



KATE MESSNER

Author Study Guide



Over and Under the Snow
978-0-8118-6784-9 • \$16.99 HC
978-1-4521-3646-2 • \$7.99 PB
Ages 5 to 8



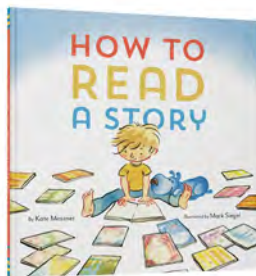
Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt
978-1-4521-1936-6 • \$16.99 HC
978-1-4521-6136-5 • \$7.99 PB
Ages 5 to 8
F&P Text Level Gradient: M



Over and Under the Pond
978-1-4521-4542-6 • \$16.99
Ages 5 to 8
F&P Text Level Gradient: M
Lexile® Measure: AD740L



Tree of Wonder: The Many Marvelous Lives of a Rainforest Tree
978-1-4521-1248-0 • \$16.99
Ages 5 to 8
F&P Text Level Gradient: J
Lexile® Measure: NC1060L



How to Read a Story
978-1-4521-1233-6 • \$16.99
Ages 3 to 5
F&P Text Level Gradient: L



Sea Monster's First Day
978-0-8118-7564-6 • \$16.99
Ages 4 to 8



Sea Monster and Bossy Fish
978-1-4521-1253-4 • \$16.99
Ages 3 to 5

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This teacher guide contains discussion questions and activities aligned with the Common Core State Standards. See inside for reference to the Reading and Writing strands and grade-specific standards.

This guide was prepared by Cyndi Giorgis, professor of children's literature. She is the dean of the College of Education at the University of Texas at El Paso.

AUTHOR STUDY

Conducting an author study focused on Kate Messner and her books will offer students the opportunity to:

- Develop their reading skills
- Build critical thinking skills
- Utilize Kate Messner as a mentor by studying her writing style across the various titles of books she has written
- Expose readers to different types of literary voices and styles
- Boost information literacy skills
- Add fun and motivation to reading!



Create an area in the classroom to display Messner's books and have students visit www.katemessner.com to learn more about the author. Instruct children to create reading notebooks that can be used to record or respond to prompts such as:

- Questions I Have as I Read
- Mapping Setting-Character-Problem-Solution
- Listing of Unique or Memorable Words
- Illustrating a Response to the Story

At the conclusion of the study, hold a Kate Messner Author Fair and direct students to share their reading notebook responses, perform a retelling of one or more of her books, or dress up and act as one of her characters for the day.

CCSS.Literacy.RL.K-1.6





Over and Under the Snow • *Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt* • *Over and Under the Pond*

INTRODUCTION

Kate Messner's nonfiction titles explore the environment through interesting and engaging text that heightens children's awareness of the natural world around them.

QUESTION-ANSWER RELATIONSHIP (QAR) STRATEGY STUDY

The QAR strategy assists students in understanding different types of questions. Some answers are "right there" in the text, others require the reader to "think and search," while some can be answered "on my own."

Right There Questions: Answers to these questions can be found directly in the text. Often the words used to formulate the question are the same words found in the text. Frequently, "who," "what," "when," "where," or "how" begin this type of question. Instruct students to answer the following "Right There" questions from Messner's books:

- In *Over and Under the Snow*, what do some of the animals do under the snow?
- When does the girl want to begin planting seeds in *Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt*? Why does she have to wait?
- How does the great blue heron catch fish in *Over and Under the Pond*?

CCSS.Literacy.RI.K-2.1

Think and Search Questions: Answers to these questions are formulated by gathering information from several parts of the text in order to make meaning. Use terms such as "summarize," "compare and contrast," and "retell" to assist children in framing responses to the following "Think and Search" questions from Messner's books:

- Compare each animal's activities in *Over and Under the Snow*. How does each of them respond to the winter weather?
- Explain what happens to the plants and animals during the different seasons in *Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt*.
- List the various creatures both over and under the pond that you can spy in each spread of *Over and Under the Pond*.

CCSS.Literacy.RI.K-2.3.

COMMON CORE-ALIGNED TEACHER GUIDE

Author and You: Answers to these questions are based on information provided in the text, but must be related to a child's individual experience. Although the answer does not lie directly on the page, students must read the text in order to answer the question. This type of question prompts children to draw inferences from the text. Direct the class to answer the following "Author and You" question:

- Like the orb weaver eating moths in *Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt* or the great blue heron eating fish in *Over and Under the Pond*, many birds and animals eat insects or other animals. What would happen to the environment if they didn't?

CCSS.Literacy.SL.K-2.1, 4

POSITIONAL WORDS

Familiarity with positional words serves an important role in comprehending Messner's stories. The author uses positional words throughout the text to help young readers understand what is happening in, up, down, over, and under the snow, garden, and pond. Knowledge of positional words expands children's vocabulary, helping them to communicate in the classroom and in the real world. To support very young children in learning positional words, create word cards. These can easily be generated on a computer and printed on paper, or accessed online.

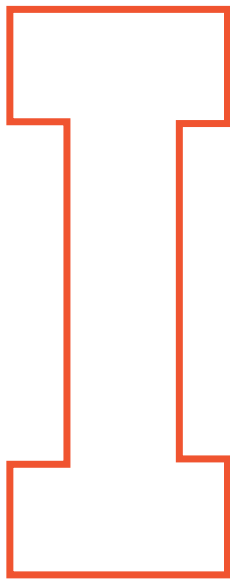
For primary grade children, these positional words can also be used to generate story ideas. Provide each child with a card containing a positional word such as "beneath," "above," "below," "inside," "outside," "bottom," or "top." Lead children on a walk outside and instruct each child to select a space to write about. Tell students to use their positional words to write about an animal that might live in the space they've chosen. Have them describe what might happen to their critter during the day or night. Back in the classroom, students can conduct additional research about the plants, animals, or insects that might reside in the area they are writing about.

CCSS.Literacy.RI.K-2.4

I AM AN EXPERT

In writing *Over and Under the Snow*, *Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt*, and *Over and Under the Pond*, Kate Messner became an expert on a variety of topics including animals, plants, and seasons. Using the "I" graphic below, have students pick a topic or subject in which they are an expert and then write their selections on the "I." Direct them to share and compare with other students. As an additional step, consider instructing children to explore their topics further by researching and then presenting their findings visually or orally.

CCSS.Literacy.W.K-2.2





Tree of Wonder: The Many Marvelous Lives of a Rainforest Tree

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Discuss the meaning of the word “wonder” and instruct students to use it in a sentence describing a person or a thing.

Correlates with CCSS RI. 1-3.4.

Ask students to talk about the cover of the book with a classmate and consider why the book is called *Tree of Wonder*.

Correlates with CCSS RI. 1-3.7.

Lead the class in a quick game of I Spy. Direct students to flip the book open to the endpapers and identify all the animals they can spy in 10 seconds. Ask them to close the book and pool their responses with classmates.

Correlates with CCSS SL. 1-3.1.

WHILE READING: QUESTIONS RELATED TO TEXT & ILLUSTRATIONS

Tell the class to study the pictures of the blue morpho butterflies. Discuss why the butterfly’s wings are blue on one side and brown on the other. How does this coloring enable them to survive? Read the author’s narrative about the butterflies aloud to confirm responses. Then, analyze the pictures of other animals and discuss how their coloring may protect them.

Correlates with CCSS RI. 1-3.1, 1-3.7.

Have students study the image of the poison dart frogs. The author says they have “sticky toes.” Why is this characteristic important for the poison dart frogs? Comb through the other illustrations and discuss the other unique physical characteristics that allow this animal to survive.

Correlates with CCSS RI. 1-3.1, 1-3.7.

Using both the illustrations and the text provided by the author, ask students to compare and contrast the keel-billed toucan and the great green macaw.

Correlates with CCSS RI. 1-3.5, 1-3.9.

Ask the class to consider why leafcutter ants remove leaves from almendro trees and carry them to their nests. Does removing the leaves damage the trees? Why or why not?

Correlates with CCSS RI. 1-3.1.

Explain to students that nocturnal creatures are animals that are mostly active at night. Instruct the class to study the illustrations. Which animal (or animals) appear to be nocturnal? What clues from both the text and illustrations suggest they are night creatures?

Correlates with CCSS RI. 1-3.7.

This is a story about relationships. Direct students to review the animals that live in the almendro tree. In what ways do the animals depend on the tree, and in what way does the tree depend on the animals that make their home there?

Correlates with CCSS RI. 1-3.6.

COMMON CORE-ALIGNED TEACHER GUIDE

Ask the class to complete the math problems at the end of the book. Then, have students write a series of multiplication word problems for their classmates to solve—at each difficulty level—featuring the organisms from *Tree of Wonder*.

AFTER READING

Invite students to identify the organism they found most intriguing in the book and research the animal online. Instruct students to prepare a short presentation in which they share several interesting illustrations or pictures they have found of the organism. In their presentations, students should explain why they chose the images to share, and list three interesting facts they learned when researching the animal online.

Correlates with CCSS W. 1-3.6, 1-3.7

Have the class research the almendro tree online and identify three to five additional facts about the tree to share with the class. Students should plan a brief presentation, accompanied by two or three photos of almendro trees, in which they share this additional information about the tree with classmates. For variety, encourage some students to research other rainforest trees.

Correlates with CCSS W. 1-3.6, 1-3.7.

EXTENSION STRATEGY

After reading *Tree of Wonder*, discuss the definition of “ecosystem.” Ask students to identify the ecosystem that surrounds them every day. Then, take students on a short exploratory walk around the school or neighborhood. Ask each student to identify and draw an element of the ecosystem, whether it is flora or fauna. Give them ample time to draw their organism.

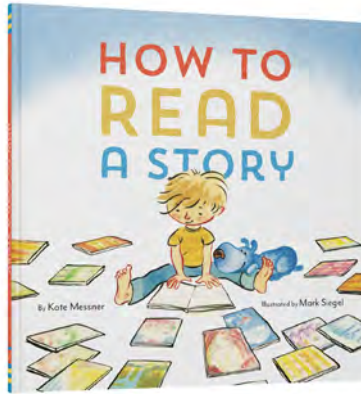
On returning to the classroom, ask students who focused on the same organism to work together. If necessary, have them research their organism to find out more. Ask them to write a paragraph about their organism and the role it plays in its environment. Collect the students’ drawings and writing and assemble everything together in a class book.

Correlates with CCSS W. 2-3.2, 1-3.5, 1-3.6, 1-3.7.

FURTHER READING

- *The Frog with the Big Mouth* by Teresa Bateman. Illus. Will Terry. Albert Whitman & Co., 2008.
- *In the Jungle* by J.C. Greenburg. Illus. Jan Gerardi. A Stepping Stone Book, 2007.
- *Jazz Fly 2* by Matthew Gollub. Illus. Karen Hanke. Tortuga, 2010.
- *Judy Moody Saves the World* by Megan McDonald. Illus. Peter Reynolds. Candlewick, 2002.
- *Jungle Drum* by Deanna Wundrow. Millbrook, 1999.
- *Little Siby: An Orangutan Tale* by Sally Grindley. Illus. John Butler. Peachtree, 1999.
- *Only Tadpoles Have Tails* by Janne Clarke. Illus. Jane Gray. Crabtree, 2002.
- *Orangutanka* by Margarita Engle. Illus. Renee Kurilla. Henry Holt, 2005.
- *The Parrot Tico Tango* by Anna Witte. Barefoot, 2004.
- *Rumble in the Jungle* by Giles Andreae & David Wojtowycz. Tiger Tales, 2002.
- *The Umbrella* by Jan Brett. G.P. Putnam, 2004.
- *There Was a Tree* by Rachel Isadora. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2012.
- *Tree-man* by Carmen Agra Deedy. Illus. Douglas J. Ponte. Peachtree, 1993.
- *Tuki and Moka: A Tale of Two Tamarins* by Judy Young. Illus. Jim Madsen. Sleeping Bear, 2013.
- *Way Up High in a Tall Green Tree* by Jan Peck. Illus. Valeria Petrone. Simon & Schuster, 2005.
- *Welcome to the Green House* by Jane Jolen. Puffin, 1993.
- *Weslandia* by Paul Fleischman. Illus. Kevin Hawkes. Candlewick, 1999.
- *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* by Jeannie Baker. Greenwillow, 1987.





How to Read a Story

INTRODUCTION

Learning how to read a story can be instructive—and fun!—for young children. In *How to Read a Story*, Kate Messner details the steps to reading a story and explains how to make reading enjoyable for both reader and listener.

BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER READING

Lead students through the following exercises before, during, and after reading *How to Read a Story*:

BEFORE

- Ask children to think about and share aloud how they like to read a story and what they like about being read to. Write answers down on a chart to revisit during the story.

DURING

- Pause after three or four steps and see if students have anything to add to the chart created earlier.

AFTER

- Read the story again, but stop after each step to collect student responses on sticky notes. For example, after reading Step 1, “Find a Story,” instruct a few students to name their favorite book, write the title on a sticky note, and then attach it to the page. For Step 2, “Find a Reading Buddy,” ask a few more students to identify their reading buddy, write the name on a sticky note, and add the note to the page. Continue this process through the book, prompting the class to share interesting responses for each step, like strategies they use when they don’t know words in a story (Step 8). This exercise offers students a fun way to think about how they select and read books.

CCSS.Literacy.RL.K-2.10



RECOMMENDED READING

When students read a book they enjoy, they often want to tell others about it. This also indicates that children perceive themselves as readers and want to share a favorite piece of literature. Book recommendations are one way for students to record their suggestions for classmates.

Create a large chart for the class using the categories below. Display it throughout the year so students can continually add to it. By the end of the school year, the pages of the chart will serve as a record of recommended books that can be photographed or transcribed and posted on the school website as a summer reading list. This activity not only creates a community of readers, but also offers students opportunities to learn more about each other as they support their literacy development.

Title	Who am I recommending it for?	Why do I think s/he will like it?

CCSS.Literacy.RL.1.2

WRITING YOUR OWN HOW-TO BOOK

How to Read a Story serves as an excellent model for students to consider when thinking about how they might write their own “how-to” stories. Students can build off of Messner’s book and simply add their own ideas about how they like to be read to, or they can select another topic for which they could provide simple instructions or steps. This activity can be done by the whole class, in small groups, or individually. For example, instruct students to create a book on how to make a sandwich. Potential steps could include selecting the type of bread, adding ingredients, determining whether to cut it in half or not, and deciding what type of drink or chips will complement the meal. Have students limit the process to five or six steps so they can focus on the most important elements of making a sandwich. To complete the story, children can add drawings or digital photos.

CCSS.Literacy.W.K-2.3





Sea Monster's First Day • *Sea Monster and the Bossy Fish*

INTRODUCTION

In *Sea Monster's First Day* and *Sea Monster and the Bossy Fish*, Kate Messner uses common experiences—such as the first day of school or dealing with someone who is bossy—to provide children with an opportunity to share their own experiences, reflect on their behavior, and develop strategies for welcoming others or responding to bossy classmates.

BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER READING

Ask students to respond to the following questions before, during, and after reading these picture books:

BEFORE

- Instruct the class to look at the cover and answer: What do you think the book is about? How do you think Sea Monster is feeling based on his expression(s)?
- Do you remember your first day of school? How did you feel? (*Sea Monster's First Day*)
- Has anyone been bossy to you? What does that mean? Can being bossy also mean the person is a bully? (*Sea Monster and the Bossy Fish*)

DURING

- Pause periodically and ask students: What do you think will happen next? Has this ever happened to you? What did you do?

AFTER

- Compare and contrast *Sea Monster's First Day* and *Sea Monster and the Bossy Fish*.
- Think-Pair-Share by having students write down their thoughts about how they could help a person new to their class or how they might deal with a bossy person. Once this is done, ask them to can discuss their ideas with a partner and then share with the class. "Find a Story," instruct a few students to name their favorite book, write the title on a sticky note, and then attach it to the page. For Step 2, "Find a Reading Buddy," ask a few more students to identify their reading buddy, write the name on a sticky note, and add the note to the page. Continue this process through the book, prompting the class to share interesting responses for each step, like strategies they use when they don't know words in a story (Step 8). This exercise offers students a fun way to think about how they select and read books.

CCSS.Literacy.RL.K-1.9

CHARACTER MAPPING

Kate Messner creates memorable characters in *Sea Monster's First Day* and *Sea Monster and the Bossy Fish*. Ask students to select a character from one of the stories then fill in the chart below with the following information:

How the character looks:	How the character acts:	How the other characters respond:
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This can be done as a group activity or independently. Once the chart is completed, be sure that students have the opportunity to discuss the characters and their behavior with others.

CCSS.Literacy.W.K-2.3

READERS' THEATER

Readers' Theater provides students with an opportunity to develop scripts, perform in groups, and practice using their voice to depict characters from texts (sharing *How to Read a Story* would provide some helpful hints). Through this activity, children develop fluency and enhance their comprehension of the story.

Sea Monster and the Bossy Fish naturally lends itself to being performed as a Readers' Theater. Instruct students to create a script. One student can serve as a narrator who reads the storyline, while other students can read the various characters' speech bubbles. Older students can generate their own script and perform the story for younger children.

Assign parts or have children select the roles they will read. In preparing their scripts, tell students to highlight each role in a different color.

Allow time for the group to practice the script so that the performance flows smoothly and the audience is able to enjoy the story.

CCSS.Literacy.RL.K-2.10

FRIENDSHIP HEART MAP

The theme of friendship is explored in *Sea Monster's First Day* and *Sea Monster and the Bossy Fish*. Have students discuss what is important about making new friends and about being a friend. Then have them create a friendship heart map. Direct students to fill in each section with:

- Names and drawings of friends or special family members
- Memories of times spent together
- Adventures they would like to have with friends/family
- Words about friendship such as "loyalty," "kindness," etc.
- Colors that denote friendship

When the hearts are completed, display them on a wall or an area where students can see other's responses.

CCSS.Literacy.W.K-2.5

FRIENDSHIP HEART MAP

