

A BUDDY

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Every lesson was so much fun and interesting, but the week's wait between the two practices felt so long.

Skubba had now learned how to swim with real fins. Luckily they were able to convince Nella that it was better to put the fins on your feet rather than your hands. Big hands don't really help you to swim faster. Larger feet however do the job. Or did Nella pretend she didn't know? Fred was convinced she knew better, but Skubba was too enthusiastic about it to see through the game she played.

Skubba's snorkel clearing exercises went really well.

Nella had taught them how to clear a snorkel by telling them the story of the archerfish. This fish catches insects by shooting them with water from their mouths. They had to pretend to be archerfish and try to shoot plastic creatures at the pool's edge. First by filling the snorkel with water, and then blowing the water out. Once they passed that test they had to do it again, but this time by diving underwater with the snorkel, waiting a while to let it fill up with water and surface to shoot the creatures by blowing air through the tube. Little by little they learned to clear their snorkel as they surfaced. "Shoot the targets," Nella cried when they forgot to blow. If you do not blow it out, you could end up swallowing the water instead.

They learned to slowly snorkel with both their snorkels and fins, gracefully swimming along the water's surface with their heads facing down in the water and the snorkel position high above the surface. When snorkelling, you can spend time looking around underwater for hours. Unfortunately, the training did not last long enough to test that out.



Skubba could even dive through a hoop and pick a snorkel up from the bottom. Nella had shown them how to dive like a duck. Fred thought ducks did not dive, that they just tilted their body upside-down looking for food. Later, however, he had to admit that ducks do dive. Skubba looked more like a frog on his first attempt, but after a while he mastered the 'duck dive' pretty well.

He also kept an eye on his 'buddy'. A strange name for someone who dives with you. Apparently, you always dive in a pair. Both divers have to be in the water, together. Your buddy is a fellow diver,

not somebody standing by on dry ground like Fred. Skubba liked that because that way you always had someone that knew what you had done and see the same things. You could try out and do new things together. Also, your buddy helps check your equipment before you get in the water. That makes it extra safe, because Skubba sometimes forgets things. A buddy can also help you put your equipment on. And of course, you are there to help him or her too.

"Yes, Skubba, it is indeed more fun diving in two, and it is also safer. Your buddy can always help you if there are any problems underwater," Nella had explained.

He did not understand what Nella meant by problems underwater. Later, he got a hoop caught in his tank, so his buddy helped him get untangled. From then on he understood what Nella meant by a helping hand when encountering problems underwater. And yet, Skubba's best buddy was Fred who was always ready to help him and answer the many questions Skubba had. The only problem was, Fred did not dive.