

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP 137 Thinking About Blinking

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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, Sponge

OUTLINE: May 28th , 2019

FIRST DRAFT: June 27th , 2019

SECOND DRAFT: July 22nd, 2019

POLISH: August 26th, 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 school.

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2                               ELINOR (CONT'D)                               2
    Hello school.

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

3 ELINOR (CONT'D) 3
 Hmm, where is everybody?

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

OLIVE jumps into frame.

4 OLIVE 4
Hi, Elinor!

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

5 OLIVE (CONT'D) 5
Oops. Sorry. But you've gotta
come quick, you should see this!

Olive reaches out with her trunk and hefts Elinor to her feet. They skip away.

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

6 OLIVE (CONT'D) 6
Ari's in a staring contest!

Elinor is curious, she's never seen a staring contest before! Excited, she nudges her way into the crowd with Olive.

Near the center of the action, Camilla, holding a piece of paper fashioned into a megaphone, announces:

7 CAMILLA 7 *

Come one, come all! Welcome,
everyone, to today's staring
contest!

The crowd <CHEERS!>. Elinor is getting swept up in the
enthusiasm. Olive turns to Elinor to explain. *

8 OLIVE 8

A staring contest is when two
players stare into each other's
eyes until one of them blinks -
like this!

Olive blinks deliberately to demonstrate.

9 OLIVE (CONT'D) 9

The last one to blink wins the
contest!

While everyone is excited, something seems to be catching
Elinor's curiosity.

10 CAMILLA 10 *

Introducing your current champion,
he has brown hair and has the
longest stare... Koa!

KOA walks to the center of the ring (on top of Jungle-Gym),
he's very nonchalant, hands in his pockets. <GREETINGS WALLA:
YO>.

11 CAMILLA (CONT'D) 11 *

Playing with him today, 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!

12 ARI 12

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.

13 CAMILLA 13 *

And... go!

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 toy xylophone.

Ari has won, the crowd <CHEERS!>. Ari gives Koa a pat on the back as the crowd runs up to congratulate him. They all slide down the slide together celebrating.

14 ARI 14
Good game, Koa, good game.

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

15 ARI (CONT'D) 15
 Anyone else wanna play?

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 sponge.

3. EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - CONTINUOUS

Ari is being hoisted up on his friends' shoulders like Rudy.

16 ARI 16

"Eye" am the best! Get it?
(pointing to his eye) Eye?

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

17 ELINOR 17
Ari's so good at not blinking.

18 OLIVE 18
Yeah. He's the not-blinking king.

19 ELINOR 19
But I wonder... Why do we have to blink?

20 OLIVE 20
Huh? (repeating) Why do we have to blink? Hmm... (considering it) I've never thought about it before. *

They think about it for a beat, both blinking a couple of times, slowly and deliberately.

21 ELINOR 21
That is sooooo interesting!

22 OLIVE 22
My eyes close when I sleep, maybe blinking is how our eyes try to go to bed? *

23 ELINOR 23
But none of the kids in the contest seemed sleepy. (BEAT) Maybe it's our eyes clapping because they like what they see?

They <GIGGLE>.

24 OLIVE 24
No, that can't be it, I don't hear any clapping when I blink.

Olive blinks a few times. *

25 ELINOR 25
You're right. Hmmm... We need more observations. C'mon! *

The two of them scurry off.

4. EXT. STREAM BEHIND THE SCHOOL - DAY

Elinor and Olive find a quieter spot to do some serious investigating.

26 ELINOR 26
Okay, I'll 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.

27 ELINOR (CONT'D) 27
You just did it.

28 I did? OLIVE 28

Elinor blinks.

29 OLIVE (CONT'D) 29
You just did it too.

30 ELINOR 30
Really? But I wasn't even thinking
about blinking.

31 OLIVE 31
I guess we blink without even
noticing. Maybe it's something our
body does all by itself.

32	ELINOR	32	
	Whoa... Okay, let's see what		*
	happens when we try <i>not</i> to blink.		*

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

33 ELINOR (CONT'D) 33
Wow, it's *really* hard not to blink.
My eyes start to water and feel
tired.

34 OLIVE 34
Yeah, it must be something our
bodies *have* to do.

35 ELINOR 35
But why? It's a mystery.

36 OLIVE 36
It's a blinking mystery!

Ari flaps in, still on top of the world.

37	ARI	37
	Woo hoo! This is the best day	
	ever.	*
	(MORE)	

ARI (CONT'D)

It's even better than pizza
Fridays! I'm the best starrer in
the world!

*

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

*

38 ELINOR, OLIVE, MZ. MOLE 38
(chanting)
Ari, Ari, Ari!

39 OLIVE (O.S.) 39
Ari?

Olive's interruption pulls Ari out of his daydream, his
thought bubble bursts.

*

40 ARI 40
Watcha doing?

41 ELINOR 41
<GIGGLES> We're trying to learn
everything we can about blinking.

42 OLIVE 42
So far we've learned that you blink
without thinking and that it's
really hard not to blink.

43 ARI 43
Cool, this is an awesome idea. If
I know more about blinking I can
win even *more* staring contests.
Can I join you?

44 ELINOR 44
Of course.

Ari flaps up in the air, looking very excited. Elinor and
Olive shrug, then follow him.

They walk beside the stream, Ari still overly excited. Olive
notices something.

*

45 OLIVE 45
Look Ari, I think you have a new
fan.

They look into the stream. A fish is floating there,
watching Ari.

*

46 ELINOR 46
A fish! Oooh he's so cute!

*

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

47 ARI 47

Well bubble back to you too Fishy-
fish, <SIGH> you should'a seen me
today. I was so good at staring!

They keep walking, the Fish seems to be following Ari.

48 OLIVER 48
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.

49 ARI 49
 Hmm... Can you follow this!?!

Ari quickly runs back and forth, the Fish follows. Ari does a spin, the Fish does a spin! The kids <LAUGH>. Elinor notices something.

50 ELINOR 50
Hey, Fishy-fish, you haven't
blinked once since we met you.

The Fish just stares stoically.

51 ARI 51

You're right! Fishy-fish, you're
the *perfect* player to have a
staring contest with.

52 OLIVE 52
I don't know, Ari. That fish seems
really good at not blinking. *

53 ARI 53
Pfft. I could beat it with my eyes
closed!

54 OLIVE 54
But your eyes need to be open.

55 ARI 55

(BEAT)

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

*

56 OLIVE 56
You're not supposed to close your eyes.

57 ARI 57
(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.

58 ARI (CONT'D) 58
That's impossible!

59 ELINOR 59
Wow, that Fish doesn't blink at all.

60 ARI 60
All right, rematch! Let's do this.

Ari leans over and intensely stares at the bored Fish.

Elinor and Olive notice Mz. Mole, she's holding a bucket with some sponges inside.

61 ELINOR 61
Oh, hi Mz. Mole.

62 MZ. MOLE 62
Hi, Elinor. Hi, Olive.

She sees Ari in an intense stare-off with the Fish.

63 MZ. MOLE (CONT'D) 63
 Hi Ari. Hi, umm, staring Fish.

Mz. Mole kneels at the river, dunking a sponge into it.

64 MZ. MOLE (CONT'D) 64
 That's better.

65 OLIVE 65
 Whatcha doing, Mz. Mole?

66 MZ. MOLE 66
 I was cleaning the school windows
 but my sponges got dry. And I can't
 clean with dry sponges! *

Mz. Mole pulls the sponge out of the river. Elinor hops over
 with curiosity. *

67 ELINOR 67
 Hmmm. How did they get dry, Mz.
 Mole? *

68 MZ. MOLE 68
 Oh, I left them out too long. Wet
 things get dry if you leave them
 out in the open. 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
 <GIGGLE>. *

69 OLIVE 69
 We're just thinking about blinking.
 Ari's in a staring contest with
 this fish. *

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

70 ARI 70
 (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.

71 ARI (CONT'D) 71
 I tried really hard to keep from
 blinking, but then my eyes felt
 scratchy like they were dry or
 something and then - I blinked!

He gives them a rub. Elinor ponders on that.

72	ELINOR	72	*
	Hmmm... Dry...		

Mz. Mole is dunking more sponges. Elinor feels one of them, dry, and another that's wet. Suddenly, a light bulb goes off.

73	ELINOR (CONT'D)	73	*
	Maybe that's it.		

74	ARI	74	
	You think I need a sponge to win?		

75	ELINOR	75	*
	<GIGGLE> No, maybe our eyes dry out		*
	because we leave them open. Just		*
	like Mz. Mole's sponges got dry		*
	when she left them out.		

Olive and Ari reflect on this. Ari holds his eyes open with his fingers. *

76	ELINOR (CONT'D)	76	*
	But when we close our eyes, we keep		*
	them wet.		*

Ari gives his eyes a nice long blink. *

77	ARI	77	*
	I think you're right. When I close		*
	my eyes or blink, it makes them		
	feel wetter and better.		

78	OLIVE	78	
	(blinking) Yeah, every time I		
	blink, it makes my eyes wet again.		

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

79	ELINOR	79	*
	That's why we blink! To keep our		*
	eyes wet.		

80	ARI	80	*
	And the longer we don't blink, the		*
	more dry our eyes get.		

81	OLIVE	81	
	I wonder if 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.

82 ELINOR 82
His eyes are always in the water so
they can't get dry. They're always
wet!

Mz. Mole, who's been hanging back and listening, jumps in. *

83	MZ. MOLE	83
	Oh my little scientists have done it again! Great observations, kids. We blink to keep our eyes from getting too dry.	*

The kids react, <EXCITEMENT>.

84 MZ. MOLE (CONT'D) 84
That's why fish don't need to
blink, they're always in the water.
In fact, most fish, like this one *
here, don't even have eyelids.
They don't need them! *

85 ELINOR/OLIVE 85
Whoa/Cool!

86 ARI 86
 (accusing)
I knew something was fishy about
that fish!
 (to the fish)
No wonder you won, you don't even
have eyelids.

87 MZ. MOLE 87

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

*

88 ARI 88

So, our bodies are the real
champions!

89 ELINOR 89
We did it! We solved the mystery.

90 OLIVE 90
The blinking-mystery.

She flutters her eyelids in celebratory fashion. 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.

91	ARI/ELINOR/OLIVE	91
	<i>ARI: Did you know you're always blinking?</i>	

Elinor blinks!

Elinor: You do it without thinking.

Olive appears between them.

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

*ELINOR: It's just soooooo
interesting!*

88	- Ari in his bedroom, hanging upside down.	88
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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 is alone, in the bath.

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

The Fish leaps out of the bath water and splashes down again, splashing Ari.

ARI: You don't want them to get dry! 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!

The song ends.

6. EXT. STREAM - CONTINUOUS

92	ARI	92
	Well, I guess you can't keep your eyes open forever unless you're a fish.	

93	MZ. MOLE	93
	That's right, you don't want your eyes to get all dry like my sponges!	

94	OLIVE	94
	Does this mean you're going to quit staring contests, Ari?	

95	ARI	95
	Not yet, I still have to beat Fishy-fish.	

96	ELINOR	96
	How are you going to do that?	

He looks down at the Fish.

97	ARI	97
	I have an idea. Olive, may I have some paper and a crayon?	

She obliges from her satchel. Ari starts to draw something.

98	ARI (CONT'D)	98
	Ta-daa!	

He holds up a crude/cute drawing of himself and hangs it on a branch. The Fish stares at it, and Ari eagerly stares back and forth between the sign and the fish.

99

ELINOR

99

I gotta feeling he's gonna be there
for a loooong time.

Olive and Mz. Mole <GIGGLE> as we pull up into the sky and...

FADE OUT.