ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP. 172 “The Little Drummer”

By: Laura Sams and Robert Sams

Elinor's Question: *Why is a woodpecker pecking on Ari's mailbox?*

Logline: After a noisy woodpecker keeps waking Baby Miri, Elinor, Olive and Ari are able to solve the problem by observing both the woodpeckers and Ari's drum-playing.

Curriculum Goals:

LS5. Begin to understand that animals and plants depend on other living things and nonliving things in the environment to meet some of their needs:

b. Identify the habitats of familiar animals and plants in the environment

c. Recognize that each kind of living things has a habitat that has resources to meet its unique needs

d. Identify and observe the consequences of how plants and animals impact the environment (Elinor and her friends observe the woodpecker's habits, its environment and the impact the woodpecker’s habits have on its environment).

ND5. (RTL Crosscutting concept Cause and Effect): Appreciate that events are connected to each other via cause and effect, and that similar links can be found in the natural and designed worlds. (Elinor and her friends make the link between the muffling of Ari's drums and decide to muffle the woodpecker's pecking).

SEP1. Asking questions (science) and defining problems (engineering) (Elinor is curious about why the woodpecker is pecking on the mailbox)
a. Demonstrate curiosity about the greater world outside of their local environment b. Ask more complex questions about observable phenomena c. Ask and/or identify cause and effect questions that can be answered by an investigation

d. Identify a problem that can be solved by the design a new or improved object or tool
(engineering)

SEP6. Constructing explanations (science) and Designing Solutions (engineering) (The kids notice that the woodpeckers are pecking back and forth to communicate with each other. Elinor suggests that the mailbox is loud like the drums were loud, and that they can make the mailbox quiet by muffling it with a blanket, just like Ari's drums.)
a. Use background knowledge experiences, and data to construct reasonable explanations and theories of natural phenomena
(science)
b. Look for and describe patterns and relationships in natural phenomena (science)

OUTLINE: April 1, 2020
FIRST DRAFT: April 28, 2020
SECOND DRAFT: May 08, 2020
POLISH DRAFT: May 19, 2020
FINAL:

1. INT. A ROCK CONCERT ARENA STAGE (ARI'S THOUGHT BUBBLE/FANTASY)

Colorful stage lights shine down on ARI, who stands proudly with his wings wide, holding drumsticks high in a rockstar pose behind his drum set. The massive crowd <CHEERS> in silhouette, in anticipation.

1 ARI 1
(loudly to his fans)
Are you ready to ROCK?

The unseen audience <CHEERS> even louder as Ari plays an epic <DRUM SOLO>. We see music video-esque camera angles on Ari playing the drums. The crowd is cheering his name, and Elinor's voice emerges on top of the crowd's cheering.

2 ELINOR (V.O.) 2
(like an enthusiastic fan cheering to the rhythm) Ar-*i*! Ar-*i*!

WIDEN and TILT DOWN to reveal this is all happening in Ari's daydream.

2. INT. ARI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ari startles from his daydream and hits the drums a couple more times. The room flips to reveal he is upside down, sitting at his drum set that hangs from the ceiling of his bedroom. ELINOR and OLIVE are standing beneath him, each holding a pair of drumsticks, looking up at him.

3 ELINOR 3
(transitioning from Elinor's voice yelling in the daydream) Ari! We're ready!

4 ARI 4
Whaaa? (snapping out of his daydream)

5 ELINOR 5
Ari, (giggling) you were *
daydreaming. I said we're ready. *

Olive lifts her trunk to reveal she's holding a third drumstick with her trunk.

6 OLIVE 6
Yeah, you were gonna teach us how *
to play the drums. *

7 ARI 7
Okay, I'M gonna play something.
Then YOU play the same thing.

8 ELINOR 8
Okay. So just do what you do?

9 ARI 9
Yep. Elinor, try this.

Ari plays a rhythm on his drumset <SFX: TAT-TAT-TAT>. Elinor * sits and taps the drumsticks lightly on the rock floor in * Ari's room and plays the same rhythm back <SFX: TAT-TAT-TAT>.

10 ELINOR 10
Ha! I did it!

11 ARI 11
Nice. Okay Olive, your turn.

Ari plays a rhythm <SFX: TAT-TU-TAT). Olive sits and taps the * drumsticks lightly on Ari's rock floor and plays the same rhythm back <SFX: TAT-TU-TAT).

12 OLIVE 12
Ooh this is fun.

13 ARI 13
Okay, Elinor, try this.

Ari starts with a simple rhythm <SFX: TAT TAT TAT TU TAT> but before Elinor can try it, Ari gets carried away and begins playing an epic drum solo, playing with his eyes closed and banging the drums really LOUD.

MRS. BAT enters the room and looks up at Ari.

14 MRS. BAT 14
Ari?

Ari doesn't hear her because the drums are so loud. Elinor and Olive look up at Ari.

15 MRS. BAT (CONT'D) 15
(good-natured)
ARI!!

Ari still doesn't hear his mom and keeps playing. Mrs. Bat flies up toward the ceiling to be face to face with Ari. Just then, Ari opens his eyes.

16 ARI 16
(startled) Whoah! Mom!

He stops playing immediately.

17 MRS. BAT 17
Ari, Miri is taking a nap, and your
drum playing is a little loud.
Could you kids please play quietly *
so you don't wake her up?

3. INT. MIRI'S CRIB -- DAY

Miri, hanging upside down in her crib, closes her eyes and falls asleep.

4. INT. ARI'S ROOM - DAY

Mrs. Bat is still fluttering and close to Ari on the ceiling.

18 ARI 18
Oh, yeah, of course Mom. *

19 MRS. BAT 19
Thanks kids. *

Mrs. Bat flies down to the ground and leaves.

20 ARI 20
Wanna hear something cool?

21 ELINOR 21
Yeah!

Ari opens up the face of one his drums, stuffs it with a blanket and then closes it again.

22 OLIVE 22 *
What's the blanket gonna do?

Ari picks up his drumsticks.

23 ARI 23
Listen to this...

Ari plays the drums again, except now it is much, much quieter.

24 OLIVE 24
(in awe) It's *quiet* now!

25 ELINOR 25
The blanket made the drum less *
loud. That's SO interesting. *

Ari plays his drums quietly for a moment, then flies down to the ground.

26 ARI 26
Yeah, playing the drums loud is way more fun, but this way I can play the drums when Miri's napping. *

27 ELINOR 27
Well, wanna do something else?

28 OLIVE 28 *
(offering a happy suggestion) We could play outside.

29 ARI 29
Good idea, let's ask my mom if that's okay.

5. INT. ARI'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mrs. Bat relaxes on the couch, reading a book. Elinor, Olive and Ari walk into the room, just as a loud drumming sound echoes. <SFX: THRRRRRRP>

(Note: It is the sound of a pileated woodpecker. Drumming sound references can be found here: https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Pileated_Woodpecker/sounds and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqPPioNKIfo)

30 MRS. BAT 30
(without looking up from her book, kind of stage whispering toward Ari's room) Ari, I can still hear the drums!

31 ARI 31
It's not me, Mom. I'm right *here*.

Mrs. Bat looks up at Ari, who is standing near the couch.

32 MRS. BAT 32
(surprised) Oh, sorry. I didn't see you there.

Elinor, Olive and Ari hear the drumming sound again <SFX: THRRRRRRP>. Elinor's ears swivel as she listens for where the sound is coming from.

33 ELINOR 33
What is that sound? Where's it coming from? *

Olive cups her hand to one of her big ears as she listens again to the sound. <SFX: THRRRRRRP>

34 OLIVE 34
I think it's... coming from *
outside? *

35 ARI 35
Yeah, it is. It's that woodpecker again.

36 ELINOR 36
A woodpecker? *

Mrs. Bat is a little exasperated.

37 MRS. BAT 37
It's back? (sigh) A *woodpecker* *
keeps pecking on our mailbox. The *
sound is *so loud* it keeps waking *
Miri up. *

6. INT. MIRI'S CRIB - DAY

Miri sleeps soundly upside down in her crib, when a loud drumming sound echoes in her room. <SFX: THRRRRRRP> Miri's eyes pop open. The drum sound happens again. <SFX: THRRRRRRP> Miri looks around and opens her mouth wide. <SFX: BABY CRYING WALLA>

7. INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Bat responds to her daughter's <SFX: BABY CRYING>

38 MRS. BAT 38
Oh dear. Coming Miri! (to the trio) I don't know *why* that woodpecker keeps pecking on our mailbox.

Mrs. Bat gets up to go check on Miri.

39 ELINOR 39
Can we go outside to see it?

40 MRS. BAT 40
Please do...(calling as she walks away toward Miri) and if you figure out why it's pecking on the *
mailbox, lemme know!

Elinor looks at her friends, excited about the mystery.

41 ELINOR 41
Let's go!

8. EXT. ARI'S HOUSE - DAY

The kids stand outside Ari's house on the front steps and look around. Elinor points excitedly to the sky.

42 ELINOR 42
There it is!

43 OLIVE 43
It IS a woodpecker! Look at the red *
feathers on its head! *

The pileated woodpecker (with a red crest on its head) flies down and lands on the mailbox, a metal mailbox on a wooden post - we don't need to worry about design, woodpecker peck on mailboxes because they are so resonant. It starts pecking fast with its beak on the metal to make a drumming sound. <SFX: THRRRRRRP>

44 ARI 44
(to Olive)
Knock, Knock.

45 OLIVE 45
Who's there?

46 ARI 46
The woodpecker.

47 OLIVE 47
The woodpecker who?

48 ARI 48
The woodpecker who's knocking on my mailbox.

Olive and Elinor <SFX: LAUGH>.

49 OLIVE 49
Whoah, it *is* pecking on the mailbox.

50 ELINOR 50
That's SO interesting.(wondering) Why IS the woodpecker pecking on your mailbox, Ari?

51 ARI 51
I dunno.

52 OLIVE 52
Hmmm. I read about woodpeckers in my nature book.

TILT UP to Olive's THOUGHT BUBBLE. We see a pileated woodpecker on the side of a tree trunk and a close up of its pointy beak. It stabs the tree a couple times and rips off a chunk of wood with its beak to make a small hole. (Note the woodpecker doesn't peck fast.) Inside the hole, we see a few ants walking around. The woodpecker reaches into the hole and sticks out its tongue to lick up ants.

53 OLIVE (CONT'D) 53
Woodpeckers are birds that peck on trees with their pointy beaks. That's how they find bugs to eat.

TILT DOWN to the kids.

54 ELINOR 54
Hmmmm, (pondering) maybe it's pecking on the mailbox because there are bugs inside? We'd better check. *

As the kids look on, the woodpecker on the mailbox flies away. *

55 ELINOR (CONT'D) 55
Look, it flew away.

56 ARI 56
Yeah, but it'll be back. Quick, let's go see if there are bugs in the mailbox.

The kids run over to the mailbox. Close on the mailbox, as Olive approaches and lifts her magnifying glass to inspect the mailbox's sides. *

57 OLIVE 57
Hmmmm, no bugs here.

Elinor looks under the mailbox closely.

58 ELINOR 58
(looking intently) I don't see any bugs here.

Ari stands near the mailbox and suddenly looks intrigued.

59 ARI 59
(a bit sneakily) Hmmm, I wonder... *

Ari casually walks by the front of the mailbox, looking away from the mailbox as if he just doesn't care about it at all, and then suddenly he jumps and flips the mailbox lid down to look inside.

60 ARI (CONT'D) 60
Ahaaaa!!!!!!!

Cut to a POV from inside the mailbox looking at Ari's face, as he peers into the inside.

61 ARI (CONT'D) 61
Huh, no bugs.

Olive holds her magnifying glass over some dents in the metal mailbox side. Close on the dents.

62 OLIVE 62
Look at this! I can see where it was pecking.

Elinor inspects the dents and then reaches up with her fingertips to gently feel them.

63 ELINOR 63
It's dented. But why would the * woodpecker peck here? *

64 ARI 64
Not sure. They're called WOODpeckers, not MAILBOXpeckers.

Olive, Elinor and Ari <SFX: GIGGLE>.

65 OLIVE 65
Yeah, if there are no bugs inside, * why is it pecking on the mailbox?

66 ELINOR 66
Let's see if the woodpecker comes back. We need more observations. *

The kids hide behind a bush, look around and watch the * mailbox.

67 ELINOR (CONT'D) 67
Look! There it is! *

The woodpecker lands on the mailbox and starts drumming. <THRRRRRRP>.

68 OLIVE 68 *
That's really loud.

Just then, another <SFX: DRUMMING> sound rings out from the woods near Ari's house.

69 ARI 69
Wait! Do you hear that?

The kids all look toward the sound, surprised. Olive cups an ear toward the sound.

70 ELINOR 70 *
It sounds like...another woodpecker.

Olive gets up and walks to the edge of the trees.

71 OLIVE 71 *
(excited gasp) I see it! There IS another woodpecker.

Elinor and Ari run over to Olive, excited to see the other pileated woodpecker on the tree.

72 ELINOR 72
And it has red feathers on its head too, like the other woodpecker does. *

The woodpecker drums on the tree trunk.

73 ELINOR (CONT'D) 73
It looks like it's pecking on the tree. * *

74 OLIVE 74
Maybe it's looking for bugs to eat. Lemme check!(she pulls out her binoculars) * *

We look through binoculars to focus on the woodpecker on the tree, who is pecking really fast but not making a hole, or eating bugs.

75 OLIVE (CONT'D) 75
No, it doesn't look like it's eating bugs. (watching it peck) * Wow, it's beak moves SO fast... And the sound is so loud! * *

76 ARI 76
Yeah, it's like a little drummer. With feathers.

We see the three kids looking up toward the tree. After the woodpecker drums, the other woodpecker on the mailbox drums, and all three kids' heads turn toward the sound.

The woodpeckers drum back and forth, and we see the three kids' heads turning in unison (like watching a tennis match) to the right, to the left, back to the right, as they listen to the birds drumming.

77 ELINOR 77
They're taking turns making pecking *
sounds. It's almost *
like...they're...

Mrs. Bat pops her head out from the house far away and calls. The woodpecker on the mailbox drums <SFX: THRRRRP> at the exact moment she speaks.

78 MRS. BAT 78
(good natured) Kiiiids?

Elinor turns her head toward the house. Then the woodpecker on the tree drums <SFX: THRRRRP> at the exact moment that Ari calls back.

79 ARI 79
Yeah mom?

Elinor's head turns back and forth (like watching a tennis match) as she listens to Mrs. Bat and Ari talk back and forth. The woodpecker on the mailbox drums <SFX: THRRRRP> at the exact moment that Mrs. Bat calls back.

80 MRS. BAT (V.O.) 80
Where'd you go?

The woodpecker on the tree drums <SFX: THRRRRP> at the exact moment that Ari talks, and the woodpecker on the mailbox drums <SFX: THRRRRP> when Mrs. Bat talks again.

81 ARI 81
We're over here!

82 MRS. BAT (V.O.) 82
Okay! Lunch is almost ready!

Elinor hops up with excitement.

83 ELINOR 83
(gasp) I think I figured it out. *
The woodpeckers are TALKING to each
other!

84 OLIVE 84
(nodding in agreement) Just like Ari and his mom were talking to each other! It's like one woodpecker goes peck peck peck to say 'Hi, I'm over here!' *

85 ARI 85 *
Ohhh… And then the other woodpecker goes peck peck peck to say 'And I'm over here!' *

86 ELINOR 86
Wow, so woodpeckers peck on trees to look for food AND to talk to each other. *

The woodpeckers drum loudly <SFX: THRRRRP> back and forth.

9. INT. MIRI'S ROOM - DAY

Miri sleeps soundly upside down in her crib, when the loud drumming sound echoes in her room. <SFX: THRRRRRRRP>. Miri's eyes stay closed for a beat, but then pop wide open. Her mouth opens wide and she yells. <SFX: BABY CRY>

10. EXT. ARI'S HOUSE - DAY

Elinor, Olive and Ari still stand by the trees, but they turn back toward the house because they hear Miri yelling from inside. <SFX: BABY CRYING>

87 ARI 87
Uh oh, the woodpecker pecking the mailbox woke Miri up again. *

The trio turn back to look at the woodpecker on the mailbox.

88 ELINOR 88
That woodpecker really is loud. I wonder how we can get it to peck more quietly, or maybe even somewhere else. *

89 ARI 89
(to himself) Yeah, peck more quietly. (beat) Wait, my drums!

90 OLIVE 90
What about em?

91 ARI 91
I made my drums quiet with a *blanket*! Maybe we can make the mailbox quiet by putting a blanket inside it. *

92 ELINOR 92 *
Let's try it out! Ari, can you get the blanket?

93 ARI 93
You know I can! I'll be back super fast.

Ari flies toward his house.

WIPE TO:

11. EXT. ARI'S MAILBOX - DAY

Close on the woodpecker as it pecks on the mailbox and flies away. We rack focus to the trio in the background watching. Olive holds the blanket, while Ari holds his drumsticks. Now that the bird's gone, they approach the mailbox. * * * *

94 ELINOR 94
Okay, let's try our idea. (turning to Ari). Did your mom say it's okay for us to drum on the mailbox to see if it will work? * * *

95 ARI 95
Yep, as long as we're careful not to wake up Miri. (looking off into the distance) Has anyone ever had a mailbox band? * *

TILT UP to Ari's THOUGHT BUBBLE/FANTASY of himself as a rockstar, standing on a giant stage like his previous fantasy, except this time...he is standing behind a drum set made of mailboxes. The massive crowd <SFX: CHEERS> in anticipation.

96 ARI (CONT'D) 96
(to his adoring fans) This one's called Mailbox Rock!

The unseen crowd <SFX: CHEERS>. *

97 ELINOR 97
Ari? Ari!

WIDEN and TILT DOWN as Ari snaps out of his daydream, to show he is just standing by the mailbox, holding his drumsticks.

98 ARI 98
Oh, sorry.

Ari lifts his drumsticks up dramatically as if he is a rock star and bangs on the mailbox two times. <SFX: PAF! PAF!>

99 OLIVE 99
Whoah that's LOUD. Be careful we don't want to wake up Miri.

100 ARI 100
(looking guilty back at the house)
Right. Better try the blanket.

Olive opens the mailbox, stuffs the blanket inside and closes the lid.

101 ELINOR 101
Ari, *now* drum on the mailbox.

Ari lifts his drumsticks dramatically like a rock star, and he plays the mailbox, but this time it is much quieter.

102 ELINOR (CONT'D) 102
It worked! It's quieter!

103 ARI 103
Just like my drums in my bedroom.
The blanket made it quieter!

104 ELINOR 104
Okay, let's go sit on the grass and observe what the woodpecker does. *

The kids sit on the grass and wait in anticipation. We hear <SFX: FRONT DOOR OPENS> and Mrs. Bat walks up behind them. *
The woodpecker flies back and lands on the side of the mailbox. The woodpecker looks around. *

105 MRS. BAT 105 *
Oh there's that woodpecker again. *
(sigh) And Miri just fell asleep. *

106 ARI 106
It's okay mom, watch! *

The woodpecker leans its head back, and then starts to <SFX: DRUM> very fast with its beak. But this time, it is quieter.

107 MRS. BAT 107 *
Oh, it's much quieter now! Wow *
kids, how did you do that? *

The woodpecker stops, tries to drum again, pauses and looks *
around.

108 ELINOR 108 *
Well we figured out that *
woodpeckers can talk to each other *
by pecking on things. And the *
louder the better. *

109 OLIVE 109 *
And that's why the woodpecker was *
pecking on the mailbox. *

110 ARI 110 *
So we put a blanket inside to *
muffle the sound. *

The woodpecker flies away into the woods to land on a tree. *
Close on the woodpecker as it drums <SFX: THRRRRP> on the
tree trunk, instead of the mailbox.

111 OLIVE 111 *
Look! It's pecking on a tree now!

We cut wide to see that the woodpecker is now pretty far from
Ari's house. Elinor, Olive, Ari and Mrs. Bat watch from afar. *

112 ELINOR 112
Now that the mailbox is quieter, it *
found something louder to peck on,
far from the house!

113 MRS. BAT 113 *
That's marvelous, kids! *

SONG - DRUMMING SONG MONTAGE

We see a montage of pileated woodpeckers drumming on
different trees, back and forth, along with close ups of
their beaks pecking at the trees.

114 ELINOR/ARI/OLIVE 114
A rat-a-tat-tat
A bibbidy-bum
The woodpecker's pecking like the
sound of a drum,
A rat-a-tat-tat,
A bibbidy bow,
(MORE)

ELINOR/ARI/OLIVE (CONT'D)
The woodpecker's drumming so it can be loud.

When a woodpecker wants to send a message
To say "I'm right here!"
To talk to the other woodpeckers
Flying far and near,

It taps really fast with its beak
To make a loud sound,
Because woodpecker drummers are the
Best bird drummers around!

A rat-a-tat-tat
A bibbidy-bum
The woodpecker's pecking like the sound of a drum,
A rat-a-tat-tat,
A bibbidy bow,
The woodpecker's drumming so it can be loud.

The song ends as the woodpeckers drum from the trees, but it's pretty quiet because it's far from the house.

115 MRS. BAT 115
(Sighing with relief) Ari, do you hear that sound coming from the house?

The kids listen, but no sounds come from the house.

116 ARI 116
(confused, listening) Uh, I don't hear anything.

117 MRS. BAT 117
Exactly. (sighing with relief) Your sister is *finally* a*sleep*.

12. INT. MIRI'S CRIB -- DAY

Miri, hanging upside down in her crib, is now sleeping soundly. She rolls onto her side in a deep sleep.

13. EXT. ARI'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

118 MRS. BAT 118
(with a big smile) Oh this is wonderful. Thanks kids.

Mrs. Bat gives Ari a great big hug with her wings.

119 ELINOR 119
You're welcome, Mrs. Bat!

The trio and Mrs. Bat stand on the grass as MR. PIG, the postal worker, walks up carrying a bag of mail. Mr. Pig waves at them on the porch, and they wave back.

Close on Mr. Pig as he lifts an envelope from his bag, opens the mailbox to put it in, pauses...and (looking confused) pulls a BLANKET part way out of the mailbox.

120 MRS. BAT 120
Whoops, how are we supposed to get our mail now?

The trio and Mrs. Bat <SFX: LAUGH> as we:

IRIS OUT

THE END. *