

# STEMtacular Book-Inspired Writing Activities

From Children's Author & Literacy Specialist

**Randi Sonenshine**

## Book Title(s):

The Lodge That Beaver Built  
The Nest That Wren Built  
This is the Nest That Robin Built  
This is the Sunflower

## Curriculum Connections:

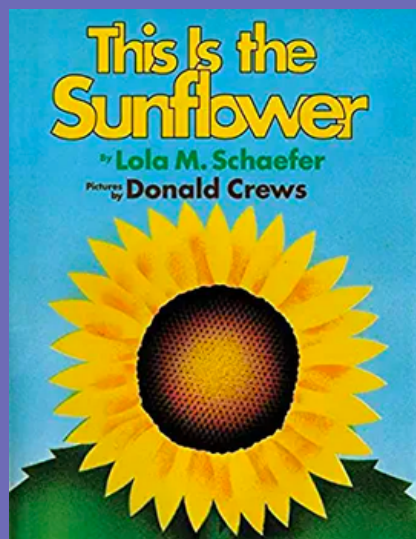
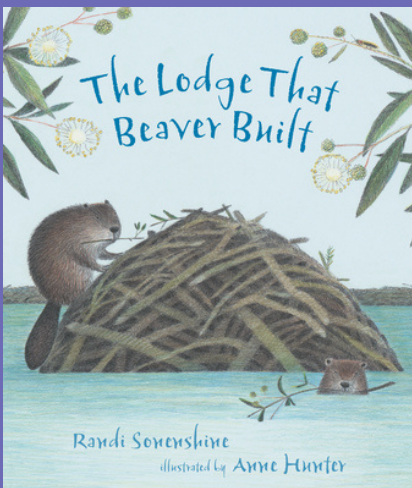
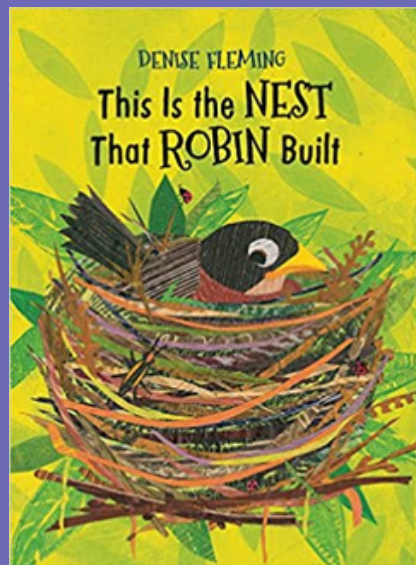
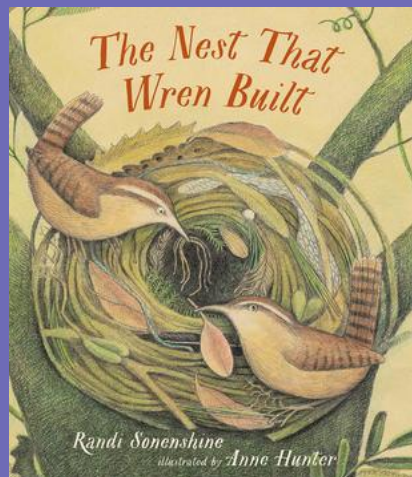
Life Cycles; informative writing; text structure/relationships

# Structure Poem

Students will write a poem using the structure of the books to explore a concept and its structure.

Examples:

Life cycles (chronological/sequential)  
Body System (Part-to-whole/purpose)  
Ecosystem (part-to-whole-purpose)  
Place (spatial- using prepositions)  
Historical event (events- cause effect)  
Solar System (spatial/description)



## Butterfly Life Cycle

This is the egg laid on a leaf, the very first stage but one that's brief...in the life cycle of a butterfly.

This is the larvae that eats and grows and sheds its skin like too-small clothes...in the life cycle of a butterfly.



**Book Title(s):**  
**Any animal books!**

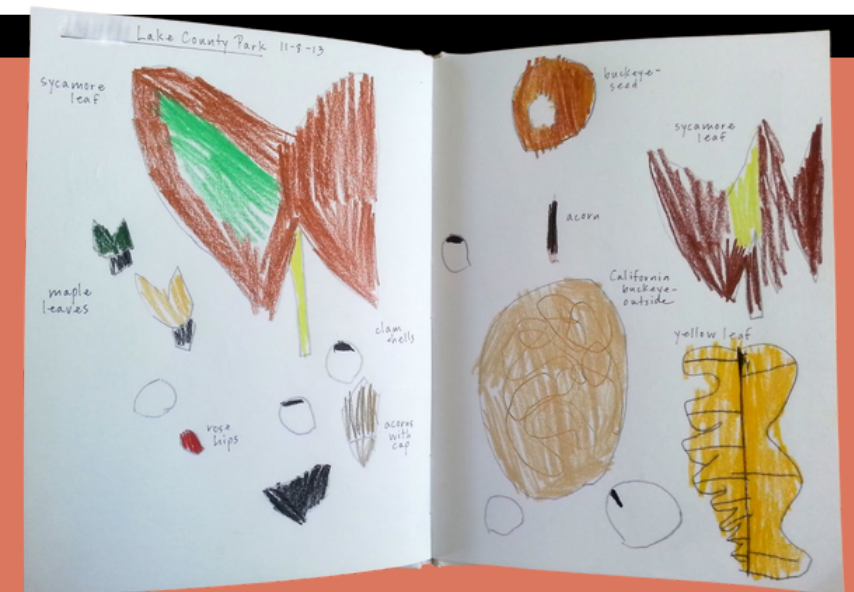
**Curriculum Connections:**  
**animal interactions with the**  
**environment, homes, adaptations,**  
**classification; informational writing**



# Nature Sleuth Journal

Take a trip outdoors with students to an area with lots of wildlife. Provide each student with a journal (make with copy paper). Instruct students to stay still and scan the ground, treetops, in bushes, in the air, on fences, branches, thickets; look for signs of wildlife like nests, poop, feathers, tree cavities, etc. Have them listen for songs, calls, coos, squawks, snuffles, scratching in leaves, on tree bark or on the ground, wings whooshing, flapping, fluttering, leaves rustling. Next, try to locate where the sound/s are coming from.

Have them draw, label, and/or write observations in journals: shape and size-body, tail, beak, wings, legs, feet colors, markings, and patterns-different parts of body: stripes, speckles, bands, rings. behaviors- eating, singing, flying, perching, hopping, rustling in leaves, etc. location and placement, questions/wonderings.



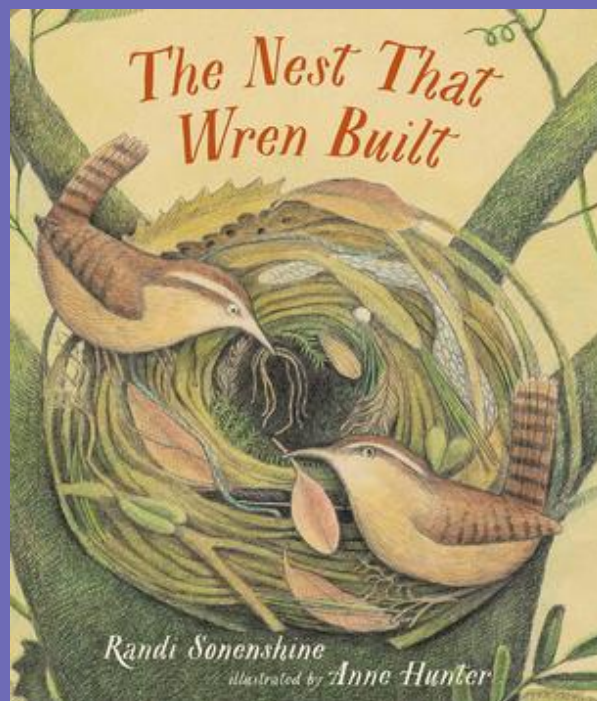
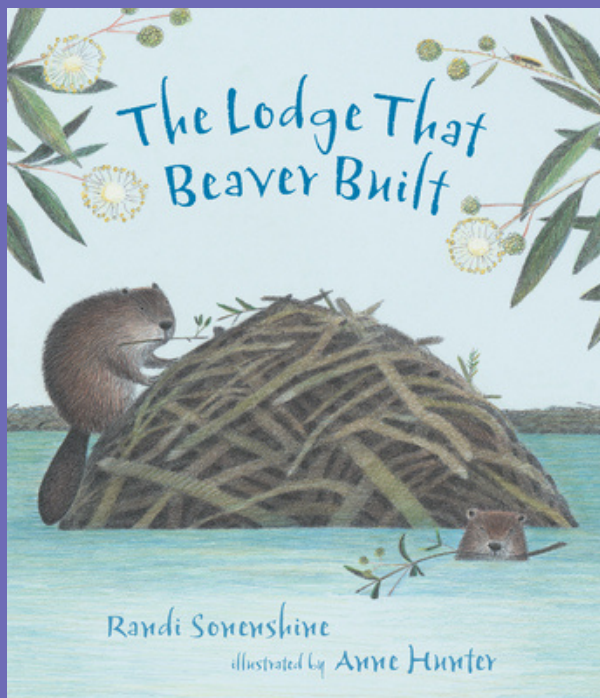


## Book Title(s):

The Lodge That Beaver Built  
The Nest That Wren Built

## Curriculum Connections:

animals and their environment; research;  
narrative writing



# The Other Story

Whose story is untold? Students will choose one of the hidden animals in the the illustrations to research. Then they will write a story using details from the book and knowledge of the animal to write the story.

Examples:

NEST: ant, squirrel, rabbit, beetle, mice, snail, ladybug  
Lodge: kingfisher, owl, dragonfly, bear, rabbit, frog

## The Snail's Tale

One day, Snail was taking a long stroll in the forest. Strolling was hard work for a snail, and soon, she became tired.

"I need a nap," she thought. "But how will I protect myself from the sun and predators?"

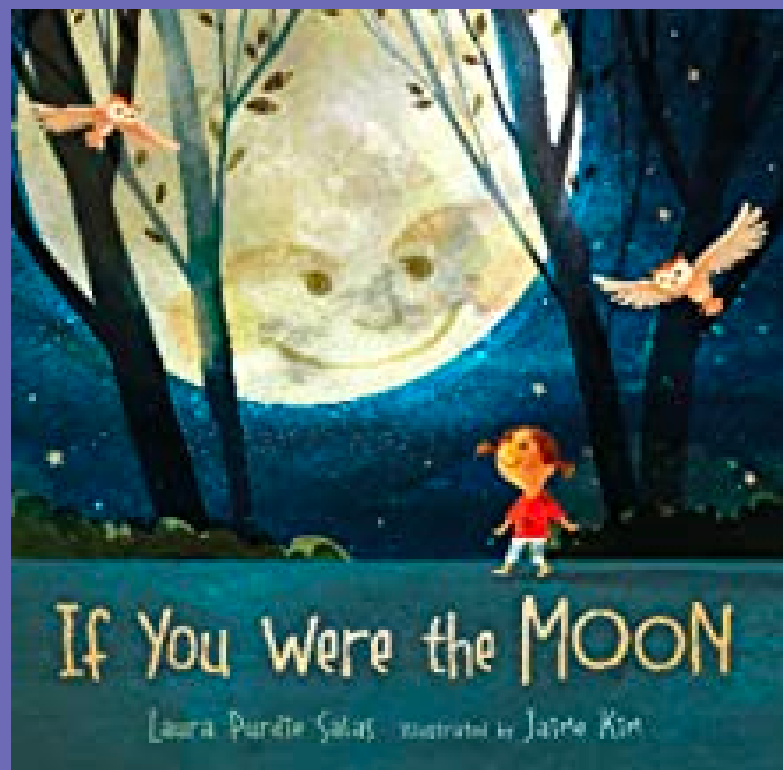
Just then, the perfect snail-sized leaf drifted down from a tree...

## Book Title(s):

Any book!

## Curriculum Connections:

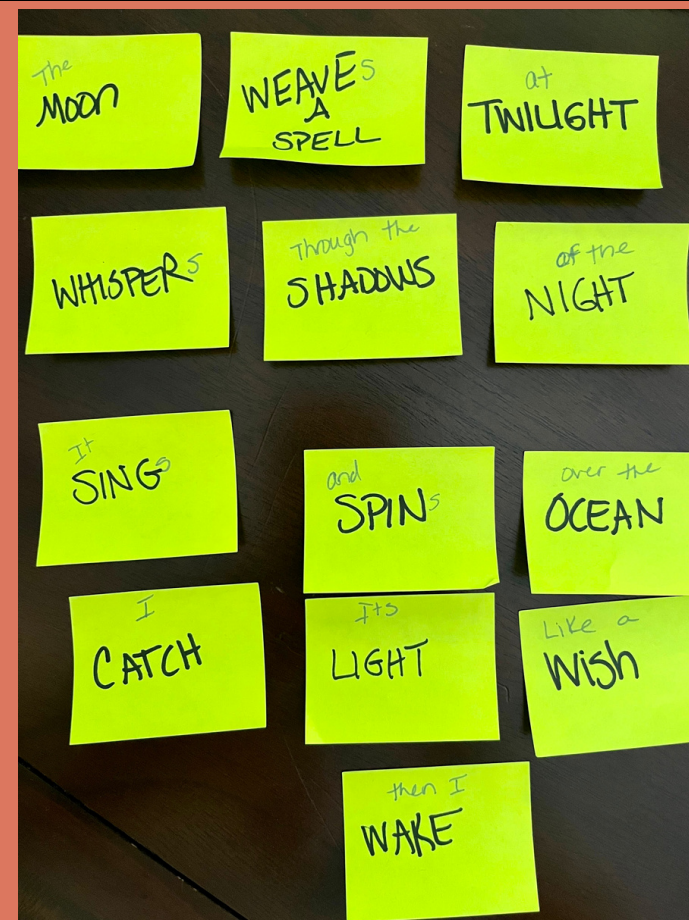
STEM content; language use; writing poetry; figurative language;



## Found in-the-book Free-Verse

During a Read-Aloud (or independent reading), students write 10-20 memorable/appealing words and phrases from the book on sticky notes or index cards then arrange them into a poem. They can write and illustrate the poem then read it aloud. This can be done as a whole class with the students dictating or each student writes a poem using the same words.

The teacher can supply connector words (pronouns, prepositions, articles, etc.).



The moon weaves a spell at twilight  
whispers through the shadows  
of the night.

It sings and spins over the ocean.  
I catch its light like a wish  
then I wake.



## Book Title(s):

Nonfiction/informational books about animals.

## Curriculum Connections:

Animal needs; life cycles; animals and their environments; informational writing



## New Critter's Survival Guide/Instruction Manual

After reading several books about an animal, students create an illustrated booklet with instructions for a newly born/hatched critter based on what they have learned. Scaffold this by brainstorming and charting facts first. To simplify the task, students can present the information as Do's and Don'ts.

### Baby Bird's Survival Guide



### Hatching Time!



### Do

Use your special egg tooth!

### Don't

PANIC!



**Book Title(s): Any animal book!**

Nightsong, Ari Berk

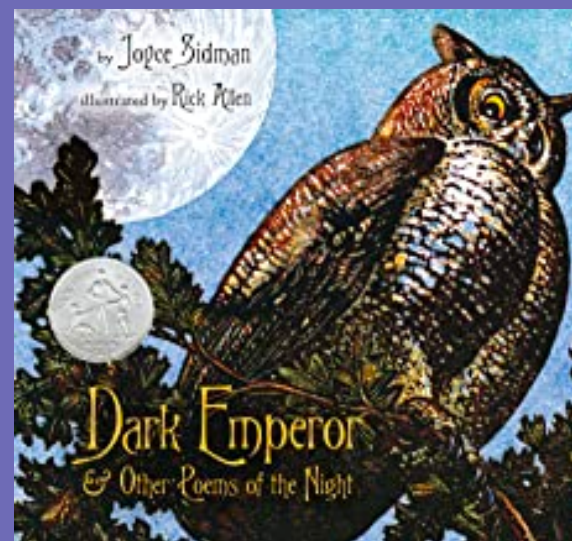
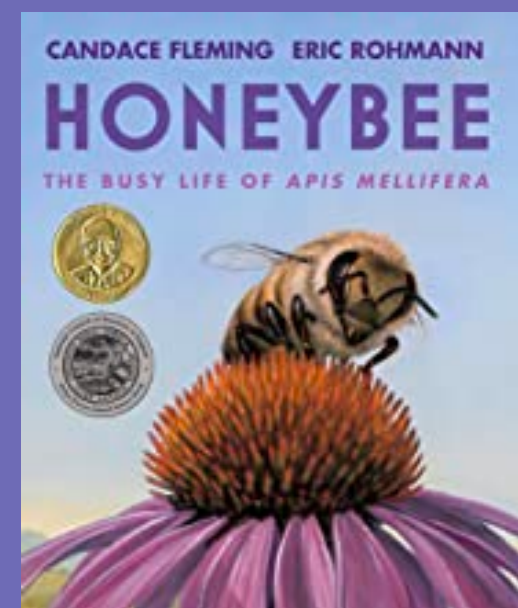
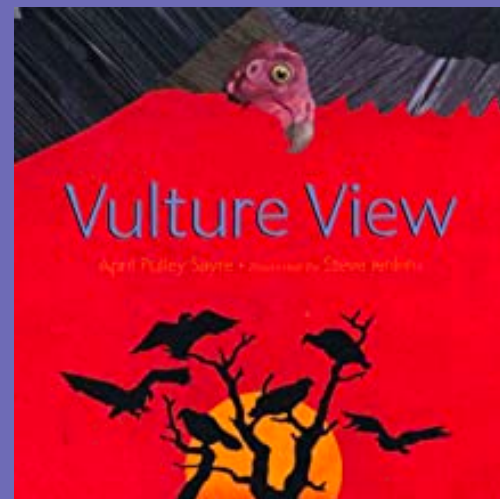
Honeybee, Candace Fleming

Vulture View, April Pulley Sayre

Dark Emperor; Song of the Water Boatman  
by Joyce Sidman

## Curriculum Connections:

Animals (life cycles, habitat, etc.); language  
use; writing poetry; figurative language;



## I Am Poem

Students will write an "I Am" poem from the point of view  
of the animal (ex. bird, beaver, honeybee, bat, etc.)

I am (adjectives)

I Hear

I see

I feel

I want

I am (animal name)

I am big-toothed

I hear a tail slap the water

I see coyote in the distance

I feel kits climbing onto my back

I want a safe pond for my lodge and family

I am a mama beaver

## Book Title(s):

The Nest That Wren Built; The Lodge That Beaver Built; Mama Built a Little Nest; Building; This is the Nest That Robin Built (any book about animal homes, building structures, etc.

## Curriculum Connections:

STEM content; language use; writing poetry; figurative language;



## How to Build a Nest

Students construct a model of a structure, like a bird's nest, using craft and/or natural materials. As they build, they write the steps in order using transition words to show sequence. Scaffold with sentence frames.

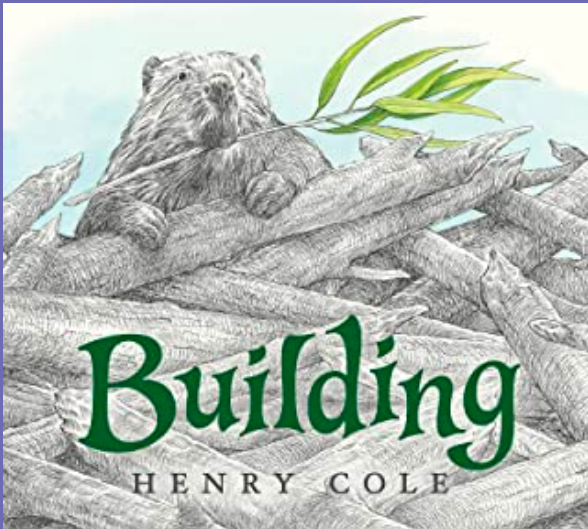
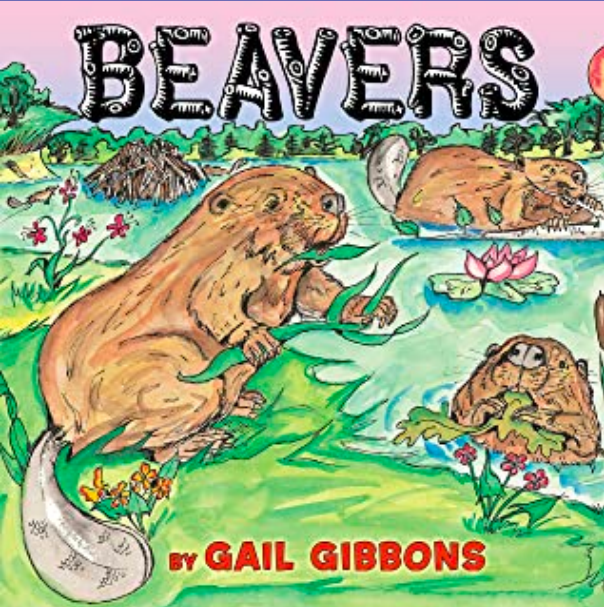
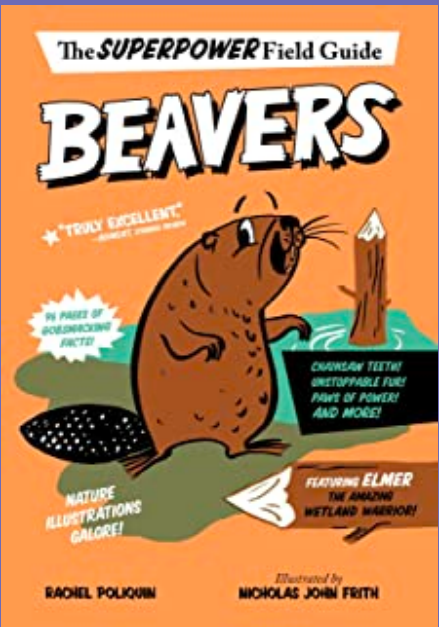
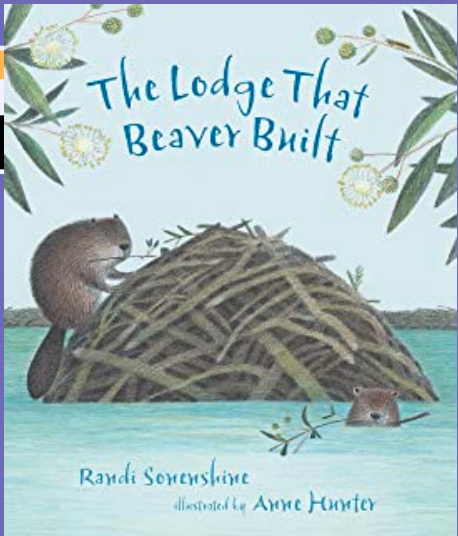
More advanced learners can write a paragraph using the list as a guide. The building part can be designed as a STEM challenge. Younger children can draw and label the model, numbering each piece in the order they used it in the building process.





**Book Title(s):**  
The Lodge That Beaver Built  
Building (Henry Cole  
The Superpower Field Guide Beavers  
(Poliquin)  
Beavers (Gail Gibbons

**Curriculum Connections:**  
Ecosystems; animals and their  
environments; informational writing



# The Importance of...

Create a chart showing the benefit an animal provides the environment and other animals. Base the chart on the structure/content of the text. Have students use the chart to write an informational text or create a presentation about why the animal is important.

## The Importance of Beavers

Animal	Season	Benefit
muskrat	Fall and winter	Shelter/safety
heron	Spring, summer, fall	fish
goose	spring	Nesting site
ducklings	spring	Safety from the hawk

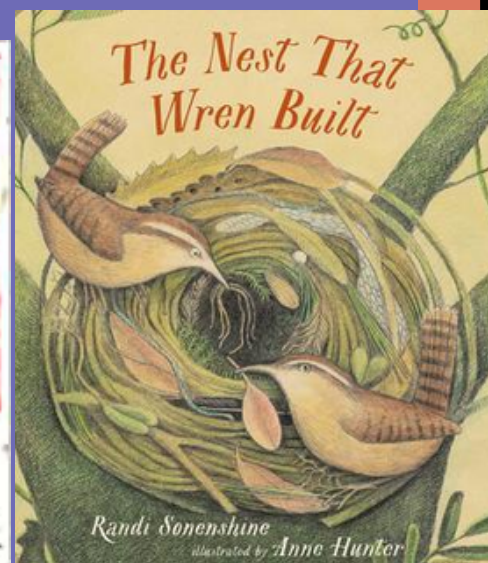
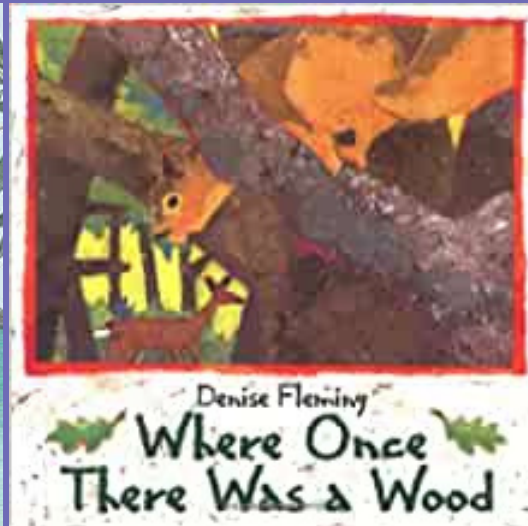
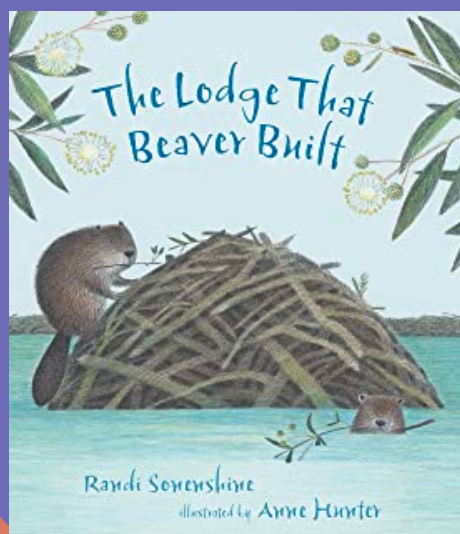
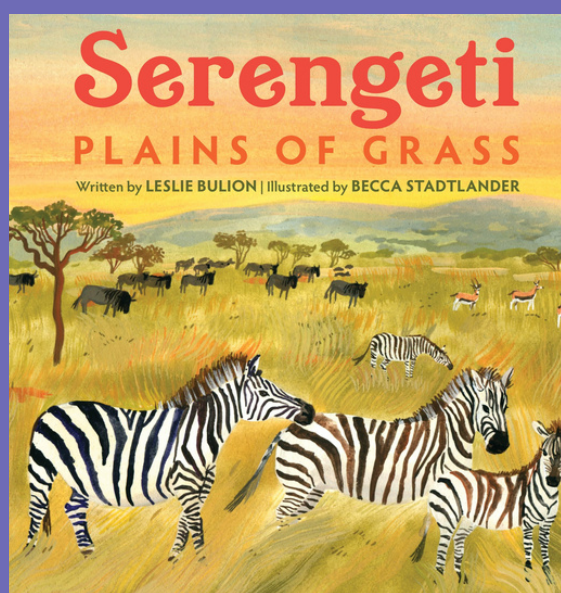


## Book Title(s):

Any books with animals in their own habitats.

## Curriculum Connections:

Ecosystems; animals and their environments; adaptations, narrative writing



# STEM Storytelling Cubes

Create one cube with different animals from the book/s you have read. Create another cube with settings different from the book. Students will role the cubes and write and/or tell a story about the animal in the new location. For a STEM challenge, use different ecosystem on the setting cube. Students write a story about how the animal adapts to its new environment in order to meet its needs (shelter, food, water). Also challenge them to include other animals they would meet in the new ecosystem.

\*STEM bonus challenge! Construct a model of the animal in its new habitat

