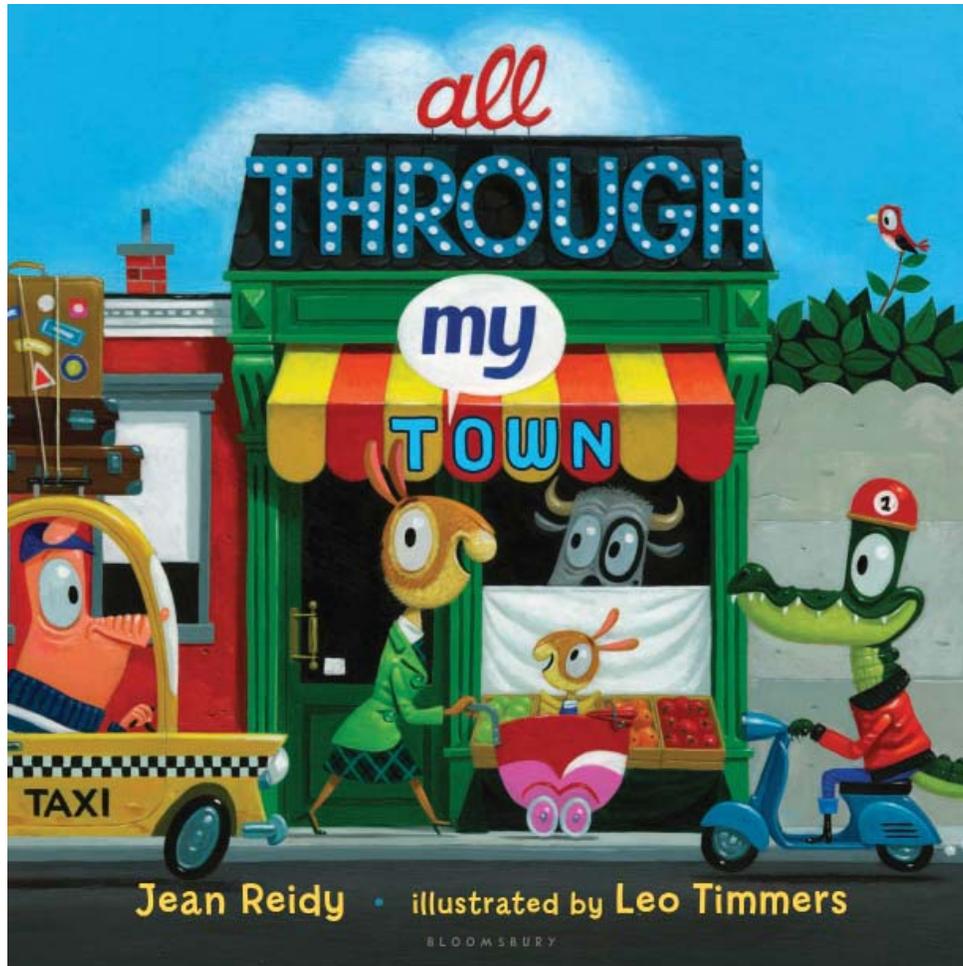


A Teacher's Guide to
ALL THROUGH MY TOWN

Written by Jean Reidy
Illustrated by Leo Timmers



ALL THROUGH MY TOWN © 2013 by Jean Reidy; Illustrations by Leo Timmers;
Bloomsbury Children's Books

Praise for ALL THROUGH MY TOWN

“Richard Scarry has some competition in this effort, which follows a toddler-age bunny and his mother around town on their errands... Neatly encapsulates the three-ring circus that is a little tyke’s world and gives children an opportunity to practice all kinds of skills.” ~ Kirkus

“The rhyming text bounces along with an abundance of action words... Timmers’s fun, double-page acrylics creatively illustrate the vocabulary... This spirited picture book is as much fun to browse through as it is to read, and it could spark classroom discussions about neighborhoods and community workers.” ~ School Library Journal

“With spreads jam-packed with detail and event—as the action moves from home to bustling sidewalks, past traffic jams and into the hospital (for a visit) and the library—it’s an undeniable feast for the eyes.” ~ Publishers Weekly

“This adorable trip around town will be a big hit with any toddler who has ever been a passenger alongside a busy grownup with errands to run. With fun-packed illustrations for little ones to look at again and again and a surprise ending that causes instant giggles, this book definitely earns a spot on the ‘favorites’ shelf.” ~ Kids’ Indie Next List,

Jeanne Snyder, Books & Books, Coral Gables, FL

Story Summary

Rising, waking.

Bread is baking.

School bus honks its horn.

Who are the people in your neighborhood? Perfect for the pre-K set, this adorable rhyming text takes a walking tour of your community. The fresh modern art of Leo Timmers features hidden details and a perennial theme reminiscent of Richard Scarry. Little ones will beg to re-read again as they discover the characters who repeat throughout the art in this sweet and vibrant story.



About the Author

On any given day you might find **JEAN REIDY** ...

skiing, hiking, running, biking
singing, walking, laughing, talking
cooking, eating, writing, reading
all from her town...

of Greenwood Village, Colorado.

Jean's other books include *Light Up the Night*, illustrated by Caldecott Honoree Margaret Chodos-Irvine and winner of the Colorado Book Award; *Too Purpley!*, *Too Pickley!*, and *Too Princessy!* illustrated by Geneviève Leloup; and *Time Out for Monsters!* illustrated by Robert Neubecker.

Please visit Jean at www.jeanreidy.com.

Teachers and librarians please also visit
http://www.jeanreidy.com/Time_Out_for_Teachers.html
to learn more about her free resources and free Skype visits.

About the Illustrator

LEO TIMMERS was born in Genk, Belgium in 1970. After studying advertising and graphic design, he started as a freelance children's book illustrator. In 2000, he wrote his first picture book, *Happy with Me*, which he also illustrated; it received a Bookfeather award.

Leo continued writing books and won the annual children's and youth jury award in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2012. Also in 2012 his book *Bang* was awarded the prestigious Bookpeacock award for best illustrated book.

His work has been translated in more than 20 languages. Over the years his style has changed and evolved, but it has always been marked by humor, form, color and insightful ideas. Leo lives in Brussels with his wife and two daughters.



Pre-Reading

Picture Possibilities

Display pictures of three different buildings that could also be found in the book (ex. hospital, grocery store, barber shop).

Ask students the following questions:



Who goes to these places?



What do you wear there?



Who works there?



What do you see people doing there?



Students will use prior knowledge to identify characteristics of people and places.

Vital Vocabulary

Option 1: Your students may not recognize the following words. Have them use the text and pictures from the book to deduce the meanings.

Fetching, Dashing, Healing, Blazing,
Sorting, Gushing, Munching, Stacking,
Spraying, Peeping, Shushing, Clipping

Students will deduce meanings from reading.

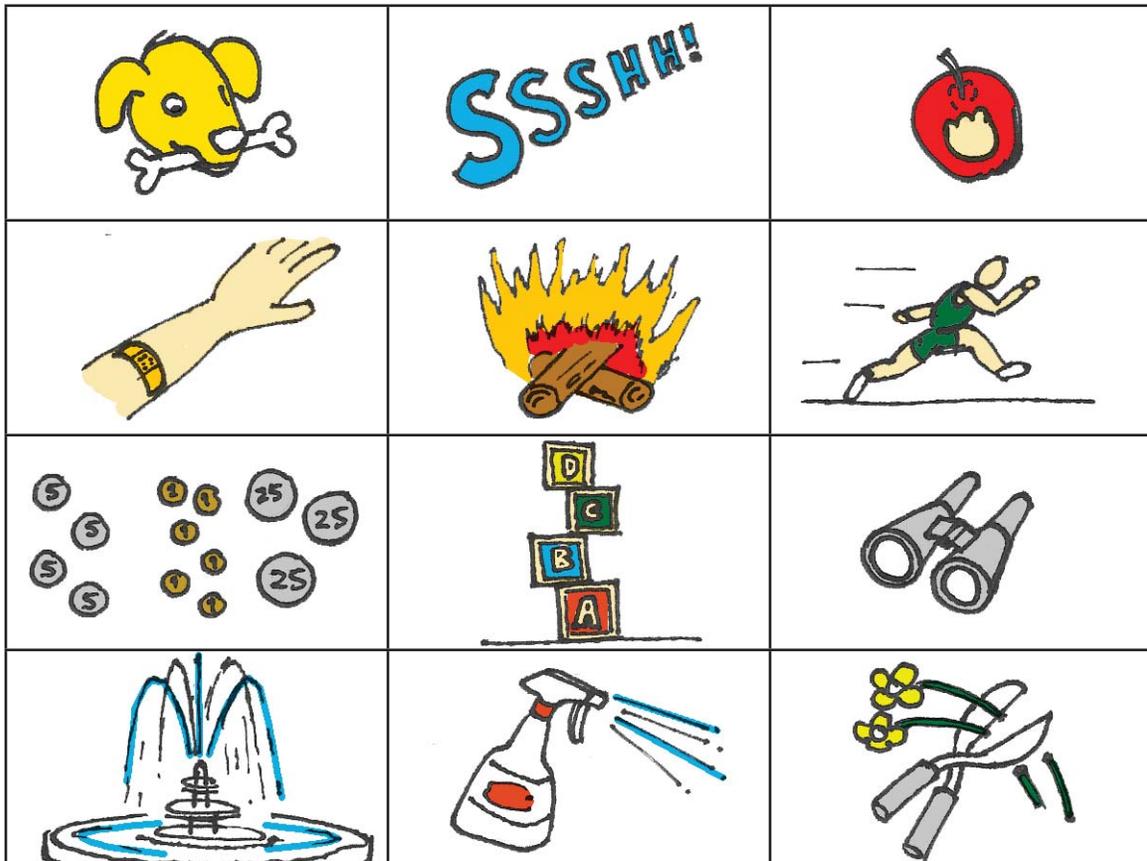
or

Option Two: Copy the picture and vocabulary worksheets on page 4 for each child. Display a list of the vocabulary words. Point to one of the words and see if the students can identify the related picture on their sheet. Once they correctly identify the picture, call on a student to explain what the word means. (They might say munching is eating or healing is fixing.) Then using the following sheets have students create a memory game. Split the students into pairs. Then have the pairs cut out all the word and picture tiles and flip them over so the blank side of the paper shows. Have the students take turns flipping over two of the tiles at a time. If they get a match, have them keep the pair. If they don't, have them flip the tiles back over.

Students will use prior knowledge to create definitions for new vocabulary.

Students will recognize visual representations of vocabulary words.

Fetching	Shushing	Munching
Healing	Blazing	Dashing
Sorting	Stacking	Peeping
Gushing	Spraying	Clipping



A Walk Through My Book

-  Point out the title of the book, the author, and the illustrator.
-  Ask students what they think the title signifies. What are the bunnies doing? What emotions are they expressing? Why might they feel this way?
-  Turn the pages and ask what the bunnies do at each place they visit. What is their reaction to each new setting? Why?
-  As you go through the pages, have students predict the next place the bunnies will visit.

*Students will identify the title, author, and illustrator.
Students will use comprehension skills such as previewing, foretelling, and deducing.*

Discussion Questions

-  Why does the bunny wake up his mother? (*knowledge*)
-  Where does the mom bunny take the little bunny? (*comprehension*)
-  Look at the illustration on the page that says, “Spraying Sweeping Backing Beeping.” Have students notice the man getting sprayed by the fire hydrant. How do you think he feels? Why? (*analysis*)
-  If you were to visit any store in town, where would you go? Why? (*application*)
-  How would the story change if no other animals were outside on their walk? (*synthesis*)
-  Do the bunnies really travel around town? What parts of the story did you think were real? What parts of the story are imagined? (*analysis*)
-  Do you think the bunny had fun playing with the toys? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

Student Activities

Lights, Camera, Action Verbs

Throughout the book, the animals are performing various actions.

Now it is your students’ turn to “take action.” Give each student an action verb from the chart on page 6, or have each write his or her own. Then have students take turns acting out their action verbs in front of the class. (If you have a larger group, you may want to split the group in two.) Call on students to guess the actions of their classmates.

Students will write, perform, and identify action verbs and demonstrate their understanding of this part of speech.

Running	Jumping	Skipping	Eating
Hopping	Laughing	Walking	Stopping
Dancing	Crying	Calling	Rolling
Swimming	Singing	Kicking	Climbing
Reading	Writing	Driving	Painting

Towns and Cities

Copy the pictures of the city street, the small town, and the Venn Diagram for each student (pages 7 and 8). Based on the pictures of the city and town, have students identify the similarities and differences that they see. Students can use the Venn diagram to do this. Have the students list the similarities in the area where the circles overlap and list the differences in the areas where the circles do not overlap.

Draw a large Venn diagram on the board. Ask students for their answers and fill it in as you go.

or

Explain that transportation, buildings, and homes can look very different if you are in a town or a city. Explain that, often, cities will have more types of transportation to accommodate the number of people. Then show pictures of buses, taxis, subways, and elevated trains. Cities will also have airports. Explain that many times smaller towns won't have these things because of the smaller population.

Go on to explain that due to larger populations many cities will have high rises or skyscrapers where towns do not need such large buildings. Show students pictures of some famous skyscrapers (ex. Willis Tower, Empire State Building, etc.).

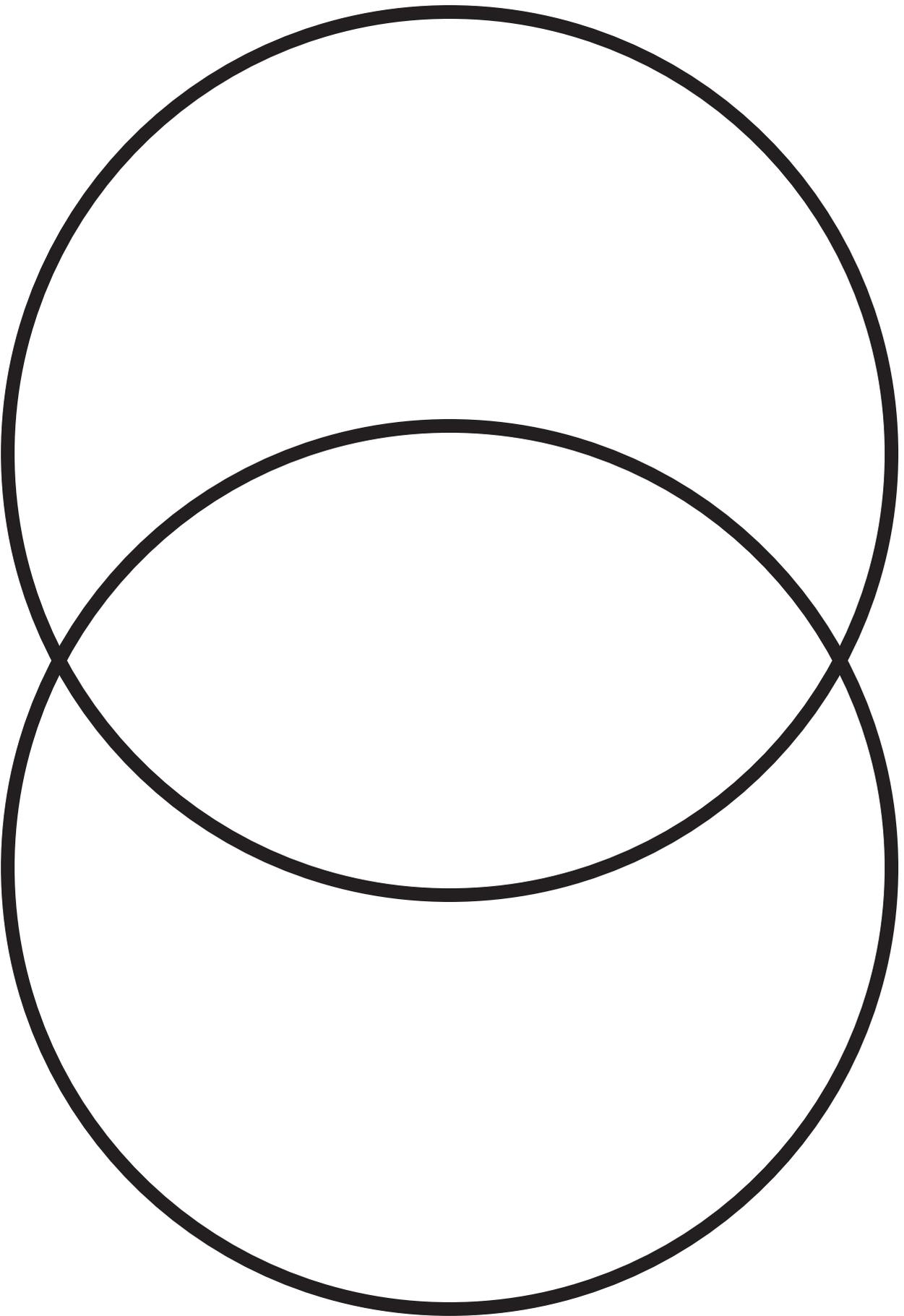
After the presentation, have students fill in their Venn diagrams. Then, draw a large Venn diagram on the board. Ask students for their answers and fill it in as you go.

Students will use visual forms to compare and contrast different communities.

Things in a town:

Things in both a town and city:

Things in a City:



Safety Signals

It is important that students remember safety when walking through town.



First, see if students can think of safety rules for the parking lot at school or the bus stop. If your school has crossing guards, ask students about directions they give. Write down their answers.



Then display a photo of a traffic light. Explain what cars are supposed to do when the light is green, yellow, and red. Then display a photo of a stop sign. Explain what cars are supposed to do at a stop sign.



After you finish explaining the light and sign, display a picture of a walk signal. Explain to students when to walk and when to wait.



Then show a picture of a crosswalk. Explain to students the importance of crossing within the crosswalk.



Finally, remind students that regardless of signage, signals or the presence of a crosswalk, they should always look both ways before they cross the street.

Place masking tape on the floor in two parallel lines three feet apart; this will simulate a crosswalk. When each student comes to the front, display either a picture of a green light, yellow light, red light, stop sign, or various “Walk” and Don’t Walk” signs. Using the crosswalk, have each student demonstrate what they would do in the given situation.

Students will recognize the appropriate response and will perform the correct action through physical movement.

Students will demonstrate body and spatial awareness through safe movements in a simulated situation.

Time Saver:

Display signals, but instead of the student, you act out each situation. You can make mistakes like forgetting to look both ways and have students point out what you should have done.

Students will explain how to safely be pedestrians around motor vehicles.

Walking Wingman

Jean Reidy dedicated the book to her husband Mike who goes on all adventures with her.

Print out the following page (page 10) for each student. Have the students write a sentence about who they would want as their walking partner on a trip around town and why. Have students illustrate a picture with his or her walking partner on the sidewalk.

Students will use writing, dictation, and drawing to compose opinion pieces.

I want my walking partner to be _____
because _____.



Mealtime and Manners

At Croc's Corner, many of the animals are enjoying meals.

Give each student a piece of white paper (8 ½ by 11). This will serve as the student's placemat; give each student time to decorate it. Then explain that you are going to teach them how to set a place at a table and how to use manners when ordering.

Print page 12 for each student. Have them cut out the napkin, fork, spoon, knife, plate, and cup.

Explain that they will place the napkin on the left side of the placemat and then place the fork on top of the napkin.

After they do that, have them place the knife on the right side of the placemat and the spoon to the right of the knife.

Finally, have them place the cup on the top right corner.

Once their placemat is complete, have them practice using good manners while ordering. Pair up students. Student A will be the customer and Student B will be the waiter or waitress. Then have them do the following role play:

Student A: May I please have the chicken, green beans, and potatoes.

Student B: Yes you may. (*Student B then places the plate in the center of Student A's placemat.*)

Student A: Thank you.

Once they complete their role play, have Student A and Student B switch roles.

Students will communicate appropriate manners in a social situation through active play.

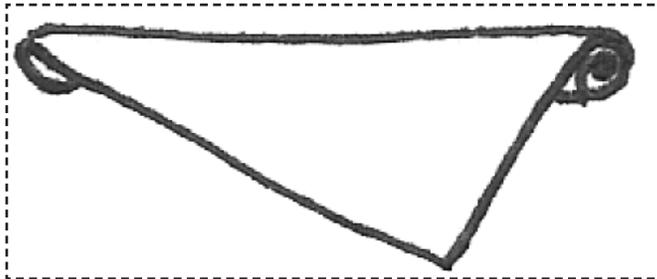
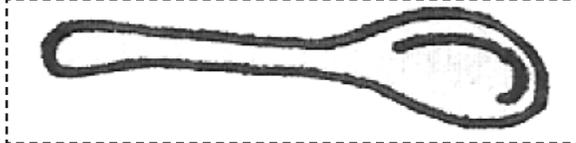
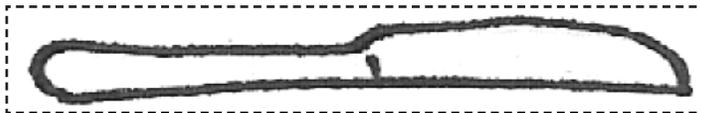
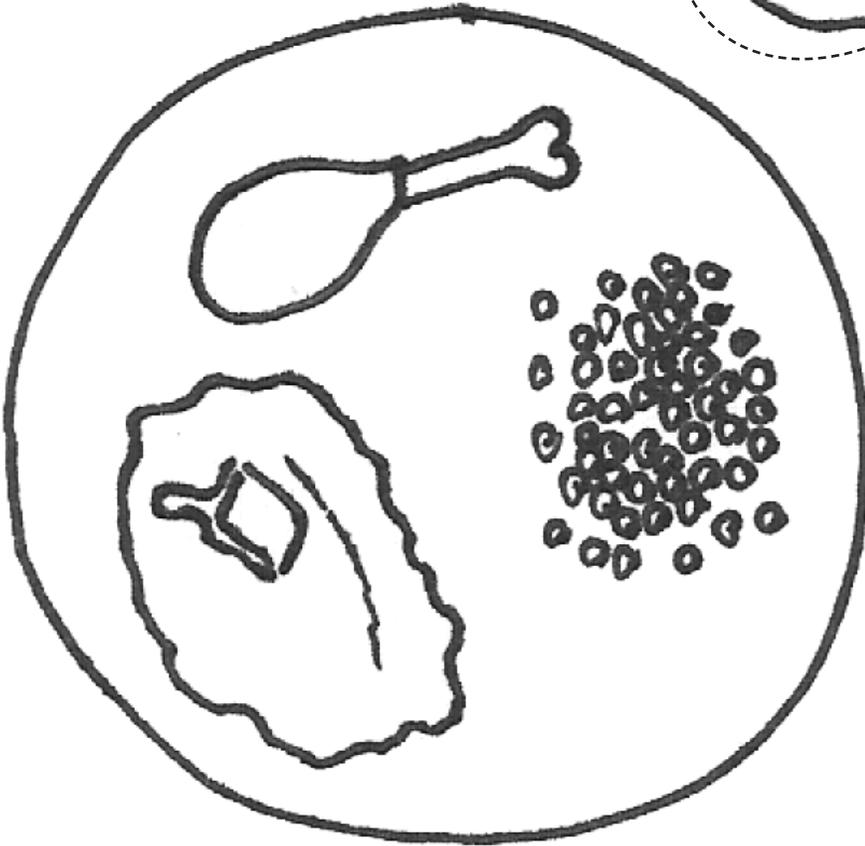
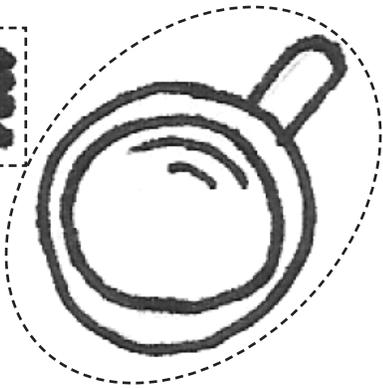
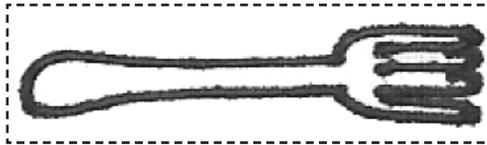
Croc's "Good-for-You" Cakes

Remind students of the importance of healthy eating through this activity. At the beginning of the book, the bunnies stop at Croc's Diner to eat a healthy breakfast before they go on a walk through town. Now it is the students' turn to make healthy homemade pancakes. Ask parent helpers to come in with griddles or electric skillets to do the cooking. Don't forget to supply plates, mixing bowls, spoons, utensils, and syrup!

See the recipe on page 13.

Students will recognize that eating food from a variety of food groups promotes good health.

Students will create a food product by following directions in sequential order.



Croc's "Good-for-You" Cakes:

Ingredients:

- 2 cups whole wheat flour
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups of skim milk
- $\frac{1}{4}$ Cup vegetable oil
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup fresh blueberries

Directions

- 1) In a medium bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, and cinnamon.
- 2) In a separate large bowl, lightly beat eggs. Add milk, vegetable oil, vanilla. Mix together.
- 3) Add flour, baking powder, and cinnamon mixture to milk, oil, vanilla, and egg mixture. Mix until moistened.
- 4) Add blueberries. Mix until berries are distributed throughout mixture.
- 5) Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ cup batter on lightly greased griddle.
- 6) Turn pancake when batter bubbles and bottom is golden brown.
- 7) When both sides are golden brown, serve with syrup. (Recipe yields 12-14 pancakes).

Rhyme Time

Throughout the book, Jean Reidy uses rhyming to help her story flow.

Rhythm and rhyme schemes help children predict and decipher new words. Copy the next four pages (pages 15-18) and cut out the buildings. (There are four additional pairs of buildings for students to create their own rhymes.) Have students match the buildings with the words that rhyme.

Waking – Baking Fetching – Stretching Shaving – Waving
Ringing – Singing Sweeping – Beeping Stopping – Hopping
Dashing – Flashing Wheeling – Healing Shushing – Gushing

Students will use a full range of tactics to understand materials such as rhymes.

Students will identify words through recognition skills such as phonics.

Students will recognize and construct rhyming words.

Create a Community

First, have the class create a list of buildings that are found in a community and are not found in the book (ex. arcade, ice cream parlor, bookstore, etc.). Pair up students and assign each pair a building from the list. Then have students either dictate to a teacher or write a short description on their own of what happens in that building. Make sure they include at least one action verb.

Have students construct their buildings by decorating shoe boxes, cereal boxes, or milk cartons with construction paper.

Call one member of the pair “Partner A” and call the other member of the pair “Partner B.” Partner As will present while Partner Bs will stroll around the town and listen to the building descriptions from Partner As. Once all Partner Bs have gone through the town, Partner A and Partner B will switch roles.

Students will write a descriptive piece and share it with an audience.

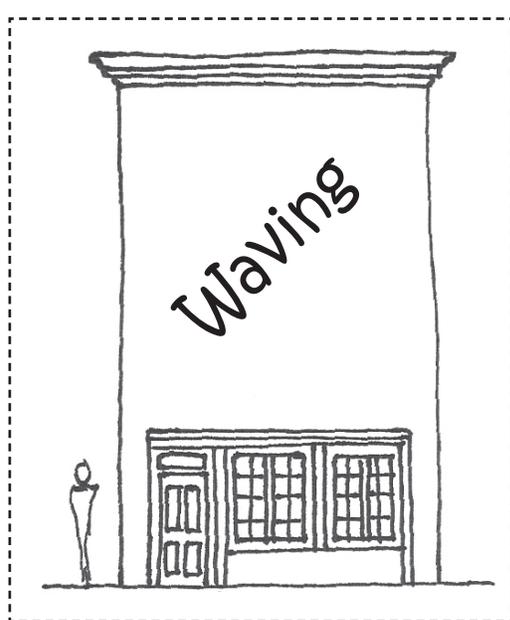
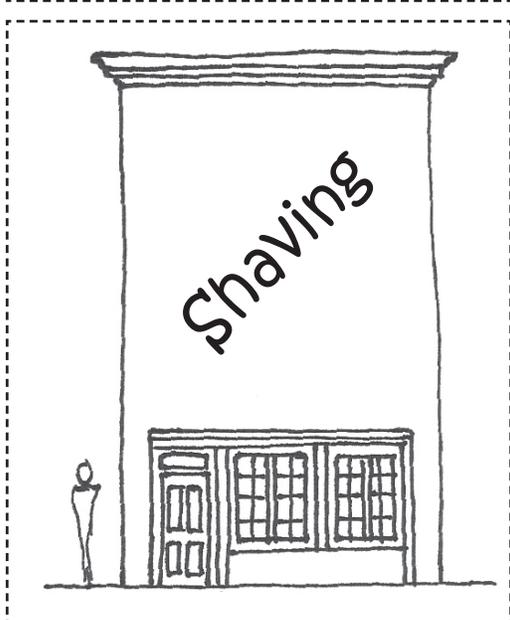
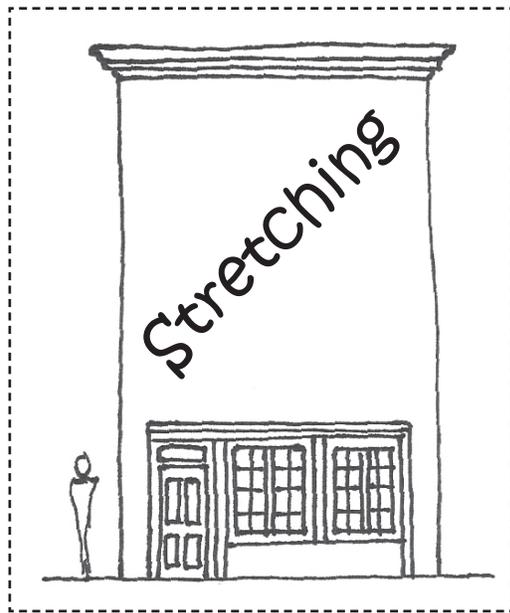
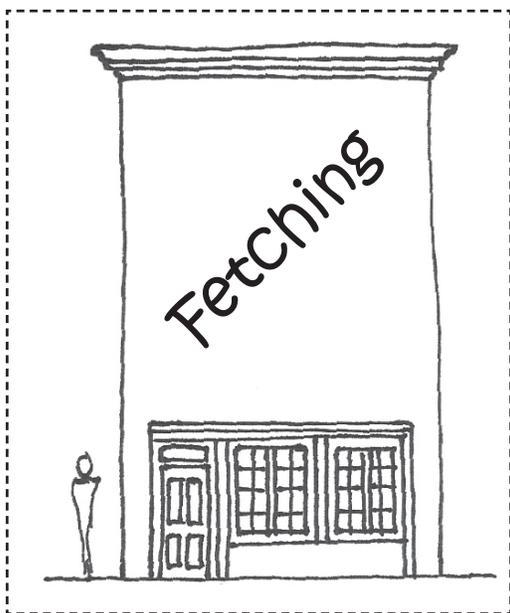
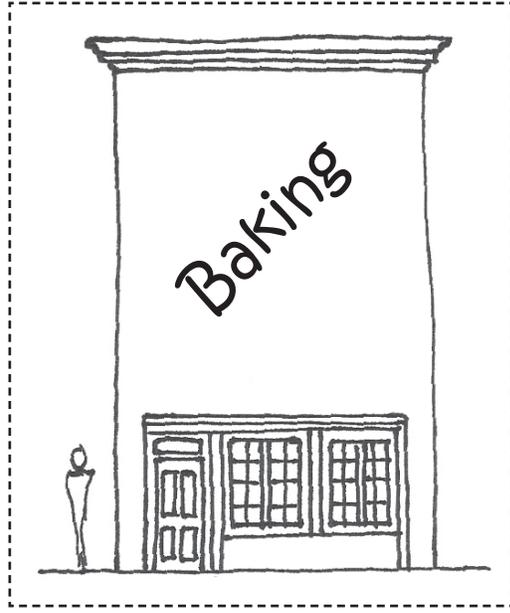
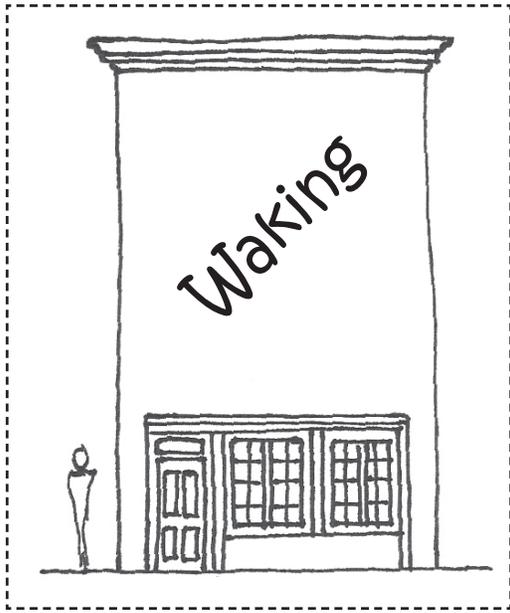
Students will create a visual representation through specific mediums.

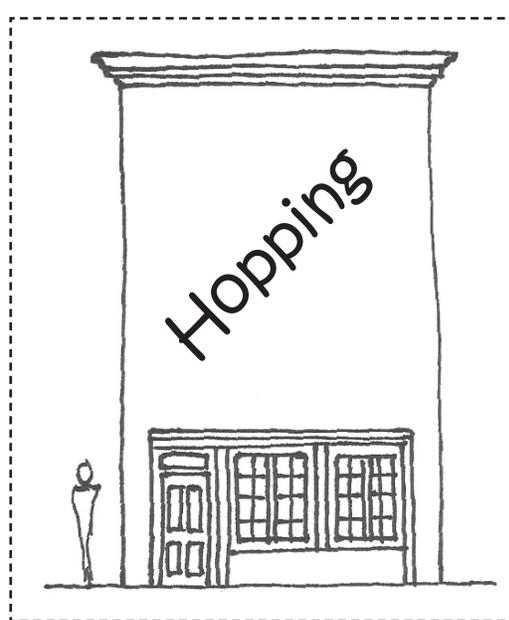
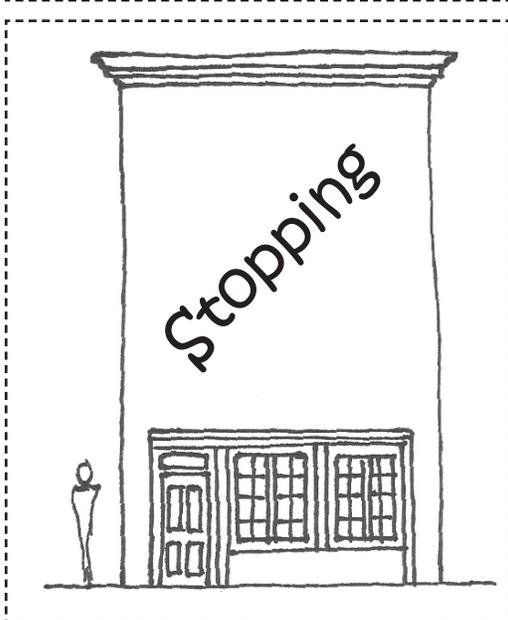
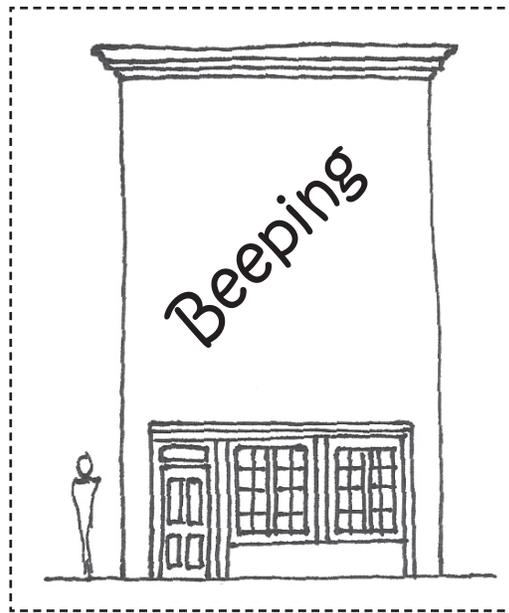
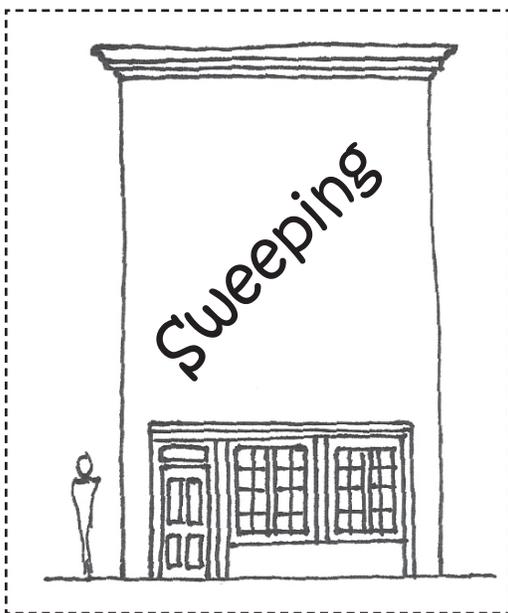
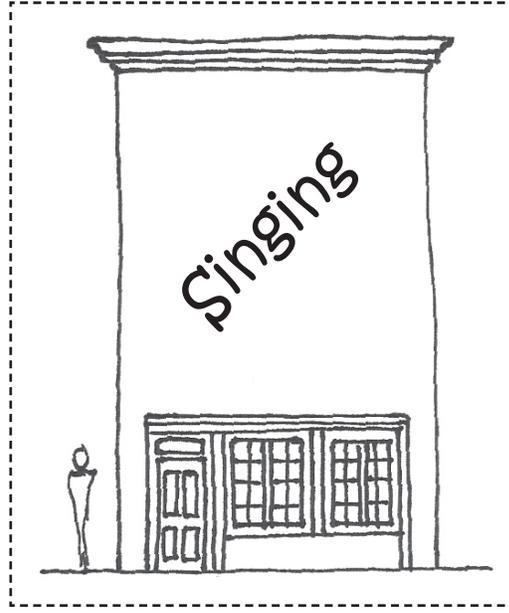
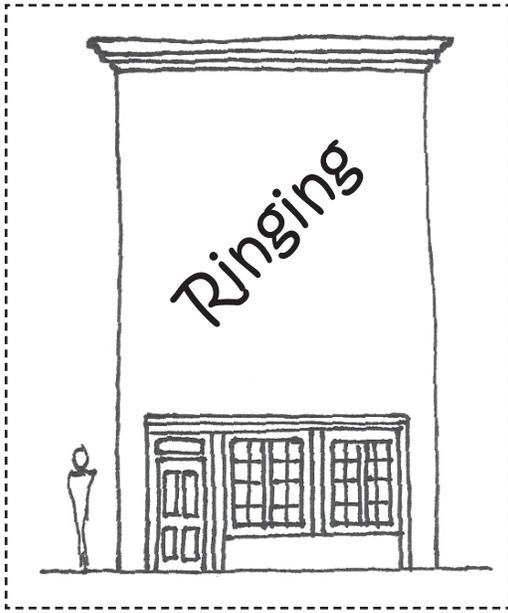
Extended Lesson for Math

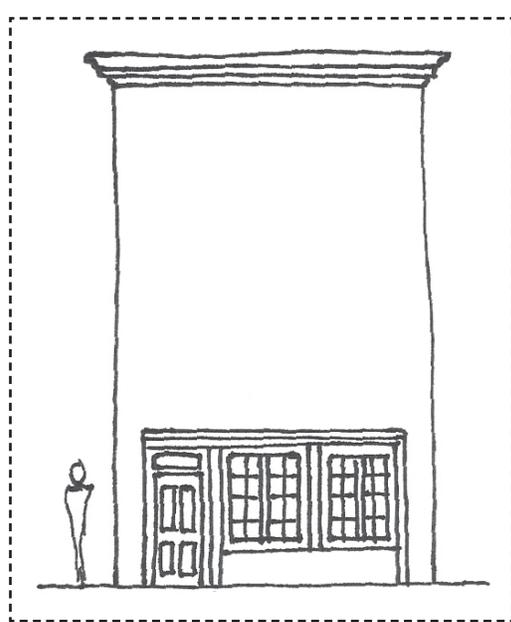
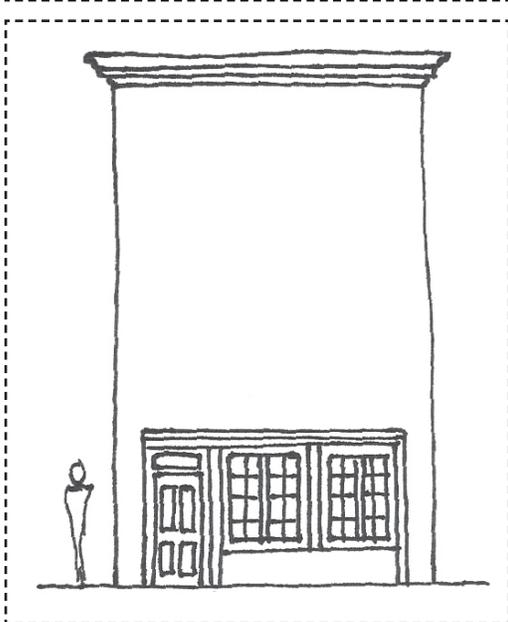
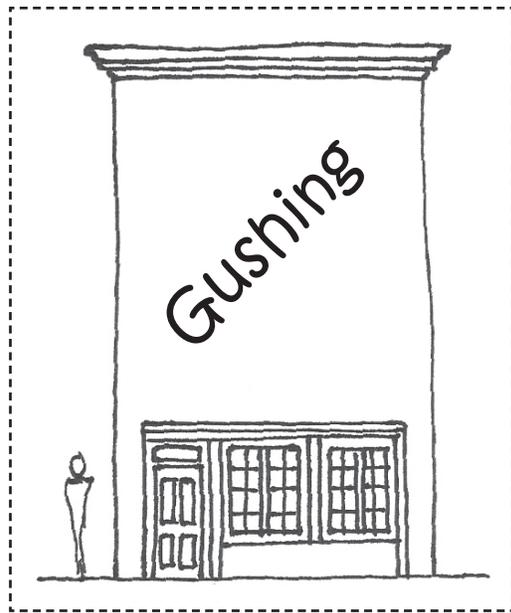
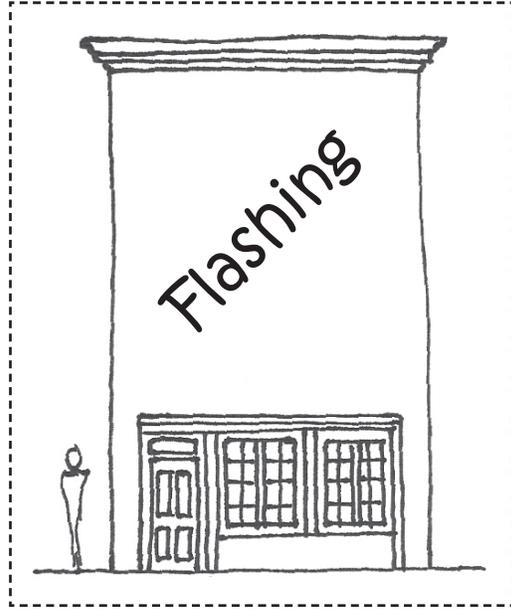
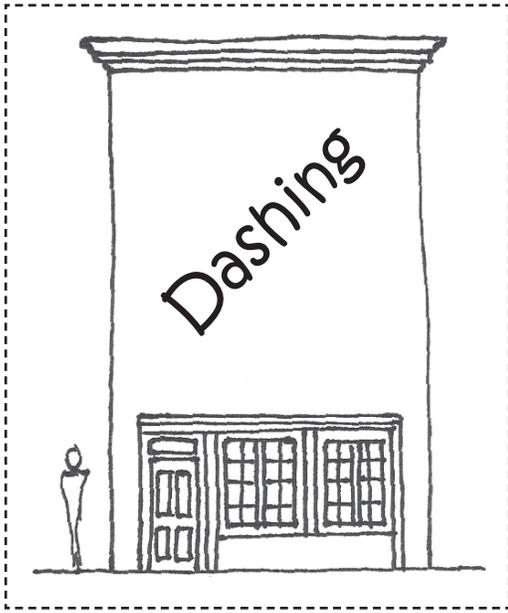
Mini Merchants

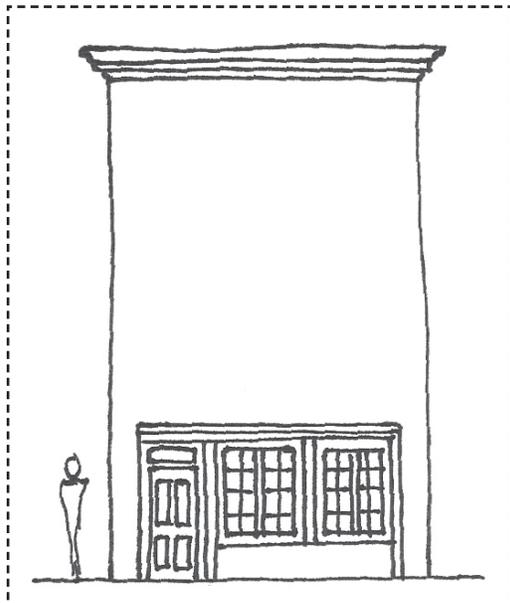
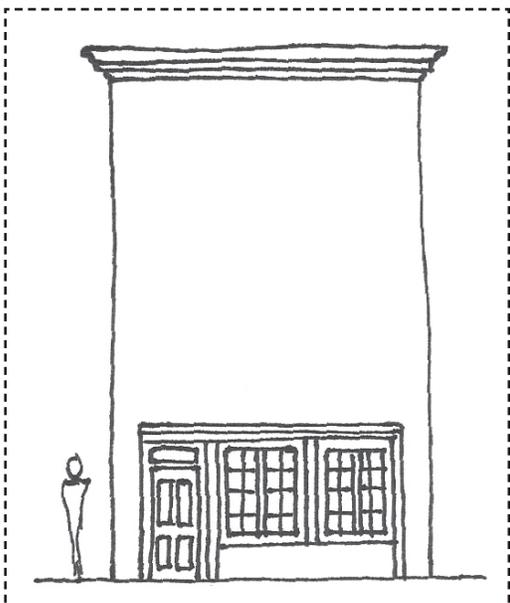
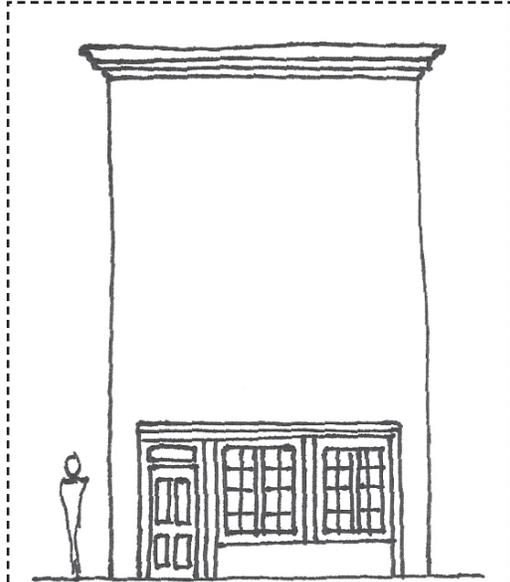
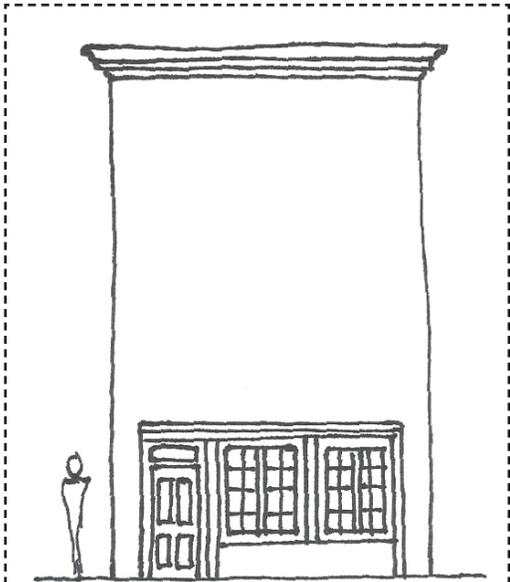
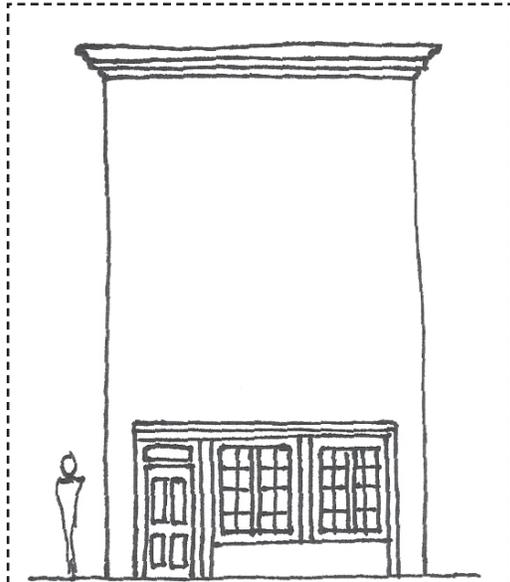
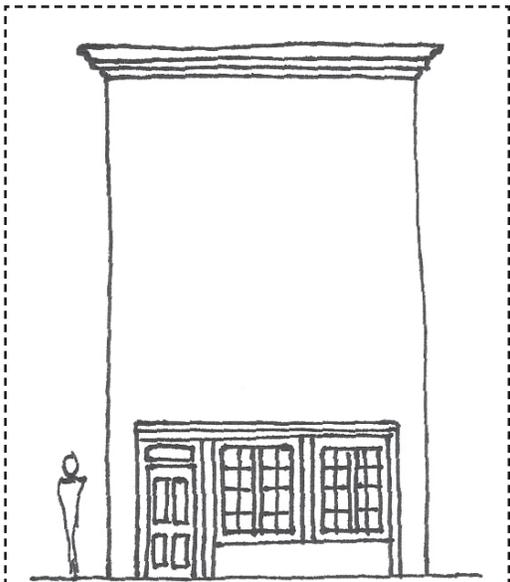
Have students create items to “sell” at their buildings (ex. Paper ice cream cones for an ice cream parlor). Students can be given play money to pay for items at each station. Allow one member of the pair to be the cashier and the other to be the patron. Then have students switch roles.

Students will count by whole numbers to buy specific quantities of items.









Outdoor Outfits

For the best results, save this activity for a hot and sunny day.

It was a nice day when the bunnies went on an adventure through the town.

In this activity, students will think about outfits they would wear on a warm day to keep cool. Have students discover through this experiment how colors may affect temperatures.



Ask students: What would you wear on a walk through town on a cold day? What would you wear on a warm day?



Tell students that on a warm day some colors are better to wear to keep them cool.



Have students predict which color will keep them the coolest and keep a tally.



Using the t-shirt template on page 20, cut the t-shirts from five colors of paper (white, black, red, blue, green). Fill five clear glasses with 2 cups of water each. Place the five glasses of water in direct sunlight. Wrap one of the paper shirts around each glass. Every half hour for a period of 3 hours have students take the temperature of the water. Have them fill in the chart on page 21.



After the chart is complete, have students discuss which color shirts would be best to keep cool on a warm day and which color shirts they should avoid wearing on a warm day.

Students will hypothesize the result of an experiment using prior knowledge.

Students will measure to compare and order objects.

Helper Hats and Badges

Throughout the book, people are pictured helping each other.



Have students come up with a list of people who help in their community (police officers, firefighters, bus drivers, crossing guards, etc.).



Allow students to choose between the photo of the fire hat or police badge.



Have them color the following badge (page 22) and hat (page 23) pictures and write how the police officer or firefighter helps their town.

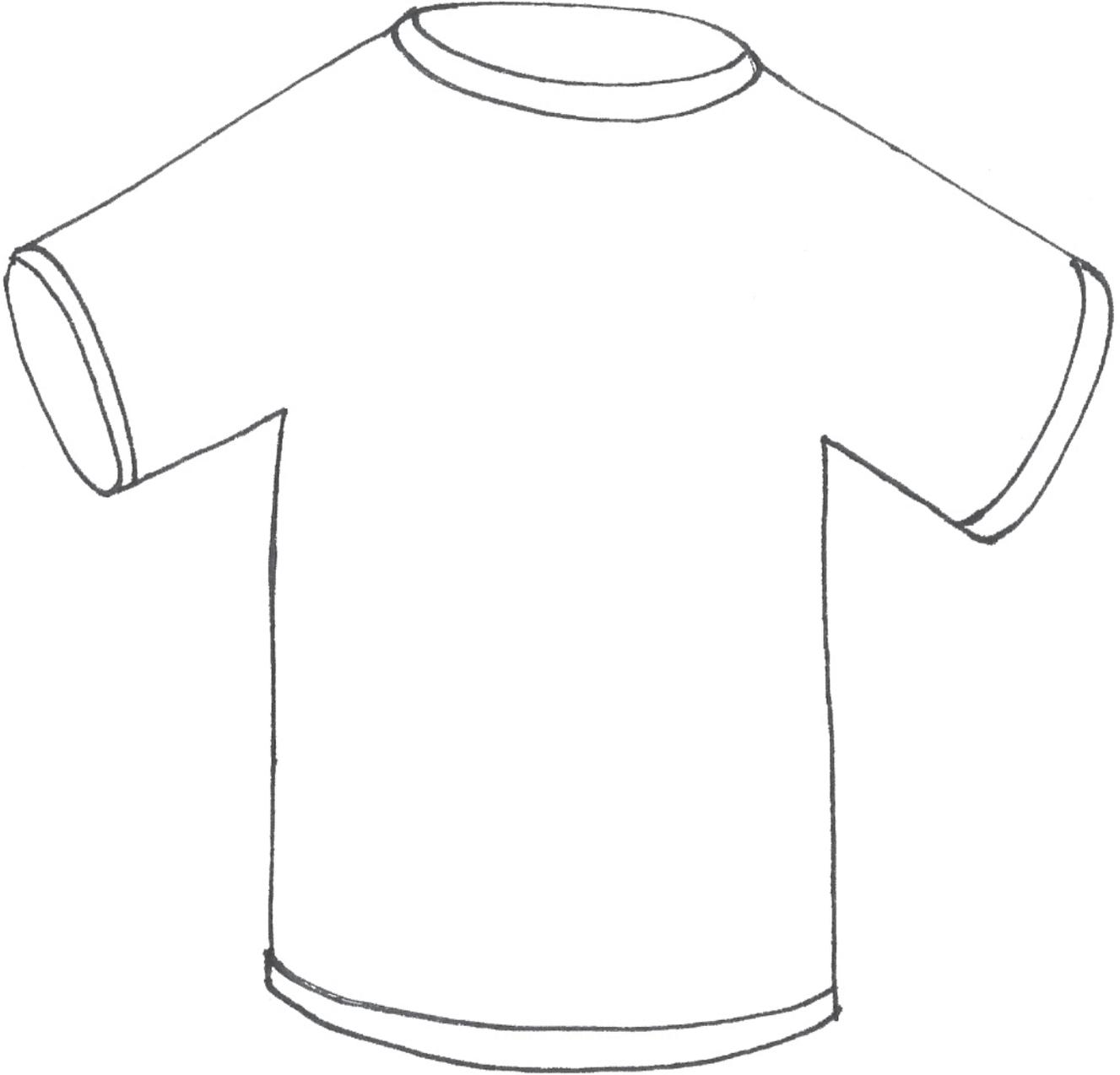
A firefighter helps by _____.

A police officer helps by _____.

Note: If possible invite a member of the police force or fire department to come in and present to the class about safety.

Students will use writing, dictation, and drawing to compose opinion pieces.

Outdoor Outfits



Outdoor Outfits

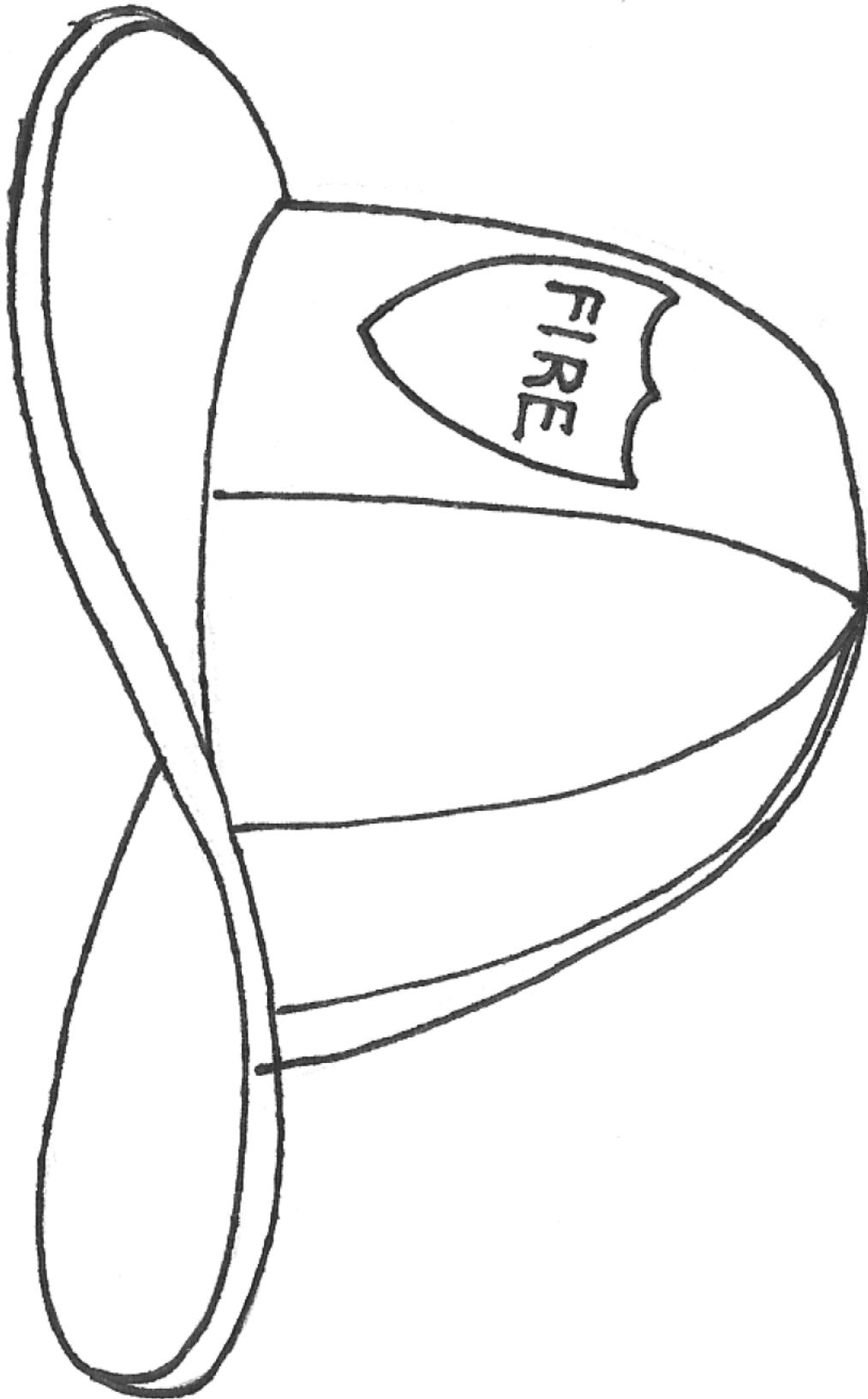
What color do you think you should wear on a warm day to keep cool?

	White shirt	Blue shirt	Green shirt	Red shirt	Black shirt
30 minutes					
1 hour					
90 minutes					
2 hours					
150 minutes					
3 hours					

A police officer helps by _____
_____.



A firefighter helps by _____
_____.



Help the Animals Find Their Homes

In the book, there are many examples of animals, birds, and reptiles.

Explain to students that they don't usually see these creatures walking down the street in their towns. Display a large world map in the front of the classroom and display the pictures of the penguin, moose, elephant, llama, dalmation, crocodile, and tiger (you can use the pictures on pages 25-28). Tell students they are going to try to help the animals find their "homes."

Have the students help these animals get to their "home" by having them place the animal, bird, or reptile on the appropriate continent.

Note: Please explain to your students that these mammals, birds, and reptiles can be found on multiple continents, but for this activity you will find one of the places where they live.

You say:



This bird can be found in Antarctica. (Point to Antarctica on the map.) Although this bird has wings, it cannot fly. Which one do you think it is? (Place the picture of the penguin on Antarctica.)



This animal can be found in Africa. (Point to Africa on the map.) This animal has large ears and a long trunk. Which one do you think it is? (Place the picture of the elephant on Africa.)



This animal can be found in Europe. (Point to Europe on the map.) This animal barks and has many spots. Which one do you think it is? (Place the picture of the Dalmatian on Europe.)



This animal can be found in North America. (Point to North America on the map.) The male members of this animal have large antlers. Which one do you think it is? (Place the picture of the moose on North America.)



This animal can be found in Asia. (Point to Asia on the map.) This animal is the largest member of the cat family and has stripes. Which one do you think it is? (Place the picture of the tiger on Asia.)



This reptile can be found in Australia. (Point to Australia on the map.) This reptile is scaly and has lots of teeth. Which one do you think it is? (Place the picture of the crocodile on Australia.)

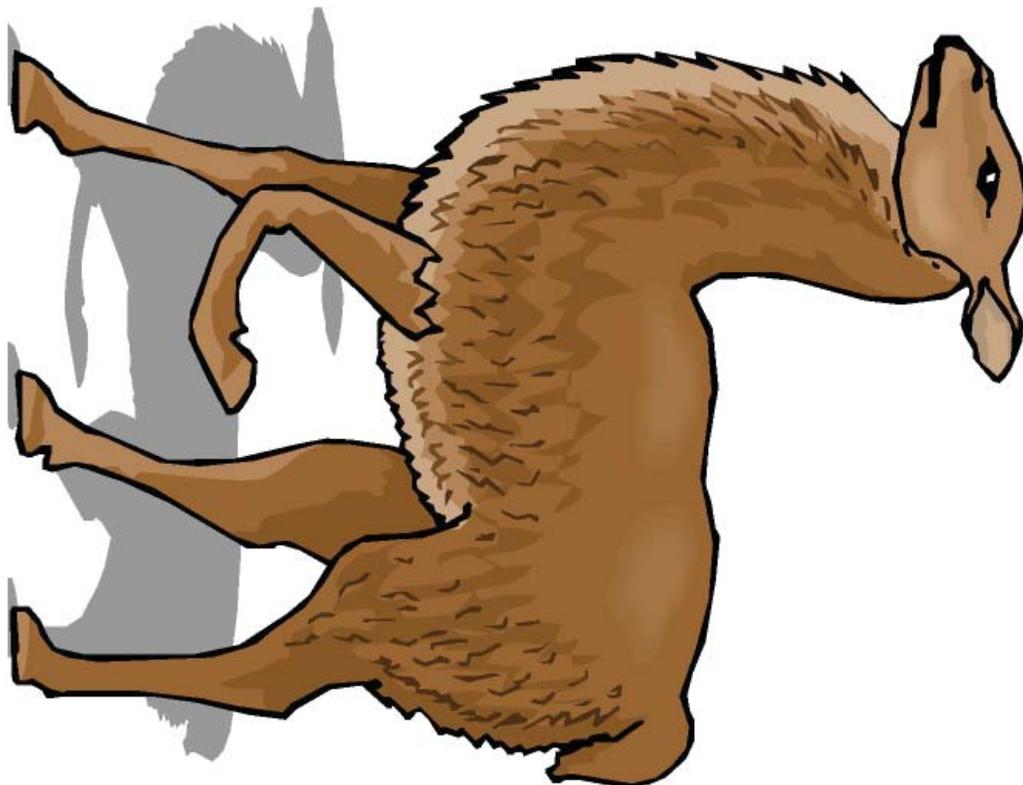


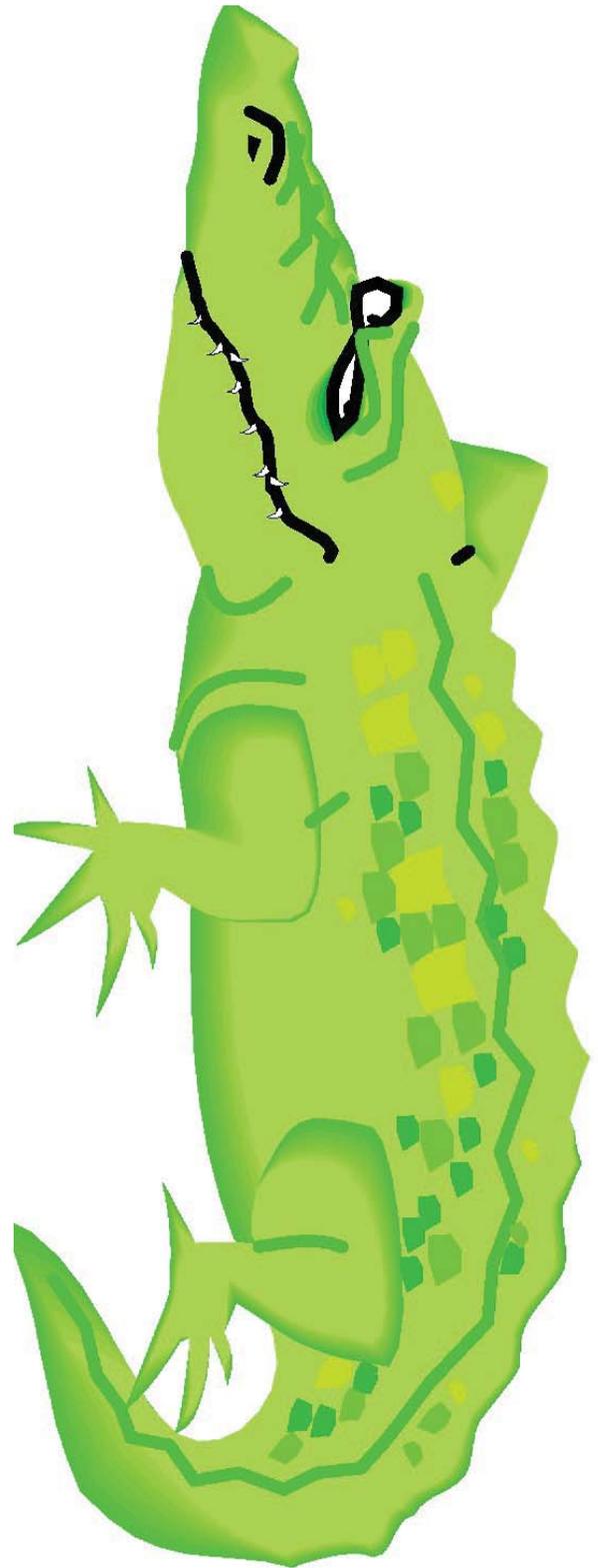
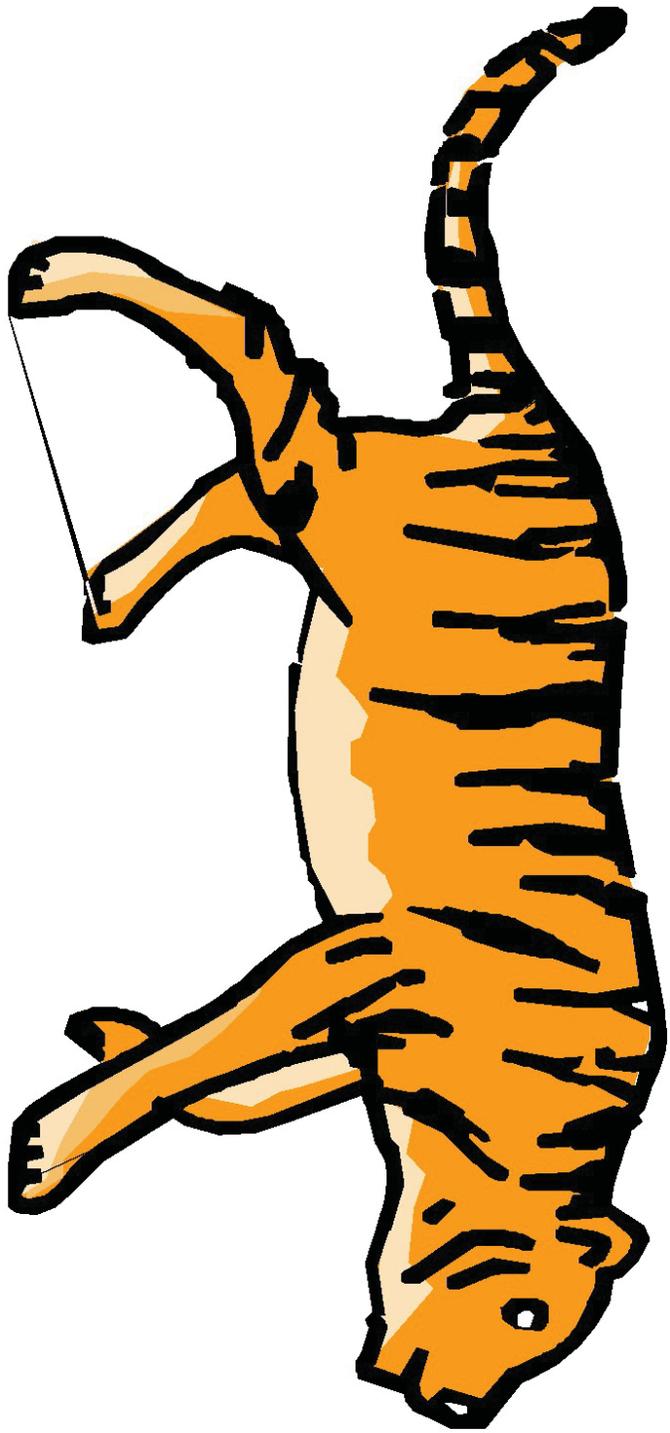
This animal can be found in South America. (Point to South America on the map.) This animal has soft fur and a long neck. Which one do you think it is? (Place the picture of the llama on South America.)

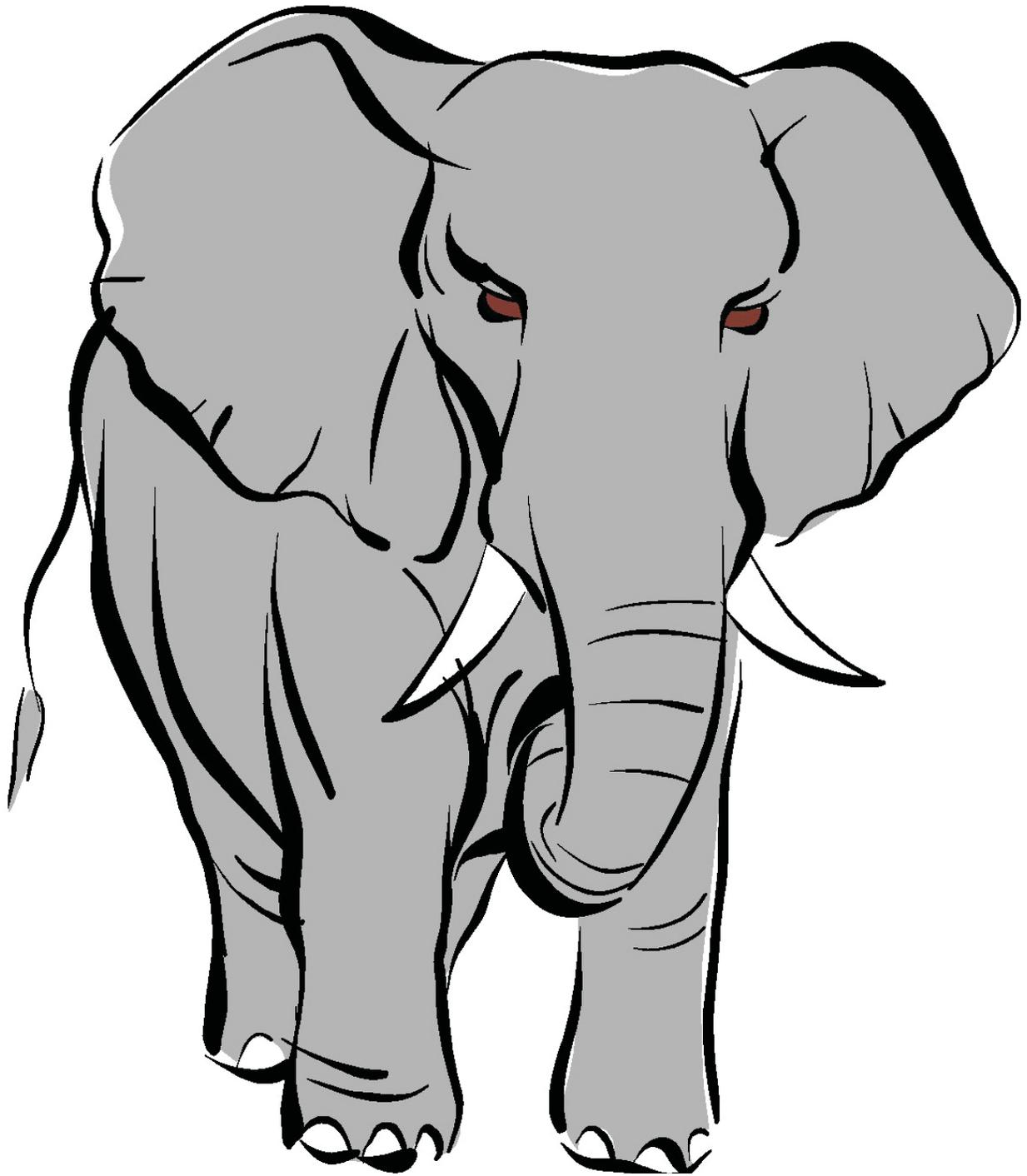
Students will recognize that animals live in different settings around the world that can be found on a map.

(Clipart from Microsoft Word)









Sounds for Sounds

In the book's school yard, many animals are playing instruments.

Allow students to make their own musical instruments.

First, collect empty 16 oz. plastic bottles for each student in your class. Make sure they are clean and still have the cap.

Give each student one cup of dried beans and have them pour them into the empty bottle. Then make sure they seal the bottle with the cap. (If time allows, give them stickers or colored paper and allow them to decorate the bottle.)

Then explain to the class that today they are going to listen for words that start with the letter "b." Read *All Through My Town* outloud slowly to the class. Each time they hear a word in the story that starts with "b," have them shake their bottles. Tell them you will give them a thumbs up for right answers and thumbs down for wrong answers. **Once they see your thumb, they should stop shaking.**

Try this with other letters of the alphabet in future readings of the book.

Students will recognize a letter through sound and create music in response to sound.

An Interview with Author Jean Reidy

How did you get the idea for *ALL THROUGH MY TOWN*?

A couple of years ago, my editor at Bloomsbury called me and said, “Jean, we noticed that our kids’ list needs a book about “community.” We have an illustrator in mind and we’d love for you to write it.”

“Community” is an evergreen – enduring - topic that I could get excited about because I knew that kids would too. Young children enjoy the relatability and familiarity of topics that are part of their every day. And picture books are often the tools they use to become experts on the subjects they love. My editor and I had at one time discussed our own kids’ past and recent obsessions with vehicles, towns and all things busy. So the idea felt like a natural fit.

I welcomed the challenge of putting a fresh spin on a long-beloved subject, so, of course, I said yes. Then I spent hours perusing the previous artwork, books and online portfolio of the amazing illustrator, Leo Timmers.

That’s when inspiration took over and the music of the text began to sing in my ear. I pulled images and ideas from my childhood town, my current town and other busy, bustling communities where I had once lived or visited. From those images and musings, I constructed the text. And from my text, Leo worked his artist’s magic. *ALL THROUGH MY TOWN* is an example of author-editor-illustrator collaboration at its best.

How long did it take to write *ALL THROUGH MY TOWN*?

This is always a difficult question to answer because the writing process is never start-to-finish in one sitting. Writing a picture book is a repeating cycle of inspiration, idea formulation, text construction, and revision. And with each revision pass, especially after critique and discussion with a writer buddy, the text morphs and grows into what the story wants to be. It can be a matter of weeks or even months for a picture book to fully evolve.

What was the easiest part of the writing process for *ALL THROUGH MY TOWN*? What was the most difficult part?

Perhaps the easiest part of writing *ALL THROUGH MY TOWN* was deciding on the structure. I wanted the story to be an active romp with a fun, read-aloud rhythm. Using the present participle “ing” verbs, I hoped to pull the reader/listener right into that stroller ride and through the bustle of the busy town.

But then came the challenge of meeting the demands of the rhythm and rhyme scheme I had settled on. As usually happens in my writing, about 90% of the text-in-verse flowed easily once the structure was set, but the remaining 10% required much more work. Constructing those remaining difficult verses in a set rhyme scheme is challenging. But it’s the part I most enjoy, because I have to work harder for the words. I might have to dream up a way to creatively use a word that, at first glance, might not seem to fit the tone or concept of the story. I have to reach beyond the usual to explore the unusual. And the resultant text is often richer for it. In the end, those troublesome verses often end up to be my favorites

Describe the town where you were raised. What was your favorite shop to visit?

Highland Park, Illinois, on the North Shore of Chicago was like many of the other lake hugging northern suburbs – lovely, Midwestern, loaded with deciduous trees, sprawling parks and rocky ravines. Like many of these towns, each had its own unique “uptown” complete with library, train station, grocery

store, post office, bakery, barber shop, cafe – just like the town in my book. My family actually owned the home delivery dairy in town.

As for my favorite shops, it's difficult to pick one. Probably Chestnut Court Bookstore tops the list. I always loved to browse around, sometimes with a gift card or babysitting money in hand. Other favorites included my local stationery store and paint store where I loaded up on my art supplies. Art was always a huge part of my life.

Do you have a favorite place to write?

Actually, quite a bit of my “writing” happens while I'm on the move and engaged in other activities.

I might hear a new, intriguing rhythm pattern while shoveling snow. I might construct a verse while on a walk. I might happen upon a brand new story idea while eavesdropping on a toddler's endless questioning in the grocery store. But at some point, I need to put fingers to the keyboard and get it all down. That's when I'm happy to have my office.

My workspace is a sunny, small room which sits above the entryway in my house. That sunlight comes from a wall of huge windows that open to my front yard and street, so I can see the comings and goings of my cul-de-sac. Through the double doors and more windows on the opposite side, I have a direct shot of my backyard. Lovely - especially in winter.

The rest of my house is a flurry of color, pattern and family pictures – which I love too. But for my office I prefer a clean, composed, calm space. The furnishing and decor are spare. It's my attempt at keeping my mind uncluttered. And sometimes it works.

You can actually read more about my creative space and see photos of my office at:
<http://writerjenn.blogspot.com/2013/03/a-peek-at-creative-space-of-jean-reidy.html>

Besides writing, what do you enjoy doing?

Reading, skiing, hiking, running, cooking, singing loudly, playing cards, and most of all – spending time with my family.

What advice do you have for aspiring authors?

First, read, read, read. Read anything you want. Comic books, magazines, funny books, sad books, adventures, fantasy - whatever you like. Focused, deliberate reading is the best teacher of writing. I actually schedule reading time into my work day. As I read, I pay close attention to structure, word choices, voice, page turns, endings ... every book is a writing lesson.

Then don't be afraid of the blank page or the blank screen. Just do it. Don't be afraid of sounding stupid. Just get it down. Write about things you like in the way you like to write. Make lists, doodle, rant, rap. Write poems. Wacky stories. Diary entries. But just write. The more you do it, the more you'll love it. AND the better you'll become.

Finally, when you've written something you love, take time to revise it until it's your best. Remember, stories evolve through revision. Find a few trusted readers and ask for their honest feedback. Then be prepared to write 2, 3, 4, 25 ... as many drafts as it takes to make your ideas clear.

What is the greatest piece of advice you've received during your writing career?

I've benefitted from so much great advice over the years, and I'm forever indebted to the people who've shared it. But there is one thing I like to keep in front of me, kind of my go-to quote, where I try to land with all my kidlit writing. It is this simple phrase from editor Allyn Johnston "... the true goal of all this work we do together: a child, a story, and a deep and long-lasting connection between them." That, in my mind, says it all.

An Interview with Illustrator Leo Timmers

How long did it take you to illustrate ALL THROUGH MY TOWN?

It took roughly 8 months. About 4 months of my time were spent sketching and mapping everything out and another 4 months were spent painting. I have a very labor intensive technique, so it all goes very slowly. On one illustration I work about a week, sometimes a bit more.

How did you come up with the illustrations for the book? Were you inspired by any parts of your town?

Oh, yes, there's a lot of Brussels in it, certainly in the houses and buildings. But I liked to design the American diner which was inspired by Hopper. The cars are all American because I love old American cars.

Why did you choose animals as your main characters instead of humans?

I think animals have so much more character than humans. They are colorful and you can play with their size. Also, by using animals you're more in another world, a magical world; it's more of a fantasy, and not so realistic. Another thing is that I find humans pretty boring to draw; however, I'm now making a book with humans, just to challenge myself. But for this book, I thought animals were really perfect.

What is your favorite illustration in the book and why?

My favorite illustration would probably be the station. It was on a technical and composition level the hardest to pull off. There are lots of things are going on, but all the different scenes are clear and they fit neatly in this big station-scene. It's a real puzzle to create an image like this.

How did you become an illustrator?

By accident. From a very young age I was more interested in comics. I published several books between the age of 11 and 20, but then I got a bit tired of it and I showed some drawings to a publisher near where I lived.

He gave me my first assignment and that's how the ball started rolling. After a few years I also started writing myself and now I rarely only illustrate. All Through My Town is really an exception. I loved the words so much, the text is so open and spare that I could bring my own universe to it.

What advice do you have for aspiring illustrators?

Put in the hours. Find your own voice, and that means work a lot. Look at great books and learn from them. But most important, never give up!

Besides illustrating books, what do you enjoy doing?

Illustrating is really a passion, so there isn't much time left for other 'hobbies' . I play badminton once a week. I love reading. I'm interested in vintage design, but my biggest passion is film. I'm a real film buff, especially older classic films like Hitchcock, Kubrick, Keaton, and many more. I love the craft, and craftsmanship of the masters, and I find it very inspiring. I also aspire to have a high level of craftsmanship in my work.

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