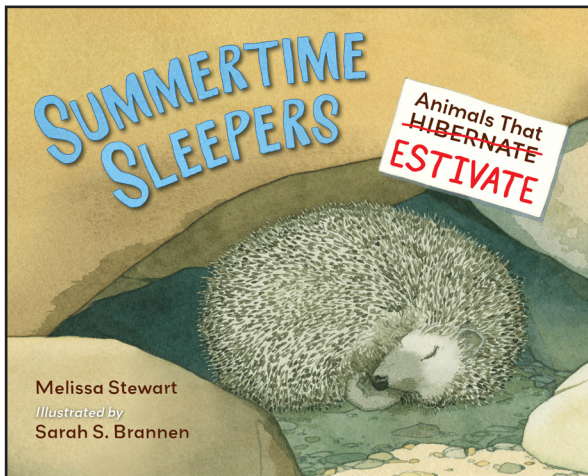


# SUMMERTIME SLEEPERS

## Readers Theater

developed by Melissa Stewart



Melissa Stewart • Illustrated by Sarah S. Brannen  
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### About the Book

What do mourning cloak butterflies have in common with pixie frogs and yellow-bellied marmots? They all estivate, or sleep through summer. Everyone knows about hibernation, but this book offers young readers a lyrical look at its fascinating warm-weather counterpart. Discover how a variety of animals survive by taking a break during the hottest days of the year.



### About the Author

Melissa Stewart is the award-winning author of more than 180 books for children, including *Seashells: More Than a Home*; *Feathers: Not Just for Flying*; and *No Monkeys, No Chocolate*. She holds degrees in biology and science journalism and serves on the board of advisors for the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. Melissa speaks frequently at conferences for educators and is available for school visits. Visit her online at [www.melissa-stewart.com](http://www.melissa-stewart.com).



### About the Illustrator

Sarah S. Brannen is the author and illustrator of *A Perfect Day*, *Madame Martine*, and *Uncle Bobby's Wedding*. She is the illustrator of *Seashells: More Than a Home*; *Feathers: Not Just for Flying*; and *At Home in Her Tomb: Lady Dai and the Ancient Chinese Treasures of Mawangdui*. Sarah lives in Massachusetts. Visit her online at [www.sarahbrannen.com](http://www.sarahbrannen.com).

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## Readers Theater

### Getting Started

Many readers theater scripts have just ten or twelve parts, but this script has twice as many roles! It includes twenty animal parts and a narrator. The animal parts vary in difficulty to accommodate children at a variety of reading levels. The narrator text is the most challenging. It can be read by an adult or by an advanced young reader. The script also includes a variety of choruses—lines read by everyone.

If you are working with a small group of children, some students can perform two roles. If you have a group larger than twenty, some children can share a role or you can divide the narrator role into multiple parts.

After you've matched students with parts, ask the class to read through the script a few times. As the children practice, provide as much support and advice as needed.

### Planning the Performance

When the children feel confident about their roles, you may want to set out a variety of art supplies and encourage students to make animal badges, hats, or even simple costumes to wear during the performance. Children acting as narrators may want to wear something special too.

During the final reading, the students can perform for another class or even a group of parents.

### Cast of Characters

Narrator

Chipmunk

Wood Frog

Bumblebee

Ladybug 1

Ladybug 2

Mourning Cloak Butterfly

Land Snail 1

Land Snail 2

Christmas Island Red Crab 1

Christmas Island Red Crab 2

African Lungfish

Mangrove Killifish 1

Mangrove Killifish 2

Mangrove Killifish 3

California Tiger Salamander

Pixie Frog

Spotted Turtle

Leopard Gecko

Desert Hedgehog

Yellow-Bellied Marmot

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**CHORUS:** Yawn, stretch, blink!

**NARRATOR:** As warm weather spreads across the land, hibernating animals spring to life.

**CHORUS:** Greetings, chipmunk!

**CHIPMUNK:** I'm ready for action.

**CHORUS:** Wake up, wood frog!

**WOOD FROG:** Hop, hop, hooray. It's spring!

**CHORUS:** Time to get buzzy, bumblebee!

**BUMBLEBEE:** Let's go!

**NARRATOR:** But soon another group of animals searches for shelter.

**CHORUS:** It's time for an estivation vacation!

**NARRATOR:** In hot, dry places, ladybugs snooze in groups.

**LADYBUG 1:** We pack ourselves inside curled-up leaves.

**LADYBUG 2:** It's the best way to spend summer.

**NARRATOR:** Mourning cloak butterflies rest all alone.

**BUTTERFLY:** I slip into a crack and nod off until autumn.

**NARRATOR:** Land snails climb up high for a nap.

**SNAIL 1:** That's right. We cling to tree branches and seal our shell shut.

**SNAIL 2:** Our heart rate slows, and we barely breathe as we wait for cooler days.

**NARRATOR:** Christmas Island red crabs doze underground.

**CRAB 1:** Deep below the forest floor, we hunker down and sack out.

**CRAB 2:** [Snoring sound]

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- NARRATOR: An African lungfish cozies up quickly. It's ready for a rest.
- LUNGFISH: I nestle into the cool mud. A coat of slippery slime keeps me moist, so I can beat the heat.
- NARRATOR: Mangrove killifish toss and turn before catching their zzz's.
- KILLIFISH 1: That's no joke! When our watery home dries up, we jump across the land.
- KILLIFISH 2: We flip-flop, head-over-tail, until we find a hollow log.
- KILLIFISH 3: Crammed inside our dark, damp den, we wait for wetter days.
- NARRATOR: A California tiger salamander rests inside another animal's empty home.
- SALAMANDER: The cool, comfy burrow is the perfect place to spend summer.
- NARRATOR: A pixie frog digs its own den.
- PIXIE FROG: I wrap myself inside a cocoon and take a break.
- CHORUS: A cocoon?**
- PIXIE FROG: Yup, it surrounds my whole body. And when the rain returns, I rip off the wrapper, eat it, and scramble to the surface.
- CHORUS: Wow! That's cool.**
- PIXIE FROG: You can say that again!
- CHORUS: Wow! That's cool.**
- NARRATOR: Okay, you estivators, settle down.
- CHORUS: Who's next?**
- NARRATOR: The spotted turtle. It goes on a journey before it estivates.

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- TURTLE: You bet! I s-l-o-w-l-y travel to a vernal pool, so I can gorge on frog eggs and tadpoles.
- NARRATOR: And when the part-time pool dries up . . .
- TURTLE: I s-l-o-w-l-y head uphill to the forest. Then I burrow into the leaf litter and rest all summer long.
- NARRATOR: A leopard gecko stays home to snooze.
- GECKO: I retreat into my den for days or weeks at a time. I get all the energy I need from fat stored in my tail.
- NARRATOR: A desert hedgehog drowzes for just a few days at a time.
- HEDGEHOG: When I have trouble finding food, I curl up in a shady spot to save energy.
- NARRATOR: At the first hint of summer, a yellow-bellied marmot heads underground for some serious shut-eye.
- MARMOT: I enter a steady slumber until the grass I eat turns lush and green.
- NARRATOR: And then, when autumn arrives . . .
- CHORUS: . . . estivating animals wake up!**

**THE END**