

A Standards-Aligned Educator Guide for Grades PK- K

# THE HOME BUILDERS

## About the book:

This vibrantly illustrated picture book celebrates a variety of woodland creatures as they make their homes and prepare for their young.

Age Range: 3 - 5 years

Grade Level: PK - K

Publisher: Nancy Paulsen Books

ISBN-10 : 0399166858

ISBN-13: 978-0399166853

Welcome to a serene woodland where lots of expectant animal parents are in their “nesting” phase--that is, busy preparing safe, cozy homes for their growing families. As they dig, tunnel, gnaw, and gather, they create dens, burrows, lodges, and, of course, nests. Soon the woods are full of new little ones peeping, crawling, romping, and snuggling--and with artwork so gorgeous that it feels like an invitation into the scenery it’s depicting, readers will be eager to join them in their beautiful home.

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## About the author – Varsha Bajaj:

Varsha’s story begins in Mumbai, India, in the early 1960s in a rambling house built in 1929 surrounded by coconut, guava, and betel nut trees. Today, as an author and speaker, Varsha visits schools and facilitates workshops for both kids and adults. Her experience ranges from teaching creative writing with Writers in the Schools, to leading small groups, and speaking at conferences. Find out more about Varsha and her fascinating project by accessing her website at [varshabajaj.com](http://varshabajaj.com).



## About the illustrator – Simona Mulazzani:

Simona Mulazzani was born in Milan and now lives in the town of Pesaro. She is an adored children’s book artist in Italy, and now America has come to appreciate her charming work. Simona has illustrated over 90 adult and children’s books for international publishers. In 2013 she received a Silver Medal from the Original Art Show at the Society of Illustrators, for her illustrations in the book, “I Wish I Had.”



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## Pre-Reading Discussion:

- Study the illustration on the front cover. Name the animals and insects featured in the picture.
- Notice that some of the animals seem to be hiding. Explain why this is so.
- The title of the book is THE HOME BUILDERS. If the creatures featured in the illustration are home builders, where can their homes be found?
- Why do insects, animals, and people need to build a home?
- Predict what this book is going to be about.



## Post-Reading Discussion:

Do you see the home builders?

Deep on the trail,  
Beneath the mound,  
Down by the water,  
Safe off the ground.

- Turn to the first spread in the book featuring animals at home in the woods. Identify the names of the animals featured in the illustration. Tell all that you know about each.
- Examine where the animals' homes are in the woods. Which homes are burrowed in the ground? Which are found high in the trees? Make a connection between where they live, how they live, and their relationship to nature surrounding them.
- Discuss how the plants and water found in the woods provide all that the animals need to survive.

Do you see the homes?

Beds in leaf piles,  
Dens snug and warm,  
Lodges on ponds,  
Shelter from storms.

- Describe how each home built by the animals keep them safe and warm?
- Explain why the beaver builds a home near water. Why does an owl build its home high in a tree, rather than in a burrow on the ground?
- An animal's habitat defined as its natural home. Describe how each animal creates a home in woods, it's natural habitat.
- Discuss the difference and similarities between a summer habitat and a winter habitat.
- Discuss how all the animals in the woods, together, create a habitat than meets all their needs. Tell how each animal relies on one another to survive.

Do you see the families?

Born to be wild,  
To work and play,  
Learning to soar,  
Growing each day.

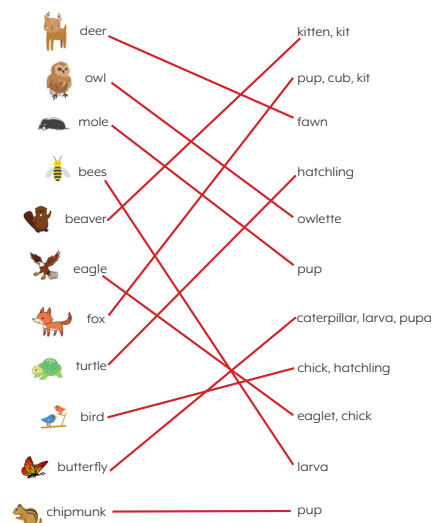
- To be *blessed* means to be happy, lucky, and fortunate. Explain why having a baby is a blessing.
- Define the word *family*. Tell everything you know about families.
- Observe the illustrations of the animal families. List ways that they are different. Identify how they are the same.
- The last line of the book is "Home is our earth, Shared by us all." Determine how humans can share the earth in ways that all living things can live and thrive together.

## Home Builders & Their Babies:

Choose a Home Builder and its young that you want to learn more about. Research information about them by reading books, articles, watching videos, and finding interesting facts online. Define your animal's relationship with nature. Explain how they adapt to living in the woods. How do they change their homes as the seasons change? Where do they find food and shelter? Write and illustrate a short report about the pair. Share your work with the class.



## Match-Up Answers



COMMON CORE ANCHOR STATE STANDARDS ALIGNMENT:

Reading: CCRA-RL.1, RL.2, RL.3, RL.4, RL.7, RL.10 Writing: CCRA-W.2, W.4, W.7 Speaking & Listening: CCRA-SL.1, SL.2, SL.4, SL.6

NEXT GENERATION STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

K-ESS3-1 Earth and Human Activity, K-ESS2-2 Earth's Systems, K-ESS3-3 Earth and Human Activity

Guide created by Debbie Gonzales, MFA



## The Home Builders & Their Babies Match-Up

Draw a line to match the names of the home builders and their babies's.



deer

kitten, kit



owl

pup, cub, kit



mole

fawn



bees

hatchling



beaver

owlette



eagle

pup



fox

caterpillar, larva, pupa



turtle

chick, hatchling



bird

eaglet, chick



butterfly

larva



chipmunk

pup

