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SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS

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When Rain Falls

Written by Melissa Stewart
Illustrated by Constance Bergum

ISBN: 978-1-56145-438-9 / \$16.95 / Hardcover
9 1/2 x 11 inches; 32 pages

Picture Book/Nonfiction/Science & Nature; Ages 4-8

About the Book

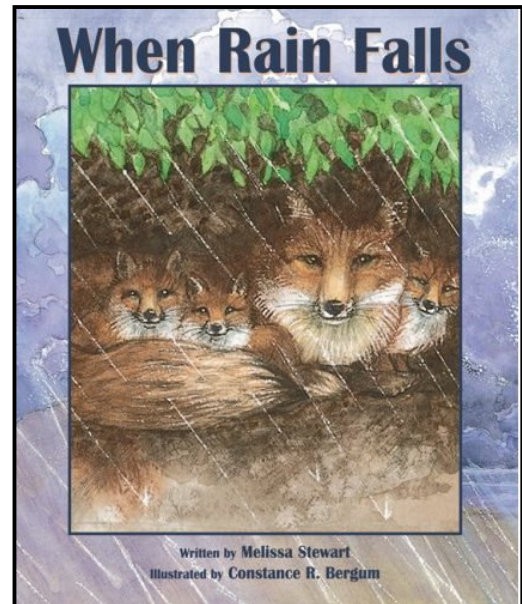
We go inside when the rain comes down, but where do animals go? That depends on the kind of animal and where it lives. Bees hide in hives and ants stay safe in underground nests. Squirrels pull their long bushy tails over their heads like umbrellas. Caterpillars crawl under leaves. Using clear, simple language, *When Rain Falls* offers young readers a lyrical look at how animals living in forests, fields, wetlands, and deserts behave during a rainstorm.

Themes

- Habitats
- Weather
- Water cycle
- Animal groups (insects, mammals, reptiles, birds)
- Plant and animal diversity
- Size and scale

Skills Reinforced

- Observation
- Description
- Compare and contrast
- Sorting and sequencing



Before You Read

Grades K-1

- Ask students to list reasons rain is important.
- Discuss what humans do when it rains (go inside or take shelter; use umbrellas, raincoats and rain boots).
- Ask students what they think wild animals do when it rains. Have them consider a large animal (deer), a medium-size animal (squirrel), and a small animal (ladybug).
- Define *habitat*. Discuss the four habitats (forest, field, wetland, desert) mentioned in the book.
- Divide the class into four groups and assign each group a habitat. Then assign each student one of the animals mentioned in the book.

Grades 2-3

- Have students discuss the following questions in small groups. Before reading

the book, compile the groups' answers on the chalkboard.

- What is a habitat?
- Brainstorm plants found in a desert, a wetland, a forest, and a field.
- Brainstorm animals found in each habitat.
- How does rain help these animals? How can it harm them?

As You Read

Grades K-1

- Ask students to raise a hand when you mention the habitat you assigned them.
- Students should also raise a hand when you read about their assigned animal. They should be ready to tell the class what their animal does when it rains.

Grades 2-3

- Ask students to think about the answers compiled on the chalkboard while listening to the book. Are there things they want to change or add? Encourage students to take notes.

After You Read

Grades K-1

- Have students draw a picture showing what their assigned animal does when it rains. Ask them to explain their pictures to the rest of the class.
- Have students pretend to be their assigned animal. Ask them how they would feel during a rainstorm. Discuss the idea that a single raindrop can be dangerous to a small creature.
- Create four habitat cards and place one in each corner of the room. Ask students to fly, crawl, or swim to the appropriate habitat card.

Grades 2-3

- As a class or in groups, have students add new information to or erase incorrect information on the chalkboard.
- Working in groups of three to four, students should compare and contrast the habitats described in the book. Ask them to consider the plants, animals, and water

availability in each habitat. Then have students create Venn diagrams to highlight the similarities and differences among the four habitats.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Science

Grades K-1

- Ask the class to bring raingear to school and take them outside while it is raining. Ask students to use their five senses to observe the rain. They should consider these questions:
 - How large are the drops?
 - What sounds do the drops make?
 - Does rain have a smell? (Rain can be polluted so children shouldn't taste it.)
 - How does rain feel?
 - What happens to rain when it hits the pavement, the grass, or the school building? Discuss the questions when you go back inside.

Grades 2-3

- Take your class outside after a rainstorm. Have students find and observe puddles. They should describe the puddles in a notebook and hypothesize why they form where they do.
- On a warm, sunny day after a rainstorm, have students use chalk to draw circles around shallow puddles on pavement. They should add a new line every 30 minutes. Have them describe what is happening to the puddle in their notebooks and try to explain why. When you go back inside, discuss evaporation and the water cycle.
- Students can observe how a cloud forms by placing three spoonfuls of soil and a little bit of grass at the bottom of a small, resealable plastic bag. Then they should add one spoonful of water to the soil. (Students must be careful not to get the sides of the bag wet.) Have students seal their bag and tape it to a sunny window.

They should observe the bag after 5, 10, and 15 minutes. Have them draw pictures and make notes of what they see. Ask them what happens when they tap the sides of the bag.

Math

Grades K-1

- Using photos from books or the Internet, show students that the patterns of dots on a ladybug's wings are symmetrical. Give students a red, oval piece of paper and have them paint black dots on one half. (Make sure students leave plenty of space between the dots.) Then show students how to fold the oval in half and press the painted side against the blank side. Their ladybugs wings will end up with the same pattern on both sides. Have them write the doubles addition fact to accompany their dots.
- Using the information below, students should create a bar graph that compares animal sizes. Help students identify each animal as a mammal, reptile, insect, or bird. Which group of animals tends to be the largest? Which tends to be the smallest? Does size affect what they do when it rains?

Deer: 60 inches	Duck: 26 inches
Fox: 40 inches	Rattlesnake: 36 inches
Squirrel: 18 inches	Turtle: 10 inches
Mouse: 3 inches	Ant: 0.06 inches
Hawk: 20 inches	Ladybug: 0.25 inch
Chickadee: 6 inches	Butterfly: 3 inches

Grades 2-3

- Create a rain gauge for your class. You will need a large, plastic peanut butter jar and the top half of a 2-liter soda bottle (turned upside down and placed inside the jar to act like a funnel). Use a ruler and permanent marker to mark ½-inch divisions along the side of the jar. Place the rain gauge in an open area outdoors. Each day, ask a pair of students to record any rainfall and empty the rain gauge if necessary. Each month, have the class calculate the total rainfall and the average

weekly rainfall. Then have students compare that to data from a local weather station.

- The United States is losing more than 80,000 acres of wetland habitat annually. That's more than seven football fields every hour! Have students calculate the average number of acres of wetland habitat the United States loses every week and every month.

Language Arts

Grades K-1

- Have students create as many words as possible with the letters in rainfall. Then ask the children to sort the words by: number of letters in each word, word families, and vowel sounds. Ask the students to alphabetize the words.
- Ask students to create a picture story of what they do before, during, and after a rainstorm.

Grades 2-3

- Have students research one of the four habitats mentioned in the book. Each report should include information about the diversity of plant and animal life, estimated annual rainfall, and whether the habitat is increasing or decreasing in the United States. They should also find out if their habitat exists in your state. Encourage them to include any fun facts they discover.
- Ask students to write a story about what a raindrop does before, during, and after a rainstorm.

All grades

- Download a copy of the readers theater script written to accompany *When Rain Falls* from the author's website (www.melissa-stewart.com) and lead the class in performing it.
- Author Melissa Stewart got the idea for *When Rain Falls* while watching the film *Microcosmos*, which is now available in the video/DVD section of most libraries. Watch the film with your class and ask

students which parts they think inspired the author to write the book. Talk to students about how they can generate ideas for their own writing projects.

- Have students write letters to author Melissa Stewart, telling her what they liked best about *When Rain Falls*. Send the letters to Author Fan Mail, Peachtree Publishers, 1700 Chattahoochee Ave., Atlanta, GA, 30318-2112. If you include an e-mail address, Ms. Stewart will send an e-mail to your class.
- Read the Langston Hughes poem below. Then ask students to write their own poems about the rain.

April Rain

Let the rain kiss you.
Let the rain beat upon your head with
silver liquid drops.
Let the rain sing you a lullaby.
The rain makes still pools on the
sidewalk.
The rain makes running pools in the
gutter.
The rain plays a little sleep song on our
roof at night.
And I love the rain.

—*Langston Hughes*

- Ask student to pretend they are one of the animals mentioned in *When Rain Falls*. They should think about how they feel when it rains. Do they like it or not? Is it fun, scary, or a nuisance? Ask them to consider how big a raindrop is compared to the size of their body. Does the raindrop feel like a drop, a huge wave, a waterfall? Have students write a poem from the perspective of the animal they choose.

Art

All Grades

- Have students make hats representing their assigned animal. They can wear their hats while performing the readers theater script created to accompany *When Rain Falls*. You can download a copy of

the script from the author's website (www.melissa-stewart.com).

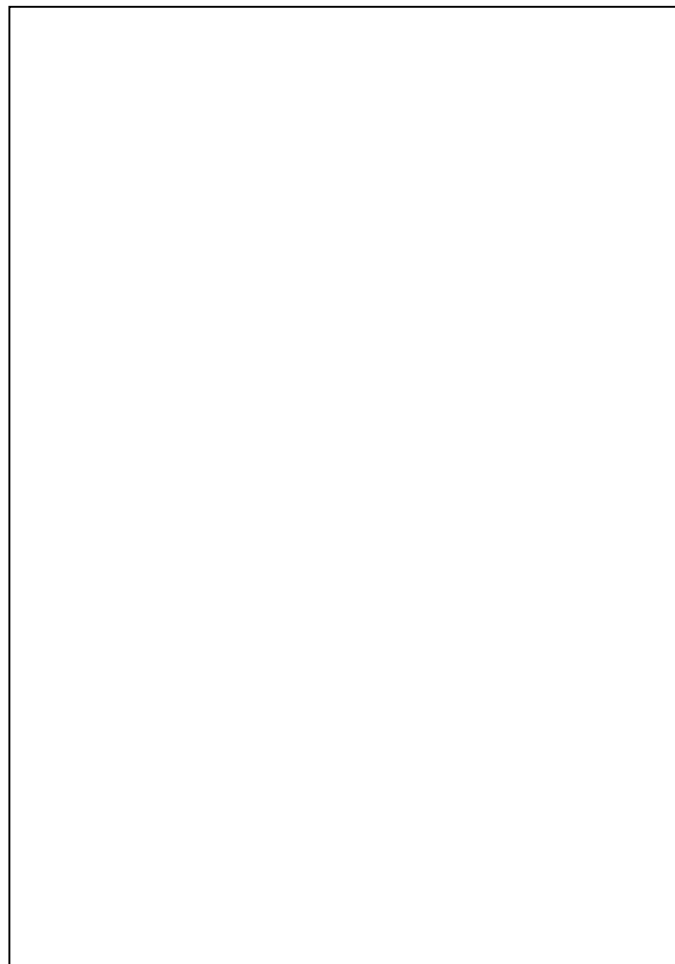
- Ask students to draw pictures showing how the five groups of animals (mammals, insects, spiders, reptiles, birds) described in *When Rain Falls* are different.
- Ask students to create an imaginary animal that could weather any storm. They should think about its size, color, type of body covering, number of legs, and where it lives.

Geography

Grades 2-3

- As a class, look at a map of your town. See how many of the habitats mentioned in *When Rain Falls* exist in your town. Discuss why some natural habitats do not occur in your town or your state.

Notes:



Related Reading

- Cole, Sheila. *WHEN THE RAIN STOPS*. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books, 1991.
- Dunphy, Madeleine. *HERE IS THE WETLAND*. New York: Hyperion, 2007.
- Sayre, April Pulley. *DIG, WAIT, LISTEN: A DESERT TOAD'S TALE*, New York: Greenwillow, 2001.
- Schafer, Lola. *THIS IS THE RAIN*. New York: Scholastic, 2003.
- Shannon, David. *THE RAIN CAME DOWN*. New York: Blue Sky Press, 2000.
- Stewart, Melissa. *A PLACE FOR BUTTERFLIES*. Atlanta: Peachtree Publishers, 2006.
- Sturges, Philemon. *RAINSONG, SNOWSONG*. San Francisco: North South Books, 1995.

About the Author



MELISSA STEWART is the award-winning author of more than more than one hundred books for children and more than fifty articles for children and adults. She has a B.S. in biology from Union College in Schenectady, NY, and a M.A. in science journalism from New York University. Melissa is on the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators' national Board of Advisors and is a judge for the American Institute of Physics Children's Science Writing Award. In her free time, Melissa enjoys exploring natural areas near her home in eastern Massachusetts. She also likes visiting exotic habitats around the world and has spent time in Costa Rica, East Africa, Europe, the Galapagos Islands, and Mexico. Melissa has taught fiction and nonfiction writing classes for children and adults, and is available for school visits. See her website for more information: www.melissa-stewart.com. (Intended Audience for school presentations: Grades K-4.)

About the Illustrator



CONSTANCE R. BERGUM has illustrated several children's books. She holds an MFA in illustration from Marywood University and lives in Montana.

We have authors and illustrators who visit schools and libraries! For information regarding author appearances, please contact our Marketing Department at 404.876.8761 x111 or hello@peachtree-online.com.

Peachtree Pointers for *WHEN RAIN FALLS* was prepared by Melissa Stewart.

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1700 Chattahoochee Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30318-2112
phone (404) 876-8761 / (800) 241-0113 sales phone
fax (404) 875-2578 / (800) 875-2578 sales fax
<http://www.peachtree-online.com>

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