



AFTERSCHOOL EXCHANGE ACTIVITY

WHY MOSQUITOES BUZZ IN PEOPLE'S EARS

PREPARATION

Grade Levels: 3-4

This activity would be most effective if delivered in three separate 45-minute periods, with groups of no more than 12 students.

Prerequisite:

Group leaders will need to have access to the Video on Demand service, available to New York state educators at <http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/itv>. If you do not live in New York state, get a password by calling 1-800-323-9084.

Background information: Folktales usually tell the adventures of animal or human behaviors. Some folktales, like *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears*, are called cumulative tales because they contain repetitive actions that build to a climax. This tale is also a "why" tale as it explains how an animal (in this case, an insect) obtained the characteristic of buzzing.

Materials:

For Students:

- Crossword puzzle [link to handout] handout
- Lead and Colored Pencils
- Crayons
- Scissors
- White Paper

For Group Leader:

- The ITV (<http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/itv/search.php>) video *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears*, or access to Thirteen's Video on Demand (<http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/itv/search.php>).
- Copies of *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* by Verna Aardema
- Other books to have on hand include:
 - Concept books such as the *True Book Series* published by Children's Press and the *Carolrhoda Nature Watch Book Series* published by Carolrhoda Books, Inc.

- Examples of postcards (both new and used)
- Globe or world map
- Enough 4x6 inch index cards for your group
- Easel size chart paper
- Scotch tape

Academic Goals:

Children will:

- have an opportunity to appreciate African folktales.
- make “connections” between geography and literature.
- research facts about Africa’s animals and present findings through art and writing.
- further develop their appreciation of folktales.

Social Goals:

Children will:

- engage in open-ended discussions about the meaning of the story.

STEPS

Introductory Activity (20 minutes):

1. Have the group sit in a comfortable, non school-like manner. Tell the children that you are going to play the game Telephone. Ask them if they have ever played the game before. If they have, ask someone to explain how it is played. Then, with the children sitting in a circle, whisper a sentence to the child sitting closest to you. (It’s a good idea to first write the sentence on a piece of paper so you have “proof” at the end.) Ask that child to whisper the sentence to the next child, who whispers it to the next child, and so on around the circle. The last child says the sentence out loud. Talk about how different the original “whisper” was from the last one. Briefly discuss what can happen when a message gets mixed-up. Tell the children that they will be reading a story about what happens when a message gets mixed up.
2. Read the story, guiding the children to see the cause and effect. Gently keep recapping the progression of animals to help children see the build-up of the story line.
3. Encourage children to join in on the refrain: “...and now Mother Owl won’t wake the sun so that the day can come.”
4. Ask the children what they think this story is telling us. (Misunderstanding, gossip) Ask if they have ever had a misunderstanding with anyone and how they resolved it. Write their comments on the chart paper, to give the group a better appreciation of how misunderstandings can cause hurt feelings. Give an example from your own experience if the discussion needs a start.

Transition:

If your program has internet access, have the children begin viewing *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People’s Ears* via [Video on Demand](#)

(<http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/itv/search.php>). Let them do this with a buddy to generate more conversation. Explain to the children that everyone will have a chance to see the video within the next few days. If this is a mixed age group, this activity also presents an excellent opportunity for older children to work with younger ones.

Do this part of the activity gradually, not in an assembly-line style. (This can be done during the free-play part of the afternoon. If the group goes to a computer lab, it can be done there.)

If you do not have internet access, tape the video when it airs on ITV (<http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/itv/search.php>) and show the tape to the whole group. Running time is only 10 minutes.

After the children have viewed the story, have them complete the crossword puzzle activity below either with a partner or alone. This is another alternative for story review. Note: Custom-made crosswords such as this one can be created by using: <http://www.edHelper.com>.

Activity 2: (two 45-minute sessions)

1. Have a globe or an attractive, easy to read world map available. (Each child could have his/her own for easy reference.) Discuss how this tale came from Western Africa. Depending upon the group's interest, discuss how a person could travel to Africa. What would be the fastest way? The slowest?

2. Show the children some postcards. Ask them if they have ever sent postcards from a place they visited. Then show them a 4x6 inch index card. Tell them they are going to design their own postcards while they visit Africa through the Internet or through books.

3. Programs with Internet access should preview the following videos on Video On Demand:

- *Animal Places, Animal Faces*
- *Animal Profiles* (a series) of the following animals: giraffes, ring-tailed lemurs, lions, mandrills, gorillas and zebras

Allow children to view the videos (or choose one of an animal they are particularly interested in learning about). Have children move to a table set up with colored pencils, crayons, scrap paper, and 4x6 inch index cards. Have concept books at these tables for reference.

Programs without Internet access should provide a wide variety of concept books on Africa available for children to use. Attractive arrangement of books and art materials is key to making this an appealing activity. Model how to go about choosing an animal. (e.g. "I really like giraffes. I want to look at some books with information about them.")

Transition:

After children have finished making their postcards, have them share their cards with one another. Make sharing time special – serving a special snack if possible, taking photos of children while sharing. If your environment allows, display the postcards for others to see.

Extension:

Children can write messages on their postcards, and mail them to family members or friends. For example, they might use the postcards to share their opinions of the story *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears*.

CREDITS

This AFTERSCHOOL EXCHANGE activity was developed by Cathy Smith, Deputy Director of the Riverdale Neighborhood House, in connection with Ed Online/Video On Demand *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* by Verna Aardema.

WHY MOSQUITOES BUZZ IN PEOPLE'S EARS HANDOUT

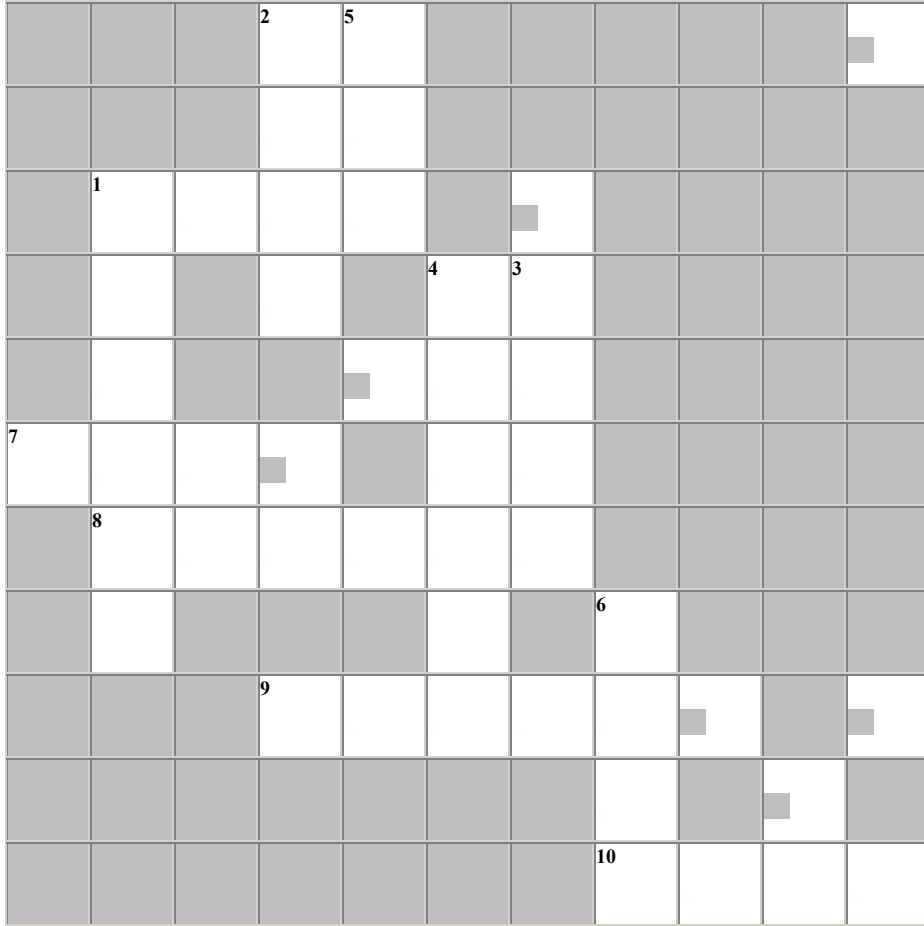
Name _____

Date _____

Buzz Buzz Buzz

(Answer ID # 0914442)

Complete the puzzle.



Down

1. the iguana is this kind of reptile
2. a big black bird
3. this is what the owlets live in
4. this is where the story takes place
5. without this, the nights became longer and longer
6. this word means not being able to hear

Across

1. this animal called in all the other animals
7. the vegetable the farmer was digging
8. this animal lives in a hole
9. this reptile went into the rabbit's hole
10. this is the kind of tale this is

Answer Key

			c	s						
			r	u						
	l	i	o	n						
	i		w		a	n				
	z				f	e				
y	a	m			r	s				
	r	a	b	b	i	t				
	d				c		d			
			s	n	a	k	e			
							a			
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