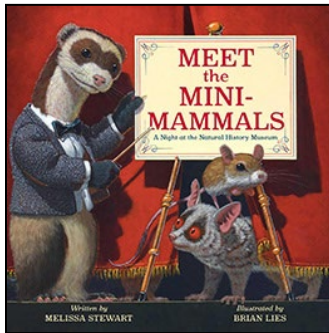


## Readers Theater



### Meet the Mini-Mammals: A Night at the Natural History Museum

by Melissa Stewart  
Illustrated by Brian Lies  
Beach Lane / Simon & Schuster, 2025  
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#### ABOUT THE BOOK

Big mammals like elephants, hippos, and giraffes get a lot of press, but what about the littlest 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 for read alouds combine in this adorable and informative picture book from Sibert Honoree Melissa Stewart and Caldecott Honoree Brian Lies.

#### GETTING STARTED

Many readers theater scripts have just ten or twelve parts, but this script has twice as many roles! It includes 10 animal parts and 12 narrator parts plus some lines read by everyone. These choruses help children stay focused throughout the reading.

If you're working with a small group of children, some students can perform two roles. If you have a large group, some children can share a role or you can divide a role into multiple parts.

After you've matched students with parts, invite them 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.

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

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

Narrator 1	
Narrator 2	
Narrator 3	Japanese dwarf flying squirrel
Narrator 4	Southern lesser galago
Narrator 5	Lesser hedgehog tenrec
Narrator 6	Philippine tarsier
Narrator 7	Least chipmunk
Narrator 8	Madame Berthe's mouse lemur
Narrator 9	American shrew mole
Narrator 10	Dwarf three-toed jerboa
Narrator 11	Etruscan pygmy shrew
Narrator 12	Kitti's hog-nosed bat

### SCRIPT

Narrator 1: You probably already know a lot about BIG mammals like elephants and hippos and giraffes.

**Everyone:** **That's why we're here to celebrate small.**

Narrator 2: Get ready to meet some of the world's most amazing mini-mammals and discover which one has the teeny-tiniest body of all.

JDFW: [Step forward.]

Narrator 3: Hello, Japanese dwarf flying squirrel!

JDFW: I spend my nights dashing through treetops in search of seeds, buds, bark, and fruit. If I sense danger, I jump for my life!  
[Jump.]

Narrator 3: And then what?

JDFW: [Spread arms.] I gracefully glide to safety. I can travel the length of eight school buses with one leap!

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Narrator 3: [Point.] Is *this* lively leaper the mini-est mammal of all?

**Everyone:** No!

SLG: [Step forward.]

Narrator 4: Hello, Southern lesser galago!

SLG: A moth is no match for me! I can easily snatch insects out of the air with my front feet.

Narrator 4: What do you do between snacks?

SLG: I scamper through the forest, hopping from tree to tree. I spray my feet with sticky urine to help them grip branches.

Narrator 4: [Point.] Is *this* fluffy furball the mini-est mammal of all?

**Everyone:** No!

LHT: [Step forward.]

Narrator 5: Hello, Lesser hedgehog tenrec!

LHT: During the day, I rest under a rotting log. At night, I wander across the ground, sniffing my surroundings. [Sniffing sound.]

Narrator 5: What if a hungry hunter attacks?

LHT: I roll into a ball to stay safe. I might even lunge backward and try to stab the predator with my sharp spines.

Narrator 5: [Point.] Is *this* prickly pipsqueak the mini-est mammal of all?

**Everyone:** No!

[LC, MBML dart forward and look excited.]

**Everyone:** **Hey, mischievous munchkins, it's not your turn yet.**

Narrator 1: Get back in line!

[LC, MBML look disappointed and scurry back to their to their spots.]

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PT: [Step forward.]

Narrator 6: Hello, Philippine tarsier!

PT: Check out my enormous eyes! [Point.] They're perfect for spotting insects, frogs, lizards, and bats—even on the darkest nights.

Narrator 6: What do you do after hunting all night?

PT: I search for a tree hole near the ground. Then I climb inside, curl into a ball, and drifts off to sleep. [Close eyes, snoring sound]

Narrator 6: [Point.] Is *this* tiny tree dweller the mini-est mammal of all?

**Everyone:** No!

LC: [Step forward.]

Narrator 7: Hello, Least chipmunk!

LC: As summer ends, I get ready for cold, snowy weather. I stuff my chubby cheeks with nuts and seeds. Then I head back to my burrow.

Narrator 7: How do you survive in winter?

LC: By snoozing for a few days at a time. Between naps, I nibble on my supply of snacks.

Narrator 7: And then what?

LC: When warm days return, I shake myself awake and spring into action. [Jump forward.]

Narrator 7: [Point.] Is *this* striped sprinter the mini-est mammal of all?

**Everyone:** No!

MBML: [Step forward.]

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Narrator 8: Hello, Madame Berthe's mouse lemur!

MBML: In warm, wet weather, I spend nights bounding along branches. I gorge on fruits, flowers, and tree sap. I gobble insects, spiders, and small lizards too.

Narrator 8: What do you eat during the cool, dry season?

MBML: Insect poop. But it doesn't provide all the energy I need. So I spend a lot of time sleeping. I lower my body temperature and breathe very slowly.

Narrator 8: [Point.] Is *this* itty-bitty beast the mini-est mammal of all?

**Everyone: No!**

[DTTJ, EPS dart forward and look excited.]

**Everyone: Hey, rambunctious rascals, it's not your turn yet.**

Narrator 2: Get back in line!

[DTTJ, EPS look disappointed and scurry back to their to their spots.]

ASM: [Step forward.]

Narrator 9: Hello, American shrew mole!

ASM: I'm one of the world's strangest sleepers. I doze for about 8 minutes at a time. Then I hunt for up to 18 minutes before I need another nap.

**Everyone: Wow, that is *really* strange.**

ASM: You can say that again.

**Everyone: Wow, that is *really* strange.**

ASM: And you'll never guess how I hunt for worms and slugs. I tap-tap-tap my nose in the dirt. Then I take a step forward and tap some more. When I finally touch my target . . . *Chomp!*

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- Narrator 9: [Point.] Is *this* tiny tyke the mini-est mammal of all?
- Everyone:** No!
- DTTJ: [Step forward.]
- Narrator 10: Hello, Dwarf three-toed jerboa!
- DTTJ: During the day, I sleep in an underground den. At night, I hop-hop-hop across the desert.
- Narrator 10: What happens when you spot a tasty seed or leaf?
- DTTJ: I grab it with my front feet and chow down. I get all the water I need by nibbling on roots.
- Narrator 10: [Point.] Is *this* pinky-sized peewee the mini-est mammal of all?
- Everyone:** No!
- EPS: [Step forward.]
- Narrator 11: Hello, Etruscan pygmy shrew!
- EPS: I live my life at top speed. My heart beats 15 times faster than yours. And I take 40 breaths in the time you take just one.
- Narrator 11: How do you get enough energy to keep your body running?
- EPS: I eat twice my weight in food every single night. That's like a 10-year-old kid devouring more than 500 hamburgers a day.
- Narrator 11: [Point.] Is *this* speedy snacker the mini-est mammal of all?
- Everyone:** No!
- Narrator 12: [Looks around.] Hello? Anyone there?
- KHNB: [Rushes forward with arms spread.]
- Narrator 12: Aha, there you are! Hello, Kitti's hog-nosed bat.

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- KHNB:** I spend most of my time hanging upside down deep inside a cave. At dusk, I hunt insects and spiders for just 30 minutes. Then I head home.
- Narrator 12:** Wow, that's not very long.
- KHNB:** Then, at dawn, I spend 20 more minutes searching for food.
- Narrator 12:** [Point.] Is *this* furry flier the mini-est mammal of all?
- Everyone:** Why, yes, it is!
- KHNB:** Just look at my teeny-tiny body.
- Narrator 1 & 2:** Three cheers for the mini-mammals! Let's give them all a hand.
- Everyone:** [Applause and cheering.]

THE END

