

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP 113 Bird Song

By: Jorge Cham and Daniel Whiteson

Elinor's Question: Why do birds sing?

Logline: Elinor and friends figure out that birds use songs to talk to each other.

Curriculum Goals:

LS 3a. Observe ways that animals and plants get what they need to live and grow. [Elinor will observe the ways the birds use songs to communicate in order to get what they need.]

ND2. (RTL Crosscutting concept 'Systems'): Begin to understand that systems developed in our world often work in similar ways to systems found in the natural world. [Elinor understands that birds use song the way we use words. She uses the bird song to communicate with the birds and help her father sleep in.]

SEP1 Ask and/or identify cause and effect questions that can be answered by an investigation [Elinor asks why birds sing and does an investigation]

SEP3. a. Identify and use a greater variety of tools to extend the senses for observing, measuring, and recording data about objects and events [Elinor uses binoculars]

SEP4. b. Use the 5 senses and simple tools to gather and record data [Elinor listens to as well as watches the birds]

SEP6 b Look for and describe patterns and relationships in natural phenomena [Elinor watches the birds to get a clue about why they sing]

SEP7. Engaging in argument from evidence

a. Engage in discussions before, during, and after investigations. [Elinor speculates about why birds sing, observes and updates her thoughts]

b. Support thinking and argue ideas with evidence [Elinor uses her observations to support her idea for why bird sing]

ET2. b. Use a variety of low-tech tools including binoculars.

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5 MR RABBIT (CONT'D) 5
 <groans>

2. INT. ELINOR'S ROOM

Elinor wakes up slowly. She rubs her eyes and yawns contentedly. She hears some <SFX: BIRD SONG> in the distance and her ears turn and react.

6 ELINOR 6
Hmmm. What's that?

Elinor hops out of bed and goes to the window. ZOOM IN on the window, revealing the Robin outside.

7 ELINOR (CONT'D) 7
Oh, good morning, little bird!

The bird <SFX: BIRD CHIRPS>, seemingly in response.

8 ELINOR (CONT'D) 8
Thank you for the nice wake-up
song! I'll be outside soon. Maybe
we can play!

3. INT. KITCHEN -- DAY, A SHORT TIME LATER

Elinor comes down for her breakfast, which Ranger Rabbit has just served on the table.

9 RANGER RABBIT 9
Good morning, Elinor! How are you
this morning?

Mr. Rabbit slouches down the stairs like a sleep-deprived zombie. He comes into the kitchen.

10 ELINOR 10
I'm great, mom! I just heard a cute
little bird singing a really nice
wake-up song.

11 RANGER RABBIT 11
That's wonderful, dear.

Mr. Rabbit pours himself a coffee and slumps into his chair.

12 ELINOR 12
Morning, Dad! Did you hear that
pretty bird singing this morning?

13 MR RABBIT (UNENTHUSIASTIC) 13
Mmmm hmmm. I sure did, Elinor.

14 ELINOR 14
Wasn't it pretty?

15	MR RABBIT	15
	Yes. <pause> Pretty LOUD.	
16	ELINOR/RANGER RABBIT	16
	(laugh)	
17	RANGER RABBIT	17
	Did it wake you up, dear? I know you wanted to sleep in today.	
18	MR RABBIT	18
	Well, I tried to go back to sleep but I couldn't. Why do birds have to sing RIGHT outside my window?	
19	ELINOR	19
	(intrigued) Good question, Dad! And why do birds sing anyway?	
	Mr. Rabbit shrugs sleepily.	
20	ELINOR (CONT'D)	20
	(excited by the mystery) Lizards don't sing. Bugs don't sing. Plants don't sing.	
21	MR RABBIT	21
	Thank goodness for that!	
22	ELINOR	22
	So why do BIRDS sing?	
	Ranger rabbit puts down a plate of food for herself and Mr. Rabbit and joins the family at the table.	
23	RANGER RABBIT	23
	That IS a good question, Elinor! Why do YOU think birds sing?	
24	ELINOR	24
	(excited to share) Hmmm... Maybe they are practicing to give a big singing concert somewhere?	
25	RANGER RABBIT	25
	That's a fun idea. Have you ever heard of birds giving a concert?	
26	ELINOR	26
	No, you're right. Birds don't give concerts. So why do they sing?	

27	MR RABBIT Maybe they just like waking up sleeping bunnies?	27
28	ELINOR/RANGER RABBIT (laugh)	28
29	ELINOR But Dad, birds sing in LOTS of places, not just outside your window.	29
30	MR RABBIT Hmph. Could have fooled me!	30
31	ELINOR But if I figure out WHY birds sing, then maybe I can figure out why that bird is waking you up!	31
32	MR RABBIT Thank you, Elinor. That's the best idea I've heard all morning.	32
33	RANGER RABBIT How are you going to figure it out, Elinor?	33
34	ELINOR Hmm... I need MORE OBSERVATIONS!	34
Ranger Rabbit gets up and pulls a pair of binoculars off a hook on the wall		
35	RANGER RABBIT Then you might want to use these binoculars. They're good for watching birds.	35
36	ELINOR Oh, thanks mom!	36
37	RANGER RABBIT You're welcome. Do you remember how to use them?	37
38	ELINOR (SLIGHTLY OFFENDED) Of course!	38

Ranger Rabbit smiles.

39 ELINOR (CONT'D) 39
 OK, I'm going to figure out this
 mystery! Thanks for breakfast, mom!
 See you later, Dad! Dad?

Elinor hops by her father, who is now fast asleep, head on the table.

40 MR RABBIT 40
 <Snores...>

41 ELINOR (STAGE WHISPER) 41
 Don't worry, Dad. I'll figure this
 out for you.

4. EXT. FOREST NEAR ELINOR'S HOUSE - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Elinor is hopping around the woods near her house with the binoculars around her neck.

42 ELINOR 42
 OK, let's find some birds and make
 some observations!

She lifts the binoculars to her face -- the wrong way.
 BINOCULARS POV: We see two small overlapping circles with far away trees.

43 ELINOR (O.S) (CONT'D) 43
 Hmm, am I doing this right?

BACK TO ELINOR: Elinor keeps the binoculars at her face and waves one hand in front of the binoculars. BINOCULARS POV: We see a small Elinor's hand waving.

44 ELINOR (O.S.) (CONT'D) 44
 These are supposed to make things
 look CLOSER, not FARTHER AWAY!

BACK TO ELINOR: She lowers the binoculars and realizes that she's had them backwards.

45 ELINOR (CONT'D) 45
 Oh. <giggles> I had them backwards.

She turns them around. BINOCULARS POV: We see two large overlapping circles that come into focus. Awesome!

46 ELINOR (O.S.) (CONT'D) 46
 There we go! Now I can see things
 that are far away!

Elinor scans around, we see the POV sliding, until she passes a bird and then comes back to look at it.

47 ELINOR (CONT'D) 47
Ooh! There's a cute little bird. I
can't wait to hear its song!

Something brown, fuzzy and blurry blocks her view.

48 ELINOR (CONT'D) 48
Huh? What's that? Let's make it
clearer.

BACK ON ELINOR: We see her adjusting the focus knob on the binoculars. BINOCULARS POV: The picture comes into focus and... we see part of ARI's face.

BACK TO ELINOR: We see Ari looking through the big end of the binoculars. OLIVE is standing behind him.

49	ARI	49
	Hi, Elinor! Whatcha doing?	

She lowers the binoculars.

50 ELINOR 50
Oh, hi Ari, hi Olive! I'm using
these binoculars to look for birds.
I'm trying to solve a mystery!

51 OLIVE 51
Cool! <beat> Uh, what's the
mystery?

52 ELINOR 52
I want to know why birds sing!
Plants don't sing, lizards don't
sing. Why do birds sing?

53	ARI	53
	Uh, of course birds sing! They are birds!	

54 OLIVE 54
But WHY do they sing, Ari?

55 ARI 55
Oh. Hmm. I never thought about it
before. You're right, I don't know!

56 OLIVE 56
We'll help you, Elinor. Let's all
solve the mystery together!

57 ELINOR 57
OK! We'll all watch the birds and
try to figure out what makes them
sing.

The kids look around for birds. We hear <SFX: TRILLING AND CHIRPING OF VARIOUS BIRDS> from different directions.

58 ARI (STAGE WHISPER) 58
There's some that way!

He points in one direction.

59 OLIVE (STAGE WHISPER) 59
I heard one this way!

She points in a totally different direction.

60 ELINOR 60
I think there's one over there.

She points to a nearby tree.

61 ELINOR (CONT'D) 61
 Hmm. There are a lot of birds in
 the forest.

62 OLIVE 62
Let's split up! I'll look for birds
over here...

63 ARI 63
And I'll look over there!

64 ELINOR 64
Great idea! Now we can get MORE
OBSERVATIONS!

Ari and Olive and Elinor tiptoe off screen in the direction of the birds they heard.

5. EXT FOREST -- VARIOUS LOCATIONS -- DAY

Elinor finds a good spot. She sits among some short bushes (so she's slightly hidden) in the center of the scene and cocks her head to listen for the <SFX: FOREST NOISES>.

65 ELINOR 65
OK birds, I'm ready, let's hear
some songs!

There are faint <SFX: BIRD SONGS> from many directions, but nothing close.

Suddenly she hears <SFX: ROBIN CHIRPING> in a tree to her left. She picks up her binoculars and puts them to her face, turning to her left. BINOCULARS POV: We see through her binoculars an American Robin mama bird. [AR adult design reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-LbyrrJzrM>]. The robin is looking left and right, up and down, <SFX: CHIRPING> each time. We get the sense that it's looking for something. [AR Adult sound reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZl2X4zjejA>]

BACK ON ELINOR: We see Elinor looking through her binoculars.

66 ELINOR (CONT'D) 66
 Hmm, you look like you're looking
 for something.

Elinor hears another <SFX: CHIRP>, this time to her right. It sounds similar, but like an baby.[AR Chick sound reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yccgqNNL10yI>] Elinor lowers her binoculars and turns to the right.

67 ELINOR (CONT'D) 67
 Ooh, another bird. They sound kind
 of the same. Do they know each
 other?

She looks through her binoculars again. BINOCULARS POV: We see a baby American Robin in the tree. It is looking around, <SFX: CHIRPING> constantly. [AR chick Design reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-LbyrrJzrM>].

68 ELINOR (CONT'D) 68
 Hi cute little bird! You look like
 a baby version of the other bird!

We hear the mama bird <SFX: CHIRP> again (offscreen) and see the baby respond <SFX: CHIRP>. BIN POV: swishes left to where the mama bird is.

69 ELINOR (CONT'D) 69
 Hey, you must be the mama bird! Are
 you looking for your baby?

We hear the mama bird <SFX: CALL> , and the baby <SFX: REPLY>. The mama bird flits over to the tree on the right near where the baby bird sits. BACK ON: Elinor lowers her binoculars and tries to show the Mamma where to go.

70 ELINOR (CONT'D) 70
 Yes, your baby is over there!

Elinor lifts her binoculars again. BIN POV: We see the Mama and baby near each other but not next to each other.

The mama calls and the baby replies. The mama moves over to the baby and they have a happy reunion.

BACK ON ELINOR: She's looking through the binoculars.

71	ELINOR (CONT'D) Yay! You found each other! (putting down the bins) Hmmm.	71
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Elinor looks like she's about to have an idea, when suddenly we hear Ari calling out to Olive.

72	ARI (O.S.) OLIVE! Where are you?!	72
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Elinor puts down the binoculars and listens.

73	OLIVE (O.S.) I'm over here! Who is calling me?	73
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The voices come from the left and the right. Elinor turns her head each time to follow the voices.

74	ARI (O.S.) It's me Ari!	74
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75	OLIVE (O.S.) Ari?	75
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76	ARI (O.S.) Yes!	76
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77	OLIVE Where are you?	77
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78	ARI I'm right next to a tree!	78
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79	OLIVE Which tree?	79
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Ari emerges from the left-hand side of the screen, standing next to the tree the mama bird was spotted on earlier.

80	ARI Uh, it's tall, with a bunch of leaves?	80
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OLIVE emerges from the right-hand side of the screen, standing next to the tree that has the mama and baby bird.

81 OLIVE 81
That sounds just like the tree I'm
standing next to.

The mama and baby bird fly off.

82 ARI 82
Oh, I see you!

83	OLIVE	83
	I see you too!	

84 ELINOR 84
Did you guys see any birds?

85	ARI	85
	No! Not yet!	

86 OLIVE 86
Me either! Still looking!

Elinor shakes her head as Ari and Olive walk out of the scene in opposite directions. She resumes looking at the spot where the birds were sitting. BIN POV: The birds are gone.

87 ELINOR 87
 Hmm, I guess they left.

BACK ON ELINOR: She lowers the binoculars and looks around. She cocks her head, listening. She hears a bird <SFX: FLUTTER> in a tree in front of her, near the center of the scene. The bird is on a branch on the left side of the tree.

88 ELINOR (CONT'D) 88
Ooh, there's a pretty one. Sing for
me, birdie!

She puts up her binoculars. BIN POV: The bird is an American Robin adult. It <SFX: CHIRPS> to the right, looking annoyed, and flaps its wings.

89 ELINOR (CONT'D) 89
You don't seem very happy. What's
making you upset? Are you looking
for your baby too?

We hear an <SFX: AGITATED CHIRPING> response.

90 ELINOR (CONT'D) 90
There's another one!

The view slides over to the right, showing another bird. This one is <SFX: AGITATED CHIRPING> back to the first bird, also waving its wings.

91 ELINOR (CONT'D) 91
Uh oh, you two are not getting
along!

The first bird enters the BIN POV. The two flutter at each other, <SFX: CHIRPING> back and forth. The first bird gets up close to the second bird. [Fighting Robins reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4x809VJaH4>]

92 ELINOR (CONT'D) 92
What are you arguing about?

The second bird flies off to the right. BACK ON ELINOR: Elinor lowers her binoculars. We can see the second bird has moved to a different tree. The two birds <SFX: CHIRP BACK AND FORTH MORE HAPPILY>.

93 ELINOR (CONT'D) 93
Ooooh. I guess those two birds
didn't want to share that tree.
Hmm...

Suddenly, we hear Ari again.

94 ARI (O.S.) 94
Olive! You're too close, I'm
looking for birds over here!

Elinor looks surprised. Her ears react.

95 OLIVE 95
No, you're supposed to be over
there! This is my spot!

96 ARI 96
Really? Wait, I thought this was MY
spot!

Ari and Olive emerge in the center of the frame, next to the tree the birds were fighting over.

97 OLIVE 97
No, this is my spot! <TRUMPET>

The two birds from earlier fly away.

98 ARI 98
Hmm, maybe you're right! I'll go
over here and look.

Ari goes to the tree on the right.

99	OLIVE	99
	Thank you. I just need some space. Sometimes you're SO LOUD. <TRUMPET>	
	During this exchange, Elinor is watching, fascinated.	
100	ARI	100
	Well, I need some space too.	
	Elinor looks like she's had a realization.	
101	ELINOR	101
	Guys! I think I figured it out! I think I know why birds sing!	
102	ARI	102
	What? Already? We haven't even seen a single bird yet!	
103	OLIVE	103
	Yeah, we're still looking.	
104	ELINOR	104
	You two helped me figure it out!	
	Ari and Olive look at each other.	
105	ARI AND OLIVE	105
	We did?	
106	ELINOR	106
	First, I saw a mama bird trying to find her baby bird.	
	Next to Elinor, we see a THOUGHT BUBBLE recalling the scene from earlier.	
107	OLIVE	107
	Awww!	
108	ELINOR	108
	Both birds were singing, and then I realized they were doing the same thing you and Ari were doing!	
109	ARI	109
	They were?	
110	ELINOR	110
	Yes! They were singing to find each other!	

111	ARI	111
	Wait, am I supposed to be a baby bird?	

112 OLIVE 112
(laughing)
Noooo, Elinor means the birds
called to each other with their
singing the way we did with our
words.

113	ARI	113
	Oh, right! When we couldn't find each other!	

114 ELINOR 114
Yes! Then, I saw two birds in the
same tree singing to each other
really loudly.

Another **THOUGHT BUBBLE** forms, showing the earlier scene.

115 ELINOR (CONT'D) 115
Then I realized they were telling
each other they needed more space!
Just like you and Ari were doing!

116	OLIVE	116
	Like an argument, but a...song- ument?	

117 ELINOR AND ARI 117
(laugh)

118 ELINOR 118
(giggle)
Uh-huh. They used their song to
talk about it, and then one of them
found a different tree.

119 OLIVE 119
 (gets it)
Oh! Just like when Ari and I were
talking about our bird-watching
spots.

120 ARI 120
 (good natured)
That WAS my spot.

121 OLIVE 121
(good natured)
No, that was MY spot.

It's early morning and through the window we see Elinor's father sleeping happily. Suddenly the same bird from yesterday lands on the branch outside his window.

ON: Just as the Bird opens its mouth and prepares to belt out a good morning song, it's interrupted by an off-screen <SFX: WHISTLE>.

ON: Elinor whistling to the bird. She smiles. WIDEN The bird looks interested in Elinor's whistle. Elinor backs away <SFX: WHISTLES> more, then she beckons (so it's clear to the audience) and the bird follows. It flits from tree to tree, <SFX: CHIRPING> as Elinor leads it away.

130

ELINOR

130

Sleep well, Dad!

PAN back to show Elinor's father sleeping happily. **THE END.**

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