

# November is Science Picture Book Month

By Terrence E. Young, Jr.

*"One hundred years from now it will not matter:*

*What kind of car you drove,  
What kind of house you lived in.  
How much you had in your bank account  
Nor what your clothes looked like  
But the world may be a little better  
because you read to your child."*

Author unknown

Children enjoy science—both emergent and sophisticated readers often choose science as their favorite genre of literature. The picture books for the youngest readers (and nonreaders) provide a wonderful opportunity for shared learning experiences. Children naturally enjoy listening to, and discussing stories. Sharing books frequently with young children is one of the most effective ways to develop literacy at an early age. The number one thing that helps children become good readers is to read to them. Reading a beautiful and accurate science book to a child opens up a world of wonder to them. Having children listen to and respond to science stories and science poems appears to be one of the most beneficial means of extending and developing their scientific literacy. Reading good science books to children challenges their thinking on many different topics. As they grow, it is important to provide children with interesting books that they can read and enjoy on their own, for this is the habit that leads to lifelong learning.

2011 marked the inaugural year for Picture Book Month. Across the globe, schools, libraries, booksellers, and book lovers are coming together to celebrate the print picture book.

The website, [PictureBookMonth.com](http://PictureBookMonth.com), features essays from "Picture Book Champions," thought leaders in the children's literature community. Each day in November, a new essay will be posted from a notable picture book author and/or illustrator.

Picture Book Month partners include The American Booksellers Association and The American Association of

School Librarians. The Children's Book Council, Reading is Fundamental, and the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. A downloadable promotional kit is available as well as certificates, posters, and bookmarks.

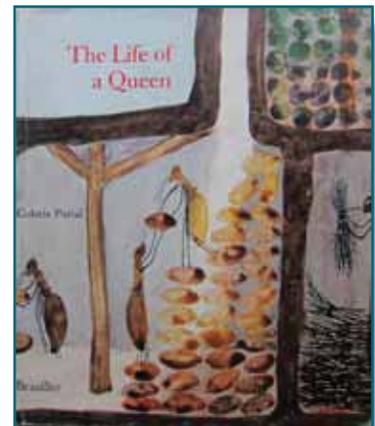
Founder Dianne de Las Casas said, "I'm excited about this year's Picture Book Month. We have an incredible lineup of Picture Book Month Champions and their essays are a wondrous testament to the power of picture books."

AAAS has been reviewing children's science books since it started publishing its Science Books lists in the early 1960s. Beginning in 2005, we have been awarding the AAAS/Subaru *SB&F* Prizes for Excellence in Science Books. The prizes celebrate outstanding science writing and illustration for children and young adults and are meant to encourage the writing and publishing of high-quality science books for all age group. AAAS believes that, through good science books, this generation, and the next, will have a better understanding and appreciation of science. In celebration and support of the 2012 November is Picture Book Month, *SB&F* is proud to reacquaint you with some of our favorite science picture books as we support this literacy initiative.

## A Picture Book from Our First Issue

*The Life of a Queen*, written and illustrated by Colette Portal (From the German by Marcia Nardi) NY: George Braziller, 1964, unpagged.

A beautiful book which shows the rise and fall of an "ant city" from the fertilization of the queen to the invasion and destruction of the city by black ant. The text gives a good, accurate idea of ant civilization and its beautiful illustrations will greatly appeal to young children. (Science Books: A Quarterly Review. Volume 1, Number 1, page 35.)

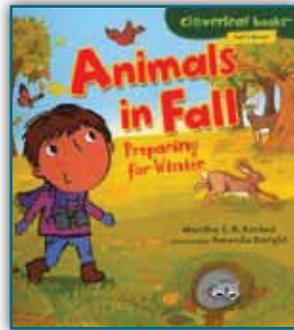


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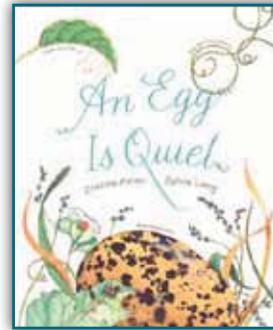
# Favorite Picture Books

***Animals in Fall: Preparing for Winter***, by Martha E.H. Rustad (Illus. by Amanda Enright; from the Cloverleaf Books—Fall's Here! Series.) Minneapolis, MN Millbrook Press 2011. 24pp. 2010053468. ISBN 9780761350668. Glossary; Index; C.I.P.

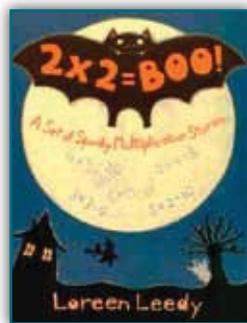


*Animals in Fall: Preparing for Winter*, relates the animals preparation for winter through pictures and text. The story details how some animals go south to warmer climates while others go to sleep or change their appearances.

***An Egg Is Quiet*** by Dianna Aston, (Illus. by Sylvia Long). Chronicle Books, 2006. 32 pp. ISBN 9780811844284.

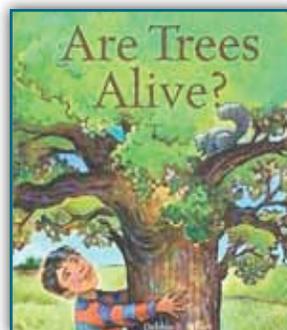


This book is visually pleasing, educational, and utilitarian—destined to be a "keeper" in many homes. The hand lettered text is richly garnished by over 100 ink and watercolor illustrations of eggs (and many of the adults that produce them) of a rather eclectic array of species, all identified by common names. A child who might have had it read to him or her as a preschooler could use it several years later to identify an unknown egg found on a field trip.



***2 x 2 = Boo! : A Set of Spooky Multiplication Stories***, written and illustrated by Loreen Leedy. Holiday House 1995. 32pp. ISBN 9780823411900.

Six funny math stories with spooky characters, including witches, ghosts, and bats, introduce the multiplication facts from 0 through 5.



***Are Trees Alive?*** by Debbie S. Miller (Illus. by Stacey Schuett) Walker 2002. 32pp. ISBN 9780802788016.

Against the backdrop of rich, earthy colors, Miller's simple text compares the many ways that trees and humans are alike.

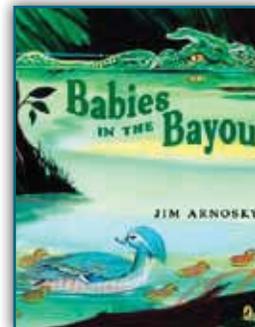
***Actual Size***, by Steve Jenkins. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. 34pp. ISBN 9780618375943.

How big is a crocodile? What about a tiger, or the world's largest spider? Can you imagine a tongue that is two feet long or an eye that's bigger than your head? Sometimes facts and figures don't tell the whole story. Sometimes you need to see things for yourself at their actual size.

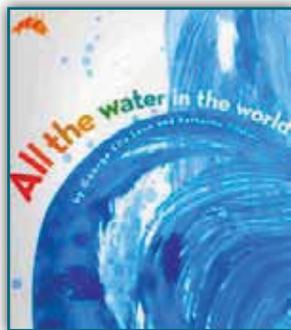


Bark, like skin, can be dark or light; and like skin, bark protects trees from harsh weather and insects. "Without sap the tree could not live, just like your body could not live without blood. Look at the veins in a leaf and compare them to the veins in your hand." The end pages show a map of the world with the locations of the 13 species illustrated in the text. An appendix contains interesting descriptions of each tree.

***Babies in the Bayou***, written and illustrated by Jim Arnosky. Putnam 2007. 32pp. ISBN 9780399226533.



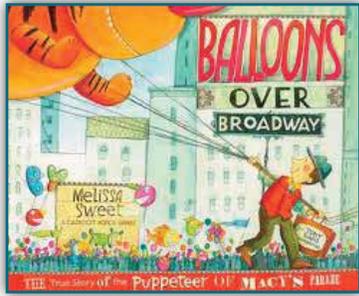
Young children will love learning about the baby animals of the bayou in this lyrical book that introduces alligators, raccoons, turtles and ducklings. Even though they might have sharp white teeth, hard shells, webbed feet, or quick claws, their mothers still need to watch over them and protect them from harm. As he's done so masterfully with other animals and environments, Arnosky, one of our most respected naturalists, presents an intimate look at an unusual and rich habitat.



***All the Water in the World***, by George Ella Lyon (Illus. by Katherine Tillotson) Atheneum 2011. 34pp. ISBN 9781416971306.

Water is a vital resource and many creatures depend on it for survival. Often-rhyming, didactic poetry beautifully mixes with appealing, digitally-composed artwork to introduce young readers to the water cycle. The teacher's guide is available at [http://www.georgeellalyon.com/files/water\\_guide.pdf](http://www.georgeellalyon.com/files/water_guide.pdf)

**Balloons Over Broadway: the True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy's Parade**, written and illustrated by Melissa Sweet. Houghton 2011. 34pp. ISBN 9780547199450.

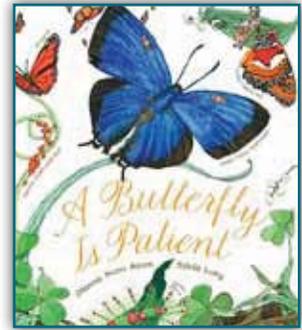


This 2012 Robert F. Sibert Medal Winner and Caldecott Honor

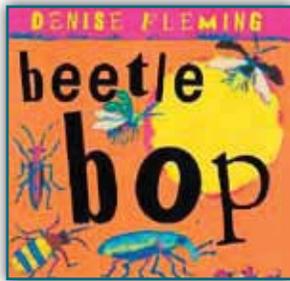
book tells the story of puppeteer Tony Sarg, the man who first invented the helium balloons that have become the trademark of the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Combining typography with watercolor and scrapbook-style illustrations, Sweet begins Sarg's story by chronicling his development as a puppeteer and demonstrating the curiosity and imagination that guided his hands (literally).

collage style of anatomically correct and scaled skeletons will engage young readers. The last two pages contain an assortment of bone facts.

**A Butterfly is Patient**, by Dianna Hutts Aston. (Illus. by Sylvia Long) Chronicle 2011. 34pp. ISBN 9780811864794.



From iridescent blue swallowtails and brilliant orange monarchs to the worlds tiniest butterfly (Western Pygmy Blue) and the largest (Queen Alexandra's Birdwing), an incredible variety of butterflies are celebrated here in all of their beauty and wonder. The author/illustrator team of Aston and Long have several other noteworthy titles in this format: *An Egg is Quiet*, *A Seed is Sleepy*, and *A Rock is Lively*.

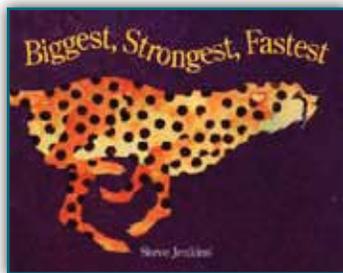


**Beetle Bop**, by Denise Fleming. Harcourt 2007. 32pp. ISBN 9780152059361.

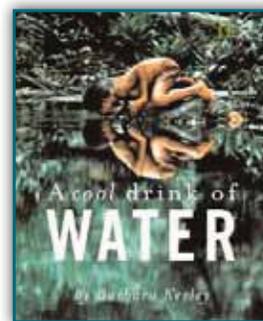
Bigger and brighter is this latest addition to the science series by the talented author. Fleming's books are more than simple, rhymed introductions to nature and its creatures. Her lyrical text demonstrates

the English language at its finest – expressive, descriptive, onomatopoeic. "Beetles are one of the largest groups of animals on earth." "Diving beetles, whirling beetles, spiraling, swirling beetles." "Beetles flip. Beetles flop...Beetles... bop!"

**Biggest, Strongest, Fastest**, by Steve Jenkins. Houghton 1995. 32pp. ISBN 9780395697016.



Cut paper collage illustrations introduce fourteen animals that surpass all others in certain physical features or abilities. Young readers can see the animal's size in relation to something familiar, and a chart on the last page indicates the size, weight, and diet of each animal, as well as where it can be found in the wild.

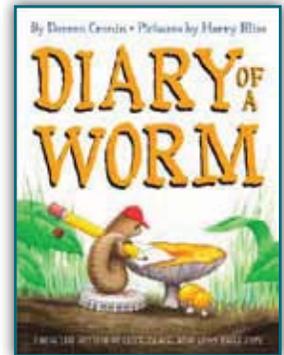


**A Cool Drink of Water**, by Barbara Kerley. National Geo-graphic 2002. 32pp. ISBN 9781426313295.

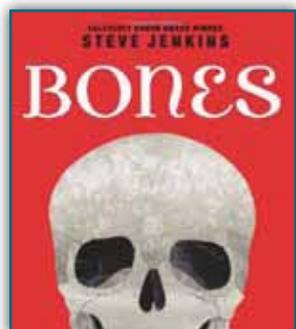
People all around the world are unified by their common need for water. Barbara Kerley brings home this point simply and eloquently in this beautiful and educational picture book that combines striking National Geographic photographs with a poetic text to show how people in various cultures use and conserve the world's most vital resource.

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**Diary of a Worm**, by Doreen Cronin. Pictures by Harry Bliss. Joanna Cotler Books, 2003. 34pp. ISBN 9780060001513.

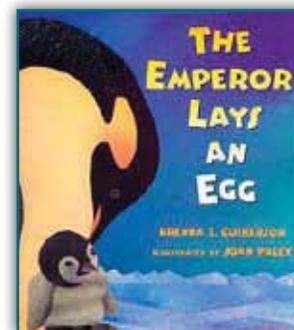


This is the diary...of a worm. A young worm discovers that there are some very good and some not so good things about being a worm in this great big world. Young readers will enjoy this hysterical journal about the daily doings and the hidden world of a lovable underground dweller.



**Bones: Skeletons and How They Work** [foldout], by Steve Jenkins. Scholastic 2010. 32pp. ISBN 9780545046510.

Caldecott Honor winner Steve Jenkins presents a fascinating look at the bones of the human body as compared to the bones of animals, and shows them off! Jenkins cut-paper



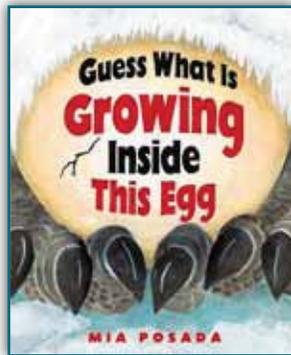
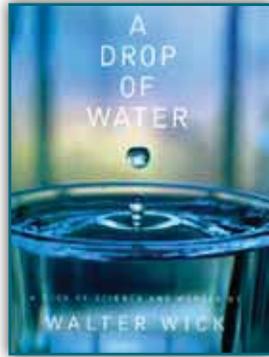
**The Emperor Lays an Egg**, by Brenda Z. Guiberson. (Illus.) by Joan Paley. Henry Holt, 2001. 32pp. ISBN 9780805062045.

Follows the cycle of life for the Emperor penguin who lays an egg in the middle of winter which hatches during the short Antarctic summer. The mother and father emperor penguins share the duties involved in

laying and nurturing eggs, and caring for the newly hatched penguins.

***A Drop of Water: A Book of Science and Wonder***, written and photographed by Walter Wick. Scholastic, 1997. 40pp. ISBN 9780590221979.

Describes the origins, characteristics, and uses of water in stunning photographs.

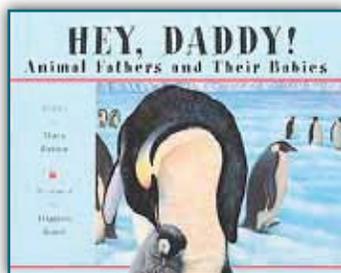


***Guess What Is Growing Inside This Egg?*** by Mia Posada. Millbrook 2007. 29pp. ISBN 9780822561927

On one page is the question: "Can you guess what is growing inside these eggs?" A hint is given in a brief paragraph:

"Hidden in a rock cave Deep beneath the oceans waves, Their

mother wraps her long arms around To keep these eggs safe and sound." Turn the page: Octopuses!! And an informative paragraph gives the reader a few facts, e.g., "They are only about the size of a grain of rice...but they are able to take care of themselves." The colorful collages give visual hints as to whose egg it is. Even the print is varied in color.



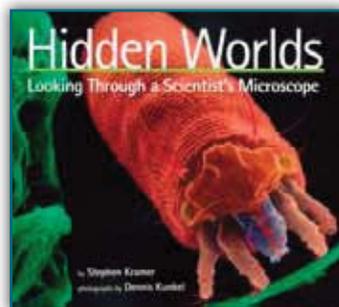
***Hey, Daddy! Animal Fathers and Their Babies***, by Mary Batten. (Illus. by Higgins Bond) Peachtree, 2002. unpagged. ISBN 1561452726.

Big, realistic, vivid art instantly captivates the reader. And the text grips him with the strange

parenting habits of mammals, birds, and reptiles. Some are familiar species (blue jay, mice) and others are exotic (the mallee fowl is of Australia; the Darwin frog of the South American rainforest). Each species is introduced on one page (the Emperor penguins rate 3 pages, but with short paragraphs!) so this could be read over a period of time.

***Hidden Worlds: Looking Through a Scientist's Microscope***, by Stephen Kramer. Photographs by Dennis Kunkel. Houghton Mifflin 2001. 57pp. ISBN 9780618055463.

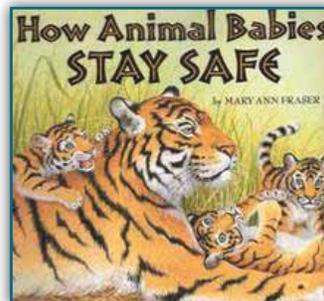
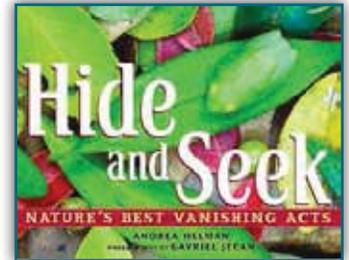
There are hidden worlds in nature—places you can visit only with a microscope.



Through the lenses of powerful microscopes, Dennis Kunkel has examined objects most people have never even thought about: a mosquito's foot, a crystal of sugar, a grain of pollen, the delicate hairs on a blade of grass. *Hidden Worlds* takes you behind the scenes of Dennis's work and explains how he captures his remarkable images of microscopic life and objects.

***Hide and Seek: Nature's Best Vanishing Acts***, by Andrea Helman. Photographs by Gavriel Jecan. Walker 2008. 40pp. ISBN 9780802796905.

First you see them, and then you don't! In habitats around the world, animals rely on clever ways to hide in plain sight. They camouflage themselves in unique ways to avoid danger or to keep undercover while hunting. Vivid color photographs take readers from one ecosystem to the next, searching high and low for animals using the best tricks of the trade to survive. Blink and you might miss these crafty creatures using camouflage to either outwit or outhunt one another.

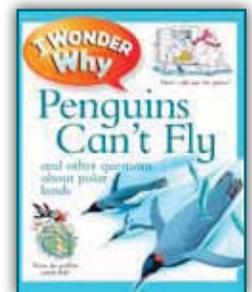


***How Animal Babies Stay Safe***, by Mary Ann Frazer. HarperCollins 2002. 33pp. ISBN 9780064452113. Series: Let's Read-and-Find-Out Science, Stage 1.

The accurate and colorful illustrations depict all the animals in their natural habitat. A wide variety of animals are pictured as helpless newborns depending on parents, each other, or even instinct for survival. An addendum lists what to do if you find a baby animal.

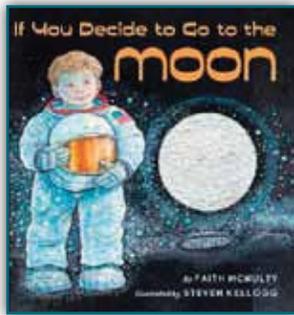
***I Wonder Why Penguins Can't Fly and Other Questions About Polar Lands***, by Pat Jacobs. Kingfisher, 2011. 32pp. ISBN 9780753465189.

The titles in this highly popular and long-running series explore the questions that young readers ask about the world around them in an unrivalled child-friendly style. The question-and-answer conversational format provides an assortment of factual information about the Earth's polar regions. There are over 25 titles in this series. Check them out!



***If You Decide to Go to the Moon***, by Faith McNulty. (Illus. by Steven Kellogg) Scholastic 2005. 38pp. ISBN 9780590483599.

"If you decide to go to the moon," writes Faith McNulty, "read this book first. It will tell you how to get there and what to do after you land. The most important part tells you how to get home.

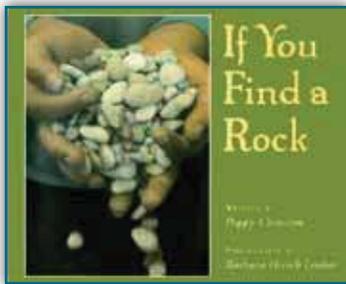


Written in the second person, the text allows the reader to participate in every aspect of the journey, from packing, to liftoff, to traveling through space. The reader lands at the Sea of Tranquility, the site of the first lunar landing.

**If You Find a Rock**, written by Peggy Christian. Photographs Harcourt, 2008. 32pp. ISBN

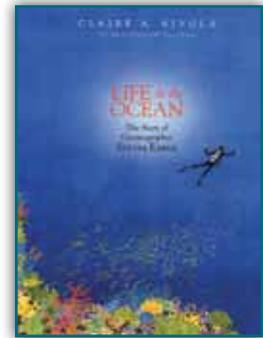
9780152393397.

Think of all the rocks there are: the skipping rocks, the splashing rocks, and the chalk rocks. Whether the found treasures are climbing rocks or wishing rocks, children can't help collecting them. Celebrate the variety of rock in this delightful book with joyful text and luminous photographs.



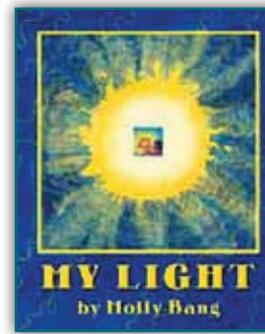
**Life in the Ocean: The Story of Oceanographer Sylvia Earle** by Claire A. Nivola. Farrar Straus 2012. 32pp. ISBN 9780374380687.

The book is the inspiring story of world-renowned oceanographer and environmentalist Sylvia Earle. This picture book biography also includes an informative Author's Note that is sure to motivate young environmentalists.



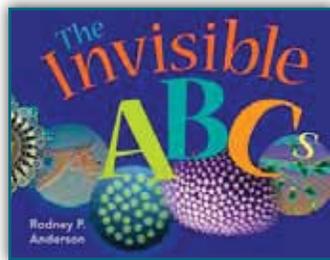
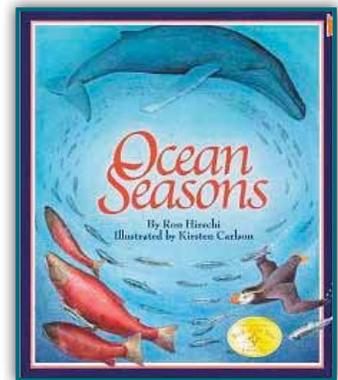
**My Light**, by Molly Bang. Scholastic 2004. 32pp. ISBN 9780439489614.

Gorgeous graphic art and a lyrical first-person narrative depict the creation of energy in a hydroelectric dam, wind turbines, a coal-burning plant, and solar cells. Four pages of detailed notes appear at the end of the book.



**Ocean Seasons**, by Ron Hirschi (Illus. by Kirsten Carlson) Sylvan Dell 2007. 32pp. ISBN 9780977742325.

Dramatic double spread illustrations capture the differences in the four seasons and all the activities that ensure during the particular season. "Spring is a burst of color...Diving birds and swimming seals dine on the young fish that live in the dense tangles of kelp." And in each season whales are featured. At the end is an activity: "For Creative Minds" along with additional information: "Seasons Come and Go, Around and Around" and "Ocean Food Web."

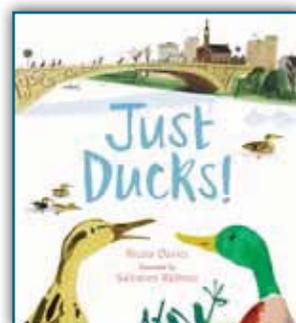


**The Invisible ABCs: Exploring the World of Microbes**, by Rodney P. Anderson. ASM Press 2006. 64pp. ISBN 9781555813864.

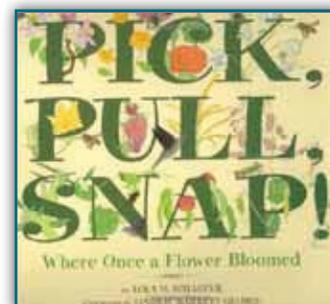
We are immersed in microbes. Dr. Anderson, a microbiologist and professor, has collected photos of microorganisms shaped like letters of the alphabet to illustrate the significant role microbes play in our daily lives. The Invisible ABCs presents answers to questions that we all have an interest in, such as "Why can cows use grass for food but humans can't?" and "Why do we get gas after we eat beans?" This alphabetic exploration of microorganisms with photographs and photomicrographs will delight readers of all ages.

**Just Ducks!** by Nicola Davies. (Illus. by Salvatore Rubbino) Candlewick 2012. 26pp. ISBN 9780763659363.

In this informative yet humorous tale, a young girl shares her fascination with the ducks that live on the river, making observations about everything from their eating habits to their courtship

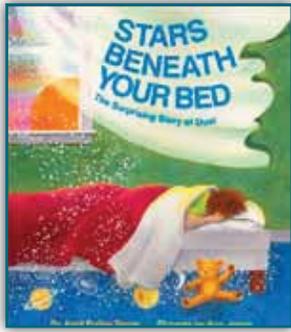


practices. Salvatore Rubbino's watercolor illustrations bring the story to life, combining both waterscapes with close-up portraits of the birds to great effect.



**Pick, Pull, Snap! Where Once a Flower Bloomed**, by Schaefer, Lola M. (Illus. by Lindsay Barrett George) Greenwillow 2003. 32pp. ISBN 9780688178345.

This lift-the-flap title offers a basic introduction to plant growth. On each spread, rhythmic text describes a plant's flower or husk and shows a cross section that reveals the seeds inside. A few lines of text explain a plant's growth, and then the page folds out to reveal the mature plant—peas, raspberries, corn, peanuts, and so on. Back matter gives gardening directions for the featured plants, and a final illustration counts through the months for preschoolers learning the seasons.

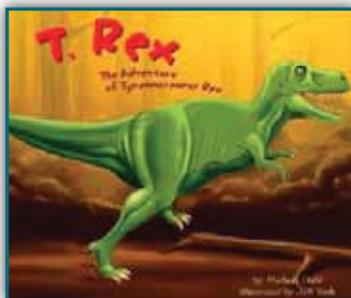
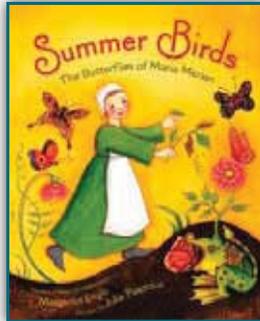


**Stars Beneath Your Bed: The Surprising Story of Dust** by April Pulley Sayre, (Illus. by Ann Jonas.) NY: HarperCollins (Greenwillow Books), 2005. 32pp. ISBN: 9780060571894.

In a poetic and lavishly illustrated package, *Stars Beneath Your Bed* explains dust—where it comes from, its longevity, how it affects sunset and sunrise, and the role it plays in the formation of raindrops.

**Summer Birds: The Butterflies of Maria Merian**, by Margarita Engle. Pictures by Julie Paschkis. Henry Holt 2010. 32pp. ISBN 9780805089370.

In the Middle Ages, people believed that insects were evil, born from mud in a process called spontaneous generation. Maria Merian was only a child, but she disagreed. She watched carefully as caterpillars spun themselves cocoons, which opened to reveal summer birds, or butterflies and moths. Maria studied the whole life cycle of the summer birds, and documented what she learned in vibrant paintings. This is the story of one young girl who took the time to observe and learn, and in so doing disproved a theory that went all the way back to ancient Greece.

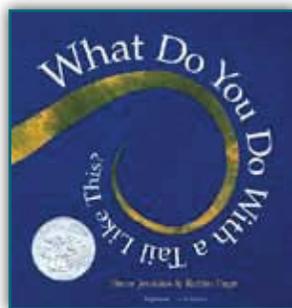


**T. rex: The Adventure of Tyrannosaurus rex**, by Michael Dahl (Illus. by Jeff Yesh). Picture Window Books 2004. 24pp. ISBN 97814048 01394.

This colorful presentation about dinosaur life reads like a story, featuring the characters *T. rex* and *Edmontosaurus*. Interesting information is included in the endnotes, such as the fact that *T. rex* was a cannibal.

**What Do You Do with a Tail Like This?** by Steven Jenkins and Robin Page. Houghton 2003. 32pp. ISBN 9780618 256280.

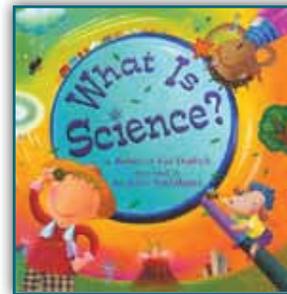
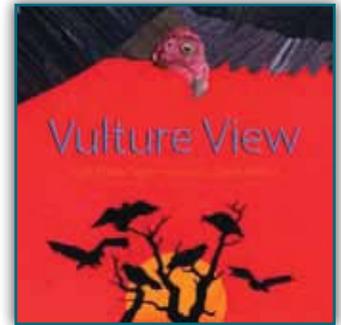
In this clever book, double-page spreads feature a question (“What do you do with a nose like this?”) and illustrations of a particular body part from a group of “mystery” animals. Turn the page and a complete illustration of each animal is pictured, with descriptive notes. This format is repeated with



ears, tails, eyes, feet, and mouths. An illustrated appendix at the end gives more details about the 30 animals pictured.

**Vulture View** by April Sayre (Illus. by Steve Jenkins) Henry Holt 2007. 28pp. ISBN 9780805075571

She’s done it again! From dust balls under the bed to vultures soaring high in the air, she captures us (young and old) with poetic text about a widely recognized bird which we know little about. “The sun is rising. Up, up. It heats the air. Up, up... Turkey vultures tilt, soar, scan to find the food that vultures can.....eat! That snake over there? No, no...Vultures smell the air. They sniff, search, seek for foods that...REEK!” At the end of the text are topics with more detail: “Soaring Up, Up, Up! The Vulture Family, Nature’s Cleanup Crew, etc. and a challenge to young scientists to research more because too little is known about the turkey vulture. Equally impressive is the cut out art of Jenkins – big, colorful double spreads. How can we use the adjective “beautiful” to describe nature’s ugliest bird, a perfect example of an oxymoron. What a grand merge of talents! A great read aloud!

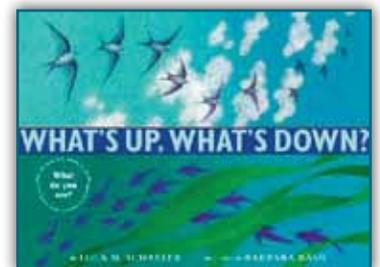


**What is Science?** By Rebecca Kai Dotlich. (Illus. by Sachiko Yoshikawa) Henry Holt 2006. 32pp. ISBN 9780805073942.

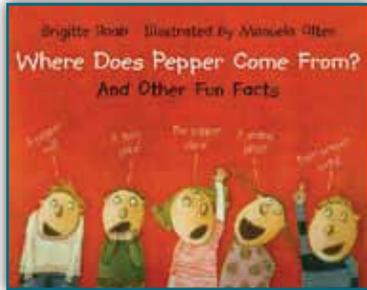
In answering this question asked by the title, over 30 topics are cited in the rhymed text: “What is science? So many things. The study of stars and Saturn’s rings.... The study of soil, of oil and gas.” “We question, we wonder, we hunt and explore the secret of caves, the dark ocean floor...What IS science? So many things!” The bright cartoony illustrations of children and the outdoors add to the appeal of the text. The reader can ask questions about the details in the pictures, getting the very young children to identify objects. For children who can read and write have them draw slips of paper with one of the thirty-odd science topics listed in the book. They can do some research and give an oral report to the class about the particular topic.

**What’s Up, What’s Down?** by Lola Schafer (Pictures by Barbara Bash) Greenwillow, 2002. 32pp. ISBN 97800602 97572

“Read this book from bottom to top and top to bottom. Look everywhere in between. What do you



see?” A fun book for story hour that piques the imagination. Turn the book sideways and follow the arrows. “WHAT’S UP if you’re a mole?” Turn the page, and the answer is “Loose, rich soil sewn together with thread-fine roots.” “What’s up if you’re a root? Proud, new grass pushing emerald blades toward the sun.” When you finally reach the “pearly moon..” turn the book over. “WHAT’S DOWN if you’re the moon?”



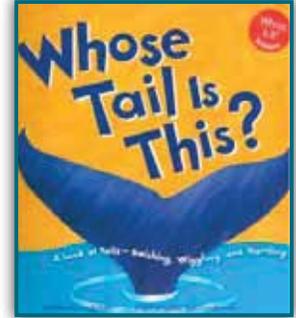
**Where Does Pepper Come From?** by Brigitte Raab (Illus. by Manuela Olten; translated by J. Alison James). North South Books 2006. 32pp. ISBN 9780735 822184.

What a fun book! Eight questions about all kinds of ordinary things in nature are translated from the original German edition and illustrated with bright comical pictures. “Black pepper is the most common spice in the world....Most pepper is grown in India, Indonesia, Brazil, and Malaysia.” Each question is followed by a silly answer and a child expressing exasperation “No!” “Why are flamingos pink? Because they’re embarrassed about being stared at in the zoo.

No! Flamingoes eat a lot of small shrimp, crabs, and algae, which have the same red carotenoid pigment that carrots have. That’s why they turn pink.” Hibernation, snail shells, salty seas, sheep wool, whales and migrating birds are other questions asked.

**Whose Tail Is This? A Look at Tails—Swishing, Wiggling, and Rattling**, by Peg Hall. (Illus. by Ken Landmark) Picture Window Books 2003. 24pp. ISBN 9781404800113.

A good book for the very young at story hour. Nice size, bright art, the tail only is shown on one page and the page is turned over for the answer. Fun facts accompany each of the seven animals. The end of the book has riddles about the information presented in the text. Other titles in the series: *Whose Ears Are These? Whose Eyes Are These? Whose Feet Are These? Whose Legs Are These? Whose Mouth Is This? Whose Nose Is This? Whose Skin Is This?*



## APRIL PULLEY SAYRE

April Pulley Sayre, the author of *Stars Beneath Your Bed: The Surprising Story of Dust*, winner of the 2006 AAAS/Subaru SB&F Prizes for Excellence in Science Books Children Picture Book category, shares her thoughts on science picture books.

“Reading aloud is a way of sharing wonder, inquiry, and voice. So science and readaloud picture books are a natural pairing. Read aloud picture books allow reflection yet also encourage discussion. Picture books are a way to joyfully and effortlessly build a child's vocabulary through tasting and playing with delicious words. (Science is full of crunchy, chewy words. Let's stop running from that. Let's embrace it!) Science also has a hugely playful, creative side; I see it with all the scientists I meet. They're jazzed up about the way the world works. I want kids to experience the joy of science. I want kids to feel connected to the real world—to have a tangible sense of belonging that reaches down to their cells. They should know that their food comes from plants, their skin creates sunsets, and that the elements in their bodies were once part of stars. Great science picture books help us to step back into the real world with refreshed, more perceptive eyes.”

## DIANNA ASTON AND SYLVIA LONG

Dianna Aston and Sylvia Long, the author/illustrator team of the winner *An Egg Is Quiet*, winner of the 2007 AAAS/Subaru SB&F Prizes for Excellence in Science Books in the Children's Science Book category, answered some questions for us about what makes science picture books so special.

### What makes science picture books to appealing to children?

**SYLVIA LONG:** “I believe that children are naturally more visual than verbal early in their lives. They can see and understand a picture long before they can explain it to you.”

**DIANNA ASTON:** Making non-fiction “sexy”—a word my boss at the Houston Post used to describe what gets a reader's attention and makes them want to read on -- is the challenge of writing science, which can be a bit dry. The adjectives I chose for our books are the best words I could think of to make eggs, seeds, butterflies and rocks sexy. One reviewer called them “lyrical science,” and that's what nature is to me. Poetic in its beauty and harmony. Nature is our greatest teacher.”

### What separates science picture books from the mass market fiction picture books?

**SYLVIA LONG:** “Victoria Rock, our editor at Chronicle Books, said from the beginning that the goal for our “non-fiction-picture books” was to marry the two genres in a way that hadn't been widely done before. There's really no good reason that a non-fiction book shouldn't be visually appealing.”

**DIANNA ASTON:** With fiction, a reader is immersed in a world of the author's imagination. With non-fiction, specifically nature books, a reader is grounded in the world we know. In this Golden Age of Technology, we spend our time in a cyber world, one that doesn't exist. Science books reveal the hidden wonder of an egg, a seed, a butterfly or rock. They seek to answer questions of why and how, to inspire curiosity. As Einstein said, “The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. Never lose a holy curiosity.” When I do school visits, children ask me why I wrote a particular book. The answer is simple: I was curious. Science books, in their often quiet way, encourage readers to look up from the TV, the computer or an electronic game, and to step into the grass and hunt for eggshells or to discover seeds with curved horns.

### What is the relationship between the text and illustrations in science picture books?

**SYLVIA LONG:** “As an illustrator, I try to supplement the manuscript, not duplicate the text visually. I try to show what the words don't say.”

**DIANNA ASTON:** “In our series, Sylvia's illustrations are so real, you feel like you can hold one of those eggs. Or take your time gazing at a butterfly that, in nature, doesn't hold still. Pictures capture young readers' attention before the text and spur their own imagination and sense of wonder. THEN the reader wants to know the story.