

# *Around One Log*

*Chipmunks, Spiders, and  
Creepy Insiders*

Activities, Lessons,  
and Tons  
Of Really Neat Ideas



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# Around One Log: Chipmunks, Spiders, and Creepy Insiders

Anthony D. Fredericks  
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## Selected Citation:

*"I love this little book! The fun rhyming verses provide a great introduction to common forest critters you can find in your own backyard, while also teaching about forest cycles and decomposition. Plus as the story builds, it repeats, which is an excellent introduction technique for young children. I'd recommend it to any early or elementary educator as a low-cost field trip."*

- Jackie Stallard, Manager of Education  
Programs, Project Learning Tree,  
American Forest Foundation

## Summary:

Years after a great oak tree tumbled to the ground, a whole community of animals made it their home. Roly-polies and daddy longlegs prowled here and there, while chipmunks and salamanders dashed everywhere. Is the old tree alive? Or is it now dead?

## Suggested Grade Levels: 1-4

## Lesson Objectives:

Science Standards

- Content Standard A: Science as Inquiry
  - Abilities necessary to do science inquiry (K-4, 5-8)
  - Understanding about science inquiry (K-4, 5-8)
- Content Standard C: Life Science
  - The characteristics of organisms (K-4)
  - Organisms and environments (K-4)
  - Populations and ecosystems (5-8)
  - Diversity and adaptations of organisms (5-8)
- Content Standard F: Science in Personal and Social Perspectives
  - Characteristics and changes in populations (K-4)

## Critical Thinking Questions:

1. What did you find most enjoyable about this book?
2. What was the most amazing "log" animal?
3. Which of the animals would you like to learn more about?
4. What did you enjoy about the artwork in this book?
5. How is the forest similar to, or different from, where you live?
6. How are so many different animals able to live together in one place?
7. Why are rotting logs so important?

## Literature Extensions

### **Invite students to select one or more of the following:**

1. Invite students to locate a fallen tree somewhere in their community or an area close by. Invite them to take photographs of the fallen tree or log over a period of several weeks or several months. Invite students to post the photos on a large bulletin board and provide a specific caption (and date) for each picture. Invite them to discuss any differences between photos.
2. Encourage students to imagine that they are one of the creatures in the book. Ask them to create posters that say "Save Our Home." They may wish to include a full-color drawing of their creature and write a convincing ad for saving the rain forest.
3. As an extension of the activity above, invite students to assume the role of one of the creatures in the book. Encourage each student to write a "thank you" note to humans for their efforts in preserving the creature's environment.
4. Invite students to make a collage of all the animals listed in the book. They may wish to cut out photographs and illustrations from a collection of old magazines or environmental catalogs. The collages can be posted throughout the classroom, library, or school.
5. The forest is filled with an enormous variety of birds. Students may wish to create a series of bird feeders and compare the variety of birds in their part of the country with the variety of birds that inhabit a forested area. Here are some simple feeders students can build:
  - Cut a half-circle from the plastic lid of a coffee can. Nail or tape a small board to the side of the can and put some birdseed inside. Put the lid back on, so that it covers the bottom half of the can, and lay the feeder outside.
  - Cut an orange in half. Scoop out the insides and make four small holes around the edge. Tie pieces of string to the holes around the orange half, fill it with birdseed. and hang it in a tree.
  - Tie a string to a pinecone. Fill the crevices in the cone with peanut butter and roll the cone in some birdseed. Hang the cone from a tree branch.
  - Tie a string to the stem of an apple. Roll the apple in some fat or bacon grease and then roll it in some birdseed. Hang it from a tree branch.

6. Divide the class in half. One half can be “predators” and the other half can be “prey.” A “predator” is matched up with a “prey.” The pair is encouraged to construct a book or poster on the life of a forest predator trying to catch its prey and the prey’s attempt at escape. Illustrations should also be added.
7. This book lends itself to a delightful readers theatre adaptation. Invite students to create a readers theatre script using the creatures in this book along with a narrator. They may wish to use words or phrases from the book or create their own original dialogue for the critters.
8. There are several Internet sites that are ideal for students wishing additional information about forests. Invite your students to check out some of the following:
  - <http://lsb.syr.edu/projects/cyberzoo/coniferous.html>
  - <http://www.gp.com/EducationalinNature>
  - <http://www.fw.vt.edu/dendro/Forsite/contents.htm>
  - <http://www.sierraclub.org/ecoregions/boreal.asp>
  - <http://lsb.syr.edu/projects/cyberzoo/deciduous.html>
  - <http://www.fw.vt.edu/dendro/Forsite/contents.htm>
9. Invite students to pretend that they are moving to a forested region somewhere in the world. Encourage students to write a postcard about their life in the forest to a family member who stayed behind.



## **Comprehension Lesson** (Chapter Slam)

### **Setting the Stage:**

Invite students to list everything they know about the forest. Students may wish to do this individually or as members of small groups.

### **Before Reading:**

Ask students to group all the items on their lists into various categories (students select the category titles or designations). After students have assigned a name to each group of items, ask them to arrange the categories as though they were a table of contents for a book. Again, this can be done on an individual basis or in small groups.

Invite students to write a “book” about the topic of “The Forest” or “A Rotting Log” using the categories (above) as chapter titles. Encourage students to write as much about each topic as they can, summarizing what each section is about. If students get stuck, allow them to make up what they don’t know.

### **During Reading:**

Invite students to read the book (or listen to a read-aloud). Encourage them to listen for specific information that may (or may not) be compatible with the pre-reading categories they selected earlier.

### **After Reading:**

After students have finished reading *Around One Log* invite them to write another “book” and compare it (orally) with the one generated at the beginning of the lesson. Students will undoubtedly discover that some of their previous perceptions about rotting logs and forests have changed.



## CHAPTER SLAM

Make a list of all the terms, vocabulary, and words you know that would pertain to the forest or to rotting logs:

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Now, organize those words into various categories. Create a name or title for each category.

<b>Category #1 Name:</b>
<b>Words:</b>

<b>Category #2 Name:</b>
<b>Words:</b>

<b>Category #3 Name:</b>
<b>Words:</b>

Using the category names above as chapter titles, write a "book" (or tell a story) about the forest. If you get stuck, you can make up what you don't know. You'll be able to change your "book" (or story) after reading ***Around One Log***.

## ***Animal Scramble***

Listed below are some of the animals featured in ***Around One Log***. For each one, look in other books or on the Internet to obtain the requested information.

### **Termites**

Where it lives:

Food it eats:

Size/dimensions/colors:

Fascinating fact:

### **Roly-poly**

Where it lives:

Food it eats:

Size/dimensions/colors:

Fascinating fact:

### **Garter Snake**

Where it lives:

Food it eats:

Size/dimensions/colors:

Fascinating fact:

### **Daddy Longlegs**

Where it lives:

Food it eats:

Size/dimensions/colors:

Fascinating fact:

### **Chipmunk**

Where it lives:

Food it eats:

Size/dimensions/colors:

Fascinating fact:

# The Important Thing is....

Why is a rotting log important? How does a rotting log make a difference in your life? Read ***Around One Log*** to discover the answers to these questions. Then, complete each of the sentences below:

1. The important thing about a rotting log is\_\_\_\_\_

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2. The important thing about a termite is\_\_\_\_\_

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3. The important thing about a salamander is\_\_\_\_\_

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4. The important thing about a garter snake is\_\_\_\_\_

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5. The important thing about a daddy longlegs is\_\_\_\_\_

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6. The important thing about a community of animals is\_\_\_\_\_

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# What If?

Think about the importance of a rotting log. Why is it important for the animals living there? Why is it important for humans? Now, put on your thinking cap and decide what some of the consequences might be for each situation below.

1. What if all the rotting logs in the world were eliminated? What would be the effect for the animals living in each one?

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2. What if all "rotting log" animals became extinct? What would be the overall effect on forest life?

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3. What if all the forests in the world were to suddenly disappear. What would be the consequences?

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4. What if there were no more insects? What effect would that have on life in the forest?

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# Rotting Log Dictionary

Create your own "Rotting Log Dictionary." For each of the letters of the alphabet gather words or phrases related to forests or rotting logs. You may wish to consult several forest-related books or Web sites. Can you find at least one word or phrase for each letter of the alphabet? How many words or phrases can you locate for a single letter? A few samples have been filled in for you.

A -

B -

C - Chipmunk,

D - Decomposition,

E -

F -

G -

H -

I -

J -

K -

L - Log,

M -

N -

O -

P - Prey,

Q -

R -

S - Salamander,

T - Trunk,

U -

V -

W -

X -

Y -

Z -

## ***Dear Author....***

Pretend that you are writing a letter to the author of ***Around One Log*** – Anthony D. Fredericks. How would you complete the following?

Dear Author:

I really liked ***Around One Log***. Here are the three most important things I learned from reading your book \_\_\_\_\_

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Here are two things about rotting logs I would like to share with other people

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Here is one more thing I would like to learn about a log \_\_\_\_\_

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Thank you for writing an interesting book.

Sincerely,

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(your name)

## Sentence Challenge

On each line below, create a sentence about a rotting log or the forest that follows the specific rule. Make sure each sentence is more than four words long. The first one has been done for you.

1. A sentence in which every word begins with a vowel

An old oak is an amazing environment.

2. A sentence that does not have the letter **r** in it.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. A sentence in which every word ends with an **s**.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. A sentence that does not have a long vowel.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. A sentence in which every word has the letter **t**.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. A sentence in which every word begins with the last letter of the previous word.

\_\_\_\_\_

7. A sentence in which every word has one less letter than the previous word.

\_\_\_\_\_



## Guided Reading Lesson Plan

Following is a guided reading lesson plan that you may wish to use with *Around One Log*. As with any lesson plan, please feel free to modify and adapt this design according to the needs of your students and your classroom reading/science program. Also, consider this plan as a blueprint for the design and delivery of your own guided reading lessons with a variety of other ecosystem-related materials.

<b>Setting the Stage</b>	Before passing out copies of the book to members of a guided reading group, read – out loud - the summary of the book on the back cover. Afterward, invite students to make some predictions about the book. What do they think they will learn in this book? What is the significance/importance of forests? What kind of animals will they read about? Take a few minutes to discuss and share all predictions.
<b>Before Reading</b>	Invite students to participate in a K-W-L activity. Ask students to talk about what they already know about forests (or logs). Write this information in the “K” section of a K-W-L chart. Encourage students to categorize the information they have volunteered. Students may wish to create a semantic web of this data. Invite students to make predictions about the types of information the book will contain. Write these predictions on a chalkboard or large sheet of newsprint. Ask students to generate their own questions about the book. These can be discussed and recorded in the “W” – What we want to find out – section of the chart.
<b>During Reading</b>	Invite students to read the book and record any answers to their questions. Students may wish to do this individually or in pairs.
<b>After Reading</b>	Upon completion of the book, provide students with an opportunity to discuss the information learned and how that data relates to their prior knowledge. Talk about questions posed for which no information was found in the book. Help students discover other sources for satisfying their inquiries.
<b>Literature Extensions</b>	<b>Invite students to select one or more of the following:</b> 1. Invite students to imagine that they are in a forest. What types of plants or animals do they see? What are some of the geographical or geological features in that forest? Invite students to assemble a “forest information book” that could be distributed to local travel agencies, other classes in the school, or community organizations.

2. Invite small groups of students to each assemble an almanac of various forest animals. Students may wish to assemble descriptions of the ten most amazing forest animals or they may wish to develop a booklet of the most endangered forest animals or even forest animals that have become extinct. Make these available for sharing in the school library.
3. Invite students to write imaginary letters to other students telling them about life in the forest. What would they say about the day to day living in a forest? What would they want to share with other students?
4. Invite students to log on to several Internet sites about forests. Invite students to create their own forest web site – one that provides specific information about forests for students. This information may include specific plants or animals, a description of specific forests, everyday products obtained from the forest, forest preservation efforts, etc. Students may wish to survey other classes for appropriate information to include in their web site.
5. Invite students to post an oversized map of the world on one wall of the classroom. Ask them to research major forest areas around the world. Ask students to write a brief description of each major forest on an index card and then post each card around the perimeter of the map. Push a pin in the location of the forest location and string a length of yarn from the forest location to its appropriate index card. What do students notice about the locations of major forests? Where do most of them occur?

