

Teacher Resource Guide



Journey Beyond the Burrow

Symbiotic (especially mutualistic) relationships in nature have always fascinated me and are a big inspiration for this story. The plover bird & crocodiles, mongooses & warthogs, ravens & wolves... I could read about these relationships all day! JOURNEY BEYOND THE BURROW is of course fantasy and adventure. But!! If you enjoy the twists and turns in Tobin's journey, try reading up on a few real forest friendships that are sure to fascinate anyone. A google search of "examples of mutualism in animals" will entertain for hours!

Rina Heisel has written the scripts for many natural science-themed documentaries and magazine segments, a few of which have links on her website, rinaheisel.com. She is also a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. After eleven years producing educational television programs for South Dakota Public Broadcasting, Rina found she especially enjoyed writing segments centering on natural sciences. She found lots of inspiration in the animals she filmed, feeling as if she was getting a sneak peek into their secret worlds.

**A JUNIOR LIBRARY GUILD
GOLD STANDARD
SELECTION!**

There are rules every mouse must follow if they're to survive in the forest.

Tobin knows these guidelines by heart. After all, with one younger sibling, another on the way, and a best friend with a penchant for trouble-making, he needs to be prepared for anything.

But one stormy night, Tobin's safe burrow is invaded by monstrous arachnids, and his baby brother stolen away. To save him, Tobin will have to do something he's never done before: break the rules.

Drawing inspiration from the author's work as a natural science documentarian, Journey Beyond the Burrow is as alive as the forest floor, where nature is unpredictable, occasionally frightening, and inspirational all the same.



PICTURE BOOK PAIRINGS

While reading *JOURNEY BEYOND THE BURROW*, read these picture books about mutualism in animals and symbiotic relationships.

How to Clean a Hippopotamus: A Look at Unusual Animal Partnerships

by Steve Jenkins & Robin Page

Amazing Animal Friendships: Odd Couples in Nature

by Pavla Hanackova

COMMON CORE

(List of standards covered in this guide)

3rd Grade:

ELA RL 3.1, 2, 3, 4, 9;
W 3.3; SL 3.4

4th Grade:

ELA RL 4.1, 2, 3, 4, 9;
W 4.3; SL 4.4

5th Grade:

ELA RL 5.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9;
W 5.3; SL 5.4

6th Grade:

ELA RL 6.1, 2, 3, 4, 9;
W 6.3; SL 6.4

7th Grade:

ELA RL 7. 1, 2, 3, 4;
W 7.3; SL 7.4

Determining Theme

Journey Beyond the Burrow has themes of questioning the rules and traditions, believing in oneself, and working together despite differences to achieve a common goal. As students discuss possible themes in the book, have students look for evidence in the story to support the themes.

Text-to-Text Connections - Have students brainstorm other books they have read with similar themes. How are they similar? How are they different?

Text-to-Self Connections - Have students think about a time in their lives when they worked together with someone despite their differences. How did they navigate those experiences? In what ways was it similar to Tobin? In what ways was it different?

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by Rina Heisel

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may contain words that are new for you. Use this list as a bookmark and while you are reading, use context clues to investigate the meanings of these words. On the back of the bookmark, write down other new words you find in the book

alcove
appendage
boisterous
camouflage
cavity
crevice
dallying
exoskeleton
fissure
frenzy
jarring
labyrinth
mottled
mustering
muzzle
peculiar
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Pre-Reading Writing Prompt



Before reading the book, share the full cover art of the book with students. The full cover art of the book is illustrated by **Paul Scott Canavan**.

Activity #1: Students make a list of 10 predictions about the book based on what they see in the picture. They can make predictions about the setting, characters, and events of the story.

Activity #2: Students write a story based on what they see in the picture.

After reading the book, have students compare their predictions and/or stories to the book.



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Reading Response Questions

A few ideas for incorporating these questions into your reading of Journey Beyond the Burrow...

- Have students keep a journal while they read and answer questions as you read.
- Utilize Think-Pair-Share and discuss these questions throughout the reading.
- Select a couple of questions for students to write a longer written response. This is an opportunity to cite evidence in their writing to support their answers.

What are a few of the **Rules of Rodentia**? Why is it important for the mice to understand and follow these rules?

Mutualism in animals means unexpected animals work together for a common goal. What examples of mutualism did you find in the story? Why did these animals work together?

Would you go up and take a peek out at Lookout Landing to see the storm? (Ch 2)

Why did Tobin, Wiley, and Talia decide to leave the burrow? Which Rule of Rodentia did they break when they decided to leave? (Ch 4-5)

What obstacles did the mice face while crossing the creek? (Ch 6)

What did the mice learn about the Arakni from Camrik, the chipmunk, and Hess, the snake? (Ch 7-10)

What do you think will happen in the fight with the possum? (Ch 13)

What compromise does Tobin's group make with Hubbart, the woodchuck? (Ch 14)

What did Tobin and Wiley learn about the Araknis during their scouting trip? (Ch 17)

Do you think Hess is friend or a swindler? (Ch 18)

What did Tobin and Wiley find in the toppled tree trunk? (Ch 20)

Do you agree with Tobin's decision to free the websacks? Why?





Extension Activities

Burrow Board Game

Tobin, Wiley, and Talia set off to attempt a daring rescue of the newborn baby mouse. Along the way they encounter a number of obstacles and make a few surprising friends.

Now you have the chance to recreate their journey by creating a **Burrow Board Game**. Design the board game to show the journey they take from the burrow to the spiders' lair. Include the obstacles Tobin, Wiley, and Talia face during their journey and the friends they meet along the way.

Be as creative as you want as you plan the rules and design of the game!

You've just been hired as the newest **Junior Weather Scout!** Your job is to prepare a five-day weather report for the burrow.

Don't forget to sniff the air, search the air, and feel the air.

Use the **You're Hired** page to complete your report.

OH NO! I'VE SHRUNK THE STUDENTS!!

JOURNEY BEYOND THE BURROW is told from the perspective of a trio of mice...so everything is told from the perspective of being just a couple of inches tall.

What would happen if one day you woke up and realized you were only 3 inches tall?

What would be different about your life? Would anything be the same? What would school be like? What dangers would you face? What would you like about being so small?

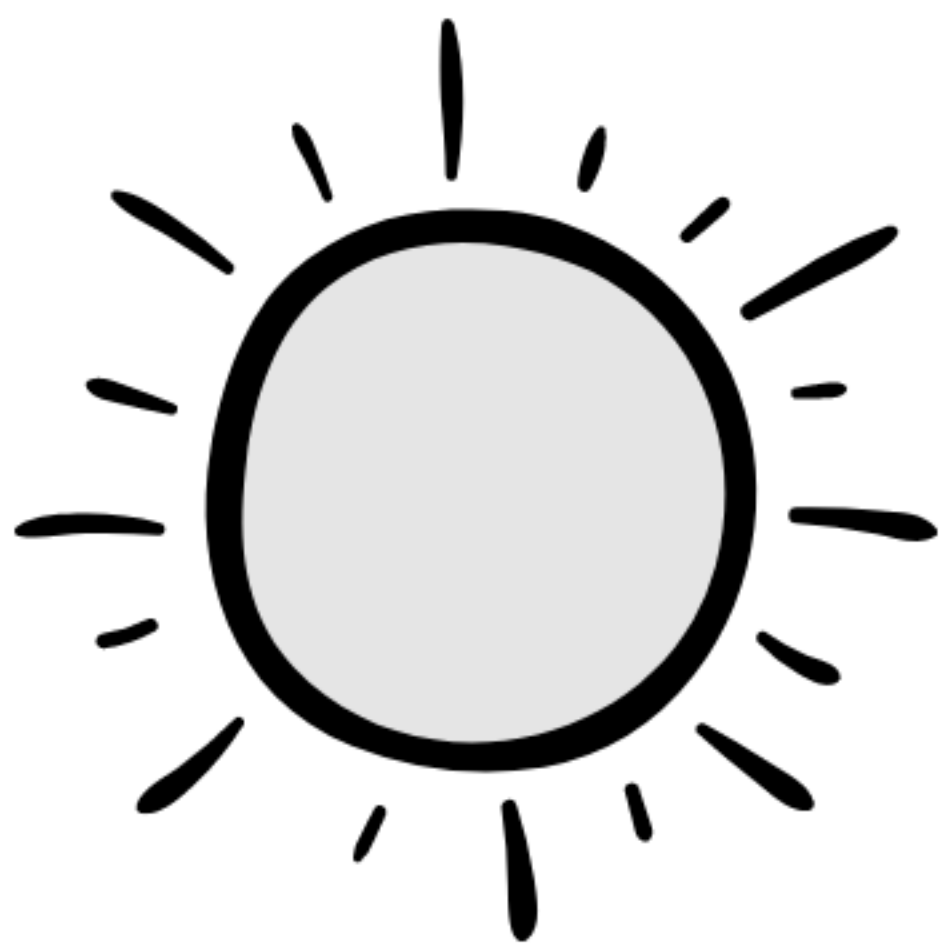
Write a story about being just a few inches tall. Be as creative as you want...create a graphic novel, or a picture book, or write a narrative.

YOU'RE HIRED!

You've just been hired as the newest **Junior Weather Scout!** Your job is to prepare a five-day weather report for the burrow. Use the space below to record your report, but don't forget to sniff the air, search the air, and feel the air.

Bonus: Once you've created the weather report, film your weather report to share with the Eldermice. When you're finished you can also share your report on social media, with Rina Heisel (Twitter: RinaHeisel; Instagram: rina.heisel)

Illustrate what the weather will look like here.



Write the weather report here.

