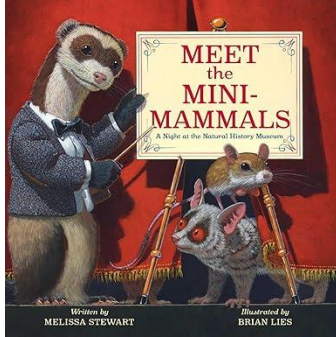


Meet the Mini-mammals: A Night at the Natural History Museum

By Melissa Stewart

Illustrated by Brian Lies

About the Book



Big mammals like elephants, hippos, and giraffes get a lot of press, but what about the little critters? From pint-sized flying squirrels to itty bitty mouse lemurs, learn all about the mini-est mammals from around the world, depicted at their real-life size. Delightful illustrations and lively text perfect read alouds combine in this adorable and informative picture book from Sibert Honoree Melissa Stewart and Caldecott Honoree Brian Lies.

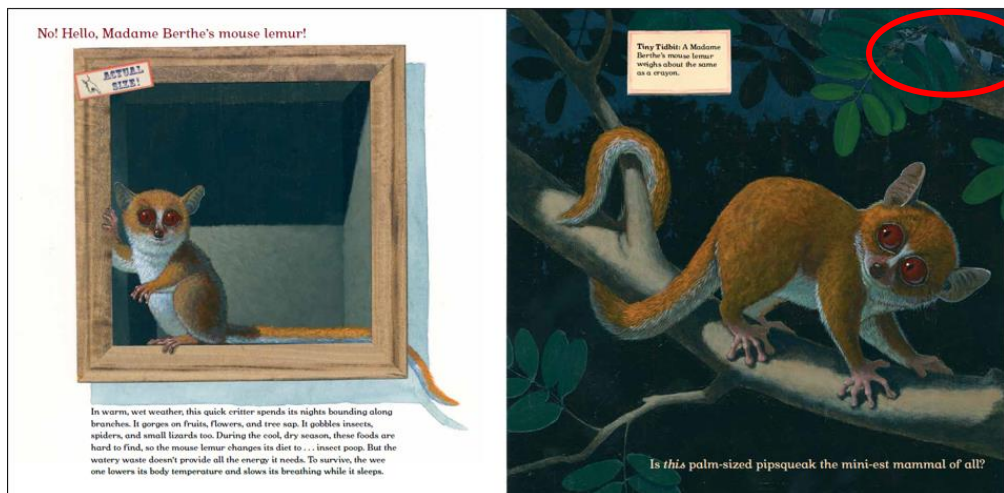
Before You Read

- Invite children to look at the front and back cover of *Meet the Mini-mammals: A Night at the Natural History Museum*. Then ask the following questions:
 - What do you think this book will be about? Where do you think it will take place?
 - What do you think a mini-mammals is?
 - Why do you think one animal is wearing clothes, but the others aren't?
 - Do you think the book will be fiction (a made-up story) or nonfiction (true information)?

As You Read

- Point out that the mini-mammals inside the framed boxes are shown at actual size. Invite a volunteer to compare the size of their hand to the size of each animal.





- After reading each Tiny Tidbit, encourage children to look for the weight comparison object, such as the crayon circled above, hidden in each illustration.

After You Read

- Revisit the question you asked before reading the book: Do you think this book is fiction (a made-up story) or nonfiction (true information)?

After inviting students to share their ideas, let them know that there is a third category of book. Informational fiction includes true information, but it also has some made up elements. *Meet the Mini-mammals* describes ten real animals. The text was carefully researched and is completely accurate, but some things in the art aren't real. Ferrets don't wear clothes or walk on their back legs or act as tour guides, and small animals aren't allowed to run around in museums.

Ask students the following questions:

- Do the fictional elements in the art make the book more fun to read?
- Would you rather read a book with photos and facts?

- Encourage each child to draw a picture of their favorite mini-mammal doing one of the actions described in the secondary text below the framed box. Allow time for children to explain their pictures to the rest of the group.

Extension Activity

Purpose: To help students get a sense of the process a nonfiction picture book author goes through when they review sketches created by an illustrator.

Process:

1. After your students write nonfiction about a topic of their choice, invite children in another classroom at the same grade level to create one or more illustrations for the text. Like professional authors and illustrators, the students don't meet or don't speak to one another.

2. Your students review the artist's work to make sure everything in the art is accurate.
3. Students write a polite letter asking the artist for any necessary changes. They can comment on accuracy only. They can't make any comments about the style of the art.

Questions:

- Are you surprised that the author and illustrator work in this way?
- Do you think it would be helpful if they could talk to one another?
- Author Melissa Stewart has written more than 200 nonfiction books for children. Do you think she was surprised when she saw the fictional elements in Brian Lies illustrations?

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