

Go Girl: Sink or Swim

By: Thalia Kalkipsakis

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Talk about the difference between competitive swimming and fun water games, and make lists of necessary equipment
- Write journal entries about challenges that they have faced and overcome.
- Talk about nutrition, and design and make healthy snacks

About the story

Bec loves swimming. It's everything that she thinks about. When she's invited to move up from her lessons at the swimming centre into the junior squad, it seems like a dream come true. Bec starts training with her new group of friends, she feels fitter and happier than she ever has before. And she really wants to win.

But the junior squad is much harder than her old lessons. Can Bec make the cut? Will she swim, or sink? With her first big race coming up, Bec is excited and nervous. She's sure that she'll do a good job. But race day comes and there's more pressure than she's ever had before. Seeing so many people watching makes Bec really really nervous. All she can think about is the crowd. She loses all of her races, and her confidence.

Bec's friends and coach aren't about to let her go down without a fight though, and all try to help her get through her nerves. When another big race comes along, Bec thinks she's ready for it, although maybe winning isn't that important anyway.

Before you read the story

Read the title of the book. Ask the students if they all know how to swim. Ask them to share their experiences of learning to swim or being in swimming competitions. Read the blurb out loud. Ask the students if they've ever won or lost a race. How did it make them feel? Have a discussion about winning and ask them to guess what they think Bec might learn in the book.

Questions

Chapter One

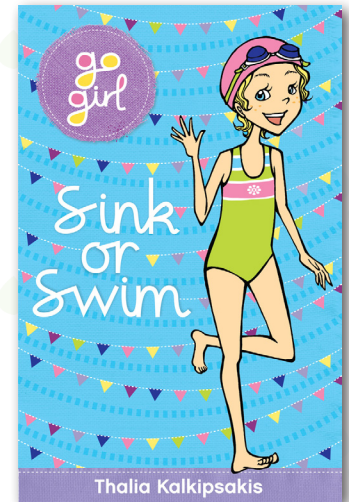
Why is Bec walking fast around the pool? Why is it important not to run around the pool?
Why is Bec happy that she finds her brick first? Does it matter?

Chapter Two

What does Hung want to talk to Bec and her mum about? Is it good news?
What equipment will Bec need for junior squad?
What is the article *Golden Girls* about? Why is Bec so inspired by it? What does she do to feel like one of the swimmers in the article?

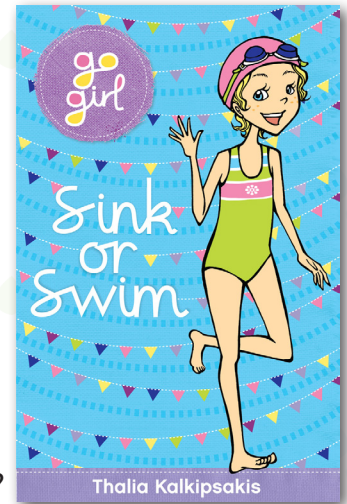
Chapter Three

How does Bec know that the others are serious swimmers? Why does she like Holly?
How does Hung show Bec how to improve her technique? Why does it make her feel silly?
What are Bec's first impressions of being on the junior squad?



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Questions

Chapter Four

What do Bec and Holly have in common? What does Bec hope that she can achieve or learn that Holly already knows how to do?
How does Bec make her new friends?

Chapter Five

Bec and her new friends have started sharing snacks after practice. What has she brought to practice today? Why does she think it will surprise them?
Why did Holly and Bec each have to take their nailpolish off?
What exciting news does Hung have for Bec at the end of practice?

Chapter Six

Swimming takes over Bec's whole life. What does she forget in school? What else is swimming keeping her from?
What is Bec feeling nervous about?
What throws Bec off when she arrives at the pool?

Chapter Seven

Why is Bec miserable?
How do her team-mates cheer her up? Why is she surprised that they're all talking to her?
What do the others say to make Bec feel better? Does it work?

Chapter Eight

'Races are won and lost up here.' Hung says this to Bec when he talks to her about the race. What does he mean by this?
Can you think of a situation where what's going on in your head has changed what's going on in your body?
What tips does Hung give Bec to help her to calm down?

Chapter Nine

How does starting each swim class with meditation help Bec?
What does Hung say to make her start to panic again? How does she change her thinking?
What is the exciting opportunity that Hung offers Bec? Is she ready for it?

Chapter Ten

What does Bec make for her special race day party?
What thought interrupts Bec's meditation before the big race? How does she overcome it?

Chapter Eleven

What does Holly send in her email to Bec that makes her feel better before the big race?
How does Bec feel this time when she walks into the swimming centre?
How does Bec make herself ready for the big race?

Chapter Twelve

What does Bec stop thinking about when she starts swimming?

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Activities

Ask students to make a list of things that they would need for swimming lessons. Have a discussion about swimming in races and swimming for fun. Talk about the different types of equipment used for each. Ask the students to make a list of what they would need for a swimming carnival, and then what they would need for a pool party.

Ask the students to talk about challenges that they have undertaken. This could be going up a level in sport, going into a more advanced class or taking on a new hobby. Ask them to write a journal entry imagining that they are about to start the new challenge. Discuss their fears, hopes, inspirations going into the challenge. Then ask the students to write another journal entry having completed the challenge. Which things were unexpected? What did they achieve? How did it make them feel overall?

Good food is important to swimmers. Talk about good nutrition to the class, using the snacks that Holly and her friends have as an example. Have a discussion with the class about types of food that are good for athletes, that keep them healthy and give them the energy they need. Ask the students in groups to come up with snack ideas for Bec and her friends, explaining their choices and talking about why they would be good snacks for the swimmers. Groups could get together after school and make their snacks, then bring them into class for a healthy class picnic.

