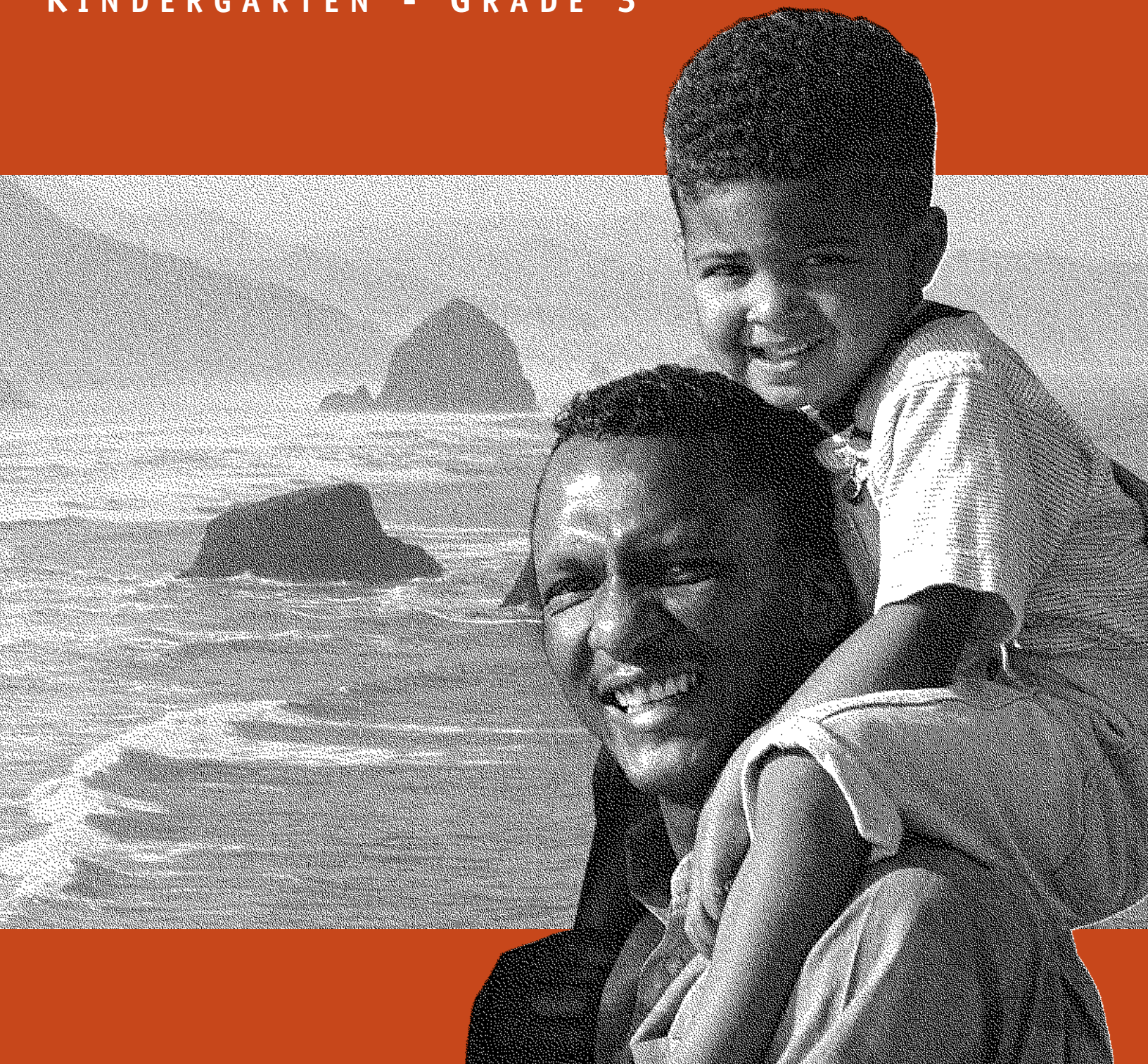


READING IS FUNDAMENTAL STORY SAMPLER

Our Natural World

FOR CHILDREN IN
KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 3





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What Is a Story Sampler?

A Story Sampler makes books come alive for children. It is a book-based thematic approach to reading designed to engage children in the book experience. Each Story Sampler includes hands-on, cross-curricular activities for books that are linked by a common theme.

Why Use a Story Sampler?

Motivational activities are an important part of every Reading Is Fundamental program. And these motivational activities are an easy way to excite children's interest in reading and help them associate books and reading with positive experiences and fun! The ideas you will find in each Story Sampler show you how to build anticipation and excitement in your RIF programs.

Scores of studies show that students learn more and do better in school when their parents are involved in their education. Different types of hands-on activities enable all children to learn in different ways. Particular questions before, during and after read aloud activities can develop high-order thinking skills.

Family members can encourage children to become lifelong readers by reading aloud with them everyday. Reading aloud to children is one of the most effective ways

to support language and literacy development. Children who are read to from infancy associate reading with pleasant, warm feelings. When you invite children to participate in reading, ask open-ended questions that promote creative thinking and learning, and plan activities and experiences that allow children to expand their understanding of the story, you help them develop a love of reading.

What Are the Standard Elements of a Story Sampler?

Each section of the Story Sampler includes a featured book plus additional titles and resources.* The activities that accompany each section will help you develop a literacy-rich environment that contributes significantly to a child's enjoyment of reading. The standard elements in the Story Sampler include:

- Questions to ask
- Family involvement
- Things to do
- Community connections

**The ISBN listed indicates a specific edition of the book. However, other editions may also be available through the public library or other publishers.*

Who Should Use a Story Sampler and Where?

Some Story Samplers are age-specific, but most can be adapted to a broad range of ages. Teachers, families, and child-care providers can use them in classrooms, community centers, homes, and in Head Start sites. And most importantly, parents can extend the story beyond the classroom with home-based projects and field trips.

Story Samplers can forge relationships and shared experiences within the family and the community. Through the family, children can be introduced to many kinds of books. Books can explain and reinforce concepts; allow children to build positive self-images; stimulate discussions and thinking; increase children's understanding of various concepts; and expand their imagination.

The age range for a Story Sampler is indicated at the beginning of each set of activities.

When and How Should I Use a Story Sampler?

Story Samplers can be used within or as a supplement to a curriculum or an after-school program. They can be part of reading challenges, reading weeks, and family involvement events. Your imagination and the interests of the children who participate in the RIF program will help determine the best way to use the Story Sampler. Enjoy and have fun!

Tips for Reading Aloud

Before You Read a Story...

- Make sure everyone is comfortable
- Show the cover and read the title and author of the book
- Ask the children about the cover
- Suggest things the children can look or listen for during the story

During a Story...

- Change your voice to fit the mood or action
- Move your finger under the words as you read them
- Show the pictures and talk about the book as you read
- Add information or change words to help kids understand more words and explain the meaning of a new word
- Ask children to make predictions about the plot, the characters, and the setting
- Share your own thoughts about the story
- Follow the cues of the children

After You Read a Story...

- Ask questions about what happened in the story
- Encourage the group to relate the story to their own experiences
- Ask children how they might feel or act if they were one of the characters
- Encourage children to share their thoughts about the story and pictures
- Extend the story with an activity or another book

Our Natural World

A STORY SAMPLER FOR CHILDREN IN KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 3

▶ PLANET EARTH

If You Find a Rock

by **Peggy Christian**, with photographs by Barbara Hirsch Lember, Harcourt, 2000
ISBN: 0152393390

▶ THE GREEN WORLD

A Tree Is Nice

by **Janice May Udry**, with illustrations by Marc Simont, HarperCollins, 1956
ISBN: 0060261552

▶ EXPLORING OUR WORLD

Stone Girl, Bone Girl: The Story of Mary Anning

by **Laurence Anholt**, with illustrations by Sheila Moxley, Orchard, 1998
ISBN: 0531301486

▶ HUMAN MIGRATION

Grandfather's Journey

by **Allen Say**, Houghton, 1993
ISBN: 0395570352

▶ CELEBRATING EARTH

My Name Is Georgia: A Portrait

by **Jeanette Winter**, Harcourt/Silver Whistle, 1998
ISBN: 015201649X

If You Find a Rock

by **Peggy Christian, with photographs**
by **Barbara Hirsch Lember**

Harcourt, 2000

ISBN: 0152393390

“If you find a rock, / a nice flat, rounded rock / that sits just right / in the crook of your finger, / then you have / a skipping rock.” So starts this poem about the kinds of rock people collect. Illustrated with hand-tinted black-and-white photographs, this book resonates with meaning and will connect with anyone who has ever bent down to pick up a rock. At the same time, the book reveals the intimate relationship human beings have with the land on which they live.

What To Do Before Reading the Story

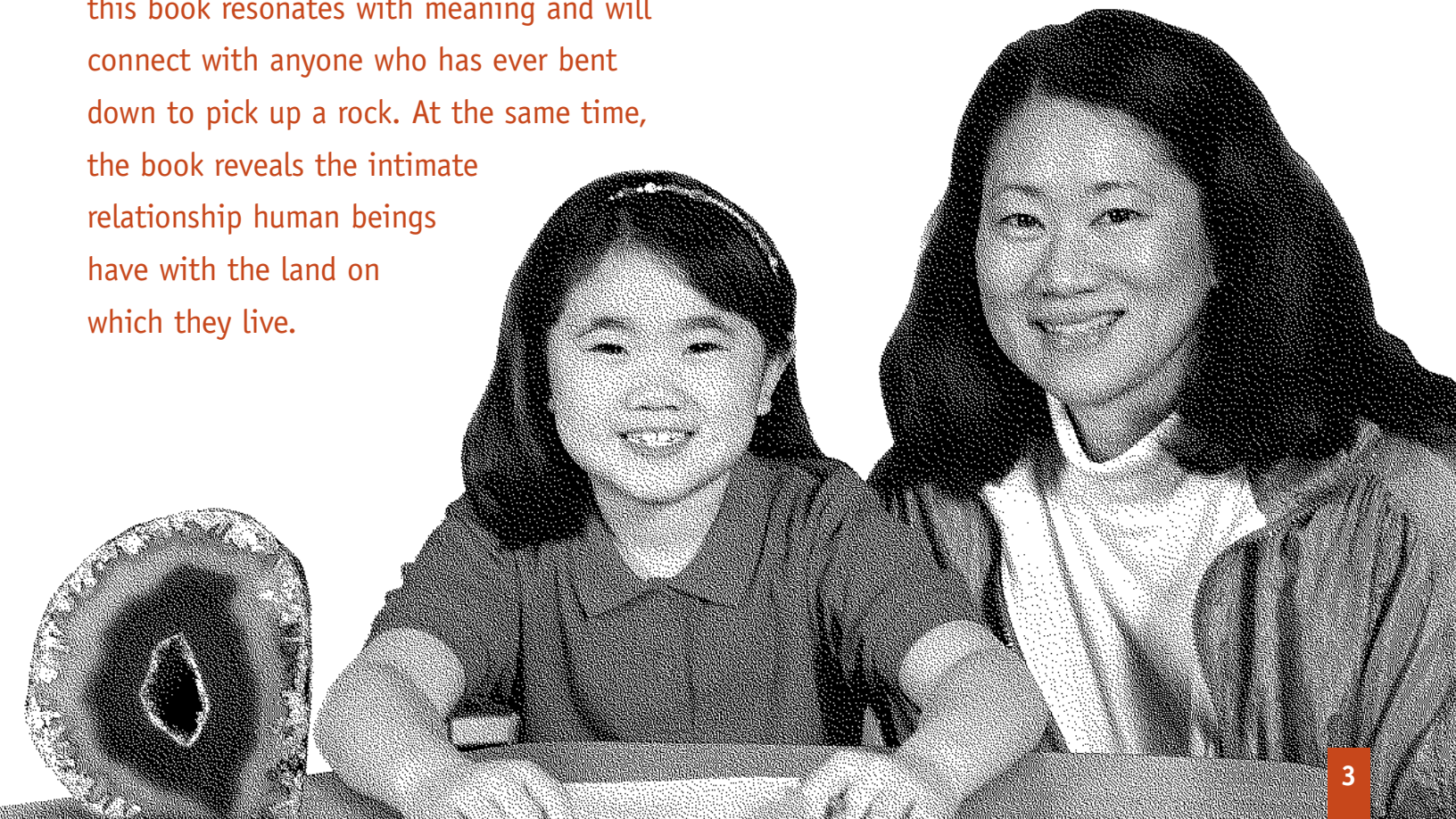
- Ask children if they collect rocks or have ever found a special rock. Give children a little time to talk about those experiences.
- The title of this book asks, “If you find a rock . . .” Ask the children how they would complete this sentence.
- Hold up the book and ask children to call out words describing the rocks that appear on the cover.

Things To Talk About During the Story

- Before reading each page, show the children the photograph and ask them what is happening. Then read the words opposite the picture. Ask children if they have ever done any of these things.
- Let children examine the photographs, and point out how the image looks different than a color photograph. Explain that the artist painted on top of a black-and-white photograph.

What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- Ask children if they can think of any other kinds of rocks.
- Take a walk around your building with the group. See how many different rocks the children can find.
- Let children bring in a special rock and tell the story of how and where they found it.
- Talk about different types of rock and how Earth is made out of all different kinds of rocks.



Family Involvement

- Examine some family jewelry (such as a wedding ring) and talk about how and why these objects came to be. Materials such as gold, silver, turquoise, and precious (and semi-precious) gems all come from the earth. Have a conversation about how these rocks look in their natural state.
- Look at the various coins around the house. Then talk about money and how it came to be. Explain that gold and silver used to be our money, and then tell the children why we switched to paper money.
- Paint rocks or decorate a shoebox to store a rock collection.

Community Connection

- Go to a beach or your local playground and play in the sand. Help children understand that sand is rock that has been broken down by the Earth's waters. What kind of other natural materials wash up on the sand?
- Visit a place that sells rocks such as a home improvement store, a pet store or perhaps a jewelry store to see the different types of minerals and gems that can be found on Earth.
- A person who studies rocks is called a geologist. Invite a college or museum geologist to come talk to your group.

Additional Titles

A Drop of Water by Walter Wick, Scholastic, 1997
ISBN: 0590221973

Extraordinary photographs explain how water “works.” As Earth’s surface is covered mostly by water, this book explains the large systems of weather and the water cycle in smaller terms (such as freezing and melting, and evaporation).

Just a Dream by Chris Van Allsburg, Houghton, 1990
ISBN: 0395533082

Van Allsburg’s striking ecological plea provides children with a reason to protect their environment and the planet as a whole.

Oceans by Seymour Simon, Morrow, 1990
ISBN: 0688154786

One in a nonfiction series by Simon, this visually stunning book shows oceans in all their glory and power.

Paddle-to-the-Sea by Holling Clancy Holling, Houghton, 1941
ISBN: 0395292034

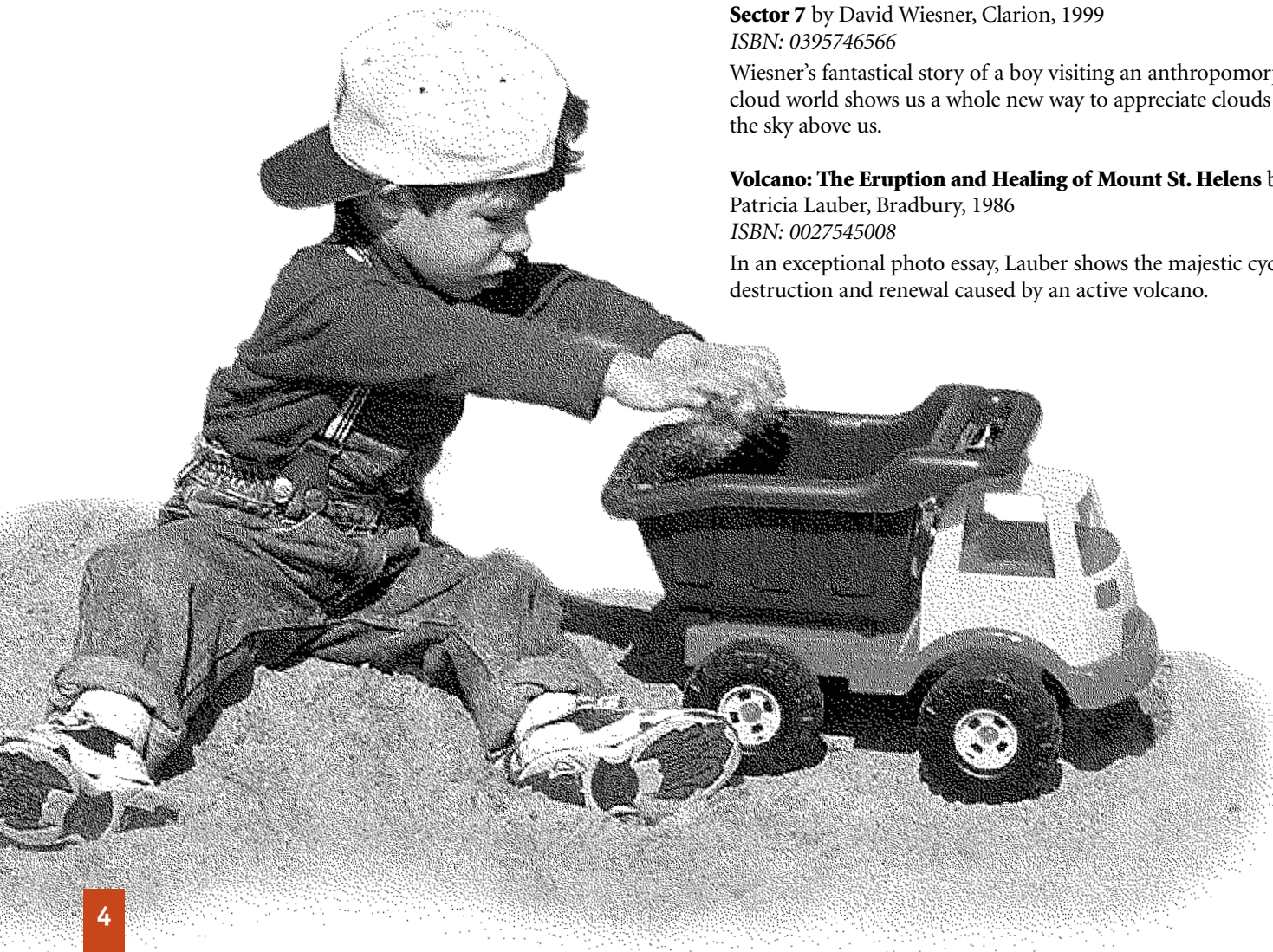
A Native American boy sends his hand-carved toy canoe on a vast journey that starts in Lake Superior and ends in the Atlantic Ocean. An adventure story to be sure, but this book also gives a broad perspective of the human relationship with land and water.

Sector 7 by David Wiesner, Clarion, 1999
ISBN: 0395746566

Wiesner’s fantastical story of a boy visiting an anthropomorphic cloud world shows us a whole new way to appreciate clouds and the sky above us.

Volcano: The Eruption and Healing of Mount St. Helens by Patricia Lauber, Bradbury, 1986
ISBN: 0027545008

In an exceptional photo essay, Lauber shows the majestic cycle of destruction and renewal caused by an active volcano.



The Green World

A Tree Is Nice

by **Janice May Udry**, illustrated by **Marc Simont**
HarperCollins, 1956
ISBN: 0060261552

Written almost 50 years ago, this picture book still offers a simple and beautiful reason to understand and respect trees. With illustrations that alternate from color to black and white, Simont shows readers how trees feed us, shelter us from heat and wind, and provide homes for animals.

What To Do Before Reading the Story

- Point out the Caldecott medal on the front cover. Then ask children to think about what they like in Simont's drawings.
- Discuss the title. Ask children why they think this is or isn't true. Can they think of other words to describe a tree?
- Tell children that Marc Simont drew these pictures 47 years ago and that he is still illustrating picture books today.

Things To Talk About During the Story

- Point out how the artist makes the people in this story small compared to the trees. Why does he do this? Who is more essential to this story? Who is the main character?
- Discuss how the book begins by showing how beautiful trees are. Then it describes how useful trees are. Ask children to think of other things that are beautiful and useful.
- At the end of the book, two children plant trees. The book has given us many reasons why we should plant trees. Encourage children to call out other reasons.

What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- Talk about how trees provide oxygen, and without them (and other plants) human beings and many other living organisms could not survive. Also explain that trees need carbon dioxide, which human beings provide.
- Explain how trees (and plants) are living organisms that make their own food.
- Discuss how water travels from the roots of a tree to its leaves.





Family Involvement

- Check out a tree identification book from the library. Together, find five different trees in the neighborhood. Save a leaf from each tree, and make a scrapbook. Children may want to glue the leaves into a journal or notebook with a flower or seed from the tree. Parents can jot down comments their children make about what they have seen.
- Purchase a tree and plant it in the yard. Or, pot a smaller plant in a window box. Consult someone who works at a garden center for advice.
- Make a contribution and join the Arbor Day Society to learn more about trees and how they help us.

Community Connection

- Visit an apple orchard and pick fresh apples.
- Invite a certified arborist to talk to the group about the care of trees.
- Visit the library and ask the reference librarian to help you find the oldest tree in the neighborhood. When you locate the tree, submit the story to a local newspaper.

Additional Titles

The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry, Harcourt, 1990
ISBN: 015200520X

While a woodcutter naps under a kapok tree in the Amazon rainforest, the animals enumerate the many reasons why he should not cut the great tree down.

I Took a Walk by Henry Cole, Greenwillow, 1998
ISBN: 0688151159

A young child explores the rich and hidden life in four different green habitats: the woods, a meadow, a stream, and a pond.

Johnny Appleseed: A Tall Tale retold by Steven Kellogg, Morrow, 1988
ISBN: 0688064175

Kellogg offers a fun retelling of the life of the legendary Johnny Appleseed, who spent his life moving west and planting apple orchards for new settlers.

Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf by Lois Ehlert, Harcourt, 1991
ISBN: 0152661972

From seed to mature tree, Ehlert uses collage art and a scrapbook-like layout to explain how a tree grows. She includes plenty of information about planting trees at the end of this book, too.

Inspirational Friends

Exploring Our World

Stone Girl, Bone Girl: The Story of Mary Anning

by Laurence Anholt, illustrated by Sheila Moxley
Orchard, 1998
ISBN: 0531301486

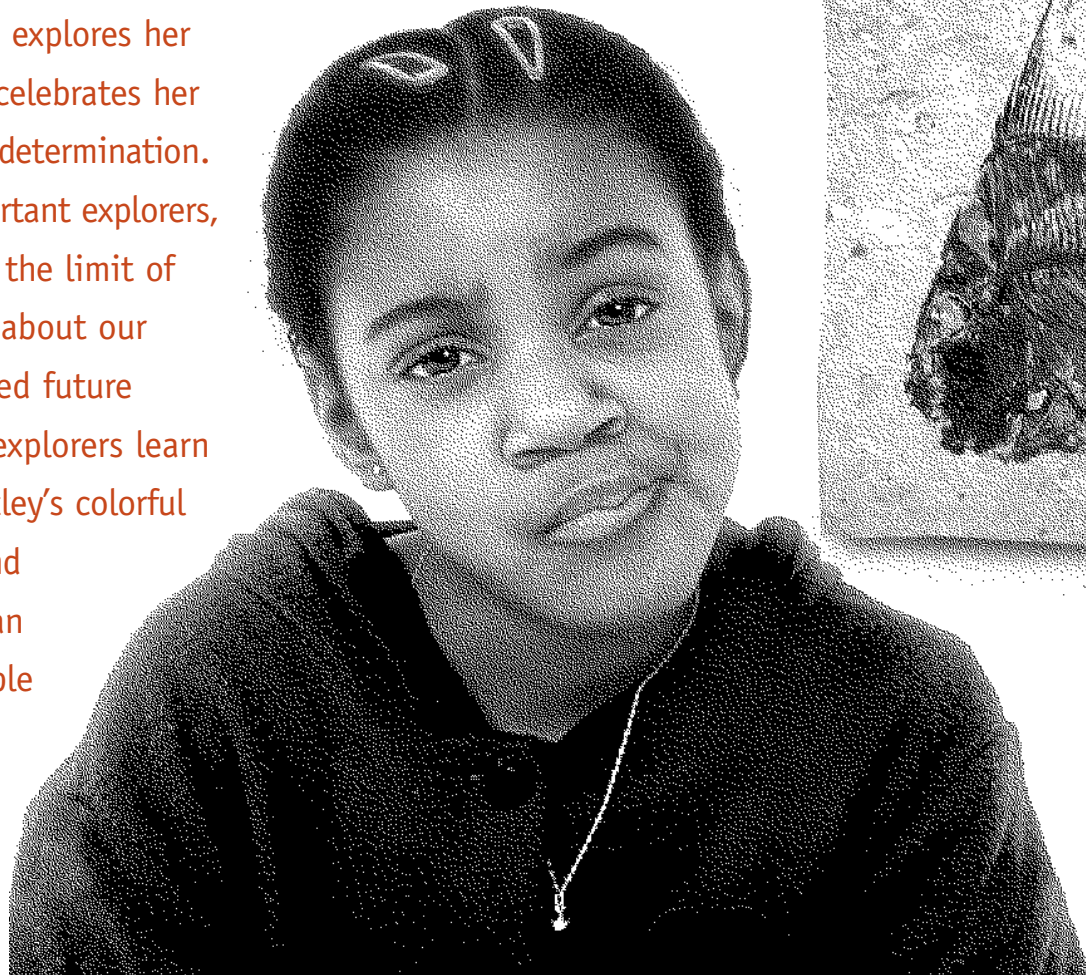
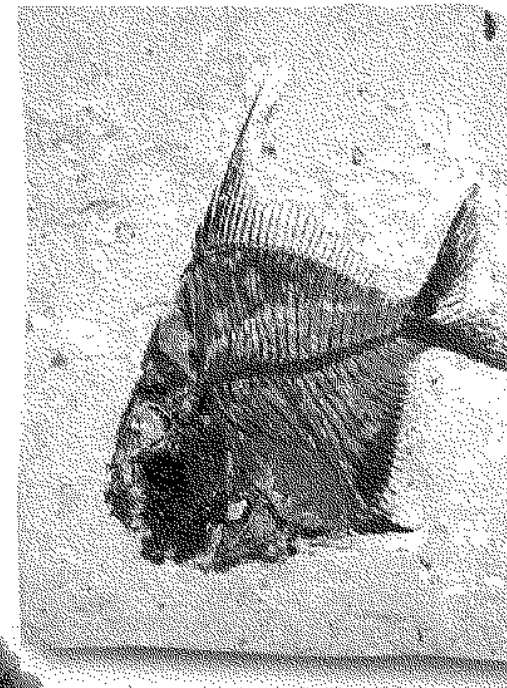
Mary Anning was born in 1799 in Dorset, England. At the age of 12, she discovered the first ichthyosaur fossil. This picture-book biography explores her childhood and celebrates her dedication and determination. Like other important explorers, Anning pushed the limit of our knowledge about our world and helped future scientists and explorers learn even more. Moxley's colorful illustrations lend excitement to an already incredible story.

What To Do Before Reading the Story

- Ask children if they have ever heard of Mary Anning. Hold up the cover of the book and ask children what they think it will be about.
- Look at the front cover. How is the little girl dressed? Ask the children when they think this story takes place.
- Hold a brief discussion about dinosaur fossils. Has anyone ever heard of an ichthyosaur?
- Show the endpapers of the book. Ask children what they think these images represent.

Things To Talk About During the Story

- Show on a map or globe where Lyme Regis is located (Dorset, England).
- Point out the cliffs in the opening spreads. Do the children recognize these patterns from the endpapers?
- Discuss why the children in Mary Anning's village tease her. Is this fair?
- Who does the dog represent? Ask children if they think the dog appeared and then disappeared in real life. Does the author really know this about Mary Anning's life?





Community Connection

- Invite a paleontologist into your classroom to discuss fossils and how they are preserved and then discovered.
- Search daily newspapers for articles on fossil finds and then display these stories in the classroom.
- Make photocopies of different fossils from books. Then let children draw a picture of how they think the animals looked when they were alive. Mount a copy of each fossil next to the children's drawings, and ask a library or some other public building to display the group's art.

Additional Titles

Uncommon Traveler: Mary Kingsley in Africa by Don Brown, Houghton, 2000
ISBN: 0618002731

As a character study, this picture-book biography shows the qualities that people need to get out and do something that no one else has ever done.

Maria's Comet by Deborah Hopkinson, with illustrations by Deborah Lanino, Atheneum, 1999
ISBN: 0689815018

This picture book examines the childhood of Maria Mitchell, America's first female astronomer.

Starry Messenger by Peter Sis, Farrar/Sunburst, 1996
ISBN: 0374470278

This beautiful picture-book biography of Galileo reveals how this scientist changed our view of Earth forever when he proved that Earth circles the Sun.



What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- In a short note at the end of this book the author states that Mary Anning is the girl in the old tongue twister: "She sells seashells by the seashore." Hold a contest to see which child can say this tongue twister the most times (or the fastest).
- Can you think of another female fossil hunter who just recently discovered a famous fossil? (Sue Hendrickson who found the most complete T-Rex fossil yet).
- Call a local museum or university geology department to see if someone can bring in an actual fossil for the children to examine.

Family Involvement

- Go on a "fossil hunt" in a nearby park or natural landscape.
- Visit a museum where different kinds of fossils are on display. Call the museum ahead of time to find out what kind of fossils it holds in its collection. Make a list of the different types of fossils on display and hand it out to children. Then let the children go on a scavenger hunt as they explore the museum with you
- Visit the library and read more about Mary Anning and other fossil hunters.

Human Migration

Grandfather's Journey

by **Allen Say**
Houghton, 1993
ISBN: 0395570352

In this picture book, Allen Say tells the story of his grandfather, who emigrated to the U.S. from Japan and then returned late in his life to live there again. As a young man, Grandfather came to the United States and traveled widely, settling finally in California. "He loved the strong sunlight there, the Sierra Mountains, the lonely seacoast." Say's illustrations are varied and magnificent. Say also effectively captures the immigrant paradox: missing one country while in another.

What To Do Before Reading the Story

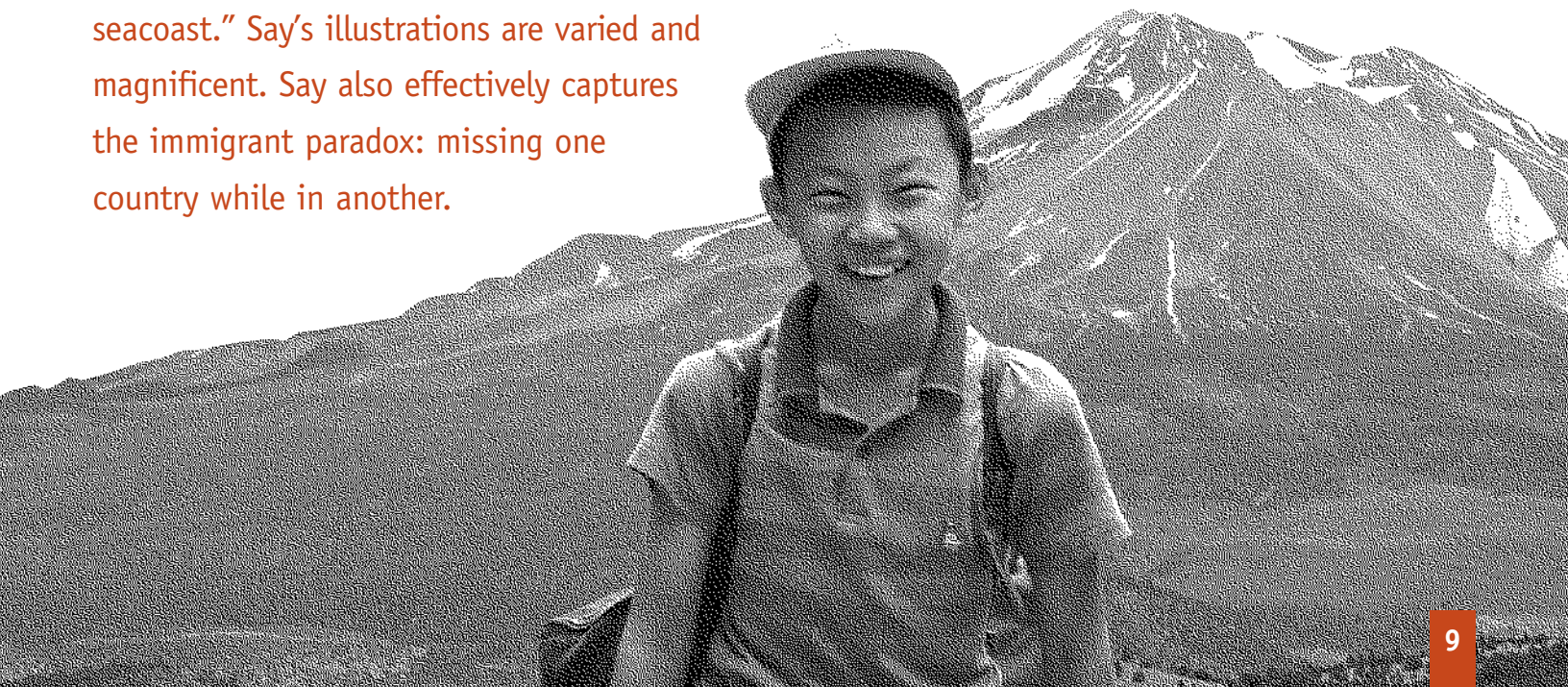
- Hold up the cover of this book. Point out how the man is dressed. Ask children when they think this story takes place. Ask them what they think it will be about. Where do they think the man is going?
- On a map or globe, locate Japan and trace the journey Grandfather takes.
- On the title page and back cover is an illustration of a paper boat. Explain the Japanese art form of *origami* to the children.

Things To Talk About During the Story

- Discuss the types of clothing Say features in the story. For example, you can introduce the word *kimono*.
- Ask children why the "endless farm fields reminded him of the ocean he had crossed."
- Why does Grandfather return to Japan?
- Pause at the spread beginning with: "But a war began." What war is Say referring to?
- Why does the author say, "I think I know my grandfather now?"

What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- Ask children to name the country of their birth. Is anyone new to this country? What about their parents or grandparents?
- Talk about the various "waves of immigration" that have happened over time. Help children to understand why groups of people (or individuals) leave one country for another. Weather, war, famine, politics all contribute to human migration.
- Talk about how families are often separated during the immigration process. Ask children to talk about how this must feel to the people involved.





Family Involvement

- Ask children to find out the immigration story of their family. It may be happening right now, or it may have happened a few generations ago. In any case, it is worth hearing and recording. If a video camera is available, encourage the videotaping of various family members telling their immigration stories. Children may also document the stories in a journal or on note cards.
- Families can research and learn about the country or countries of their origin. They can learn about the different customs, objects and music of their native country.
- Go through a family photo album together and share stories about family members. Photocopy a favorite photo and help children create a frame for it. Children can incorporate art and design from their native country into the frame.
- Plan a family vacation to discover a new region of the United States.
- Collect the new state quarters and learn about the different areas of the United States.

Community Connection

- Send a note home with children asking for volunteers to talk to the class about their immigration stories.
- Visit the Chinatown or other ethnic community closest to your neighborhood.

- Learn about different ethnic communities near you, and then eat a meal at a neighborhood ethnic restaurant. Look in the Yellow Pages for a list of ethnic restaurants. Or, check a newspaper or local magazine for restaurants or community festivals that might offer a different fare.

Additional Titles

Coming to America: The Story of Immigration by Betsy Maestro, with illustrations by Susannah Ryan, Scholastic, 1996
ISBN: 0590441515

This story tells the history of immigration and human movement in the United States. It begins with the first nomads (who were pushed off their lands), and then speaks of imported slavery and the waves of immigration from all over the globe.

Harriet and the Promised Land by Jacob Lawrence, Simon & Schuster, 1993
ISBN: 0689809654

A famous black American artist tells the story of Harriet Tubman in beautiful verse and pictures. The story depicts another type of human migration, one in which slaves fled the southern United States for freedom in the North.

Leaving Vietnam: The True Story of Tuan Ngo by Sarah S. Kilborne, with illustrations by Melissa Sweet, Simon & Schuster, 1999
ISBN: 068980797X

This picture book tells the true midnight escape of a boy and his father, leaving war-torn Vietnam for a better life in America.

My Name Is Georgia: A Portrait

by **Jeanette Winter**

Harcourt/Silver Whistle, 1998

ISBN: 015201649X

This picture-book biography provides a brief outline of the life of painter Georgia O'Keeffe. Growing up on a farm in Wisconsin, O'Keeffe loved the wide-open blue skies and its clouds. As an adult living in New York City, she grew to miss the natural landscapes. So she moved to Arizona and spent the rest of her life painting images of clouds, skies, flowers, and desert scapes in a beautiful and original expression of joy for the natural world.

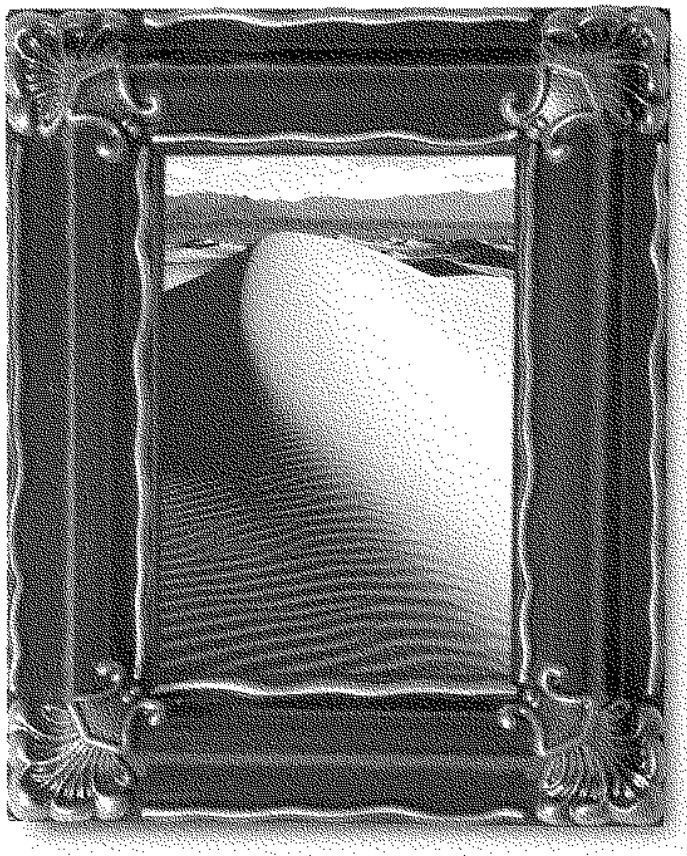
What To Do Before Reading the Story

- Ask children if they have ever hear of Georgia O'Keeffe.
- Show a map of the United States, and point out the significant places where O'Keeffe lived: Wisconsin, New York, and Arizona.
- Show a reproduction of one of O'Keeffe's paintings to the group.

Things To Talk About During the Story

- Ask the children how the young Georgia is different from her sisters.
- Point out that many young ladies of that time did not study art or become professional artists.
- Compare the illustrations in this book to the type of art that Georgia O'Keeffe actually produced.





What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- Show a photograph of Georgia O'Keeffe. In the book *One Hundred Flowers*, which collects many of her flower paintings, there is a black-and-white photograph of the artist.
- Check out a book about Georgia O'Keeffe that contains samples of her artwork. Share this with the children. Find out which paintings children like the most.
- Ask children if they can name any other famous female artists (Mary Cassatt, Annie Liebowitz, etc.).

Family Involvement

- Georgia O'Keeffe was famous for her drawings of clouds and flowers, among other things. Together, find a flower and draw pictures of what you see. How are the pictures alike or different?
- Take a walk to the park together. Lie down in the grass and study the cloud shapes in the sky. Discuss the view. Or, let children draw what they see in small sketchbooks.
- Georgia O'Keeffe celebrated what she loved about the natural world. Find out what each family member likes most about the natural world. Encourage families to learn each other's favorite flower, season, and natural setting (beach, forest, etc.).

Community Connection

- Find out if any local museums hold an original O'Keeffe and visit it. If not, visit a local museum and look for ways that other artists celebrate nature.
- Sign up for an art seminar or workshop at a local nature center, library, or community art center. Sometimes libraries have free art programs with visiting artists.
- Visit an art store, and examine all the different materials that artists use to make their art. Ask children if they can identify which materials Georgia O'Keeffe used to make her paintings.

Additional Titles

Brother Eagle, Sister Sky: A Message from Chief Seattle by Susan Jeffers, Dial, 1991
ISBN: 014054514X

Chief Seattle's eloquent speech makes a plea to preserve the "web of creation." That message still resonates today with its sadness, and its hope.

The Desert Is My Mother / El Desierto es mi madre by Pat Mora, with illustrations by Daniel Lechon, Arte Publico, 1994
ISBN: 1558851216

This bilingual book celebrates the many gifts that a young girl feels the desert gives her. The text appears in both Spanish and English.

Stringbean's Trip to the Shining Sea by Vera B. Williams and Jennifer Williams, Greenwillow, 1988
ISBN: 0688071619

Stringbean and his brother travel west across the U.S. sending home postcards and stories that celebrate their unforgettable trip.

This Land Is Your Land by Woody Guthrie, with illustrations by Kathy Jakobsen, Little Brown, 1998
ISBN: 0316392154

The complete lyrics to Guthrie's famous folk song are paired with Jakobsen's folk art in a celebration of the United States.

What a Wonderful World by George David Weiss and Bob Thiele, with illustrations by Ashley Bryan, Atheneum, 1995
ISBN: 0689800878

Louis Armstrong made this song famous, and here Ashley Bryan uses carnival colors to interpret the joyful sentiment of the people who originally wrote it.

RIF'S MISSION

Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. (RIF) develops and delivers children's and family literacy programs that help prepare young children for reading and motivate older children to read. Through a national network of teachers, parents, and community volunteers, RIF programs provide books and other essential literacy resources to children at no cost to them or their families. RIF's highest priority is the nation's neediest children, from infancy to age 11.

ABOUT RIF

Founded in 1966 in Washington, D.C., RIF is the nation's oldest and largest nonprofit children's literacy organization, with programs operating nationwide in 20,000 schools, child-care centers, libraries, hospitals, clinics, migrant worker camps, Head Start and Even Start programs, homeless shelters, and detention centers.

RIF serves more than 5 million children through a network of more than 400,000 volunteers. Two-thirds of the children served by RIF have economic or learning needs that put them at risk of failing to achieve basic educational goals.

Through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education, RIF provides federal matching funds to thousands of school and community-based organizations that sponsor RIF programs. RIF also receives private support from hundreds of corporations and foundations, thousands of local organizations and businesses, and countless individuals.

RIF distributes about 15 million books a year. In 2001, RIF celebrated its 35th anniversary and the milestone of placing more than 200 million books in the hands and homes of America's children.



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