

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

107 INTERSTITIAL: SENOR TAPIR

Written by

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FOLLOWS: "BIRD SONG"

CONNECTION: BIRD COMMUNICATION

CURRICULUM: Irene Pepperburg was the first scientist to wonder whether birds were smart enough to communicate with people. She figured out that Alex the Grey Parrot was not only smart, but could tell her what he was thinking.

SEPl. Ask and/or identify cause and effect questions that can be answered by an investigation. (Senor Tapir replicates Irene Pepperburg's work with Alex the Parrot in a song)

FIRST DRAFT: 25-FEB-19
SECOND DRAFT: 12-MAR-19
FINAL: 15-Mar-19

Open on SENOR TAPIR in the park of Animal Town, sitting on a tree stump at the edge of a pond. There are two different GUITARS next to him, one RED and one BLUE one. A group of kids sit at his feet, including ELINOR, ARI and OLIVE.

(MORE)

SENOR TAPIR (CONT'D)

Her name is Irene Pepperburg, and
Alex the Parrot was her special
bird.

Irene wondered if she could show
That Alex could say a lot more than
"HELLO."

Irene holds up two blue keys in front of Alex the Parrot.
Alex's beak opens when he says BLUE and TWO.

7 SENOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 7
She said what color? He said
"BLUE". She said how many? He said
"TWO".

We see Irene teaching words to Alex, while Alex sits on his
wooden stick perch. She shows him objects like a spoon, a
banana, different colored shapes, etc.

[Reference: See 5:30-5:35 of <https://www.pbs.org/video/nova-sciencenow-profile-irene-pepperburg-alex/>]

8 SENOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 8
What a bird! Oh, what a bird! Said
scientist Irene Pepperburg.

Close up of Irene's hands holding up two pieces of paper, one
green and one red. The red one is noticeably larger. Alex
looks at the paper and his beak opens when he says RED. Her
hands hold up a loaf of bread next to Alex, who opens his
beak to say YUMMY and BREAD.

9 SENOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 9
What color's bigger? He said "RED".
What do you want? He said "YUMMY"
and "BREAD."

Shapes and colors, and counting to
eight, Alex could really
communicate!

What a bird! Oh, what a bird! Said
scientist Irene Pepperburg.
So many words! So many words! Her
bird knew over a hundred words!

END SONG:

3. EXT PARK -- DAY

10 ELINOR 10
Let's sing the song a hundred more
times!

Tapir grabs his red guitar.

11 SENOR TAPIR 11
Great idea. Let's start with one
more time.

He starts to <MFX STRUM>

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Note from Emily DuVal, our bird expert on how Pepperburg's work is perceived in the scientific community: "She's a fellow of the Animal Behavior Society, and I lectured on her cognition work last Wednesday (including pointing out that you'd think it would be a bad idea to base your PhD on one parrot, but she pulled it off). I've seen her speak in packed-room seminars at Berkeley and at conferences. Legit. "