swans.”

“Swans,” he repeated.

The other swans surrounded the new swan. They all were so friendly and accepting. The ugly duckling had never felt such happiness before. And now he knew he wasn’t an ugly duckling after all, but a beautiful swan.

The End





The Ugly Duckling is a Beautiful
Swan!



Feature Stories and Fairy Tales – The Ugly Dickling

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