

# Creative Writing:

## The child who turned into a seal

**WILD  
PLANET  
TRUST**

### Learning Intention

We are devising a story using the adaptations of fur seals.



### Sample Story

“Right, class, it’s time for front crawl so listen to my instructions...”

The swimming teacher’s voice was drowned out by the hub-bub of the pool full of noisy children. Lessons were always cold and chaotic, but Holly loved the feeling of being weightless in the water. If only that teacher would stop being so strict, she could be having fun.

Holly looked down at her hand. Skin had appeared between her fingers again, just like the webbing in a fur seal’s flipper. What if someone noticed? She quickly put her hand back underwater, with a splash. No-one was looking at her, and she sighed in relief.

“GO!”

Her teacher’s voice rang out, and the other children sprang away from the pool edge in a froth of bubbles and foam, their arms and legs flailing and churning up the water. Holly had been distracted, and was now left behind. She took a deep breath and pushed away from the wall.

In just two strokes she was flying through the water. The webbing between her fingers scooped the water with such power, she was swimming faster than she ever had before. In a few moments more, she was ahead of her classmates and approaching the end of the pool. With a flick of her feet, Holly turned and raced back the other way...

# Introduction for Pupils



In Spider-Man, the bite of a spider gives a teenager spider powers. Peter Parker turned into a super-hero, fighting criminals and saving innocent citizens. But what if a person gained the powers of a fur seal?

As well as a sudden fondness for fish, the person might show changes that make a fur seal better-suited to life underwater:

- ◆ **hands and feet flattening, and webbing growing between fingers and toes**
- ◆ **eyes changing to focus well underwater, but poorly on land**
- ◆ **ability to hold breath for incredibly long time**
- ◆ **whiskers to find food in dark/cloudy water**
- ◆ **body shape changing to become more streamlined**
- ◆ **growing thick fur to protect against cold water (fur seals use fur rather than blubber)**

Write a story describing a person who slowly turns into a fur seal, and how the changes help them to live in the water. Swimming lessons would become more fun, but football might be more challenging...

## Starter Sentence

Once upon a time, in a town not far from here, a boy ate so many fish fingers that he started to turn into a fur seal...

## Tips for Parents

- ◆ In Scottish myth a Selkie can peel off its sealskin and become a person on dry land, for a short time.
- ◆ Other animals could be substituted – penguins, for example, may be particularly suitable as they walk upright.
- ◆ This could be presented as a graphic novel or comic strip, if more appropriate.
- ◆ As animal lovers, we're keen to encourage a positive image of wild animals – hence the choice of the character eating too many fish fingers, as the moment when power is invested, rather than being bitten by a seal!

