

Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears

by Verna Aardema

Pictures by Leo and Diane Dillon

Teacher's Guide

Written By Kathy Sammis.

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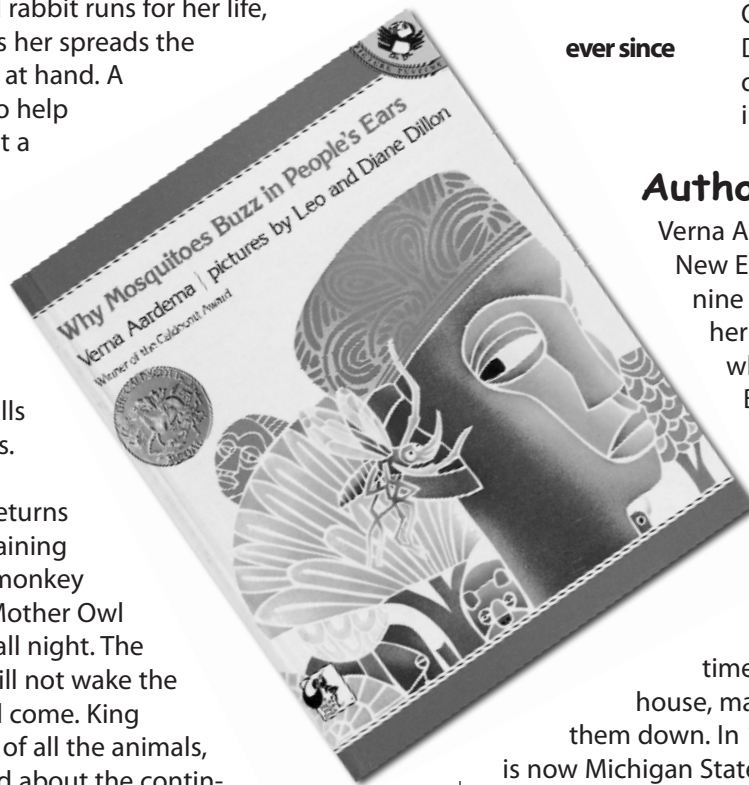


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Synopsis

This West African *pourquoi* (French for "why") tale follows a series of events to their culmination and then traces those events back in sequence to uncover the true culprit. The story begins as a mosquito tells an iguana about seeing giant yams. The grumpy iguana doesn't want to listen, so he puts sticks in his ears and stalks off. A python is alarmed when the iguana won't return a greeting. Fearful that the iguana is plotting mischief against him, the python hides in a rabbit's burrow. The terrified rabbit runs for her life, and a crow who sees her spreads the alarm that danger is at hand. A monkey screeches to help spread the news that a dangerous beast is on the prowl. As the monkey bounds through the trees, he breaks off a dead limb, which falls on the owl's nest and kills one of the baby owls.

When Mother Owl returns to the nest, the remaining owlets tell her that monkey killed their sibling. Mother Owl mourns all day and all night. The next morning she will not wake the sun so the dawn will come. King Lion calls a meeting of all the animals, who are very worried about the continuing nighttime darkness. King Lion questions each animal involved in the chain of events in turn. The monkey faults the crow for alarming him, the crow blames the rabbit for causing him to spread the alarm, the rabbit blames the python for scaring her, the python faults the iguana, and the iguana blames the mosquito for annoying him. The assembled animals cry, "Punish the mosquito!" Satisfied, Mother Owl hoots and the sun comes up.



The mosquito, hidden in a nearby bush, hears all this. Ever since, the mosquito has had a guilty conscience and whines in people's ears, "Is everyone still angry at me?"

Timeline

morning, 1st day

The chain of events unfurls, from mosquito to iguana to python to rabbit to crow to monkey to owl. Mother Owl mourns her lost owl. Mother Owl fails to wake the sun. King Lion presides over a council of animals, which ultimately finds the mosquito to be at fault. Mother Owl hoots, and the sun rises at last. Driven by a guilty conscience, mosquito buzzes in people's ears, asking if everyone is still angry.

**1st day and night
morning, 2nd day**

ever since

Author Sketch

Verna Aardema was born June 6, 1911, in New Era, Michigan. The third oldest of nine children, she was expected to help her mother with household chores, which interrupted her avid reading. But when Verna received an A from her sixth-grade teacher for her first piece of creative writing, her mother declared that Verna was going to be a writer like the mother's own grandfather, and allowed her to spend great amounts of time in the cedar swamp behind their house, making up stories and, soon, writing them down. In 1935, Verna graduated from what is now Michigan State University, becoming a teacher and marrying Albert Aardema. Her interest in storytelling reemerged when her young daughter, a fussy eater, demanded a story to be told with each meal. Aardema drew on her great interest in, and reading about, Africa to spin these tales.

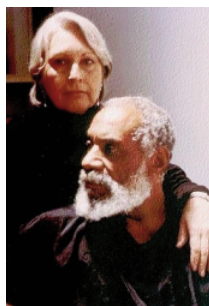
During the 1950s, Aardema continued to develop her storytelling skills and became a newspaper reporter as well. In 1960, her first book, a series of African folktales called *Tales from the Story Hat*, was published. Aardema



then went on to become a preeminent reteller of African folktales for children and the winner of numerous awards, retiring from teaching and pursuing storytelling full-time. Aardema moved to Florida in the 1980s with her second husband (a childhood friend), Joel Vugteveen, keeping up an active schedule of writing, storytelling at schools, and speaking at writers' conferences. She died in 2000.

Illustrators' Sketch

Husband-and-wife team Diane and Leo Dillon have collaborated since the 1950s. They were born eleven days apart in 1933 on opposite coasts: Leo in Brooklyn, New York, to immigrants from Trinidad; Diane in Southern California. Leo's parents were supportive of his talent, and he honed his skills at a New York City arts high school and later at Parsons School of Design. Diane's parents were also supportive, but she received little formal training until college, eventually culminating at Parsons as well. The two met there in 1954, and at first were fierce rivals. They married in 1957, and began collaborating as artists a few years later, forming a successful, award-winning partnership.



Over the years of working as a team, the Dillons have honed their unique collaborative process, passing a piece back and forth continually, refining as they go. They call the result of the collaboration the "third artist," and it is to this that they attribute their unique and highly acclaimed style—a bold, effective use of a wide variety of techniques and media. The Dillons have said that they consider drawing for children "a responsibility, an honor, and a profound joy."

Critic's Corner

Verna Aardema's retellings of folktales have garnered widespread critical admiration as well as a delighted and appreciative audience of young readers and listeners. The same is true of the Dillons' numerous artistic creations. Critics writing about *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* praised both the text and the artwork. The *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* wrote, "A 'why' story from Africa is retold with verve in a picture book that should delight young listeners and adult readers equally. . . . The youngest children especially

will enjoy the descriptions of sound . . . and the surprise ending." The *New York Times Book Review* commented, "This charming narrative of cause and effect is an African legend retold, one of the nicest of many such adaptations. . . . Children will enjoy the tattle-tale quality of the denouement. . . . The repetitive patterns of feathers, leaves and scales complement the lilting rhythms of the text." *Language Arts* summed up, "Repetitious use of sounds characteristic of each animal reflects the style of the traditional African storyteller. Stunning, vibrant, full-color illustrations enhance the delightful chain tale." *School Library Journal* especially admired the artwork: "Stunning full-color illustrations . . . give an eye-catching abstract effect and tell the story with humor and power. This ought to be a strong contender for the Caldecott Medal." The book did in fact win the 1975 Caldecott.

Other Works by Verna Aardema

- Tales From the Story Hat*, illustrated by Elton Fax (1960)
- Behind the Back of the Mountain: Black Folk Tales From Southern Africa*, illustrated by Leo Dillon and Diane Dillon (1973)
- Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears: A West African Tale*, illustrated by Leo Dillon and Diane Dillon (1975)
- Who's in Rabbit's House? A Masai Tale*, illustrated by Leo Dillon and Diane Dillon (1977)
- Half-a-Ball-of-Kenki: An Ashanti Tale*, illustrated by Diane Stanley Zuromskis (1979)
- Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain*, illustrated by Beatriz Vidal (1981)
- Oh, Kojo! How Could You! An Ashanti Tale*, illustrated by Marc Brown (1984)
- Bimwili and the Zimwi: A Tale from Zanzibar*, illustrated by Susan Meddaugh (1985)
- Rabbit Makes a Monkey of Lion: A Swahili Tale*, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney (1989)
- Borreguita and the Coyote*, illustrated by Petra Mathers (1991)
- A Bookworm Who Hatched* (autobiography) (1992)
- The Lonely Lioness and the Ostrich Chicks*, illustrated by Yumi Heo (1996)
- Koi and the Kola Nuts: A Tale from Liberia*, illustrated by Joel Cepeda (1999)

Selected Works by the Illustrators

- Hakon of Rogen's Saga*, by Erik C. Haugaard (1963)
The Ring in the Prairie: A Shawnee Legend, John Bierhorst and Henry R. Schoolcraft, eds. (1970)
Behind the Back of the Mountain: Black Folktales From Southern Africa, by Verna Aardema (1973)
The Hundred Penny Box, by Sharon Bell Mathis (1975)
Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears: A West African Tale, by Verna Aardema (1975)
Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions, by Margaret W. Musgrove (1976)
Two Pairs of Shoes, by P. L. Travers (1980)
Brother to the Wind, by Mildred Pitts Walter (1985)
The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales, by Virginia Hamilton (1985)
The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks, by Katherine Paterson (1990)
Pish, Posh, Said Hieronymus Bosch, by Nancy Willard (1991)
Switch on the Night, by Ray Bradbury (1993)
To Every Thing There Is a Season: Verses from Ecclesiastes (1998)

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Contemporary Authors, New Revision Series, Vol. 39. Detroit: Gale Research, 1992.
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Something About the Author, Vols. 68, 107, 119. Detroit: Gale Research, 1992, 1999, 2001.
Something About the Author Autobiography Series, Vol. 8. Detroit: Gale Research, 1989.

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- Children's Literature Review, Vol. 44*. Detroit: Gale Research, 1997.
 Dillon, Diane, "Leo Dillon," *Horn Book Magazine*, August 1977, pp. 423-25.
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- Preiss, Byron, ed. *The Art of Leo and Diane Dillon* (1981). NY: Ballantine Books, 1981.
 Silvey, Anita, ed. *Children's Books and Their Creators*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995.
Something About the Author, Vols. 51, 106. Detroit: Gale Research/Group, 1988, 1999.

Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears—reviews

- Booklist*, November 15, 1975, p. 447.
Bulletin of the Center for Children's Literature, November 1975, p. 37.
Childhood Education, April 1976, p. 317.
The Horn Book Magazine, April 1976, pp. 146-47.
Kirkus Reviews, October 1, 1975, p. 1117.
Language Arts, May 1976, p. 510.
The New York Times Book Review, November 9, 1975, p. 48.
School Library Journal, December 1975, p. 40.

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- Verna Aardema
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verna_Aardema
Verna Aardema: The Bookworm Who Hatched
www.kidspoint.org/columns2.asp?column_id=534&column_type=author

DIANE AND LEO DILLON

- L + D Dillon
www.bpib.com/l&dillon.htm
 Leo and Diane Dillon
www.kidsreads.com/authors/au-dillon-leo-diane.asp
 Leo and Diane Dillon: The Third Artist Rules
www.locusmag.com/2000/Issues/04/Dillons.html

Objectives

General Objectives

1. To use discussion questions to recall details, interpret characters and events, read or listen critically, and respond creatively to the story and its illustrations.
2. To expand vocabulary through context clues and word study.
3. To expand responses to the book by completing a variety of related activities, some in other areas of the curriculum.
4. To exercise artistic, craft, and dramatic skills to help interpret reading.

Specific Objectives

1. To understand why the artists show the same creature twice on the early two-page spreads.
2. To understand why the each creature reacts as he or she does in the chain of events.
3. To identify the results of each incident in the chain of events.
4. To count and identify, where possible, the various specific creatures shown in the book's illustrations.
5. To recognize what the right-hand-page illustrations show during the council meeting.
6. To understand the outcome of the animals' council, and the effect this has on the mosquito.
7. To recognize the author's use of rhythm, repetition, and sound words to enhance the effect of the author's storytelling.

The Importance of Setting

The story takes place in a forested West African setting. It begins at a waterhole, then moves into the forest, where the monkey inadvertently breaks a dead tree limb that kills the owlet in its nest. Then King Lion assembles all the animals to a council in the forest, where they eventually decide that the mosquito is the real culprit.

Cross-Curricular Sources

Picture-Book Tales

- Aesop, *The Best of Aesop's Fables*, retold by Margaret Clark
- Ashley Bryan, *Beat the Story-Drum, Pum-Pum*
- Baba Wague Diakite, *The Hunterman and the Crocodile: A West African Folktale*
- Pamela J. Farris, *Young Mouse and Elephant: An East African Folktale*
- Rachel Isadora, *A South African Night*
- Mary D. Lake, *The Royal Drum: An Ashanti Tale*
- Teri Sloat, *The Thing That Bothered Farmer Brown*
- Catherine Stock, *Where Are You Going, Manyoni?*
- Toshi Yoshida, *Young Lions*

Nonfiction

- Philippa-Alys Browne, *African Animals ABC*
- Wendy Hartmann, *One Sun Rises: An African Wildlife Counting Book*
- Gregory Scott Kreikemeier, *Come with Me to Africa: A Photographic Journey*
- Claire Llewellyn, *Some Bugs Glow in the Dark: And Other Amazing Facts About Insects*

D. M. Souza, *What Bit Me?*

John Wallace Purcell, *African Animals*

CD-ROM

- Amazing Animals: CD-ROM Activity Pack* (Dorling Kindersley Multimedia)
- Interfact Ladders: Wild Animals* (Two-Can Publishing)
- The Magic School Bus Explores Bugs* (Microsoft)
- The Magic School Bus Explores the World of Animals* (Microsoft)

Internet for Students

- "Africa for Kids": pbskids.org/africa/
- "African Animals" (Enchanted Learning): www.zoom-school.com/coloring/Africa.shtml
- "Flies and Mosquitoes": www.ent.iastate.edu/imagegal/diptera/
- "Get This Bug Off Me!": www.uky.edu/Ag/Entomology/ythfacts/stories/hurt-rnot.htm

Internet for Teachers

- "African Folk Tales": www.canteach.ca/elementary/africa.html
- "African Folk Tales—Background Information": www.teachervision.fen.com/folktales/africa/3716.html
- "Deep in the Bush, Where People Rarely Ever Go (Use Folk Tales to Bring Africa Alive in the Classroom)": www.phillipmartin.info/liberia/
- "African Resources for the Classroom (Boston University)": www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/K-12/African_Resources_BU.html
- "African Folktales in the Classroom": cuip.uchicago.edu/wit/99/teams/tales/folktales.html

Video/DVD

- Aesop's Fables* (two versions, Golden Book and Dolmatch Group)
- Akwaaba: Welcome to Alphabetic Africa* (African Artistic Ventures)
- The Magic of Anansi* (National Film Board of Canada)
- Stories Alive! African & African-American Folktales* (Frank and Toni Simmons)

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* should include these aspects:

Themes

- cause and effect
- consequences of actions
- assigning blame
- origins of natural phenomena
- death and grief
- misunderstanding

Motifs

- West African animals
- mosquitoes' buzzing
- rhythmic word use
- repetition
- descriptive sound words
- rising of the sun

Meaning Study

Discuss with students the meaning of the following words from the story in the following sentences.

1. A West African Tale
(In this case, tale refers to folktale. A folktale is a traditional story passed down through the generations of a culture, in written or oral form. This category can also include fairy tales, myths, and legends. This story is the type of folktale that explains the origin of a natural phenomenon—i.e., why mosquitoes buzz in people's ears.)
2. "I saw a farmer digging yams."
(A yam is a kind of sweet potato, and it is also the root of a tropical vine that can be baked, broiled, or ground into flour. Yams are a staple food in parts of Africa.)
3. "I'm afraid he is plotting some mischief against me!"
(Because the iguana ignores his friendly greeting, the python fears that the iguana is planning to play some trick on him that will cause him harm or trouble. Actually, the iguana doesn't hear the python because of the sticks the iguana has put in his ears.)
4. It was the crow's duty to spread the alarm in case of danger.
(When the crow sees the rabbit running for her life, the bird reacts the way crows naturally do—he flies about while cawing loudly, to warn the other forest creatures that something dangerous is nearby.)
5. The monkey happened to land on a dead limb.
(The monkey lands on a tree branch that is dead.)

The force of the monkey's landing breaks the limb, which in turn falls with enough force to kill the owlet that it lands on.)

6. It was Mother Owl who woke the sun each day.
(Many cultures have legends or folktales that explain the phenomenon of the sun rising every day and banishing the darkness of night. In this case, Mother Owl hoots each morning as she settles down into her nest for the day, and her hooting awakens the sun, which then rises.)
7. The animals sat down around a council fire.
(A council is a group of people—in this case, talking animals—called together to discuss a problem, give advice, and/or make a decision. King Lion calls all the forest animals to a council to find out which creature is to blame for the owlet's death.)
8. The iguana had not heard the summons.
(A summons is a notice or command to appear somewhere or do something. King Lion issued a summons for all the forest animals to meet in a council, but the iguana didn't hear the summons because he still had the sticks in his ears.)
9. The mosquito has a guilty conscience.
(A conscience is an inner sense of right and wrong. According to this folktale, mosquitoes have felt guilty ever since being found at fault for the owlet's death.)

Comprehension Study

Discuss the following questions with your students. You could ask students in higher grades to write their answers to the questions in their own words.

1. Look at the pictures in the book, without reading the story. Write or tell a few sentences about one or more of the pictures. Describe 1) what the creatures in the picture are feeling or doing at that moment, and 2) what is happening in the picture. As you read or listen to the story, see if what you wrote or told about the picture(s) was accurate. *(Answers will vary.)*
2. What part of the story do the pictures on the title-page spread illustrate?
(They show the mosquito seeing the farmer dig up the large yam, and the mosquito turning to fly away and tell someone about this.)

3. Why do the artists show two mosquitoes on the title-page spread, and then two iguanas on the next two-page spread, and then a two-headed snake and two rabbits on the next page, and so on? *(The artists are showing a sequence of two actions, as described in the text. On the title-page spread, the mosquito sees the farmer and then turns to fly off. In the next spread, the iguana doesn't like what the mosquito is telling him and then walks grumpily away with the sticks in his ears. In the next spread, the python greets the iguana, who ignores him, and then the python heads down the rabbit's hole; the rabbit sees the python entering and then starts to flee. This pattern continues on the next spread with the crow and the monkey.)*
4. Why does the iguana stick twigs in his ears? What problem does this cause? *(The iguana doesn't want to listen to the foolish things the mosquito is telling him, so he blocks his ears with twigs. Then the iguana doesn't return the python's friendly greeting because he can't hear it, which alarms the python.)*
5. Why does the python crawl into the rabbit's hole? What problem does this cause? *(When the iguana ignores him, the python thinks the iguana is plotting against him, so he crawls into the rabbit's hole to hide from the iguana. This terrifies the rabbit, who runs for her life away from her hole.)*
6. Why does the crow fly through the forest, cawing loudly? What problem does this cause? *(The crow sees the terrified rabbit running for her life, and assumes that some dangerous creature is stalking the forest animals. The crow flies about cawing to spread the alarm about the danger to the other forest creatures. This causes the monkey to also spread the alarm while leaping through the trees. On one leap, the monkey lands on a dead tree limb, which falls and kills the owlet below.)*
7. What is happening on the first two-page spread that shows Mother Owl?
(Mother Owl is cradling her dead baby in her wings, grieving. The two remaining owlets are gesturing as they tell Mother Owl that the monkey killed their sibling. The animals below are narrowing their eyes in grief. The sun gradually sinks in the sky as night approaches.)
8. Look again at the first two-page spread that shows the animals in council. How many creatures are at the council? Name as many of them as you can. As you continue to read and/or listen, count the numbers of creatures in each two-page spread and name as many of them as you can. What does the picture without text show on this first council spread? Is this what really happened? *(This picture shows what Mother Owl is telling the other animals about the monkey killing her owlet. The picture shows an angry, fierce monkey striking the poor little owlet with a tree limb, but of course this is not what really happened.)*
9. How do the three crows on the next two-page spread show the story that the monkey is telling King Lion?
(The monkey is emphasizing how urgent and alarming the crow's warning message was. The sequence of pictures shows the crow becoming more and more agitated.)
10. On which pages does the antelope appear? What is his part in the story?
(The antelope appears in the first, third, fourth, sixth, and eighth council illustrations. The antelope is King Lion's messenger, summoning Mother Owl and then the iguana to the council. He also enjoys mugging at the readers.)
11. Why didn't the iguana come to the council at first? What happens when he arrives?
(The iguana didn't hear the summons to the council because he still had the twigs in his ears. When he arrives, he tells the story of how the mosquito annoyed him and thus set off the chain of events that ended in the owlet's death.)
12. What are the animals doing on the two-page spread that shows the long night beginning to end?
(They are all shouting loudly, "Punish the mosquito!"—except for the antelope, who is mugging at the readers again.)
13. What part does the mosquito play in the council? How does the council's decision affect the mosquito?
(The mosquito listens to the council's proceedings while hiding in a nearby bush. She never is found, so she never plays a part at the council. But she feels guilty about the animals declaring her to blame for the owlet's death. All mosquitoes ever since have been burdened by a guilty conscience about this.)

14. How would you describe the artwork for this book?
(Answers will vary. Students will probably note the stencil-like or collage-like style of the artwork, its vivid colors, and its boldness.)
15. What examples of rhythm, repetition, and sound words do you find in the book?
(Examples will vary; they abound. Discuss with students how the author's use of these elements reinforces the text's sense of storytelling.)

Across the Curriculum

Invite students to complete any of these activities that are suitable for their grade- and interest level.

Art

1. Create your own stencil-type or collage illustrations in a style something like this book's artwork.
2. Two books that Leo and Diane Dillon illustrated won the Caldecott Award. Find out more about this award, and create a class display of other Caldecott winners.
3. Create some life-like or stylized illustrations of creatures that live in your environment.

Science

1. Choose one of the creatures shown in the book to report on in detail. Be sure to include pictures in your report, and explain how and where this creature fits into the West African environment.
2. Explain the cycle of the sun "rising" and "setting" each day.
3. Create an illustrated or multimedia report on the mosquito. Be sure to explain mosquito behavior, such as biting and buzzing.
4. Create an illustrated booklet that tells how to grow yams. Include information about what types of climates yams will grow in.
5. Make a chart that lists all the creatures that appear in this book under the appropriate heading: insect, bird, mammal, reptile.

Language Arts

1. Read or listen to other folktales retold by Verna

Aardema. What common elements do you find? Which are your favorites, and why?

2. Write an original "folktale" that explains the origin of some natural thing, such as, "Why does the dog wag its tail?" or "Why is grass green?"
3. Read or listen to other folktales, from Africa and other cultures around the world, that explain why or how the sun rises and sets each day, or why or how a certain animal looks or acts the way it does.

Social Studies

1. With classmates, create a class display of images showing traditional art and cultural artifacts of West Africa.
2. Explain the role of folktales in traditional societies around the world. Point out common themes and story elements.

Geography

1. On a map of West Africa, show the different environments and the different nations. Then decide from looking at your map where this tale might have taken place.

Mathematics

1. Count the number of different creatures shown on each two-page spread of this book. Which two-page spread shows the greatest variety of animals?

Student Involvement Activities

1. With classmates, dramatize the story told in the book. Create costumes of some sort that suggest each creature. You could also add more dialogue of your own to each scene that you act out.
2. Visit a zoo and take photographs of the African animals in the African-like environments the zoo has created for them. Or observe African animals online at zoo web-cam sites. Then create an informative class display of your photographs or web-cam images together with information about each animal.
3. Create a multimedia photo safari of African animals. Include as many of those in the book as possible.
4. With classmates, host an African storytelling event at your school. You could use any of Verna

Aardema's numerous African folklore books as a primary source.

5. Create a class display that shows the variety of different styles the Dillons have used in their many illustrated books.
6. Work with your school librarian to create a display of the library's Verna Aardema books. You could display other Aardema books in your classroom from your local library.
7. Invite a person who has a pet iguana to bring it to your classroom, and tell your class about caring for and enjoying iguanas.

Alternate Assessment

Depending on student ability level, students can write their responses to one of these assessment vehicles or simply discuss them, individually or in a group setting.

1. Explain what the pictures add to this story, or how the pictures fill out the story's words.
2. Which creature, if any, is really responsible for the owl's death? Explain your answer.
3. Tell in your own words what happens in this story: how the chain of events unfolds, what happens at the animals' council, and what impact the council's decision has on the mosquito.

Vocabulary Test

Read each sentence. Below the sentence, find the answer that could be used in place of the word in boldface (dark) type. Write the letter of the answer in the blank in front of the sentence.

- _____ 1. *The title of this book is Why Mosquitoes **Buzz** in People's Ears.*
(a) screech
(b) make a humming sound
(c) bite
- _____ 2. "Iguana, you will never believe what I saw **yesterday**."
(a) today
(b) tomorrow
(c) the day before today
- _____ 3. "What's a mosquito compared to a yam?" snapped the iguana **grumpily**.
(a) with a bad mood
(b) with a happy mood
(c) in a bored way
- _____ 4. The rabbit **scurried** out through her back way.
(a) moved in a hurry
(b) crawled
(c) tiptoed
- _____ 5. Mother Owl was searching for one more **tidbit** to bring to her hungry babies.
(a) drink of water
(b) berry
(c) choice little bit of food
- _____ 6. The **timid** rabbit stood before the King Lion.
(a) bold
(b) shy and not brave
(c) talkative

Comprehension Test A

Part 1: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write the letter of the ending you choose in the space in front of each sentence.

- _____ 1. The mosquito talks to the iguana at the
(a) owl's nest. (b) waterhole. (c) farmer's field.
- _____ 2. The python makes this sound:
(a) krik, krik. (b) mek, mek. (c) wasawusu, wasawusu.
- _____ 3. The rabbit alarms the
(a) crow. (b) iguana. (c) monkey.
- _____ 4. The crow's job is to
(a) wake the sun. (b) feed the owlets. (c) spread the alarm.
- _____ 5. The owl is killed by a
(a) tree limb. (b) snake. (c) poison arrow.
- _____ 6. The animals all cry, "Punish the
(a) monkey!" (b) mosquito!" (c) iguana!"
- _____ 7. The mosquito is a(n)
(a) insect. (b) mammal. (c) reptile.
- _____ 8. The iguana is this color:
(a) brown. (b) purple. (c) green.
- _____ 9. This animal runs the council:
(a) Mother Owl. (b) King Lion. (c) Brother Antelope.
- _____ 10. How many creatures are part of the chain of events?
(a) eight (b) five (c) three

Part 2: Matching (20 points)

Find the name below that matches the description. Write the letter of the name in front of the description. Use each name only once.

- A. mosquito B. rabbit C. iguana D. antelope E. Mother Owl
- _____ 1. Creature who puts sticks in his ears.
- _____ 2. Creature whose hoots wake up the sun.
- _____ 3. Creature who runs through the forest in fright.
- _____ 4. Creature who watches the farmer dig up a giant yam.
- _____ 5. Creature who grins at us from the book's pages.

Part 3: True/False (20 points)

Mark each sentence with a **T** if it is true or an **F** if any part of it is false.

- _____ 1. Mosquitoes buzz in people's ears because they want to annoy people.
- _____ 2. The mosquito tells her side of the story at the animals' council.
- _____ 3. The crow alarms the monkey.
- _____ 4. The python tries to eat the rabbit in her hole.
- _____ 5. The iguana refuses to listen to the mosquito.
- _____ 6. The sun appears in most of the book's daytime pictures.
- _____ 7. The crow blames the python for what happened.
- _____ 8. The iguana is grumpy.
- _____ 9. The sun stays down for many days.
- _____ 10. Mother Owl usually hunts at night.

Part 4: Essay (40 points)

Choose one of these questions and answer in complete sentences.

1. The animals at the council blame a series of creatures for what happened. Name two of the creatures who are blamed and explain why the animals blamed each one, at least for a short while.
2. Why do mosquitoes buzz in people's ears, according to the tale?

Comprehension Test B

Part 1: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write the letter of the ending you choose in the space in front of each sentence.

- _____ 1. The crow makes this sound:
(a) kili wili. (b) nge, nge, nge. (c) kaa, kaa.
- _____ 2. The python scares the
(a) rabbit. (b) monkey. (c) mosquito.
- _____ 3. The monkey accidentally kills the
(a) rabbit. (b) owl. (c) mosquito.
- _____ 4. This story takes place in
(a) South America. (b) Africa. (c) Asia.
- _____ 5. Mother Owl's job is to
(a) spread the alarm. (b) eat mosquitoes. (c) wake the sun.
- _____ 6. The iguana puts these things in his ears:
(a) sticks. (b) ear plugs. (c) hearing aids.
- _____ 7. The python is a(n)
(a) mammal. (b) fish. (c) reptile.
- _____ 8. The mosquito is mostly this color:
(a) brown. (b) blue. (c) orange.
- _____ 9. The animals hold their council
(a) at noon. (b) under the sun. (c) at night.
- _____ 10. Which creature appears in each of the book's story pages?
(a) red bird (b) mosquito (c) antelope

Part 2: Matching (10 points)

Read each description. Find the name below that matches the description. Write the letter of the name in the space in front of the description. Use each name only one time.

- A. owl B. python C. monkey D. crow E. King Lion

- _____ 1. Creature who alarms the monkey.
_____ 2. One of three baby creatures in a nest.
_____ 3. Creature who runs the animals' council.
_____ 4. Creature who leaps through the trees.
_____ 5. Creature who crawls into the rabbit's home.

Part 3: True/False (20 points)

Mark each sentence with a **T** if it is true or an **F** if any part of it is false.

- _____ 1. Mosquitoes buzz in people's ears because they have a guilty conscience.
_____ 2. The monkey alarms the rabbit.
_____ 3. The mosquito tells the iguana a tale about a giant yam.
_____ 4. The iguana scares the python.
_____ 5. Two of Mother Owl's owlets are killed during the story.
_____ 6. Both the crow and the monkey spread the alarm through the forest.
_____ 7. The iguana tells the council that the python is his enemy.
_____ 8. The sun finally comes up when King Lion orders it to do so.
_____ 9. The monkey blames the crow for what happened.
_____ 10. The antelope hides from the council.

Part 4: Essay (40 points)

Choose one and answer in complete sentences.

1. The animals at the council blame a series of creatures for what happened. Name two of the creatures who are blamed and explain why the animals blamed each one, at least for a short while.
2. Which creature starts the chain of events, and how?

Answer Key

VOCABULARY

- | | |
|------|------|
| 1. B | 4. A |
| 2. C | 5. C |
| 3. A | 6. B |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part 1: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. B | 6. B |
| 2. C | 7. A |
| 3. A | 8. C |
| 4. C | 9. B |
| 5. A | 10. A |

Part 2: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|------|
| 1. C | 4. A |
| 2. E | 5. D |
| 3. B | |

Part 3: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. T |
| 2. F | 7. F |
| 3. T | 8. T |
| 4. F | 9. F |
| 5. T | 10. T |

Part 4: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part 1: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. A |
| 2. A | 7. C |
| 3. B | 8. B |
| 4. B | 9. C |
| 5. C | 10. A |

Part 2: Matching (10 points)

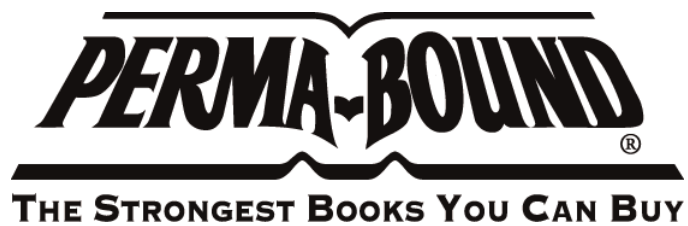
- | | |
|------|------|
| 1. D | 4. C |
| 2. A | 5. B |
| 3. E | |

Part 3: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. T |
| 2. F | 7. F |
| 3. T | 8. F |
| 4. T | 9. T |
| 5. F | 10. F |

Part 4: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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