

A STONE SAT STILL

By **Brendan Wenzel**

Common-Core Aligned Teacher Guide

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Ages 3-5 • F&P Text Level Gradient: TK

Lexile® Measure: TK

About the Book

In this moving companion to the Caldecott Honor-winning *They All Saw a Cat*, Brendan Wenzel tells the story of a seemingly ordinary stone. But it isn't just a stone—to the animals that use it, it's a resting place, a kitchen, a safe haven...even an entire world. With stunning illustrations in cut paper, pencil, collage, and paint, and soothing rhythms that invite reading aloud, *A Stone Sat Still* is a gorgeous exploration of perspective, perception, sensory experience, color, size, function, and time, with an underlying environmental message that is timely and poignant.

About the Author/Illustrator

Brendan Wenzel is a *New York Times* bestselling author and illustrator based in upstate New York. He wrote *Hello Hello* and *They All Saw a Cat*, which was the recipient of a Caldecott Honor. He is a proud collaborator with groups working to protect and conserve wild places and creatures.

Note about this guide and *A Stone Sat Still*

This guide consists of classroom extension activities and discussion opportunities that can be used when reading, teaching, or discussing *A Stone Sat Still*.

A Stone Sat Still allows readers to use comprehension strategies such as deciphering figurative language, comparing and contrasting elements, linking cause and effect, analyzing illustrations, and looking at perspective. It also provides opportunities for science, physical education, and social/emotional extensions.

The discussion opportunities and classroom extension activities in this guide are designed to be used in Kindergarten through 3rd grade as the text is read as a whole group, in a small group, or independently. Although this guide primarily focuses on the text's use in early elementary classrooms, it should not be limited to these grade levels.

The Common Core Anchor Standards in English Language Arts, Next Generation Science Standards, National Core Art Standards Anchors, and National PE Standards that can be addressed using the discussion questions and activities in this guide are:

English Language Arts

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Science

PS2B: Types of Interactions

ESS2A: Earth Materials and Systems

ESS3C: Human Impact on Earth Systems

ESS3D: Global Climate Change

Art

CREATING: ANCHOR STANDARD #1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Health/Physical Education

STANDARD 1: The physically literate individual demonstrates competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns.



Classroom Discussion Questions & Activities

Use these activities to discuss the book with students and extend their learning cross-curricularly with *A Stone Sat Still*.

Activities

The Five Senses

- Activity 1: Five senses in *A Stone Sat Still*
- Using a five senses graphic organizer (like the one found here: www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/pdf/sense_eng.pdf), have students find examples of when the author utilized different senses in the book.

Examples:

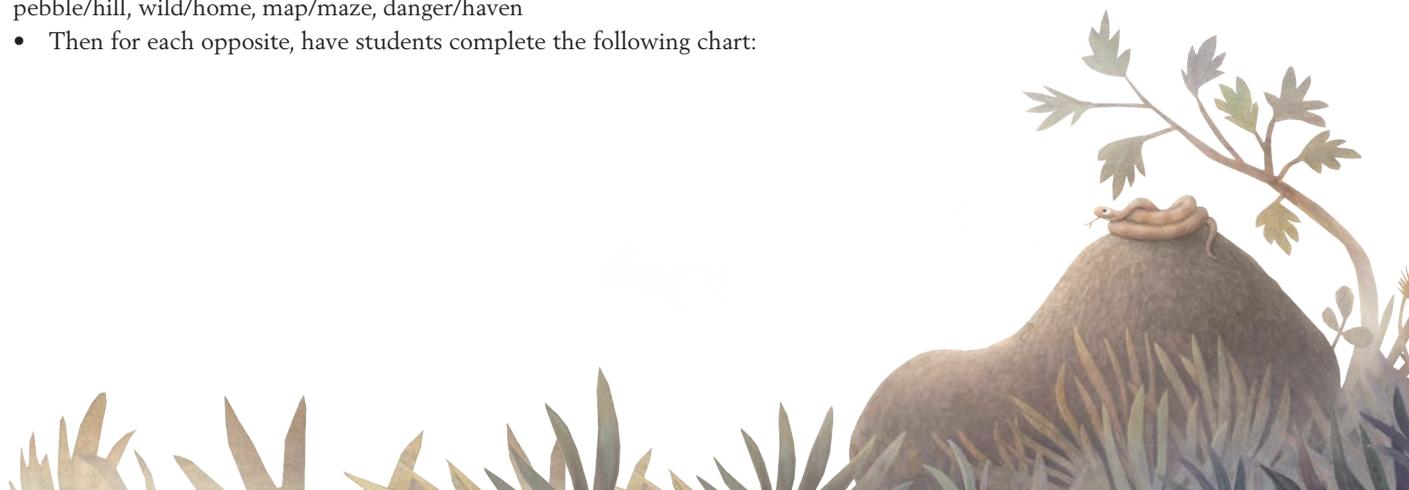
- Sight: “The stone was dark.”
- Sound: “The stone was loud.”
- Touch: “The stone was rough.”
- Extension: Have students utilize new words related to the senses to create new scenes involving the stone.

Activity 2: Five senses in students’ lives

- Have students pick a location that’s important to them, and, using the same graphic organizer from Activity 1, ask them brainstorm how to describe the location using each of the senses.
- Examples: a park, a house, a playground
- Extension: Have students turn their brainstorming into descriptive writing! Allow them to choose between using *A Stone Sat Still* as a mentor text or formatting their writing in a different way.
- Perspective

Activity 1: Opposites scavenger hunt

- The stone is shared by creatures that see it from many different points of view, demonstrating the significance of perspective.
- First, have students find all of the opposites and contrasts in the book. Examples: dark/bright, loud/quiet, rough/smooth, pebble/hill, wild/home, map/maze, danger/haven
- Then for each opposite, have students complete the following chart:



TEACHER GUIDE

OPPOSITES!	
TERM 1	TERM 2
ANIMAL THAT FEELS THIS WAY	ANIMAL THAT FEELS THIS WAY
WHY DOES THE ANIMAL FEEL THIS WAY?	WHY DOES THE ANIMAL FEEL THIS WAY?

Example:

OPPOSITES!	
ROUGH	SMOOTH
SLUGS	PORCUPINE
The slug is small, so it can feel all of the roughness of the stone.	The porcupine is larger, so the roughness of the stone doesn't feel as rough. Also, porcupines are prickly creatures, so a stone with minor bumps would feel smooth.

This activity can be completed independently, in pairs, in groups, or as a class.

Activity 2: Other perspectives

- Have students select an animal not featured in the book and ask them to determine how that particular creature would perceive the stone.
- Instruct students to use the chart from Activity 1 to share their answers.
- Then, have students complete their own page of *A Stone Sat Still*. First, they will write "And the stone was ____." Next, they will fill in the blank with what they came up with for their chosen animal. Finally, they will complete an illustration in the style of Brendan Wenzel showing the animal and how it perceives the stone.

Activity 3: Purpose

- In the book, the author shows all the different purposes and perspectives for a stone and how its surroundings change over time. Have your students choose another item in nature and create a 10-frame storyboard showing how its purpose changes for different animals, and how it and its surroundings may change over time. Allow students to use *A Stone Sat Still* as a mentor text to create the storyboard, but have them check for scientific accuracy.
- Examples: tree, hole, flower

Animals

- *A Stone Sat Still* introduces us to approximately 30 different types of animals, offering just a peek into those animals' lives.
- Learning: Assign an animal to each of your students, and have them do a brief report answering questions like: Where do they live? What do they eat? What type of animal are they? What's an interesting fact about them?
- Reporting: Next, allow students to be creative in how they report their results. Host a gallery walk where students walk move around the room and visit each other's work to learn about the different animals.
- Animals in the book: snail, chipmunk, owl, snake, seagull, slug, porcupine, frog, lobster, beaver, fox, moose, weevil, raccoon, wolf, shrew, grasshopper, spider, cricket, otter, fish, bobcat, pika, crab, seal, geese, ant, red beetle, weasel, bunny

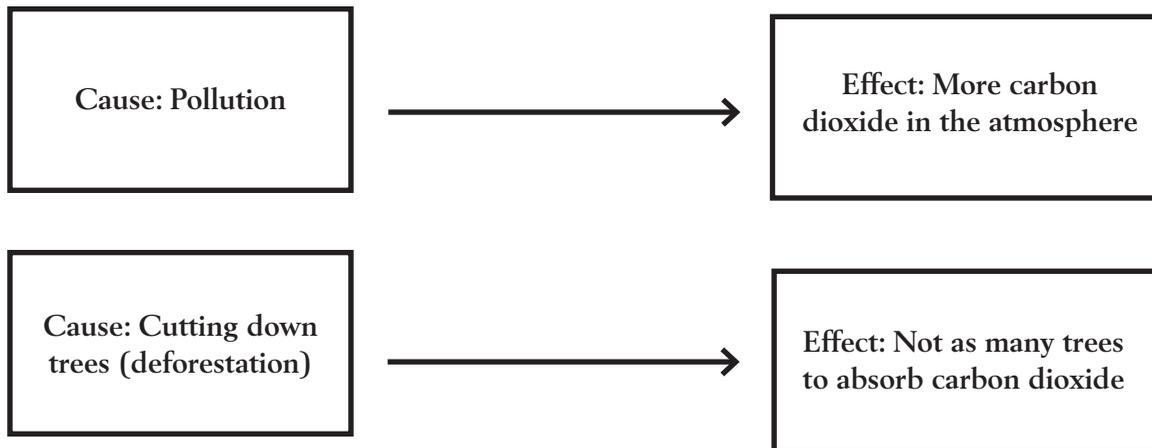
Climate Change

Brendan Wenzel has said that his highest hope for *A Stone Sat Still* is that it will serve as the jumping-off point for conversation about climate change.

Activity 1: Cause and effect flow charts

As a class, look at the basic cause and effect of climate change and other environmental issues and complete flow charts.

Examples:



Activity 2: Brainstorming change

- Because looking at climate change from such a big point of view can seem daunting, make sure to brainstorm as a class ways that every individual can effect change on a daily basis.

Resources for both activities:

- www.climaterealityproject.org/blog/just-kids-what-climate-change-and-what-can-i-do
- www.c2es.org/content/climate-basics-for-kids
- climatekids.nasa.gov/climate-change-meaning
- www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/geography/general-geography/what-is-climate-change

A Meaningful Place

Brendan Wenzel has shared that he created this book during a week at his in-laws' house on the coast of Maine. From Brendan: "Their cabin is on a beautiful tidal inlet, probably the most peaceful place I have ever spent time. Life there is bound to the rising and falling of the tides, and right on the high tide line, several old stones sit, round, grey and adorned in skirts of seaweed. We have taken to calling one of these stones 'magic rock' and it is probably my favorite place on earth."

- Have students write a reflective journal entry answering the following questions: What is a meaningful place for you? Where do you like to go that makes you feel comfortable, is peaceful, and inspires you?

Yoga

Yoga exercises the body and mind at the same time. Often pulling from nature for inspiration, it utilizes breathing techniques and builds strength.

- Many of the flora and fauna included in *A Stone Sat Still* have corresponding yoga poses that can be made child-friendly for classes.

- Example poses that match with the book: cat, cobra, tree, moose (use cow pose), wolf (use downward dog pose), locust, frog, fish, rock (use mountain pose)
- To familiarize yourself with the poses, use Yoga Journal's yoga poses search engine: www.yogajournal.com/poses

The Earth Over Time

The Earth changes over time. Refer to the web resource at dinosaurpictures.org/ancient-earth#240 to show students how their city has changed over time. This online resource will help students understand why a stone could be above water at one point and under at another.

Discussion Questions

- Discuss the following questions as a class and ask students to share scientific evidence to support their answers:
- Why would the stone end up underwater?
- Some answers will include: global warming, tides, flooding
- Where do you think the stone was located?
- Discuss the following questions as a class and ask students to find evidence in the text to support their answers:
- Time passes throughout the book. How can you tell time is passing? Are there clues in the words? Illustrations?
- What happened to the tree?
- Which of the animals is your favorite in the story? Why?
- What did you learn from reading this book?
- How do you feel when you read the book? What do you think the author did to make you feel this way?

About the Guide Creator

This guide was created by Kellee Moye, a middle school literacy specialist in Orlando, Florida. Kellee is the author of various teaching guides for all levels; the co-author of the blog *Unleashing Readers*; a jury member of the 2020–2021 Schneider Family Award Committee; a member of the 2016–2018 ALAN Board of Directors; a member of NCTE, ALAN, and ALA; and a member then chair of the Amelia Elizabeth Walden Book Award committee from 2012-2014. Kellee can be reached at Kellee.Moye@gmail.com.

