

READING IS FUNDAMENTAL STORY SAMPLER

My Place on the Planet

FOR CHILDREN IN KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 3





Support for Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. comes from corporations, foundations, government, and other national service organizations. RIF is affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution and has been accorded tax-exempt status under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to RIF are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Reading Is Fundamental, RIF, and the logo design showing the open book with a smiling face on it and the words Reading Is Fundamental underneath it are all registered service marks of Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. All rights reserved.

Created and developed by Kathy Broderick, consultant and Sara Horwitz, Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.

Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.
1825 Connecticut Avenue, N. W.
Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20009-5726
Toll free: 877-743-7323
Web site: www.rif.org

© 2002 Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.
All rights reserved.

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

My Place on the Planet

A STORY SAMPLER
FOR CHILDREN IN
KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 3

▶ I AM SMALL, AND THE WORLD IS BIG

A Pig Is Big

by **Douglas Florian**, HarperCollins/
Greenwillow, 2000
ISBN: 0688171257

▶ CITYSCAPES AND COUNTRYSAPES

Town Mouse, Country Mouse

by **Jan Brett**, Putnam, 1994
ISBN: 0399226222

▶ I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Gardener

by **Sarah Stewart**, with illustrations by David
Small, Farrar/Sunburst, 1997
ISBN: 0374425183

▶ THE CYCLE OF SEASONS

Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf

by **Lois Ehlert**, Harcourt, 1991
ISBN: 0152661972

▶ WE SHARE THE EARTH WITH ANIMALS

I Took a Walk

by **Henry Cole**, Greenwillow, 1998
ISBN: 0688151159

I am Small, and the World is Big

A Pig Is Big

by **Douglas Florian**

HarperCollins/Greenwillow, 2000

ISBN: 0688171257

This picture book examines the concept of *big* with a lighthearted rhyming text and humorous watercolor paintings. "What's big?" the author asks. "A pig is big. / A pig is fat. / A pig is bigger than my hat." Slowly, children are introduced to bigger and bigger things. But, what's bigger than a pig, a cow, a truck, a street, a neighborhood, a city, and even Earth? Children will love to answer these questions. This book does a wonderful job of zooming out from a location on our planet to deep outer space, offering an eye-opening perspective for young children.

What To Do Before Reading the Story

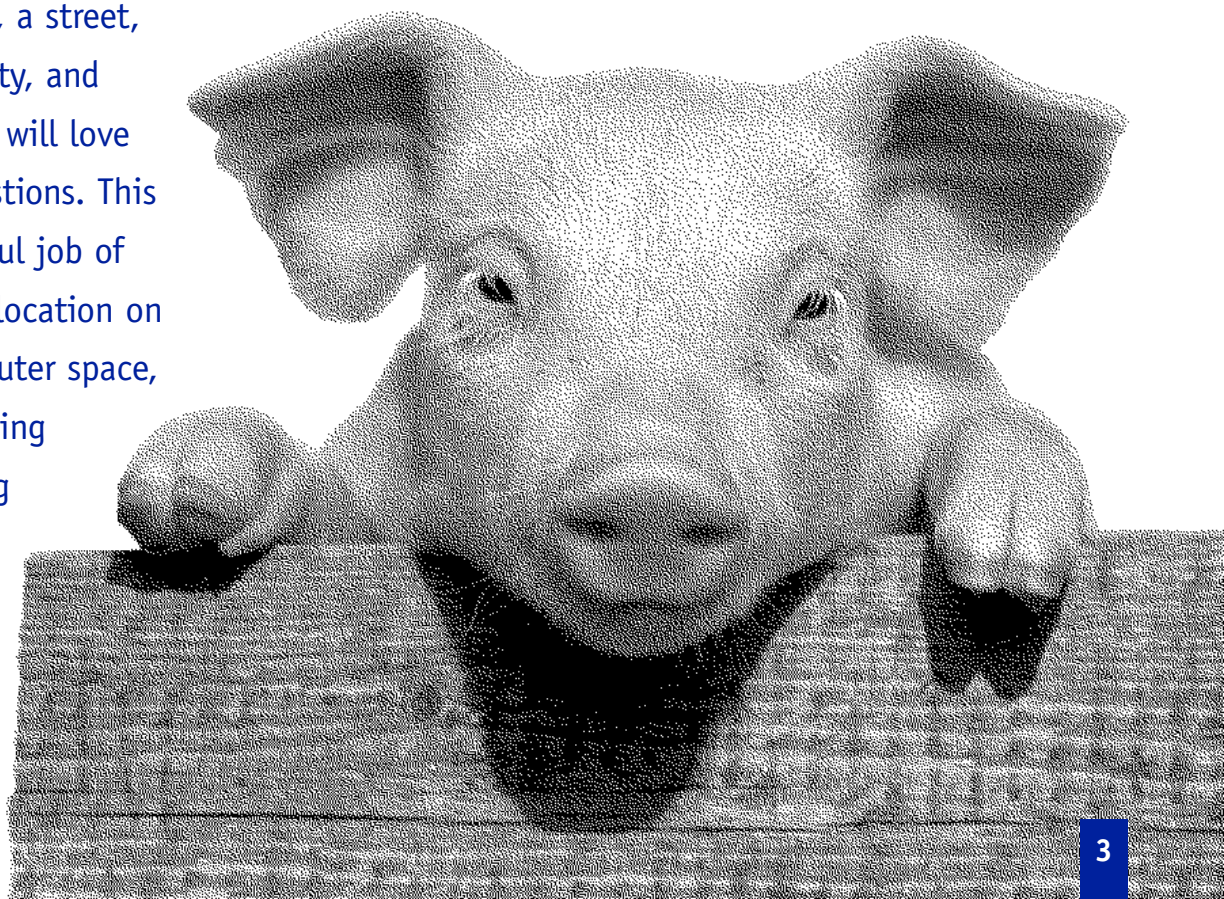
- Since the title of this book makes a statement about *big*, ask the children what they think: Does a pig seem big? Are there other, larger animals?
- Why does Douglas Florian choose the pig to talk about the concept of big?
- Make sure the children can identify rhyming sounds when they hear them. Play a short game to test their rhyming ability.

Things To Talk About During the Story

- The answer to every question in this book is written in rhyme. See if the children can finish the rhyming sentences for you as you read along.
- Ask the children to comment on where they think the pig and cow friends are going.
- Let the children call out the names of their streets, neighborhoods, and cities.

What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- On a globe, point out Katmandu and the Atlantic Ocean.
- Then show the children where they live, and zoom out as the book does.
- Talk about constellations and about how people long ago saw shapes (many of them animal shapes) in the sky. Ask the children if they think a pig constellation actually exists.



Family Involvement

- Ask families to read books from the *Additional Titles* list that show places around the country and around the world. Focus on how people do similar things wherever they live. They may seem far away, but all the people who inhabit planet Earth are traveling through a vast universe on a small planet . . . *together*.
- Suggest that the children interview their parents or guardians about how the family came to this country. Follow the family's route of immigration on a globe or map.
- There are board games with a geography twist, such as *Where in the World Is Carmen SanDiego?* and *Risk* that families can play together. Young children may be interested in these games, even if they are too young to follow the directions.

Community Connection

- Search the Internet for a Web site that offers live camera footage (such as the San Diego Zoo's pandacam). Make sure the children understand from where (on a map or globe) the site is broadcasting. This is a way for the children to understand how far they are from the place they are watching, but at the same time, how connected they are to it.
- Though the world is big, and human beings seem small and insignificant in comparison, talk about how individuals can and do make a difference. Invite a local celebrity to talk to your group. Or, invite a child or teenager who has made a difference in your community.

Additional Titles

Houses and Homes by Ann Morris, photographed by Ken Heyman, Morrow/Mulberry, 1992
ISBN: 0688135781

This work of nonfiction uses color photographs to show examples of homes built in different countries around the world.

How To Make an Apple Pie and See the World by Marjorie Priceman, Crown/Dragonfly, 1996
ISBN: 0679880836

Priceman's young heroine travels the globe from Vermont to Italy to Sri Lanka collecting the ingredients for apple pie. Her recipe is appended.

Hush: A Thai Lullaby by Minfong Ho, illustrated by Holly Meade, Orchard, 1996
ISBN: 0531071669

This beautiful book makes it quite clear that people of all cultures use lullabies to ease their children into sleep — even if they fall asleep before their children do!

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

The lyrics of this famous folk song are illustrated and made into a delightful picture book that shows the diversity of America.



Cityscapes and Countryscapes

Town Mouse, Country Mouse

by Jan Brett

Putnam, 1994

ISBN: 0399226222

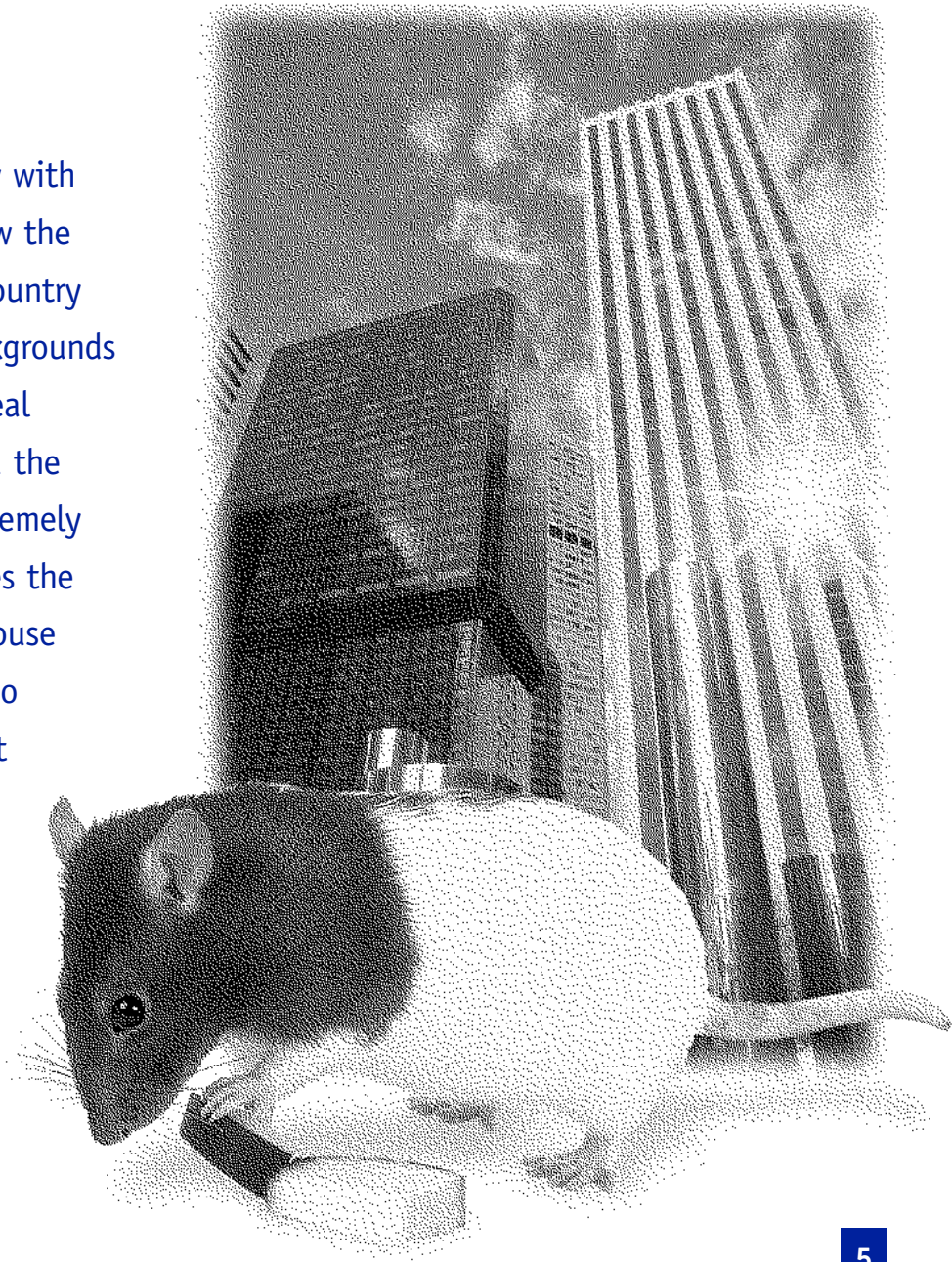
Brett embellishes this familiar story with beautiful, detailed drawings to show the differences between living in the country and living in a busy town. The backgrounds of the illustrations are filled with real objects and natural landscapes, and the two married mouse couples are extremely realistic and appealing. She captures the feelings of excitement that each mouse experiences in a new place. She also explores their feelings of discomfort in being away from the place they call home.

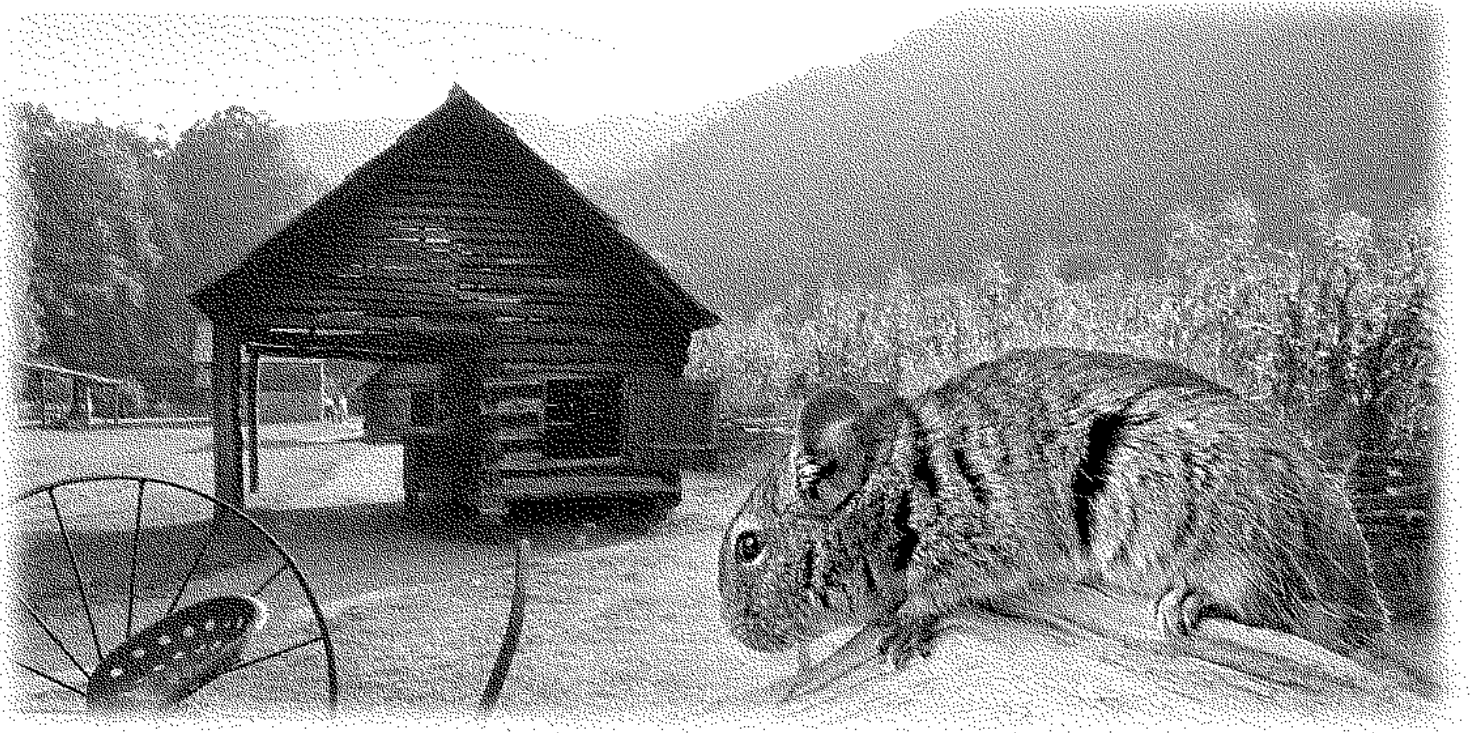
What To Do Before Reading the Story

- Ask the children if they have heard this story before. Tell them that it has been illustrated many times, and this is just one illustrator's interpretation of the story.
- Hold up the book cover, and ask the children if they can tell which mouse is a town mouse and which is a country mouse.
- Ask the children if they are "town mice" or "country mice."

Things To Talk About During the Story

- Jan Brett tells a second story in the edges around her main illustrations. Help the children keep track of the cat and the owl. Can they guess what will happen to them?
- Ask the children to point out objects and places in the illustrations that are familiar to them.





What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- Find another version of this story and read it to the children. Have them compare and contrast the two versions.
- Ask the children to describe a visit to a different locale. They can draw a picture of it or write a short story about it.
- Look through an atlas of the United States with your children. Show them the different kinds of maps that exist, and try to show them why some areas remain “country” and some become “city.”

Family Involvement

- Plan a day trip with all the members of your family to a place different from your everyday surroundings (to the country or to the city).
- A great way to see the change from city to country (or vice versa) is on a train ride. Suggest that the children ask their parents or guardians if they can travel by train on their next trip.

Community Connection

- Many cities and suburbs have architecture tours or house tours. As a group, attend one of these tours to see the ways houses are different, though the same in function.
- Invite a city planner to come talk with your children. Cities do sprout up in certain geographical places, but find out how the growth is controlled.

Additional Titles

Henry Hikes to Fitchburg by Donald B. Johnson, Houghton Mifflin, 2000
ISBN: 0395968674

In a tribute to the ideals of Henry David Thoreau, a bear named Henry chooses to walk to Fitchburg and revels in the rural experience.

The Little House by Virginia Burton, Houghton Mifflin, 1942
ISBN: 039525938X

Little House feels trapped between the skyscrapers of the growing city. She finally finds peace when she is moved to the country by the great-great-granddaughter of the man who originally built her.

Little House in the Big Woods by Laura Ingalls Wilder, illustrated by Garth Williams, HarperCollins, 1932
ISBN: 0064400018

Not many books can take a reader back to the life of a pioneer like this one can. Laura and her family live a life that to us seems difficult and isolated, but to them is rich and beautiful.

Tar Beach by Faith Ringgold, Crown/Dragonfly, 1991
ISBN: 0517885441

This colorful picture book depicts life in 1939 Harlem for young African-American Cassie Louise Lightfoot, who sees pearls in the city lights and beaches on the rooftops of skyscrapers.

Uptown by Bryan Collier, Holt, 2000
ISBN: 0805057218

Collier's paint and photo collages show Harlem as seen through the eyes of a young boy who lives there.

I Can Make a Difference

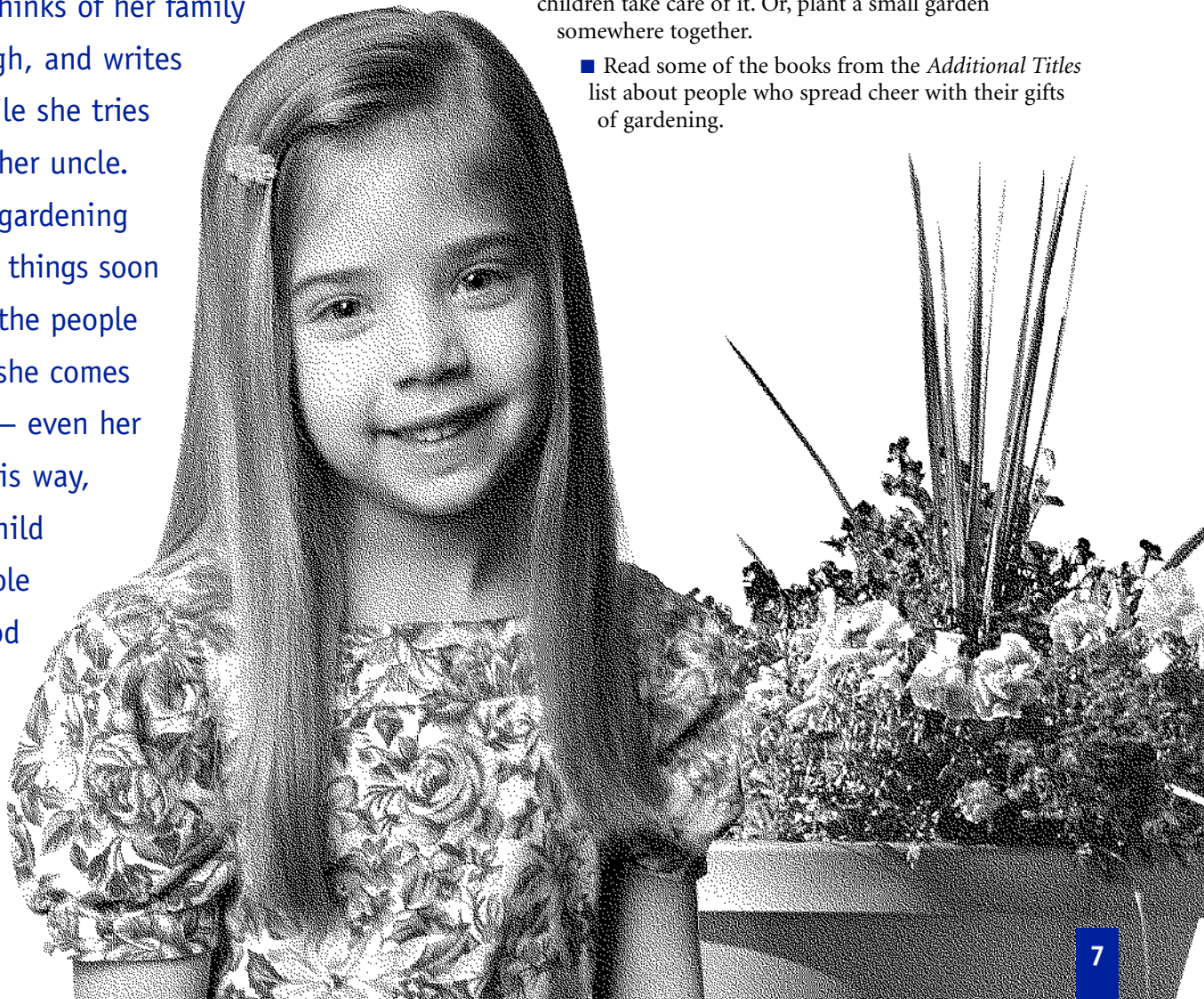
The Gardener

by Sarah Stewart

Farrar/Sunburst, 1997

ISBN: 0374425183

In this inspiring picture book set during the Great Depression, young Lydia spends time with her sour, unhappy uncle in his city home. She thinks of her family often, though, and writes to them while she tries to befriend her uncle. Her love of gardening and growing things soon changes all the people with whom she comes in contact — even her uncle. In this way, one small child shows a whole neighborhood how to be a better and happier place.



What To Do Before Reading the Story

- Hold up the cover of the book. Ask the children where they think the girl is going with the large plant in her hands.
- Ask the children if they have a garden or have done any gardening. How did it make them feel?
- Ask the children if they could imagine a garden. What would it be like?

Things To Talk About During the Story

- Lydia is called the gardener because she gardens — it doesn't matter where she is, how much space she has, or how much money she has. She refuses to live in a world without greenery. Notice how hard she is working. Does she seem to mind the work?
- Look carefully at the illustrator's drawings. How does he use body language to convey a character's feelings?

What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- Purchase a small plant for your classroom, and let the children take care of it. Or, plant a small garden somewhere together.
 - Read some of the books from the *Additional Titles* list about people who spread cheer with their gifts of gardening.



Family Involvement

- Send the children home with a cut flower for their parents, and have them watch how their parents react.
- Ask the children to take walks with their families. Encourage them to pick up and throw away garbage they see along the way.
- Request the Gardening Story Sampler for Preschoolers and Kindergartners from Reading Is Fundamental, called *Blooming with Books*, and try out some of the activities and wonderful books!

Community Connection

- As a group, visit a home for the elderly. Senior citizens will always appreciate your children's smiles and good cheer. The children may want to present them with flowers or small plants.
- Invite an environmentalist to talk to your group. Children need to learn that everyone is a steward of the Earth. There is a time to construct buildings, bridges, machines, and streets. But there is also a time and reason for making gardens.

Additional Titles

Alison's Zinnias by Anita Lobel, Greenwillow/Mulberry, 1990
ISBN: 0688147372

"Alison acquired an Amaryllis for Beryl. Beryl bought a Begonia for Crystal. Crystal cut a Chrysanthemum for Dawn." The book continues through the alphabet in a celebration of friendship and flowers.

Flower Garden by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Kathryn Hewitt, Harcourt/Voyager, 1994
ISBN: 0152023720

A young girl plants a window box for her mother and hangs it from their city apartment window.

Johnny Appleseed: A Tall Tale by Steven Kellogg, Morrow, 1998
ISBN: 0688064175

This popular illustrator offers his version of the life of John Chapman, the man who spent a lifetime planting apple orchards throughout a large portion of the northeastern United States.

Miss Rumphius by Barbara Cooney, Puffin, 1982
ISBN: 0140505393

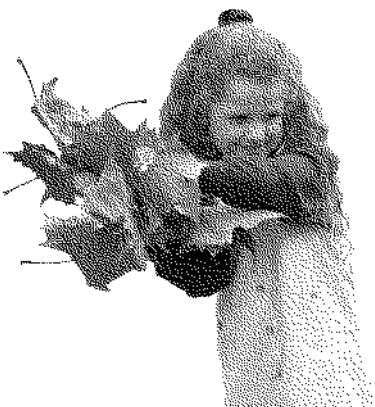
This classic children's picture book about the Lupine Lady carries the message that one "must make the world more beautiful."

The Cycle of Seasons

Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf

by **Lois Ehlert**
Harcourt, 1991
ISBN: 0152661972

Ehert's bold collage illustrations always make exciting picture books. Here, a young child finds great pleasure in a sugar maple tree as she learns to care for it. A tree is a symbol for the changing seasons since it changes so much over the course of a year. Ehert's profound respect for trees will be contagious to an audience of young readers, and the vast amount of information she provides will stay with them for a lifetime.



What To Do Before Reading the Story

- Talk about the four seasons with your group of children. If you live in a part of the country that does not see four distinct seasons, ask your children if they have seen the brilliant fall colors or experienced snow.
- Show the cover of this book. Why aren't there any green leaves on the cover?
- Ask the children if they know why leaves change colors.

Things To Talk About During the Story

- Talk about how the illustrator made the pictures for this book. She actually used leaves and branches and glued them together in a collage. How must the original art have looked compared to the way it looks in the book?
- There is a lot of information in this book. Record on a chalkboard or a sheet of paper all the facts that are new to the children.



What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- Try to find some of the leaves that Ehlert shows in this book.
- Plant a tree, if possible, with your children to show them the proper way of doing it.
- Let the children draw a picture of a tree or write a poem about one.
- Make the recipe for a bird treat included at the end of this book.

Family Involvement

- Take a picture of your family under a specific tree during each season. Record the date on each photograph and collect a leaf from each day as well. Then construct a small family album as a gift for someone special.
- Suggest that the children go on leaf-collecting missions with their families. When they return home they can make leaf rubbings together.

Community Connection

- Find a local nature preserve and plan walks through it at different times of the year. Take along a journal for recording specific details about your observations. Then, revisit the journal at year's end.

- Take a trip to a local gardening center at different times of the year to see which flowers, shrubs, and trees are on sale for planting during various months of the year.

Additional Titles

Song of the Swallows by Leo Politi, Aladdin, 1949

ISBN: 0689711409

Young Juan and old Julian tell how the swallows return every year in the springtime to San Juan Capistrano.

Snow by Uri Shulevitz, Farrar, 1998

ISBN: 0374370923

Shulevitz's picture book celebrates a fresh snowfall in a manner that makes a reader crave winter.

Sky Tree: Seeing Science Through Art by Thomas Locker,

HarperCollins, 1995

ISBN: 0060248831

Locker's elegant oil paintings of a single tree on a hill by a river reflect the changing seasons and changing sunlight. Children learn the science behind what's happening and how art makes them feel.

A Tree Is Nice by Janice May Udry, illustrated by Marc Simont,

HarperCollins, 1988

ISBN: 0064431479

This book talks about all the wonderful things that trees provide and how we benefit from them on hot days and windy days and in every season.

We Share the Earth with Animals

I Took a Walk

by **Henry Cole**

Greenwillow, 1998

ISBN: 0688151159

One morning a young boy takes a walk along a path and discovers the many hidden worlds of small animals. In special fold-out spreads, readers are given the opportunity to see what the young boy sees. From this extraordinary book, children will learn a whole vocabulary for the natural world and the names of many animals they have never heard of or seen themselves.

What To Do Before Reading the Story

- Ask the children where they go when they take walks and what kinds of things they see. Take a short nature walk around your building to see what the children notice.

Things To Talk About During the Story

- Four habitats are detailed in this picture book. Discuss these habitats and where they might exist in your part of the country.
- Read slowly, and give the children plenty of time to find the animals and plants listed in this book.



What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- Go for another walk with your children, along the route you took earlier. See if the children notice more animals, plants, and other elements of nature this time.
- Take the author's advice at the end of this book: "Find a place to sit and watch and listen. What do you see?" Bring along some books!

Family Involvement

- Encourage the children to take walks with their families. Or to sit quietly and listen. A picnic in a park is a special family activity.
- Suggest that the children go into their backyard and count how many different kinds of bugs and animals they can see.

Community Connection

- Visit a zoo or an aquarium to see the variety of animals that live on our planet with us. Keep a tally of how many are endangered.
- Invite a zookeeper or biologist to talk with the children about saving natural habitats and protecting animals.

Additional Titles

Biggest, Strongest, Fastest by Steve Jenkins, Houghton Mifflin, 1995

ISBN: 0395861365

Vibrant collage illustrations compare different animals to each other and to human beings, giving a unique perspective on the wild kingdom.

Blueberries for Sal by Robert McCloskey, Puffin, 1948

ISBN: 014050169X

Two young 'uns (one child, one bear cub) each wander off and follow the wrong mother home, but everything turns out fine in the end. Their parallel stories reinforce the notion of just how entwined the lives of humans and other animals really are.

Crinkleroot's Guide to Knowing Animal Habitats by Jim

Aronsky, Aladdin, 1997

ISBN: 0689835388

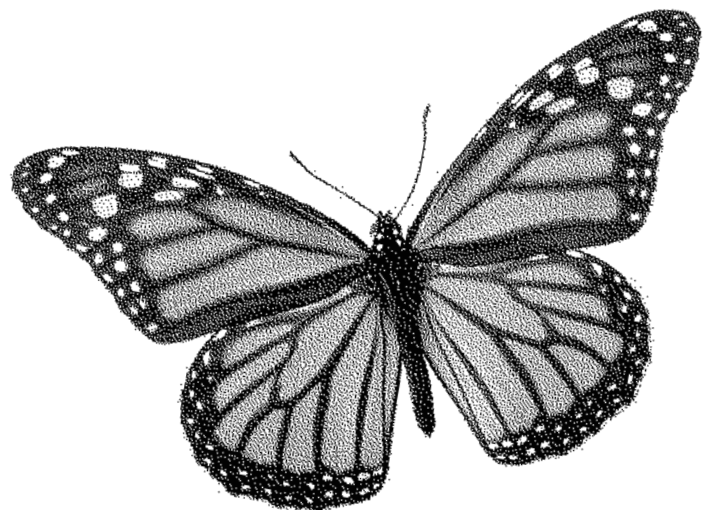
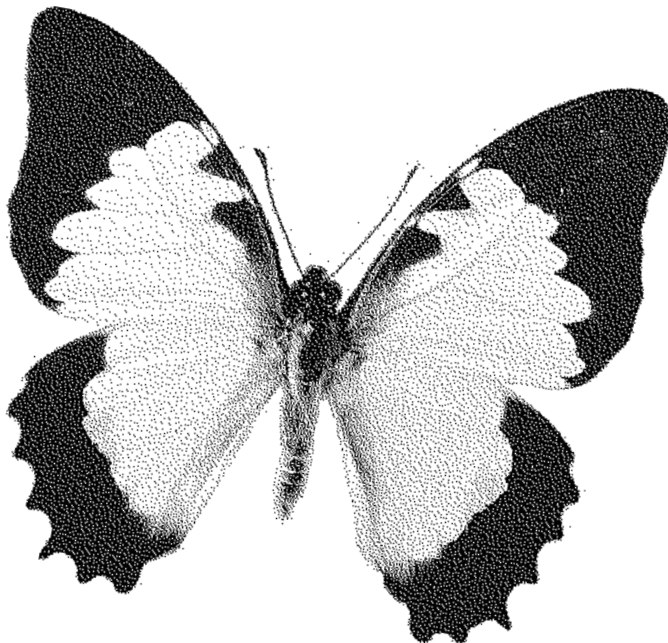
Crinkleroot, the "explorer and wildlife finder," takes readers through wetlands, woodlands, and other habitats reminding us that we share the world with wildlife.

Mammabilia: Poems and Paintings by Douglas Florian,

Harcourt, 2000

ISBN: 0152021671

Florian's silly poems and cool watercolor paintings present an intriguing picture of our animal friends. See also *Insectlopedia* by the same author.



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.



Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.
1825 Connecticut Avenue, N. W., Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20009-5726
Toll free: 877-743-7323
Web site: www.rif.org

©2002 Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.
All rights reserved.