

ABOUT THE BOOK

Bees buzz, birds sing, and children roll in the grass and feel the heat of the summer sun. With striking verbal imagery, repetition, and alliteration, Kevin Henkes introduces basic concepts of language and the summer season. Laura Dronzek's glowing paintings beautifully illustrate the wonders of summer. This is an engaging seasonal companion to the bestselling *When Spring Comes*, *In the Middle of Fall*, and *Winter Is Here*. Ideal for introducing the season, for story time, and for bedtime reading.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Photo by Michelle Corpora

KEVIN HENKES is the author and illustrator of more than fifty critically acclaimed and award-winning picture books, beginning readers, and novels. He received the ALA Children's Literature Legacy Award in 2020, the Caldecott Medal for *Kitten's First Full Moon* in 2005, and *Waiting* won a Caldecott Honor and Geisel Honor in 2016. Kevin Henkes is also the creator of a number of picture books featuring his mouse characters, including the #1 *New York Times* bestsellers *Lilly's Big Day* and *Wemberly Worried*, the Caldecott Honor Book *Owen*, and the beloved *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*. His most recent mouse character, Penny, was introduced in *Penny and Her Song*; her story continued in *Penny and Her Doll* and *Penny and Her Marble* (a Geisel Honor Book). Bruce Handy, in a *New York Times* Book Review piece about *A Good Day*, wrote, "It should be said: Kevin Henkes is a genius." Kevin Henkes received two Newbery Honors for novels—one for *The Year of Billy Miller*, and the other for *Olive's Ocean*. Also among his fiction for older readers are the novels *Junonia*, *Bird Lake Moon*, *The Birthday Room*, and *Sun & Spoon*. Kevin Henkes has been published by Greenwillow Books since the release of his first book, *All Alone*, in 1981. His fiftieth book, the picture book *Egg*, was published in January 2017. Most recently, he is the author of *Summer Song*, *A Parade of Elephants*, *Sweeping Up the Heart*, *Penny and Her Sled*, and *Sun Flower Lion*. He lives with his family in Madison, Wisconsin.



Photo by Kevin Henkes

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

LAURA DRONZEK is a painter whose work has been exhibited nationally. Her picture books include the acclaimed *When Spring Comes*, by Kevin Henkes; *In the Middle of Fall*, by Kevin Henkes; *Winter Is Here*, by Kevin Henkes; *Summer Song*, by Kevin Henkes; *Birds*, by Kevin Henkes; *Oh!*, by Kevin Henkes; *White Is for Blueberry*, by George Shannon; *Tippy-Toe Chick*, *Go!*, by George Shannon; *Moonlight*, by Helen V. Griffith; and *It Is Night*, by Phyllis Rowand. She lives with her family in Madison, Wisconsin.



Interest Level: PreK–2
Guided Reading Level: J
Themes: Summer, Seasons



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. Show the students the endpapers just inside the book's front cover. Ask, "What do you see? What does this make you think about?" Point out the different signs of summer on these pages.
2. Read the pages, "The Summer sun is a giant flower, and the flowers are like little suns." Ask the students if they agree. How are the sun and a flower alike? How are they different?
3. Read the page: "But if I had to pick one color, I'd say Summer is green." Ask the students if they agree. Why or why not?
4. The author describes summer as a song. In what ways does he hear a summer song?
5. The author includes many sensory details about summer. Ask the students to think about what summer sounds like, looks like, feels like, smells like, and tastes like.
6. The illustrator depicts many creatures in the story. Ask: "What animals and insects are included in the book? Have you seen these creatures outside during the summer?"
7. What types of weather does the author describe in the story?
8. What do the children in this story like to do on a summer day? What do they enjoy doing on a summer evening?
9. How do the children in the story stay cool on a hot summer day?
10. What do the children bring with them to the beach? What do you and your family bring to the beach?
11. How do you know that summer is coming to an end? What does the author say about this in the story?



EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

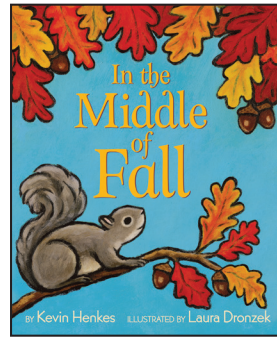
SING A SONG. The author describes the season of summer as a song. Discuss onomatopoeia, and how it could relate to a summer song (e.g., the “whoosh” of the breeze, the “hum” of a fan, the “chirping” of crickets). Then have the students work in pairs or small groups to create a song about summer using the details in the story, or even their own ideas about summer. Have the students practice their song and then perform it for the class.

Q & A. Pair the students and tell them that they will be interviewing each other about their summer experiences. They will need to write several questions to ask their partner, and then record their responses. (Younger students can do this activity orally.) As a whole group, the class can brainstorm possible questions before they break up into pairs. Some examples are, “What do you do in the summer? Do you like to swim? What are your favorite things about summer? Have you been to the beach? Have you ever chased fireflies?”

JUST BEACHY. Bring some beach items into the classroom (e.g., shells, sand, sand dollar) into the classroom. Have the students touch the items and describe how they feel. Ask them what they like or dislike about the beach. Then have the students create a beach poster by gluing items, tracing them, drawing them, or making rubbings (place the item beneath the paper and color on the paper above the item with crayon).

TAKE A WALK. Take a walk outdoors with the students. Ask them to search for signs of summer, as well as indications that the season is changing. For example, if it is September, students might find remnants of summer and the beginnings of fall. If it is May or June, they will see spring and summer signs. If possible, take photos as you walk. Afterward, write a narrative with the class about their experiences. The narrative and photos can be compiled into a class book about their seasonal walk.





COMPANION BOOK ACTIVITIES



The following activities can be used to teach the companion books *When Spring Comes*, *Summer Song*, *In the Middle of Fall*, and *Winter Is Here*.



WITH FLYING COLORS. Henkes writes that “Summer is green.” Discuss the unique colors that dominate the other seasons. Children might suggest that fall is yellow and red and orange, winter is white and gray, and spring is blue skies and bright multicolored flowers. Give children a large piece of paper and have them create four boxes. They should label each box with the name of a season and draw a picture using the colors they think represent that season.

IT’S THE BEST. Ask the children to compare the four seasons. Older children can create a T-chart for each season, listing the pros and the cons, while younger children can do this as a class while you record their ideas. Then, have children select a season (older children should choose the one possessing the most pros on their list). Group the children by seasons they have selected. Have two teams debate which season is the best, while the other two teams observe. The debating teams should try to convince the observers that their season is the best. At the end of the debate, have the audience vote to see which team won. Then switch, so that the observing teams now have a debate while the other two teams are audience observers.

ADOPT A TREE. Choose a tree for the class to “adopt” and to observe throughout the year. Have the children keep a seasonal journal, starting at the beginning of the school year (summer). On each journal entry, they should record the date, the season, a description of what the tree looks like, and draw an illustration to match. Repeat this activity in the fall, winter, and spring. Discuss how the tree changes from season to season.

IT’S ABOUT TIME. Create a timeline of the months of the year. Directly beneath this timeline, create another timeline of the four seasons. Ask the children questions about each of the two timelines and discuss when each season starts and ends. Point out that the summer season continues into September, and help students recognize which months each season spans.

