

Poetry Picture Book

TEACHER GUIDE

PERFECT FOR
CELEBRATING
POETRY MONTH!



A STRANGE PLACE TO CALL HOME

By Marilyn Singer
Illustrated by Ed Young
978-1-4521-0120-0 • \$16.99 HC
9781452141251 • \$7.99 PB
Ages 4-8 • Guided Reading Level: Q



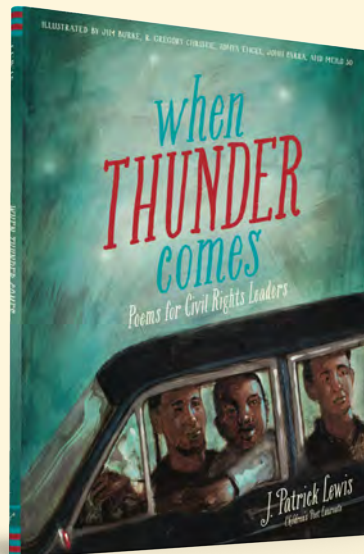
WATER SINGS BLUE

By Kate Coombs
Illustrated by Meilo So
978-1-4521-0119-4 • \$16.99 HC
Ages 4-8 • Guided Reading Level: T



BIGFOOT IS MISSING!

By J. Patrick Lewis and Kenn Nesbitt
Illustrated by MinaLima
978-4521-1895-6 • \$17.99 HC
Ages 7-10 • F&P Text Level Gradient: T



WHEN THUNDER COMES: POEMS FOR CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERS

By J. Patrick Lewis
Illustrated by Jim Burke, R. Gregory Christie, Tonya Engel,
Meilo So, and John Parra
978-0-8118-7284-3 • \$16.99 HC
Ages 8-12 • Guided Reading Level: Z



THINGS TO DO

By Elaine Magliaro
Illustrated by Catia Chen
978-1-4521-1124-7 • \$16.99 HC
Ages 4-6

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.

Dear Educator,

From infancy, we are drawn to the music of language. Rhythm, rhyme, and cadence are all essential building blocks in early language acquisition, and the interplay between sound, rhythm, and meaning in prose, poetry, and song continues to be compelling all our lives. This makes poetry a powerful potential learning tool for readers of all ages. Poetry builds community and provides a platform for developing cultural understanding and knowledge about our environment. Poetry also affords us the opportunity to sketch images of the world and humanity, and develop deeper understandings of our own identities, relationships with others, and the planet on which we live. Poetry condenses ideas, so that a single poem becomes an opportunity to engage a classroom in analytic exercises at a higher reading level without overwhelming students with length.

This curriculum guide is developed for four poetry collections. *Water Sings Blue* and *A Strange Place to Call Home* offer fascinating glimpses into the natural world. *Bigfoot Is Missing!* is a humorous exploration of the mysterious world of cryptozoology. *When Thunder Comes* illuminates the lives of seventeen individuals who, against overwhelming odds, fought for civil rights in countries around the world. And *Things to Do* is a celebration of the small everyday moments in a child's life.

ABOUT THE BOOKS

A Strange Place to Call Home by Marilyn Singer, illus. by Ed Young

Of all the miracles of life, it is life's persistence that astounds the most. In the endless black of the deepest caves, blind fish find their way. In a frozen forest, snow monkeys find a cozy hot spring to keep warm. Even in the salt desert's barren cold, flamingoes bloom like vivid flowers. The fourteen animals in this book defy the odds and make their homes under the weight of seas, in the belly of tar pits, in the sandstorm's mouth.

Renowned poet Marilyn Singer and celebrated artist Ed Young offer a fascinating look at the creatures that call the strangest places home.

Water Sings Blue by Kate Coombs, illus. by Meilo So

Come down to the shore with this rich and vivid celebration of the ocean! With gorgeous watercolors by award-winning artist Meilo So and lyrical, playful poems by Kate Coombs, *Water Sings Blue* evokes the beauty and power, the depth and mystery, and the endless resonance of the sea.

Bigfoot Is Missing! by J. Patrick Lewis and Kenn Nesbitt, illus. by MinaLima

Bigfoot, the Mongolian Death Worm, the Loch Ness Monster—these and many more creatures lurk within these pages. Are they animals yet undiscovered? Are they figments of imagination? Only eerie whispers and sinister rumors give us hints at the truth.

2011 Children's Poet Laureate J. Patrick Lewis and 2013 Children's Poet Laureate Kenn Nesbitt team up to offer a tour of the creatures of shadowy myth and fearsome legend—the enticing, the humorous, and the strange—in a book that disguises the poems (and the monsters) in the art.

When Thunder Comes: Poems for Civil Rights Leaders by J. Patrick Lewis, illus. by Jim Burke, R. Gregory Christie, Tonya Engel, Meilo So, and John Parra

Peace, Justice, Liberty—as precious as these are to us, they cannot be, without one thing: equality. The seventeen men and women featured in this poetry collection are fighters for the civil rights of all mankind. Against overwhelming odds and heartbreaking loss, they stood, they hoped, they spoke.

In moving verse, Children's Poet Laureate J. Patrick Lewis gives each of them new voice in this commanding collection of poems, and invites the reader to hear in them the thunder that lies in even the smallest voice. Featuring civil rights luminaries Coretta Scott King, Harvey Milk, Mohandas Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, among others.

Things to Do by Elaine Magliaro, illus. by Catia Chen

With playful prose and vivid art, *Things to Do* brings to life the small moments and secret joys of a child's day. In this thoughtful and ingenious collection of poems, Elaine Magliaro and Catia Chien provide a luminous glimpse of the ordinary wonders all around us. A collection of poems in the form of "Things to Do If You Are. . ." that take us through a child's day, from "Things to Do if You Are Dawn" to "Things to Do if You Are the Moon."

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

A Strange Place to Call Home

Draw a picture of the most unusual creature you have ever seen. Share your drawing with a classmate. Explain what makes this creature strange.

Correlates to Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, K-3.4, K-2.5

Water Sings Blue

On the board, create a word splash of all the definitions of the word "blue." Then, read the title of the book and skim through the pages. Discuss the meaning of the title. How can water "sing blue"? Discuss the multiple meanings of the word "blue" that appear in the pages.

Correlates to Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards: Comprehension and Collaboration, K-3.1, K-3.2; Reading Standards for Literature: Craft and Structure, K-3.

Bigfoot Is Missing!

Look up the meaning of the words cryptozoology and cryptid. In small groups, discuss at least one cryptid story you've read or heard about. What evidence exists that this creature is real? What makes you think it's imaginary? Is this creature frightening, funny, or just plain strange? Why?

Correlates to Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, 2-5.4

When Thunder Comes: Poems for Civil Rights Leaders

Identify an individual in your personal life whom you admire for treating people fairly. Brainstorm examples of how this person represents fairness or equity. Share with a classmate.

Correlates to Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, 3-5.4

Things to Do

Instruct students to pretend they are something other than themselves: a wild animal (like a lion, dolphin, spider, or honeybee), a force of nature (like the wind, rain, or snow), or an object in space (like the sun or moon). Ask each child to make a list of the things they would do as their chosen animal, force of nature, or object in space. Direct the students to share their lists with the class.

Correlates to Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, K-3.4, K-3.6

WHILE READING: TEXT-BASED QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

A Strange Place to Call Home

- Identify one unusual creature. What enables this creature to live in its environment?
- Compare and contrast the habitats of any two creatures. Which seems more dangerous, and why?
- Identify a favorite poem and discuss how the poet Marilyn Singer depicts the creature and its environment. What words paint a vivid picture of the animal and its environment? How does Singer appeal to each of the five senses?

Correlates to Common Core Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details, K-3.1; Craft and Structure, 1-3.4

Water Sings Blue

- In what ways can this collection be considered a celebration of the ocean?
- Identify a favorite illustration. Describe three elements in the illustration that illuminate three phrases in the poem. Does the illustration provide any new understanding of the poem that you couldn't have gotten otherwise?
- Choose one poem to read aloud to a classmate. Discuss why you chose this poem and what you like about it the most, referring to at least two specific phrases from the poem.

Correlates to Common Core Reading Standards for Literature: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, K-3.7; Speaking and Listening Standards: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, K-3.4

Bigfoot Is Missing!

- Identify one cryptid from the collection with which you are the most familiar. Discuss in small groups what new “fantastic facts” you have learned about this creature.
- Which cryptid seems the most believable to you? Why? Use information from the poem to support your response.
- Discuss one poem from the collection as a class without looking at the illustration. Then, with a partner, draw your own illustration of the cryptid. Compare to MinaLima’s illustration when you’re done. What information do you notice or gain from the original illustrations?

Correlates to Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards: Comprehension and Collaboration, 2-5.2; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, 2-5.4, 2-5.5; Reading Standards for Literature: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, 2-5.7

When Thunder Comes: Poems for Civil Rights Leaders

- Select a favorite poem and discuss five key words and/or phrases that provide a deeper understanding of the civil rights leader.
- Identify a civil rights leader from the collection with whom you are the least familiar. Discuss what you learned about this individual by reading the poem. What does he/she have in common with other civil rights leaders you have read about?
- Choose a role model in your life whom you admire and who shares some of the same key qualities of the civil rights leaders. Write a short, 10 line poem that tells the story of this role model.

Correlates to Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards: Comprehension and Collaboration, 3-5.2; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, 3-6.4; Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details, 3-6.1, 3-6.3; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, 3-5.9

Things to Do

- Ask children to think of how different animals move about, and the kinds of things that they do. For example, the author of *Things to Do* says that a honeybee should FLIT among flowers and SIP nectar for hours, a snail should SLIDE along a trail of slime, an orb-spider should WEAVE a web and then WATCH and WAIT. Explain to students that FLIT, SIP, SLIDE, WEAVE, WATCH, and WAIT are all verbs or action words.
- Reread *Things to do if you are CRICKETS* and tell students to listen for the verbs that name the things that crickets should do (e.g. TUNE, BID, RUB, SING). Ask children to volunteer acting out the verbs they find in *Things to do if you are CRICKETS*. Reread the poems about dawn, an acorn, and rain. Instruct students to pick out the verbs that name the things that dawn should do, and then repeat the exercise for an acorn and for rain.

Correlates to Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards: Comprehension and Collaboration K-3.1-2; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, K-3.6; Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details, K-3.1

AFTER READING: RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND CREATIVE WRITING

Have students identify a beach where they would like to go for a vacation. Have them read about the natural habitat around the beach and create a brochure or other form of advertising for the beach. Students may use images from the web and/or develop their own sketches. This may be a family/guardian project.

Correlates to Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, K-3.4, K-2.5

Have students read an additional story and/or view a video about one of the civil rights leaders in *When Thunder Comes*, then develop a short talk that describes three to four key points about this individual’s life. Students may use any media to deliver their presentation. For example, students may deliver their presentation accompanied by a visual such as a poster or a digital slideshow.

Correlates to Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, 3-6.4, 3-6.5, Writing Standards: Research to Build and Present Knowledge, 3-6.7

After having read a poem out loud as a class, have students identify any poem to study and read with emphasis or recite to another audience. The audience may be a family member, a small group, or the whole class. The Poetry Out Loud website offers excellent teaching resources for poetry recitation.

Correlates to Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, 2-3.5

Have students pretend they are an animal or other object that is the topic of a poem in *Water Sings Blue*, *Bigfoot Is Missing!*, or *A Strange Place to Call Home* and act out their poem.

Correlates to Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, K-5.4

Have students draw a picture of and write a poem about a living organism in *Water Sings Blue*, *Bigfoot Is Missing!*, or *A Strange Place to Call Home*. In lieu of drawing, students may create a collage of different images of the organism or they may create a 3D representation out of any modeling material. Students might conduct outside research on the organism. They should be prepared to share details about the animal such as what it eats, where it lives, how it reproduces, etc.

Correlates to Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, K-5.5, Writing Standards: Research to Build and Present Knowledge, K-5.7, K-5.8

Have students read and discuss examples of similes and metaphors. Discuss how these literary techniques create vivid pictures. Ask students to find examples of similes and metaphors in a favorite poem in the collection. Then have them write examples of simile and metaphor, describing a favorite object or animal in any of the poems.

Correlates to Common Core Reading Standards for Literature: Craft and Structure, 1-6.4

To gain an understanding of perspective and personification, have students assume the identity of one of the animals or inanimate objects in one of the poems and write a poem or short narrative using first person point of view. Students should publish or share their writing with others.

Correlates to Common Core Reading Standards for Literature: Craft and Structure, 1-6.6

After completing *Things to Do*, Reread the poems about the honeybee, snail, orb-spider, and crickets. Ask students to name the things the author thinks those animals should do. Have students go back to the lists they brainstormed during the pre-reading activity and instruct them to add even more powerful, vivid verbs to their lists.

For example:

- Snake: SLITHER, SLINK, SLIP, SLIDE along the ground or through the grass; HISS; STICK OUT its tongue to catch the scent of prey
- Gray Squirrel: SCAMPER, SCURRY, SKITTER up a tree trunk; SEARCH for acorns; BUILD a nest in the top of a tree

Ask students to share what they wrote. Then, ask them to choose one animal to write a “things to do” collaborative class poem about. Once an animal is decided upon, have the class brainstorm the things it should do and list them on a “Poem Ideas Sheet” (a piece of chart paper). Elicit responses from students by asking questions, such as:

- What kinds of things do you think the animal should do during the course of a day/night?
- How do you think the animal moves about?

On the Poem Ideas Sheet, list all of the children’s responses. Read through them with students. Ask children if they want to add anything to their responses.

On a separate piece of chart paper, lead the children in writing a collaborative class poem. Tell them to look at their responses on the Poem Ideas Sheet and ask what might be the best way to begin their class poem. NOTE: Tell them that the poem DOES NOT have to rhyme.

When the class is finished writing their collaborative poem, read through it with them. Ask if there are any changes or additions they would like to make.

Variation

Ask for volunteers to read the sky and rain poems to the class. Begin a class discussion about what the author thinks the sky and rain should do. Have students brainstorm about the things the wind might do, and record their ideas on a Poem Ideas Sheet. Next, lead the class in writing a collaborative poem about the wind, or ask students to return to their desks and write their own *Things to Do if you are the WIND* poems. When children are finished writing, have them share their poems with the class.

Extensions

- Print the collaborative class poem on a piece of paper and make photocopies of it. Have children illustrate their copies of the poem. Let children take their copies of the poem home to share with their parents.

- Photocopy the children’s individually illustrated poems. Then staple or bind them into a packet for the children to take home and share with their parents.

Correlates to Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards: Comprehension and Collaboration K-3.1-2; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, K-3.4-6; Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details, K-3.1, Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: K-3.10

BUILD A THEME-BASED TEXT SET

Civil Rights

As Fast As Words Could Fly by Pamela Tuck. Illus. Eric Velasquez. New York: Lee & Low, 2013.

Belle, the Last Mule at Gee’s Bend: A Civil Rights Story by Calvin Ramsey and Bettye Stroud.
Illus. John Holyfield. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2011.

Child of the Civil Rights Movement by Paula Young Shelton and Raul Colón. New York: Dragonfly, 2009.

Freedom on the Menu: The Greensboro Sit-Ins by Carole Boston Weatherford. Illus. Jerome L. Lagarrigue.
New York: Dial, 2005.

I Have a Dream by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Illus. Kadir Nelson. New York: Schwartz & Wade, 2012.

If a Bus Could Talk: The Story of Rosa Parks by Faith Ringgold. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999.

Josephine’s Dream by Joan Betty Stuchner. Illus. Chantelle Walther. Holliston, MA: Silverleaf, 2008.

Martin’s Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by Doreen Rappaport. Illus. Bryan Collier.
New York: Hyperion, 2001.

These Hands by Margaret Mason. Illus. Floyd Cooper. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011.

This Is the Dream by Diane Shore and Jessica Alexander. Illus. James Ransome. New York: Amistad, 2009.

Animals and Their Environments

The Elephant Scientist by Caitlin O’Connell and Donna Jackson. Illus. Timothy Rodwell. Boston:
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011.

Ice Bear: In the Steps of the Polar Bear by Nicola Davies. Illus. Gary Blythe. Somerville, MA: Candlewick (2005).

Mister Seahorse by Eric Carle. New York: Philomel, 2004.

The Ocean Alphabet Book by Jerry Pallotta. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 1989.

Oceans: Dolphins, Sharks, Penguins, and More! by Johnna Rizzo and Sylvia A. Earle. Des Moines, IA:
National Geographic, 2010.

Seashells by Josie Iselin and Sandy Carlson. New York: Abrams, 2007.

A Symphony of Whales by Steve Schuch. Illus. Peter Sylvada. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2002.

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