

***Song of the Water Boatman*, Joyce Sidman**

Original text—

SPRING PEEPERS

The sound of spring peepers is one of the earliest signs of spring. These inch-long tree frogs can freeze almost completely in winter because of a special “antifreeze” in their cells. As soon as the ground thaws, they begin to come alive again, climbing up twigs and bushes with their sticky toes. Their nighttime song—a loud, steady trill—is actually a series of high-pitched peeps, lasting only a third of a second, from their balloon-like throat sacs. The peepers you hear are the males, who are calling to attract a mate.

Set 1.

These inch-long tree frogs can freeze almost completely in winter because of a special “antifreeze” in their cells.

DEVOLVED:

1. These frogs can freeze almost completely in winter. (Base)
2. The tree frogs are one inch long.
3. The frogs have a special “antifreeze” in their cells.

Use REDUCTION:

Reduce 2 to a hyphenation adjective *inch-long*

Reduce 3 to a prepositional phrase using *because of*.

NOTICE:

1. Preposition: *because of*
2. Hyphenated word: *inch-long*
3. Use of quotation marks to set off the word *antifreeze*

Set 2.

As soon as the ground thaws, they begin to come alive again, climbing up twigs and bushes with their sticky toes.

DEVOLVED:

1. As soon as the ground thaws, they begin to come alive again. (Base)
2. They climb up twigs and bushes.
3. They are able to climb with their sticky toes.

Use REDUCTION:

Reduce 2 to participle phrase by changing *climb* to *climbing*.

Reduce 3 to a prepositional phrase.

NOTICE:

1. Subordinating conjunction: as soon as to express time
2. Comma use: *As soon as DC, IC*. (DC = dependent clause. IC = Independent clause)

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Set 3.

Their nighttime song—a loud, steady trill—is actually a series of high-pitched peeps, lasting only a third of a second, from their balloon-like throat sacs.

DEVOLVED:

1. Their song is actually a series of peeps. (Base)
2. They sing the song at nighttime.
3. The song is a loud, steady trill.
4. The peeps are pitched high.
5. A peep lasts only a third of a second.
6. The peeps are made from their throat sacs that are like balloons.

Use REDUCTION:

Reduce 2 to an adjective, *nighttime*.

Reduce 3 to a noun phrase that serves as an appositive to “song.”

Reduce 4 to an adjective, “high-pitched” and place it before “peeps.”

Reduce 5 to a participial phrase by changing “lasts” to “lasting.”

Reduce 6 to a prepositional phrase; reduce relative clause “that are like balloons” to a hyphenated adjective, “balloon-like.”

NOTICE:

1. Compound word: nighttime.
2. Use of dash to set off appositive.
3. Hyphenated words: high-pitched and balloon-like. Use of commas to set off participial phrase “lasting only a third of a second” helps to clarify that “from their ...” is modifying peeps

Set 4.

The peepers you hear are the males, who are calling to attract a mate.

DEVOLVED:

1. The peepers are males. (Base)
2. The ones you hear are calling to attract a mate.

Use SUBORDINATION:

Subordinate 2 as a relative clause

NOTICE:

Use of comma to set off relative clause beginning with *who*