



The Very Hungry Caterpillar

by Eric Carle

Teacher's Guide

Written By Elanna Grover



CLASSROOM
FAVORITES

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Note to the Teacher: The Very Hungry Caterpillar has no page numbers. For the sake of convenience and to follow this guide, you may wish to number the pages on your copy, starting with the page showing the egg on the large green leaf as page 1, and ending with the butterfly as page 22.

Synopsis

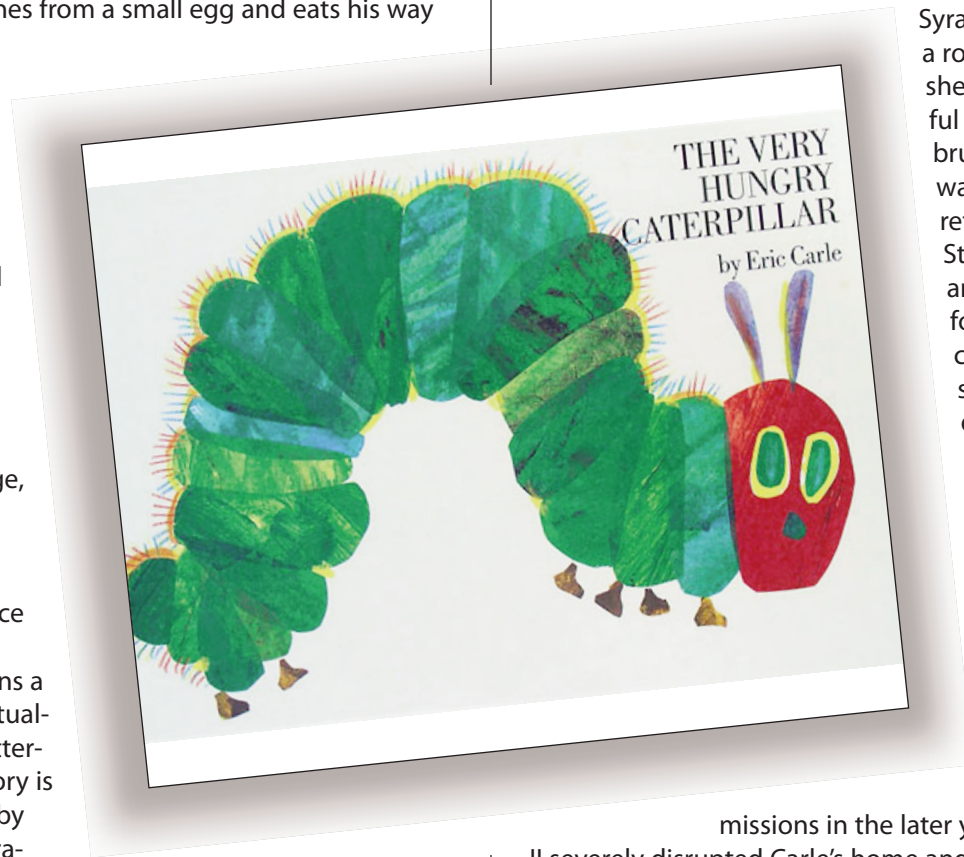
A caterpillar hatches from a small egg and eats his way through one apple on Monday, two pears on Tuesday, three plums on Wednesday and so forth, until on Saturday, he eats chocolate cake, ice cream, pickle, cheese, salami, lollipop, cherry pie, sausage, cupcake, and watermelon and ends up with a stomachache. Once he is fattened up the caterpillar spins a cocoon and eventually turns into a butterfly. This simple story is made distinctive by the colorful illustrations and the holes in the pages that show where the caterpillar has eaten. Another unique feature of the book is the variation in the size of the pages. The page showing one apple is only a few inches wide. The page showing two pears is a little wider, and each succeeding page widens until the foods that the caterpillar eats on Saturday are shown on a double page spread.

Author Sketch

Eric Carle is a much-loved, highly acclaimed writer-illustrator of picture books for young children, a career path he was drawn to in response to his own childhood experiences. Carle was born in 1929 to German immigrant parents in Syracuse, New York. From a very young

age, Carle went on long nature walks with his father, both taking delight in discovering and studying small creatures like salamanders, spiders, and worms, an enthusiasm that would be clearly expressed many years later in Carle's picture books. Carle happily attended kindergarten in

Syracuse at age five in a room full of "large sheets of paper, colorful paints, and big brushes." When Carle was six, his parents returned to Stuttgart, Germany, and the young boy found himself in a classroom with strict rules, harsh discipline, and "small sheets of paper, a hard pencil, a ruler, and a warning not to make any mistakes." From then on Carle hated school, except for art classes.



Allied bombing missions in the later years of World War

II severely disrupted Carle's home and school life. After the war, Carle studied commercial art at Stuttgart's Akademie der bildenden Künste, then worked in Germany as a graphic designer and poster artist until leaving in 1952 to return at last to the United States, where he has lived ever since. Carle soon landed a job as a graphic designer with *The New York Times*, but then was drafted and served in the U.S. Army (stationed in Stuttgart) from 1952 to 1954. In Germany, Carle met and married his first wife, Dorothea, who returned with him to New York, where their two children were later born.

Carle resumed his job with the *Times* in 1954, then worked as an advertising agency art director until 1963, when he became a freelance designer and illustrator so he could spend all his time "creating pictures." Following

The Very Hungry Caterpillar Eric Carle

his 1964 divorce, Carle lived as a bachelor in New York City until his second marriage in 1973 to Barbara Morrison. The couple soon moved to northwest Massachusetts, where they lived in Northampton for many years.



In 1964, Carle was asked to do illustrations for a series of young children's books, and he awakened to his true calling. "The child inside me—who had been so suddenly and sharply uprooted and repressed—was beginning to come joyfully back to life," Carle says. He began writing and illustrating the books he had yearned for during his own repressed early school years—picture books that he designs to be, in his own words, "fun, bright, bold, and educational without being heavy-handed." Carle has been immensely successful in carrying out his purpose.

His second picture book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (1969), is an enduringly popular classic. Carle has also illustrated many picture books written by other authors, but he is best known and loved for his own word-and-picture creations. Carle has two grown children, a son and a daughter. He and his wife, Barbara, divide their time between the Florida Keys and the hills of North Carolina.

Critic's Corner

Critics admire, and audiences thoroughly enjoy, many aspects of Eric Carle's works: the vibrant colors, the bold and expressive artistic style, the masterful design sense, the inventiveness and humor and intellectual stimulation that pervade each book. Carle's typical artistic technique is collage—he cuts out shapes from colored tissue paper, pastes them to cardboard, and adds splashes, strokes, and dabs of acrylic paints plus a few touches of ink or crayon to create texture, variety, and depth. The results are lively, vibrant, eye-catching illustrations. Carle also typically manipulates the physical page to create, as he says, "a book that can be touched and felt, and a toy that can be read." *The Grouchy Ladybug*, for example, uses split pages; *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* features pages of different lengths and holes; and *The Very Busy Spider* uses die-cut pages and raised surfaces. These physical features stimulate readers' interest and imagination, drawing them physically as well as intellectually into the book. Reflecting the influence of his childhood nature walks with his father, Carle frequently centers his stories around a humanized animal or insect and imparts some knowledge about the natural world

to his young audience. A Carle story appeals to young readers' emotions while also subtly teaching concepts such as shapes, counting, comparative size, and telling time.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Carle's most famous book, has been wildly popular since its publication in 1969, and widely praised for its innovative design and use of easy-to-read words, an approach that can help young children learn to read. The book has been translated into fifty languages, and has spawned everything from plush toys to DVDs; as of 2005, the last date for which such figures were available, a copy of the book was sold every 57 seconds!

Carle has said that he first got the idea for *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* when he punched a hole in a stack of papers, and thought about a bookworm eating his way through a book. Eventually, with his editor, he developed the idea into the picture book.

Timeline

In the moonlight	An egg lies on a leaf.
Sunday	The caterpillar hatches and starts looking for food.
Monday	He eats through an apple.
Tuesday	He eats through two pears.
Wednesday	He eats through three plums.
Thursday	four strawberries.
Friday	He eats through five oranges.
Saturday	He has a feast! He gets a stomachache.
Sunday	He eats a green leaf, and feels better.
Then	He builds a cocoon.
More than two weeks	He stays in the cocoon.
Finally	He emerges from the cocoon as a beautiful butterfly.

Eric Carle's Awards

Eric Carle has won numerous awards during his career, including citations from the American Library Association and the American Booksellers' Association. Some of his other awards include:

- The NEA Foundation Award for Outstanding Service to Public Education, 2007
- John P. McGovern Award in Behavioral Sciences, Smithsonian Institution, 2006
- The Laura Ingalls Wilder Award from the Association for Library Service to Children, American Library

- Association, 2003
- The Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, 2001
- The Japan Picture Book Award, Presented by Mainichi Newspaper for Lifetime Achievement, 2000
- An Outstanding Friend of Children Award, Pittsburgh Children's Museum, 1999
- The Regina Medal, Catholic Library Association, 1999
- The University of Southern Mississippi Medallion from the DeGrumond Collection, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattisburg, MS, 1997
- The 1995 David McCord Children's Literature Citation, Framingham State College
- The Nobscot Reading Council of the International Reading Association, 1995
- A Silver Medal from the City of Milano, Italy, 1989

Selected Other Works by Eric Carle

- The Say-with-Me ABC Book* (1967)
- 1, 2, 3 to the Zoo* (1968)
- The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (1969)
- Pancakes, Pancakes!* (1970)
- The Tiny Seed* (1970)
- Do You Want to Be My Friend?* (1971)
- The Rooster Who Set Out to See the World* (1972) (later edition, *Rooster's Off to See the World*)
- The Secret Birthday Message* (1972)
- The Very Long Tail* (1972)
- The Very Long Train* (1972)
- Walter the Baker: An Old Story Retold and illustrated by Eric Carle* (1972)
- Have You Seen My Cat?* (1973)
- I See a Song* (1973)
- All About Arthur (An Absolutely Absurd Ape)* (1974)
- "My Very First Library" Series (1974, 1986)
- The Mixed-up Chameleon* (1975)
- Eric Carle c Storybook: Seven Tales by the Brothers Grimm* (1976)
- Seven Stories by Hans Christian Andersen* (1978)
- Watch Out! A Giant!* (1978)
- Twelve Tales from Aesop: Retold and illustrated* (1980)
- The Honeybee and the Robber: A Moving Picture Book* (1981)
- Catch the Ball* (1982)
- Let's Paint a Rainbow* (1982)
- What for Lunch?* (1982)
- The Very Busy Spider* (1984)
- All-Around Us* (1986)
- Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me* (1986)
- A House for Hermit Crab* (1987)

- Eric Carle 's Treasury of Classic Stories for Children* (1988)
- The Very Quiet Cricket* (1990)
- Draw Me a Star* (1992)
- Today Is Monday* (1993)
- My Apron* (1994)
- The Very Lonely Firefly* (1995)
- Little Cloud* (1996)
- The Art of Eric Carle* (1996)
- From Head to Toe* (1997)
- Flora and Tiger: 19 Very Short Stories from My Life* (1997)
- Hello, Red Fox* (1998)
- You Can Make a Collage: A Very Simple How-to-Book* (1998)
- The Very Clumsy Click Beetle* (1999)
- Does a Kangaroo Have a Mother Too?* (2000)

Bibliography

- Book World (Washington Post), February 12, 1978, p. G4.
- Bulletin of the Center for Children s Books, June 1978, p. 155.
- Carle, Eric, "From Hungry Caterpillars to Bad Tempered Ladybirds," Books for Your Children, Spring 1978, p. 7.
- "Authorgraph No. 2: Eric Carle," Books for Keeps, May 1985, pp. 14-15.
- Chevalier, Tracy, ed. Twentieth-Century Children Writers, 3d ed. Chicago/London: St. James Press, 1989.
- Contemporary Authors, New Revision Series, Vols. 10 & 25. Detroit: Gale, 1983, 1989.
- de Montreville, Doris, and Elizabeth D. Crawford, eds. Fourth Book of Junior Authors & Illustrators. NY: H.W. Wilson Co., 1978.
- Kingman, Lee, et al., eds. illustrators of Children Books 1967-1976. Boston: Horn Book Inc., 1978.
- Klingberg, Delores R., "Eric Carle," Language Arts, April 1977, p. 447.
- School Library Journal, February 1978, pp. 44-45.
- Silvey, Anita, ed. Children Books and Their Creators. Boston: Houghton Muffin, 1995.
- Something About the Author Vols. 4 & 65. Detroit: Gale Research, 1973, 1991.
- Something About the Author Autobiography Series, Vol. 6. Detroit: Gale, 1988.
- Time, November 21, 1977, p. 69.

Internet

- "The Official Eric Carle Website," <<http://www.eric-carle.com/home.html>>
- "Eric Carle Biography," <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_Carle>
- "Eric Carle Teacher Resource File," <<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/carle.htm>>

The Very Hungry Caterpillar Eric Carle

"Eric Carle Author Study,"

<<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3234>>

"Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art,"

<<http://www.picturebookart.org/>>

Objectives

1. To recall details, make interpretations, read critically, and respond creatively to the book
2. To develop concepts about print and expand sight vocabulary
3. To have opportunities for a variety of writing experiences
4. To respond to the book through the use of art and creative movement

Meaning Study

PREREADING

Before reading the book

- Read the title and look at the cover of the book with students. Make a list of everything the students know about caterpillars. Be sure to discuss what caterpillars might like to eat.
- Look at the end papers. Have students guess why Eric Carle chose to make the end papers and the title page look the way they do.
- Ask the students if they have ever eaten too much. Have them describe how they felt. Make a list of words the students use in their descriptions.

WORD STUDY

Independent Readers

Words to Introduce Before Reading. (These words have been chosen because they are crucial to understanding the story, and are not easily understood through the context.)

Print these two words on the board: *cocoon*, p. 20; *nibbled*, p. 20

- *cocoon* - If this word did not come up in the prereading discussion, talk about it now. Show pictures of cocoons from some of the informational books listed in the Related Readings section of this guide. Or, better yet, bring in a real cocoon.
- *nibbled* - Pantomime this word. Talk about it in relation to other similar words such as *gulped*, *tasted*, *chewed*, *sipped*.

During the Reading. When students encounter words that are unfamiliar, encourage them to use the context along with the beginning consonant sound to take a guess at a word that would make sense. Then have

them confirm their guess by looking at the ending consonant sound to see if it fits with their guess.

Other Word Study Activities (to be done after reading the story)

1. Copy the page of word cards found at the back of this guide so that there is a set of cards for each pair of students. Cut each set of cards and put them in an envelope. You may wish to laminate the cards before you cut them. Working with a partner, students may use these cards to construct their own sentences. Include a few blank cards in each envelope so that students may write additional words if they need them to complete their sentences.
2. Use the word cards again for a categorization activity. You may designate categories such as food, number words, days of the week, words describing caterpillars, etc., or students may suggest the categories to be used.

Emergent Readers

The goal for these readers is not that they master every word in the book, but that their concepts about print are developed.

1. Introduce the book to your more advanced readers first and let them make a big book version of the story (see activity suggestion #8), or use an opaque projector to enlarge the pages of the book and project them onto a wall or screen.
 - **Day 1:** Read the story aloud from the enlarged version of the text, pointing to each word as it is read with a small ruler or pointer. This pointing is very important because it helps students develop concepts about print such as left-right, top-bottom directionality, how spaces separate words, that the left hand page is read first, etc.. Talk about one of the discussion questions found in the following section of this guide. Reread the story, again pointing to each word as it is read. This time encourage students to join in chorally with the reading wherever they are able.
 - **Day 2:** Reread the story from the enlarged version of the text, pointing to each word as you read it. Encourage students to join in. Talk about another of the discussion questions from the following section of this guide. Read the story again asking different students from the group to use the pointer as you and the group read aloud. Use regular size copies of the book and have students work with a partner to count how many words are on a particular page. Pair the students so that those who don't yet have

a concept of what a word is work with a partner who does.

Day 3: Reread the story chorally from the enlarged version of the text again pointing to each word as it is read. This time stop periodically after reading a page and ask students to come up and find a particular word in the text. Choose words that are frequently repeated such as hungry, caterpillar, and leaf, the days of the week, number words, and the foods the caterpillar ate, for the students to find. You may want to talk about beginning and ending consonant sounds in the words that the students are searching for. Another way that students might find the word they are looking for is to reread the text (which by now they may well have memorized) pointing to each word until they come to the one they want. In addition:

- Talk about another of the discussion questions from the following section of this guide.
- Have students work with a partner to reconstruct a portion of the text from one of the “stair step” pages in the regular-sized book. Copy the page of cards found at the back of this guide so that there is a set of cards for each pair of students. Cut each set of cards and put them in an envelope. You may wish to laminate the cards before you cut them. Students may also use these cards to construct their own sentences.

• **Day 4:** Reread the story from the enlarged version of the text, pointing to each word as you read it. Encourage students to join in with the reading. Talk about another of the discussion questions from the following section of this guide. Call on individual students to come up and use the pointer while reading a page of the story. Alternate these individual readings with choral readings by the entire group.

• **Day 5:** Using the regular-size version of the book, have students read the book with a partner. The partners can take turns reading the pages, helping each other if they get stuck on a word. If you feel that the students are now familiar enough with the book to be able to read it fluently, allow them to take it home to read to their parents or another interested person.

Comprehension Study

Discussion Questions

1. Which of the following describes the hungry caterpillar?

- greedy
- riendly
- curious
- frightened
- angry

Find an example of something that happened in the book to show that you are right.

2. Could this story have happened in a desert? A swamp? A meadow? The ocean? Outer space? A forest? A farm? A garden? A city? Your neighborhood? Your school? Talk about why the story could or could not have happened in each of these places.
3. Look at all the things the hungry caterpillar ate on pages 15 and 16. Where do you think he found all these foods?
4. Eric Carle was going to name the main character in this book Willie the Worm. Then he changed his mind and made him a caterpillar, but he didn't give him a name. What name would you choose for the caterpillar?
5. Suppose a hungry bird had come along. How could this have changed the story?
6. How many characters were in this story? How would the story be different if another character were added? Think of some characters that might be added to the story, and tell how the story would be changed if they were in it. (Examples: a spider, a boy, a girl, a farmer, other caterpillars.)
7. Now that the story has ended, what do you think will happen to the butterfly?
8. Look carefully at the pictures in *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. How do you think they were made? (tissue paper collage)
9. Read Eric Carle's *The Very Busy Spider* and *The Very Grouchy Ladybug*. Compare the spider and the ladybug to the caterpillar. Tell how they are alike and how they are different.
10. The very hungry caterpillar changed into a butterfly in this story. What other changes can you think of that happen in nature? (a tadpole turns into a frog; a seed turns into a plant; water turns into ice or steam; leaves change color in the fall; etc.)

Across the Curriculum

Science

1. Depending on the season, you may find caterpillars or purchase cocoons for classroom observation. If you find caterpillars on your own put them, along with the leaves on which they were found, in a terrarium. Place a screen over the top of the terrarium. Soon the students should be able to see the caterpillar spin its cocoon.
2. Leave the cocoon in the terrarium all winter and in the spring you can watch a butterfly emerge. If it is later in the year, you may be able to find a cocoon. Monarch butterflies often spin their cocoons on milkweed plants. Do not try to detach the cocoon from the plant. Instead, cut a section of the plant where the cocoon is attached and place it in a terrarium or a large jar with a gauze cover attached to the top with a rubber band.
3. If it is spring or summer, go on a butterfly walk and see how many different kinds of butterflies you can find. If you want to make a class butterfly collection, try catching and photographing the butterflies, then letting them go, rather than killing them and mounting them. Display photographs along with a label telling the date and place where the butterfly was caught and the name of the butterfly, found in a reference book. Alternatively, you may want to reproduce images of different butterflies from books or the Internet, and create a bulletin board "collection" that way.
4. Invite someone who has a butterfly collection to visit your classroom. Have the person share his or her collection and talk to the students about butterflies.

Math

1. Count how many items the caterpillar ate. Put the things the caterpillar ate into categories. How many categories do you have?
2. Make a graph showing the favorite foods of each member of the class, or the activities that students do on each day of the week.

Health

1. Discuss the basic food groups. Categorize the items the caterpillar ate according to the food groups. Discuss what is nutritious for a caterpillar versus what is nutritious for a person.

2. Find out what some other animals eat. Make a chart displaying this information.

Writing and Storytelling

1. Make a step book. (For a free, printable PDF with directions for making the books, go to the following link at Susan Kapuscinski Gaylord's "Making Books with Children" website: <<http://www.makingbooks.com/stepbook.pdf>>.) Make a rebus story by drawing different kinds of food or cutting pictures of food out of magazines, or printing them off of the Internet, and pasting them into the book. Your text might read, "On Monday the very hungry caterpillar ate one _____. On Tuesday the very hungry caterpillar ate two _____. On Wednesday the very hungry caterpillar ate three _____." Continue with this pattern until you get to Sunday. Adapt the step book idea as you see fit.
2. Write a class book titled *The Very Hungry _____*, modeled after *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, about another animal or a person. Use what you have learned about what other animals eat, the basic food groups, and nutritious foods versus "junk" foods, to select the foods that your character should eat each day of the week. Write this story as a group, with various students contributing different parts of the story. Get suggestions from the group for revisions and improvements.
3. Make a big book version of the story. Use 14 inch-by-22 inch paper, cutting the pages to replicate the step design. Print the text in letters large enough to be seen by all students when they are seated in a reading circle on the floor. The students can recreate the illustrations with tissue paper and paste them into the book. You may want to laminate the finished product before binding it together with a poster board cover and small metal rings.
4. Using overhead transparency film, have various students make the hungry caterpillar, leaves, the foods the caterpillar ate, and other items from the story. Then tell the story using an overhead projector.

Art

1. Make a sock caterpillar by stuffing a sock and tying heavy thread or string at intervals along the length of the sock to make the sections of the caterpillar. Add felt or button eyes and pipe clean-

er antennae to complete the caterpillar.

2. Try making your own tissue paper collage. Rubber cement, a glue stick, or paste are the best kinds of adhesives to use to make the paper tissue stick to the background paper. Glue tends to make the tissue paper wrinkle and the colors run.

Music and Dance

1. Make up a dance that shows the caterpillar hatching from the egg, eating and growing, spinning a cocoon, and finally turning into a butterfly. Listen to some different kinds of music and pick the music that you think fits your dance the best. Perform your dance for another class.

Cross-Curricular Sources

Concept Books

Aliki, *Feelings*
Caron L. Cohen, *Where's the Fly?*
Gail Hartman, *As the Crow Flies: A First Book of Maps*
Steve Jenkins, *Big and Little*
Claire Llewellyn, *My First Book of Time*
Stuart J. Murphy, *The Best Bug Parade* and *Give Me Half!*
Robert E. Wells, *Is a Blue Whale the Biggest Thing There Is?*

Picture Books

Judy Allen, *Whale*
Robert Bender, *A Most Unusual Lunch*
Marguerite W. Davol, *How Snake Got His Hiss*
Marcus Pfister, *The Rainbow Fish*
Michael Rosen, *This Is Our House*
Jill Paton Walsh, *Connie Came to Play*

Nonfiction Animal Books

Moira Butterfield, *Brown, Fierce, and Furry: What Am I?*
and *Fast, Strong, and Striped: What Am I?*
Nicola Davies, *Big Blue Whale*
Claude Delafosse and Ute Fuhr, *Whales*
Louise Goldsen, *The Ladybug and Other Insects*
Judy Hawes, *Fireflies in the Night*
Bianca Lavies, *Backyard Hunter: The Praying Mantis*
Angela Royston, *Insects and Crawly Creatures*

CD-ROM

Blue s' Treasure Hunt: A Learning Adventure (Humongous Entertainment)
The Bug and the Slug in the Rug (Green Bark Press)
Dr Seuss Preschool & Kindergarten (Learning Co./Broderbund Software)

The Magic School Bus Explores the World of Animals
(Microsoft)

Make a Masterpiece (Edmark Corp.)

This House Is Bugged (Sunburst)

DVD/Video

Animal Life for Children (12-video series, Schlessinger Media)

Courtesy Counts (MarshMedia)

Critter Hunt (6-video series, DAVEY/SVE, Churchill Media)

Eric Carle: Picture Writer (Searchlight Films)

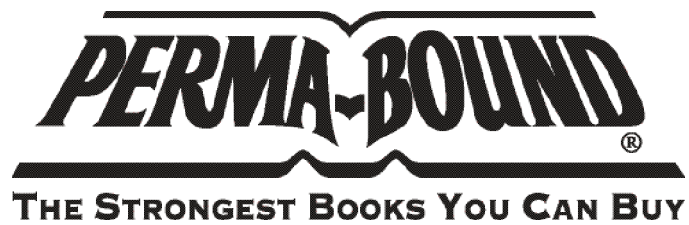
Student Workshop: Angry? Ten Ways to Cool Off
(Sunburst)

Thank You, Meiling (MarshMedia)

The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Other Stories (UK television adaptation, GAGA Communications)

INTERNET

Step book directions from Susan Kapuscinski Gaylord's "Making Books with Children" website
<http://www.makingbooks.com/step.shtml>



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