

Growing Readers Review

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Tiny Scientists

When do children begin to explore the important topics of science and mathematics? We may have an image of children in elementary school, but perhaps the path of curiosity, exploration, and discovery begins when an infant experiences the taste and texture of an object she puts in her mouth. Along the way, a toddler goes beyond rote counting and learns the actual meaning of the number two. And a preschooler watches day by day as a seed placed in a cup of dirt becomes a plant with tomato blossoms.

Young children are inquisitive, filled with questions about the world around them. Children's literature can both answer questions and stimulate growing interests.

One Foot Two Feet, An EXCEPTIONal Counting Book offers a fresh look at counting to ten. Children can follow along a number line as one of each item—a foot, a mouse, a tooth—is compared to many. A little lesson on irregular plural nouns and a search game are thrown in for good measure. What a colorful way to learn to count.

What about a lesson on animate versus inanimate objects? Too advanced for a young reader? Not if the lesson is taught through the questions asked in *Do You Know Which Ones Will Grow?* "If an owl grows and becomes an owl, can a washcloth grow and become... a towel?" Youngsters can make their choices, and then lift the flap to test their answers in this page by page discovery of what is alive and what is not.

Ecology is another big scientific topic that becomes accessible and fascinating to young readers in *Meadowlands: A Wetlands Survival Story*. Through text and lovely watercolors, this book demonstrates the resiliency of the earth when there is a determined effort to repair it.

Very young children can explore the worlds of science and mathematics through hands-on experiences, observation, and books that make these topics come alive. These books could be the beginnings of a life-long interest.

By Susan C. Bremner, EdD

BOOKS OF EXCELLENCE

PRESCHOOL

Do You Know Which Ones Will Grow?

Written by Susan A. Shea; illustrated by Tom Slaughter

"If you look around you'll see, some things grow, like you and me. Others stay the way they're made, until they crack, or rust, or fade. Do you know which ones will grow? Think, then answer YES or NO."

Children are drawn into a series of challenging questions that encourage them to consider whether or not something lives and grows. Could it make sense that if a duckling can grow into a duck, then a car can grow into a...truck?! Incorporate the element of surprise and suspense with fold-out pages that reveal the rhyming sequence and soon children will be anticipating the words.

"If a calf grows and becomes a cow, can a shovel grow and become...a plow?"

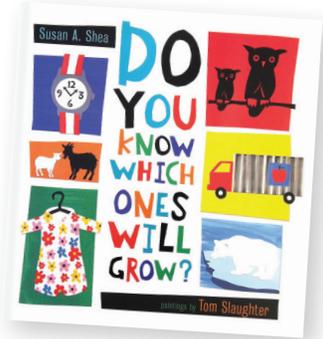
Preschoolers who are already excited by the fundamentals of biology will take their discovery to a new level as they question and reflect on the science of growing. Uproarious illustrations of watches growing into clocks or sweaters growing into coats will amuse and teach children and adults alike. Coupled with a pleasant rhyming cadence, this book makes learning fun.

The crescendo is the most important discovery of all—"If a joey grows and becomes a kangaroo, can a baby grow and become YOU? YES to a jumping kangaroo. YES to a living, growing you!

About the Author/Illustrator:

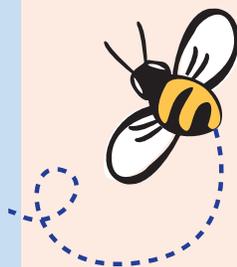
This is **Susan A. Shea's** first book. As a former elementary school teacher, she combines her love for learning with her love for reading in this debut.

Tom Slaughter is an acclaimed painter whose works have been shown in exhibits around the world. He has worked with Durham Press for over 20 years and currently has prints on display in the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art.



Your Brain on Fiction

Children and adults read to learn or just for pleasure. But is it possible that much more is going on? In the *New York Times* March 17th edition, author Annie Murphy Paul writes that neuroscience is showing us that reading novels helps us understand the world of others. Novels may prepare us for actual interactions. Even preschoolers are able to use what they learned from stories in real-life situations. To read the full article, Internet search for "Your Brain on Fiction."

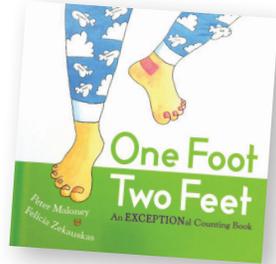


INFANT/TODDLER

One Foot, Two Feet

Written and illustrated by Peter Maloney and Felicia Zekauskas

You might call this a child's first grammar book — but one that will be read over and over! This imaginative book explores the singular and plural forms of some of our most pesky English words in a way that will delight children and have them asking for more. From “One Foot, Two Feet” to “One Goose, Four Geese,” children will be urged to read on to see the next set of drawings that use counting and a peek-a-boo page format that's pretty irresistible. The illustrations are simple, yet each page contains some small and surprising elements that will delight. This book is bound to be a toddler favorite.

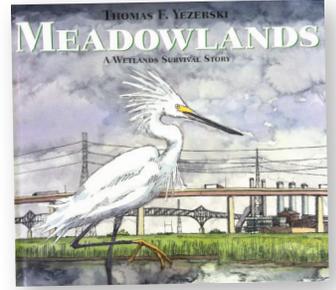


SCHOOL AGE

Meadowlands: A Wetlands Survival Story

Written by Thomas F. Yezerksi

From the top of the Empire State Building in New York City, you can see a flat, wet place in New Jersey. This place is called the Meadowlands. And in this Book of Excellence we watch this piece of land transform through the centuries. From being dammed up, drained, built over, and polluted, the Meadowlands still showed signs of life. With the help of activists, government, and ordinary people, the Meadowlands are recovering. Yezerksi's story is written with insight and clarity, and his illustrations are accurate and detailed. School-age children will enjoy this book, especially the border art, which labels the artifacts and organisms found in the Meadowlands.



NOTABLE BOOKS

Home for a Bunny

Written by Margaret Wise Brown; illustrated by Garth Williams
Infant/Toddler

After more than fifty years in print, this story of a bunny's search for a home is still a toddler favorite.

Moo, Moo, Brown Cow, Have You any Milk?

Written by Phillis Gershator; illustrated by Giselle Potter
Infant/Toddler

A new version of an old favorite nursery rhyme with some lessons about animals and a perfect cadence for bedtime.

999 Tadpoles

Written by Ken Kimura; illustrated by Yasunari Murakami
Preschool

999 Tadpoles turn into frogs and go on an adventure, including surviving a snake and a hawk, to find a larger pond. Delightful illustrations complement the story.

If Rocks Could Sing

Written and illustrated by Leslie McGuirk • Preschool

Rocks that look like every letter of the alphabet will have children searching their environment for their own found objects.

Ten Little Caterpillars

Written by Bill Martin Jr.; illustrated by Lois Ehlert • Preschool

Ten little caterpillars walk through beautiful flowers and gardens and introduce the reader to many wonderful discoveries. The final discovery is sure to be a favorite with young readers!

A Butterfly is Patient

Written by Dianna Hutts Aston; illustrated by Sylvia Long
School Age

Lush illustrations accompany the story of metamorphosis, perfectly set for young readers of science.

Swirl by Swirl: Spirals in Nature

Written by Joyce Sidman; illustrated by Beth Krommies • School Age

Spiral shapes are interesting and mysterious and can be found everywhere. Sleeping hedgehogs, breaking ocean waves, and calla lilies all celebrate this unique shape.

