

## Narrative text: Item #2

The assignment for the short story “Touching Bottom” by Kari Strutt

### Pre-reading activity (*Before you read the story*)

1. This story uses memories and the retelling of memories as a technique for building a story. Have you ever retold a memory as if it were a story? Was there a beginning, a middle, and an end? How did you make this “story” exciting or funny for the listener? Retell a memory that you have as a story. Write it now.



2. One technique that writers use to add depth and meaning to their stories is by using metaphors. A metaphor is an extended comparison. In the story “Touching Bottom,” swimming is a metaphor. On the one hand, the characters in the story really are swimming. On the other hand, they are doing what? Think about it as you read.

Read the story now.

**Post-reading questions** (*After you've read, or while you read, answer these questions.*)

3. How old do you think the narrator is, in the very first paragraph? Explain.
  
4. Think about why the story is called "Touching Bottom." Explain what is going on when the narrator touches each of these "bottoms":
  - a) a sandy bottom with a yellow plastic bowl lodged in it
  
  - b) a clear bottom with black lines painted on it
  
  - c) a bottom that dropped away
  
  - d) toes that hit sand 12 or 15 feet away, at most
  
  - e) a bottom with blurry black lines in blue-green water
  
5. Now, using your answers from question #4, write a five-sentence summary of this story.
  
6. While the narrator and Ian are swimming for their lives, what is the narrator's husband doing? What might Ian and the narrator have felt about that?
  
7.
  - a) Copy down one or two lines from the story that paint a vivid picture in your mind.
  
  - b) Now choose a line or two of dialogue from the story that you think sounds authentic or real – like people actually speaking in real life.
  
  - c) Because of the kind of images and words used in this story, what emotions did you feel as you read it?