

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP 137 Thinking About Blinking

By: Paul Moncrieffe

Elinor's Question: Why do we blink?

Logline: After Ari wins a staring contest, he and his friends learn everything there is to know about blinking.

Curriculum Goals:

LS2. Understand that animals have different body parts that are used in different ways to meet their needs, and that plants have different parts that help them survive and grow:

- a. Identify body parts of animals and their function
- b. Identify the basic parts of plants and their function
- c. Compare how the external body parts of animals and plants are the same and/or different
- d. Explore how different external features of an animal help it survive in its environment (Elinor and her friends explore eyelids and how blinking protects the eyes).

SEP6. Constructing explanations: Use background knowledge, experiences, and data to construct reasonable explanations and theories of natural phenomena. (Elinor and her friends construct an explanation of the question, ("Why do we blink?"))

Main Characters: Elinor, Olive, Ari, Mz. Mole

Secondary Characters: Koa

Non-Speaking Character: Fish, Goat Twins, Alejandro

Backgrounds - School playground, forest (stream)

Props - Paper Megaphone, Towel

OUTLINE: May 28th , 2019
FIRST DRAFT: June 27th , 2019

1. EXT. OUTSIDE SCHOOL -- MORNING

ELINOR skips to school, <HUMMING> merrily. The sun is bright and the birds are <SINGING>. She greets everything she passes.

1 ELINOR 1
Hello, bluebird! Hello, sunflower.
Hello, other Elinor.

She walks past a stream, waving to her reflection.

She arrives at the FRONT DOOR, peaks in. There's nobody inside!

2 ELINOR (CONT'D) 2
 Hmm, where is everybody?

She starts to look about, seeing further by balancing on her tippy-toes like a real rabbit standing up.

OLIVE jumps into frame.

3 OLIVE 3
Hi, Elinor!

Startled, Elinor falls down <OOF!> followed by a <GIGGLE>.

4 OLIVE (CONT'D) 4
Come quick, come quick, you've got
to see this.

Olive grabs her hand, she hefts Elinor to her feet and they skip away.

All of Elinor's classmates are stood around the JUNGLE GYM, looking up, watching something and <CHEERING> the spectacle on.

5 OLIVE (CONT'D) 5
Ari's in a stare-off!

Elinor is curious, she's never seen a stare-off before! Excited, she nudges her way into the crowd.

Olive reaches into her bag and pulls out a piece of paper, fashioning it into a megaphone. She runs up the slide, excited, but slips halfway and slides back to the bottom <OOF!>. She tries again, struggling on all fours but ends up where she started.

She <GIGGLES> as she stands, announcing into her megaphone--

6 OLIVE (CONT'D) 6
Come one, come all! Welcome,
animals, to today's stare-off!

The crowd <CHEERS!>. Elinor is getting swept up in the enthusiasm.

7 OLIVE (CONT'D) 7
A stare-off is when two starers
stare into each other's eyes until
one of them blinks - like THIS!

Olive blinks deliberately to demonstrate.

Elinor is getting even more curious, she's observing this very differently from her classmates.

8 OLIVE (CONT'D) 8
Introducing your reigning
champion... Koa!

KOA enters the ring (on top of Jungle-Gym), he's very nonchalant, hands in his pockets.

9 KOA 9
Yo...

10 OLIVE 10
And his challenger, the bat with
all that... Ari!

ARI enters, walking with his legs astride like a cowboy. Things are about to get INTENSE.

WESTERN SHOWDOWN MUSIC, we focus first on Ari's unblinking eyes, then Koa's little penny slits. A rubber ball bounces past like tumbleweed. It's a good day for a stare-off!

11 ARI 11
I'll win this thing in the blink of
an eye.

The crowd <LAUGHS>. Ari's eyes narrow. Koa opens his little penny slits to REVEAL two tiny eyeballs.

12 OLIVE 12
Begin!

She <TRUMPETS!> with her trunk. The crowd <ROARS>.

Close up shots of Ari and Koa's eyes. Each time we get closer and closer. Intensity increasing with every cut. Soon they're both struggling. There are tears. We hold onto Koa, he's REALLY struggling.

Ari notices (all this still on their eyes, only) Koa is holding his eyes open. It's genuinely intense, <SFX: heart pounding!> <MFX: Music rising!> Palms sweating! Throat lumping! We hold on Koa as we feel his whole world is about to break! We hold...

And...

```
<PLINK>! Koa's little eyes blink with the sound of a
xylophone.
```

Ari has won, the crowd <CHEERS!>. They all run in and help Ari down, giving him hugs.

Ari give Koa a pat on the back.

13	ARI	13
	Good game, Koa, good game.	

He flutters up in the air, just full of energy.

14 ARI (CONT'D) 14
Anyone else wanna play? Huh?
Anyone?

2. MONTAGE. I/C AROUND SCHOOL

- Ari goes eye to eye with ALEJANDRO the possum. Alejandro BLINKS and Ari <CHEERS!>. PAN OUT AND AROUND to REVEAL both are hanging upsidedown from a tree while everyone watches.

- Ari VS the GOAT TWINS. He zips back and forth, out-staring both of them.

- Ari is intensely staring at... someone. REVEAL he's challenging Mz. Mole through the school window, she blinks and continues to scrub the window with a towel.

3. EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - CONTINUOUS

Ari is being hoisted up on his friends' shoulders like Rudy (from the movie Rudy).

Elinor and Olive are watching as Ari <CHEERS> and <HOLLERS> in B/G.

ELINOR

Ari's so good at not blinking.

16 OLIVE 16
Yeah. He's the not-blinking king.
But I wonder why the others all
blinked?

17 ELINOR 17
I've never thought about it before,
but why do we blink?

She thinks about it for a beat and blinks.

18 ELINOR (CONT'D) 18
Hmm, that is sooooo interesting!

19 OLIVE 19
Your eyes close when you sleep,
maybe blinking is your eyes trying
to go to bed?

20 ELINOR 20
Maybe it's our eyes clapping
because they like what they see?

They blink and <GIGGLE>.

21 ELINOR (CONT'D) 21
We need more observations. Let me
watch you and see if you blink.

They both stare at each other. They both blink, but neither
notices because they were both blinking.

Beat. They blink again. Unnoticed.

Beat. Olive blinks.

22 ELINOR (CONT'D) 22
You just did it!

23 OLIVE 23
I did?

Elinor blinks.

24 OLIVE (CONT'D) 24
You just did it too!

25 ELINOR 25
Really? But I wasn't even thinking
about blinking.

26 OLIVE 26
I guess we blink without even
noticing.
(MORE)

OLIVE (CONT'D)

Blinking must be something our body
does all by itself!

27

ELINOR

27

Wow! I wonder happens when you try
not to blink?

Elinor tries to but soon finds her eyelids getting very
heavy. She struggles, eventually giving in with an exhausted
sigh.

28

ELINOR (CONT'D)

28

Wow, it's *really* hard not to blink!
Ari really is the not-blinking
king.

29

OLIVE

29

So blinking is something our bodies
have to do. I had no idea! But we
still don't know *why* we do it.

30

ELINOR

30

It's a mystery.

Ari flaps in, still on top of the world.

31

ARI

31

This is the best day ever, it's
even better than my birthday or
pizza Fridays! I'll never be
defeated, I can just see it now.

THOUGHT BUBBLE: Ari is in a stadium, the faceless crowd is
<CHEERING HIS NAME>, waving signs with an eye symbol. Camera
flashes, he's a champion.

32

OLIVE (V.O.)

32

It's a blinking mystery!

This pulls Ari out of his daydream, his thought bubble
literally bursts.

33

ARI

33

Hey, you burst my bubble!

34

ELINOR

34

We're learning everything we can
about blinking, Ari. Maybe it can
help you become even better at not
blinking.

35 OLIVE 35
So far we learned that you blink
without realizing and that it's
really hard not to blink.

36 ARI 36
Cool, this is awesome. If I know
more about blinking I can win even
more staring contests!

Ari flaps off, looking very excited. Elinor and Olive shrug,
then follow him.

4. EXT. STREAM BEHIND THE SCHOOL - DAY

Elinor, Ari and Olive walking along beside the water.

37 ARI 37
Eye am the best. Get it? Eye...

He points to his eye. Olive and Elinor <GIGGLE>.

38 OLIVE 38
And I think you have a new fan,
Ari.

They look into the stream. A FISH is floating there,
watching them.

39 ELINOR 39
A fish! Oooh he's so cute!

It's not cute at all. It burps up an air bubble.

40 ARI 40
Well bubble back to you too Fishy-
fish, <SIGH> you shoulda seen me
beat everyone today.

They keep walking, the Fish is following Ari.

41 OLIVER 41
Hey, Ari, I think it likes you.

Ari tests this theory. He takes a couple steps back, the
Fish follows. Then a couple steps forward, the fish follows
again.

42 ARI 42
Hmm... Can you follow this!?!

Ari quickly runs back and forth, the Fish follows. Ari does
a spin, the Fish does a spin!

Finally, Ari flaps up in the air momentarily before settling to the ground. The Fish flaps out of the water and <SPLASHES> back down. The kids <LAUGH>. Elinor notices something.

43 ELINOR 43
Hey, Fishy-fish, you haven't
blinked once since we met you.

The Fish just stares stoically.

44 ARI 44

You're right! Fishy-fish, you're
the *perfect* challenger!

45 OLIVE 45
I don't know, it's *really* good at
not blinking.

46 ARI 46
Pfft. I could beat it with my eyes
closed!

47 OLIVE 47
But your eyes need to be open.

48 ARI 48

(BEAT)

... oh yeah. That's fine, I'll
still win. This contest is gonna
be so tense you won't be able to
close your eyes!

49 OLIVE 49
You're not allowed to close your
eyes.

50	ARI	50
	(BEAT)	
	... oh yeah. Never mind, let the	
	contest begin!	

Ari stares the impassive Fish down.

On Ari. He's curious. How good *is* this guy?

On the Fish. Nothing.

On Ari. It's getting harder. Should he start to worry?

On the Fish. Nothing.

On Ari. He's struggling. Tears coming.

On the Fish. Cool as a cucumber.

On Ari. This is the fight of his life!

Aaaand...

ARI BLINKS. His first defeat. The Fish still staring, it releases some listless bubbles from its gills.

ARI (CONT'D) 51
That's impossible!

52 ELINOR 52
 Wow, that Fish doesn't blink at
 all.

[illegible]

Ari leans over and intensely stares at the bored Fish.

Elinor and Olive notice Mz. Mole, she's carrying a towel.

54 ELINOR 54
Oh, hi Mz. Mole.

55 MZ. MOLE 55
Hi, Elinor. Hi, Olive.

She see's Ari in an intense stare-off with the Fish.

56 MZ. MOLE (CONT'D) 56
Hi Ari. Hi, umm, staring Fish.

She picks a nearby branch and drapes her towel over, it's directly in the sun.

57 MZ. MOLE (CONT'D) 57
Ah yes, this looks like a nice
spot.

58 OLIVE 58
Whatcha doing, Mz. Mole?

59 MZ. MOLE 59

I'm hanging my wet towel on this
branch. You see, kids, if you
leave things out in the open it's a
great way to dry them out.

She feels her towel.

60 MZ. MOLE (CONT'D) 60
Ah yes, it's already working.

Elinor gives the towel a feel as well.

61 ELINOR 61
Hmmm. That's so interesting. It's
starting to dry.

62 MZ. MOLE 62
Yes, indeed. What are you kids up
to?

On Ari and the Fish. Ari's eyes look like they're about to burst, he's being overdramatic and looks silly. Olive and Elinor <GIGGLE>.

OLIVE

We're just thinking about blinking.

64 ELINOR 64
Because Ari's in a stare off with
this fish.

Back on Ari struggling with the contest. He finally blinks. He's defeated. He falls to his knees in dramatic fashion.

65 ARI 65
 (breathing heavily)
I can't keep my eyes open! I HAVE
to blink! You win, Fishy-fish.
You're...the champion.

He walks over to his friends, wings dragging on the ground.

66 ARI (CONT'D) 66
I tried really hard to keep from
blinking, but my eyes started to
water and then they felt scratchy
like they were dry or something and
then - I blinked!

He gives them a rub. Elinor ponders on that.

67 ELINOR 67

Hmmm

She feels Mz. Mole's towel again. It's almost completely dry now. Suddenly, a light bulb goes off, it hits her (a realisation, not the light bulb... that would be awful).

68 ELINOR (CONT'D) 68
 Maybe that's it!

ARI

69 What, that I need a towel to win? 69

70 ELINOR 70
 <GIGGLE> No, maybe when we keep our
 eyes open they dry out, just like
 Mz. Mole's towel drying in the sun.

71 OLIVE 71
 And every time we blink it makes
 them wet again.

72 ARI 72
 I think you're right!

He gives his eyes a nice long blink.

73 ARI (CONT'D) 73
 When I blink it does make my eyes
 feel wetter and better.

SCIENCE CLOSE UP: In on Ari's eyes, when his eyelids blink it
 adds moisture to his eyeballs.

74 ELINOR 74
 Then that's gotta be it! The
 longer we don't blink the more dry
 our eyes get.

75 OLIVE 75
 And maybe that's why the fish
 doesn't have to blink.

They look over at the Fish who still has the same blank
 expression, bubbles emerge from his mouth.

76 ELINOR 76
 Because his eyes are always wet in
 the water, they can't get dry.

Mz. Mole jumps in startling the kids with her excitement.

77 MZ. MOLE 77
 Oh my little scientists have done
 it again! Great observations,
 kids. You are correct. We blink
 to keep our eyes from going dry,
 every time we do it, it adds water
 to them.

The kids react, <EXCITEMENT>.

78 MZ. MOLE (CONT'D) 78
 The fish's eyes are always wet like
 you said.
 (MORE)

MZ. MOLE (CONT'D)

In fact most fish, like this one here, don't even have eyelids because they don't need them.

79 ELINOR/OLIVE 79
Cool!

80 ARI 80
I knew something was fishy about that fish! No wonder he won, he has no eyelids.

81 MZ. MOLE 81
Our bodies do a lot of things without you having to think about it, like breathing or blinking. It's just your bodies way of making sure it stays safe and healthy.

82 ARI 82
So, our bodies are the real champions!

83 ELINOR 83
We did it! We solved the mystery.

84 OLIVE 84
The blinking mystery.

She flutters her eyelids in celebratory fashion. And like something out of a Disney movie (though in a way that could never be interpreted as copyright infringement) our characters break into a song...

5. SONG MONTAGE. I/C DIFFERENT LOCATIONS

- The playground. Ari is in another stare off, this time against Elinor

85 ARI/ELINOR/OLIVE 85
ARI: Did you know you're always blinking?

Elinor blinks!

Elinor: You do it without thinking.

Olive appears between them.

OLIVE: Take a minute, let that sink in

(MORE)

ARI/ELINOR/OLIVE (CONT'D)

*ELINOR: It's just sooooo
interesting!*

88 - Ari in his bedroom, hanging upside down.

88

ARI: Blinking in your bedroom

He blinks (all blinks accompanied by a note that matches the song).

- Elinor and co in class, listening to Mz. Mole.

ELINOR: Blinking during class.

She blinks.

- Elinor running through flowers.

*ELINOR: Blinking when it's
playtime.*

- Grass, Olive rolls around.

*OLIVE: Or when you're rolling in
the grass.*

- Ari's bathroom, Ari's in the bath.

*ARI: It's easier to see when your
eyes are nice and wet, your body
does it by itself just so you don't
forget!*

Now Elinor pops up in the bathtub.

*ELINOR: You don't want them to get
dry!*

Olive emerges, the tub is barely big enough for all of them!

*OLIVE: Blinking is bath time for
your eyes!*

- Stream, the gang singing together.

*ELINOR: So you see, you're always
blinking.*

ARI: You do it without thinking.

*OLIVE: Take a minute, let that sink
in!*

*ELINOR: Wow, that is soooo
interesting!*

HOLD ON the Fish as it stares down Ari's picture.

FADE OUT.