

An Unusual Friendship

(February 2020)

In 2000, a bad flood caused a hippopotamus calf to wash down into the banks of a river in South Africa. The calf was spotted by Shirley Joubert and her husband, Tonie. She had no food and no other hippo close, so the Jouberts took in the calf, now named Jessica, and a rare and stunning bond came to be.

When the Jouberts spotted her, Jess was only a few hours old. Tonie was a game ranger at the time, so the Jouberts understood how to take care of her, and now, as an adult hippo, she still has a strong bond with them.

The connection Jess has to the Jouberts is rare. Hippos are huge and often aggressive, and Jess is not domesticated. While she spends a lot of time with them, the Jouberts have never kept her from leaving. She has the bond she made with the family as a calf and is still a normal hippo.

So why is Jess still so content with the Jouberts? Experts think she washed away from her mom right after birth and was not able to look at her. Instead, Jess imprinted on the Jouberts. It is hard to say if she looks at herself as a person, or looks at the Jouberts as hippos, but it is clear they are mom and dad to her.

Most hippos like to be social with other hippos they know, but Jess also likes new people. They can visit with Jess and feed her, too! While there, they also learn about other hippos, the for-profit culling in the area that has hurt the hippo population, and how people can help.

Jess is and always will be a wild animal. It is important that anyone who visits her knows this. Still, her kind way with people and her attachment to the family who took her in shows a more complex view of these mammals—and the role that early contact can have on our relationship with them.

Teacher Resources

Please note: this non-controlled readable text passage features a ***description text structure***. As such, it is written to be ***at least 80% decodable at Substep 4.2***. A specific decodability score is listed below.

- This text passage is 80.12% decodable at Substep 4.2.

Text Easability Scores

If you would like to measure the text easability scores of this passage, please follow the directions below.

1. Visit the Coh-Metrix Text Easability Assessor website at <http://tea.cohmetrix.com/>. If you do not already have a login and password, create one. It is free and easy to sign up for access to the website.
2. Once you have created an account and sign in, you will be taken to a page with an empty, white text box. Copy and paste the text from this passage into the empty, white text box. Make sure you are only copying and pasting the body of the passage. Do not include the title, date, or any of the resources present in the passage.
3. When you have pasted the passage into the text box, click on the red button beneath the text box that says "Analyze." There will be a short delay and after a few seconds, you will see a bar graph appear to the right of the screen.
4. The bar graph will give you the percentages for several text characteristics including: narrativity, syntactic simplicity, word concreteness, referential cohesion, and deep cohesion.
5. Below the bar graph, the Flesch Kincaid Grade Level is also included for your benefit.
6. Lastly, a paragraph is provided that explains the meaning of the measurements of the text characteristics for your particular passage.
7. Once you have completed measuring your passage, you can click on the "Clear" button below the text box and measure another passage, if you wish.

This text passage is archived under *Animals*.