

# **LOOK WHOOO'S COUNTING**

by Mary Lou Meerson

## **Before reading the book**

- Have the children share their knowledge of, experiences with and feelings about birds in general. Have them share stories about exotic birds they may have seen in zoos, or about pet birds.
- With the children, observe a bird, perhaps in a yard or on a balcony. Point out how the wings spread wide when the bird flies away.
- Check the children's prior knowledge about owls. If they are unfamiliar with these birds, point out pictures of them in encyclopedias, nature books or magazines. Because these are larger than the birds they observed close to home, tell the children that the wing span will also be larger.
- Determine the stage of each child's counting ability. Depending on whether they cannot count at all, can count just a few numbers or can easily count to 10, you can determine which of the following activities will be most appropriate for each child.
- Read the book straight through, the first time, giving students lots of time to anticipate, enjoy and discuss the illustrations.
- During subsequent readings of the book, choose appropriate activities from those listed below. Since repeated readings will allow students to practice the skill of counting, choose only one or two activities each time.

# ACTIVITIES

## MATH

-After reading the book two or three times, if no child has pointed out the numbers in the owl's wings, you point them out. If the children can write numbers, have them write a line of 1's when owl counts 1, a line of 1,2,1,2 when she counts 2 and so on.

-When the children have become familiar with the story, encourage them to name each item on their fingers each time you read the book.



-Give the children small squares of paper or other markers. After you read each page of the book say, "Show me one", "Show me two", and so on.

-In pairs, have the children count marbles, paper squares or game pieces. Have them check each other to make sure they agree on the number. When they become skilled at this, you can turn it into a game by putting the same amount of pieces in small plastic bags and seeing who can come up with the right number first.

## LANGUAGE ARTS

-Do a group innovation on the text by choosing a different animal (or even a human) and deciding what sorts of things they might see. For instance: On his way to school, the boy saw one mail carrier, two stop signs, three dogs... Enlarge and illustrate the text as a class book. You can use this book as the basis for any of the activities in this guide, as well as using it for reading practice.

-Each number sentence in the book begins, "Owl saw...". Ask the children if they can think of other words that could be used instead of "saw". Some examples might be spied, noticed, observed, viewed, gazed (at), glared (at), peeped (at), looked (at), or watched.

-Help children become more aware of action words (verbs). Make a list of the animals mentioned in this book. Then ask the children, "What do owls do?" (They fly, eat, hoot, etc.). "What do prairie dogs do?" (They run, dig, sit, etc.) Try to make long lists for each animal.

-Point out the word "dawn" at the end of the book. Explain that this is a word that describes a certain part of the day. Ask children if they know any other words like this. If not, familiarize them with words such as morning, noon, afternoon, dusk, twilight, evening, night and midnight.

## **SCIENCE**

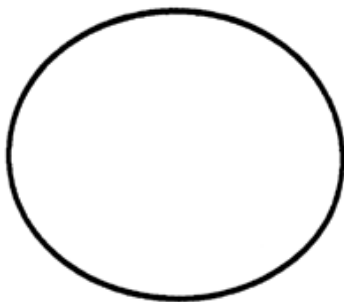
-Help the children find out as much as possible about owls. Have them make a chart or poster listing such things as where they live and what they eat. Be sure they understand that owls are nocturnal.

-Discuss the difference between nocturnal and diurnal animals. Make a list of each kind.

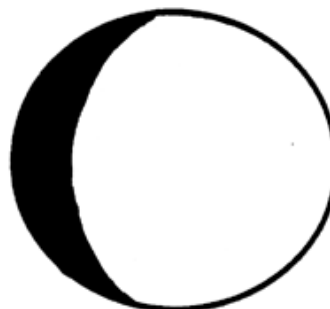
-On the snail page, ask the children when dawn comes. Try to ascertain an actual clock hour. If your area observes daylight saving time, discuss how that hour will change, and when.

-Have each child choose one of the other animals in the book and write a report similar to the one they did on owls.

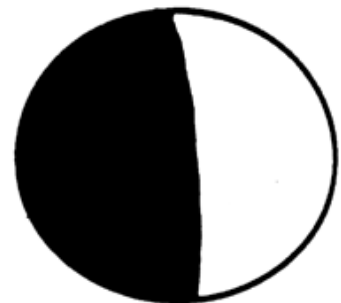
-Ask what kind of a moon it was on the night that owl went flying. Ask if the children have ever been up late enough to see a full moon like this one. Show them the major phases the moon exhibits each month.



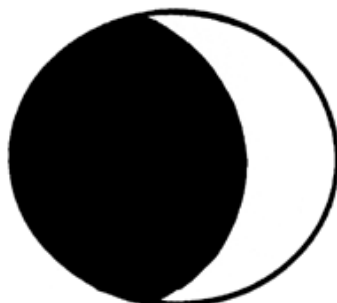
**Full Moon**



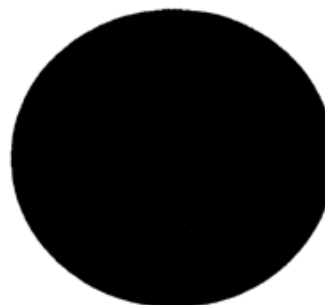
**Gibbous Moon**



**Half Moon**



**Crescent Moon**



**New Moon**

-If possible, obtain some butterfly or moth cocoons and let the children watch them emerge. Then release the creatures into a grassy field.

-Most areas have garden snails. Try to obtain some. Put them in a glass container and let the children observe them for a few days. Have the children research and provide proper food. This is a good opportunity for them to learn how to keep a daily scientific journal, writing or drawing what they observe each day. Then return the snails to an appropriate environment.

## **ART**

-Draw a large number 1 in the center of a sheet of paper. Make copies for each child. Have the children make a drawing which incorporates the number. For instance, the 1 could become the side of a building or a giraffe's neck or a tree trunk. Encourage the children to add lots of details, so that the number is only one of many aspects of the picture. Have the children color or paint their drawings. Hang them up and point out how different people have created different things, starting from the same base. You could try this again later, using a different number.

-Have the children create a "hidden numbers" picture. They start by drawing a complicated scene filled with details such as grass, clouds, clothing or room decorations, etc. Then have them "hide" numbers in these details. When they are finished, have them exchange drawings and try to find all the hidden numbers in their partner's picture.

-Read aloud this paragraph by Suse MacDonald, which describes how she created the pictures for this book. Then have the children try making a picture using similar processes.

The illustrations for this book were made in a style called collage. This means gathering materials and gluing them onto a surface. Try making your own collage of a plant or animal.

1. A VERY important step in this process is to plan your work carefully before you begin. Make a pencil sketch of what you want your picture to look like. You can use brown parcel-wrapping paper or cut up paper grocery bags for this.
2. Look at your picture to determine each "small" part of the picture. For instance, the head, ears, eyes, and mouth of an animal, or petals, leaves and stem of a plant. Outline these pieces in heavy black crayon or felt pen.
3. Lay pieces of tissue paper over your sketch and trace the outlines of each piece. You can make the pieces from different colored tissue paper.
4. Cut out the tissue paper pieces.
5. For your background, use a large piece of construction paper.
6. Using your rough sketch as a guide, glue the pieces of tissue paper to the construction paper.

## **MATH AND ART**

-Have the children complete the connect-the-dots puzzle at the end of this guide. If they cannot recognize the numbers above 10, do the puzzle with them by writing the next number on a chalkboard or a large piece of paper. When they have found and connected that dot, write the next one, and so on. After they have finished the puzzle, have them draw in some background, such as the limb on which the owl is sitting, more branches, leaves, clouds, sky, and feathers on the owl. Then have them color or paint the picture.

## **MUSIC**

-Teach and sing this new version of “Ten Little Indians”.

One little, two little, three little prairie dogs,  
Four little, five little, six little prairie dogs,  
Seven little, eight little, nine little prairie dogs,  
Ten little prairie dog pups.

## **MOVEMENT**

-Look at the lists of action words that you made for each animal. Either as a group or taking turns, have the children pantomime each of these actions as if they were that animal. In other words, running could be used for all the 4-legged animals, but the children must run like a squirrel or run like a sheep.

## **PROBLEM SOLVING**

-Have the children solve the maze puzzle at the end of this guide. The directions are:  
Put your pencil at Start. Do not lift your pencil from the paper at any time. Try to find a way to End in the center. You may not cross any gate. If you find your way blocked by a gate, you must retrace your line until you can make a new choice to follow.

## **RELATED LITERATURE**

-The children may also enjoy these counting books:

*Big Fat Hen* by Keith Baker

*Moja Means One* by Muriel Feelings

*Ten, Nine, Eight* by Molly Bang

*Ten Little Mice* by Joyce Dunbar

-They may also enjoy these books that relate to some of the animals mentioned in this book:

*Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen

*Stellaluna* by Janell Cannon

*Mouse Paint* by Ellen Stoll Walsh

*Over in the Meadow* by John Langstaff

*Brown Bear, Brown Bear* by Bill Martin, Jr.

*Dupper* by Betty Baker (about a prairie dog)

*At Mary Bloom's* by Alike

*Make Way for Ducklings* by Robert McCloskey

Any of the folk tales about Anansi the Spider

