

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP 159 "Ears to You"
By: Tom Berger

Logline: One day at the lake, Elinor and her friends notice that certain animals don't appear to have ears and they wonder how they can hear without them.

Curriculum Goals:

LS2: Understand that animals have different body parts that are used in different ways to meet their needs. (The kids observe and experiment to discover that different animals have unique hearing depending on their needs and environment)

SEP1: Ask more complex questions about observable phenomena (Elinor wonders how various animals can hear when they don't appear to have ears)

MAIN CHARACTERS: Elinor, Olive, Ari, Mz. Mole

SECONDARY CHARACTERS: Deputy Mouse

PROPS: Towels, misc. beach props (water bottles, hats, beach toys, umbrellas, etc.), Olive's satchel and Nature Book, swim suits, green frog, brown frog x2.

FIRST DRAFT: January 9, 2020
SECOND DRAFT: February 4, 2020

1. EXT. LAKE - SHORE, BY THE TOWELS - DAY

It's a gorgeous summer day, and MZ. MOLE and the STUDENTS are enjoying an afternoon at the LAKE. Some KIDS swim (with life vests), make SAND CASTLES, play, or read on TOWELS. DEPUTY MOUSE sits in a LIFEGUARD TOWER watching over the kids.

1	DEPUTY MOUSE (TO VARIOUS KIDS)	1	*
	You there, slow down! And you,		*
	speed up! Are you wearing enough		*
	sunscreen? Wear a life jacket if		*
	you're going in the lake!		*

MZ. MOLE walks precariously, balancing a TALL STACK OF *
SUPPLIES. Her arms are so full with TOWELS, BAGS, UMBRELLAS, *
PICNIC BASKETS, BEACH TOYS, ETC, that she can barely see over *
the top. She bumps into ELINOR (wearing a SWIMSUIT), and a *
SUN HAT from her pile falls onto Elinor's head. *

2	ELINOR	2	*
	Ha! A perfect fit! (she sees Mz.		*
	Mole struggling) Your arms sure are		*
	full, Mz. Mole. Can I help?		*

3 MZ. MOLE 3 *

Is that you Elinor? Can you tell me *

where I can put all this stuff down? *

Elinor scans the beach and sees a suitable spot nearby. *

4	ELINOR	4	*
	Ah! The perfect spot. Just two		*
	steps to your left...		*

Mz. Mole takes two steps left. *

5 ELINOR (CONT'D) 5 *

And three steps forward. That's it! *

Mz. Mole takes three steps forward and drops the supplies
with a comedic <FWUMP>. Elinor returns Mz. Mole's sun hat,
which she puts on.

6	MZ. MOLE	6	*
	Phew. Thanks Elinor. I didn't think		*
	we'd need <i>quite</i> so many supplies		*
	for a class field trip to the Lake.		*

Elinor <GIGGLES> and shakes out a TOWEL for Mz. Mole to sit
on. ARI and OLIVE approach (also wearing SWIMSUITS).

7	OLIVE (TO ARI)	7	*
	Of course you can.		*

8	ARI (TO OLIVE)	8	*
	No way. You can't do it.		*
	They stand off, face-to-face (good-naturedly).		*
9	ARI / OLIVE	9	*
	Can! Can! Can! / Can't! Can't!		*
	Can't!		*
10	ELINOR	10	*
	(Giggling) What are you two talking about?		*
			*
11	OLIVE	11	*
	Ari thinks you can't hear		*
	underwater, but I think you can.		*
	Ari sticks his fingers in his ears.		*
12	ARI	12	*
	Being underwater is like plugging		*
	your ears... and you can't hear		*
	with your ears plugged.		*
13	MZ. MOLE	13	*
	Well now, this <i>sounds</i> like an		*
	interesting question.		*
14	ARI (FINGERS STILL IN EARS)	14	*
	What's that?! I can't hear you.		*
	Elinor <GIGGLES> and takes Ari's fingers out of his ears.		*
15	ELINOR	15	*
	How about now?		*
16	ARI	16	*
	Oh, much better. See? You can't		*
	hear with plugged ears.		*
17	OLIVE	17	*
	But being underwater isn't the same		*
	as having fingers in your ears.		*
18	ELINOR	18	*
	No sense in wondering when we can		*
	experiment and find out. Let's go!		*
	The kids grab LIFE JACKETS and run		*
	towards the lake. Mz. Mole		*
	collapses happily on her towel.		*

2. EXT. LAKE - SHALLOW WATER - A MOMENT LATER.

The gang (now wearing LIFE JACKETS) runs into the lake.

19	ELINOR	19	*
	Ok, who wants to go first?		*

Ari shoots up an eager arm and waves it around as if trying
to get a teacher's attention.

20	ARI	20	*
	Oh oh! I'll do it, whatever it is.		*

Elinor pretends not to see him. *

21	ELINOR	21	*
	Anyone? Olive?		*

Ari jumps up and down and waves his arm more obviously. *

22	ARI	22	*
	Ah! Me! Pick me! I'm right here!		*

Olive stifles a <GIGGLE>. Elinor looks around for a half beat *
before she finally "sees" Ari. *

23	ELINOR (ACTING SURPRISED)	23	*
	Oh, Ari, I didn't notice you there.		*
	Ready to see if you can hear		*
	underwater?		*

Ari relaxes with a <HUGH RELIEVED SIGH>. *

24	ARI	24	*
	Phew! Yes please!		*

The friends all share a <LAUGH>. *

25	ELINOR (GIGGLING)	25	*
	Ok, take a deep breath and dunk		*
	under the water. We'll make noise		*
	and you tell us if you can hear it.		*

Ari nods and takes a deep breath. He dunks his head deep
enough in the lake to cover his face and ears.

26	ELINOR (TO OLIVE) (CONT'D)	26	*
	Ready? Let's call his name on the		*
	count of 1... 2... 3!		*

27	ELINOR / OLIVE	27	*
	ARRRRRIIIIIIIII!		*

UNDERWATER: Ari's eyes go wide as he hears his friends calling to him. He pulls his head out of the lake.

28	ARI	28	*
	(fake earnest)		*
	I could hear you! See? I <i>knew</i> we		*
	could hear underwater.		*

29	OLIVE	29	*
	(Laughing) Ari! I'm the one who		*
	said we could hear underwater, you		*
	said we couldn't. My turn!		*

Olive fills her cheeks and sticks her face underwater. *

UNDERWATER: A curious GREEN FROG swims past Olive and *
<RIBBITS> in surprise. Olive <GIGGLES>, releasing BUBBLES. *

ABOVE: Olive resurfaces, playfully splashing her friends. *

30	OLIVE (CONT'D)	30	*
	I heard a frog croak at me down		*
	there. That's so cool!		*

She turns her head sideways and shakes water from her ear. *

31	OLIVE (CONT'D)	31	*
	But getting water in my ears is so		*
	<i>annoying</i> . Ugh.		*

Ari turns his head sideways and does the same. *

32	ARI	32	*
	That's for sure. (hopping) Get!		*
	Out! Of! My! Ear!		*

Olive and Ari hop around, shaking water from their ears as Elinor watches and <GIGGLES>. Suddenly, A <RIBBIT> from the beach gets the kids attention. They turn to see the green frog hopping along the sand.

33	ELINOR	33	*
	Is that your new underwater friend,		*
	Olive?		*

34	OLIVE	34	*
	It sure is.		*
	(she notices something)		*
	Hey, speaking of ears... That frog		*
	doesn't have any!		*

35	ARI (STILL SHAKING)	35	*
	Not having ears is better than		*
	getting water in them. Ack!		*

He wiggles a pinky around in an ear. Elinor looks after the frog in the distance and squints.

36	ELINOR	36	*
	Are you <i>sure</i> it doesn't have ears?		*
	It's hard to tell from so far away.		*

37	ARI	37	*
	We should get a closer look.		*
	(he has an idea)		*
	Let's play Follow The Frog!		*

<SFX: YEAH< GREAT IDEA WALLA> as the kids run back to the beach.

3. EXT. LAKE - SHORE - CONTINUOUS

The kids (no longer in life jackets) drop off their life jackets and catch up to the frog. Ari crouches down behind it. Olive and Elinor crouch into their own frog poses.

38	ARI	38	*
	Ribbit! Follow The Frog!		*

39	OLIVE	39
	Ribbit! Ribbit!	

Ari hops after the frog, followed by Elinor and Olive. The kids happily bounce along the beach, following the frog under UMBRELLAS, around sand castles, and over BEACH BALLS. The frog speeds up and starts to gain distance on them.

40	ARI	40	
	Hop faster! It's getting away.		*

The kids speed up and quickly overtake the frog. *

41	ELINOR	41	*
	Oops! Now we're hopping too fast!		*

The kids slow down and the frog passes them again. Turning away from the lake, the frog hops over a LOG and bounds into the surrounding GRASS, disappearing in it. After a beat, the kids land in a row on top of the log, one after the other. They scan their surroundings, searching for the frog.

42	OLIVE	42	
	Ribbit! Where'd the frog go?		*

ARI
I dunno. I didn't see where it went.

As the kids scan the beach and the lake, they hear an unexpected <RIBBIT> from somewhere behind them.

44 ARI (CONT'D) 44
Huh? Did one of you just ribbit? *

45 ELINOR 45
It wasn't me. Olive? *

46 OLIVE 46
Wasn't me either. It must have been- *

Olive is interrupted by a <RIBBIT>! The kids' ears perk up. *

47 OLIVE (POINTING) (CONT'D) 47
The frog! It's that way, let's go! *

Following the source of the sound, the kids bound off the log and run towards the edge of the grass surrounding the lake.

48 ARI 48
That ribbit came from around here, *
but I don't see the frog. *

Another <RIBBIT> gets their attention. Elinor perks up her ears, turning them towards the vegetation. *

49 ELINOR 49
It's in the grass somewhere. Follow *
That Frog! Ribbit! *

Elinor drops into a crouch and bounds off into the grass, followed by her friends, all happily <RIBBITING> and hopping. *

4. EXT. TALL GRASS - CLEARING - CONTINUOUS *

The kids hop into the clearing, catching up to the green frog who sits calmly on a SMALL STONE. *

50 ELINOR 50
Aha! There it is! *
 (he looks up at her ears) *
Isn't it cool that we found the *
froggy by *listening* with our ears *
instead of *looking* with our eyes? *

51 OLIVE (NODDING) 51
Even when it was far away, I could *
hear the croaks because my big ears *
are good for far-away hearing. *

Elinor perks up her ears and rotates them left and right. *

52	ELINOR	52	*
	My ears are tall <i>and</i> I can turn them, so I could tell where the sound was coming from.		*
			*
	Ari wiggles his ears quickly and proudly.		*
53	ARI	53	*
	Ok... but can you do <i>this</i> ?		*
	The girls <GIGGLE>. They're interrupted by a <RIBBIT>. The gang leans in for a closer look. CLOSE UP on the frog reveals it, indeed, doesn't seem to have ears!		*
			*
54	ELINOR	54	*
	Wow, that's cool. I really don't see any ears on that frog at all.		*
			*
55	ARI (AMAZED)	55	*
	You're right. It doesn't have big ears like Olive, tall ears like Elinor, or... (demonstrating) ...wiggly ears like me.		*
			*
			*
56	ELINOR	56	*
	That's sooo interesting! (a thought occurs) Hmm... So if it doesn't have ears, does that mean the frog can't hear?		*
			*
	An unexpected <RIBBIT> from behind a nearby LARGE ROCK gets the frog's attention. It bounds off behind the rock. The gang shares a curious look.		*
			*
57	OLIVE	57	*
	I think it heard that ribbit.		*
	The kids approach the rock and peer around it, spotting the green frog sitting on A LOG with TWO BROWN FROGS.		*
			*
58	ARI	58	*
	Check it out - a frog party.		*
59	OLIVE	59	*
	Oooo fun... are we invited?		*
	The kids watch as the green frog <RIBBITS> and the brown frogs <RIBBIT> back in unison. This repeats.		*
			*
60	ELINOR	60	*
	You're right, Olive. They <i>can</i> hear each other!		*
			*

61	ARI	61	
	You try talking to them, Elinor.		*
62	ELINOR (A LITTLE LOUDER, TO FROGS)	62	
	Hello froggies!		
The frogs look up at Elinor, startled to see the kids for the first time. They quickly hop off <RIBBITING>.			
63	ARI	63	
	Yup. They heard you all right!		
64	ELINOR	64	*
	Hmmm... I wonder how can frogs hear		*
	if they don't have ears?		*
65	OLIVE	65	*
	Too bad they bounced off before we		*
	could find out.		*
66	MZ. MOLE (O.S.)	66	*
	Kids! Snack Time!		*
Ari cups a hand around an ear towards the lake.			
67	ARI	67	*
	Snacks?! I heard that!		*
His stomach <GURGLES>.			
68	ARI (PATting HIS BELLY) (CONT'D)	68	*
	I think my tummy did too, c'mon!		*
The girls share a <GIGGLE> and follow Ari back to the beach.			
5. EXT. LAKE - SHORE, BY THE TOWELS - CONTINUOUS			
The kids arrive back at the shore as students get JUICE BOXES			
and FRUIT SLICES from Mz. Mole. The gang approaches and Mz.			
Mole hands them SNACKS (which Ari quickly devours).			
69	MZ. MOLE	69	*
	How did the experiment go? Can you		*
	hear underwater?		*
70	ARI	70	*
	We sure can! (toying with Olive)		*
	Just like I said we could.		*
71	OLIVE (SMILING)	71	*
	Ari! You said we <i>couldn't</i> !		*

Olive and Ari share a <LAUGH>. Mz. Mole notices Elinor is deep in thought.

*
*

72

MZ. MOLE

72

Are you wondering what *else* you can do underwater, Elinor? Maybe jumping jacks?

*
*
*
*

Mz. Mole demonstrates and Elinor <GIGGLES>.

*

73

ELINOR

73

(Giggles) No, I'm wondering how frogs can hear sounds if they don't have ears.

*
*
*
*

74

ARI

74

Yah! They don't have big ears, tall ears or...
(demonstrating)
Wiggly ears!

*
*
*
*
*

Mz. Mole stifles a <GIGGLE> and turns her head.

*

75

MZ. MOLE

75

Have you ever noticed that it doesn't look like *I* have ears like yours either?

The gang looks at her as if for the first time. Her head is smooth and seemingly ear-less! The kids are shocked!

76

ARI

76

Woah, no ears? But *you* can hear us.
(then, unsure)
...right?

77

MZ. MOLE

77

I sure can, Ari.

78

ELINOR

78

Hmmm... but how *can* you hear if you don't have ears?

*

79

MZ. MOLE

79

I didn't say I don't have ears, it only *looks* like I don't. See?

*

Mz. Mole parts the fur on the side of her head as the kids lean in. **SCIENCE CU:** Mz. Mole has small lobe-less ears on the sides of her head surrounded by fur.

80

ELINOR

80

(Gasp!) You *do* have ears!
(squinting)
(MORE)

	ELINOR (CONT'D)		
	They're so small, I can barely see them.		*
81	MZ. MOLE	81	
	I sure do. Most animals that can hear have ears.		* *
82	ELINOR (CONSIDERING)	82	
	How interesting! So if the frogs can hear, that means... (realizing) They <i>must</i> have ears too!		*
Mz. Mole nods and releases the fur around her ear which disappears under it.			
83	MZ. MOLE	83	
	Exactly! You all have ears that are easy to see. Big ones, tall ones, or...		* *
	She looks at Ari who wiggles his ears.		*
84	MZ. MOLE (CONT'D)	84	
	(Giggles)... or wiggly ones. But some animals have ears that are much harder to spot... like mine.		*
85	ELINOR	85	
	Why are your ears hidden by fur anyway?		
86	MZ. MOLE	86	
	Moles, like me, tunnel underground. My ears are small and protected by fur so dirt doesn't get into them.		*
87	ELINOR / OLIVE / ARI	87	
	Cooooooooooooo...		
	Olive considers.		*
88	OLIVE	88	
	If Mz. Mole's ears are made for hearing underground, maybe frogs have ears for hearing underwater?		* *
89	ELINOR	89	
	That's a good idea, Olive. Maybe you're right...		* *
	Suddenly, a <RIBBIT> gets the kids attention. They look around and spot the green frog hopping along the beach.		*

90	ARI	90	
	Let's go find out! Thanks for the		*
	snacks, Mz. Mole.		*
91	MZ. MOLE	91	
	You're welcome... come back to tell		*
	me what you discover.		*
92	ELINOR	92	*
	Let's Follow That Frog!		*
	Olive grabs her NATURE BOOK from her SATCHEL on the beach.		*
	The kids drop into frog poses and hop after the frog.		*
	6. EXT. LAKE - SHORE, LARGE ROCK - CONTINUOUS		*
	Further up the shore, the frog settles on a LARGE ROCK at the		
	edge of the lake. The kids approach quietly. The green frog		
	<RIBBITS> and the brown frogs from earlier suddenly emerge		
	from the lake, jump onto the rock, and <RIBBIT> in reply.		*
93	ARI	93	
	Whoa, check that out! Did the brown		*
	frogs just hear the green frog?		*
94	ELINOR	94	*
	Yeah, I think so.		*
95	OLIVE	95	*
	That means frog ears must work		*
	underwater... just like ours do!		*
	Olive realizes something and sticks a finger in her ear.		*
96	OLIVE (CONT'D)	96	*
	That reminds me... I <i>still</i> have a		*
	little water in <i>my</i> ear... ugh...		*
	Elinor considers something and lands on an idea!		*
97	ELINOR	97	*
	Frogs are going in and out of water		*
	all the time...I wonder how they		*
	keep the water out.		*
	REVEAL: Ari's head is turned as he shakes out more water.		*
98	ARI	98	*
	It'd be <i>really</i> annoying if you had		*
	to do <i>this</i> every time you got wet.		*
99	ELINOR	99	*
	We need more observations!		*

The gang leans in closer to the frog. **SCIENCE CU:** The friends * notice a SMALL CIRCULAR PATCH OF SKIN behind a frog's eye.

100	ELINOR (CONT'D)	100
	Look at that round patch of skin...	*
	(realizing)	*
	Gasp! Maybe the frog's ear is	*
	behind it.	*

101	OLIVE	101	*
	Let's check my Nature Book.		*

Olive pulls out her NATURE BOOK and reads from it. A THOUGHT
BUBBLE grows and SIMPLE ANIMATION shows a FROG hopping in and
out of water, illustrating how the external membrane
(TYMPANUM) protects the inner ear from water getting in.

102	OLIVE (CONT'D)	102	*
	You're right Elinor! That skin is		*
	covering the frog's ear so it		*
	doesn't get wet underwater.		*

As if to illustrate, one of the brown frogs hops from the log *
and disappears into the lake. The green frog <RIBBITS> and
the brown frog resurfaces before <RIBBITING> a reply in
unison with the other brown frog.

103	ARI	103	*
	Now <i>that</i> is cool. I wish <i>my</i> ears		*
	didn't get water in them.		*
	(he bounces again)		*
	Just! One! More! Drop!		*

The last drop drips out his ear. *

104	ELINOR	104	
	(Giggles) C'mon... let's go tell		*
	Mz. Mole what we learned.		*

MUSIC STARTS as they perk up, hold out and wiggle their ears.

SONG:

105	ELINOR / OLIVE / ARI (SINGING)	105	
	OLIVE: Big ears!		*
	ELINOR: Tall ears!		*
	ARI: Cute-and-wiggly bat ears!		*
	ALL: If we counted all the ears,		*
	We'd be counting ears for years!		*

They watch the frogs, who <RIBBIT> along, hopping in and out of the water.

(MORE)

ELINOR / OLIVE / ARI (SINGING)

ELINOR: It seems like they have
none at all,

ARI: But frogs have ears that hear
your call.

OLIVE: You might be surprised to
know,

ALL: They work on water or below.

The green frog hops off the log and bounces back along the
shore. The kids drop into frog poses and hop after it.

OLIVE: Big ears!

ELINOR: Tall ears!

ARI: How-cool-are-these frog ears?

ALL: If we counted all the ears,
We'd be counting ears for years!

7. EXT. LAKE - SHALLOW WATER - CONTINUOUS

The frog speeds away from them, so the gang stops hopping.

ELINOR: Bunny ears are tall and
they,

Turn this way or that-a-way,

OLIVE: I can pull my big ears wide,
But they're hard to hide!

The gang spots Mz. Mole and runs towards her.

OLIVE: Big ears!

ELINOR: Tall ears!

ARI: Covered-by-fur mole ears!

ALL: If we counted all the ears,
We'd be counting ears for years!

8. EXT. LAKE - SHORE, BY THE TOWELS - CONTINUOUS

MUSIC STOPS as the kids land on towels next to Mz. Mole.

106

ELINOR

106

Mz. Mole! We can't wait to tell you
what we learned about frog ears!

107

MZ. MOLE

107

And I can't wait for you to tell
me... I'm all ears!

108

ARI (JOKING)

108

Really? I only have two.

Ari wiggles his ears and everyone share a <LAUGH>. **THE END.**