

Name _____
Date _____
Class Period _____

Weekly Article #3*

While reading, mark the main idea and 5 supporting details (use different colors or symbols).

Fiona the baby hippo, or how animals go viral

By Agence France-Presse, adapted by Newsela staff 09/11/2017

Fiona is a baby hippo at the Cincinnati Ohio Zoo. She has her own Facebook Live show called, The Fiona Show... Across America, zoos and animal parks are looking for the next Internet sensation. It is a strategy that tugs at the country's heartstrings and **generates** tons of clicks. But it can also backfire.



Fiona was born prematurely in January, weighing just 29 pounds.

Come Tuesday, she will be the star of her own series, "The Fiona Show," on Facebook's Watch. This is the social network's new platform for original video content.

For the premiere, the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden—which already has been sharing every little detail of Fiona's life on social media—has pledged to unveil a never-before-seen video of the hippo's birth.

America has fallen in love with the adorable but somewhat clumsy mammal. Her first steps have felt in some ways like a soap opera, with a regular rhythm of ups and downs. She has her own hashtag: #TeamFiona... In one video released by the zoo, fans can see Fiona being bottle-fed by a caretaker shortly after birth, nestled into the woman's chest.

Then, with the world watching, Fiona found her taste for playtime. She dove into the pool to reconcile with her mama, who had **initially** rejected her at birth.

At 7 months, she now weighs a more standard 450 pounds.

"We didn't plan on her becoming a celebrity. It just happened," said Michelle Curley, the Cincinnati Zoo communications director. "We were **transparent** and communicated her health challenges from the day she was born. People started to root for her and fell in love with the little hippo."



Zoo Attendance Up

The idea of turning Fiona into a reality star was not really the zoo's idea, Curley said.

"Facebook approached us about doing a show about Fiona on their new Watch platform," said Curley. She admitted that she herself is "crazy" about the hippo.

Curley also admits that the "Fiona factor" has boosted the zoo's bottom line. "Attendance has been great this summer, and some of that can be attributed to the Fiona factor. We have not, however, spent one dollar on ads inviting people to come see Fiona," she noted.

Ivy Collier is a board member for the nonprofit Animals and Society Institute. In her opinion, turning zoo animals into stars is an "economical" marketing tool.

In recent years in the United States, zoo births— from pandas to eagles— have been followed by hundreds of thousands of people online, thanks to live webcams focused on the animal **enclosures**.

Collier said she hopes that zoo watching and education will "**translate** into a deeper interest of animal protection and welfare."

"It's awfully hard to learn about cute, fuzzy polar bear cubs and then watch them be abused," she said.

But for Lisa Moore, a sociologist and professor at the State University of New York - Purchase College, such a strategy is "greenwashing": pretending that it's pro-environmental and pro-animal when it's really about money.

"It's completely artificial. And that's the paradox: it's supposed to get us closer to animals but it actually disconnects us. And eventually we won't have to leave home anymore and will just watch webcams," Moore said.

Write a main (central) idea sentence in your own words:

What are two supporting details?

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-

Author's Craft

List three sensory details that the author uses.

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Vocabulary:

Define **paradox**:

Choose an unfamiliar word and define:

Reflection:

Ask the author of this article a follow up question.

How will knowing the information from the question help you better understand the article?