



Birds

Adventures in Reading:

Reading Adventure Packs from Reading Rockets



Funded in part by the
Park Foundation, Inc.

Contents:

- Two books — one fiction, one nonfiction
- Parent information sheet
- Three activity sheets
- Bookmark
- Parent survey

For teachers and librarians



This Reading Rockets reading adventure pack is designed to support reading activities at home. We've chosen a fiction and nonfiction book about **birds**, appropriate for a second and third grade interest level, and included related activities to encourage some hands-on fun and learning. Just assemble the packet and books in a two-gallon zip top bag, and send home with your students.

When packing for this reading adventure about birds we suggest you include *Aviary Wonders Inc. Spring Catalog and Instruction Manual: Renewing the World's Bird Supply Since 2031* by Kate Samworth and *Crinkleroot's Guide to Knowing the Birds* by Jim Arnosky. In *Aviary Wonders*, people who want to have experiences with birds are offered the opportunity to order parts to build their own — now necessary since nearly all birds have become extinct. *Crinkleroot's Guide to Knowing the Birds* features the warm and folksy nature guide Crinkleroot who introduces kids to birds and the pleasures of watching them.

Reading Rockets carefully chose these titles because they are widely available in libraries and appealing to young readers. If they are not available, or you prefer other titles, substitute books related to the theme. You'll find more titles about *birds* included on the bookmark and at www.worldcat.org/profiles/ReadingRockets/lists.

How to assemble the Reading Adventure Pack

1. Print the Welcome sheet, How To sheet, the three activities, and the bookmark/survey.
2. Into a two-gallon zip top bag, pack:
 - Two books — one fiction and one nonfiction
 - Welcome and How To sheet
 - Three themed activity pages
 - ★ Creativity Activity: a hands-on craft project
 - ★ Imagination Activity: encourages imaginative play, writing, or drawing
 - ★ Get Real Activity: focuses on real-world experiences for parent and child
 - Bookmark, which lists both the featured titles and additional titles
 - Survey for parents
3. Send the packet home with your student. Encourage parents to keep the parent information sheet, the activities, and bookmark, and return the books and survey to you when they are finished reading and exploring. You might want to include a due date slip with the packet to ensure return of the books.
4. Let Reading Rockets know what you think of this resource for families by e-mailing us through our website: www.readingrockets.org/contact. Click on "Reading Adventure Packs"

START YOUR READING ADVENTURE!

Welcome

Dear _____

Exploring new ideas and enjoying books with you sends a powerful message to your child: Reading and learning are fun, and happen everywhere — not just at school. This Reading Rockets reading adventure pack about **birds** was created to help you and your child enjoy reading and learning together.

Start your learning adventure by reading some books with your child about this popular topic. Then explore the topic with three activities. Enclosed you'll find what you need:

- How to use your reading adventure pack
- Two books to share with your child
- Three related activities
- Bookmark with a list of other books to extend the fun, if you wish
- Short survey to tell me if you enjoyed using the packet

The “how to” sheet, bookmark, this parent information sheet, and the activities are yours to keep.

When you've finished with the materials, please return the books and the completed survey to school in your child's backpack. Please return the Reading Rockets activity packet by _____ .

I hope you'll enjoy reading and learning together!

Teacher signature

To learn more about children's books, reading with your child, and information about helping kids become confident readers, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org



Reading Adventure Packs: Hands-on fun & learning from Reading Rockets
Find more themes and activities at ReadingRockets.org/readingadventurepacks

How to use your Reading Adventure Pack

Getting ready

1. Before you read the books to your child, be sure to read them yourself.

One book is fiction — a “make-believe” story. The other book is nonfiction, or informational and true. Reading the books first will give you the “inside scoop” to the twists and turns of the story, the interesting information inside, and the parts of the books that will appeal most to your child.

2. Next, read the three activities to see which of them you think your child will enjoy most, and which one you have the time and materials on-hand to do right away. Chances are, after you read one (or both) of the books with your child, he or she may want to do an activity right away.

Start the fun

3. When you know you’ll have at least enough time to read and talk about one of the books, grab your child and a book, and dive right in. Start with the fiction selection. Talk about the cover of the book with your child — can he guess what it is about? Have they ever read a book by the same author or illustrator or about the same topic?

Read the book to your child. If you are using the fiction title, you will be sharing a make-believe story. As you read and explore the pictures, you should note to your child that the author might include real facts in fiction writing. Talk with your child about how to confirm factual information found in works of fiction. Then, try the nonfiction book or one of the activities.

4. When you read the nonfiction book, take a moment to explain to your child the difference between the two types of books. The fiction book told a made-up, make-believe story, and a nonfiction book focuses on real people, places, and things. The information in nonfiction books can answer lots of questions and confirm facts. You don’t have to read a nonfiction book straight through.

5. Feel free to pick and choose from the activities, or change them to suit your child’s interests. Read the books again over the next few days and try different activities. Most important: have fun!

When you’re done...

6. Keep the bookmark, the activities and this page. Complete the survey and return it with the books to your child’s school.

Make the most of the excitement the books create, and try some hands-on learning or make-believe fun. Exploring new ideas alongside you lets your child see you learning — and reading — too, and gives your child personal experiences to support her growing knowledge.

Tips for reading nonfiction books with kids:

- Wonder out loud. As you are reading, or after talk about facts you find interesting or questions you have.
- Show your child how to use the table of contents, section headings, index and word list (glossary) to find answers to specific questions.
- Don’t be afraid to jump around, reading pages that especially interest your child. You don’t have to read a nonfiction book straight through.

Tips for reading fiction books with kids:

- Take your time and talk about the story with your child. Ask your child questions.
- Explore the pictures with your child.
- Read with expression. Change your voice or how fast you read to create excitement. Ham it up!
- You don’t need to read every word. Keeping your child interested is the goal.



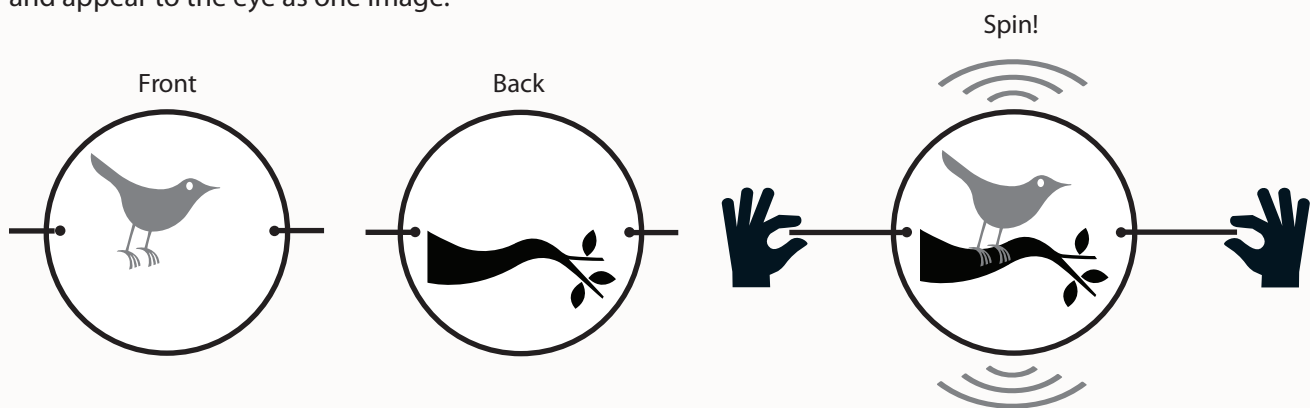


The eyes have it

Vision is the most important sense for birds. Their good eyesight makes safe flight possible. Birds also rely on their keen vision for finding food, detecting predators and choosing a mate. Birds see much better than humans do — especially things that move really fast or very slowly.

Birds also do a lot of their own moving around. Focusing on seeing movement will help your child locate birds outside. Making and playing with a **thaumatrope** or “wonder turner” can help your child think about how people and animals see moving objects and get all eyes ready for bird watching adventures.

A **thaumatrope** (pronounced THO-ma-trope) is a simple toy that was popular in the 1800s. The thaumatrope has two pieces of string attached to a paper disk that features a different picture on each side. When the strings are twirled quickly, the two pictures rapidly alternate so that they blend together and appear to the eye as one image.



What you'll need

- Heavy paper or cardstock
- Pencil and markers
- A glass, cup or something to trace to make a circle
- Glue, scissors and a ruler
- String

Directions

1. Explain to your child what a thaumatrope is and how the optical illusion works. Ask your child to imagine how he could show bird activities with this toy. Where has he seen birds? What has he noticed birds doing? Perching on a branch? Sitting on a nest? What two pictures could he draw that, when put together, will make one interesting new picture of a bird? *(continued on next page)*

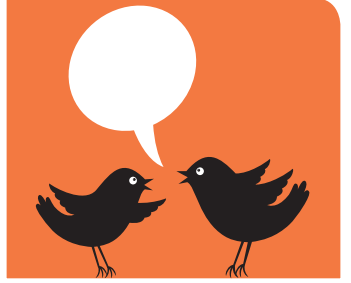


The eyes have it

Thaumatrope (continued from previous page)

2. Have your child draw and cut out two identical circles, 3" to 5" in diameter from heavy paper or cardstock. Then use a pencil to lightly draw a horizontal guideline through the center of the circle. Hold both circles together. About 1/4-inch in from both sides on the line, poke a small hole through both circles.
3. In the center of one circle, have your child draw a bird. On the other circle, have him draw a branch, nest or whatever else he imagines his bird is doing.
4. With one picture right side up and the other upside down, your child should glue the backs of the two circles together. One picture must be upside down or the illusion won't work.
5. While glue dries, measure and cut two two-foot lengths of string. Knot the ends of each string together. Thread one loop through each hole in the circle then pass the string back through the loop to secure it to the circle.
6. Have your child hold a string in each hand and twist the strings back and forth between his thumbs and fingers to spin the circle and see his two pictures as one! What happens when he changes how fast or slow he spins the string? What other images could he experiment with? Could he make a thaumatrope that creates an illusion of a bird in flight?

Stop, listen and look



In getting to know birds, using your ears is just as important as using your eyes. Head outside with your child to listen, locate and identify birds.

What you'll need

- Paper and pencil
- Bandana or something else to use for a blindfold
- Bird field guide

Directions

Find a place where you and your child can sit outside quietly and comfortably. Put the blindfold over her eyes. Let her know you are covering her eyes so that she can focus on using her sense of hearing instead of sight.

Spend 10-15 minutes listening carefully to the sounds around you. What does she hear? Have your child describe the sounds or name all the things she hears, from passing cars to leaves rustling to bird calls. Write a list of what she reports hearing.

Take off the blindfold and talk together about what's on the list. Did she hear some things at the same time? Was she able to hear distinctive sounds? Did she hear any sounds that she couldn't identify? Was there ever a moment when she heard no sounds at all? How does she think that careful listening will help her find and identify birds?

Now get ready to spend some more time quietly listening—and looking. As your child listens for bird songs or calls, have her start looking for birds based on where the sounds she hears are coming from.

As she spots birds:

- Have her write down what she observes the bird doing while it's making the sound. Ask her how she thinks what the bird is doing relates to its song.
- Have your child draw the bird and make notes about its sounds and songs. Ask your child to think of words or phrases that sound like each bird's song and will help her remember the bird.
- Use your bird guide to try and identify each bird by how it looks and how it sounds. Your bird guide should include information about bird songs and calls, such as the American Robin's "cheeryup cheerily" and "teek" and "tuk tuk tuk."

Your child's notes and drawings are the start of a birding journal! Give her a binder or blank book to keep her notes and drawings and encourage her to head outside often to continue to record the sights and sounds of birds.



Build a bird

Get your child thinking more about how the shapes and sizes of birds' beaks, feet and wings help them to survive and thrive in specific environments when your child makes a unique bird sculpture of a bird from his imagination.

What you'll need

- **Natural birds:** acorns, nutshells, twigs, leaves, seeds, pinecones
- **Lego birds:** Lego bricks of all shapes, sizes and colors
- **Clay birds:** modeling clay in all colors and wire for foundational armature and feet
- **Paper birds:** construction paper or heavy paper to cut, fold and glue or tape
- **Fabric or felt birds:** fabric, felt, yarn, scissors, needle and thread
- **Recycled birds:** items from the recycling bin like toilet paper tubes, small plastic containers, twist ties, plastic bags, bottle lids, etc.
- **Books** about birds

Directions

Together, take a close look at pictures of birds in books. Talk with your child about some of the things that make a bird a bird — like feathers, wings, beaks, feet — and how these physical adaptations are characteristics that help a bird survive in its environment. For example, the shape of beaks is important to each kind of bird that feeds in a particular habitat, such as the cardinal's short, thick, cone-shaped beaks for cracking seeds or the heron's straight, pointed bill for spearing fish. Take some time to look at the wide variety of bird adaptations and environments.

Then ask your child to think about what kinds of adaptations a bird might need in a very unusual environment with peculiar sources for food, like a bird that lives in your laundry room and eats lint from the dryer or a bird that nests in ocean flotsam (think Great Pacific Garbage Patch) and eats shoelaces.

Let your child imagine a habitat and food source then challenge him to build a bird adapted to survive in that environment. He may want to sketch out his ideas first and think about details of other adaptations, like feather color or patterns. When he's ready to build, talk together about what kinds of building materials would be a good fit for making the kind of bird he has in mind.

As he builds, encourage your child to tell you about how the features he creates for his bird would help the bird survive in its environment.

To add the finishing touch to this new feathered friend, tune in to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds Bird Guide (www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/search) to listen to recordings of bird songs. Then have your child invent a song and call for his bird and record his sound effects while taking video footage of his bird sculpture.



Featured Fiction

- Albert* by Donna Jo Napoli
- Aviary Wonders Inc. Spring Catalog and Instruction Manual: Renewing the World's Bird Supply Since 2031* by Kate Samworth
- Hey, Al!* by Arthur Yorinks
- Sparrow Girl* by Sara Pennypacker
- Welcome, Brown Bird* by Mary Lyn Ray

Featured Nonfiction

- The Boy Who Drew Birds: A Story of John James* by Jacqueline Davies
- Crinkleroot's Guide to Knowing the Birds* by Jim Arnosky
- Look Up! Bird-Watching in Your Own Backyard* by Annette Cate
- Olivia's Birds: Saving the Gulf* by Olivia Boulter
- Pale Male: Citizen Hawk of New York City* by Janet Schulman

Field Guides

- Birds of North America* (Kaufman Focus Guides) by Kenn Kaufman
- Peterson Field Guide to Birds of North America* by Roger Tory Peterson
- The Sibley Guide to Birds* by David Sibley



READING ADVENTURE PACKS
Parent Survey

Parents: Cut out the bookmark for your child to keep. Return the survey to your child's teacher, along with the book(s).

Tell us about your experience with the activities:

- Easy and fun to do
- The directions were difficult to understand
- My child enjoyed the activities

Did talking about what you were reading, and the activities help your child to learn? (on a scale of 1 to 5)

1	2	3	4	5
				(learned a lot)
(did not learn much)				

Would you like to try another "read and learn together" activity with your child?

- yes
- no

What kinds of things is your child interested in?

Your name (and your child's name)
