

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EW 174 Do The Crane Dance

By Jorge Cham

Elinor's Question: Why do cranes dance?

Logline: When Mr. Lion encourages the kids to make up dances to express themselves, Elinor gets some inspiration from some cranes she sees dancing nearby.

Curriculum Goals:

LS 3a. Observe ways that animals and plants get what they need to live and grow. [Elinor and her friends observe the ways that cranes use dance to communicate.]

ND2. (RTL Crosscutting concept 'Systems'): Begin to understand that systems developed in our world often work in similar ways to systems found in the natural world. [Elinor and her friends discover that birds use dance to communicate, just like we do]

Arts. (From the Arts Framework): Dance is a way to explore and express behaviors, feelings, ideas/concepts, and stories using movement. [Elinor and her friends use dance to communicate something they've learned]

FIRST DRAFT: May 08, 2020

SECOND DRAFT:

POLISH:

It's a wonderful Spring day in Animal Town, and MR. LION (the town art teacher) is outdoors again with the kids, this time teaching them about Dancing. We open on his face as he strikes a dramatic pose, and then launches into an abstract and sometimes funny and expressive dance routine that communicates different emotions and actions.

1 MR. LION 1
And that, is the joy of dancing!

2 ELINOR 2
Wow, Mr. Lion, that was amazing.

4 OLIVE 4
But then you found a flower.

6 MR. LION 6
That's right! That was a dance
about how sometimes I'm sad, but
then flowers cheer me up.

7 MR. LION (CONT'D) 7
You see, kids, dancing isn't just a
great way to move our bodies and
get healthy exercise. It's also a
way to *communicate*! To talk about
ideas and tell others how you feel.

8 MR. LION (CONT'D) 8
It's also... a lot of fun!

The kids <SFX: GIGGLE>.

9 MR. LION (CONT'D) 9
 And now, it's YOUR turn. For class today, I want you to work with others and come up with your own dance that *communicates* something you all think is special.

The kids look at each other with excitement, except Elinor who looks a bit thoughtful.

10 MR. LION (CONT'D) 10
 And at the end, we'll have a little show where everyone can share their dance. How does that sound?

The kids <SFX: YEAH!/AWESOME/YOU BET! WALLA> and the group starts to break up. Elinor, still looking pensive, hangs back and talks to Mr. Lion.

11 ELINOR 11
 Mr. Lion, what if we don't know what to make our dance about?

12 MR. LION 12
 Don't worry, Elinor, I'm sure you'll come up with something great.

Elinor looks a bit more encouraged.

13 MR. LION (CONT'D) 13
 When you find something that you want to dance about, you'll *feel* it. And then you'll want to share it with the whole world!

Elinor reflects on this as she joins Ari and Olive, who have moved to a spot in the clearing near the tree line. Ari looks like he's warming up to dance.

14 OLIVE 14
 Ok, what should our dance be about?

15 ELINOR 15
 Well, Mr. Lion said it should be something we all think is special.

16 ARI 16
 Ooh, I know! We should do a cha-cha dance about my favorite snack: peanut butter and pickles!

Ari demonstrates by doing a fun shimmy and groove with gusto where he mimes eating peanut butter and pickles and rubs his tummy.

While doing the final flourish, though, he trips on himself <SFX: WH-WHOA!> and falls in front of Olive, who catches him in a dance dip move. Ari, still hanging from Olive, grabs a nearby stick with some leaves on it and puts it in his mouth (like a rose) and strikes a pose:

17 ARI (CONT'D) 17

Ta da!

The kids <SFX: GIGGLE>.

18 OLIVE 18
Um, I'm not sure I like peanut
butter and pickles as much as you
do, Ari.

Olive has an idea.

19 OLIVE (CONT'D) 19
I know! We should do a beautiful
ballet about my favorite thing:
books!

Olive demonstrates a few kid-graceful moves and pirouettes while holding and miming reading her nature book, finishing in a plié.

20 ELINOR 20
Wow, Olive, you're so good at
ballet.

21 ARI 21
Yeah, I'm not sure I can dance
ballet like that.

22 OLIVE 22
What about you, Elinor, what do you
think we should dance about?

Elinor thinks for a moment.

23 ELINOR 23
 Hmm, I don't know. Mr. Lion said it
 should be something we all think is
 special, but I'm not sure what.

24 ARI 24

I don't know either, but look at
Mary and Lizzie. Their dance does
look pretty special.

The kids look over to where the goat twins are practicing their dance, and it's pretty good. The goat twins do a perfectly synchronized mirror-image series of hip kid dance moves while a few other kids look on. They finish with flair.

25 MARY 25
And that's our dance about...

26 LIZZIE 26
How much fun it is to be...

27 MARY/LIZZIE 27
Twins!

The gathered kids <SFX: CLAP and CHEER>.

28 OLIVE 28
Wow, their dance is so good.

Elinor looks lost in thought in their problem <SFX HMMM...>, and as the three of them ponder <SFX: HMMM...>, something catches Elinor's attention. Next to her is a small sandhill crane chick, looking up at her (<https://images.app.goo.gl/a8Wnvw2EcwmE2Knc8>).

29 ELINOR 29
Oh, hello little bird.

The bird makes some funny moves, which include an awkward jump and a spin with a one wing out (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQthhI6ukTE>). Elinor thinks it's cute <SFX: AWW/GIGGLES>. She turns to call her friends.

30 ELINOR (CONT'D) 30
Olive! Ari! Come look.

31 OLIVE 31
What is it, Elinor?

Ari and Olive come over, but when Elinor turns around, the bird has meandered over to the edge of the clearing.

32 ELINOR 32
You have to meet this bird. C'mon, let's follow it.

Ari turns to Mr. Lion.

33 ARI 33
We'll be right back, Mr. Lion!

Mr. Lion waves back.

34 MR. LION 34
Ok, don't go too far!

2. EXT. SHALLOW POND - DAY

After a few beats of following, still just a few steps away from the clearing, the kids emerge and discover a nearby shallow pond, where a whole flock of crane birds are hanging out.

35 ELINOR 35
Whoa, look at all these birds.

36 OLIVE 36
I don't think I've ever seen this kind of bird before.

37 ARI 37
They're so tall. And look at the cool red feathers on their heads.

38 ELINOR 38
There's the little chick bird.

The kids spot the crane chick. Suddenly, they see something even more amazing: some of the birds start to move in interesting ways!

39 ARI 39
(gasp!) What are the birds doing?

The cranes do dips and jumps and twirls and spins, by themselves and with other cranes
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9ZjZqR4mt8>).

40 ELINOR 40
Look at how the birds are moving.

41 OLIVE 41
It looks like... they're dancing?

They see other crane birds stretch their wings, pump their heads, bow, and leap into the air in graceful and energetic ways (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WLHZ2RIiNY>).

42 ELINOR 42
It does look like they're dancing.
That is SO interesting.

43 ARI 43
I didn't know birds could dance!

The kids are amazed <SFX: WOOOOW...>. Elinor thinks for a moment.

44 ELINOR 44
I wonder... why are these birds
dancing?

45 OLIVE 45
Yeah, it doesn't look like they're
in a dance class. Maybe... they're
putting on a show?

46 ELINOR 46
Mmm, it doesn't look like they're
putting on a show, either.

47 ARI 47
I know! Maybe they like doing the
cha-cha too!

Ari does a little cha-cha dance, and Elinor and Olive <SFX: GIGGLE>.

48 OLIVE 48
I'm not sure birds know what the
cha-cha is, Ari.

49 ARI 49
Yeah, maybe only bats know about
it.

50 ELINOR 50
Let's take a closer look and see if
we can figure out why they're
dancing. We need more observations.

The kids stealthily move a little closer to watch the birds and observe them dancing. They scan the flock.

First, they see one bird doing moves in front of another bird.

51 OLIVE 51
Look, that bird is dancing in front
of that other bird.

52 ELINOR 52
It flapped and jumped, and now it's
running around the other one.

Both birds then start to jump one after the other, and then they alternate head bobs.

62 OLIVE 62
I think you're right, Elinor. That
bird danced to tell the other bird
that it likes it.

Ari also catches on, and looks at the second bird they
observed.

63 ARI 63
Ohhhh, and *that* bird danced to tell
the other birds to stay away.

64 ELINOR 64
Yes! You can use dance to
communicate. Even birds do it!

65 OLIVE 65
We figured it out!

Smiles and <SFX: YAY!/AWESOME WALLA> and high fives. At that
moment, Mr. Lion walks over.

66 MR. LION 66
Ah, there you are, kids. What are
you looking at?

67 ELINOR 67
Mr. Lion, we found these birds that
dance!

68 OLIVE 68
Yes, and they dance to communicate,
just like you said.

69 ARI 69
And they even do the cha-cha! (does
a little dance, then pauses) Ok,
not really.

Elinor and Olive smile and <SFX: GIGGLE> as Mr. Lion looks at
the crane birds.

70 MR. LION 70
Ah yes, these are Sandhill Crane
birds. They're one of many birds
that like to dance. Isn't it
amazing?

We pull out to see the kids and the cranes dancing in the
foreground.

71 MR. LION (CONT'D) 71
And you're right, scientists think
these birds dance to communicate.
(MORE)

MR. LION (CONT'D)

They dance to tell each other when they're mad, and when they like each other.

Just then, they see the crane bird chick they saw earlier. The chick seems to be trying to imitate the older birds, and is just dancing by itself.

72 ELINOR 72
There's the little crane chick we
saw before.

73 MR. LION 73
Wonderful! Some scientists think
that sandhill cranes sometimes also
just dance for fun, to communicate
how happy they are.

They watch the little bird spin and jump and bob its head.

74	OLIVE	74
	Go little chick bird!	

75 ARI 75
Yeah, woo hoo!

Elinor looks at all the birds.

76 ELINOR 76
That's so cool that these birds
dance.

77 OLIVE 77

Yeah...

Suddenly, Elinor has an idea.

78 ELINOR 78
(gasp!) Ari! Olive! That gives me
an idea for what our dance should
be about.

Ari and Olive look excited.

79 OLIVE 79
I think we know what you mean,
Elinor.

80 C'mon! ELINOR 80

The kids dash off back towards the clearing. Mr. Lion stays for a beat, then follows them.

81 MR. LION 81
Ah, inspiration! I love it!

3. EXT. FOREST CLEARING -- DAY

It's a short time later, and the class is in the middle of the dance show. We catch the show as Sally and Tito are doing their dance.

Sally and Tito dance a fun happy dance where they point up at the sky and embrace the warm sunlight a few times before plopping down on the ground.

82 MR. LION 82
Bravo! Bravo! (clapping) Sally,
Tito, that was wonderful! I could
tell that you were trying to
communicate how happy you are, and
how much you like being out in the
sun.

Sally and Tito nod vigorously.

83 MR. LION (CONT'D) 83
Ok, who would like to go next?

Elinor, Ari and Olive raise their hands.

84 MR. LION (CONT'D) 84
Elinor, Ari, Olive, you're up!

The kids walk up to the middle of the clearing and they explain their dance.

85 ELINOR 85
Ahem. Like Mr. Lion said, dancing
is a way to communicate.

86 OLIVE 86
Yeah, it's a way to talk about
something you think or something
that you've learned.

87 ARI 87
So, our dance is about something
that we learned today. It's
called... The Crane Dance Dance!

We hear a few musical beats as we launch into their musical dance performance.

First, Ari dances in place in the center. Then, Olive and Elinor come running in, flapping their arms while doing circles around Ari. As the other kids watch, some of them yell out what they think is happening.

88 MARY 88
Look, it's birds!

Next, Ari joins Elinor and Olive on a loop around as he looks like he's following them. Elinor and Olive circle to the middle as Ari looks on, and they take turns jumping and moving like the birds we saw earlier. The audience kids yell out:

89 LIZZIE 89
They're dancing!

90 SALLY 90
Birds can dance? I didn't know that.

91 TITO 91
Awesome!

Elinor and Olive are expressive in their dance, taking turns and then dancing together in a way that says, "I like you!" and "I like you too!"

92 SALLY 92
It looks like they're communicating!

The kids do a few more fly around moves and dance together to express their excitement at learning something new, and they end their dance as Mr. Lion and the other kids <SFX: CHEER>.

93 MR. LION 93
Bravo! Bravo! That was great!
Elinor, Ari, Olive, you danced
about something you learned and how
that made you feel.

94 ELINOR 94
Yeah, we learned that some birds
also dance to communicate.

95 OLIVE 95
And that you can use dance to
communicate all kinds of things,
like how you feel and what you
learn.

96

ARI

96

And how you feel WHEN you learn,
which is... happy!

He does a few cha-cha moves, and all the kids <SFX:
GIGGLE/LAUGH>.

Mr. Lion beams.

97

MR. LION

97

And that makes ME feel happy too!
(flash of inspiration)
I have an idea, let's ALL dance
like the crane birds to show how
happy we are!

All the kids <SFX: CHEER/YEAH WALLA> and join in a happy
dance of flapping and jumping and bobbing their heads, as we
pan up into the sky. As the camera pulls up, we catch crane
birds dancing in the background and we...

FADE OUT.