

# I Hear You, Forest

Kallie George ✨ Carmen Mok



A Companion Guide  
for Teachers and Parents



**Title:** *I Hear You, Forest*

**Author:** Kallie George; illustrated by Carmen Mok

**Genre:** Picture book

**Themes:** Nature, Interconnectedness, Communication

**Suitable for:** Pre-K–Grade 2 / 3–7 years

**Guided Reading Level:** H

**Lexile Level:** AD410L

**Common Core Standards:**

RL.1.1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9

W.1.1,3,5,6

SL.1.1,1a,1b,1c,2,3,4,5,6

L.1.1,1b,1c,1d,1e,1f,1g,1h,1i,1j,2,2a,2b,  
2c,2d,2e,4,4a,4b,4c,5a,5b,5c,5d,6



## SUMMARY

The forest has lots to say... if you listen.

A child steps into the forest with her mother. Her ears are open and her heart is too. As she moves through the forest, she listens carefully and hears marvelous things, like the rustling of the leaves sharing their secrets, or a beetle balancing on a branch. *I Hear You, Forest* encourages imagination, awareness, and empathy with all living things.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

**Kallie George** is an author and picture book editor living in Gibsons, British Columbia. She has written numerous acclaimed books for children, including *The Secret Fawn*; *The Lost Gift*; *Goodnight, Anne*; The Magical Animal Adoption Agency series; and The Heartwood Hotel series. She has also taught writing workshops for both children and adults. She grew up on the Sunshine Coast in B.C., where she spent her days roaming the forests, listening to all the sounds.

**Carmen Mok** studied studio art at the University of Waterloo and design at Sheridan College. Her illustrations have been published in magazines across Canada and the U.S., as well as on greeting cards, stationery, and children's home accessories. She has now dedicated herself to children's book illustration, and has received several awards, including the SCBWI Canada East People's Choice Portfolio Award in 2017 and 2018, as well as their Storyteller Award in 2018. Carmen is the illustrator of *Grandmother's Visit*, *Violet Shrink*, and *A Stopwatch from Grampa*. She currently lives in St. Catharines, Ontario.



## THE AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

“I spent most of my time writing this book in my ‘head’ while walking through the woods with my young son. That way I could be the most inspired by the sounds we heard together. This story is dedicated to his best friend (also a toddler) who loves to sit and quietly pay attention to the smallest treasures and details the forest offers.

I spent many hours daydreaming in the woods near the home I grew up. I thank the woods for helping me become a writer.

As a new mom, I spent a lot of time listening to different podcasts, and something that came up a few times is to help toddlers with their emotions by saying, ‘I hear you.’ This makes a lot of sense to me. ‘I hear you’ can let little babies and toddlers feel heard and respected. When I’m frustrated or otherwise, I really want to be heard. Everyone does, I think. And why not forests too?

Truly listening to anyone, or anything, helps build compassion and understanding. This phrase, combined with my early love and connection with the woods of the West Coast, were the inspiration behind this story, as well as my desire to write a book with my son in mind.”

## THE ILLUSTRATOR'S INSPIRATION

“There are lots of beautiful outdoor scenes where I live in the Niagara Region, Canada. I took the opportunity to hike in the area to take reference photos and inspiration. That was how I visualized *I Hear You, Forest.*”

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Look carefully at the illustrations without reading the words. What do you notice?
2. Have you ever gone for a walk (or a bike ride, or any kind of journey) that was memorable? Share with the group something you noticed on your walk or journey.
3. Can you guess what the story is about, just by looking at the illustrations? Could you make up your own story to go with the drawings?
4. In this story, the leaves share a secret. What is it?
5. What other things in nature might have secrets? What do you think those secrets could be? For example, what secret might a river be hiding?
6. Do you think you are good at noticing things? Have you ever found something that other people couldn't find? What happened?
7. Look through the book again and make a list of all the creatures in the illustrations. You can make the list yourself or as a group. If you could transform into an animal or insect, which creature would you like to be?
8. Look at the list of creatures that you made for the previous question. What sound does each creature make? Can you make those sounds too?

# ACTIVITIES FOR CREATIVE NOURISHMENT

## The Rain Game

In this popular activity, everyone in the group needs to pay attention and listen to each other in order to “make” a rainstorm together. This activity is good for teaching listening skills for children in preschool or kindergarten.

The group can either stand or sit, preferably in a circle. First, explain that everyone needs to pay attention to what the teacher or leader is doing and then do it too.

Perform each action for about ten seconds (or until everyone in the group is performing it) before moving on to the next action, in this order:

- Rub thumb and forefinger together
- Rub hands together
- Snap fingers
- Clap hands
- Pat chest or slap thighs
- Stomp feet
- Stomp feet and clap hands at the same time



Then move through the same actions, but in reverse:

- Stomp feet and clap hands at the same time
- Stomp feet
- Pat chest or slap thighs
- Clap hands
- Snap fingers
- Rub hands together
- Rub thumb and forefinger together

Ask the group what they heard. Did it sound like a rainstorm passing through?





## Sound Scavenger Hunt

In this simple activity, students practice their listening skills to make a list of different sounds.

### Materials

Each child will need:

- Sheet of paper
  - Pencil, pen, or marker
  - Clipboard or other surface to press on (optional)
  - Printout of the List of Sounds, below (optional)
1. This activity works best outside. Go outside—either to the playground, around the block, or to a nearby park or community space.
  2. Give each child a piece of paper, a pencil, pen, or marker, and a clipboard (or something to press on, if necessary).  
*Optional: For younger children, give each child a copy of the List of Sounds.*
  3. Students can either sit in one spot or walk around. Tell them to listen carefully. What can they hear? Younger children can cross off each sound that they discover. Older children can write their own list of sounds.  
*Optional: Another idea for older children is to divide the class into pairs. Each child can make their own Sound Scavenger Hunt list and then swap with their partner.*

## List of Sounds

bird\*

dog

people talking

leaves rustling

car driving

car honking

people yelling

bicycle

scooter

water

wind

airplane

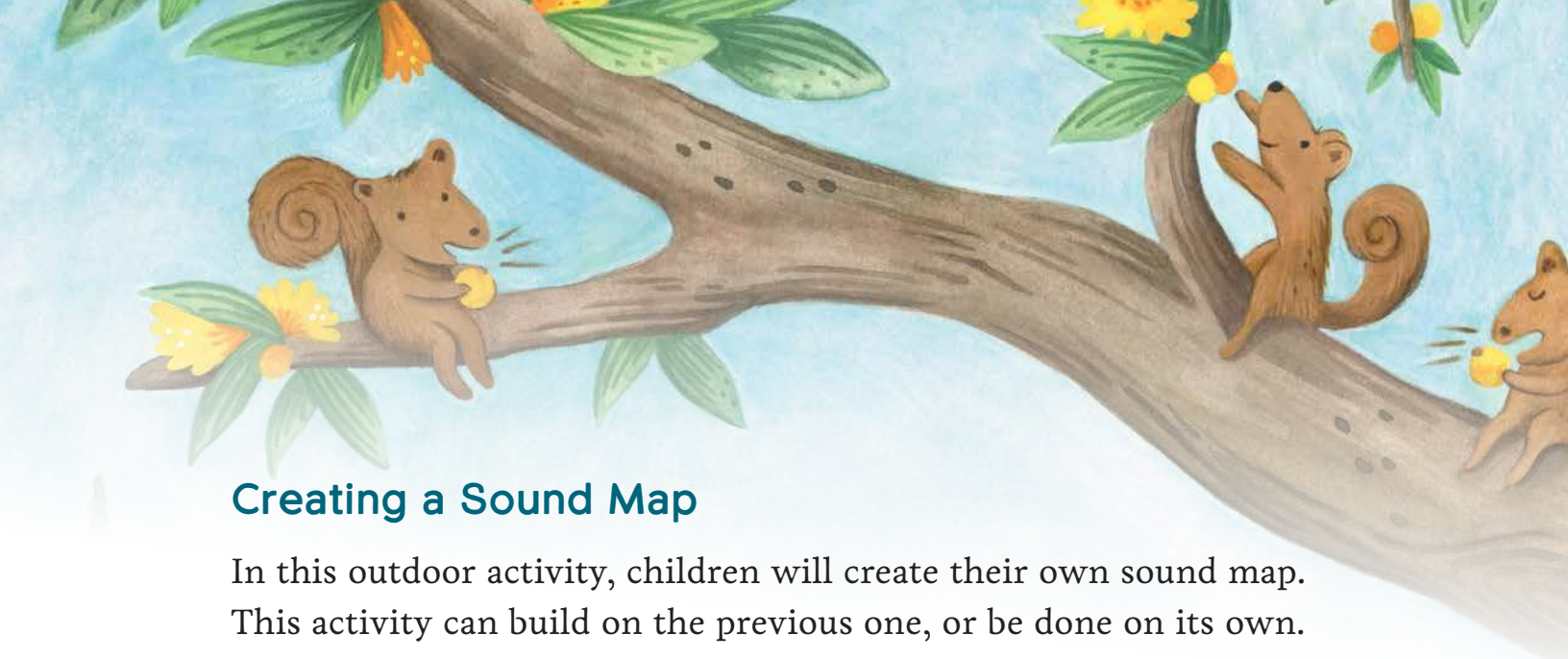
### Other sounds:

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\* Bonus points for anyone who can correctly identify the bird(s) they hear





## Creating a Sound Map

In this outdoor activity, children will create their own sound map. This activity can build on the previous one, or be done on its own.

### Materials

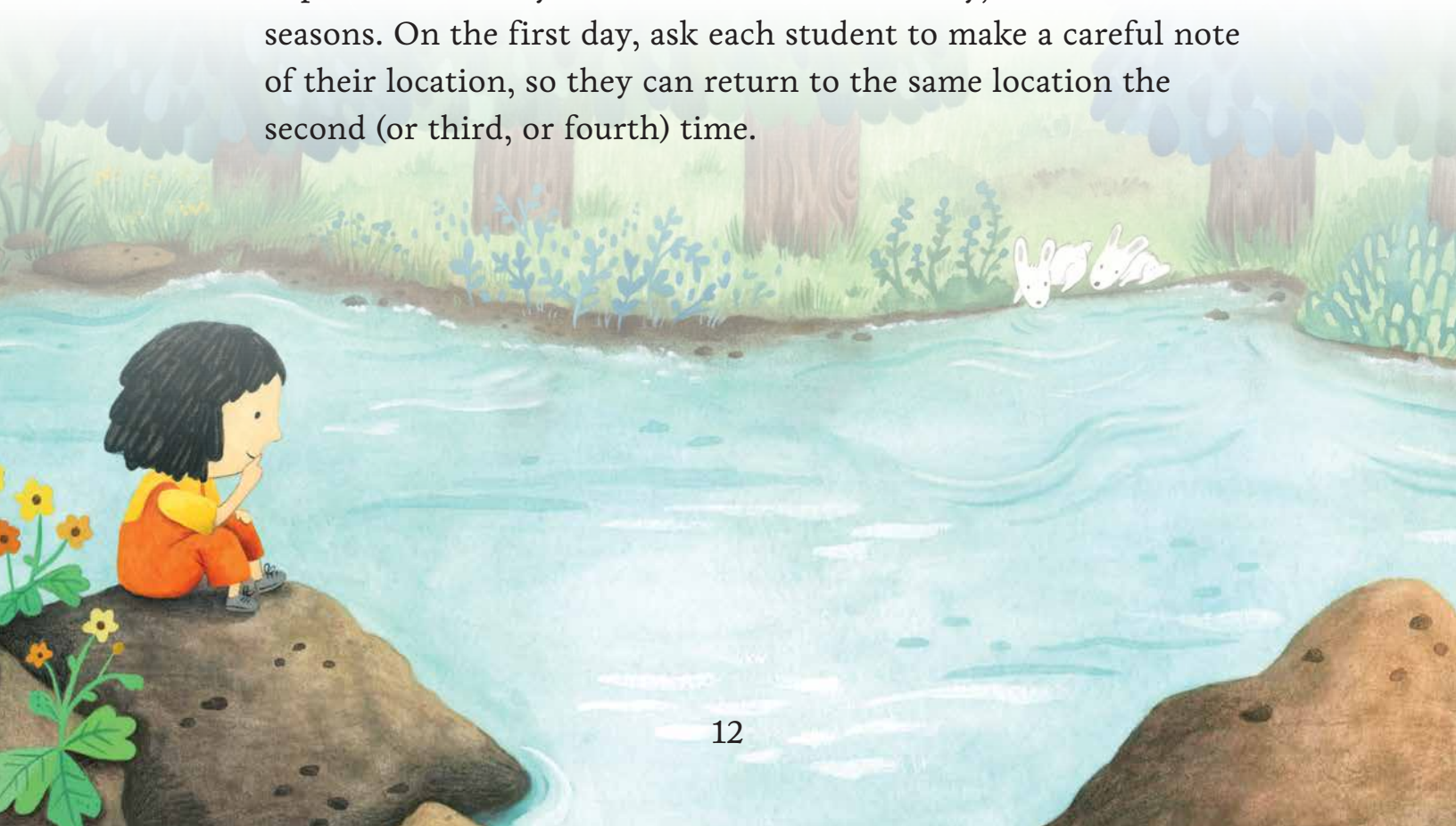
Each child will need:

- A sheet of paper
  - A variety of pencil crayons or markers
  - Clipboard or other surface to press on
1. Before the group goes outside, ask the children how sounds help animals. How do we use sounds? How does the shape and placement of our ears (one on either side of our head) help us to tell where a sound comes from? Think of some of the different ears that animals have. Which animals have good hearing?
  2. Each child will need a piece of paper, some pencil crayons or markers, and something to press on. Each child can mark the middle of the paper with a dot, an X, or a stick person to represent themselves.
  3. Once outside, tell each child to find a comfortable space where they can sit safely and quietly. This activity requires children to be very quiet, so make sure they are spread out. Then ask them to close their eyes and listen carefully to the sounds around them for a few minutes.

4. Once they've listened carefully, ask the children to jot down what they heard (not what they can see) on their paper, using words or symbols or simple sketches. It's not important how they illustrate sounds, as long as their symbols or sketches make sense to them.
5. Before leaving their spot, remind children to make a key for their map so they can remember what each symbol or sketch represents.
6. Once the group is back together, ask the children what they were able to detect just by using their ears.

### Options

1. If possible, try this activity again in a different location. What different sounds can they hear?
2. Repeat this activity at different times of the day, or in different seasons. On the first day, ask each student to make a careful note of their location, so they can return to the same location the second (or third, or fourth) time.



3. Make cone-shaped animal ears (or “ear trumpets”) and repeat this activity.

For each student, you will need two sheets of construction paper and some tape.

To make the animal ears, roll a sheet of construction paper into a wide cone. One side should have a hole that is small enough that you can place it in your outer ear. **(Be very careful to *not* insert anything inside your ear canal.)** Use a couple pieces of tape to secure the cone’s shape. Repeat with the second sheet of construction paper so that you have a pair of ears. If you like, decorate them.

Gently place the small end of your “ear trumpet” in the outer part of your ear, just above your ear lobe. Point the wide end of the cones forwards. What can you hear? Point the wide end of the cones backwards. What can you hear?

How do the animal ears change what you can hear, compared to when you listen with only your own ears? Name some animals that might work in the same way. How is the shape of an animal’s ear useful?



## Animal Ears

A simple activity is to make animal ears that the children can design and then wear. To make the headband, cut a strip along the long side of a sheet of construction paper. You may need to cut two strips and glue or tape them together, depending on the size of each child's head. A strip of fabric will also work.

Ask children to think of what kind of ears they'd like to have. Big or small? Tall, thin, wide, or floppy? What color(s) are their ears? They can pick a real animal or invent their own animal.

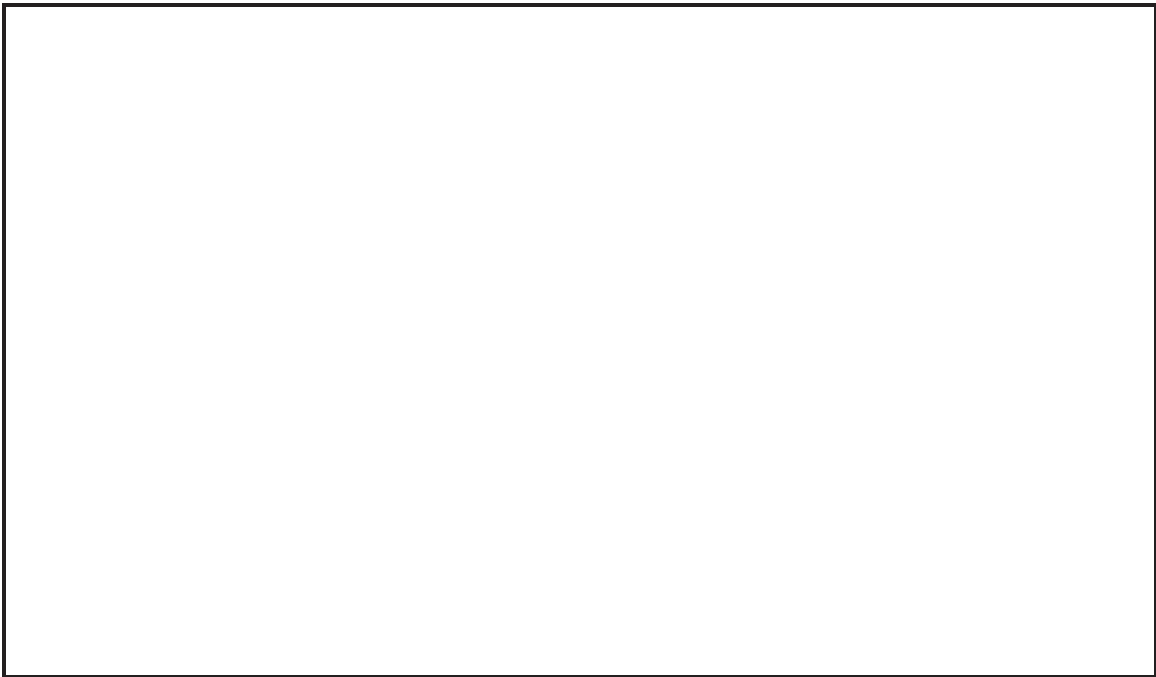
Once the ears are ready, attach them to the headband so each child can wear their creation.

What sound does a creature with these ears make?



## Postcard Story

Imagine that you are writing a postcard from an imaginary outdoors setting. Use the top part to illustrate a picturesque scene and the bottom half to write your message. Remember to pick a specific character who is writing a postcard and a specific character who is receiving it. Remember, too, you should concentrate on describing the setting that is depicted on the “front” side of your card, using your senses.

A rectangular box with a black border, intended for writing a message. It features a vertical line on the left side, a postage stamp placeholder (a rectangle with a scalloped border) in the top right corner, and three horizontal lines for writing the message.