

# NEA's Read Across America 2012

## Community Reading Chest Classroom Activity Guide



### Emphasize the concept of community as you celebrate NEA's Read Across America in 2012!

The annual celebration of Dr. Seuss's March 2nd birthday is meant to commemorate reading, learning, and community. This Community Reading Chest is filled with suggestions for school-wide and classroom-based activities designed with extensions for simple or elaborate Community Connections to help you connect your students with the people and places of their own neighborhoods and to places like the Street of the Lifted Lorax and Mulberry Street.

**In participating in Read Across America, you and your students are joining a community of millions—an entire nation of readers! Use the Community Reading Chest to:**

- Bedeck the readers in your community with festive Lorax-inspired headwear
- Build on the Lorax's message and bring it to your community through student writing, film, and activism
- Beautify your community and grow readers with *The Lorax* and *The Cat in the Hat's* Learning Library
- Learn how to knit your community together by finger knitting a Truffula Tree Bookmark
- Celebrate 75 years of *And to Think that I Saw It on Mulberry Street* with streetwise writing activities for all ages

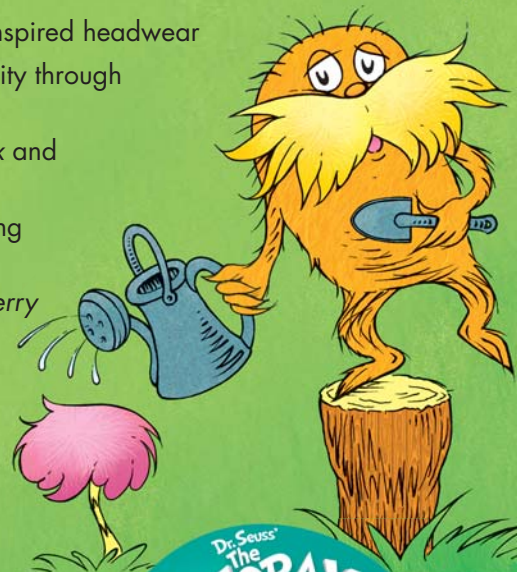


RandomHouse.com/teachers  
NEA.org/readacross

Dr. Seuss properties TM & © 2011 Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P. All Rights Reserved.

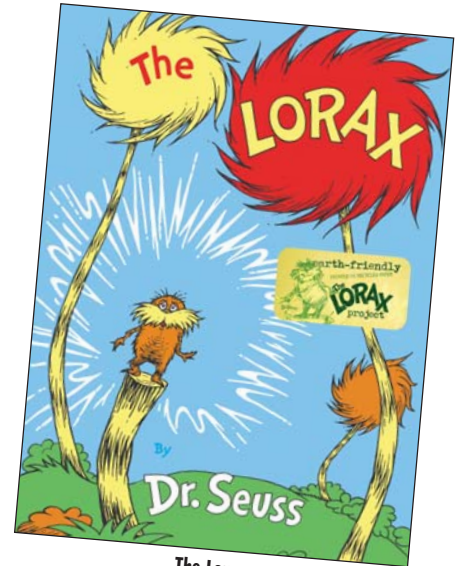
TM & © 1997 Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P., and NEA. Cat in the Hat image.  
TM & © 1957 Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P. All Rights Reserved.

The movie Dr. Seuss' *Lorax* © 2012 Universal Studios. Based on *The Lorax* book and characters TM & © 1971 Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P. All Rights Reserved.

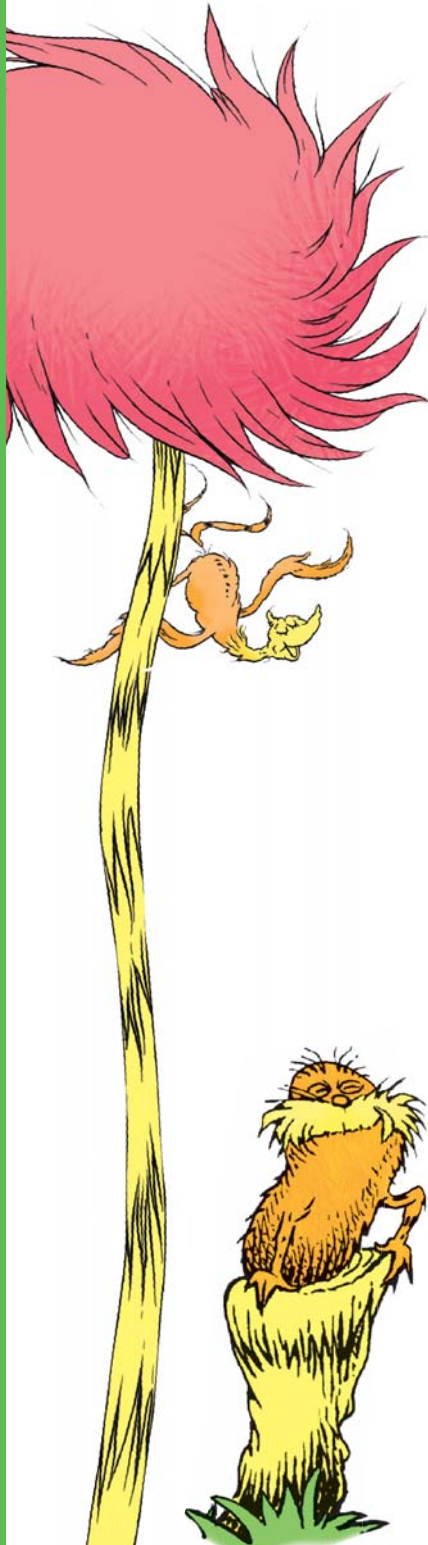


# THE MANY HATS OF THE LORAX

In communities in all 50 states, folks are most often caught “red-hatted” on NEA’s Read Across America Day. While the red-and-white stripes of the Cat in the Hat’s hat are popular on March 2, the Lorax leads the way to other hats that are fun to make and wear on Dr. Seuss’s birthday.



The Lorax  
HC: 978-0-394-82337-9  
GLB: 978-0-394-92337-6



## Recycled Reading Hat

Hats say a lot about who we are. Police officers wear one kind of hat, chefs another. Football players wear a helmet, the French wear berets. A hat can tell us about a person’s personality, occupation, heritage, religion, and more. This special hat for Read Across America Day tells everyone what you like to read!

This hat says “I reuse and recycle,” because it is made from old newspapers or used paper grocery bags. For a folded newspaper hat, there are several styles to choose from. Try the traditional sailor triangle or the bishop’s hat ([WikiHow.com/Make-a-Paper-Hat](http://WikiHow.com/Make-a-Paper-Hat)). For the paper bag hat, try the Big Hat model [EnchantedLearning.com/crafts/hats/big](http://EnchantedLearning.com/crafts/hats/big), or design your own pattern.

Next check the paper recycling bin for colored scraps to add decorative details and for white paper that’s blank on one side for kids to depict their own colorful rendition of the cover of a favorite book. Attach student book covers to the fronts, backs, or all around the hat!

## Tree Hat

The Once-ler could only appreciate the Truffula Tree for what he could make from it—not for itself or all it provided. Here’s a hat to help students get in touch with the trees around them and make something from them without causing harm.

Head out into the school yard or to the park with your students and bring large sheets of paper (at least 11x17), masking tape, and large crayons (with paper peeled off). Gather around a tree and take a really close look. Ask for observations and introduce vocabulary. Is it a home or *habitat* for birds, squirrels, or insects? Does it have leaves or needles? Does that make it *deciduous* or *evergreen*? Encourage explorations and observations that use different senses: How does it smell? What kind of texture does the bark have?



Let students have paper and crayon. Have them press the paper horizontally up against the bark of the tree and gently rub the side of the crayon on the paper in one direction until the pattern of the bark appears. (Use masking tape to secure paper onto the tree for smaller hands.) Once everyone has covered their entire paper with a rubbing, turn it into a tree hat by rolling it into a tube and running a piece of tape along the inside. If your students want to further decorate their hats, have them leave flowers, leaves, and green growing plants alone and let them pick up twigs or dead leaves on the ground. Now everyone is ideally attired for a reading of *The Lorax* under a tree.

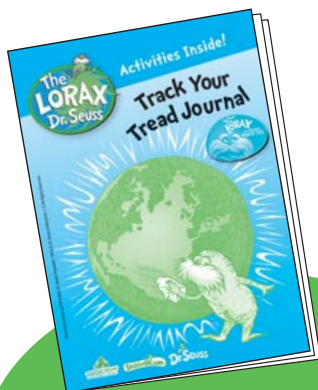
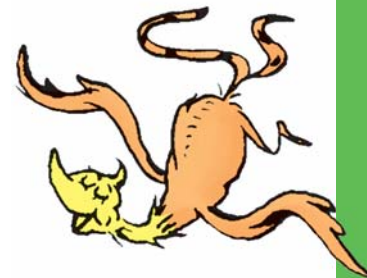
### Read a Good Hat

The Poetic Leaf Hat, *non bai tho*, is a traditional Vietnamese hat, handmade from materials of nature like bamboo and palm leaves. Its simple conical design is useful as protection from hot sun and driving rain, but it offers even more—words of inspiration. Inside of the hat, one finds poems, proverbs, and often scenic pictures inserted in the leaves of the hat.

Kindle student creativity by encouraging them to develop expressive headgear of their own. Have them research and read about the development of the conical hat and why it survives in Vietnamese culture. Then have students reflect on their own culture and environment, thinking about the Once-ler’s words, “Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.” Have them each design and create a hat that suits their environment and includes a personally relevant poem or message about what the Once-ler and the Lorax mean by “unless.”

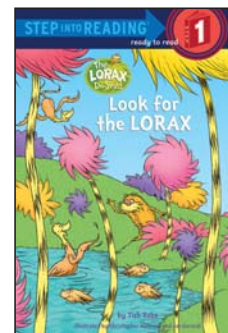
### Community Connection

- Invite guest readers who know a lot about recycling and keeping your community green, like refuse and recycling collectors, mass transit workers, energy engineers, and urban and regional planners. Have students make your guest readers a Recycled Reading Hat to wear when they read aloud and share details about their work.
- Work with the public library, shopping mall, or community center to promote reading and Read Across America with a public display of creative student hat-making efforts that asks, “Have you read a good hat today?”



Visit [Seussville.com](http://Seussville.com)  
to print out Track Your  
Tread Journals  
for your students

**NEW!**



**Look for the Lorax**  
PB: 978-0-375-86999-0  
GLB: 978-0-375-96999-7



**The Lorax Pop-Up!**  
HC: 978-0-375-86035-5



# THE LORAX IN YOUR CLASSROOM AND COMMUNITY

## Starring the Lorax!

*The Lorax* movie is in theaters in March 2012. It's time for your class to start working on the sequel! But before a sequel can appear on the big screen, it needs a story. Read *The Lorax* aloud to your class and then work together to map the plot of the story. Looking at the most significant events in the book, have students make suggestions for plausible cause-and-effect chains that could continue the story of the Lorax, the Once-ler, and the Boy willing to pay. Discuss beginning sentences and, as a group, select one to start your story. Continue your sequel as a collaborative writing project by having each student add the story's next sentence after reading what the previous student wrote. Pass the developing story around the room until everyone has had a chance to contribute. Read the entire story aloud and discuss revisions as a class, continuing the editing process until the group reaches agreement and comes up with a title for their sequel. If time and technology permit, film a dramatization of your story and offer a special NEA's Read Across America premiere!

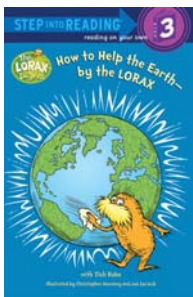


## Community Connection

- Line up a guest reader who knows what it takes to bring a story to TV or the big screen. See if a representative from your local public television station can visit and speak with your students about the PBS Kids show *The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That!* or arrange for a visit to the station to see firsthand how the Cat travels the airwaves.

## Author! Author!

The Lorax has written his own book! *How to Help the Earth—by the Lorax* has lots of good advice for kids on simple things they can do to reduce, reuse, and recycle. It is everyone's responsibility to take care of our natural resources and to care for what is being treated carelessly. Plan to publish your own version of *How to Help the Earth* written by your entire school! Set up a suggestion box to collect student ideas for conservation, environmental awareness, recycling, dealing with pollution, and celebrating the earth. Have an editorial team of teachers and students select contributions and compile suggestions and others to work on design, layout, and illustrations. Publishing your title as an ebook in PDF format, makes it easy to post on your school website, email to parents, and promote in your community as well as saving money, paper, and trees!



**How to Help the Earth—by the Lorax**  
PB: 978-0-375-86977-8  
GLB: 978-0-375-96977-5

## Community Connection

- Check with your local library to see if they would include either a print or electronic version of your school's book in the library's collection. Also check with your nature center, botanical garden, or children's museum to see if they would be interested in a copy or in helping promote your school's efforts.



## Blooming with Books

Ted Geisel's artistic talents extended far beyond his books to painting, sculpture, and even gardening. He believed gardening to be another form of art and enjoyed creating a tranquil, lush outdoor environment to share with his friends and family at his home in La Jolla, California. Dr. Seuss was also concerned about the environment beyond his garden and wanted to make the world aware of the consequences of indifference to nature—and he did with the publication of *The Lorax*.

When you take your students outside, they can learn about their environment and work to improve it. A school garden provides students with abundant opportunities for creative thinking and meaningful active learning. But developing a school garden takes time, organization, and a plan for long-term support. These resources can help you decide if pursuing a school garden is right for your school:

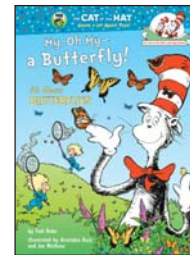
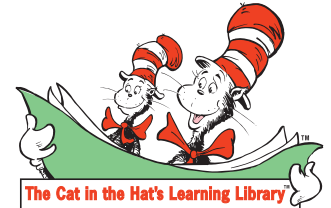
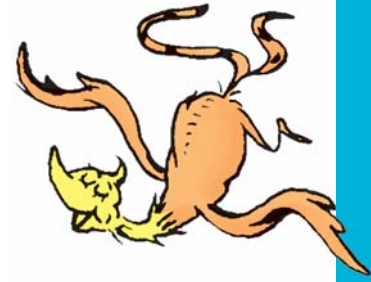
- Kids Gardening (National Gardening Association): [KidsGardening.org](http://KidsGardening.org)
- School Gardens (University of Florida Institute of Food & Agricultural Sciences): [GardeningSolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/schoolgardens/school\\_gardens](http://GardeningSolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/schoolgardens/school_gardens)
- School Garden Wizard (United States Botanic Garden and Chicago Botanic Garden): [SchoolGardenWizard.org](http://SchoolGardenWizard.org)

## If breaking ground for a school garden on Read Across America Day isn't possible, you could:

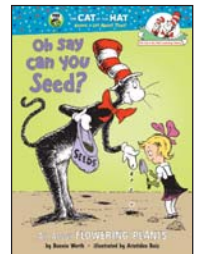
- Read aloud *My, Oh My—a Butterfly!*: *All About Butterflies* from the Cat in the Hat's Learning Library. Then make plans to help butterflies in your community as you plant milkweed seeds in containers for transplanting later to an area with other native nectar-making plants and bushes.
- Share *Oh Say Can You Seed?*: *All About Flowering Plants* from the Cat in the Hat's Learning Library. With this background knowledge, the importance of the last Truffula Tree seed in *The Lorax* becomes ever more apparent. Have students design a seed packet for a Truffula Tree seed. Have them include diagrams, pictures, as well as descriptions that would appeal to the Lorax. If you like, you even could give each student one seed to include in their packet—the flowers of Celosia Pampas Plume, commonly known as plumed cockscomb, bloom in many of the same vibrant colors of the Truffula Tree and have masses of soft feathery plumes.
- Visit other gardens and natural places through books and video. The Cat in the Hat's Learning Library can help students explore interesting habitats in *Would You Rather Be a Pollywog?*: *All About Pond Life* and *If I Ran the Rain Forest: All About Tropical Rain Forests*. Online video clips at [PBSLearningMedia.org](http://PBSLearningMedia.org) of animals in their own habitats and interviews with scientists can enrich and reinforce what was shared in a read aloud. And a discussion of kids' own habitats—their homes—can lead back to Read Across America and how to create a reading environment at home.

## Community Connection

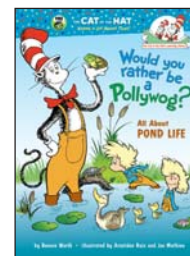
- Get to know your neighbors and what they like to read. Dedicate a tree at school or in your community as a reading tree—a place where readers of all ages can enjoy a good book under the shade of its branches—and invite everyone in your neighborhood to decorate it with colorful hanging tags featuring their names and the title and author of their favorite book.



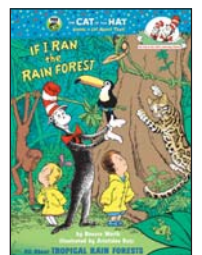
**My, Oh My—  
a Butterfly!**  
**All About Butterflies**  
HC: 978-0-375-82882-9  
GLB: 978-0-375-92882-6



**Oh Say Can You  
Seed?: All About  
Flowering Plants**  
HC: 978-0-375-81095-4  
GLB: 978-0-375-91095-1



**Would You Rather  
Be a Pollywog?:  
All About Pond Life**  
HC: 978-0-375-82883-6  
GLB: 978-0-375-92883-3



**If I Ran the  
Rain Forest: All About  
Tropical Rain Forests**  
HC: 978-0-375-81097-8

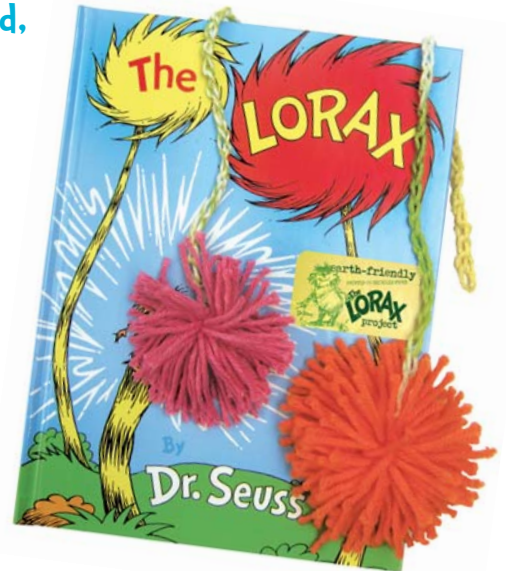


# FINGER KNIT A TRUFFULA TREE BOOKMARK

“And with great skillful skill and with great speedy speed,  
I took the soft tuft. And I knitted a Thneed!”

While the Once-ler’s Thneed-knitting factory split apart and destroyed the Lorax’s community, you and your students can use knitting to bring your community together. Learning the process of connecting little loops of yarn to create a fabric can unite your students with community members and with each other.

Instead of knitting a Thneed, your students can finger knit a better “Fine-Something-That-All-People-Need” —a bookmark! Finger knitting is a simple way to knit a chain of yarn without using knitting needles. The yarn chain is the tree trunk and a pom-pom is the bright-colored tuft of the Truffula Tree bookmark. You’ll need a ruler, worsted weight yarn in bright colors (about 35 feet per bookmark), and scissors. Make one of your own first so you can demonstrate.



## Instructions:

- Start with the tree trunk. Measure a length of yarn (about four feet) and make a loose loop around the top knuckle of your left index finger (or your right if you are left-handed). Tie the loop with a granny knot but make sure the loop can easily slide off your finger. (Note that tiny hands will need help tying a knot on their own finger.) Let the tail of the tied end rest in the palm of your left hand.
- Take the remaining length of yarn (let’s call this the working end) and wrap it once around your index finger, stopping above your knot. You should have two loops of yarn around your finger.
- Let go of the working end and use your right hand to lift the bottom loop over the top loop and all the way over your index finger. Now you have one loop on your finger and the first loop of your yarn chain.
- Wrap the working end of the yarn around your index finger again and then lift the bottom loop over the top loop as you did before. Keep doing this until your chain is about 10 inches long.
- To finish, instead of wrapping another top loop, take your index finger out of the remaining loop. Insert the last of your yarn through the loop and pull it tight to close your chain. Trim loose ends and your tree trunk is ready!

**Now take more yarn to make a pom-pom for the Truffula tuft. Depending on hand size, you’ll need between 20 to 30 feet of yarn.**

- First, measure and cut two 12-inch pieces from your 20–30 feet and set them aside.
- Make a peace sign or letter “V” with your left index and middle fingers. Take your remaining yarn and wind it around the “V” near the top knuckles, leaving space between your fingers as you wind. Depending on hand size, you’ll need to wind around about 30–60 times.
- When you’re done winding, take the two 12-inch pieces you cut earlier and push them through between your fingers under the wound yarn at the bottom of the “V.” Loosely tie the yarn pieces around the yarn between your fingers and then slip the yarn off your fingers.
- Tighten your loose ties now with a triple knot. You should have two sets of loops on each end. Use your scissors to cut open the loops and then hold the tying yarn ends to shake out your pom-pom.

**Take the tying yarn ends of the pom-pom and poke them through the last chain loop of your tree trunk. Tie the ends on tightly then trim their length with scissors to match your pom-pom. Now you have a Truffula Tree bookmark to hold your place in your favorite books!**



Visit the  
Random House  
channel on



for a finger knitting  
demonstration

## Community Connection

- Tiny fingers will need helping hands to learn finger knitting. Invite older students, parents, or members of the community to join in. Reading *The Lorax* aloud and making the bookmarks can be a fun activity for NEA's Read Across America Day or a cause for celebration when your students present a gift of Truffula Tree bookmarks to their reading buddies, senior citizens, the local library, or a nature center.
- Caring corners of your community—your local hospital, shelter for the homeless, children's agency, or senior center—would love to have knitted items. Your students can combine their finger-knit chains (use four fingers to create a double chain for a wider knit piece) and sew a small blanket or several striped scarves. You could also invite retired teachers, senior citizens, or members of a local knitting group to read with your students and then teach them to knit squares or rectangles that can be sewn together to create larger items to donate. If you have trouble locating a recipient group in your community, these national organizations can help:
  - Craft Yarn Council and Warm Up America! Foundation: [TeachKnitandCrochet.org](http://TeachKnitandCrochet.org)
  - Project Linus: [ProjectLinus.org](http://ProjectLinus.org)
  - The Snuggles Project and Hugs for Homeless Animals: [SnugglesProject.org](http://SnugglesProject.org)

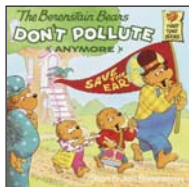
Consider alternatives to buying yarn and knitting needles for knitting projects:

- Make your own "yarn" out of old T-shirts or plastic bags by cutting them into long thin strips and knotting the strips together
- Recycle yarn by unraveling unwanted sweaters, single mittens, or other knitted items
- Sharpened colored pencils or wooden chopsticks are great knitting needles for beginners

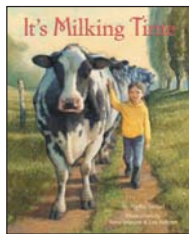


## More Books About Our Environment

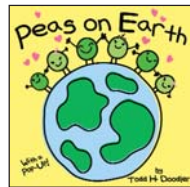
### Early Readers



**The Berenstain Bears Don't Pollute (Anymore)**  
PB: 978-0-679-82351-3



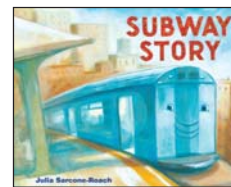
**It's Milking Time**  
HC: 978-0-375-86911-2  
GLB: 978-0-375-96911-9



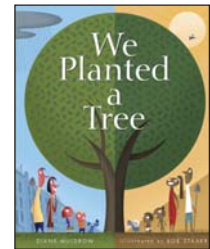
**Peas on Earth**  
BR: 978-0-307-93088-0



**Rosie Sprout's Time to Shine**  
HC: 978-0-375-86721-7  
GLB: 978-0-375-96721-4



**Subway Story**  
HC: 978-0-375-85859-8  
GLB: 978-0-375-95859-5

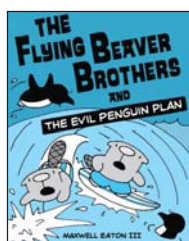


**We Planted a Tree**  
HC: 978-0-375-86432-2  
GLB: 978-0-375-96432-9

### Middle Grade



**Chomp**  
HC: 978-0-375-86842-9  
GLB: 978-0-375-96842-6

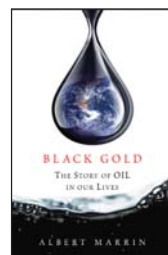


**The Flying Beaver Brothers and the Evil Penguin Plan**  
PB: 978-0-375-86447-6  
GLB: 978-0-375-96447-3



**The Flying Beaver Brothers and the Fishy Business**  
PB: 978-0-375-86448-3  
GLB: 978-0-375-96448-0

### Young Adult



**Black Gold: The Story of Oil in Our Lives**  
HC: 978-0-375-86673-9  
GLB: 978-0-375-96673-6



# SPARK IMAGINATION WITH DR. SEUSS'S VERY FIRST BOOK FOR CHILDREN!

## Write Up Your Alley

With the publication of *And to Think that I Saw It on Mulberry Street* in 1937, Theodor Seuss Geisel became known to the world as Dr. Seuss. In Dr. Seuss's very first children's book, a plain horse and wagon on Mulberry Street launches the imagination of Marco, a young boy on his way home from school who is looking for something interesting to tell his father about his walk through the neighborhood.

Reading *And to Think that I Saw It on Mulberry Street* is a wonderful way to launch the imaginations of young aspiring authors and connect them with their community. After reading the book aloud, hold a discussion about exaggeration, embellishment, and what Marco's father means by "turning minnows into whales." You might also talk about how everyday, ordinary things can become extraordinary when transformed by imagination and described with interesting language and illustrations.

## Try one or more of these story prompts with student writers:

### Walk in Marco's shoes—for smaller feet

Pretend that you are Marco. Use your imagination to transform the horse and wagon into another kind of animal-powered transportation. Draw your ideas and write one or more descriptive sentences.

### Walk in Marco's shoes—for bigger feet

Seeing a horse and wagon on the street in our day and age would be unusual and something worth sharing. But 75 years ago, horses and wagons were still used for transportation. Pretend that you are Marco and that you have traveled through time from 1937 to the year 2012. Imagine and write about a modern street scene based on Marco's 1937 knowledge and point of view.

### Draw from reality

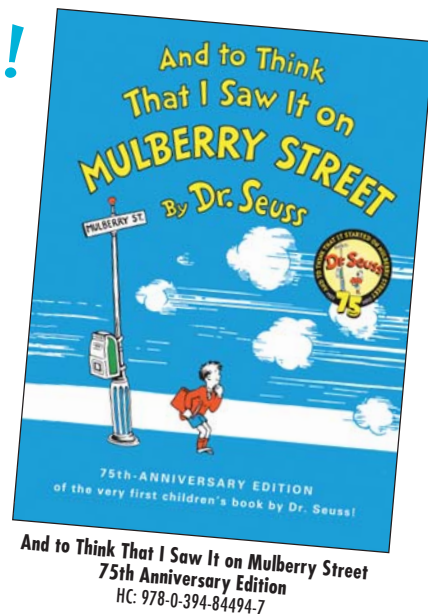
Dr. Seuss wanted readers to take a look at the world around them. Use both your powers of imagination and observation to describe something you saw on the way to or from school. Write two versions of your description: one that is realistic and accurate, and one that is a fantastical flight of imagination.

### How to Get to Mulberry Street

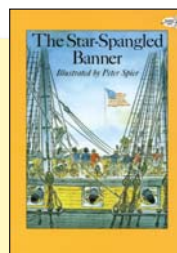
Use Google Maps or Google Earth street view to explore a real Mulberry Street. Visit Mulberry Street in Dr. Seuss's hometown of Springfield, Massachusetts, or search for a Mulberry Street nearby. On Mulberry Streets in big cities like New York, you'll find lots of activity. Write a poem about an object you see on Mulberry Street and try to find some new way of looking at the object. You can even write the poem from the perspective of the object.

### Community Connection

- Invite parents and community members to school to celebrate NEA's Read Across America Day, making it special with invitations, decorations, and refreshments. Kick off the event by having a special guest read *And to Think that I Saw It on Mulberry Street* aloud. Form small groups of students and adults to co-author their own first book together. Provide story starters and encourage group members to take turns developing the plot of the story and building upon each other's ideas. A sample story starter might be, "And to think that we saw it on \_\_\_\_\_ Street," which could become a story about what's important or fun about the street or community where you live.



AND  
don't forget about  
NATIONAL ANTHEM  
DAY  
on MARCH 3rd!



The Star-Spangled Banner  
PB: 978-0-440-40697-6



Francis Scott Key's  
Star-Spangled Banner  
PB: 978-0-375-86725-5  
GLB: 978-0-375-96725-2