



## The First Music

### Read Aloud Guide

**Themes:** Music, Inclusion, Nature

**Book Brief:** A whimsical African folktale where a group of jungle animals realizes their individual noises are actually beautiful music. This heartwarming story follows the animals as they join together in a rhythmic “jam session,” teaching children that everyone has a unique song inside them.

**Author:**  
Dylan Pritchett

**Illustrator:**  
Erin Banks

### Before Reading

**The Cover:** Ask students to make a prediction about the story based on the cover.

**The Pictures:** Take a brief picture walk and ask students what they notice.

**Prior Knowledge:** Ask, “Have you ever felt you were misunderstood, making “noise” rather than “music?”” What does that mean to you?”

**Vocabulary:** Frontload Tier 2 words using the accompanying [Vocabulary Guide](#).

**Purpose for Reading:** “As we read, think about how all the animals had unique sounds and abilities, and how they learned to bring them together for beautiful music.”

### During Reading

**Check for understanding & make connections:**

- What is the setting for the story?
- What were some of the forest sounds in the beginning?
- How did the elephant, the monkey, and the crane each make their sounds?
- Which sounds did animals using their voices make?
- Why didn't the frogs make any sounds?
- How many days did the animals play and dance?
- Where did the animals go on the seventh day? Why?
- Why does the frog practice morning and night?



**Think Aloud:**

“I notice that the frogs are not sure how to contribute to the music being made.”

I'm wondering...”Have you ever felt you couldn't contribute to something but then figured it out, as the frogs did?”

### After Reading

**Our Purpose:** “How did the many animals find their voice and music together in the forest?”

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.

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## Extension Activities

### Drums

Directions:

- Work with a partner to determine 3 reasons why a drum may be used to communicate.
- Create a rhythm by using your desk, table or floor as a drum. How will you make these rhythms different and distinct?
- Share your rhythms with the class and have classmates guess what each rhythm signifies.

### African Riddles

Directions:

- Guess the following riddles about African animals:
  1. I am an African mammal. I am the tallest living animal. (Who am I?) (Giraffe)
  2. I am the largest living land animal. (Who am I?) (Elephant)
  3. I am the most human-like animal. (Who am I?) (Ape)
  4. I am the largest land animal next to the elephant. I have either 1 or 2 horns on the upper surface of my snout. I can be brown or gray. (Who am I?) (Rhinceros)
- Create your own African riddles.

### Read *A Big Quiet House*

Directions:

- Compare and contrast [A Big Quiet House](#) with [The First Music](#).
- What sounds become noises instead of music?
- Do you think noises and music can be the same? How?