

A Teacher's Guide to the Award-Winning Books by Philip C. Stead & Erin E. Stead



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Philip C. Stead and Erin E. Stead are the co-creators of the 2011 Caldecott Medal Book, *A Sick Day for Amos McGee*. Their other collaborations include *Lenny & Lucy* and *Bear Has a Story to Tell*. In addition to their joint projects Philip has written and illustrated *Creamed Tuna Fish and Peas on Toast*, *Jonathan and the Big Blue Boat*, *A Home for Bird*, *Hello, My Name Is Ruby*, and *Sebastian and the Balloon*, which received three starred reviews and was lauded by *Kirkus* as being “full of whimsy, heart and delight.” Erin has also illustrated acclaimed picture books *And Then It's Spring* and *If You Want to See a Whale*, which *Booklist* called “brehtaking” in a starred review. Erin and Philip live in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

ABOUT THE GUIDE

This guide is intended to enhance children's reading experience, as well as promote the acquisition of skills and strategies.

PRE-READING AND RESPONSE STRATEGY

The following books are highlighted in this guide with a pre-reading or response strategy:

Lenny & Lucy by Philip C. Stead; illustrated by Erin E. Stead.

Peter and his faithful dog, Harold, have moved to a lonely new house. In search of friends and someone to guard the scary bridge, he creates Lenny and Lucy who provide companionship and comfort until a new friend comes along.

Strategy: Have students draw a friend they would want to build or create, listing what materials they would use and the characteristics of their new friend.

Special Delivery by Philip C. Stead; illustrated by Matthew Cordell.

Sadie discovers that mailing an elephant to her Great-Aunt Josephine is going to take a lot of stamps, so she decides to find another way that involves a plane, an alligator, a train, some bandit monkeys, and a lot of determination.

Strategy: Ask students to decide what they want to mail and to whom. Next, have them design a stamp and determine how far it needs to travel and how much it will cost to mail that object.

Sebastian and the Balloon by Philip C. Stead.

When Sebastian launches himself on a journey in a hot air balloon made entirely of Grandma's afghans and patchwork quilts, his boring day turns into the adventure of a lifetime.

Strategy: Create a chart and record each “problem” that was encountered in the story, and then next to each write down the “solution.”

Hello, My Name Is Ruby by Philip C. Stead.

Ruby, a very small bird in a very big world, is looking for a friend, so she introduces herself to a variety of animals.

Strategy: Before reading, ask students, “How do you feel when you meet someone for the first time?” As you begin reading, ask, “What is your first impression of Ruby?” Then at the end of the story, have students talk about their experiences meeting a friend for the first time and what kind of things they learned from that friend.

If You Want to See a Whale by Julie Fogliano; illustrated by Erin E. Stead.

Advises the reader what to do and not do in order to successfully spot a whale, such as wrapping up in a not-too-cozy blanket, ignoring the roses, and especially being patient.

Strategy: Revisit the book after reading the story and ask students to list all of the things from the story that you should do and not do to see a whale. Then use this list as a poem that is similar to the text in the book but doesn't provide the rationale, just the advice.

Bear Has a Story to Tell by Philip C. Stead; illustrated by Erin E. Stead.

Bear, with the help of his animal friends, remembers the story he had hoped to tell before the onset of winter.

Strategy: After reading *Bear Has a Story to Tell*, draw a circle and have students write Bear's problem and the animals he encounters around it. At the point in the story when Bear wakes from hibernation, continue writing the animals he met, finally arriving back at the beginning when Bear is ready to tell his story. Explain to students that this is an example of a circle story.

And Then It's Spring by Julie Fogliano; illustrated by Erin E. Stead.

Simple text reveals the anticipation of a boy who, having planted seeds while everything around is brown, fears that something has gone wrong until, at last, the world turns green.

Strategy: Introduce *And Then It's Spring* by discussing the four seasons. Next, generate a list of words with students that describe spring, particularly focused on the colors that are associated with this season.

A Home for Bird by Philip C. Stead.

Vernon the toad takes the silent Bird on a journey in hopes of finding Bird's home.

Strategy: Discuss with students: What kind of animal is Vernon? Why does Bird remain silent? Why does Vernon help Bird find his home?

Jonathan and the Big Blue Boat by Philip C. Stead.

When Jonathan's parents decide that he has gotten too old to have stuffed animals, they trade his favorite bear, Frederick, for a toaster. So he sets off aboard a boat, looking for Frederick.

Strategy: Before, during, and after reading, have students pay close attention to the collage, pen-and-ink, and acrylic paintings. Create a list of the documents that are incorporated into the illustrations such as maps, stamps, postcards, and news articles.

A Sick Day for Amos McGee by Philip C. Stead; illustrated by Erin E. Stead.

In this Caldecott Medal-winning story, friends come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. In Amos McGee's case, all sorts of species, too! Every day Amos spends time with each of his friends at the zoo—running races with the tortoise, keeping the shy penguin company, and even reading bedtime stories to the owl. But when Amos is too sick to make it to the zoo, his animal friends decide it's time they returned the favor.

Strategy: At the conclusion of the story, ask the following questions: Describe Amos's daily routine. What is the first thing he does? The last? What happens to Amos's routine one day? Why do Amos's friends go to him? What details do you observe in the illustrations that add to the story (such as the red balloon)?

Creamed Tuna Fish and Peas on Toast by Philip C. Stead.

In this toe-tapping, hand-clapping romp of a picture book, Wild Man Jack is not easy to please, and there is one dish that he particularly dislikes.

Strategy: Before or after reading, write down a list of foods that students don't like, and then categorize them, such as fruits, vegetables, meat, etc.

Ideas Are All Around by Phillip C. Stead.

Strategy: While reading aloud, pause at points in the story and model how to ponder and wonder about the character, the setting, or the plot. Invite students to share their pondering and wondering as well while encouraging them to extend beyond predicting and include aspects such as background, details, clarification, or motive.

OTHER STRATEGIES TO USE BEFORE, DURING, OR AFTER READING THAT ARE ALIGNED WITH THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:

BEFORE READING:

- **Word Walk:** Before reading aloud a story, skim through the picture book and identify words that might be unfamiliar to students and define them. CCSS: RL.K.4, RL.1.4, RL.2.4
- **Think Now:** Provide students with a thought-provoking question before beginning to read the book such as, “Why do you think friendships are important?” Give them 3–5 minutes to write their response or to discuss it with a partner. Have students share their responses prior to beginning the story, and then revisit them once the story is concluded. CCSS: RL.2.7, RL.3.7
- **Prediction:** Show the book cover and read the title. Have students predict what they think the story will be about. CCSS: RL.K.7, RL.1.7

DURING READING:

- **Investigating Illustrations:** As students read each picture book, have them look at the illustrations to discover the ways that the Stead’s extend the story through their art. CCSS: RL.K.7, RL.1.7, RL.2.7
- **Turn and Talk:** As students read or hear the story read aloud, pause periodically for them to turn to another student and discuss, “What do you think will happen next?” CCSS: RL.K.4, RL.1.4
- **Read and Respond:** Have students fold a piece of paper in half. On the left, they record key statements from the book and then respond to them on the right-hand side. CCSS: RL.1.1, RL.2.1, RL.3.1

AFTER READING:

- **Read and Retell:** After a picture book is read aloud, have student retell the story by sharing what happened in the beginning, the middle, and at the end. CCSS: RL.K.2, RL.1.2, RL.2.2
- **Fact or Fiction?** After reading several books by the Steads, ask students to suggest three things that make the stories fictional. CCSS: RL.K.5, RL.1.5
- **Think-Pair-Discuss:** At the conclusion of the story, have students write down two connections they had with the book. Next, have them discuss these connections with a partner to foster interaction and highlight different perspectives. CCSS: RL.1.1, RL.2.1, RL.3.1

THEMES IN BOOKS BY PHILIP C. STEAD AND ERIN E. STEAD

FRIENDSHIP: *And Then It’s Spring; Bear Has a Story to Tell; Hello, My Name Is Ruby; A Home for Bird; Jonathan and the Big Blue Boat; Lenny & Lucy; Sebastian and the Balloon; A Sick Day for Amos McGee*

JOURNEY: *Hello, My Name is Ruby; A Home for Bird; If You Want to See a Whale; Jonathan and the Big Blue Boat; Lenny & Lucy; Sebastian and the Balloon; Special Delivery; Ideas Are All Around*

HELPING OTHERS: *Bear Has a Story to Tell; A Home for Bird; Sebastian and the Balloon; A Sick Day for Amos McGee; Special Delivery*

ANIMALS: *And Then It Was Spring; A Home for Bird; A Sick Day for Amos McGee; If You Want to See a Whale; Special Delivery*

QUEST: *Creamed Tuna Fish and Peas on Toast; Hello, My Name Is Ruby; A Home for Bird; If You Want to See a Whale; Special Delivery; Ideas Are All Around*

PATIENCE: *And Then It Was Spring; Hello, My Name Is Ruby; A Home for Bird; If You Want to See a Whale; Jonathan and the Big Blue Boat; Special Delivery*

Discussing and exploring themes in books provides an opportunity to look across a variety of titles and to respond using several strategies.

COMPARE & CONTRAST

Have students select two or three books containing the same theme, such as friendship.

Using a Venn diagram or other graphic, have students record how the books are alike and how they are different.

Students can also write their responses in sentence form:

(Title) _____ and (Title) _____ are alike because they both _____ and _____.

The way they are different is _____. Another difference is _____.

CCSS: RL.1.9, RL.3.9

THEME POEM

After reading several books under one theme, have students write down a list of words or phrases about that theme or directly from the text in response to the stories. Then title the poem, such as “Quest” and write the list of words and phrases to create the poem. For example:

Quest

Searching, Looking, Problem, Solution

WRITING STRATEGIES

GENERATING TOPICS

Picture books by Philip C. Stead and Erin E. Stead provide excellent models to assist young writers in thinking about the topics that authors write about and how stories are crafted. Read and discuss the following books to help children understand topic selection:

And Then It's Spring by Julie Fogliano and illustrated by Erin E. Stead: Sometimes people write about planting a garden and waiting patiently for the plants to grow and for spring to arrive.

Hello, My Name Is Ruby by Philip C. Stead: Sometimes people write about their desire to have a friend.

Lenny & Lucy by Philip C. Stead and illustrated by Erin E. Stead: Sometimes people write about how difficult it is to experience new things.

A Sick Day for Amos McGee by Philip C. Stead and illustrated Erin E. Stead: Sometimes people write about very special friendships.

Special Delivery by Philip C. Stead and illustrated by Matthew Cordell: Sometimes people write about trying to solve a problem with the help of others.

Next, create a chart to list what people write about using these books and others that students read. The chart can be used as a resource when students complain that they don't know what to write. CCSS: W.2.3, W.3.3

Ideas Are All Around by Philip C. Stead. Sometimes people write about people and animals that they meet—both real and imagined.

EXPRESSING AN OPINION

Before beginning, define opinion and then briefly share examples of an opinion about a topic relevant to the Stead books, such as friendship. Give students an opportunity to talk about their opinions. Have students select one of the Stead books and write their opinion about it using the following structure:

Write the author's and illustrator's name(s)

Write the title of the book

Write your opinion of the book

(interesting, funny, exciting, sad, scary, happy)

Why? Back up your opinion

Write about your favorite part from the book and why it's your favorite

Conclusion

This book is _____.

CCSS: W.K.1, W.1.1, W.2.1, W.3.1

SMALL MOMENTS NARRATIVE WRITING

Read several books written and/or illustrated by Philip C. Stead or Erin E. Stead that show small moments—a moment in the story that is stretched out over several pages, such as in *Hello, My Name Is Ruby* (introducing herself to a variety of animals), *Jonathan and the Big Blue Boat* (his parents trade his beloved bear for a toaster), or *Bear Has a Story to Tell* (Bear tries to remember his story). Refer to the illustrations to emphasize how this moment was stretched across pages. Next have students select a small moment from their own life and write a narrative in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events that include details regarding what happened (using temporal words to signal event order) and provide some sense of closure. For emerging writers, create this narrative together by using an example from a book or one from a student.

CCSS: W.K.3, W.1.3, W.2.3, W.3.3

WRITING WALK

In *Ideas Are All Around*, the writer took a walk when he didn't have any writing ideas. Use this same strategy with students by modeling how to find ideas from taking a walk and recording ideas in their journals.

- Take students on a walk around the school building and outside.
- Stop periodically and point to an object or person and talk about ideas that are generated for you. For example, a big pile of leaves might be near the playground. Show students that you are writing down the word "leaves" and then your connection, such as when you jumped in the leaves with your sister and scared the cat who was hiding there. Demonstrate to students that it's not just the object's or person's name that you record, but also additional words or a phrase to assist in remembering the significance of the object or person.
- Before returning to the classroom, have a few students share what object's or person's name they recorded in their journal and the memory it evoked for them.
- Once you are back in the classroom, continue to model how to take an idea and transform it into a story. You might want to brainstorm other story ideas about leaves or maybe events that included the sister that initially generated the memory. CCSS.W.K.8, W.1.8, W.2.8, W.3.8

WORD WEB

Students can generate writing ideas using word webs. Word webs are graphic organizers that assist in creating specific ideas from general ones and also produce vocabulary for use in writing. **Blank templates can be found online.** Begin with a word such as *friendship*, *journey*, or *patience* and then write down words that are associated. CCSS.W.1.3, W.2.3, W.3.3

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES THAT PROMOTE RESPONSE AND SUPPORT VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT, COMPREHENSION, AND VISUAL LITERACY

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Questions that have more than one right answer or can be answered in many ways are called open-ended questions. When an open-ended question is asked, the child's answer may be one that is unexpected. Language use as well as creativity is stimulated by asking open-ended questions, and students realize that there can be several different answers to a question.

Examples of open-ended questions:

- What do you think? • How do you know?
- Why did you think that? • What are some other ways that the character(s) could have solved his/her problem?
- What can you tell me about . . . ? • What do you think would happen if . . . ?
- What does this story remind you of? • What do you think will happen next?

CCSS: RL.K.1, RL.1.1, RL.2.1, RL.3.1

PICTURE WALKING

Reading the illustrations enables all readers to participate in the discussion and to increase their language and visual literacy skills.

Explore the illustrations in each book and discuss:

- What do you see? • What colors are in the illustration? How do they make you feel?
- What is your favorite illustration? Why? • What do you wonder when you look at the illustration?

CCSS: RL.K.7, RL.1.7, RL.2.7, RL.3.7

RECOMMENDING BOOKS

Have students write the sentence below on a sticky note to recommend a book.

I like _____ (title) because _____.

Place the note on the inside of the book. When other students read the same book, have them write their own recommendation on a sticky note and place it in the book as well.

CCSS: W.K.1, W.1.1, W.2.1, W.3.1

CULMINATING ACTIVITIES

After students have read a variety of books by Philip C. Stead and/or Erin E. Stead, engage them in the following culminating activities that can encompass several or all of their books.

BOOK BOX RETELLING

Fill a book box or a book bag with an item that could be associated with one of the Steads' books. For example, a balloon (*Sebastian and the Balloon*), seeds (*And Then It's Spring*), a toy bird (*A Home for Bird*), or a toy dog (*Ideas Are All Around* or *Lenny & Lucy*). When a student selects an object have them list several details from the story. Then go through the list and help them identify which details to keep and which ones to toss for a good retelling. Explain why some details are necessary for a retell and why some may be interesting, but not necessary. This is a good strategy for pairing students or creating a small group to engage in the retelling to provide them with practice in negotiating the details that they keep and which ones to toss. It also enables them to consider how to retell a story using multiple voices. CCSS: R.L.K.10; R.L.1.10; R.L.2.10; R.L.3.10

CONNECTING TEXT TO SELF

Have students reread the books by Philip C. Stead and Erin E. Stead, then select an event from the stories with which they found a connection. Next, students write or draw the event and then record how they connected to the text. CCSS: R.L.K.3, R.L.1.3, R.L.2.3.

To attain specific Common Core grade-level standards for their classroom and students, teachers are encouraged to adapt the activities listed in this guide to their classes' needs. You know your kids best!

For a detailed description of the common core standards used in this guide please visit www.corestandards.org



NEAL PORTER BOOKS
Roaring Brook Press



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