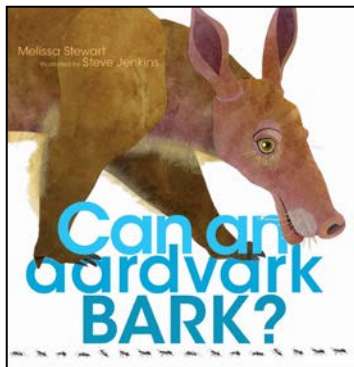




Teacher's Guide



Can an Aardvark Bark?

by Melissa Stewart

Illustrated by Steve Jenkins

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Ages 5-9

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Barks, grunts, squeals – animals make all kinds of sounds to communicate. With a growling salamander and a whining porcupine, bellowing giraffes and laughing gorillas, this boisterous book is chock-full of fun and interesting facts and is sure to be a favorite of even the youngest animal enthusiasts.

Themes

- Animal adaptations
- Animal communication
- Animal defenses
- Animal senses

Teaching Suggestion

The two levels of text in this book make it ideal for Reading Buddy programs, which are now popular at many schools. For more information, please see:

<http://www.melissastewart.com/pdf/scirdbuddies.pdf>

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BEFORE YOU READ

Work with students to create a list of wordless sounds that humans make. Possibilities include laughing, humming, whining, and groaning. Invite a volunteer to make each sound. Then ask the rest of the children how they think a person feels when he or she makes that sound.

After recording the students' responses on chart paper, let your class know that you're going to read a book about sounds animals make. Can the children think of any sounds that might be in the book? Do they think any will be the same as the human sounds on their list? What is their rationale?

AS YOU READ

After reading the first four pages of *Can an Aardvark Bark?*, invite a volunteer to make a grunting sound. Ask the class: *When would a person make a grunting sound? What would he or she be trying to communicate?*

Next, work with the children to list when and why the animals in *Can an Aardvark Bark?* grunt. Then ask: *Do any of the animals grunt for the same reason as people? Explain your evidence.*

Repeat this process after reading the pages that begin, "Lots of other animals whine too." and "Lots of other animals laugh too." Your final data table should look similar to this:

Sound	Animal	When and Why
Grunt	Aardvark	When travels
	River otter	When plays, grooms
	Hamadryas baboon	Greeting
	White-tailed deer	Say it's the boss, announce location
	Oyster toadfish	When angry, afraid
Whine	North American porcupine	Attract mate
	Black bear	See mom, when wresting
	Mosquito	Find one another
	Beaver	Ask for food
	American martens	So larger martens won't attack
Laugh	Eastern gray kangaroo	When see mom
	Laughing kookaburra	Announce location
	Spotted hyena	Invite others to feast
	Rat	When play, express happiness
	Gorilla	When tickled, express happiness

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AFTER YOU READ

Invite the class to look carefully at the information in the data table. Ask your students: *What do you notice? Do you see any patterns?* Record their ideas on chart paper.

(Encourage a wide variety of observations, but make sure the students realize that (1) animals use sounds to communicate many different messages and (2) one sound can mean many different things.)

Next, ask your class, *What do you think is the main idea of Can an Aardvark Bark? Explain your rationale.* Provide support as needed until the children realize that the book's final sentence is the main idea. Then work with your class to identify supporting details.

Grades K-2

Divide the class into small groups. Give Groups 1 and 2 an index card with the words "beaver" and "spotted hyena" written on it. Give Groups 3 and 4 an index card with the words "white-tailed deer" and "laughing kookaburra" written on it. Give Groups 5 and 6 an index card with the words "black bear" and "eastern gray kangaroo" written on it.

After each group uses the information in the class data table and *Can an Aardvark Bark?* to determine what the two animals on its card have in common, invite them to discuss how that similarity might help the animals survive. Then pass out drawing paper and encourage each child to use words and pictures to record the group's ideas. Some students may wish to share their drawings with the rest of the class.

Grades 3-5

Divide the class into five groups – Hamadryas baboons, New Zealand fur seals, Beavers, American martens, and Gorillas. Invite each group to use information in the class data table and *Can an Aardvark Bark?* to determine which of the five senses (seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, smelling) its assigned animal uses to receive the information that prompts it to make sounds. (ANSWERS: seeing – Hamadryas baboons, New Zealand fur seals, American martens; feeling – Beavers, Gorillas)

Let your class know that when an animal's senses **receive** (collect) information about its surroundings, they send messages to the animal's brain. The brain quickly **processes** the information to make meaning out of it. Then the brain sends out messages that tell the body how to **respond**.

Encourage the groups to create a diagram that shows how their assigned animal receives, processes, and responds to information in *Can an Aardvark Bark?* Then ask the groups to make a second diagram that shows how they predict other animals will receive, process, and respond to the assigned animal's actions. Allow time for each group to share its visual models with the rest of the class.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

All Grades

On October 12, 2005, Fabiano de Oliveira Calleia, Fabio Rohe, and Marcelo Gordo became the first scientists to observe a margay making high-pitched squeals like a baby pied tamarin monkey. The hungry hunter was trying to lure curious adult monkeys, so that it could attack them. Invite student volunteers to pretend they are the three scientists and act out making this incredible discovery. Then ask younger students to draw a picture of the scene. Encourage older students to write a journal entry in which they describe the thrill of making the discovery.

Grades K-2

After reading *Can an Aardvark Bark?* and *Bird Talk: What Birds Are Saying and Why* by Lita Judge, divide your class into small groups and encourage students to compare the two books. How are they similar? How are they different? Which book do they like better? Why?



As the group discussions wind down, give each child a piece of drawing paper and encourage students to use words and pictures to explain either two ways the books are similar or two ways the books are different.

Grades 3-5

After reading *Can an Aardvark Bark?*, ask your class: *What do you notice about the format of this book? How is it organized?* (There are two layers of text. The larger, main text presents a main idea. The smaller, secondary text presents supporting details.)

After re-reading just the main text, review the six major nonfiction text structures (description, sequence, cause and effect, compare and contrast, question and answer, and problem-solution) with your students. Then ask: *What is the text structure of Can an Aardvark Bark?* (question and answer)

Let your students know that nonfiction writers often experiment with different text structures and choose the one that they think works the best. After dividing the class into small groups, give each child a copy of Handout 1 (at the end of this guide), and explain that it has excerpts of the main text from three early drafts of *Can an Aardvark Bark?*

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Encourage group members to work together to (a) identify the text structure of each version and (2) create a bulleted list of the key characteristics of that version.

(ANSWERS: Version 1: compare and contrast, Version 2: question and answer, Version 3: description). You may wish to use the following excerpt from the printed book as an example:

Can an aardvark bark?

No, but it can grunt.

Lots of other animals grunt too.

Can a seal squeal?

No, but it can bark.

Lots of other animals bark too.

Can a wild boar roar?

No, but it can squeal.

Lots of other animals squeal too.

Can a porcupine whine?

Why, yes, it can!

Text structure: Question and answer

Brief description:

- The answer to most of the questions is “No,” but the porcupine example surprises us because the answer is “Yes.”
- Alternate two-page spreads have a rhyming pair, such as aardvark-bark and seal-squeal.
- There is a pattern to the sound words. An aardvark can't **bark**, but it grunts.
- A seal can't *squeal*, but it **barks**. A wild boar can't roar, but it *squeals*.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Melissa Stewart is the award-winning author of more than 180 books for children. She holds degrees in biology and science journalism and serves on the board of advisors for the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. Melissa speaks frequently at conferences for educators and is available for school visits.

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ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Steve Jenkins has written and illustrated dozens of books for young readers, including the Caldecott Honor-winning *What Do You Do with a Tail Like This?* His books have been called stunning, eye popping, inventive, gorgeous, masterful, extraordinary, playful, irresistible, compelling, engaging, accessible, glorious, and informative. He lives in Colorado with his wife and frequent collaborator, Robin Page, and their children.

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HANDOUT 1

Excerpts of the Main Text from Early Drafts of *Can an Aardvark Bark?*

Version 1

Some animals bark.

And some animals bellow.

Some animals whistle.

And some animals whine.

Version 2

Which animals bark?

Frogs, gorillas, owls and geckos.

Which animals bellow?

Deer, koalas, gators, hippos.

Which animals chirp?

Sparrows, chipmunks, shrews and crickets.

Which animals chatter?

Mice and lemurs, squirrels and kinglets.

Version 3

Creatures call out,

night and day.

This is what they have to say:

"Hello, friend."

"Please, choose me!"

"Hey, look out!"

"Set me free!"