

# TEACHER'S NOTES

Written by Brenda Gurr  
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## Sophie Won't Sleep

Dr Danielle Camer  
Illustrated by Tatsiana Burgaud

# ABOUT THE BOOK

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## Summary

It's bedtime for Sophie sloth! But she wants treetop adventures instead. Will Sophie ever make it to bed?

This gentle story follows a feisty main character who resists bedtime and then discovers that being stubborn can lead to problems. It provides an opportunity to discuss themes of independence, making decisions, rules and routines, and family relationships. The rich illustrations will also encourage an interest in learning about sloths and their rainforest environment.

## Themes

Humour, belonging, love, fear, problem-solving



## About the author: Dr Danielle Camer

Danielle is a professional writer from Wollongong, Australia, who has previous careers in medical research and university teaching. She has presented at leading national and international conferences, been published in international journals, and received several awards for outstanding teaching and academic performance. Danielle specialises in marketing and advertising for global pharmaceutical and healthcare companies. When she isn't writing, Danielle enjoys spending time with her family, visiting her local beach, and travelling. Danielle loves sloths.



## About the illustrator: Tatsiana Burgaud

Tatsiana is based in Bordeaux, France. She is originally from Belarus and has also lived in Turkmenistan, Germany and Ireland. She believes this background is reflected in her work. Tatsiana's father was a military man from the Soviet army, so she moved a lot during her childhood. She continued to travel until her late 20s before finally settling in France. She still loves travelling. Tatsiana is completely self-taught in art, although she has taken some online drawing courses and is currently attending a drawing course at École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts (School of Fine Arts) in Bordeaux. She never stops learning. Tatsiana started illustrating two years ago after a career in fine wine trading.

## ABOUT THE BOOK

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### My inspiration: Danielle

My daughter, Sophie, and her bedtime routine inspired this book.

Many parents of young children know bedtime can be a challenge ...

*'Mum, let me do a performance for you first.'*

*'Dad, let me tell you something. Did you know we are made of atoms?'*

*'Five more minutes?'*

Yes, that slow, sluggish, sloth-like stalling of bedtime, while we parents try to stay calm but firm through our weariness and exhaustion. Why does it feel like it is taking 10 minutes to brush each tooth? How is it suddenly 10 pm? Will my child ever make it to bed?

I thought this common experience had the makings of a charming bedtime tale, relatable to children and caregivers alike. I'm thrilled to share this story so it can be enjoyed by others.

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### My inspiration: Tatsiana

I am a big lover of nature and I'm passionate about the protection of animals and forests, so drawing nature is very rewarding for me. When I am older, I will surely go on a Greenpeace trip to clean the oceans.

I am also inspired by my children, and the white bunny in the book comes from this. A child feels less lonely when his or her imaginary friend is close by, and it is more fun, less scary and easier to get over some night fears when parents are not nearby. The child knows that he or she is not completely alone, and that the little animal has to be taken care of. There is a sense of responsibility for someone who is smaller and more vulnerable.

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# ACTIVITIES

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## Before reading

- Talk to children about their families and the people who care for them. What rules and routines are they expected to follow? Do their friends follow similar routines? What happens at bedtime in their homes? What do they do if they don't feel sleepy? What decisions are they allowed to make for themselves at home and/or at school? Has this changed over time?
- Hold up a picture of a sloth and ask children what it is. Talk about its mammalian features, and list other mammals the children know. Locate the places in which sloths live on a world map (Central and South America). Create a chart that lists things the children already know about sloths, and things they would like to find out. Use reference books or websites such as [slothconservation.org](http://slothconservation.org) to write interesting facts about sloths. You could also share the list provided below.
  - Sloths can be two-fingered or three-fingered, but all species have three toes.
  - There are six species of sloth. Sadly, the pygmy three-fingered sloth is critically endangered.
  - Sloths provide the perfect home for six different types of moths that reside in their fur.
  - Although sloths take the crown for being the world's slowest mammal, wild adult sloths actually only sleep for eight to ten hours a day.
  - Sloths are talented swimmers.
  - Sloths have very poor eyesight.
  - Hibiscus flowers are like chocolate bars to sloths – they love them!

Source: The Sloth Conservation Foundation (2021) [slothconservation.org](http://slothconservation.org).

- Introduce the book by revealing the cover and reading the title. Encourage predictions about the text. Ask children who they think Sophie might be. Why do they think she won't sleep? Where might she live? What kind of character might she be? What might happen in the story?

## Sharing the story

Before reading the story aloud, tell the children that it is set in the Costa Rican rainforest. You might like to organise some props to set the mood. For example, you could display a large map of Costa Rica or some rainforest-themed objects. You could also play Central or South American-themed music/sound effects or ask children to dress up in rainforest-themed clothing.



# ACTIVITIES

## Post-reading activity ideas

These activities relate to concepts described in the Australian Curriculum for Foundation – Year 2 [australiancurriculum.edu.au](http://australiancurriculum.edu.au).

## English

- Talk about sound words (onomatopoeia) with children and consider why an author might use this literary device in a story. Ask them to spot the sound words used in this story. These are listed below.

*Ta da!* – fanfare as Sophie performs ballet

*Ding ding!* – bicycle bell ringing

*Nom nom!* – Sophie eating her hibiscus flower

*Scaaarunch* – leaves scrunching

*Aaaaah!* – Sophie screaming as she falls off the tree

Ding  
ding!

Aaaaah!

Nom  
nom!

Ta da!

Scaaarunch

# ACTIVITIES

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## English (continued)

- Find examples of alliteration (repetition of the same initial consonant sounds within a group of words) in the text. These are listed below.

*fanning and fluffing her fancy red tutu*

*gazing at the bell on her blue bicycle*

*sniffing her scrumptious yellow hibiscus*

*practised her pliés and pirouettes*

- Ask children what is happening on the pages with the words ‘Scaaaarunch. Scaaaarunch. Aaaaah!’. How do the illustrations help us to understand what is happening? Now have children write a description of what is happening on these pages using full sentences. Which do they prefer to read – the original version or their new one?
- Ask children if they have ever had experiences like Sophie’s. For example, have they ever not wanted to go to bed? Had an adult count down until they had to be ready for something? Felt afraid and alone? They can write a postcard to Sophie that explains how one or more of their experiences have been like hers.
- Have children prepare and present a short speech that explains why their bedtime should be later. They should come up with some strong reasons that will persuade the person or people who care for them.
- Make a list of animal comparison phrases for children to complete. Begin with ‘As slow as a sloth’ and add phrases like ‘As fast as a ...’, ‘As smart as a ...’, ‘As cheeky as a ...’. Children can draw a picture for each phrase.
- Find and follow a simple cake recipe that uses edible flowers as an ingredient.
- Sophie wears a red bow in her hair. Provide ribbon, string or shoelaces and help children follow a procedure to tie their own bows.





# ACTIVITIES

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## Mathematics

- Re-read the sections of the story where Sophie's mum counts down to bedtime. Discuss other situations in which countdowns might occur (e.g. looking forward to a special date or occasion, a rocket launch, on New Year's Eve, on a microwave or oven timer). Place the numbers 1–10 on a number line and count forwards and backwards. Challenge children to count down from a high number (perhaps 100 if they feel confident). Create simple number sequences that go up and down illustrated tree trunks.
- Create a simple treasure map based on the country of Costa Rica. Give students simple written instructions to find a hibiscus flower treasure.

## Science

- Provide a labelled picture of a sloth with its main features identified. Ask children to complete simple sentences about how the sloth moves and eats, and what body parts help it to live easily in a rainforest environment.
- Find photographs of young sloths and adult sloths. Ask children to explain what is similar and different about the pictures.

## The Arts

### Dance

- Sophie practises pliés and pirouettes in the story. Find out the meaning of these ballet words together. Which language do they come from? What other words do you know from this language? Find out the meanings of other ballet words or phrases such as arabesque, *pas de chat* and *rond de jambe*. Ask children to practise and perform some of these moves in a dance routine with a partner. Children might like to try dancing slowly and carefully like sloths!

### Drama

- In a group of three, create a role play about Mummy, Daddy and Sophie (you can change any of the genders if you need to) that shows what happens the next day when Sophie wakes up. What do her parents say to her the next morning? What happens that night?
- Ask children to move as slowly as they can while miming everyday actions such as brushing their teeth, eating breakfast or playing games. Then ask them to move as quickly as possible. What was easier? What was more interesting to watch? Have them create and present a fast/slow miming performance with a partner.

### Music

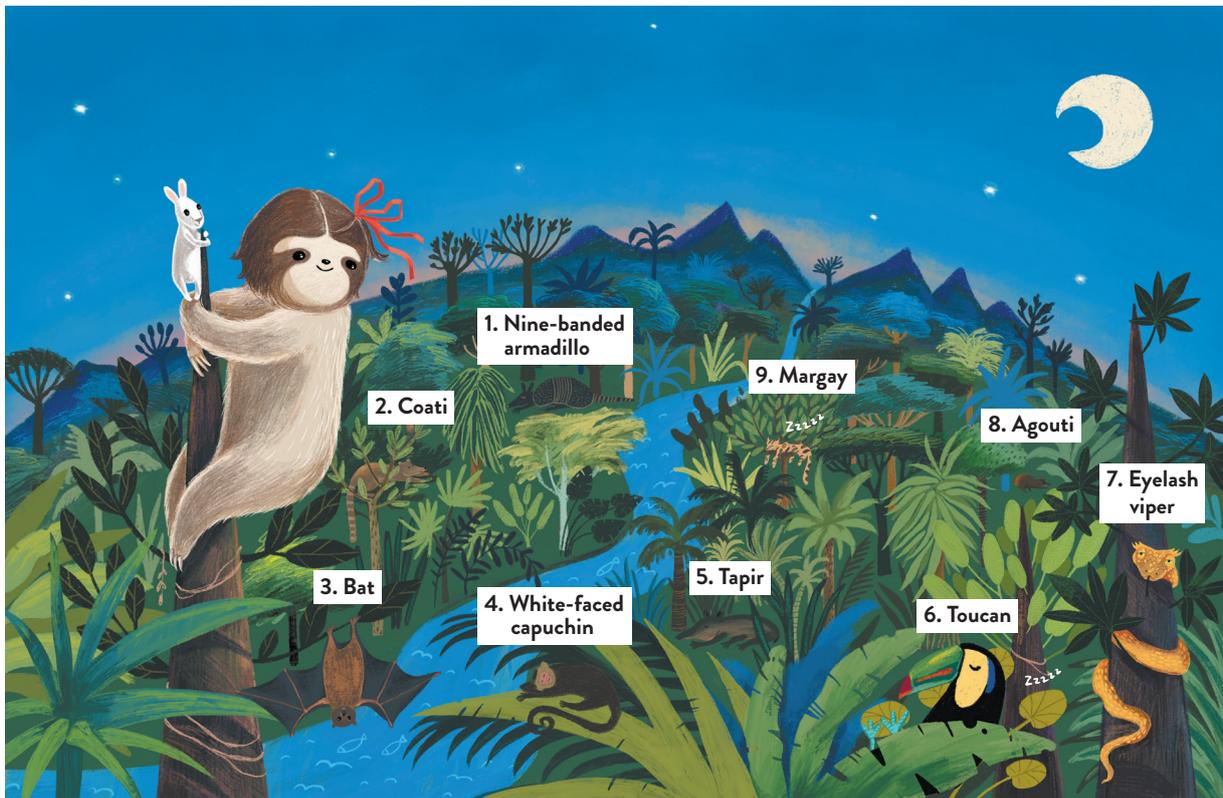
- Listen to some Costa Rican calypso music and talk about the traditional instruments that are used to play this style.



# ACTIVITIES

## Visual Arts

- Identify the primary colours used in the story – yellow, blue and red. Ask children to name the items Sophie had of each colour. Talk about other colours mentioned in the text and make a list of objects or animals that typically come in these colours. Ask the children to see how many colours of the rainbow they can find in the illustrations.
- Apart from sloths, there are nine other Costa Rican animals to find in the illustrations. Ask children to spot them, then name any that they know. Ask them to describe each one. What do they think each animal would feel like to touch? Reveal the names of each animal (shown below). You can then find out simple facts about them. Ask children to draw or paint a picture of each one.





## ACTIVITIES

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### Visual Arts (continued)

- Make a sloth mask from a paper plate. Cut the paper plate in half. Cut eye holes in one half. Paint the mask. Add wool or other fabric around the top of the mask. Finally, attach elastic so the mask can be fitted to a child's head.



# ACTIVITIES

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## Humanities and Social Sciences

Sophie has a mum and a dad but no siblings (that we can see!). Ask children to identify the members of their immediate and extended family. Talk about the different types of families that people may be part of and what children think makes a family. They can construct simple family trees on a tree template that looks like the one Sophie lives in, adding photographs or pictures to represent their family members.

## Other books about sloths to share

### Fiction

*Sparky!* by Jenny Offill and Chris Appelhans

*'Slowly, Slowly, Slowly,' said the Sloth* by Eric Carle

*The Sloth Who Came to Stay* by Margaret Wild and Vivienne To

*Archie: No Ordinary Sloth* by Heath McKenzie

### Nonfiction

*A Little Book of Sloth* by Lucy Cooke

*Slow, Slow Sloths* by Bonnie Bader

*The Secret Life of the Sloth* by Laurence Pringle and Kate Garchinsky



# BOOK REVIEW

Title:

- Draw and label a picture to show where this story is set.

- Draw and label a picture of the main character.

- What happens in the story?

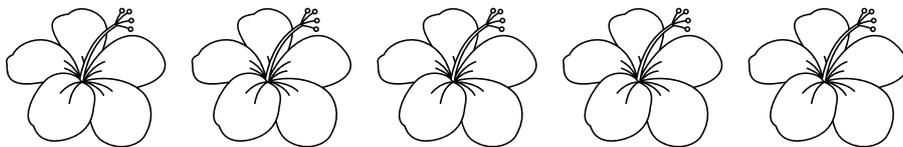
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- Colour the hibiscus flowers to give the story a rating.



# MAKE A SLEEPY SLOTH

## You will need

- half a paper plate
- paint
- white, brown and green card
- sticky tape
- a glue stick
- scissors
- markers or crayons

## Steps

1. Paint the paper plate in the colour you would like your sloth to be.
2. When the paint is dry, cut out the inner part of the paper plate. You will now have an arch and a semi-circle.
3. Cut out a big circle from the semi-circle. This is the sloth's head.
4. Trace the circle onto the white card. Cut out the white card inside the lines so it is a little smaller than the plate circle.
5. Glue the white circle to the plate circle. Use sticky tape to attach the head to the paper plate arch.
6. Draw a sleepy sloth face on the white circle.
7. Draw three claws on each end of the arch.
8. Use the brown and green card to make a leafy tree branch for your sloth.
9. Glue your sloth onto the branch. Hope it enjoys hanging around!



# WHAT DOES SOPHIE LOVE?



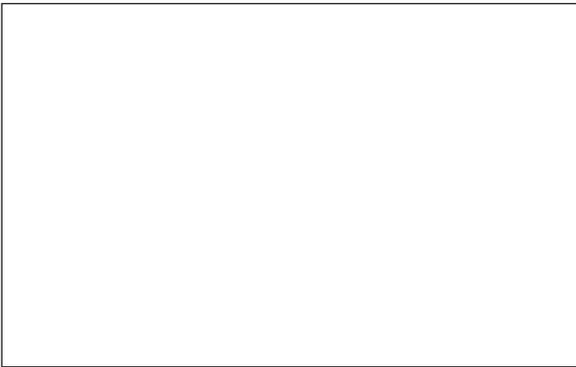
Draw some of the things that Sophie loves.



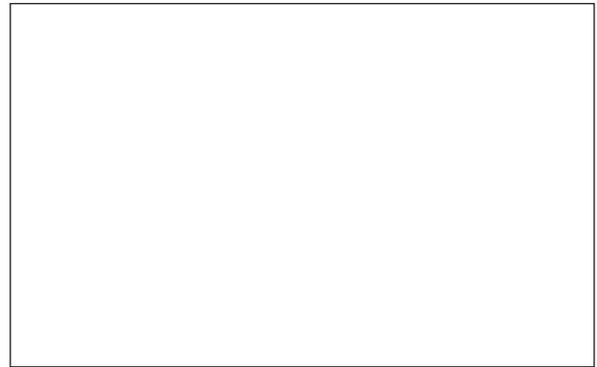
Sophie loves her family.



Sophie loves her toy bunny.  
(Can you spot it on each page?)



Sophie loves to practise ballet.



Sophie loves to eat flowers.



# WHAT DO I LOVE?

Draw and write about some of the things that you love.



I love my family.

I love my toy \_\_\_\_\_

I love to practise \_\_\_\_\_

I love to eat \_\_\_\_\_



# FRUIT FLOWER BOUQUET

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Sophie loves to eat flowers. Make some flowers that you can eat too!

## You will need

melon slices

seedless grapes (these can be cut in half to avoid a choking hazard)

berries

one or more apples

cookie cutters in different shapes like stars or flowers

long bamboo skewers

a sharp knife

## Steps

1. Wash the fruit.
2. Ask an adult to help you cut a slice from each apple so it can sit flat on a plate.
3. Use the cookie cutters to cut shapes from the melon slices.
4. Thread the fruit onto each skewer. Start with a grape or other dense piece of fruit first. This stops the other fruit from sliding down. Make each skewer as colourful as you can!
5. Stick your skewers into the apple to make your bouquet. Nom nom!



# SHADOW ANIMALS



There are lots of shadows in *Sophie Won't Sleep*. Mummy and Daddy sloth also make scary patterns with their hands.

Try making these shadow shapes with your hands in front of a ray of light.

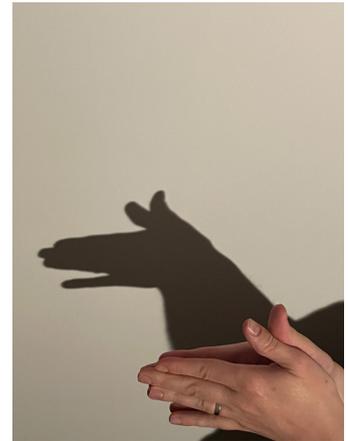
Write which animal you think each one looks like.



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Answers: Duck, Snail, Dog, Rabbit, Bird, Moose



# Colouring pages



# Colouring pages



# Colouring pages



