

## Resource Review

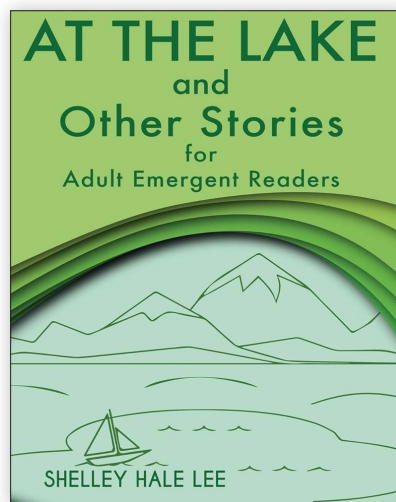
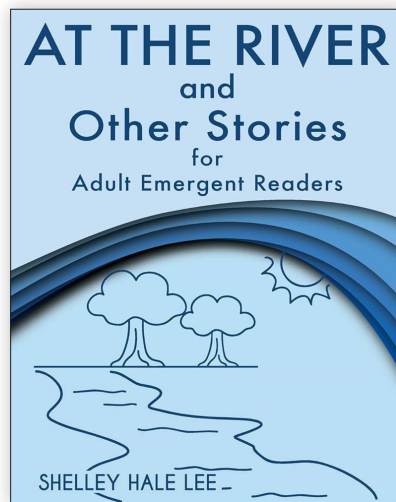
# Wayzgoose Press' *For Adult Emergent Readers Series*

Margaret Frank, Hamline University/ATLAS (retired)

This resource review includes two books: *At the River* (Book 1) and *At the Lake* (Book 2) for emergent/early readers (children and adults). The purpose of the series is to provide basic stories for English Learners (ELs) who are either non-literate or semiliterate. Along with oral language instruction, learners can improve basic literacy skills such as Roman alphabet naming and forming, English letter-sound patterns, basic word knowledge, and learn to read and understand short texts (sentences and paragraphs).

Specifically, *At the River* (10 units, 34 stories) covers Roman alphabet letter names and formation, phonemic awareness skills (oral blending and segmenting), print concepts (left to right, top to bottom), single consonants, short vowels, consonant digraphs, word blending, sight words, simple sentence structures, and text fluency.

*At the Lake* (9 units, 29 stories) includes a review of short vowels and then covers long vowel-silent e, consonant blends, R-controlled, and vowel digraphs or pairs, word blending, additional sight words, more complex sentence and paragraph structures, and text fluency.



There is a recommended assessment tool to determine needs and placement into Book 1 or 2. The author also provides a *Teacher's Guide* (free to download) that outlines a systematic and sequential lesson planning and delivery format - moving from the smallest unit of meaning (letters or sounds) to the largest (sentences or paragraphs).

## Evaluation

Both books (*At the River* and *At the Lake*) accomplish the author's goal of providing relevant, short stories for non-literate or semi-literate English learners at beginning ESL 1-3 levels - and even native English readers at ABE 1-2. The texts stay true to the scope and sequence where phonetic elements (letters, sounds, words) are carefully sequenced and systematically combined into short stories or texts. The early stories include mostly decodable words; later, they include a combination of decodable and sight words. The topics

of the sentences and stories are relevant to adult learners and their families. The accompanying line drawings are simple and graceful. They do not detract from the text, but rather enhance understanding.

Zemach, D. E. (Ed.). (2020). *At the Lake and Other Stories for Adult Emergent Readers*. Wayzgoose Press. 164 pages. \$12.99. ISBN: 9781938757846

Zemach, D. E. (Ed.). (2016). *At the River and Other Stories for Adult Emergent Readers*. Wayzgoose Press. 133 pages. \$10.99. ISBN: 9781938757242

The books along with the detailed *Teacher's Guide* can easily be integrated into beginning literacy programming. The books have all the necessary printed information and the *Teacher's Guide* offers explicit directions for regular 30–60-minute phonics classes:

1. Teach letters and sounds
2. Create a context
3. Build words
4. Read words
5. Write words
6. Read texts

The multi-sensory, systematic, and sequential design of this resource is like other phonics materials for children and adults. Although the *Teacher's Guide* is free, books must be purchased for all learners. However, the price is

reasonable considering that each unit is a week's worth (or more!) of lessons. And if students leave the books in class, new students can be given books no longer used by others. The detailed *Teacher's Guide* is necessary because it outlines how to add variety to the repetitive style of the books. Together they offer a comprehensive program for teaching foundational reading and writing skills at a reasonable price.

## Recommendation

As stated above, this resource is appropriate for beginning ESL and ABE levels. Instructors (and maybe even volunteers) at these levels will find the detailed *Teacher's Guide* to be very useful when planning and delivering a series of oral and print reading foundational skills. The lesson/unit format, if followed closely, has the potential to improve decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension skills and confidence.