

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.

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.

CHARACTERS: Elinor, Ari, Olive, Mr. Rabbit , Ranger Rabbit

NOTE: BOTH Ranger Rabbit and Mr. Rabbit have more than 5 lines. We should address this.

Line Count - 103

FIRST DRAFT: 28-Jan-19

SECOND DRAFT: Feb. 19, 2019

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. Who'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 pretty wake-up song.		*

	Elinor munches on her breakfast.	*
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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 cute bird singing this morning?		*

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

14	ELINOR	14	
	Wasn't the song 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 27
Maybe they just like waking up
sleeping bunnies?

28 ELINOR/RANGER RABBIT 28
(laugh)

29 ELINOR 29 *

If I figure out WHY birds sing, *

then maybe I can figure out why

that bird is waking you up!

30 MR RABBIT 30
Thank you, Elinor. That's the best
idea I've heard all morning.

31 RANGER RABBIT 31
How are you going to figure it out,
Elinor?

32 ELINOR 32
 Hmm... I need MORE OBSERVATIONS!

Ranger Rabbit gets up and pulls a pair of binoculars off a hook on the wall

33 RANGER RABBIT 33
Then you might want to use these
binoculars. They're good for
watching birds.

34 ELINOR 34
Oh, thanks mom!

35 RANGER RABBIT 35
You're welcome. Do you remember how
to use them?

36 ELINOR (SLIGHTLY OFFENDED) 36
Of course!

Ranger Rabbit smiles.

37 ELINOR (CONT'D) 37
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.

38 MR RABBIT 38
<Snores...>

39 ELINOR (STAGE WHISPER) 39
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.

40 ELINOR 40
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.

41 ELINOR (O.S.) (CONT'D) 41
Hmm, that doesn't look 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.

42 ELINOR (O.S.) (CONT'D) 42
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.

43 ELINOR (CONT'D) 43
Oh. <giggles> Oops! *

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

44 ELINOR (O.S.) (CONT'D) 44
That's better! *

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

45 ELINOR (CONT'D) 45
Ooh! There's a cute little bird.
Sing for me, birdie! *

Something brown, fuzzy and blurry blocks her view.

46 ELINOR (CONT'D) 46
Huh? What's THAT? *

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.

47 ARI 47
Hi, Elinor! Whatcha doing?

She lowers the binoculars.

48 ELINOR 48
Oh, hi Ari, hi Olive! I'm using these binoculars to look for birds. I'm trying to answer a question! *

49 OLIVE 49
Cool! <beat> Uh, what's the question? *

50 ELINOR 50
I want to know why birds sing! Plants don't sing, lizards don't sing. Why do birds sing?

51 ARI 51 *
Uh, of course birds sing! They are birds!

52 OLIVE 52
But WHY do they sing, Ari?

53 ARI 53
Oh. Hmm. I never thought about it before. You're right, I don't know!

54 OLIVE 54
We'll help you, Elinor. Let's all solve the mystery together!

55 ELINOR 55
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.

56 ARI (STAGE WHISPER) 56
There's some that way!

He points in one direction.

57	OLIVE (STAGE WHISPER) I heard one this way!	57
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She points in a totally different direction.

58	ELINOR I think there's one over there.	58
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She points to a nearby tree.

59	ELINOR (CONT'D) Hmm. There are a lot of birds in the forest.	59
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60	OLIVE Let's split up! I'll look for birds over here...	60
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61	ARI And I'll look over there!	61
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62	ELINOR Great idea! Now we can get MORE OBSERVATIONS!	62
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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>. Ari and Olive are far enough away that we can't initially see or hear them.

*
*
*

63	ELINOR OK birds, I'm ready, let's hear some songs!	63
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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.

64 ELINOR (CONT'D) 64
 Hmm, you look like you're looking
 for something.

Elinor hears another <SFX: CHIRP>, this time to her right. It sounds similar, but like a baby. [AR Chick sound reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycggNNL10yI>] Elinor lowers her binoculars and turns to the right. *

65 ELINOR (CONT'D) 65
 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>].

66 ELINOR (CONT'D) 66
 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>. BINOCULARS POV: swishes left to where the mama bird is. *

67 ELINOR (CONT'D) 67
 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. *

68 ELINOR (CONT'D) 68
 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.

69 ELINOR (CONT'D) 69
 Yay! You found each other!
 (putting down the bins)
 Hmmmm.

Elinor looks like she's about to have an idea, when suddenly we hear some crashing in the bushes <SFX: Ari crashing bushes> and then Ari calling out to Olive.

*
*

70 ARI (O.S.) 70
OLIVE! Where are you?!

Elinor puts down the binoculars and listens.

71 OLIVE (O.S.) 71
I'm over here! Who is calling me?

The voices come from the left and the right. Elinor turns her head each time to follow the voices.

72 ARI (O.S.) 72
It's me Ari!

73 OLIVE (O.S.) 73

Ari?

ARI (O.S.)

Yes!

75 OLIVE 75
Where are you?

76 ARI 76
I'm right next to a tree!

77 OLIVE 77
Which tree?

Ari emerges from the left-hand side of the screen, standing next to the tree the mama bird was spotted on earlier.

78 ARI 78
Uh, it's tall, with a bunch of
leaves?

OLIVE emerges from the right-hand side of the screen, standing next to the tree that has the mama and baby bird.

79 OLIVE 79
That sounds just like the tree I'm
standing next to.

The mama and baby bird fly off.

80 ARI 80
Oh, I see you!

81 OLIVE 81
I see you too!

*

82	ELINOR	82	
	Guys! I think I figured it out! I think I know why birds sing!		
83	ARI	83	
	What? Already?		*
84	OLIVE	84	
	Yeah, we haven't seen a lot of birds yet.		*
			*
85	ELINOR	85	
	You two helped me figure it out!		
Ari and Olive look at each other.			
86	ARI AND OLIVE	86	
	We did?		
87	ELINOR	87	
	I was looking around, and I saw a mama bird trying to find her baby bird.		*
Next to Elinor, we see a THOUGHT BUBBLE recalling the scene from earlier.			
88	OLIVE	88	
	Awww!		
89	ELINOR	89	
	Both birds were singing, and then I realized they were doing the same thing you and Ari were doing!		
90	ARI	90	
	They were?		
91	ELINOR	91	
	Yes! They were singing to find each other!		
92	ARI	92	
	Wait, am I supposed to be a baby bird?		
93	OLIVE	93	
	(laughing)		
	Noooo, Elinor means the birds called to each other with their singing the way we did with our words.		

94	ARI	94	
	Oh! When we couldn't find each other!		*
95	ELINOR	95	*
	Birds use singing to TALK to each other! That's why they sing!		
96	ARI AND OLIVE	96	
	Ohhh...		
97	ARI	97	
	It's bird talk!		
98	ELINOR	98	
	Yes! That is SO INTERESTING!		
	<MFX> MONTAGE: of the kids watching birds as they sing.		*
99	ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI	99	
	We know it's true, Birds like to sing, But why do they sing? It's for lots of things.		
	A singing bird can say How do you do! Or This is MY tree, Or even I love you,		
	Birds love to sing, And now we can see! They're talking to each other, Just like you and me!		
	END MONTAGE - back where we started.		
100	ARI	100	
	We solved the mystery!		
101	OLIVE	101	
	We know why birds sing!		
102	ELINOR	102	
	Hmmm... and that gives me an idea...		

PULL OUT: As the kids run off screen, we PAN UP to the sky.

6. EXT ANIMAL TOWN - WIDE

The sun sets, the night passes, the sun rises again.

7. EXT. ELINOR'S HOUSE -- MORNING

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. *

103

ELINOR
Sleep well, Dad!

103

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

THE END. *