

WHY MOSQUITOES BUZZ IN PEOPLE'S EARS

Why Mosquitoes Buzz In People's Ears

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(Dial)

Themes: Africa, Folktales

Grades K – 3

Running time: 10 minutes, Iconographic

Summary

Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears is the story of a mosquito who whispers a tall tale into the ear of an iguana. The iguana, not wanting to hear such nonsense, plugs his ears with sticks. The iguana fails to hear the python call to him. The python assumes that the iguana is angry with him and plotting some mischief. This causes the python to hide in a rabbit hole which disturbs the rabbit. This chain of events goes until a baby owl is killed as a result of the confusion.

The King Lion tries to resolve the problem of who killed the baby owl, and the antics of the animals are then unraveled. The end of the story finds the animals angry with the mosquito, who was responsible for causing all of the chaos in the first place. To this day, the mosquito buzzes in people's ears as if to say "Zeee! Is everyone still angry with me?"

Objectives

- o Children will explore African culture
- o Children will learn about jungle animals
- o Children will investigate the concept of cause and effect

Before Viewing Activities

Share the book Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears with children.

Locate West Africa on a map. Talk with children about climate, rainfall, vegetation and inhabitants.

Talk with children about the idea of telling tall tales or exaggerating. Ask: What is the difference between exaggerating and telling a lie? Why do you think people sometimes tell tall tales or exaggerate? How would you feel if you found out that something a friend told you was not the truth? What could the iguana in the story have done when the mosquito told him a tall tale? How might this have changed the story?

Discuss jungle animals with children. Encourage children to use the library and other resource books to see how much they can find out about the animals they met in the story. Later, have children share the information they uncovered with one another.

After Viewing Activities

Cover an entire classroom wall with large sheets of kraft paper or newsprint. Then supply paints that children can use to create a jungle wall mural. As children work, discuss the physical characteristics of the different animals and the ways their colors help to camouflage their bodies and keep them safe from their enemies.

Have children create short stories based on a tall tale. Offer children a story starter such as, "One day a boy whispered into his brother's ear.... Allow older children to write their stories and younger children to dictate their stories to you. Later, display children's stories on a classroom wall or bulletin board. You might want to draw and cut out a long monkey's tail and attach it vertically to the bulletin board or wall to head your "Tall Tale" story display.

Play the "tell me a secret" game. Have children sit in a circle and whisper a secret to the person sitting next to him or her. This person whispers the same secret to the next person, who whispers it to the next person, and so on. The last person to hear the secret says it out loud to the group. Children will say whether or not this was the secret that was whispered to them. As the game continues, help children understand how messages can be misrepresented or inaccurately relayed.

Other book based films and videos about African culture are available from Weston Woods. These include:

MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS by John Steptoe

THE VILLAGE OF ROUND AND SQUARE HOUSES by Ann Grifalconi

A STORY-A STORY by Gail E. Haley

HOT HIPPO written by Mwenye Hadithi and illustrated by Adrienne Kennaway

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