

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 24, 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	
	That was great, amigos! Thank you		*
	for joining me for this summer sing-		*
	a-long.		*
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 little shimmy and back flip and then spreads his		*
	arms like a shining sun. They all <SFX: GIGGLE>.		*
7	SEÑOR TAPIR	7	
	Yup. 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.		*

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.

11

11

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 sing-a-long 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 you better.		* *
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 <i>three</i> 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.

32 SEÑOR TAPIR 32
Okay, maybe moths *can* stop us from
making magnificent music. It's very
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 another time, Mr. Dog?		* *
34	MR. DOG	34	
	(laughing as he blows at the moths and swats moths away from his face) Sure, kids. 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 lover than a moth expert, 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	SEÑOR TAPIR	42	
	Let's think. What was different about Mr. Dog's house compared to the other houses where we sang?		* * * *

43	ARI	43	
	(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		*
44	ELINOR	44	
	Maybe moths only come out at night?		
45	OLIVE	45	
	(excited) Oh yeah. I read about		*
	that in my Nature Book. Most moths		*
	only come out at night. After the		*
	sun goes down.		*
46	ELINOR	46	
	That's SO interesting. (looking		*
	around). It's nighttime now. Let's		*
	see if there are any moths around		*
	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.		*
47	ARI	47	
	(playfully serious)		*
	I MOTH tell you something very		*
	important...		*
48	SEÑOR TAPIR	48	
	Ha. What is it, Ari?		*
49	ARI	49	
	I didn't see any moths. No moths		*
	anywhere.		*
50	OLIVE	50	
	I don't see any moths, either.		*
51	ELINOR	51	
	Huh, there must be something		*
	special about Mr. Dog's porch.		*
	(MORE)		

ELINOR (CONT'D)

Señor Tapir, have you ever seen
that many moths before?

52	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.	52	* * *
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53	ARI Maybe it's because Mr. Dog was howling on his porch.	53	
----	--	----	--

54	ELINOR Right. Maybe moths like howling. (excited) Let's try it!	54	* *
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The kids and Señor Tapir all look up at the moon and howl.

55	ELINOR, OLIVE, ARI, SEÑOR TAPIR "Arwwwwoooooooooooo! Arw Arwwwoooohhhhooooo!"	55	
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The kids and Señor Tapir stand still and look around
intently. No moths show up. *

56	ELINOR No moths. That's not it either. Hmmm.	56	
----	--	----	--

57	SEÑOR TAPIR Well, a good howl is never wasted.	57	* *
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58	OLIVE Maybe we'll find moths at Ari's house.	58	* * *
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59	ARI Yeah, let's try my front porch.	59	* *
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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. *

60	OLIVE No moths here.	60	*
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61 ELINOR 61
 Hmm. So why were there so many
 moths around Mr. Dog's porch?

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

62	MR. BAT	62
	Oh, hi kids. Hello, Sr. Tapir. It's	*
	pretty dark outside. Here, let me	*
	turn on this light.	*

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

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

63 ELINOR 63
 (pointing at the porch light)
 Look! Moths!

64	SEÑOR TAPIR	64	*
	Si! 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>

65 ARI 65

(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.

66 And... OLIVE 66

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

67 OLIVE (CONT'D) 67
I remember Mr. Dog turned on his *
porch light when the moths showed *
up.

68	ELINOR	68
	Right. Maybe moths like porch	*
	lights. (looking at her friends) We	*
	need MORE observations! What	*
	happens if we turned <i>off</i> the light?	*

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

69	ARI	69	*
	Look, the moths are flying away.		*
70	ELINOR	70	*
	Okay Ari, now turn the light back on.		
	The light switches on and the kids and Señor Tapir watch and wait in anticipation. A moth flutters in, then another.		*
71	OLIVE	71	
	(pointing) The moths are flying back!		*
			*
72	SEÑOR TAPIR	72	*
	Fantástico!		*
	Elinor, Olive and Ari watch the moths with wonder. <WALLA>		*
73	ELINOR	73	
	Every time we turn on the light...		*
74	OLIVE	74	
	(excited, because they are solving the mystery)		
	...the moths show up.		
75	ELINOR	75	
	And every time we turn off the light...		*
76	ARI	76	*
	(turning off the light)		*
	They fly away.		
77	ELINOR	77	
	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.		*
78	ELINOR (CONT'D)	78	*
	I'm gonna turn on the flashlight.		*
	She shines the flashlight's beam of light up toward her face.		
79	ELINOR (CONT'D)	79	*
	Now, what do you think will happen?		*
80	ARI	80	
	You're going to do shadow puppets?		*

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

91	MR. BAT Good thinking, kids! (to everyone) Moths ARE attracted to lights, which means they like to fly towards them. Some scientists think the moths get confused and think the lights are the moon or the sun, but no one really knows why.	91	* * * * * *
92	OLIVE It really IS a moth mystery!	92	* *
93	ELINOR Mr. Bat, would you turn off the light?	93	* * *
94	MR. BAT Good idea, Elinor. We should try not to confuse animals in nature any more than we have to.	94	* * * *
95	SR. TAPIR Well, now that we know why moths like to come to porches, I think we can give singing to Mr. Dog another try.	95	* * * * *
96	ELINOR Yeah, c'mon, let's go sing for Mr. Dog!	96	* * *

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.

97	MR. DOG (smiling) Oh, hello! I'm so glad you're back.	97	*
98	ELINOR Mr. Dog, would you turn off your porch light?	98	* *

99	ARI	99	
	We figured out that the moths like		*
	the light.		*
100	OLIVE	100	
	So if we turn it off, there won't		*
	be as many flying around.		*
	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.		*
102	ELINOR	102	
	Hit it, Sr. Tapir!		*
	Señor Tapir strums his guitar with a flourish, then starts to		*
	play the song.		

SUNNY SUMMER SONG

103	ELINOR, OLIVE, ARI, SEÑOR TAPIR	103
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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.

104 ELINOR, OLIVE, ARI, SEÑOR TAPIR 104
(CONT'D)
Arwwwwwwoooooooooooooooooooo!

As they all <SFX: LAUGH>, a moth flies in front of the moon *
and then toward the camera until it fills the screen. *

BLACK OUT

SEGMENT 2. *

1. EXT. GARDEN -- SUMMER DAY *

Elinor, Ari, Olive and Mz. Mole are walking through the *
flower garden. Mz. Mole has a flower in her hair. A *
hummingbird clearwing moth flies past Elinor, Aril, Olive and *
Mz. Mole and over to a bunch of flowers growing nearby. There *
is an audible <SFX: Hum> as it passes by. *

105 ARI 105 *
Whoah, what is that? *

Angle On - the moth hovers <SFX: Hum> over the flowers just *
like a hummingbird as it dips its proboscis to drink nectar. *

106 ELINOR 106 *
Is that a... hummingbird? *

107 MZ. MOLE 107 *
It looks a lot like a hummingbird, *
but it's not a bird at all. *

108 OLIVE 108 *
Is it a butterfly? *

109 MZ. MOLE 109 *
It's a kind of insect, but not a *
butterfly. It's a moth! *

110 ARI 110 *
Wow! How can you tell? It's moving *
so fast. *

111 MZ. MOLE 111 *
I have a picture of it in this *
book, all about moths! *
Mz. Mole takes out her storybook *
and opens the front cover. *

CLOSE ON the storybook which shows the hummingbird clearwing *
moth. *

2. THE STORYBOOK

The storybook comes to life in a popup book style of animation. Close-up on the hummingbird clearwing moth.

112	MZ. MOLE (V.O.)	112	*
	Take a closer look at this moth, what do you see?		*
113	OLIVE (V.O.)	113	*
	It has cute little fuzzy antennae.		*
	The clearwing moth flies away and the page turns to reveal three moths side by side - a luna moth (green), a rosy maple moth (pink and yellow), and an Io moth (yellow with two large eye spots). NOTE FOR DESIGN use as many examples as appropriate. The moths are still.		*
114	MZ. MOLE (V.O.)	114	*
	Moths come in lots of dazzling colors and sizes.		*
	The page turns to reveal a moth that looks just like a brown/dead leaf on a pile of dead brown leaves.		*
115	MZ. MOLE (V.O.)	115	*
	See this moth?		*
116	ARI (V.O.)	116	*
	Which moth, Mz. Mole? I just see some leaves. Suddenly, one of the "leaves" begins to flap its wings, then flies away.		*
117	ELINOR (V.O.)	117	*
	What?! That moth looked just like a leaf!		*
118	MZ. MOLE (V.O.)	118	*
	And how about this one?		*
	The page turns to reveal an atlas moth. Mz. Mole's hand comes into frame and the atlas moth climbs onto it. The moth is so large that its wingspan is wider than the hand.		*
119	MZ. MOLE (V.O.)	119	*
	This is an atlas moth, the largest moth in the world.		*
120	ELINOR (V.O.)	120	*
	Whoah, that's huge.		*

The moth flaps its wings and flies away. We watch it fly *
through the sky. *

121 MZ. MOLE (V.O.) 121 *
The atlas moth is so big, you might *
think it's a bird. *

122 ELINOR 122 *
Wow, moths can be as big as birds *
and as pretty as leaves. *

3. EXT. FLOWER GARDEN -- SUMMER Day *

We watch the book close. Back in the flower garden, Elinor, *
Ari, Olive and Mz. Mole look around for the hummingbird *
clearwing moth. *

123 MZ. MOLE 123 *
Now where did that beautiful moth *
go? *

124 OLIVE 124 *
There it is! *

We see the moth is drinking from the flower in Mz. Mole's *
hair. The children all <SFX: Laugh> *
*

THE END. *