

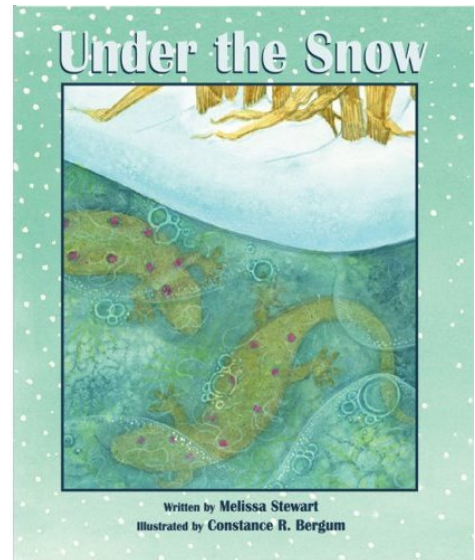
Under the Snow

~READERS THEATER~

Script based on the book by Melissa Stewart.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Using clear, simple language, *Under the Snow* offers young readers a lyrical look at the surprising ways animals living in fields, forests, ponds, and wetlands spend the chilly winter months. Some fish and insects rest, but others stay active. Voles spend their days burrowing through the snow. Red-spotted newts dodge and dart, whiz and whirl just below the ice.



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Ages 4-8 | Nature | Nonfiction

GETTING STARTED

Many readers theater scripts have just ten or twelve parts, but this script has a role for every student in an average-sized class. The script also includes four separate choruses (one for each habitat), and everyone in each chorus group should read this line together.

As written, the script includes twenty-two animal parts and a narrator. The animal parts vary in difficulty, to accommodate children at a variety of reading levels. The narrator text is the most challenging. It can be read by an adult or by an advanced young reader.

If you are working with a small group, some students can perform two roles. If you have a large group, some children can share a role or you can divide the narrator role into four parts, one for each habitat (field, forest, pond, wetland).

After you have matched students with parts, ask the class to read through the script a few times. As the children practice, provide as much support and advice as needed.

PLANNING THE PERFORMANCE

When the children feel confident about their roles, you may want to set out a variety of art supplies and ask the students to make identification tags, animal hats, or even animal costumes to wear during the performance. Children acting as narrators may want to wear mittens, hats, and scarves.

During the final reading, the students can stand in four separate groups (one for each habitat) or the script can be performed as four separate acts, so that there is always an audience.

UNDER THE SNOW

~READERS THEATER~

Chorus 1: **Under the snow in a field . . .**

Narrator: Ladybugs pack themselves into a hole in an old stone wall.

Ladybug 1: I like spending the winter with all my friends. It's like having a giant slumber party!

Ladybug 2: Not me. I wish I had a little elbow room.

Narrator: A snake rests inside another hole in the same wall.

Snake: I curl up tight and fall a-s-s-s-sleep.

Narrator: What does a vole do under the snow?

Vole: I tunnel through the white, fluffy stuff all winter long.

Narrator: A chipmunk snoozes in an underground nest.

Chipmunk: *Chip! Chip! Churp! Churp!* Sometimes I wake up to snack on nuts and seeds.

Chorus 2: Under the snow in a forest . . .

Narrator: A mourning cloak butterfly rests in a pile of brush.

Butterfly: I'm saving up all my energy for spring.

Narrator: What's inside that rotting log? Look, it's a centipede.

Centipede: Winter weather cools my body so much I can barely move.

Narrator: A bumblebee queen rests in a nearby crack.

Bee: It's nice to take a break after such a *bzzzzz*-y summer.

Narrator: A wood frog hides in leaves on the forest floor.

Wood frog: *Quack, squawk, quack!* Winter doesn't bother me. I can freeze solid and still survive.

Narrator: A woolly bear caterpillar snoozes just a few inches away.

Caterpillar: I curl up my body, so my head almost touches my tail.

Narrator: Just below the ground, a spotted salamander waits out the coldest months of the year.

Salamander: If winter's here, can spring be far behind?

Narrator: Deeper underground, a woodchuck sleeps soundly all winter long.

Woodchuck: *Chuck, chuck!* Do you think I'll see my shadow on February 2nd?

Chorus 3: Under the snow in a pond . . .

Narrator: A bluegill circles slowly through the chilly water.

Bluegill: *Glug! Glug!* I sure wish I had enough energy to catch that little bug.

Narrator: The waterboatman swimming nearby has a different point of view.

Waterboatman: Thank goodness that big fish can't chase me down!

Narrator: A carp rests quietly on the muddy bottom.

Carp: I wonder why that bluegill can swim, but I'm stuck down here?

Narrator: Two tiny water striders lie just a few inches away.

Water strider 1: Lucky for us that carp's totally pooped out.

Water strider 2: You can say that again!

Water strider 1: Lucky for us that carp's totally pooped out.

Water strider 2: Oh, puh-lease!

Narrator: A green frog and a painted turtle rest in the mud and wait for winter to end.

Frog: *Dude! Dude!* I'm sick of this. How long until spring?

Turtle: Not much longer, I hope. My toes are getting wrinkled.

Chorus 4: Under the snow in a wetland . . .

Narrator: A beaver family huddles together inside a cozy log lodge.

Beaver 1: *Whaaad, whaad, wat!* I could use a snack.

Beaver 2: Me too. Let's swim over to our storage pile and grab a stick.

Narrator: Just below the wetland's icy surface, a red-spotted newt dodges and darts, whizzes and whirls.

Newt: *Wheee!* I don't mind if spring never comes.

Narrator: But everyone else is looking forward to warm, sunny days.

Chorus 1 & 2: And as time passes, the sun's rays slowly grow stronger.

Chorus 3 & 4: And each day is a little bit longer . . .

Everyone: . . . until finally, spring arrives.

All Animals: [Jump forward and make your animal sounds.]

THE END

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