

Winter's Coming

BY JAN THORNHILL, ILLUSTRATED BY JOSÉE BISAILLON

Target grades: Kindergarten, 1, 2
Reading levels: Fountas & Pinnell: N
Lexile® Measure: AD 780L

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Lily, a young snowshoe hare, is surprised to notice the leaves changing color in her forest home. She hears from a passing flock of birds that “Winter’s coming.” Lily doesn’t know who or what Winter is, but it must be frightening. Why else would the birds be escaping South? Why else would the squirrel be hiding his food? As Lily learns the ways in which her forest friends prepare for winter’s arrival, she becomes more and more worried about what *she* should be doing. Finally, the brown bear points out that Lily has been preparing without even knowing it: her fur is thickening and turning white to help her camouflage in the changing weather.

KEYS TO THE STORY

After reading *Winter’s Coming* aloud, ask students:

- **Who** is the main character in the story?
- Are there other animal characters in the story? **Who** are they? Could the story happen without them? If so, **what** would the events of the story be?
- Are there any human characters?
- **Where** does the story take place/**What** is the setting? **How** does the setting change as the story moves along?
- Does Lily have a problem at the beginning of the story? **What** is it?
- **When** do the events of the story change? Do you hear about the change in the text or do you only see it in the illustrations?
- **How** does Lily respond to the change? **How** does the story end?

Additionally, ask Second Grade students to think about why Lily’s physical changes are revealed in the illustrations but not mentioned in the text. Ask: How would your experience of the story have been different if, from the very first streak of white, each page had mentioned how much of Lily’s coat had changed color?

READING LITERATURE STANDARD 1

RLK.1 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

RL 1.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

RL 2.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING STANDARD 2

SLK.2 Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.

SL 1.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

SL 2.2 Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

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READING LITERATURE STANDARD 5

RLK.5 Recognize common types of texts (e.g., storybooks, poems).

RL 1.5 Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.

READING LITERATURE STANDARD 5

RL 2.5 Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

IS IT TRUE?

Kindergarten

Read *Winter's Coming* aloud. Then, being certain that students reference specific details in text and illustrations, ask: Is *Winter's Coming* a true book? What clues do you find in the text and illustrations that let you know that it is *not* a true book? Is there a section of the book that is true? Does the title of this section give you a clue that it is true?

First Grade

After reading *Winter's Coming* aloud, read a selection of primary-level informational books about animals in winter. Consider these titles:

- *Gone Again Ptarmigan* by Jonathan London (National Geographic, 2001)
- *I See Animals Hiding* by Jim Arnosky (Scholastic, 1995)
- *Over and Under the Snow* by Kate Messner (Chronicle, 2011)

Then, ask students to describe the major differences between *Winter's Coming* and informational texts about animal camouflage in winter. Following this discussion, introduce students to the section of the book entitled "Animal and Environment Facts." Ask: How do we know that this section of the book is informational text?

THE BEGINNING LEADS TO THE END

Second Grade

Engage students in a discussion about the beginning of *Winter's Coming*. Author Jan Thornhill sets the stage by describing the season at the outset of the story. Ask: What clues in text and illustrations let you know what season it is? As the story progresses, the season changes. Ask: What season is it at the end of the story? Does the author repeat any character actions in both the beginning and the end of the story to tie them together?

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Kindergarten

Once you have discussed the story and shared individual responses, invite students to return to the illustrations and discuss which moment in the story each illustration captures. Ask: The text on these two pages says ____; which part of the text did illustrator Josée Bisailon choose to illustrate?

First and Second Grade

Discuss which illustrations Josée Bisailon used to further describe characters, setting, and events. Ask: Which illustrations tell you more about the characters in the story? Which illustrations tell you more about the setting of the story? Which illustrations are most helpful in understanding the events of the story? Why?

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STANDARD 7

RL K.7 With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).

RL 1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

RL 2.7 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

WRITING STANDARD 7

WK.7 Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of books by a favorite author and express opinions about them).

W 1.7 Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of "how-to" books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions).

W 2.7 Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).

WRITING STANDARD 8

WK.8 With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

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W 2.8 Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

A DISAPPEARING ACT

Winter's Coming is an animal adaptation story set in a north woods habitat. After reading the book aloud and discussing the advantages of Lily's white fur in winter, introduce or review the scientific concept of camouflage. Ask students to think of other animals that employ camouflage and discuss the habitats in which those animals live.

Next, invite students to join you in a short research and writing project about animal camouflage. Your project might be full-class for Kindergarten and Grade One and either small-group or individual for Second Grade.

Supply students with informational resources written at appropriate Lexile and text complexity levels for their information gathering. Consider using the following resources:

- Hidden in Nature series by Martha E. H. Rustad (Pebble Plus, 2009)
 - *Animal Camouflage in the Forest*
 - *Animal Camouflage in the Ocean*
 - *Animal Camouflage in the Snow*
 - *Animal Camouflage in the Desert*
- Rainbow of Animals by Melissa Stewart (Enslow Elementary, 2009)
 - *Why Are Animals Blue?*
 - *Why Are Animals Red?*
 - *Why Are Animals Orange?*
 - *Why Are Animals Green?*
 - *Why Are Animals Yellow?*
 - *Why Are Animals Purple?*

Offer students a list of animals from which to choose (either from resources you have gathered or from the list below) in order to answer the following questions: How does your selected animal employ camouflage? How does the camouflage protect the animal in its habitat?

- Snowy owl
- Tree frog
- Leaf frog
- White-tail deer
- Walking stick (insect)
- Leaf katydid
- Thorn bug
- Octopus
- Arctic fox
- Leaf-tail gecko
- Praying mantis

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