



STEP GENTLY OUT

AUTHOR: HELEN FROST

ILLUSTRATOR: RICK LIEDER

See a video of the book read aloud here: [Step Gently Out](#)

**** REMEMBER: HAVE FUN AND THE KIDS WILL TOO! ****

OVERVIEW

ABOUT THE BOOK

Step gently out, be still, and look closely at the world just outside your door. You are sure to be amazed by the tiny creatures you can find. You might see a cricket leap and land, a moth opening her wings, a spider walking across the air, or maybe even a preying mantis looking back at you! In lyrical, evocative language from Helen Frost and stunning close-up photography from Rick Lieder, here is a poetic invitation to notice the many small creatures that share the world with you. [\(from book flap\)](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Helen Frost is the author of *Monarch and Milkweed* and six novels in poems for children and young adults. She says, "When I first saw Rick's photographs, they reminded me of being a child and watching insects for hours. So I went outdoors and looked closely and I discovered that the insects were still there, all around me." Helen Frost lives in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She is married with two sons, and enjoys travel, hiking, beadwork, kayaking, and gardening especially to welcome birds and butterflies. [\(from book flap\)](#)

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Rick Lieder is a photographer, painter, and illustrator. About *Step Gently Out*, he says, "Often the smallest creatures around us are the most amazing." Rick Lieder lives in Michigan. [\(from book flap\)](#)

THE READ ALOUD

BEFORE READING

Use these prompts before reading the story to help students activate background knowledge and make predictions:

- (cover) What is this a picture of?
- (open cover so that front and back show simultaneously) What do we see if we open up the cover like this?
- (cover) There are two names on the cover. If you think they are they both the author put two fingers up? If you think one is the author and one is the illustrator, put one finger up. Maybe we'll find the answer on the title page.
- (title page) It looks like one is the writer/poet, and one is the illustrator/photographer. This is a photograph. The photographer must be pretty close to that bee.

STEP GENTLY OUT

TOPICS & THEMES:

- Insects
- Photography
- Poetry

Tips for every book!

POWER PHRASES:

I WONDER...

I NOTICE...

TELL ME MORE...

DIGGING DEEPER:

"Tell me more, why do you think that?"

"How do you know that?"

"Why do you think they feel like that?"

"Interesting, did you notice anything else?"

DURING THE STORY

Use these prompts while reading the story to help students interpret the action and content:

- (pp. 1-2) This insect looks like a leaf. Keep a look out – it will appear again in the book.
- (pp. 3-4) Is a single blade of grass usually as big as this? I wonder what that insect is. I hope we find out.
- (p. 11) This is the insect we saw on the first page of this book.
- (p. 19) Do you see the insect on this page? Do you think it would be as easy to find if there were no dew? Why or why not?

AFTER READING

Use these prompts after reading the story to help students understand what they just read:

- (Reader: Return to the first page and read the poem from stop to finish without showing the photos) Shut your eyes and make pictures in your head as you listen to the words. What did you see?
- There is a glossary at the end of the book that gives us more information. Let's read some of these facts and see what we learn.

BRINGING THE BOOK TO LIFE!

- (p. 6) What sound does a honeybee make?
- (p. 10) If you have ever stopped to watch a spider weave its web, put your hand on your nose. Does it look like they walk on air?

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- (p. 8) Turn to your neighbor and talk about what a cricket song sounds like. Who would like to share with everyone what you decided?

SMALL-GROUP IDEAS

1. DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

- Let's take a picture walk through the book, looking at the details – the insects, the difference in photos taken at different times of days, nature, etc..
- The glossary includes page numbers where we can find information. Let's look find the page where the insect appears.
- How do you feel when you see the photographs and hear the words?

Suggested Optional Activity:

- Find the rhyming words. (e.g. sings, wings; air, there) Write them down. Choose one set of words and list other words that rhyme with those words.

2. WRITING ACTIVITY

Pick your favorite insect and write its name on your paper. Write one word that describes a part of that insect (e.g. color of body, number of wings). Draw and color this insect.

3. EXTENSION ACTIVITY

If possible, go outside and take a short walk around the schoolyard or a grassy area looking for insects. Talk about any you find. Especially point out any that were in the book.

COMMON CORE LINKS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.1, K.3, K.4, K.5, K.6, K.10

You might see a cricket leap, a moth spread her wings, or a spider step across a silken web. In simple, evocative language, Helen Frost offers a hint at the many tiny creatures around us. What would happen if you walked very, very quietly and looked ever so carefully at the natural world outside? You might see a cricket leap, a moth spread her wings, or a spider step across a silken web. In simple, evocative language, Helen Frost offers a hint at the many tiny creatures around us.