



Pipsqueaks, Slowpokes, and Stinkers:

Celebrating Animal Underdogs

By Melissa Stewart

Illustrated by Stephanie Laberis

About the Book

Puny? Poky? Clumsy? Shy? This lighthearted look at the surprising traits that help some animals survive offers a gentle message of understanding and celebrating differences. Stephanie Laberis's bright, bold—and scientifically accurate—illustrations add to the fun.

Themes

Animal behavior, animal survival techniques, defense against predators, humor, recognizing and accepting personal differences, strengths and weaknesses

Before You Read

- After discussing the terms *pipsqueak*, *slowpoke*, *stinker*, and *underdog*, invite children to share what they think the book will be about.
- Do they think underdogs are worth celebrating? Why or why not?

After You Read

- Work with the children to make a list of the animals in the book. Then ask them to describe how each animal's featured characteristic helps it survive in its habitat.
- **Option A:** Invite children to draw a picture of the animal in *Pipsqueaks, Slowpokes, and Stinkers* that they think should get the Coolest Characteristic Award, and then write a sentence or two (grades K-2) or paragraph (grades 3-5) explaining why.
Option B: Encourage students to draw a picture of the animal in *Pipsqueaks, Slowpokes, and Stinkers* that surprises them the most or that they like or connect with the most, and then write a sentence or two (grades K-2) or paragraph (grades 3-5) explaining why.
Option C: Some of the animals in *Pipsqueaks, Slowpokes, and Stinkers* are endangered. Invite children to draw a picture of the animal they'd most like to save, and then write a sentence or two (grades K-2) or paragraph (grades 3-5) explaining why.

If you send your students' work to melissa@melissa-stewart.com, Melissa will share them on her blog or social media.