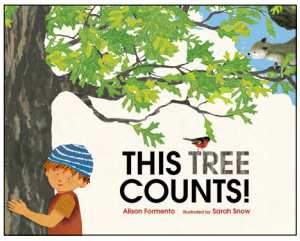
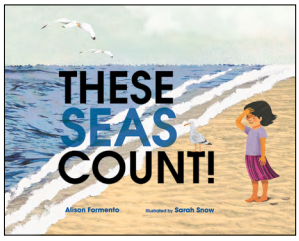
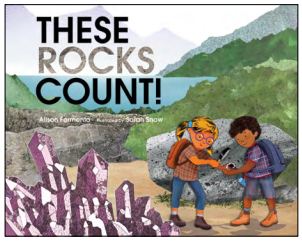
EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

This Tree Counts! These Bees Count! These Seas Count! These Rocks Count!

written by **ALISON FORMENTO** and illustrated by **SARAH SNOW**
Ages 4–7/Grades PreK–2 // Albert Whitman and Company, 2010
This Tree Counts HC 978-0-8075-7890-2 // **These Bees Count!** HC 978-0-8075-7868-1
These Seas Count! HC 978-0-8075-7871-1 **// These Rocks Count!** HC 978-0-8075-7870-4







This guide is aligned to the Common Core State Standards for Grade 1, but standards for other grades may also apply.

ABOUT THE SERIES

Each title serves as a counting book while readers learn about the many kinds of animals, birds, and insects that make their homes in trees, on bee farms, in oceans, and around the rocks that form Earth's landscape. Readers also explore the environmental impact and importance that trees, bees, seas, and rocks have in the natural world. The realistic and artfully composed paper-cut and digital-collage illustrations bring the children and natural surroundings to life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE SERIES

The CCSS ask for close reading of texts and text-based evidence to support students' answers about the reading. It's important for students' responses to refer back to the text and steer clear of opinion.

Several members of Mr. Tate's class show up in each of the four books. Have students name these characters and discuss what they learn about each throughout the four books. Do the kids act differently in the different books? Do they know kids like these? Would they like to have these kids in their class? Is Mr. Tate a good teacher?
(RL.1.3, RL.1.7, SL.1.1, SL.1.3, SL.1.4, L.1.1)

Lead a discussion about how the books are the same or different, encouraging students to talk about both words and art. Are all of the books of equal interest or do they like one of the subjects more than the others? Is one of the subjects more important than the others? Does one of the books do a better job of giving information than the others do? Can students make suggestions for adding other books to the series?
(RL.1.1, RL.1.2, RL.1.3, RL.1.7, RI.1.1, RI.1.2, RI.1.3, RI.1.6, RI.1.7, SL.1.1, SL.1.3, SL.1.4, L.1.1)

The titles of the books have a double meaning. Ask if students understand what the kids mean when they say "Trees count," after listening to the story of the trees. If not, explain and then ask students if they agree—*do* trees count? Bees, seas, rocks? In what ways do

they count? **(RL.1.1, RL.1.2, RL.1.4, RI.1.1, SL.1.1, SL.1.3, SL.1.4, L.1.1)**

Ask students if reading these books helped make them aware of just how important trees, bees, oceans, and rocks are. How did the story/pictures encourage readers to understand their importance? Can they suggest ways they can help protect these resources in their own community? **(RL.1.2, RL.1.3, RL.1.4, RI.1.1, RI.1.6, RI.1.7, SL.1.1, SL.1.3, SL.1.4, L.1.1)**

This Tree Counts! Discussion questions and activities

VOCABULARY

If students are reading the book independently, have them keep a list of words that are unfamiliar or not understood in context. If reading the book together as a class, have students ask about unfamiliar words and keep a list of those. Encourage students to figure out meanings of words they don't know from the text and pictures, and, if necessary, study the unfamiliar words before moving on to the questions.

Some possible examples: cling, skitter, boughs, cocoons, chirping, glide, moist, oxygen, breath, breathe, saplings. **(RI.1.4, RF.1.3, L.1.4, L.1.4a)**

Ask students to describe what animals, birds, and insects live in the big oak tree. Which of these animals, birds, and insects have they observed in trees at home, at a park, or at school? Have they seen others that weren't mentioned in the book?
(RL.1.1, RL.1.3, RL.1.7, RI.1.1, RI.1.2, RI.1.3, RI.1.7, SL.1.1, SL.1.1a, SL.1.1b, SL.1.1c)

What is the most interesting fact that readers learned about trees? Did they learn things about trees that were new to them? Ask them to share other tree facts they know, such as the fact that maple syrup comes from maple trees.
(RL.1.1, RL.1.3, RL.1.7, SL.1.1, SL.1.1a, SL.1.1b, SL.1.1c)

Have students write two or three paragraphs telling why they think trees are important to humans, to animals, and to other plants. **(W.1.1, L.1.1)**

Plan a trip to an arboretum or park. Students can bring notebooks and write and draw what they see. Back in class, students can write about their trip. Alternatively, students can collect different leaves from trees, bring them back to class, and create a leaf notebook with labels and descriptions. **(W.1.3)**

Have students write a poem about something they own that is made of wood. Encourage them to try and think of something that is *not* mentioned in the story. **(L.1.1)**

These Bees Count! Discussion questions and activities

VOCABULARY

If students are reading the book independently, have them keep a list of words that are unfamiliar or not understood in context. If reading the book together as a class, have students ask about unfamiliar words and keep a list of those. Encourage students to figure

out meanings of words they don't know from the text and pictures, and, if necessary, study the unfamiliar words before moving on to the questions.

Some possible examples: blossoming, gear, apiaries, pollen, pollination, grains, spout, squeezed, wisps, bursting, stretch, shimmer, nectar, hives, extractor, whisked. **(RI.1.4, RF.1.3, L.1.4, L.1.4a)**

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The book includes an author's note with further information about bees. After reading the book aloud or after students have read it independently, read the author's note aloud to the class before moving on to these questions.

Can students describe the kinds of work that bees do? Does the expression "busy as a bee" make sense to them now? Would they rather be a worker bee, a queen bee, or a drone? **(RL.1.1, RL.1.3, RL.1.7, RI.1.1, RI.1.2, RI.1.7, SL.1.1, SL.1.1a, SL.1.1b, SL.1.1c)**

Discuss or have students write two paragraphs about why flowers and flowering trees are important to bees. Had they heard of all the examples given and pictured in the book? Can they name others? **(RL.1.1, RL.1.3, RL.1.7, RI.1.1, RI.1.2, RI.1.7, W.1.2, W.1.5, W.1.8, SL.1.1, SL.1.1a, SL.1.1b, SL.1.1c, L.1.1, L.1.2)**

As a class, watch a short video about bees and honey. Then have students write a short report using what they learned in the story and in the video about how bees make honey. How many kinds of honey are there? Have all the students tasted honey? Did they like it? **(W.1.1, W.1.2, W.1.5, W.1.8, L.1.1, L.1.2)**

The author talks about colony collapse disorder (CCD) in the author's note. As a class, research bee-friendly flowers and plant a bee garden at school to help revive the bee population. **(W.1.2, W.1.4, W.1.7, W.1.8)**

These Seas Count! Discussion questions and activities

VOCABULARY

If students are reading the book independently, have them keep a list of words that are unfamiliar or not understood in context. If reading the book together as a class, have students ask about unfamiliar words and keep a list of those. Encourage students to figure out meanings of words they don't know from the text and pictures, and, if necessary, study the unfamiliar words before moving on to the questions.

Some possible examples: containers, garbage, breaching, mighty, skim, pouches, plunge, sprawl, phytoplankton, polluted, sewage, evaporate, condensate. **(RI.1.4, RF.1.3, L.1.4, L.1.4a)**

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The book includes an author's note with further information about oceans. After reading the book aloud or after students have read it independently, read the author's note aloud to the

class before moving on to these questions.

Ask students to describe what animals, birds, and fish live in the ocean. Have students been to the ocean, an aquarium, or a zoo? Have they seen any of these? Can they name others that weren't mentioned in the book?
(RL1.1, RL.1.3, RI.1.1, RI.1.3, SL.1.1, SL.1.1a, SL.1.1b, SL.1.1c, L.1.1)

As a class, compile a list of the many ways a clean and healthy ocean "counts."
(RL.1.1, RL.1.3, RI.1.1, RI.1.3, RI.1.4, RI.1.8, SL.1.1, SL.1.1a, SL.1.1b, SL.1.1c, L.1.1)

Ask students to write two paragraphs about the water cycle, and describe how oceans and seas contribute to it. Ask them to also make a drawing portraying the full water cycle.
(RL.1.1, RL.1.3, W.1.2, L.1.1)

Do students enjoy going to the beach? Why do beaches get dirty? Can students suggest ways they can help keep beaches clean? **(W.1.1, SL.1.1, SL.1.1a, SL.1.1b, SL.1.1c, L.1.1)**

The oceans have five major regions. Form five groups and ask each group to find three facts about their ocean region to present orally to the class.
(W.1.7, SL.1.1, SL.1.1a, SL.1.1b, SL.1.1c, SL.1.2, SL.1.3, L.1.1)

These Rocks Count! Discussion questions and activities

VOCABULARY

If students are reading the book independently, have them keep a list of words that are unfamiliar or not understood in context. If reading the book together as a class, have students ask about unfamiliar words and keep a list of those. Encourage students to figure out meanings of words they don't know from the text and pictures, and, if necessary, study the unfamiliar words before moving on to the questions.

Some possible examples: boulder, geode, journey, sculptor, churn, hatchlings, spears, gem, slate, Grand Canyon, granite, minerals.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The book includes an author's note with further information about rocks. After reading the book aloud, or after students have read it independently, read the author's note aloud to the class before moving on to these questions.

Ask students where Mr. Tate's class goes and what they do on their field trip. What is a word used to describe a small rock? A very big rock? What are some of the other words used for rocks? **(RL.1.1. RL.1.3, RL.1.7, RI.1.1, RI.1.2, RI.1.3, RI.1.4, WL.1.1, SL.1.1a, SL.1.1b, SL.1.1c, SL.1.2, SL.1.3, SL.1.4, L.1.1)**

As a class, come up with five uses for rocks that are mentioned in the book. What do students think is the most important use? **(RL.1.1, RL.1.3, RL.1.7, RI.1.1, RI.1.2, RI.1.3, RI.1.4, SL.1.1a, SL.1.1b, SL.1.1c, SL.1.2, SL.1.3, SL.1.4, L.1.1)**

A line from the book reads "Rocks are nature's building blocks." Do students understand what this means? Can students name the ten kinds of rocks that the class finds on their hike? Have them discuss ways in which these ten kinds are good examples of the "building blocks." **(RL.1.1, RL.1.3, RL.1.7, RI.1.1, RI.1.2, RI.1.3, RI.1.4, SL.1.1a, SL.1.1b, SL.1.1c, SL.1.2, SL.1.3, SL.1.4, L.1.1)**

Have students research and write a report about how rocks change.
(W.1.2, W.1.5, W.1.8, L.1.1)

As a class, make a poster about what students learned from the story. In the center write the words "Rocks Count!" and have students draw pictures of different rocks and paste them around the center. Have students contribute facts that they've learned and write them on the poster. **(RL. 1.1, RL.1.3, RL.1.7, RI.1.1, RI.1.2, RI.1.3, RI.1.4, SL.1.5)**

Have students gather rocks to begin their own rock collection. Egg cartons can be used to store and display the rocks. Using field guides and other reference materials, have students identify and label each rock. **(W.1.8, L.1.1)**