

Teachers' Guide

for

Hug a Bug

by

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About Storyteller Lynn Ruehlmann:

Lynn has been a professional storyteller since 1990. She has taught storytelling at Old Dominion University, she was named Artist of the Year by Young Audiences of Virginia, and she won a Folio Award for Best Actress in a Comedy. Her CDs, "Spy! The Story of Civil War Spy Elizabeth Van Lew," "It Happened in the White House," and "Mischievous: Tales of a Daydreamy Child" have won four national awards.

Welcome to "**Hug a Bug**," a show and an activity guide about real bugs and bugs in stories and imagination!

1. The story, "**Sinukuan and the Mosquito**," is from the Philippines.

It is what is called a cumulative story (which is what makes it a good story for letting the audience do refrains).

As a cumulative story progresses, more and more characters or events are added in order to come to the resolution of the plot. So in this story, first, bird has a problem, and blames it on frog, who then blames it on turtle, who blames it on firefly, until it is discovered that the final, actual culprit is mosquito.

Can your students think of other stories of this type? How about "Gingerbread Man" or "Little Red Hen" or the song, "There Was an Old Woman Who Swallowed a Fly?" Find copies in the library to read and sing with them, and compare how the stories evolve.

2. I hope your students enjoyed the mantis mask and his string trick! People often confuse walking sticks with mantises, so here's how to tell the difference:



A praying mantis can turn its head 180 degrees to see prey. They're all about eyes: they have 2 compound eyes and 3 simple eyes behind the compound eyes! They hold their front legs so it looks like praying, but their reflexes are so quick, humans can hardly see them grab their prey.

Here's a link for more information and for the source of this photo:

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/bugs/praying-mantis/>



Walking sticks can be from a tiny $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long to a huge 13 inches long! They are even better at hiding than the praying mantis, but not nearly as fast, and they can't swivel their heads. Here's a link for more information and this photo.

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/bugs/stick-insect/>

3. Puppets

I had a lot of fun creating the two puppets in this show. When I was talking to a friend about writing the program, "Hug a Bug," we brainstormed anything to do with bugs, and she started singing the song, "Shoe Fly, Don't Bother Me!" We got to thinking about how funny it could be to take this literally. So I went to a thrift store to look for a perfect shoe. I was there with another friend, telling her what I was looking for, and why. A complete stranger heard me talking and brought me the perfect shoe—and she got it right! Later, my daughter insisted Shoefly had to have a proboscis, and that led to the red slinky I found at the Dollar Store. It goes to show how much fun and how helpful it is to hear other people's ideas when creating found object puppets.

Talking about Shoefly is a great opportunity to tell your students more about the proboscis: a long appendage on an animal's head that is used for eating or sucking. Butterflies and flies have them, and even an elephant's trunk is a proboscis.

Let your students make found object puppets—it's fun to limit your ingredients to a theme. For instance, use things found in a kitchen: fold a potholder in half diagonally, so it's all one big mouth. You can add pompoms or buttons for eyes, or a copper scouring pad for hair! What could you make with an old fashioned rotary egg beater? What kind of a puppet could you make with just paper and crayons and other school supplies? (Other than drawing on the paper, of course!)

4. **"Ape and the Firefly"** (from the Philippines) and **"Rat and Beetle's Race"** (from Brazil) are both examples of Pourquoi or Why stories.

Have your students brainstorm things that are significant, unusual or just plain interesting about specific bugs: how big the eyes are on the praying mantis, how skinny a walking stick is, what enormous double wings a dragonfly has, what beautifully colored wings butterflies have.

Then help them brainstorm ideas from their imaginations about how these things came to be.

Once they've got some ideas, let them share one of their ideas with a partner, so they can feel out how to make their story interesting to a listener. This will get them ready to write their stories—they can't write until they know what to say! Once the stories are written, they can read their story to another partner.

Having students make up pourquoi stories is a great way to help them use their imagination and enjoy writing about it. You can pair this activity with some scientific information about the bugs' attributes.