

•By Lyn Price <vlprice@earthlink.com>•

Freddie Fish 4:

The Case of the hogfish Rustlers of Briny Gulch

Company: Humongous Entertainment

Estimated Price: CD-ROM, \$29.99

<<http://www.humongous.com>>

Age Group: 3-8

Freddie Fish 4 comes with a CD, Freddie Fish stickers, and a junior activity book. The CD also has a parent and teachers guide that you will find helpful. Humongous included a wonderful reviewer's kit that was very helpful to me. The package included an information guide and on a separate CD, character art and screen shots. Thank you, Humongous!!! (and are the rest of you companies taking notes?)

I now have Freddie as a desktop picture that creates a "I want , I want" from my grandchildren! Your child can get this screen saver by visiting the Humongous website. Humongous offers your child a wonderful website that offers game tricks and tips. They also have the opportunity to join the Humongous Club and to join in online gaming fun! .

Freddie Fish 4:The Case of the hogfish Rustlers of Briny Gulch

Another exciting adventure is in store for Freddie Fish and his new friend, your son or daughter. If they are familiar with the other Freddie Fish adventures, they will be thrilled with this new adventure into the Wild West!

Freddie and his friend Luther receive an invitation to visit a real western ranch owned by his cousin, Calico. When they arrive at the ranch, they are told that

Calico's prize hogfish is missing and she thinks it has been rustled. (Western talk for stolen!) This is where the adventure begins as Freddie promises his cousin he will get her hogfish back. When they find the rustler's hideout they are told how to gain entrance and get the hogfish. They must obtain the rustler's outfit: hat, belt buckle, scarf, and the Rustlers Magazine. So now the rush is on for them to collect all these objects. They must buy and trade for these objects. The appeal here is that they must continuously trade and work for items, to trade for the objects needed to finally reach their goal.

There are three mini-games within the story. The Nickelodeon, The Wanted Poster, and The Oysteroid game.

The Nickelodeon is located in Saltwater Stella's Sodaloon. There are a large variety of old fashioned movie clips here.

The Wanted Poster is an area were you can create your own posters. You can describe your own outlaws and their crimes just be scrolling through the names and descriptive words. You can even print from this area without leaving the game.

The Oysteroid Arcade is a great old fashioned shooting arcade. In this area you aim your oyster at a bubble and split the bubble with a pearl. Be careful, if the bubble touches your oyster you're a goner! Parents, there is a special note just for you. You can easily change this game so that no oyster "lives" are lost.

It's fun exploring all the places and characters in Briny Gulch. You click to make an object move, pick it up, or learn about it. When the cursor becomes a large solid arrow, it indicates the exit from a mini-game or puzzle. Remember to click on every object at least twice to make sure that you see everything and stop to chat with the town people!

I was pleased with the educational aspects of Freddie Fish 4 . The program creates an atmosphere where the children must use critical thinking skills, problem solving and memory skills, color, shape, number and letter recognition, and deductive/inductive reasoning skills.

The graphics are fantastic and the interaction with the characters of Briny Gulch can grab and hold the attention of the 3 year toddler and the 8 year old school age child. The program is easy to travel through without a lot of help from the parents of the toddler and preschooler.

The bubbles at the bottom of the screen display Freddie's inventory. Saving,

Loading, and Quitting the game could not be easier! Click on the little monitor in the lower left hand corner.

Requirements and Installation

Freddie Fish 4 requires Mac OS 7.1 or greater, PowerPC (90MHz recommended) 16 MB RAM. There is no installation. The CD also runs a video and CD-ROM speed test the first time it's launched.

Summary

Freddie Fish 4: The Case of the hogfish Rustlers of Briny Gulch is a fun and adventurous game for the 3 to 8 year olds. It's a great learning tool for the beginner toddler and for the more advanced school age child. I was amazed at the way Humongous bridged the gap between the toddler and early school age child. I allowed my 4 year old granddaughter and my 8 year neighbor's daughter to play this game. They were both equally excited and thrilled with the game. I would **highly recommend** this program to all of you with children between the ages of 3 to 8.

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Websites mentioned:

<<http://www.humongous.com>>

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