

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

129A: THE UNSINKABLE LYNX

Written by
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Elinor's Question: *How do lynx move fast in deep snow?*

Logline: *When the kids discover that Gael the lynx's feet prevent him from sinking in the deep snow, they make their own snowshoes.*

Curriculum Goals: **LS2.** Living things have different body parts to suit their needs. [The kids learn that Gael, who comes from Up North, has wide, flat, fluffy feet that help him walk on snow.]

ND3. (RTL Crosscutting concept 'Structure and Function'):
Understand that structures and materials in the natural world can be used or can inspire the engineering of structures with similar function in the designed world. [Inspired by a lynx's feet, the kids design their own set of snowshoes.]

SEP3b: Compare and contrast objects and events by describing similarities and differences in detail [The kids compare themselves with Gael to determine which variable is causing Gael to sink into snow.]

SEP6a: Use background knowledge experiences, and data to construct reasonable explanations and theories of natural phenomena [The kids hypothesize that wider feet make it easier to move in snow.]

Main Characters: Elinor, Olive, Ari, Gael, Koa, Silas (in winter clothes)

Props: Two tennis rackets, roll of duct tape, shoelaces, twigs, pieces of felt, sheet of shiny snowflake stickers, bag of banana chips

Locations: Field near Olive's house

FIRST DRAFT: 20-Dec-19

SECOND DRAFT: 16-Jan-20

POLISH DRAFT: 07-Feb-20

RECORD DRAFT: 18-Feb-20

1. EXT. OLIVE'S HOUSE - FIELD - DAY

It's a snowy day in Animal Town. Wearing their snow clothes, ELINOR, ARI, OLIVE, KOA, and SILAS have gathered next to the field beside Olive's house to play a game. The field is covered in deep snow (up to about their knees). We start with a CU: just Elinor's face looking from side to side as she dramatically introduces today's game.

DIALOGUE NOTE: there are multiple characters saying the word "tag" in this episode. We want to make sure that the voice direction keeps this word consistent across actors, and from getting too Canadian sounding. We're hoping for a word that rhymes with "flag" rather than "plague."

1	ELINOR	1
	Okay, everyone. I THINK we're ready for today's game, but let's make sure. Do we have... snow?	

WIDEN to reveal the kids standing on the side of the field, where the snow is not as deep. Ari grabs a handful of snow and holds it up.

2	KOA	2
	We have snow!	

3	ELINOR	3
	Do we have our snow clothes?	

Olive pats the sides of her snowsuit.

4	OLIVE	4
	We're warm and toasty.	

5	ELINOR	5
	Do we have a bunch of awesome friends?	

Koa reaches up his hands and high fives the two characters to his left and right simultaneously.

6	KOA	6
	We are totally awesome.	

7	ELINOR	7
	Great! It looks like we're ready to play a game of... SNOW TAG!	

The kids <SFX: YEAH> and throw their arms in the air in excitement. But when Ari raises his arms, he's holding a tennis racket in each hand. He pauses, looking confused.

8
ARI
Wait. I thought you said we were
going to play Snow TENNIS.

Ari lowers his arms.

9
ELINOR
Snow Tennis? How do you play that?

10
ARI
I don't know. I thought you knew!
But that's why I brought these
rackets.

He holds the rackets in front of him.

11
OLIVE
(giggles)
Ari, we're playing Snow TAG today.
It's just like regular tag, but we
play it in the snow.

12
ELINOR
Yeah, snow tag is much cooler.
(giggling) Get it? Because it's
colder?

The kids <SFX: GIGGLE>.

13
ARI
Ok! I guess I won't be needing
these.

Ari tosses the tennis rackets to the side in the field and
immediately perks up. Elinor steps out and notices how deep
the snow is.

14
ELINOR
Wow, there is so much snow today.
Look how deep it is.

Olive wades in.

15
OLIVE
Yeah, that might make it a little
hard to run around.

At that moment, something catches Olive's attention. Off in the distance, we see Gael Lynx approaching the group from afar and waving.

(VOICE RECORD NOTE: the Spanish pronunciation of Gael rhymes with Babel, or kale (Kal-El). "Tale" should be ok in the song because the second syllable is stressed and it rhymes.)

32 OLIVE (O.S.) 32
Oh look, it's Gael.

Ari, Olive, and Elinor approach the other kids, wading through the snow and also catching their breath. They all move to the side of the field, where the snow isn't as deep.

33 ARI 33
Who's Gael?

34 OLIVE 34
He's new in town! His family just moved here from up north. (to Gael, who just arrived) Hi, Gael!

Gael bounds up to the kids and stands next to Olive. He's a cheerful and affable lynx. He's not wearing mittens or boots (he doesn't need them). Like lynxes in real life, he has extra big paws and feet.

35 GAEL 35
Hi, everybody. I'm Gael.

The kids all greet him (SFX: WALLA HI/HELLO!>.

36 KOA 36
Cool! Welcome to Animal Town.

37 GAEL 37
Thanks, I really like it here, but's it's different from where I come from.

38 ARI 38
What's it like up north, Gael?

39 GAEL 39
Well, it's a bit snowier.

40 ELINOR 40
Is it really cold?

41 GAEL 41
Yeah. But don't worry. I'm a lynx, and lynxes have really thick fur to keep us warm.

There's general appreciation of that by all the kids <SFX:
WALLA WHOA/COOL>.

42 OLIVE 42
Well, Gael, you're just in time.
We're playing a game of Snow Tag.
Want to join us?

43 GAEL 43
Great! (he suddenly looks confused)
Um, what's Snow Tag?

44 OLIVE 44
It's the same as regular tag, but
we play it when it's snowy outside.

45 ARI 45
And right now, it's REALLY snowy.

Ari steps into the deep snow.

46 GAEL 46
Mmm, where I'm from, it's almost
always snowy, so we just call it
tag.

The kids <SFX: GIGGLE>.

47 ELINOR 47
Ok. Ari was It, but we should start
over because Gael is here. Does
anyone want to be It this time?

48 GAEL 48
I'll be It.

49 ELINOR 49
Ok, count to ten and then, it's
snow tag time!

The kids all start to scatter. Olive stays behind to give
Gael a tip.

50 OLIVE 50
Watch out for Silas. He's really
fast.

Olive wades out into the snow and joins the others as Gael
counts.

51 GAEL 51
One, two, three, four, five, six,
seven, eight, nine, ten. Here I
come!

SILAS

Gosh. The snow sure is deep over here.

69 ARI 69
Yeah, I got tired just watching it!
Did you eat some kind of special
breakfast this morning?

70 GAEL 70
 Uh, I don't think so. I ate the
 same thing I eat every morning:
 Oatmeal with extra maple syrup. We
 eat a lot of maple syrup up north.

71 ARI 71
 Mmm, I love maple syrup.

His stomach grumbles a little and the kids <SFX: GIGGLE> a
 bit.

72 ELINOR 72
 (thoughtful) Hmm. Gael, we noticed
 that you don't sink in the snow as
 much as we do. Is that why you can
 run faster?

73 OLIVE 73
 Yeah, when we walk in the snow, we
 sink down but you don't.

Olive steps over to the field to demonstrate.

74 GAEL 74
 Huh. I hadn't thought about it
 before.

He walks over next to Olive, and it's clear that Olive sinks
 down a lot more.

75 GAEL (CONT'D) 75
 You're right! I always walk on top
 of the snow. It's what lynxes do.

Koa wades in, sinks, and look up at Gael.

76 KOA 76
 Whoa, that is so cool.

77 ELINOR 77
 Hmmm... I wonder why you don't sink
 in the snow like we do, Gael.
 You're about the same size as us.

From Elinor's POV, we see her use her hand to compare Gael's
 size to another kid standing on the side of the field. Back
 on Elinor, we see her scratching her chin.

78 ELINOR (CONT'D) 78
 There must be another reason. We
 need more observations!

Ari joins in the hypothesizing.

In a SCIENCE CLOSE-UP: we see that Gael's paws and feet are amazing - they're huge, wide, and furry compared to Ari's.

88 OLIVE 88
They are SO COOL. They're big and wide and furry.

The kids all take a thoughtful moment to hold up their paws and feet and look at them.

89 GAEL 89
Oh, thank you! We lynxes all have paws and feet like this.

90 ELINOR 90
Maybe that's why you don't sink as much, Gael.

91 ARI 91
Yeah, none of us has paws like that!

92 ELINOR 92
When we step in the snow, our smaller feet sink.

She steps into the snow and we see her feet sink.

93 ELINOR (CONT'D) 93
But maybe because your feet are so wide, they don't sink as much.

Gael hops to his feet. He moves his feet up and down and we see that because of their width, they don't pierce through the snow as easily.

94 GAEL 94
I think you're right!

95 OLIVE 95
We figured it out!

On their good cheers, we go into the DITTY MONTAGE. They sing

(COMPOSER RECORD NOTE: the Spanish pronunciation of Gael rhymes with Babel, or kale (Kal-El). "Tale" should be ok in the song because the second syllable is stressed and it rhymes.)

96 ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI 96
Listen up, friends,
Listen well, we have a new lynx friend,
The unsinkable Gael!
(MORE)

ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI (CONT'D)

OLIVE: His feet are wide.
He's got fluffy toes.
ELINOR: These amazing feet
Won't sink in the snow.

ARI: Having wide feet
Help you stay on top
ELINOR: So you can run faster
and never stop

ALL: Listen up, friends,
Listen well, we have a new lynx
friend,
The unsinkable Gaaaaaeeeeel!

The kids all cheer their new friend. Ari is especially
excited. He jumps in the air and flutters.

97	ARI	97
	Look at me! I'm not sinking in the snow, just like Gael!	

Ari is fluttering backwards and lands, not realizing he's
landed on the rackets, he slips a bit but grasps the netting -
<WHOOOPS> does a little flip and lands on the pair of rackets
he had tossed earlier.

He looks down and, grasping the netting with his foot claws,
he lifts them one by one.

98	ARI (CONT'D)	98
	Haha, hey look, now I have wide feet like Gael, and I don't sink in the snow!	

He takes a few steps around the snow using the rackets like
snow shoes.

99	ELINOR	99
	Ari, you just gave me an idea. Maybe we can ALL have feet like Gael.	

100	OLIVE	100
	(catching on) Yeah, if we can find wide things to put on our feet, then we can walk on top of the snow, too.	

101	KOA	101
	I've got two flying discs [Frisbees] at home I could use.	

102	SILAS	102
	I have some toy plates at home.	
103	OLIVE	103
	I have a couple of ping-pong paddles.	
104	ELINOR	104
	And I have things at home I can use, too. Gael, will you wait for us here?	
105	GAEL	105
	Of course!	
106	ELINOR	106
	Great, let's see what we can make!	

The kids all scramble, and through a quick Watterson split-screen cross-fade montage, we see the different kids grabbing their things and jerry-rigging them. On the last cross-fade, we end up back at the snow field to reveal that everyone has a version of snow-shoes.

Triumphantly, Elinor holds up the makeshift snowshoes she has on her feet. She took a pair of twigs and wrapped them around to form a loop, then used twine or cloth to wrap and make a surface that attaches to her feet. (They look like rudimentary snowshoes)

107	ELINOR (CONT'D) (CONT'D)	107
	Ta-da! We did it.	
108	GAEL	108
	Those look awesome.	
109	KOA	109
	Cool, I have lynx feet.	
110	ELINOR	110
	Who wants to try theirs first?	
111	OLIVE	111
	I do!	

Olive steps out in the snow with her ping-pong paddle shoes.

112	OLIVE (CONT'D)	112
	(laughing) They work! Having wide feet keeps you from sinking in the snow.	

Soon, all the kids step out. Ari takes a few running steps.

114 ARI (CONT'D) 114
Umm, it might take some practice to
be like him.

115 OLIVE 115
What do you think about our lynx
shoes, Gael?

117	ELINOR	117
	Thank YOU for teaching us something	
	new today. Now... who wants to	
	play... SNOW TAG!	

118 ELINOR (CONT'D) 118
Oh, uh, or should I say, who wants
to play TAG!

IRIS OUT

1. INT. MZ. MOLE'S CLASSROOM -- WINTER DAY

Inside the classroom, Mz. Mole puts on some strange fluffy white snowshoes over her feet.

119	OLIVE	119
	Mz. Mole? What are those?	
120	MZ. MOLE	120
	These are my ptarmigan feet, for walking on the snow.	
The kids all look at each other, confused.		
121	GAEL	121
	Your what?	
122	MZ. MOLE	122
	My ptarmigan feet. I made them myself.	
123	ELINOR	123
	Mz. Mole, (giggling) what are ptarmigan feet?	
124	MZ. MOLE	124
	Oh, they are so much fun. Let's read about them!	

Mz. Mole takes out her storybook and opens the front cover. CLOSE ON the storybook which shows a ptarmigan, a brown bird about the size of a chicken, standing on the ground in the summer arctic tundra.

2. THE STORYBOOK

The storybook comes to life and the ptarmigan begins to walk around, pecking at berries on a short bush.

125	MZ. MOLE	125
	A ptarmigan is a bird, an amazing bird with amazing feet. In the summer, the ptarmigan's feet have no feathers. But watch this!	

With a quick flap of its wings, the ptarmigan hops up on a rock. The pages flip quickly creating a flipbook style of animation. Paper cutout snowflakes begin to fall. As the bird stands, its brown feathers gradually become white and fluffy.

126	MZ. MOLE (V.O.)	126
	When it starts to snow, the ptarmigan changes! What do you see?	
127	ELINOR (V.O.)	127
	It turned white!	

128 MZ. MOLE (V.O.) 128
That's right! The ptarmigan grows
white feathers all over its body.
But my favorite part is the feet!
What changes do you notice?

CLOSE ON the ptarmigan's feet. In a flipbook style, the feet
grow white feathers all over, and its toenails grow a bit
longer.

129 OLIVE (V.O.) 129
Wow! It's feet are bigger now.

130 MZ. MOLE (V.O.) 130
Yes! The ptarmigan grows fluffy
feathers on its feet, and its
toenails grow longer.

131 GAEL (V.O.) 131
Why does it do that?

Cutting to a wider view, the scenery is now white with snow.
The ptarmigan hops down from the rock onto the snow and
begins walking. The white bird now blends in with the snowy
backdrop, and it leaves footprints in the snow as it walks.

132 MZ. MOLE (V.O.) 132
Having bigger feet makes it easier
to walk on top of the snow. It's
like a built-in pair of snowshoes!

133 ELINOR (V.O.) 133
Just like Gael. He has huge paws.

3. INT. CLASSROOM -- WINTER DAY

Mz. Mole closes the storybook, picks up a bag of birdseed and
heads outside.

134 MZ. MOLE 134
Now, let's see how my ptarmigan
feet work!

Out the window, the kids watch Mz. Mole walk on the snow and
fill the bird feeder with seed. <SFX: KID WALLA Wow! Cool!
Look at that!> End

END.

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