



HOOT & HONK Just Can't Sleep

By Leslie Helakoski

TEACHER GUIDE

By Ed Spicer

Hoot & Honk Just Can't Sleep by Leslie Helakoski explores basic science concepts for our youngest explorers. Helakoski flies young scientists into the dream world of both nocturnal and diurnal birds and plays with the problem of accidentally finding oneself in the wrong nest! Young investigators show their mastery of what it means to be a nocturnal owl as well as a diurnal goose. Details on each page allow students to compare and contrast both birds. The delightful lyrical language allows young readers to sway and play along with the lovely lush text that blends into the art skillfully. Young readers will laugh when, for example, owl is expected to eat bugs and seeds. The genius of this book is that it provides a natural way for our

youngest scientists to use the pattern to predict the science-based action that will follow. Not only does Helakoski provide prediction practice for the science, language teachers will appreciate the natural way students will also predict the end rhymes. Helakoski has created a rich and layered text for our youngest students with artwork that could be featured in a fine art gallery. The minimal text is just perfect for our youngest scholars. The fact that this book will also provoke discussions about important biology concepts will never fly in the way of the fact that this book is both fun and gorgeous. All learning for young students should come with a book like this one!

This guide is aligned with the Common Core Curriculum standards. Educators can easily find grade specific standards at www.corestandards.org, which is where the following standards are found.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.1 [<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/K/1/>]

With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.2 [<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/K/2/>]

With prompting and support, identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.3 [<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/K/3/>]

With prompting and support, describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.4 [<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/K/4/>]

With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.5.9 [<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/K/5/>]

Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.6 [<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/K/6/>]

Name the author and/or illustrator of a text and define the role of each in presenting the ideas or information in a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.7 [<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/K/7/>]

With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear [e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts].

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.8 (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/K/8/>)
With prompting and support, identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.10 (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/K/10/>)
Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

Pre-Reading Thoughts and Ideas:

Before reading, have young students make a list of all the birds they know. Write them down and ask about what we know about each of these birds. What do they eat? What are they known for? Where do they live? Draw them. Talk or write about what they are doing or what they are saying.

Since this book deals with baby birds, ask about what different baby birds are called. The book is set near a farm, which allows for the opportunity to explore the difference between a big city and a rural area. Compare and contrast what one may find in a city but not on a farm. What would we likely see on a farm that we would not see in a city? What things would we see in either place?

Talk about taking naps. You should find that you have several students who do not like to take naps and it is likely that at least one student will say that he or she does not like naps because it is too light out to sleep. Regardless, however, shift the discussion about when students do go to sleep. If you have students who have parents that work a late shift, compare this to those who work a day shift. After having laid the groundwork for the fact that they sleep at night and are diurnal creatures (and DO use this word often), ask which creatures are awake when we go to sleep. Make a list of all the creatures we think are awake when we are asleep. Explain that these animals are nocturnal. Make a list of animals that are diurnal. See if you can come up with about ten animals that are diurnal and ten that are nocturnal, which may be a bit more difficult.



Discussion/Activity Guide:

When working with young students on a new book, it is important to deal with concepts of print. Begin with a close examination of the book. Take off the dust jacket. Ask for predictions before even opening the book. Explain that good readers are making predictions and asking themselves questions right from the start. Why did Helakoski use different colors for Hoot's name and Honk's name? Which bird is which? Why? Why is the top of the cover light blue? Why is the bottom portion dark blue? What kind of birds do you think are in this book? Where are these two birds? Why is the purple bird upside down? It is important to stress that predictions are NEVER right and NEVER wrong. They are based on our best thinking. They are not wild guesses either. When you receive evidence that you need to change your prediction, you do! And then you make another one.

My bias is to read the book all the way through without stopping for questions, or at least lengthy answers and discussions the very first time. Students need the opportunity to simply hear the text and see the illustrations without being influenced by activities and explanations and interpretations. And every approach has its exception based on the living, breathing students in front of you. In general, however, I prefer to read uninterrupted and then go back and do activities and ask questions and explore.

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- Play a game in which students either pretend to be asleep or pretend to be wide awake and jumping and moving (based on the space in which you have to work). Using the animal names from your list and a “sun” or “moon” (you could turn on a flashlight with a yellow screen over it for the sun and turn it off for the moon—be creative). Hold up the sun and draw an animal from your hat, say, a rabbit. Students would jump up and down and be “awake—diurnal.”

If, however, you drew a bat with the sun, students should lie down and go to sleep because bats sleep when the sun is up and are nocturnal. Play until young students understand the meaning.



- Collect reasons we have for not being able to sleep. Would these reasons be the same for a nocturnal animal? Make predictions for things that would keep us awake if we were nocturnal.
- A science extension idea is to work with your school or public librarian and collect information about how long owls, geese, snakes, mice, beetles (or other bugs), frogs, crows, chickens, and cows sleep. Where do they sleep? How do they stay safe? Throw in a few other hibernating animals, such as bears or skunks or bees. See whether students figure out that snakes, frogs, and some bugs hibernate. Have students act out the different ways these animals find a place to sleep and fall asleep. Compare and contrast with, say, a Venn Diagram what diurnal animals look for in a sleeping spot versus what a nocturnal animal would want. Many of us want a dark, quiet place to sleep—would a nocturnal animal want a noisy, well lit place to sleep? Why or why not? A good addition or alternative to a Venn diagram is to designate spots in the room to move to: “This side of the room is the dark side. The opposite side is very bright. The middle of the room is half dark and half light.” You may add other elements to the other two sides, such as “high in a tree” and “under ground” to show that an owl might be, according to some students, in the corner of the very dark/high in a tree section of the room. You will have to model various possibilities before starting, but this is an excellent way to build understanding using movement. And as students begin to understand it, you can add even more variables, such as where predators may be, etc. Students may enjoy building various habitats for various animals to sleep and live.
- Vocabulary development with young students is facilitated greatly with movement. When you read, “*Grasses sway*,” make sure you sway when you read it. When you read, “*Storms rumble*.” Rumble when you read this line. Ask for volunteers to sway, rumble, bend, and tumble. When you read, pause to see whether students will fill in the word “*tumble*.” Do this regularly with the rhymes.
- Play the opposite game. It says, “*Grasses sway*.” Do the opposite. Look at the illustration. Draw other things that are swaying. Draw them when they are doing the opposite of swaying. What would that be? Act out bending. Act out the opposite. Draw other things that bend. Draw them not bending. What do they look like if they are not bending? Ask who knows what “*tumble*” means. Have someone demonstrate tumbling.
- For fun, continue this opposite game and use your list of animals. Ask what is the opposite of, say, a bat. You will need to stress that there is not a correct answer and may find it helpful to start with the opposite of a dog or the opposite of a lion. You will be working on identifying attributes and other characteristics, such as nocturnal animals and diurnal animals, large animals and small animals, bright colored animals and muted animals, carnivorous versus herbivores, etc. The goal is having the students figure out reasons for deciding something is the opposite. You could even show pictures of various animals from the same or different animal families and have students decide “*same*” or “*different*.”
- And don't forget to play basic rhyming games too. A very simple and fun game is to find a word in the book such as “*day*.” Go around the room and have students say a different word that rhymes with day without repeating what someone else says. Set a goal depending on the pair, “*Let's see if we can find at least eight different rhyming words for day without repeating.*”
- Make cards of the pairs of words in this book (and feel free to add others such as nocturnal and diurnal and any others appropriate for your students). You might have: bedtime, playtime, dark, light, sleep, awake, open, close, moonlight, sunlight, babies, adults, chicks, hens, owl, owlet, lost, found, sunrise, sunset, safe, dangerous, farm, city, bright, dim, night, day, wake, doze, Hoot, and Honk. Put these cards in a hat and have students draw one card secretly (help with reading if necessary--quietly). Students do not show anyone their card or say what they drew. Position them around the room in a circle. When all students have their card, set a timer for two minutes (or whatever time works for your group) and then have them show their card and find their opposite. When they find their opposite, have a designated

spot for them to go. Play a few rounds making sure that students receive different word pairs each time.



- Compare and contrast grass, trees, and eggs. What happens if a tree sways or bends? What happens if a grass sways or bends? What happens when an egg tumbles? Can a tree tumble? Can grass? Look at the illustration and have students identify all the eggs. Ask where they came from. This is an excellent page to discuss the difference between fiction and nonfiction. Can an egg really tumble in a storm? If you have access to an outdoor area, you could demonstrate with a real egg or two to show what happens when a real egg falls and tumbles.
- On the spread in which the goose and owl are inspecting the eggs, ask students to explain what will happen next and tell why. The next page shows Hoot hatching with the goslings, but have students draw and/or write how the eggs got to where they were and what the owl and goose did next. Helakoski has purposely only suggested the complete timeline. Check to make sure students understand cause and effect. You are checking to make sure that students understand that the two parents picked up the wrong eggs that tumbled away during the storm and brought them back to the nest.
- Take a piece of paper and fold it into fourths (or more if your group is capable). Number the boxes from one to four. Show students that Helakoski has shown you what happens in the first box. Show the page with “Grasses Sway.” Show students that she has also shown you what happens in the fourth box. Show the page with Hoot hatching. Then have students draw and label what happened in boxes two and three. If students really do not get it, show them that Helakoski has given a hint on the spread with the goose and owl inspecting the eggs. With more advanced students, you can add more folds and have them draw out predictions for how the eggs got to the final nest.
- On the Bedtime spread. Have students explain why the illustrator drew the owl so that it looks upside down. You may have students confuse the owl with a bat at first. This is an exposure to a visual metaphor. It is matched by the question mark after Bedtime. It is okay if very young students do not see this, but you do not want them to think that owls sleep upside down like bats either.
- What do I eat? Play a game with students in which you have an owl and a goose. Have students pick either the goose or the owl. Have them select a card (or an object) out of a hat or box. These cards are two or three objects that an owl or a goose would really eat and more that one or both would not eat, including some that are egregiously wrong, such as a banana split. The student either says yum or ick. For each object that an owl or goose really eats, have a picture or text of the bird eating that object. If a student gets it right you can provide a cracker, m&m, or some treat for a reward if you wish. Wild geese eat grass, grains, plant material, insects, and small fish (mostly). Owls are carnivorous. They may also eat insects, fish, and frogs but they are known more for eating small rodents and mammals. After playing this game, look closely at the spread with the scratching and scratching. In addition to talking about the buried critters and the pond frog and why they might be keeping the owl awake, have students demonstrate the difference between scritch and scratching; scuttling and splashing.
- Watch the BBC video showing owls and other birds fly. There is no goose, but it does show and allow you to hear the silent flight of an owl: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WigEGNnuTE>
- Pass out a piece of construction paper to students. Have them flap the paper like a goose and like an owl. If you can hear the paper, it is a goose. If you cannot hear it, it is an owl.
- What sounds do you hear on a farm? Go around a circle and have students say a sound that they would hear on a farm without repeating (allow help).
- Have students write, draw, or act out this story if it were two different animals that were switched. What would happen if a panda was switched with a raccoon? What would happen if a moth is switched with a butterfly? A dog with a cat? Have students draw and write their own switched up stories.

- The front end papers are very different from the back end papers. Don't forget to have students explain why! The page after the title page is a solid yellow color. Why? On the half title page, Hoot and Honk are different colors, the ampersand is blue this time, and the remaining words are now white. Have students create their own color combinations for this title. Have them think of a word and its opposite and then match those words to animals that remind them of those words. For example, a student may pick tall and short. A tall animal could be a giraffe. A short animal could be a guinea pig. Have them name the animals and figure out a problem they both could have. For example, *Neko and Gizmo Just Can't Reach*, could tell the story of how Neko cannot reach low things and Gizmo cannot reach high things. Then they get to design the title in the manner of Hoot and *Honk Just Can't Sleep*.

About this collection of activities:

It is always my fear that teachers will think that activities are the only way for students to really understand a story. The most important activity is to share this book with students. Read it, act it out, sing it, have fun with it! If that is the only "activity" you do, it will be plenty. These activities should be seen as a springboard for your own activities based on your knowledge about the students with whom you work. So pick some of these, adapt them for your students. The BEST activities are the ones that students generate themselves. My hope is that this group of ideas will serve as a spark for your own plans for how to motivate your students to fall in love with this book and with reading in general. You will always know if you are successful because your students will spontaneously scream: READ IT AGAIN! Enjoy!

About Ed Spicer:

This guide is created by Ed Spicer, a retired first grade teacher from Allegan, Michigan. Spicer won a 2016 *Outstanding People for Education* award from the Allegan County School Board Association. He is a *Cool Teacher* award winner for Grand Valley State University's educational television station. He has taught a Graduate Young Adult Literature class, served on the Printz committee, the Caldecott committee, and many other book committees for the American Library Association. Ed has written more than 40 curriculum guides for students of all ages.

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