

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP 123A Burrowing Owl Girl

By Katherine Sandford

Elinor's Question: What kind of owl is awake in the daytime and lives on the ground?

Logline: Elinor thinks she knows everything there is to know about owls until, while visiting her grandparents, she meets a Burrowing Owl.

Curriculum Goals:LS6. Understand that individuals of the same kind of plant or animal are recognizable as similar but can also vary in many ways: a. Contrast individuals of the same kinds of plant and animal (Elinor compares and contrasts what she knows about Owls with what she observes about Burrowing Owls).

SEP3. Planning and carrying out investigations a. Identify and use a greater variety of tools to extend the senses for observing, measuring, and recording data about objects and events b. Compare and contrast objects and events by describing similarities and differences in detail (Elinor and her grandmother plan and execute an investigation into Burrowing Owls).

SEP4. Analyzing and interpreting data a. Collect, describe, and record observations in greater detail and in various ways b. Use the 5 senses and simple tools to gather and record data d. Talk about and reflect on what happened during an investigation or when solving a problem, and why it might have happened. (Elinor and her grandmother collect data about the Burrowing Owl through sight and sound and, with research and discussion, decide if it is an Owl).

MAIN CHARACTERS: Elinor, BiBi, Mr. Rabbit, Ranger Rabbit

SETTING: Grandparents' Living Room, Back Yard, Desert.

PROPS: Owl Girl Costume, small Saguaro cactuses, gardening apron, trowel, lizard (maybe), Burrowing Owl, burrow, Sand Tortoise, rocks and sticks.

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1. INT. ELINOR'S GRANDPARENTS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

BIBI (Elinor's Grandma) is tending to a small cactus in a pot and is getting ready to go out to the back yard, when the <SFX: DOORBELL RINGS>. She opens the door and we see that MR. RABBIT and RANGER RABBIT are here for a visit.

1 MR. RABBIT 1
Did anyone order a rabbit family?

2 BIBI 2
Ahh, come here you!

She grabs his cheeks and shakes them all about comically.

3 BIBI (CONT'D) 3
My favorite son!

Mr. Rabbit recovers from the shaking.

4 MR. RABBIT 4
Your favorite? Uh, Mom, I'm your
only son.

5 BIBI 5
Well, it's a good thing you're my
favorite then.
(to Ranger Rabbit)
And my favourite daughter-in-law,
soo good to see you, dear.

6 RANGER RABBIT 6
You too, BiBi.

BiBi gives Ranger Rabbit a kiss on the cheek then she realizes something:

7 BIBI 7
Where's Elinor?

BiBi winks at Ranger Rabbit.

8 RANGER RABBIT 8
I don't know. But guess WHOOO has a
special surprise for you.

Elinor jumps from behind Ranger Rabbit, dressed in her owl girl costume.

9 ELINOR 9
(calling out)
Surprise! Whoo, whoooo!

10	BIBI	10
	Oh, wow! An owl!	
	(bends down to Elinor)	
	I've never had an owl visit me before.	
11	ELINOR	11
	BiBi! It's me!	
12	BIBI	12
	Elinor! I thought you were a real owl.	
13	ELINOR	13
	Fooled ya! Do you like my owl costume? I made it for costume day at school. Mom helped a little.	
14	RANGER RABBIT	14
	Yes, and since then she's been wearing it... a lot.	
15	ELINOR	15
	Every day! Owls are some of my favorite animals.	
16	BIBI	16
	Really? I love owls too.	
17	BIBI AND ELINOR	17
	(in unison)	
	They're SOOOO interesting!	
18	RANGER RABBIT	18
	(to Elinor)	
	Well, we're helping your Grandpa today, honey bunny, and that means you're going to stay with BiBi for the afternoon.	
19	ELINOR	19
	Awesome! But where IS Baba?	
20	BIBI	20
	He's doing some work over at the community center, so it's just you and me, kiddo.	
21	ELINOR	21
	Yay! I can't wait to tell you all about owls, BiBi. I know everything there is to know about them!	

22 BIBI 22
Everything?

23 ELINOR 23
Yep. Everything!

24 BIBI 24
Well, I wouldn't be so sure of
that, Elinor. Nature always seems
to find a way to surprise you.

Elinor thinks about this for a beat.

25 ELINOR 25
Hmmm... No, I'm pretty sure I know
everything about owls. Watch me!

Elinor runs around the living room, hooting <SFX: HOOT, HOOT WALLA> as her parents watch from the doorway. On everyone's <SFX: LAUGHTER> we CROSSFADE TO:

2. EXT. BACK YARD -- A LITTLE LATER

Elinor is flying around the back yard (still in costume). <SFX: HOOT, HOOT, HOOT WALLA> BiBi putters near her potting shed (DESIGN NOTE: BiBi is now wearing her gardening apron, where she keeps a trowel). Elinor swoops in.

26 ELINOR 26
Whatcha doin' BiBi?

27 BIBI 27
A little investigation. I'm trying
to figure out which type of sand my
cactuses like the best.

ANGLE ON: Three small-ish Saguaro cactuses (this is the classic desert cactus with arms) in pots.
<https://images.app.goo.gl/ZUhz15K37j6yUx5R7>

28 ELINOR 28
Whoa, cool!! Well, I did a lot of
investigating about owls with my
Mom, and that's how I know all
about them.

THOUGHT BUBBLE, we see what Elinor knows about owls:

29 ELINOR (CONT'D) 29
Owls sleep all day, and they're
only awake at night.
(MORE)

ELINOR (CONT'D)

They're super good at flying
(whoosh!), and they live waaay up
in the trees. I observed them
myself!

BiBi looks at her fondly.

30 BIBI 30
That's wonderful, Owl Girl Elinor,
but just remember, a good scientist
knows there's always more to find
out, so keep asking questions.

Elinor has heard this all before.

31 ELINOR 31
And that means make lots and LOTS
of OBSERVATIONS!

32 BIBI 32
Exactly!

Elinor continues to fly around <SFX: HOOT, HOOT WALLA> and
starts looking around the yard while BiBi continues repotting
her cactuses. After noticing some interesting things close by
(a rock, a flower on a cactus, a beetle) <SFX: OOOH WALLA>
Elinor looks out beyond the yard (there's no fence) where she
can see the wide-open desert.

33 ELINOR 33
Wooooow!

3. EXT. DESERT -- DAY

Elinor walks out (not too far) and enjoys the view of the
beautiful desert. She sees a dune, a huge cactus, maybe a
lizard who scurries off. Suddenly Elinor hears a little <SFX:
RUSTLING> in the very small patch of grass just beyond.

34 ELINOR 34
What's that?

She peers over to see... Two big yellow eyes!

35 ELINOR (CONT'D) 35
Two eyes?

The two yellow eyes reveal themselves to be a small bird that
looks like an owl.

<https://images.app.goo.gl/2FtVzY9KbcV7WZXFA>

36 ELINOR (CONT'D) 36
(to herself)
<GASP!> It's an OWL! Hello, little
owl. Look at me, I'm an owl too.
Hoot! Hoot!

The owl stares back.

37 ELINOR (CONT'D) 37
(realizing)
Wait a minute...

(checks the sky)
It's the middle of the day.

(To the owl)
Why are you awake, little owl?
You're supposed to be sleeping
right now, so you can be awake at
night. That's what owls do!

(Back to herself, puzzled)
I wonder why this owl isn't
sleeping.

Elinor slowly approaches the owl, moving between shrubs.
Suddenly, the owl takes off running.

38 ELINOR (CONT'D) 38
Huh? Now it's running on the
ground? But owls are supposed to
fly in the sky.
(thinking)
Is that even an owl?

CU: On Elinor's confused look, we crossfade to.

4. EXT. BACK YARD -- DAY

BiBi is tending to her cactuses when suddenly Elinor runs up.

39 ELINOR 39
BiBi! BiBi! I just saw an
impossible animal!

40 BIBI 40
A what?

41 ELINOR 41
An animal that can't be! It looks
like an animal that I know, but
it's not doing the things that it's
supposed to do!

BiBi is intrigued.

42 BIBI 42
An impossible animal? That is sooo
interesting.

43 ELINOR 43
I know. I don't understand.

44 BIBI 44
Well, you know what a scientist
does when she sees something she
doesn't understand.

Elinor thinks about it for a beat, then...

45 ELINOR 45
Yes! She needs...

46 BIBI AND ELINOR 46
(in unison)
MORE OBSERVATIONS!

47 ELINOR 47
Come on, BiBi!

BiBi and Elinor head out into the desert behind BiBi's house
to observe the mysterious animal.

5. EXT. DESERT -- DAY

Elinor and BiBi find a good observation spot.

48 ELINOR 48
This is where I saw the impossible
animal.

49 BIBI 49
Ok, let's wait and watch.

50 ELINOR 50
We'd better hide, so we don't scare
it off.

51 BIBI 51
Good idea.

BiBi and Elinor hide behind a small pile of rocks. A beat,
then their ears rise up first and scan around. Another beat,
then their faces both (comically) rise up from behind the
rocks together. They are in full recon mode. Elinor looks
one way, BiBi looks the other, then they switch. Suddenly...

52 ELINOR 52
(whispering)
There it is!

Elinor points. ANGLE ON: the little owl.

53 ELINOR (CONT'D) 53
That's the animal I saw earlier.

54 BIBI 54
It looks like an owl.

55 ELINOR 55
It *looks* like an owl, but it can't
be an owl.

56 BIBI 56
Why not?

57 ELINOR 57
Because this bird is awake during
the day and owls are only awake at
NIGHT. I also saw it run on the
ground, but owls are supposed to
fly.

At this point, BiBi realizes what's going on.

58 BIBI 58
Ooooh, I see.

The little owl hops over closer to them, and they have a
moment together to admire it.

59 ELINOR 59
It's coming closer.

60 BIBI 60
Aww, it's pretty cute.

At that moment the owl runs off!

61 ELINOR 61
BiBi look! It's running away!
Let's follow it so we can keep
observing.

CUTE ACTION SEQUENCE: Elinor and BiBi keep a respectful (and
humorous) distance, hiding as they go. They follow the
little owl (which can run surprisingly fast) across the
desert.

ANGLE ON: The little bird runs into its burrowing hole.
Elinor stops and points.

62 ELINOR (CONT'D) 62
 (amazed)
 BiBi! The little bird went into
 that hole in the ground. Do you
 think that's where it lives?

63 BIBI 63
 Sure looks like it. Holes in the
 ground like that are called
 burrows.

ANGLE ON: The little owl pokes its head out, then retreats.

64 ELINOR 64
 Wow.
 (making up her mind)
 Then it's definitely *not* an owl,
 because owls live in trees. I
 OBSERVED that.

The owl comes out and starts puttering around the burrow.
Elinor observes it and starts to have second thoughts.

65 ELINOR (CONT'D) 65
 (unsure)
 Only... It really does look like an
 owl. It's got big eyes, and a
 beak, and feathers...

66 BIBI 66
 That's true.

67 ELINOR 67
 But how can it be an owl if it's
 awake in the day, and runs on the
 ground, and lives in a hole?

68 BIBI 68
 That's a really good question
 Elinor.

69 ELINOR 69
 (confused)
 I just don't get it.

Peak confusion for Elinor. BiBi thinks about how to help.
Suddenly, she spots an odd-looking little cactus to the side
of them. (maybe a Buckthorn Cholla)
[https://cals.arizona.edu/yuma/plant_index/cylindropuntia_acan
thocarpa%20.htm](https://cals.arizona.edu/yuma/plant_index/cylindropuntia_acanthocarpa%20.htm)

Or something else cool - here are other options:
[https://www.foldingguides.com/product/cacti-of-the-desert-
southwest-poster-cardset-of-6-greeting-cards/](https://www.foldingguides.com/product/cacti-of-the-desert-southwest-poster-cardset-of-6-greeting-cards/)

70 BIBI 70
Oh, look. Just what I was looking
for.

BiBi points to the unusual cactus and makes a show of finding
it.

71 BIBI (CONT'D) 71
I found another cactus for my
investigation. Isn't it a beauty?

BiBi uses her spade to dig it out and show it to Elinor.

72 ELINOR 72
Uhhhm, are you sure that's a
cactus, BiBi? It doesn't look
anything like your other cactuses.

73 BIBI 73
Good observation! But this IS a
cactus.

CU: on the cactus plant, BiBi compares it to a nearby example
of the Saguaro cactus.

74 BIBI (CONT'D) 74
There are many different kinds of
cactuses, and they are not all the
same. Nature is full of things that
look similar at first but when you
look more closely there are
differences - like those two rocks.

Bibi points. Angle on: two similar rocks, but one has a
striation.

75 ELINOR 75
Oh, I see. One has a stripe.

76 BIBI 76
But they are both rocks.

Elinor appreciates what Bibi just said. She looks back and
forth between the owl and the cactuses. After a beat, a
realization starts to dawn on Elinor.

77 ELINOR 77
Ooooooh.

She looks back at the owl.

78 ELINOR (CONT'D) 78
Hmmm.. Maybe this animal IS an owl,
but it's just a different kind of
owl.

CU: On the cute little bird.

79 ELINOR (CONT'D) 79
Maybe that kind of owl doesn't
sleep all day, or fly up high or
live in trees.

80 BIBI 80
Hmmmm. Now THAT is an interesting
idea.

BiBi puts her cactus in her gardening apron.

81 ELINOR 81
What do you think, BiBi? Is it a
different kind of owl?

82 BIBI 82
As a matter fact, it is. Good
thinking, little scientist. There
ARE different kinds of owls, just
like there are different kinds of
cactuses and different kinds of
rocks. This one here is called a
burrowing owl.

83 ELINOR 83
Oh, I know! Is it because they live
in burrows?

84 BIBI 84
That's right. Burrowing Owls live
in the desert and stay awake during
the day. And guess what else? They
don't make the holes they live in.
They use holes that other animals
made and don't need anymore.

85 ELINOR 85
Awww, what a smart little owl.

CU: On the owl, it does look smart.

86 ELINOR (CONT'D) 86
I thought I knew everything there
was to know about owls, but I guess
I didn't.

87 BIBI 87
Nature is full of surprises,
Elinor. There's always more to
learn.

At that moment, as they look at the owl, they observe it
laying small rocks and bits of (natural) desert debris out in
front of its burrow.

88 ELINOR 88
What's it doing now?

89 BIBI 89
I don't know. I've never seen a
burrowing owl do that. I wonder
why.

90 ELINOR 90
Maybe it's decorating its front
door.

91 BIBI 91
Maybe. Or maybe that's its rock
collection.

They <SFX: GIGGLE > together.

ANGLE ON: The owl puts the desert debris in a little semi-
circle around its hole.

92 ELINOR 92
It looks like its making a little
fence.

A sand tortoise walks by, then pauses and keeps going.

93 ELINOR (CONT'D) 93
Look! That turtle was going to walk
into the hole, but it got stopped
by the sticks and rocks.
(a beat, then she
realizes)
Maybe the owl put them there to
keep other animals out.

94 BIBI 94
I think you're right Elinor.
That's amazing. I didn't know
burrowing owls did that.

95 ELINOR 95
You didn't? Really? I guess there
IS always more to learn. Even for
my BiBi!

SONG - Elinor and BiBi sing together.

96	ELINOR AND BIBI	96
	ALL: Nature is full of surprises, The closer you look, The more you will see, Animals are all shapes and sizes Nature is FULL of surprises.	
	ELINOR: I thought there was only one kind of owl. That sleeps all day and flies about.	
	BIBI: Keep your mind open, and look all around,	
	ELINOR: You might find an owl that runs on the ground.	
	ALL: Nature is full of surprises, The closer you look, The more you will see, Animals are all shapes and sizes Nature is FULL of surprises.	

We CROSS FADE:

6. INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

We only see BiBi (and a pile of couch cushions) as the <SFX: DOORBELL RINGS> again. BiBi opens the door.

97	MR. RABBIT	97
	We're back!	
98	BIBI	98
	Aww, my favourite rabbit family.	
	They exchange kisses.	
99	RANGER RABBIT	99
	So, did you and Elinor have fun today?	
100	BIBI	100
	Of course! We made lots of observations. It was all sooo interesting.	
101	RANGER RABBIT	101
	Where is Elinor anyway?	

102	BIBI	102
	Oh, I'm not sure. She was around here some...	
Suddenly, Elinor comes out of a burrow she had made from the couch cushions.		
103	ELINOR	103
	Surprise!	
After <SFX: LAUGHTER> Elinor gestures to the mound of pillows.		
104	ELINOR (CONT'D)	104
	Whooo-whoo. Do you like my burrow?	
105	MR. RABBIT	105
	Your burrow? I didn't know Owls had burrows.	
106	ELINOR	106
	Neither did I. But then Bibi and I met a special kind of owl. It's awake during the day, runs on the ground, and lives in a burrow!	
107	MR. RABBIT	107
	Really!	
108	ELINOR	108
	It's amazing, isn't it? Nature is full of surprises.	
109	RANGER RABBIT	109
	Well, I'm glad you had fun Owl Girl Elinor.	
110	ELINOR	110
	That's Burrowing Owl Girl Elinor, Mom. And you know what that means...	
111	RANGER RABBIT	111
	What?	
Elinor takes off running around the room.		
112	ELINOR	112
	You can't catch meeeee!	
We end in <SFX: LAUGHTER>.		
FADE OUT.		

SEGMENT 2.**1. EXT DESERT -- DAY**

ELINOR, ARI, and OLIVE are exploring the area around BiBi's house. We see features of Bibi's desert environment, a few desert plants. The sun's heat reflects off the landscape.
<SFX: DRY BREEZE BLOWING>

113 ARI 113
 Phew! I'm thirsty!

114 OLIVE 114
 It's so dry out here.

The kids stop and look up at the landscape in front of them. They see sun-soaked hills and a few hardy plants.

115 ELINOR 115
 I wonder if there are any animals
 or plants that live out here.

<SFX: GUITAR TUNING>

116 SR. TAPIR (O.S.) 116
 Hey kids -- that's a great
 question. There's not much water
 here and that reminds me of a
 scientist who wondered what kind of
 life survives in a desert.

The kids turn around and are surprised to see Señor Tapir in the desert.

117 ARI, OLIVE, AND ELINOR 117
 Señor Tapir!

<SFX: YAY WALLA> Senior Tapir stands and stretches his back to sing and play the guitar. The kids gather close by.

2. EXT OUTSIDE (SONG ANIMATION) -- DAY

In simplified song animation, we see young Roseli Ocampo in a WARM, ARID DESERT similar to Bibi's area, examining a plant.

[Note to composers: this song has a somewhat variable rhyming and rhythm scheme. Please feel free to massage lyrics to make the music work.]

118 SR. TAPIR (SINGS) 118
 O - O - Roseli Ocampo
 Wanted to know
 (MORE)

SR. TAPIR (SINGS) (CONT'D)

All the places where life could
grow,

Roseli walks through the WARM, ARID DESERT looking at the
extent of life.

Well all life is alive!
It needs water to survive
Rain drops water from the sky
But in the desert it's very dry.

Roseli continues her walk through the WARM, ARID DESERT and
sees plants and animals adapted to living there.

Roseli in the desert,
Saw life all around,
She was amazed at the creatures
that she found,

Close-up on Roseli as she stoops to examine a plant in the
desert. A cute horned toad climbs up on her shoulder to look
at the same plant. It looks at the camera and shrugs.

O - O - Roseli Ocampo
Wanted to know
If things could live in the desert
cold!

119 OLIVE (SPOKEN) (O.S.) 119
Deserts can be *cold*!?

120 SR. TAPIR (SPOKEN) 120
Yes, that's right!

Roseli walks on, passing behind a huge saguaro cactus. As
she does, her clothes change to ARCTIC GEAR and the setting
changes to a lifeless ARCTIC DESERT.

121 SR. TAPIR (SUNG) (CONT'D) 121
Deserts can be cold or hot
Cold deserts are a very tough spot
Roseli wanted to know
Is this a place life could grow?

Roseli looks closely at a horizontal band in a cliff face.
She scrapes off some of the rock and holds it in both hands,
carefully inspecting it.

Roseli looked everywhere,
And what do you know?
She found life *even there*!

EXTREME ZOOM into the rock that Roseli is holding and examining. AS IF THROUGH A MICROSCOPE, we see links of green ovals, gently swaying. Cyanobacteria from Antarctica. BACK ON: Roseli looks surprised and happy.

O - O - Roseli Ocampo
Now she knows!
Life can live in the desert cold.

Roseli continues her march though the Antarctic desert. Fade to white.

BACK ON: Senior Tapir and the kids. <SFX: KIDS CHEER>

122	ARI	122
	So, maybe we have to look more closely to find animals here.	
123	ELINOR	123
	I see some over there! Look!	

Elinor points off to the left. There they see cacti, a tortoise slowly shuffling in the shade, and a lizard scamper by. <SFX: WHOA COOL WALLA>

THE END.