

This is the NEST...

With textured madness, Denise Fleming breaks away from papermaking—combining gelatin printing and collage to tell the story of Robin as she builds a nest. This spring read-alike for “This is the House That Jack Built” captures the imagination as Robin’s friends come together to help the nesting bird make a home for her eggs. Parents, teachers, and children will delight in this fascinating cumulative tale that shows how intricate nest building can be. The rhyming, alliterative language flits across the page as the critters scamper to aid Robin in her endeavors.

Learn more about how
Denise created the art for
this book (including a video)
at process.denisefleming.com.

Beach Lane Books | ISBN 9781481430838 | Grades P - 3

Character

Setting

Plot

To pique children’s interest, show the front cover of the book. Say, “I want you to think about a few things while we read this book from Denise Fleming. When we read a story, there are **characters**—who the story is about. There is a **setting**—where the story takes place; and there is a **plot**—the plan of the story.”

Read the story straight through the first time—we want to honor the integrity and rhythm and flow of the story. Then, for the second reading, ask open-ended questions—discussing a new story with children helps them process new words and new concepts. Here are some ideas for questions and concepts to discuss:

- Let’s name some characters in this story. What is their role?
 - How about unnamed animals? Are they characters, too?
- Where do you think this story is set?
 - Use clues—animals, scenery!
 - Where have you seen robins?
- Hmm, what do you think the plot for this story is?
 - Let’s go through the steps of building that nest...
 - And then the steps of growth for the baby birds...

Setting the stage by asking questions about characters, setting, and plot helps children to look for information as they read and listen.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

K.RF.3.1 - Identify and produce rhyming words.

PRINT CONCEPTS

K.RF.2.1 - Demonstrate understanding that print moves from left to right across the page and from top to bottom.

LEARNING OUTCOME

K.RF.1 - Understand and apply knowledge of print concepts, phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and fluency and comprehension as a foundation for developing reading skills.

LEARNING OUTCOME

K.RL.1 - Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

KEY IDEAS AND TEXTUAL SUPPORT

K.RL.2.1 - With support, ask and answer questions about main topics and key details in a text heard or read.

K.RL.2.2 - With support, retell familiar stories, poems, and nursery rhymes, including key details.

K.RL.2.3 - Identify important elements of the text (e.g., characters, settings, or events).

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS AND ORGANIZATION

K.RL.3.1 - Recognize familiar narrative text genres (e.g., fairy tales, nursery rhymes, storybooks).

K.RL.3.2 - With support, define the role of the author and illustrator of a story in telling the story.

SYNTHESIS AND CONNECTION OF IDEAS

K.RL.4.1 - With support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear.

K.RV.3.1 - With support, ask and answer questions about unknown words in stories, poems, or songs.

TALK

SING

READ

WRITE

PLAY

TALK about the book. What were their favorite parts? Do the illustrations add any information to the story? Did they learn anything that they didn't know before? Connect it to their own lives: Have they ever built anything? Who helped them? Have they ever helped anyone with a big project?

SING "This Is the Way We Build a Nest" to the tune of "This is the Way We Wash Our Clothes."



This is the way we build a nest, build a nest, build a nest.
This is the way we build a nest so early in the spring.
Trim the twigs to anchor the nest, anchor the nest, anchor the nest.
Trim the twigs to anchor the nest, the nest that Robin built.
Bring the string, long and strong, long and strong, long and strong.
Bring the string, long and strong to wrap around the twigs.
Share the straw, rough and tough, rough and tough, rough and tough.
Share the straw, rough and tough that covers all the rest.
Mix the mud to plaster the straw, plaster the straw, plaster the straw.
Mix the mud to plaster the straw to help keep it strong.
Gather the weeds, dotted with seeds, dotted with seeds, dotted with seeds.
Gather the weeds, dotted with seeds, that binds it all together.
Pick the grass, fresh and sweet, fresh and sweet, fresh and sweet.
Pick the grass, fresh and sweet to make a lovely cushion.
Here are the eggs, brittle and blue, brittle and blue, brittle and blue.
Here are the eggs, brittle and blue lying ready to hatch.
These are the nestlings, tufted and pink, tufted and pink, tufted and pink.
These are the nestlings, tufted and pink, reaching with open mouths.
This is the robin who fed her babies, fed her babies, fed her babies.
This is the robin who fed her babies as they grew to young fledglings.
These are the fledglings, rumped and ruffled, rumped and ruffled, rumped and ruffled.
These are the fledglings, rumped and ruffled that learned to fly – good-bye!

Before you **READ** through the story the first time without stopping, go over a few words the students might not be familiar with. After you **READ**, be sure to ask the students questions about the story, the illustrations, and how the words and pictures relate. Some questions to consider: How is the squirrel trimming the twigs? Where did the dog get the string? How do you think the string helped to build the nest? What is the toad doing? What other creature do you see that seems to appear on almost every page? Why do all the nestlings have their mouths open? Again, ask questions that connect the book to their own lives: What have you used, like mud, that plasters? What else could have been used to cushion besides grass?

WRITE a class cumulative story, having students contribute their own ideas. This will help them to better understand the structure. Show them more cumulative stories to help them get ideas.

PLAY with nest building. Have children use a clean paper plate as an anchor; show them how to start making a circle using the twigs, grasses, and other things you've assembled. They can use glue to make things stick or you can have them build and rebuild as they want. Allow them to use their imaginations to build as much of it themselves as possible.

EVERY CHILD READY TO READ – SIX SKILLS

PRINT MOTIVATION is all about being excited about books. In *This Is the Nest That Robin Built*, Denise Fleming shows the natural world in our backyard and how dramatic it can be. Drama is what intrigues children, draws them in to want to read and to be read to. How can this book, this text, these pictures motivate your child or students? It's as easy as their own backyards! That doesn't seem very dramatic, but the drama comes in when kids start making connections. What animal or animals from the story do they see in their neighborhoods, city, or state? Where will they see them, hear them, maybe even get to visit and observe them? You could challenge your class to take it to another level and write about a creature they wish lived in their backyard. Here we turn to habitats and the interconnectedness of regions and how animals live together, a link to social studies and community.



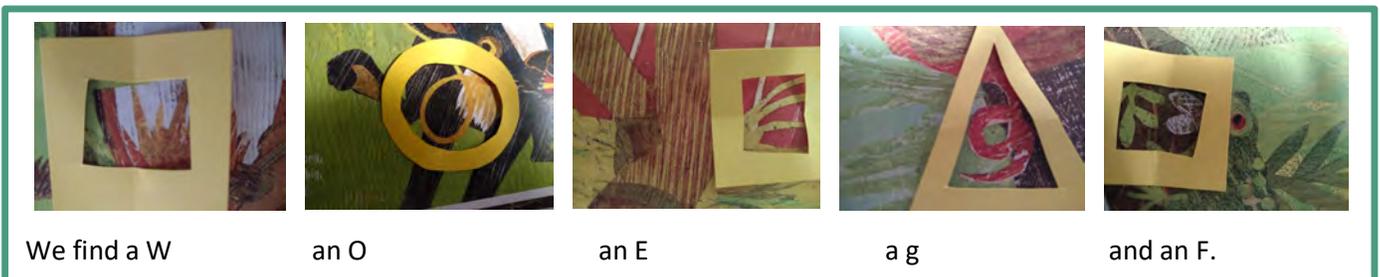
VOCABULARY Is learning the names of things. New words for students in *This Is the Nest That Robin Built* might be *anchor*, *plasters*, *cushions*, *brittle*, and *tufted*. The use of words with this text adds a level of sophistication to reading—it takes a familiar word and helps to accurately identify the new meaning nuance using the context of the story. For example, the children may know what **an anchor** is, but **to anchor** something may be unfamiliar—but can be inferred by the context. With *tufted*, show the page with the three chicks as an example to explain *feathery*. Retelling the story with props can also

help children better understand the meaning and use of new words.

Have the children try to define the words *nestling* and *fledgling*. How are they different (in meaning) from each other and how are they different from saying *baby bird*? What other animals have specific names for the developmental stages? Horses have *foal*, *weanling*, *yearling*. How about humans?

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS is all about the sounds in words. Playing with the text that has rhyming parts and adding to it is always fun for students. In *This Is the Nest That Robin Built* we find alliteration and internal rhymes. Rhyming plays with the ending sounds, and alliteration plays with the beginning sounds. The rhythm of the language catches the ear; have your children play with the language—project the text on the board, then have the students pair up and time them to see who can find the most rhyming words in a minute. Competition can really get an activity geared up.

LETTER KNOWLEDGE is learning the sounds and recognizing letters everywhere. A great way to have fun with a story's artwork in a new way is to have the children pair up again and take a square, circle or triangle, cut a smaller shape within the shape, and have them hunt for letters in the artwork (see images). It's an "I Spy" type of game. They can turn the page around any way they want to find the letters. Challenge your students to find the whole alphabet!



We find a W

an O

an E

a g

and an F.

NARRATIVE SKILLS are learning to tell a story—to describe things and events. With Robin, this is an easy task because she is building a nest. With each step of the process there is a piece of the nest and an animal that helps Robin with her building. Squirrel – twigs; Dog – string; Horse – straw; Pig – mud; Mouse – weeds; Rabbit – grass. Then we have the eggs: they hatch to nestlings, they grow to fledglings, and then they fly away... good-bye! Robin and her building process is cumulative. Cumulative stories work so well for the preschool to third grade student because they have a pattern, a rhythm, and rhyme to them. They are predictable and encourage participation and engagement on the part of the child through repetition and anticipation. Further retelling of the story with props can happen after the reading. There are lots of props that could help students retell the story: puppets, flannel pieces, and actual items like twigs, string, and grass. I've used <http://www.kizclub.com/stories.htm> before to make story props. Even if they don't have the story I want, I mix and match from other stories. They have free printables.

PRINT AWARENESS is knowing how books are organized: that we read from left to right, that the purpose of reading is to gain knowledge and that there is a connection between spoken words and written words. When the children notice that the first line of the text in *This Is the Nest That Robin Built* and the name of each animal is set in different font, point out that it draws the attention to the specific printed word. Saying *squirrel* while pointing out how the word looks different helps the child make the connection—"Hey, this is a special word!" We point out the first line and move our finger under the words to indicate that is how we read, from left to right. Making connections from print to picture helps get children ready to read. Repetition of making that connection from the emphasized word to the picture will help the child know to use that word to name the character in the picture, a clever tactic.



Connect *Letter Knowledge* and *Print Awareness* to *Art* with this activity. Take the first letter of the child's name and cut out the letter big or make a puffy paint version with glue and shaving cream. Now make that letter into an animal that starts with that letter, for example, D for Denise or Dianna could be a dinosaur. Have fun, play with the letters!

PATTERNS & WEAVING



When Robin makes her nest, she weaves all the pieces together. Use math to help your students understand how Robin weaves. Making a simple construction paper placemat will do the trick:



1. Fold a 9 x 12 piece of construction paper in half.
2. Make 7 cuts to about ½ an inch from the end.
3. Unfold the paper.
4. Cut 1-inch strips from another color of paper.
5. Demonstrate the over, under way of weaving.



If you use just one color the first time, the students see the AB pattern for math, then you can add a second color to make a different pattern.

* This is also a good fine motor activity for preschoolers and kindergarteners.

MATH



COUNTING BY THREES

It will be curious which one of your students picks up on the repetition of the ladybugs. From the title page there are three ladybugs on each full page spread. Here is a great opportunity to practice counting by threes and to inspire your class to count by other numbers. There are two skip counting mazes at the end of this guide.



BIRDS AND THEIR NESTS



Nature Walk (Engineering)

Take your children on a nature walk and have them collect items to build a nest. As you walk, talk about the things that are left lying about. Are there pieces of trash that would be safe to collect that a bird might use? Do they see any trash that could be harmful if a bird tried to use it? Is there mown grass that a bird would gather? After the children have collected materials, have them make their own nests. Focus on the importance of building—weaving items together and the order in which they are combined. To hold it all together, have them use mud (if you're brave) or modeling clay. Compare nests and have students determine what is most effective about each one. Which nest seems the strongest? Why? What materials worked the best? Have the students work together to build new nests, using the information they just discovered.

and string help weave things together; the twigs add strength.

For older grades (second and third) you can compare and contrast how habitats work together and how when one piece is damaged or goes away the ecosystem is hurt. One small piece can make a big difference. Then extend this to discuss how in organizations and human communities (even within a family unit) this translates to when each person does their part the whole is stronger. From here we go from ecology and science to social studies and society. Your group can apply this by building classroom community—use some of the ideas in the Art section for cooperative learning.

There are so many fascinating kinds of nests that birds build. In *This Is the Nest That Robin Built*, Robin builds her nest in a tree, whereas elf owls and cactus wrens build their nests in cacti and cave swiftlets make their nests in caves. Other than location, what varies? Building materials? Shape? Here is the chance to take your students to the library so they can find out more about birds and their nests. There are also some good online resources, such as nestwatch.org by Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You could encourage your student's families to get involved and have each family take on a bird and make a replica of its nest and eggs. There is plenty of material at the public library.

OTHER ANIMALS THAT MAKE NESTS

Another possible trip to the library is to study all the kinds of animals that make nests—not just birds. Using the board or a chart, make a list of these animals. Some include mice, rabbits, raccoons, gorillas, frogs, fish, American alligators, ants, bees, termites, cobras, sea turtles, and even some dinosaurs. All of these nests look quite different.

COMMUNITY

Keep building... By exploring the profusion of habitat books that are available, your classroom can keep expanding on this concept of building to include the whole community. With *This Is the Nest That Robin Built* – **with a little help from her friends**, the whole animal community lends support. Each piece adds to the construction of the nest and if one piece is left out, then it will be weaker and less effective. For example, the pig's mud is just one part, but it's integral to the structure and security—it holds everything together. The weeds fill in the gaps; the grass, hay,



Baby Animals

Have children identify the differences in appearance between Robin and her fledglings. Brainstorm why her babies might be colored differently. Research fledglings (live on the ground for almost two weeks) and discuss how environment and the need for camouflage might make a difference. What other animals have babies who are colored differently than their parents?

SCIENCE

COLLAGE



The stimulating artwork in the story can be a catalyst for children to want to make their own artwork. Help the students find out about an animal they want to build a home for like Robin built a nest for her babies. Then have them collect items to collage their own artwork for the animal they pick. For example, an arctic hare makes a cozy nest from grass and its own fur, so they could collect grass (or Easter grass) and use scraps of fake fur.

ART

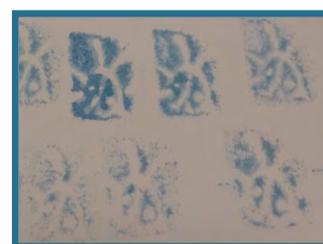
NATURE PRINTMAKING AND RUBBINGS

Go outside and pick up leaves, long grasses, shells, rocks, flowers, and other natural items to make prints. You can make impressions in clay or simply dip the object right into paint and print on paper. Try ink too!

While you're on your nature walk, be sure to take some bark rubbings. Peel the paper off of large crayons and large pieces of paper and rub the image of the bark. When you get the grasses and leaves inside try the rubbings with them too. Rubbings require large motor skills and drawing for printmaking takes smaller motor skills.

PRINTMAKING

A key ingredient for the illustrations in *This Is the Nest That Robin Built* is printmaking. Energize your students with printmaking techniques. There are so many easy ways to make your own print with WonderFoam™ sheets or Styrofoam™ (meat trays work well!). Show them that when they press into the foam with a pencil or pen, it leaves an impression. Then they can glue the foam to a piece of cardboard; press it into a stamp pad, block ink, or even acrylic paint; and then press down on paper, cloth, or another surface that is a designated work surface (see examples to the right).



CONNECT WITH DENISE

Find Denise Fleming online at her website, www.denisefleming.com. There are activities for all of her books, as well as posters, book information, a travel schedule, and more. Additional *This Is the Nest That Robin Built* activities, including a finish-the-picture, word search, crossword, robin paper flyer, and clothespin nestling puppet, are available at nest.denisefleming.com. A downloadable *This Is the Nest That Robin Built* READ poster is also available.

TEXTURE AND CONTRAST

Denise created high interest with *This Is the Nest That Robin Built* with her texture and color. Have the children create their own colorful textures.

To inspire creativity, try fork painting. I've used plastic forks with block ink or acrylic paints on watercolor paper. There are examples on Pinterest, but I like to just let the kids go at it and let them explore and try to make lots of different textures. Be sure to talk about the different colors and how they relate to each other. The primary colors are red, yellow, and blue, and the secondary colors are orange, green, and purple. The complementary colors are blue and orange, yellow and purple, and red and green—they have the highest contrast.

This is the NEST that ROBIN built

SKIP COUNT maze by 3s: 0-99

Help Robin get back to her babies by skip counting by 3s!



	3	9	12	14	10	17	22
2	6	8	18	15	16	32	27
1	3	10	21	19	3	42	40
69	7	24	27	30	39	50	45
72	66	37	35	33	36	51	48
65	75	63	56	57	54	49	96
78	81	90	60	90	51	96	98
42	57	84	87	82	93	97	



DENISE FLEMING

This is the NEST
that ROBIN built

SKIP COUNT maze by 3s: 0-30

Help Robin get back to her babies by skip counting by 3s!



12

9

17

3

3

6

15

18

16

2

7

8

24

21

1

5

9

27

25

14

13

22

23

