

Barb's BookSpot: Episode 14
Concepts, Colors, and Creative Connections.
January, 2017

OCTOPUSES ONE TO TEN. Copyright © 2016 by Ellen Jackson. Illustrations, copyright © 2016 by Robin Page.

Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Beach Lane Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, New York.

This counting book presents a fascinating look at the characteristics, behavior of various species of octopus. Very simple rhymed couplets are presented on each page, so you can read and count with the youngest of readers. Each page also features text in a smaller font, with more details and information. The large Pacific octopus is featured on the counting pages from one to ten, and the colorful illustrations are often double-page spreads. Final pages present a variety of species, some smaller than a man's hand, some that look a bit like Dumbo the elephants, and on each page is a small graphic to show the scale of the octopus relative to either a human grown or a hand.

SHAPE SHIFT. Copyright © 2016 by Joyce Hesselberth. Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Christy Ottaviano Books, an imprint of Henry Holt and Company, New York.

Nine labeled standard shapes are introduced on the opening pages, including triangle, square, trapezoid, crescent, oval and others. A young girl and boy decide to put two shapes together, and then guess about what the new figure might be. When the crescent is placed atop the triangle, the boy sees a raging bull, and when the triangle is placed above a semicircle, the girl sees a ballerina. There is much room for readers to interact and guess about the shape combinations, and final pages display all of the shapes, prompting the reader to try some combinations of their own. I might have a box of geometric pattern blocks handy to extend the experience of this book, and the fun with shapes.

YELLOW TIME. Copyright © 2016 by Lauren Stringer. Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Beach Lane Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, New York.

Exuberant and full of energy, we greet the arrival of autumn and a swirl of yellow leaves. Wavy bold lines form ash tree trunks and lend animation, and many small details are rendered in purple, a complimentary color to the bold yellow which fills most pages. The poetic text appeals to the senses as the geese leave, the wind "whooshes", the mud and wet leaves have their own unique smells. Fall is in the air. A multicultural cast of characters are seen playing, whirling and raking the leaves, and in the end, children save a few to press between the pages of a book. A delightful celebration of "Yellow Time" – a metaphor for Fall and changing leaves.

MAYBE SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL: HOW ART TRANSFORMED A NEIGHBORHOOD. Copyright © 2016 by F. Isabel Campoy and Theresa Howell. Illustrations, copyright © 2016 by Rafael López. Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York.

Mira loves color and beautiful things, but she lives in a dreary gray urban area. While passing out colorful pictures she painted to friends and neighbors, she meets a man who looks at the gray walls with an artist's eye. He is a muralist, and he and his wife begin a project which will involve the whole community to make the neighborhood beautiful. The book is based on the true story of how Rafael Lopez and his wife moved into the East Village area of San Diego, CA. and with the help of many, created the Urban Art Trail. The community was revived and a model for community-based art was born. Lopez is also the illustrator of this book which presents colorful vibrant images of people painting, planting, and creating colorful beauty.

