

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EW 168 A Moth Mystery

By Laura Sams and Robert Sams

Elinor's Question: Why are there so many moths around Mr. Dog's porch?

Logline: The kids go summer caroling around the neighborhood, but when they get to Mr. Dog's porch, there are so many moths flying around that they can't finish singing their summer song.

Curriculum Goals:

ES2: Understand that plants and animals (including humans) can change their environment (Elinor and her friends realize they can turn off Mr. Dog's porch light and the moths won't gather around).

SEP 4: Analyzing and Interpreting Data

c: Record observations to describe patterns and/or relationships in the natural and designed world(s) in order to answer scientific questions and solve problems. (Elinor and her friends identify the pattern of moth behavior, that they cluster around lights, and solve the problem by turning off the porch light).

FIRST DRAFT: March 23, 2020

SECOND DRAFT: April 06, 2020

POLISH DRAFT: April 20, 2020

FINAL DRAFT:

1. EXT. MRS. DROMEDARY'S HOUSE (FRONT DOOR) - LATE AFTERNOON

*

ANGLE ON Elinor's finger pressing a doorbell. <SFX: DING DONG>

A front door swings open to reveal MRS. DROMEDARY, who looks delightfully surprised. ELINOR, OLIVE, ARI and SEÑOR TAPIR stand on the front porch as a choir, each with a giant smile and wearing a sun hat and sunglasses. Señor Tapir strums his guitar with a flourish, pauses, then starts to play his guitar to accompany their summer song.

SUNNY SUMMER SONG

1 ELINOR, OLIVE, ARI, SEÑOR TAPIR 1

SR TAPIR: We're here to sing a
sunny summer song

KIDS: A sunny summer song, A summer
sing-along

SR TAPIR: We're here to sing a
sunny summer song

ALL: To celebrate the summer
sunshine!

ELINOR: We jump really high.

Elinor jumps high.

ARI: We flap and fly.

Ari flutters up in the air for a moment.

OLIVE: We try to touch the sky

Olive raises her trunk and arms up to the sky.

SR TAPIR: And now you know why

Elinor, Olive and Ari spreads their arms wide like shining
suns.

ALL: To celebrate the summer
sunshine!

The choir holds their last note while Mrs. Dromedary <SFX:
CLAPS> in celebration. Señor Tapir and the kids take a bow.

2 ELINOR 2

Happy summer Mrs. Dromedary!

*

Elinor, Olive and Ari wave goodbye, and Mrs. Dromedary waves
goodbye as she closes her door. The gang hops off Mrs.
Dromedary's porch.

*

*

3	SEÑOR TAPIR	3	
	You are great singers, amigos.		*
	Thank you for joining me for this		*
	summer singalong.		*
4	ELINOR	4	
	You're welcome, Señor Tapir. It's		*
	sooo fun to sing for all our		*
	neighbors. I LOVE to sing.		*
5	OLIVE	5	
	Me too.		*
6	ARI	6	
	Me three. I love to sing (he		
	pauses) and dance.		*

Ari does a back flip and then spreads his arms like a shining sun. *

7	SEÑOR TAPIR	7	
	There's no better way to spread		*
	good cheer than to sing a happy		*
	song.		*
8	ELINOR	8	
	Singing makes <i>me</i> happy.		*
9	OLIVE	9	
	Me too. Let's go to Mrs. Beaver's		*
	house and make her happy!		*
10	SEÑOR TAPIR	10	
	Great idea. Follow me, amigos.		*

Señor Tapir, Elinor and Olive hop OS, and Ari follows them while doing a funny dance move (example: the robot). *

CROSSFADE TO:

**2. EXT. PORCH SONG MONTAGE (MRS. BEAVER'S FRONT DOOR, MR. RACCOON'S BAKERY, MZ. MOLE'S FRONT DOOR, THE RANGER STATION) -
- MOMENTS LATER**

Note: This is a quick montage so that we hear the choir singing the summer song once through, while we see a montage of the choir visiting various neighbors. The sky is gradually getting darker as they go from house to house.

ANGLE ON: a front door opening to reveal MRS. BEAVER who suddenly grins widely. A wide shot shows Mrs. Beaver enjoying the carolers' music.

11	ELINOR, OLIVE, ARI, SEÑOR TAPIR	11
	SEÑOR TAPIR: We're here to sing a	
	sunny summer song	
	KIDS: A sunny summer song, A summer	
	sing-along	

ANGLE ON: the bakery's front door opening to reveal MR. RACCOON who grins widely. A wide shot shows the carolers on the sidewalk in front of Mr. Raccoon's bakery as he enjoys the song. A couple Animal Town residents, MR. BUFFALO and MR. ANTELOPE, stand on the sidewalk holding their recently purchased baked goods and smile as they listen.

SEÑOR TAPIR: We're here to sing a
sunny summer song
ALL: To celebrate the summer
sunshine!

ANGLE ON: a front door in the ground, which opens to reveal MZ. MOLE. She pops her head up out of the ground to see Elinor's feet as they jump high and back down. Mz. Mole watches the choir as they sing.

ELINOR: We jump really high.

ARI: We flap and fly.

OLIVE: We try to touch the sky

ANGLE ON: the door of the ranger station swinging open to reveal DEPUTY JACK MOUSE and MS GEE RAFFE (her body and tall neck but her head is OS). Jack Mouse looks grumpy but then (after a beat) gives a very tiny but still noticeable smile.

SEÑOR TAPIR: And now you know why

ALL: To celebrate the summer
sunshine!

END MONTAGE

CROSSFADE TO:

3. EXT. PATH - EVENING

Señor Tapir walks with Elinor, Olive and Ari along a path back to Ari's house. Ari's house is visible in the distance.

12	ELINOR	12
	This summer singalong is the BEST.	*
	Let's KEEP SINGING!	*

13	SEÑOR TAPIR	13
	I'd love to keep singing, (looking	*
	up) but the sky is getting pretty	*
	dark. I think it's about time to go	*
	home.	

The sun is now very low in the sky, almost about to sink below the horizon. We hear a <SFX: HOWL WALLA> from off screen.

14 ELINOR 14
(her ears perk up and turn toward
the sound) What was that? *

15	ARI	15
	Oh, that's Mr. Dog. He lives next	*
	door... Wait, we didn't sing for	*
	Mr. Dog.	

16 OLIVE 16
Mr. Dog *loves* music. We *have* to
sing for him.

17 SEÑOR TAPIR 17
I guess we have time for one more
magnificent song! Let's go sing! *

The kids watch Señor Tapir strum his guitar with a flourish. *

Close on his hand as it strums some dramatic chords. As a transition to the next scene, the circle of the guitar's sound hole dissolves to reveal the circle of the moon.

4. EXT. MR. DOG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

ANGLE ON: The moon shining in the sky. Suddenly Mr. Dog's mouth pops into the frame to <WALLA HOWL>.

MR. DOG sits in a chair on his front porch, howling up at the moon. Elinor leads her friends up to the porch. They are still wearing their sun hats and sunglasses, even though Mr. Dog's front porch is dark. *

Mr. Dog <WALLA HOWLS> and turns to his friends.

18 MR. DOG 18
Hellooooo there. To what do I owe
the pleasure?

- 19 ELINOR 19
We're here to sing you a summer
song, Mr. Dog. *
- 20 MR. DOG 20
Well now, I love music. Let me turn
on my porch light so I can see your
faces. *
- Mr. Dog flicks a light switch, and the porch light turns on
(which is directly over the carolers). The carolers are
standing very close together on the narrow porch. *
- Señor Tapir strums his guitar with a flourish, pauses, then
starts to play his guitar to accompany their summer song. Mr.
Dog sits back to enjoy the music.
- Suddenly a single moth flutters in and lands on Señor Tapir's
right ear.
- 21 ELINOR 21
Señor Tapir? There's a, (pausing
for a better look) what is that? *
It's, oh it's a MOTH. Right by your *
ear. *
- 22 SEÑOR TAPIR 22
(intrigued) Really? (he lifts his
hand toward the wrong ear) Where is
it? Here? *
- 23 ELINOR 23
(giggling) No, by the other ear. *
- 24 SEÑOR TAPIR 24
Here?
- He lifts his right hand toward his right ear, but the moth
flutters up and lands on his hat instead.
- 25 OLIVE 25
Now it's on your hat. (two more
moths flutter in on his hat). Uh,
now there are *three* moths on your
hat. *
- 26 SEÑOR TAPIR 26
Well, a few moths can't stop us
from making magnificent music,
right? Let's sing. *

Señor Tapir strums his guitar with a flourish. He begins to
play the guitar to accompany the song.

SEÑOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 27

We're here to sing a, thp, a, thwpp
thwppp ..."
(several new moths fly right by his
mouth) Sorry, let's try that again.

Señor Tapir strums his guitar and takes a deep breath, but just then a whole bunch of moths fly around his face and he pauses to blow them away from his mouth and nose.

Elinor, Olive and Ari <SFX: LAUGH> as bunches of moths flutter around their faces too. <SFX: MOTH WINGS FLUTTERING>

28 ELINOR 28
Wow, that's a lot of moths!

A group of moths fly near the porch light and around Mr. Dog too.

29 SEÑOR TAPIR 29

Si. But moths can't stop us from
making, (blowing and brushing moths
away from his face) magnificent
(blowing and brushing moths away)

30 OLIVE 30
(laughing) Uhhaaaaack!

Olive uses her trunk to brush away some moths from her face. Elinor turns her head and flaps her ears to try and duck away from the moths flying around her face.

31 ARI 31

Aaaa!

Ari does hilarious karate-looking moves and spin moves to evade the moths around him, to no avail.

We see a wide shot of the porch with dozens and dozens of moths around the choir and Mr. Dog, just fluttering around, but the densest bunch of moths are near the porch light. Everyone is swatting and ducking the moths, and Ari is still doing his karate moves.

SEÑOR TAPIR

Okay, maybe moths *can* stop us from making magnificent music. It sure is hard to concentrate.

Señor Tapir looks at the kids, who are still awkwardly dealing with moths. Mr. Dog is trying to blow moths away from his face too.

33	ELINOR	33	
	Is it okay if we come back later, Mr. Dog?		* *
34	MR. DOG	34	
	(laughing as he blows at the moths and swats moths away from his face) Sure thing. I look forward to it.		* * * *
35	SEÑOR TAPIR	35	
	Hasta luego Mr. Dog.		* *

Elinor, Olive, Ari and Señor Tapir hurry OS.

5. EXT. PATH - NIGHT

The kids and Señor Tapir walk back to Ari's house. They are still wearing their hats but have taken off their sunglasses. The moon is bright enough to light up their path.

36	ELINOR	36	
	Why are there so many moths around Mr. Dog's porch?		
37	ARI	37	
	I dunno. We didn't see any moths at any of the other houses.		*
38	OLIVE	38	
	Sounds like a mystery, dun, dun, dunnnn, a moth mystery.		
39	ELINOR	39	
	Wait, do you know why there were so many moths, Señor Tapir?		* * *
40	SEÑOR TAPIR	40	
	Well, I'm more of a music man than a moth man, Elinor. But I think if anyone can solve a moth mystery, it's you three amigos.		* * * * *
41	ELINOR	41	
	Yeah, WE can figure it out!		*
42	OLIVE	42	
	Okay moth mystery... Here. We. Come!		* * *

43	SEÑOR TAPIR	43	*
	What was different about Mr. Dog's porch compared to the other porches where we sang?		*
			*
			*
44	ARI	44	
	(thinking)		
	I know. It was night time when we were at Mr. Dog's porch but it was daytime at the other places.		
	TILT UP to a THOUGHT BUBBLE. We see the kids and Señor Tapir standing on Mr. Dog's porch (at night), compared to the kids and Señor Tapir standing on Mrs. Beaver's porch (during the day). TILT DOWN		*
			*
45	ELINOR	45	
	Maybe moths only come out at night?		
46	OLIVE	46	
	(excited) Oh yeah. I read about that in my Nature Book. Most moths only come out at night. After the sun goes down.		*
			*
			*
			*
47	ELINOR	47	
	That's SO interesting. (looking around). It's nighttime now. Let's watch and wait to see if moths show up here!		*
			*
			*
	The trio and Señor Tapir all stand still and look around. Ari flutters up into the night sky and looks around from up high. Ari flies OS.		*
	Ari hangs upside down from a tree branch, looking around intently. He leaves the tree branch and flutters OS.		*
	Ari flutters above Señor Tapir's hat to inspect it. No moths there either. Ari flutters down to land next to his friends.		*
			*
48	ARI	48	
	(playfully serious)		*
	I MOTH tell you something very important...		*
			*
49	SEÑOR TAPIR	49	
	What is it, Ari?		*
			*
50	ARI	50	
	I didn't see any moths. No moths anywhere.		*
			*
			*

51	OLIVE I don't see any moths, either.	51	* *
52	ELINOR Huh, if we know moths come out at night, then there must be something that made them show up on Mr. Dog's porch. Señor Tapir, have you ever seen that many moths before?	52	* * * *
53	SEÑOR TAPIR (looking wistfully to the sky) You know, I've sat under the stars and played music on many moonlit nights, but I've never seen that many moths.	53	* * *
54	ARI Maybe it's because Mr. Dog was howling on his porch.	54	
55	ELINOR Right. Maybe moths like howling. (excited) Let's try it!	55	* *
The kids and Señor Tapir all look up at the moon and howl.			
56	ELINOR, OLIVE, ARI, SEÑOR TAPIR "Arwwwwoooooooooooo! Arw Arwwwoooooohhhhooooo!"	56	
57	MR. DOG (O.S.) (after a beat, from far away) Nice howling!	57	
The kids and Señor Tapir stand still and look around intently. No moths show up.			
58	ELINOR No moths. That's not it either. Hmmm.	58	
59	OLIVE It's <i>still</i> a mystery, dun, dun, dunnnn, a moth mystery.	59	* * *
60	SEÑOR TAPIR Maybe we'll find moths at Ari's house.	60	* * *
61	ARI Yeah, let's try my front porch.	61	* *

WIPE TO *

EXT. ARI'S FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

The kids and Señor Tapir hop up to Ari's front door. The porch light is off. They all look around for a moment.

62 OLIVE 62
No moths here.

63 ELINOR 63
Hmm. So why were there so many
moths around Mr. Dog's porch?

Just then, Mr. Bat peeks his head outside the front door.

64 MR. BAT 64
It's pretty dark outside kids.
Lemme give you some light.

Mr. Bat goes back inside and flicks on the porch light.

After a moment, a few moths flutter up toward the porch light.

65 ELINOR 65
(pointing at the porch light)
Look! Moths!

66 SEÑOR TAPIR 66 *
Oooh what do you think happened? *

The kids and Señor Tapir look at the light, while more moths flutter up toward the porch light. <SFX: MOTH WINGS FLUTTERING>

67 ARI 67
(flying up a bit toward the porch
light because he's excited)
My dad turned on the porch light
(pointing at the light) and then
the moths showed up.

68 OLIVE 68
And...

TILT UP to a thought bubble as she remembers Mr. Dog turning on his porch light. TILT DOWN *

69 OLIVE (CONT'D) 69
Mr. Dog turned on his porch light
and then the moths showed up.

70 ELINOR 70
Right. Maybe moths like the porch
light.
(MORE)

ELINOR (CONT'D)
 (looking at her friends) We need
 MORE observations! I wonder what
 would happen if we turned off the
 light.

*
 *
 *

Ari turns the porch light off, so the kids and Señor Tapir
 are in the darkness. The moths flutter away.

71 OLIVE 71
 Look, the moths are flying away.

*

72 ELINOR 72
 Okay Ari, turn the light back on.

The kids and Señor Tapir watch and wait in anticipation. A
 moth flutters in, then another.

73 OLIVE 73
 (pointing) The moths are flying
 back!

*
 *

74 SEÑOR TAPIR 74
 Fantástico!

*
 *

Elinor, Olive and Ari watch the moths with wonder. <WALLA>

*

75 ELINOR 75
 Every time we turn on a light...

76 OLIVE 76
 (excited, because they are solving
 the mystery)
 ...the moths show up.

77 ELINOR 77
 Every time we turn off the light...

78 OLIVE 78
 They fly away.

79 ELINOR 79
 It's a pattern! Let's do an
 experiment to try out our idea.
 Olive, can I borrow your
 flashlight?

*
 *
 *
 *

Olive takes a flashlight from her bag and gives it to Elinor.

*

80 ELINOR (CONT'D) 80
 I'm gonna turn on the flashlight.

*
 *

She shines the flashlight's beam of light up toward her face.

81	ELINOR (CONT'D) Now, what do you think will happen?	81	* *
82	ARI You're going to do shadow puppets?	82	*
83	ELINOR No. What will happen with the moths, Ari?	83	* *
84	ARI Oh, right. (thinking, excited) Moths will show up.	84	
	Just then, moths fly right into the beam of the flashlight in front of Elinor's face.		* *
85	ELINOR Look! There they are! They showed up around the flashlight!	85	* * *
86	SEÑOR TAPIR You did it! You three amigos finally solved the, (he strums the dun dun dun on his guitar) (beat) moth mystery.	86	* * * * *
	Mr. Bat comes out onto the porch and turns the light back on.		*
87	MR. BAT What moth mystery?	87	
88	ELINOR We wanted to know why so many moths were flying around Mr. Dog's porch.	88	
89	OLIVE And we figured it out! Moths only come out at night.	89	* * *
90	ARI (excited) And when someone turns on the light...	90	* *
	Ari jumps off the porch into the darkness by his house.		*
91	ARI (CONT'D) (whispering to Elinor) Hey Elinor, turn on the flashlight.	91	* * *
	Elinor turns on her flashlight and shines it toward the house, to create a circle of light. Ari lifts up his hands to create a shadow puppet of a flying moth in the light.		* * *

92	ARI (CONT'D)	92	*
	Moths fly into the light!		*
	The kids WALLA <LAUGH> <WOW> as Ari hops back to the porch.		*
93	MR. BAT	93	*
	Oh Ari, you are good at shadow puppets. (to everyone) I do remember reading about this. Moths are attracted to light, which means they like the light and fly toward it. Some scientists believe it's because the moths think the lightbulb is the moon or the sun, but no one really knows why.		* * * * *
94	OLIVE	94	*
	It really is a moth mystery.		*
95	ELINOR	95	*
	Mr. Bat, would you turn off the light so we don't attract the moths?		* * *
96	MR. BAT	96	*
	Good idea, Elinor. We should try not to affect nature any more than we have to.		* * *
97	ELINOR	97	*
	C'mon, let's go see Mr. Dog!		*

DISSOLVE TO:

10. EXT. MR. DOG'S HOUSE (FRONT PORCH) - NIGHT

ANGLE ON Elinor's finger pressing Mr. Dog's doorbell. <SFX:
DING DONG>

The kids and Señor Tapir wait patiently on the porch, wearing
their sun hats, underneath the bright porch light. Lots of
moths flutter around them.

Mr. Dog opens his front door.

98	MR. DOG	98	
	(smiling) So glad you're back.		
99	ELINOR	99	
	Mr. Dog, would you turn off your porch light?		* *

100	ARI	100
	We figured out that the moths like	*
	the light.	*

Mr Dog turns off the porch light, so that the choir is standing in the dark, and the moths flutter away toward the moonlight.

101	SEÑOR TAPIR	101	*
	Adios, moth amigos.		*

When the moths are gone, Señor Tapir strums his guitar with a flourish, then starts to play the song.

SUNNY SUMMER SONG

102	ELINOR, OLIVE, ARI, SEÑOR TAPIR	102
	SEÑOR TAPIR: We're here to sing a sunny summer song	
	KIDS: A sunny summer song, A summer sing-along	
	SEÑOR TAPIR: We're here to sing a sunny summer song	
	ALL: To celebrate the summer sunshine!	

ELINOR: We jump really high.

Elinor jumps high.

ARI: We flap and fly.

Ari flutters up in the air for a moment.

OLIVE: We try to touch the sky

Olive raises her trunk and arms to the sky.

SEÑOR TAPIR: And now you know why

ALL: To celebrate the summer
sunshine!

Mr. Dog claps and tilts his head back to <WALLA HOWL>. Señor Tapir and the kids all join in, howling at the moon.

103	ELINOR, OLIVE, ARI, SEÑOR TAPIR	103
	(CONT'D)	
	Arwwwwwwoooooooooooooooooooo!	

A moth flies in front of the moon and then toward the camera until it fills the screen.

BLACK OUT

THE END

*