

THE ROCK FROM THE SKY

by Jon Klassen

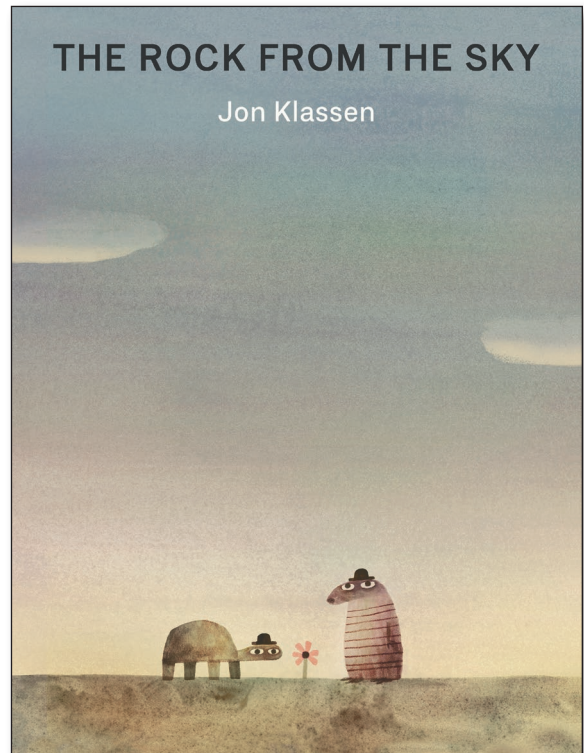
ABOUT THE BOOK

Look up! Here comes *The Rock from the Sky*, a meditation on the workings of friendship, fate, shared futuristic visions, and that funny feeling you get when there's something off somewhere, but you just can't put your finger on it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jon Klassen is the creator of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *I Want My Hat Back*, which was named a Theodor Seuss Geisel Honor Book, a *New York Times Book Review* Best Illustrated Children's Book of the Year, and a *Publishers Weekly* Best Children's Book of the Year. He returned with another hat and another thief in *This Is Not My Hat*, which won the Caldecott Medal and became a *New York Times* bestseller. The hat trilogy finished with *We Found a Hat* in 2016. He is also the illustrator of *House Held Up by Trees*, a picture book written by Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Ted Kooser, as well as *Sam and Dave Dig a Hole* by Mac Barnett.

Jon Klassen has worked as an illustrator for feature animated films, music videos, and editorial pieces. Originally from Niagara Falls, Ontario, he now lives in Los Angeles.



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Common Core Connections

This guide consists of discussion opportunities and classroom extension activities that can be used when reading, teaching, or discussing *The Rock from the Sky*.

This text allows the readers to think about literary components such as characterization, mood, themes, predictions, and author's choice. There are also opportunities for activities about ratios and meteors. The discussion opportunities and classroom extension activities in this guide are designed to be used in any grades as these texts are read as a whole group, as a small group, or independently.

The Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standard that can be addressed using the discussion questions and activities in this guide are:

Anchor Standards for Reading

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.10

Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.6

Ratios and Proportional Relationships

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.6-7.RPA

Earth's Systems

NGSS.MS-ESS2-2

For more information on specific standards for your grade level, visit the Common Core website at www.corestandards.org or Next Generation Science Standards at <https://www.nextgenscience.org/>.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use these questions for whole group discussion, reading check-ins, or writing prompts with *The Rock from the Sky*.

1. Look at the characters' eyes throughout the book. What emotions did Jon Klassen portray just with their eyes? How did he do it?
2. Where do you think the rock came from? What evidence in the text supports your answer?
3. How does the mood change throughout the book?
4. Do you think the turtle is a good friend? The armadillo? The snake? Explain your thinking.
5. In the fifth chapter, how do you think the turtle feels about the armadillo and the snake? Why do you think that?
6. Do you think this book has a lesson? If so, what is the lesson of the book? If not, explain why you think this.
7. Why do you think the snake doesn't speak?
8. In an interview (https://www.candlewick.com/book_files/1536215627.ban.1.pdf), Jon Klassen said that after he finished the first story, he thought, "*Well, that's too short for a book. It doesn't feel complete yet.*" He added, "And it turns out it took four more stories to make it feel complete." Do you agree or disagree? Would the book have felt complete after the first chapter only? Explain your answer.
9. In the interview at the link above, when asked about his favorite character from his books, Jon Klassen shared that he keeps going back to the turtle (turtles have now appeared in three of his books). He said, "Turtles are vulnerable and passive, but they are also defined, pretty literally, by their ability to completely withdraw. I guess I relate to a lot of that." What animal do you relate to and why?
 - Extension: If Jon Klassen had put your animal in this story, how would it have acted? How would it have changed the story?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Use these activities to extend students' learning with *The Rock from the Sky*.

PREDICTION

Each chapter has a title and an initial illustration. At the beginning of each chapter, complete a prediction for the chapter (this can be done as a class, in pairs, or individually).

- When done with the chapter, complete a summary of the chapter.
- Finally, do a prediction check. Was the initial prediction correct or incorrect? Explain.

PREDICTION	SUMMARY	PREDICTION CHECK

BE AN ILLUSTRATOR

Have students draw an animal with a hat in its favorite spot.

- Then ask your students: What could go wrong? Have them draw a second picture that shows what happens.
- Finally, ask: What would happen in the future? What type of alien would visit your future? Have them draw a third picture showing this.

READERS' THEATER

Readers' theater is a strategy for developing fluency and prosody. To ensure that fluency has been modeled, make sure to have read aloud *The Rock from the Sky* before taking part in this activity.

- First, group students in groups of three.
- Each group should be assigned a different section of the book.
- Have each group rewrite their section of *The Rock from the Sky* as a script.
- Within the group, ask the members to assign roles.
- Now allow students to practice their script within their groups.
- Finally, have students perform for their peers.
 - o Extension: After all trios have performed, as a class compare and contrast everyone's depictions of the characters and dialogue.
 - o Extension: Move from readers' theater into a play! Add costumes, sets, etc. Then perform each chapter for an audience.

THE CHARACTERS

Let's look more closely at each of our characters. Have students use their words, actions, body language, and expressions to complete the following character chart for the turtle and armadillo.

- o Extension: Have your students complete a character chart for the snake using their imagination.

Name _____

ABOUT A CHARACTER

Likes	Thoughts	Fears
Dislikes	CHARACTER ILLUSTRATION	Positive character traits
Behavior		Negative character traits
Is this how you would assume this type of animal would be like? Why or why not?	How is this character different from you?	How is this character like you?

REFLECTION

To help students make a connection to the book, pose one (or more) of the following reflection prompts.

- Where is your favorite spot? Draw yourself sitting in your favorite spot. Then write an explanation of your favorite spot and why you love it.
- Do you ever just “have a feeling” about something, like the armadillo does? These are called premonitions. Write about a time you’ve had a premonition, then draw an illustration of it.
- When was a time you needed help? Draw an illustration of what happened, then write an explanation.
- What is your favorite time of day? Write about it and why you love it and add an illustration.
- Who is someone you have been jealous of? Write about the situation and add an illustration.
- Have you ever been betrayed by someone? Share what happened and draw an illustration of the situation.

RATIOS

How big is that rock? Use this activity with your students to answer this question.

- To figure out how big the rock is, we’ll have to first figure out the ratio from illustration to real life.
- We’re going to use a three-banded armadillo and a red-footed tortoise for this activity as they both live in similar habitats and seem to match the comparable sizes of the characters.
- A three-banded armadillo is about 12 inches long and a red-footed tortoise can grow to be about 16 inches long.
- Measure their size in *The Rock from the Sky* to determine the ratio.
 - o Using the spread where the rock initially falls, the armadillo is 1.1 inches long and the turtle is 1.4 inches long.
 - o Both of these have a ratio of about 9:100.
- Using this same ratio, how big would the real rock be if the illustration of it is about 6.5 inches tall?
 - o Also use this ratio to determine how long the snake would be.
 - o Now research snakes from the same region as the three-banded armadillo and red-footed tortoise to determine what type of snake it could be.
 - o Extension question: Why were the three-banded armadillo and red-footed tortoise used for this equation rather than other armadillos or turtles?

METEORS

In an interview (https://www.candlewick.com/book_files/1536215627.ban.1.pdf), Jon Klassen shared that the rock falling from the sky was in fact a meteor.

Share with students that once the meteor hits Earth, it is called a meteorite. Use these resources from NASA and Space.com to introduce meteor showers and meteorites:

<https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/meteor-shower/en/>
<https://www.space.com/42636-meteorites.html>

Most meteors that enter the Earth's atmosphere either disintegrate before hitting Earth or are pulverized when they do hit Earth and make a crater.

- Extension: The National Informal STEM Education Network has a lesson titled "Craters" that has a multitude of activities exploring how craters are made. If you want to extend your students' learning about craters, visit <https://www.nisenet.org/catalog/exploring-solar-system-craters> for these activities.

Some meteorites do survive, though! Visit this *Business Insider* article about the biggest meteorites that have survived:

<https://www.businessinsider.com/biggest-meteorites-space-junk-crashed-earth-2017-2>

Group students into six groups and assign one of the large meteorites to each group. Have the groups prepare a small presentation about their meteorite.

- They should research the meteorite's makeup and size and where it landed.
- The presentation may be digital or on poster board.
- When finished, have the groups share their presentations with the rest of the class.



This guide was created by Kellee Moye, a middle school teacher-librarian in Orlando, Florida. She is a coauthor of the blog *Unleashing Readers*, the author of various teaching guides, the chair of the 2014 Amelia Elizabeth Walden Book Award committee, a cochair of the 2020–2021 Schneider Family Book Award committee, and a member of NCTE, ALAN, ALA, and YALSA.