Teacher’s Guide to Third and Fourth Grade
Reading and Writing Exercises for

In the Forest of S. T. Shrew
A story in the Project Learning Tree PreK-8 Activity Guide
Activity #8, Student Pages 43-44

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* This list could be used as a student page or made into a transparency
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1. **Language Arts Sunshine State Standards Connections Chart**

*Writing can be scored using a FCAT 2, 4, or 6 point grading rubric

Consider introducing a sharing and editing component to the writing process, like Writing 1: Mouse Brainstorm, Write, and Share and cover benchmarks relating to standard 3.4.3 or 4.3.4 as well!

2. **Related PLT Activities**

The activities below could be used to enhance the “In the Forest of ST Shrew” lesson. All PLT activities are connected to the Science Sunshine State Standards and can be found on the Florida PLT website at http://www.sfrc.ufl.edu/plt/correlations/index.html.

- #7 Habitat Pen Pals
- #9 Planet Diversity
- #23 The Fallen Log
- #25 Birds and Worms
- #47 Are Vacant Lots Vacant?

- #8 The Forest of ST Shrew
- #22 Trees as Habitats
- #24 Natures Recyclers
- #46 School Yard Safari
3. Preview
Read the title, “In the Forest of S.T. Shrew.” If students do not know what a shrew is, hold up the picture and explain it is a small animal, like a mouse, that eats insects. Ask where they think it lives (forest and meadow). This shrew is called S.T. for Short-Tailed. Ask how long its tail is (short). Ask what this story might be about. What would they like to know more about?

4. Reading Discussion Questions
1. Where does the story begin? Why is Jackie there? In the woods behind the playground. Jackie is supposed to pick a spot near home or school and write about what lives there. p.2
2. How does Jackie feel? How do you know? She is frustrated and disappointed. She hasn’t found anything interesting or unusual and she doesn’t know what to do.p.2
3. Why does the shrew help Jackie? He wants to show her the interesting animals that live in the woods.p.4
4. How does the shrew help Jackie? He magically turns her in to a shrew and leads her to interesting places.p.5
5. What danger is Jackie in and how does she escape? Because she is a shrew a large bird might eat her. She follows ST into a hole.p.6
6. Name three animals that live in the soil. What do these animals do? Explain the term “decomposer.” Earthworm, white grubs, beetles. They help breakdown dead plants and animals (= decomposers), they separate mineral soil from organic matter. They help restore nutrients to the soil, completing the nutrient cycle.p.8-9
8. How did Jackie feel when she ran on top of the log? How do you know? She was excited to roll in the soft moss, sniff the lichens, and see all the things that were growing there. It was fun for her. p.11
9. Why didn’t ST join Jackie in the log? He was too big p.12
10. Why is it hard for Jackie to walk with Millie? It was hard to coordinate all her feet p.13
11. Name three animals that Jackie found in the log. Termites, roaches, pill bugs, millipede, big beetles, centipede, salamander.p.13-14
12. What happens every time there is a flash? Jackie changes to another animal p.5, 12 and 15
13. How did Jackie feel about exploring the treetops? How do you know? She had a lot of fun. She thought flying was the best thing she did all day. p.16
14. Name three animals Jackie found in the treetops. Birds, grasshoppers, bugs, wasps, flies, caterpillars, ants, spiders, moth. p.16
15. Why did Jackie almost miss the moth on the tree trunk? It was camouflaged to match the bark. p.17
16. Why is a tree like an apartment building? *It has many different inhabitants at different levels, even around the roots – in the basement* p.17

17. How did Jackie get back to ST? *she crawled down the tree trunk head first* p.17

18. Why did Jackie have dirt in her nose? *Either she had crawled through the ground as a shrew, or her head was in the leaves as she slept* p.19

19. How does Jackie feel at the very end of the story? *She is excited to write her report about all the interesting things she had seen* p.20

20. Do you think Jackie feel asleep and dreamed everything? Explain why or why not. What evidence does the author give to help you decide? Is this story fact or fiction? How do you know? *Author’s evidence suggests Jackie had been turned into a shrew because she is now seeing all the holes, trees, and logs that she had seen with ST. That would make this story fiction because animals don’t really talk and people don’t change into animals in real life.*

21. What did ST want Jackie to learn? Summarize the message in this story. *There are many different animals that live in the woods, even the woods near the school playground.*
5. Vocabulary Words

**Adventure** – an exciting and dangerous undertaking

**Eventually** – an event or outcome that will happen sometime in the future

**Fluttered** – to flap or wave rapidly

**Impossible** – not capable of happening

**Interrupted** – to break into

**Lichens** – a combination of algae and fungus that grows on logs, rocks, and trees

**Millipede** – mille = 1000; pedis = foot, an insect with 1000 feet

**Nuthatch** – a bird that lives in the forest and eats nuts and seeds

**Salamander** – an amphibian that lives under leaves in the forest

**Scurried** – to scamper

**Separating** – to set apart

**Swooped** – to pounce or sweep

**Termites** – a social, wood-boring insect

**Underground** – compound word under + ground – under the earth’s surface; secret

**Venomous** – poisonous

**Other vocabulary words and definitions**

**Decomposer** – an organism that helps break down dead plants and animals

**Camouflage** – protective coloration that helps an animal blend in to its surroundings.

**Consumer** – an organism that eats food to get energy – an animal; not a producer (an organism that produces its own food energy from photosynthesis) – a plant

**Invertebrate** – an animal without bones, like an insect or spider

**Organism** – a plant or animal – a living thing
In the Forest of S.T. Shrew
Vocabulary Words

Adventure
Camouflage
Consumer
Decomposer
Eventually
Fluttered
Impossible
Interrupted
Invertebrate
Lichens
Millipede
Nuthatch
Organism
Salamander
Scurried
Separating
Swooped
Termites
Underground
Venomous
6. Other ideas for In the Forest of S.T. Shrew

1. Multiple meaning words used in the story. Use the text to confirm meaning.

- Squirrels didn’t really count (say one, two, three OR matter)
- Too bad she didn’t live near the pet shop (noun, a place to buy stuff OR verb, to buy stuff)
- But no, she had picked (chosen OR collected) this patch (material to cover a hole OR small space) of woods behind the playground
- Creatures are pretty upset (mad OR tipped over)
- And with that he turned and dove (a bird OR steep sudden fall)
- Uh-oh she cried (exclaimed OR wept)
- Crawled through the ground (soil OR to grind things up)

2. Analogies

Millimeter is to millipede as centimeter is to _______________ centipede
Invertebrate is to insect and vertebrate is to ________________ mammal, bird, fish, frog…

3. Circle the word that does not belong and tell what they other words have in common

- Lichen, fungus, moss, wildflower (fungus does not photosynthesize; wildflower is not a decomposer and does not grow on a rotting log)
- Caterpillar, ant, moth, grasshopper, earthworm (earthworm does not live up on a tree; earthworm is not an insect)
- Shrew, mouse, salamander, nuthatch (salamander is not warm-blooded animal; nuthatch is not a ground-living animal)

4. Find it in the story

- Find a phrase that tells you something will happen next: “Follow me, there’s still lots more for you to see.” “Then she…” “suddenly…” “Eventually…”
- Find words that help create a picture in your mind: “cool, bright-orange fungus” “thick green carpet of moss” “chewing, tunneling, boring” “shiny-black beetles with giant jaws” “swooped and darted”
- Find a description of how Jackie felt: “Jackie found it difficult to move all her legs” “Jackie was amazed” “Oooh! cried Jackie”
**In the Forest of S.T. Shrew**

**Worksheet 1- Vocabulary**

First name_________________

Last name ________________

**Directions:** Match the vocabulary word to the correct description

a. Salamander        ____ bird that eats nuts and seeds
b. Nuthatch                ____ insect that chews wood
c. Millipede                ____ fuzzy growth on rotting logs or rocks
d. Termite                ____ amphibian that lives under leaves
e. Lichen                ____ animal with many feet

**Directions:** Write and A for antonym and S for synonym in each blank.

1) Eventual and impossible   _________
2) Separate and split     _________
3) Scurry and creep       _________
4) Dart and scurry        _________
5) Dirt and earth and soil _________
6) Interrupted and constant _________

**Directions:** Use vocabulary words to complete the sentences.

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<td>adventure</td>
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<td>impossible</td>
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1) A person should be very careful around poisonous or ________________ animals.

2) Do you think Jackie’s wild ________________ could happen or was it ________________?

3) The excited moth ________ around the light.

4) The bird ____________ down from the tree to grab to a worm that was starting to tunnel deep ____________.
In the Forest of S.T. Shrew

Worksheet 1 - Vocabulary

**Directions:** Match the vocabulary word to the correct description

a. Salamander  __b__ bird that eats nuts and seeds
b. Nuthatch  __d__ insect that chews wood
c. Millipede  __e__ fuzzy growth on rotting logs or rocks
d. Termite  __a__ amphibian that lives under leaves
e. Lichen  __c__ animal with many feet

**Directions:** Write and A for antonym and S for synonym in each blank.

1) Eventual and impossible  ___A_____
2) Separate and split  ___S_____
3) Scurry and creep  ___A_____
4) Dart and scurry  ___S_____
5) Dirt and earth and soil  ___S_____
6) Interrupted and constant  ___A_____

**Directions:** Use some of these vocabulary words to complete the sentences.

1) A person should be very careful around poisonous or ___venomous_________ animals.

2) Do you think Jackie's wild ___adventure_________ could happen or was it ___impossible__________?

3) The excited moth ___fluttered_________ around the light.

4) The bird ___swooped_________ down from the tree to grab to a worm that was starting to tunnel deep ___underground_________.

Florida PLT Reading Activities, Updated February 2008
In the Forest of S.T. Shrew
Worksheet 2 - Reading Comprehension

Directions: Put the following events in the order described in the story.

Jackie crawled through the ground
Jackie flew in the trees
Jackie was happy
Jackie turned into a shrew
Jackie turned into a bird

Directions: Circle the best answer.

1) Why did Jackie go into the forest?
   a. to take a nap
   b. to read a story
   c. to meet some friends
   d. to investigate what lives there

2) Why is it hard for Jackie to follow Millie?
   a. it is hard to crawl in a tiny space
   b. Millie goes too fast
   c. it is hard to coordinate all her feet
   d. it is hard to fly

3) What was Jackie’s favorite part of the adventure?
   a. flying
   b. crawling through a log
   c. being a shrew
   d. talking to animals

4) Why is a tree like an apartment building?
   a. It is tall
   b. Animals live at every level
   c. It has an outside and inside
   d. It has parts below ground

5) What happened first?
   a. Jackie flew like a bird
   b. Jackie talked to animals underground
   c. Jackie became a shrew
   d. Jackie ran along a log
In the Forest of S.T. Shrew
Worksheet 2 – Reading Comprehension

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5. Jackie was happy

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   d. Jackie ran along a log
In the Forest of S.T. Shrew
Writing 1 – Mouse Brainstorm, Write and Share

First name ____________________
Last name ____________________

Part 1: Brainstorm
Imagine that you are a tiny mouse crawling in the forest. Write two sentences about how the forest looks from your perspective. Use sensory words to describe what you see.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Today you are going to visit one of your friends in the forest. Write a sentence to describe your friend. Write another sentence about what you talked about.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Oh no! There is a hawk living in this part of the forest. Write a sentence about narrowly escaping the hawk.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

You stop to eat some food. Write a sentence about what you found in the forest to eat.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

It is time to go back home. Write a sentence to end your adventure.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Part 2: Write
Now review all of your sentences. Make sure you have used words that help the reader see what you see. Put the best parts of your sentences together in a paragraph on your own piece of paper. Your first sentence should be a topic sentence that tells what your paragraph is about. Include a transition between the different ideas.

Part 3: Share Switch stories with a neighbor. In your neighbor’s story:
Edit their story, looking for correct spelling and punctuation.
Find the topic sentence.
Find two details that make the story interesting.
Find two words that help you see what the mouse sees.
Find a transition between two ideas.
Plan your Writing: Jackie followed three forest animals: shrew, millipede, and nuthatch. Compare and contrast the animals. You may want to consider what they look like, where in the forest they live, or how they move. Use the Venn diagram to organize your thoughts. Label each circle.
Jackie followed three forest animals: shrew, millipede, and nuthatch. Compare and contrast how they moved and the part of the forest that was their home.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
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__________________________________________________________________
**Part 1: Writing**
Imagine you told your friends about all of the amazing creatures living just outside. Your friends have a hard time believing this could be true and want to see them for themselves. Write detailed instructions they should follow to discover the creatures. You may want to include where to go, what to look for and tips that might be useful. Your instructions should be in the correct order, easy to follow, and filled with vivid descriptions.

**Part 2: Mapping**
Make it easier for your friends by drawing them a map! Draw and label important landmarks they will see and places they should stop to look for animals. Include a legend.