

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP 112B Pokey Plant
By: Jorge Cham and Daniel Whiteson

Elinor's Question: Why do cactuses have pokey spikes?

Logline: Elinor get a cactus and learns how its spikes protect it and what makes it unique.

Curriculum Goals:

LS1a; Identify and describe the physical characteristics of a variety of animals and plants [they note how the cactus looks different from other plants]

LS2d: Explore how different external features of an animal help it survive in its environment [a cactus has thorns to protect its water]

SEP3b: Compare and contrast objects and events by describing similarities and differences in detail [they compare the cactus to other plants]

SEP4a: Collect, describe, and record observations in greater detail and in various ways [they make a list of similarities and differences between cacti and other plants]

SEP6a: Use background knowledge experiences, and data to construct reasonable explanations and theories of natural phenomena (science) [they use what they learned and know to explain why cacti have thorns]

NOTE: Both "cacti" and "cactuses" are correct plural forms of "cactus."

MAINS: Elinor, Ari, Olive, Mz. Mole

LOCATIONS: Koa, Sally

PROPS: plants, fern, ivy, poinsettia, cactus, popcorn, birds

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SECOND DRAFT: May 27th, 2019
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1. EXT SCHOOL -- DAY

It's a bright morning in Animal Town. We open on ELINOR (carrying her BACKPACK) walking to her school. She's in a very good mood, and stops to look at several flowers.

1 ELINOR 1
What interesting flowers!
(she admires the leaves.)
The leaves are so green!

When she moves the leaf, she reveals another flowering plant behind it.

2 ELINOR (CONT'D) 2
Oh, and here's another pretty one.

She looks back and forth between the two plants.

3 ELINOR (CONT'D) 3
HMMMMM.

Her friends ARI (wearing a BACKPACK) and OLIVE (wearing her SATCHEL) walk up.

4 OLIVE 4
Hi, Elinor! Want to walk to school
with us?

5 ELINOR 5
Hi, Olive! Hi, Ari! Sure! I can't
WAIT for school today.

6 ARI 6
Why? Is it a special day?

Elinor looks shocked.

7 ELINOR 7
Yes! It's a VERY SPECIAL day.

8 ARI 8
Oh, is it extra snacks day? Or
maybe it's cake day!

Ari gets excited and flutters up.

9 ELINOR 9
No, silly, it's PLANT DAY!

Ari slaps his forehead.

10 ARI 10
Oh yeah, I TOTALLY forgot.

11 OLIVE 11
Plant day is the best. Mz. Mole is going to give each one of us a different plant to take home.

12 ELINOR 12
I've been looking forward to it for WEEKS. I can't wait to get my own little baby plant to take care of.

13 ARI 13
Hey, I help take care of my baby sister sometimes.

14 OLIVE 14
Umm... I think that's a little different, Ari.

15 ARI 15
You're right. My baby sister isn't a plant. Although, she does like to play in the dirt sometimes.

The kids <SFX: GROAN/GIGGLE>.

16 ELINOR 16
I help my dad take care of the plants in the garden. But I've never had my OWN plant before.

17 OLIVE 17
Me neither.

18 ELINOR 18
I'm going to be SO RESPONSIBLE and take care of it all by myself.

19 OLIVE 19
Yeah! I really want my plant to grow, grow, GROW.

She stretches her trunk up as high as she can. Elinor giggles.

20 ELINOR 20
That's a tall plant! I bet my plant is going to be green... with lots of leaves. We are going to have so much fun together!

As she talks, we see a thought bubble of the plant she is imagining: leafy and green.

In the thought bubble, we see scenes of Elinor hanging out with the plant in cute ways: she's reading a book to it, she's watering it, she's dancing with it.

21 ELINOR (CONT'D) 21
And then... it might even grow a flower!

The leafy plant in the thought bubbles grows a colorful flower. Thought-bubble Elinor looks really happy. The bubble dissolves and we go back to the kids.

22 ARI 22
Flowers are OK. But I want a plant that hangs from the ceiling! Like me!

Ari hangs from a branch.

23 OLIVE 23
That's fun. I just want something with big leaves and lots of color.

24 ELINOR 24
I can't wait. Let's go get our plants!

They go in, full of excitement and anticipation.

2. INT CLASSROOM - DAY

25 MZ. MOLE (O.S.) 25
All right, everyone, let's get started.

The kids bustle excitedly and go sit on the class rug. We pan over to Mz. Mole's desk, and we see that it's covered in small plants of all different varieties.

26 MZ. MOLE (CONT'D) 26
We have an exciting day today!

The kids look around for MZ. MOLE, not seeing her.

27 OLIVE 27
Where are you, Mz. Mole?

We look again at the plants and see that some petals in the back start to move.

28 MZ. MOLE 28
What? Oh, you can't see me?

The petals move in one direction and start coming around. Mz. Mole pops out the side, and we see that she's dressed as a FLOWER POT!

29 MZ. MOLE (CONT'D) 29
Aha! Welcome to Plant Day,
everyone!

The kids <LAUGH> excitedly.

30 ELINOR 30
YAY!

31 MZ. MOLE 31
Okay! Today, everyone is going to
get one of these plants to take
home.

All the kids go, <OOHH...>.

32 MZ. MOLE (CONT'D) 32
Not me, though. You can't take me
home!

The kids <GIGGLE/LAUGH>.

33 MZ. MOLE (CONT'D) 33
Your job is to take good care of
these little plants and help them
grow.

Several kids raise their hands.

34 ARI 34
How do we take care of our plants,
Mz. Mole?

35 OLIVE 35
Do we read books to them?

36 ELINOR 36
Do we take them for walks?

37 SALLY 37
Do plants like to play games?

38 KOA 38
Do they like to drink soup?

Mz. Mole blinks at this last one.

39 MZ. MOLE 39
Oh dear! So many good ideas. But
it's pretty simple. Most plants
just need water and sun.

40 ARI 40
Do they like juice? I like apple
juice, and orange juice, and--

41 MZ. MOLE 41
Thank you, Ari. No, just water.
Each plant comes with instructions
that show you how much water and
sun they need.

She picks up one plant and we see a string attached to the
pot with some simple instructions: just icons of water
droplets and little suns.

42 MZ. MOLE (CONT'D) 42
Now, next week, I want each of you
to tell the class what you learned
about your plant. Remember, each
plant is different, but they all
need love and care!

Elinor raises her hand.

43 ELINOR 43
Which plant do I get, Mz. Mole?

44 MZ. MOLE 44
Everyone line up and you'll find
out!

The kids are very excited and they line up as we hear <SFX:
CHATTER> and <SFX: EXCITED WALLA>. Elinor gets in line behind
Koa, Ari, and Olive, and there are several kids behind her.

45 ELINOR 45
I can't wait to see my plant!

As she says this, we see a **THOUGHT BUBBLE** next to her showing
the leafy plant she's expecting.

Mz. Mole has the plants in lines on her desk and she hands
them out to the kids in order, naming the plants as she gives
them out.

46 MZ. MOLE 46
Koa, this plant is called a fern.

She hands Koa a droopy looking plant.

47 KOA 47
Sweet. It's so totally chill!

As each kid takes their plant, they step outside to the playground. Ari is next.

48 MZ. MOLE 48
Ari, this one is called an ivy. It likes to hang from the ceiling.

She hands him a pot with a hook on it. [Ref: <https://cb2.scene7.com/is/image/CB2/MacramePlantHolderSHF17>]

49 ARI 49
Awesome! You're going to love hanging from my ceiling, ivy! We can HANG out together.

Mz. Mole laughs. Olive is next.

50 MZ. MOLE 50
Olive, this one is called a red poinsettia.

Olive's plant is mostly green with some red leaves on top [Ref: <https://images-na.ssl-images-amazon.com/images/I/51VDDJhLvWL.jpg>].

51 OLIVE 51
Wow, I love the colors.

Elinor steps up next in line, eyes closed, hands together in excited anticipation. Her **THOUGHT BUBBLE** shows the plant that she's expecting, a flower in a flower pot.

takes a look and then 'uhhh, umm.ummm..'

52 MZ. MOLE 52
Here you go, Elinor...

Ms.Mole turns holding the cactus to reveal it - elinor opens her eyes in excitement to see...

53 MZ. MOLE (CONT'D) 53
A cactus!

Elinor is confused. [Ref: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/88/ba/18/88ba1820973c7cbcb78ac827382280a4.jpg>]

54 ELINOR 54
Uhh, Umm. Hmmm....

Her hands drop to her sides and ears flop - the flower in the **THOUGHT BUBBLE** also droops, leaves fall. We see her compare the cactus with the flower in the pot. It doesn't look anything like what she was expecting!

3. EXT. PLAYGROUND -- DAY

We see Elinor stepping out of the school holding the cactus. Mz. Mole comes out, having finished handing the plants out.

55 MZ. MOLE 55
All right everyone, time to get to
know all about your little plants.

Olive (carrying her satchel) and Ari (both holding their plants) find Elinor.

56 OLIVE 56
Look, I got a colorful plant with
big leaves, just like I wanted!

57 ARI 57
And I got a plant that hangs from
the ceiling, just like I wanted!
I'm going to hang it right next to
my bed and look at it while I hang
upside down. So it's gonna look...
uh... right side up? Wait. I'm
confused.

Elinor looks at Olive and Ari's plants. They both look like regular leafy plants. Ari's plant even has a flower bud already. She looks at her cactus and is starting to feel a tiny bit disappointed.

Ari is still trying to figure out the upside down/rightside up situation.

58 ARI (CONT'D) 58
Ok, if I'm upside down, but the
plant is hanging right side up, is
it going to look... upright
down...?

Ari is trying to hold his plant up while also trying to turn his head upside down to look at it, and he accidentally backs up into Elinor's plant.

59 ARI (CONT'D) 59
Yow!

He jumps a few feet in the air. When he lands, he examines the seat of his pants and pulls out a few cactus spines.

60 ARI (CONT'D) 60
Ouch! Something just poked me! What
IS that, Elinor?

Elinor shows them what she got.

61 ELINOR 61
Sorry, Ari. This is what Mz. Mole
gave me. I thought I was going to
get a plant like you and Olive, but
instead she gave me a... cactus.

62 ARI 62
A "cactus"? They should call it an
"ouch"-us.

Ari pulls out the last spine from his pants. Olive goes over to Elinor.

63 OLIVE 63
But Elinor, you DID get a plant.
Cactuses are plants, too.

Elinor looks confused.

64 What? ELINOR 64

65 OLIVE 65
I read that in my Nature Book! It
says that a cactus is a kind of
plant.

66 ARI 66
Really? THAT'S a plant? Just like
THESE two are plants?

Ari points to the hanging plant and the poinsettia.

67 ELINOR 67
But... the cactus looks SO
different.

Elinor's curiosity is awakened. She takes a closer look at her cactus.

68 ELINOR (CONT'D) 68
So I DID get a plant! But why does
it look so different? And why
doesn't it have any leaves?

Ari leans in to take a look and puts a finger on a spine.

69 ARI 69
And why is it so pokey?

Olive looks at the instruction sheet for the cactus. It shows a sun icon and one water droplet icon.

70 OLIVE 70
I don't know. But it also doesn't need a lot of water. The instructions say you only have to water it once a week!

71 ELINOR 71
Wow, that's amazing.

72 ARI 72
I'd be so thirsty if I only drank water once a week!

73 OLIVE 73
(giggling)
I'm pretty sure you're not a cactus Ari.

Elinor checks her and Ari's plants. Each of the instructions show one sun icon and several water droplets.

74 ELINOR 74
Both of your plants need water every few days. Hmmm...

Elinor's attitude towards her plant has clearly gone from disappointment to curiosity.

75 ELINOR (CONT'D) 75
That... is... SO INTERESTING! I wonder why a cactus is SO different.

76 ARI 76
And pokey.

77 ELINOR 77
I know! Let's see if we can figure it out! We need MORE OBSERVATIONS!

4. EXT. SMALL CLEARING -- DAY

The kids run over to a small clearing at the edge of the playground to have more space to compare their plants. Elinor and Olive set their plants down and step back to take a look while Ari holds his up next to the other two. They recap the mystery.

78 ELINOR 78
Ok, why is a cactus SO different
from other plants?

79 OLIVE 79
It has spikes and it doesn't have
leaves or thin stems like other
plants.

80 ARI 80
This really pokes my curiosity.

Olive pulls out a magnifying glass.

81 OLIVE 81
Let's take a closer look.

82 ARI 82
Careful, don't touch it!

Olive grabs a small stick from the ground and gently touches
the cactus as she looks at it through the magnifying glass.

83 OLIVE 83
It's definitely green like other
plants... But the shape is very
different.

At that moment, Ari turns to put down his plant and
accidentally bumps into Olive, causing her to poke a shallow
little hole on the cactus.

84 ARI 84
Whoops! Sorry!

85 OLIVE 85
Uh-Oh! I accidentally poked the
cactus!

86 ELINOR 86
I hope it's not hurt! Can I use the
magnifying glass?

Olive gives Elinor the magnifying glass, and Elinor observes
where the poke happened.

87 ELINOR (CONT'D) 87
I think the plant is ok... But
look! There's water coming out of
the little hole you made!

A droplet of clear liquid forms where Olive poked the cactus.

88 OLIVE 88
(looking closely)
You're right!

89 ARI 89
Huh!

90 OLIVE 90
I think I read about this in my
Nature Book too!

She pulls the Nature Book from her satchel. She searches for
a moment, going back and forth until she finds the right
page.

91 OLIVE (CONT'D) 91
Hmmm, Cabbage, no. Camel, no.

92 ARI 92
Is there anything in there about
cake?

93 OLIVE 93
It's a NATURE book, Ari. Not a cook
book. Ok, here it is. Cactus!

She opens it up to the cactus page.

94 OLIVE (CONT'D) 94
It says that cactuses are not like
other plants. They live in places
that are hot and dry, so they're
thick and rounded to help them keep
water inside.

In the book, we see different kinds of cactuses and a diagram
showing how the cactus holds water.

95 ARI 95
Ohhh...

96 ELINOR 96
So that's why cactuses have a
different shape! They're full of
water!

97 OLIVE 97
And that's why they don't need
water every day. They already have
it!

98 ARI 98
Cool!

99	OLIVE	99
	The book also says that having water inside means that lots of thirsty animals like birds and lizards want to eat the cactus.	
100	ELINOR	100
	Awww...	
101	ARI	101
	Hmm, all this talk of eating makes me hungry.	
He takes out a bag of sunflower seeds from his pocket and starts munching.		
102	OLIVE	102
	Ari, do you always carry a snack?	
103	ARI	103
	It's important to be prepared!	
At that moment, a few birds nearby get attracted to the seeds and land nearby.		
104	ARI (CONT'D)	104
	Here you go, birdie! Sunflower seeds are delicious, right?	
More birds show up. One hops over and grabs a seed.		
105	ARI (CONT'D)	105
	Hey! Don't get grabby.	
Ari moves the bag of seeds away to the other side, but then a bird on that side snags one.		
106	ARI (CONT'D)	106
	Hey birds, I don't have enough seeds to share with all of you!	
He is trying to shoo the birds away in all directions. Elinor watches him and gets an idea. She gets a THOUGHT BUBBLE where Ari turns into a cactus. The birds approach the cactus, but then think twice when they get close to the spikes.		
107	ELINOR	107
	Ari, that's it!	
108	ARI	108
	That's what?	

109 ELINOR 109
I think that's why the cactus has
spikes! It doesn't want animals to
eat it, so it uses spikes to
protect itself.

110 OLIVE 110
I think you're right, Elinor! That
makes sense!

111 ARI 111
Whoo hoo! We solved the mystery!

Ari looks at the birds around him and gives up. He empties
out the bag for the birds to eat.

112 ARI (CONT'D) 112
Ok, here you go, birdies.

Elinor picks up the cactus and looks at it in a new light.

113 ELINOR 113
I was a little sad when I didn't
get a regular plant, but now I know
that cactuses are SO COOL! I'm
gonna take really good care of you!

SONG MONTAGE: We hear the first bars of a ditty and fade to a
montage of Elinor taking the plant home. She shows it off to
her parents, who touch the spines appreciatively. She does
all the things she had imagined before, this time for real
and with the cactus. In one scene, her friends are visiting
with their plants.

114 ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI 114
Some things are different
Or not what you thought they'd be
But that's what makes them special
If you notice and see...

A cactus is so cool
It's not like other plants
It's round with lots of spikes
ARI: that can poke you in your
pants!

*

Some things are different
Or not what you thought they'd be
But that's what makes them special
If you notice and see...

The song ends with Elinor going to sleep with the plant in
her window sill. As we fade out, we focus on tiny little
buds growing at the top of the cactus....

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

The kids gather and sit in the middle of the room, holding their plants.

115	MZ. MOLE	115
	Ok, kids! I hope you had a great week taking care of your plants. Now, who wants to be the first to tell us what they learned?	

Elinor, with her cactus at her side (so we don't see the top of it yet), raises her hand enthusiastically.

116 MZ. MOLE (CONT'D) 116
Ah, Elinor! Come on up.

Elinor goes up to the front with her cactus.

117

ELINOR

117

Ahem. I learned that cactuses are SO cool. They're plants, but they're not thin and leafy! They are thick and round because they hold water inside, and they have pokey spikes to protect them from animals that want to eat them. Even though this cactus was not what I was expecting, I loved taking care of it! Each plant is different, but they all need water and sun and care!

Elinor reveals that the cactus has sprouted little flowers on top. The class <SFX: OOOHS> and <SFX: AAAHHH>.

118 SALLY 118
Look, it has flowers!

119	KOA	119
	(in wonder)	
	I don't know a cactus had flowers!	
	Cool!	

The kids gather around Elinor, all wanting to know more about the cactus.

END.