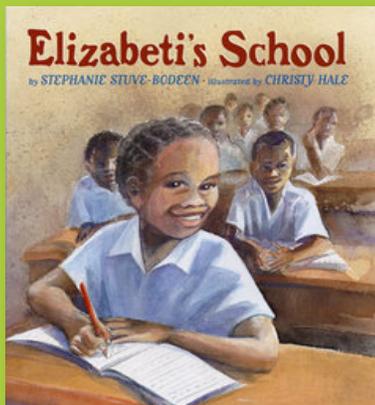


## TEACHER'S GUIDE



## Elizabethi's School

written by Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen

illustrated by Christy Hale

### About the Book

**Reading Level:** Grade 2–3

**Interest Level:** Grades PreK–2

**Guided Reading Level:** M

**Accelerated Reader® Level/**

**Points:** 3.8/0.5

**Lexile™ Measure:** AD590L

**Genre:** Realistic Fiction

**Themes:** Classroom Activities, School, Kindergarten, Fear and Anxiety, Growing Up, Siblings, Sharing and Giving, Friendship, Education, Africa (Tanzania), African/African American Interest

### Synopsis

*Elizabethi's School*, the third in the award-winning series about Elizabethi, a young girl in contemporary Tanzania, introduces Elizabethi on her first day of school. It's the first day of school and Elizabethi can hardly wait. She puts on her new uniform and feels her shiny shoes. School must surely be a very special place!

Shortly after arriving at school, however, Elizabethi begins to miss her family. What if Mama needs help cleaning the rice? What if her baby sister wants to play? What if her little brother wants to go for a walk?

When Elizabethi gets home, she is so glad to see everyone that she decides she won't return to school the next day. However, that evening, Elizabethi has a chance to show her family some of the things she has learned in school—counting to five, writing letters, dancing, and playing a game called **machaura**. Her pride in accomplishing these things and her joy in sharing them make Elizabethi decide that maybe she will give school another chance after all.

In this contemporary Tanzanian story, author Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen and artist Christy Hale once again bring the sweet innocence of Elizabethi to life. Readers are sure to recognize this young child's emotions as she copes with her first day of school and discovers the wonder and joy of learning.

For the full *Elizabethi* series, check out: <https://www.leeandlow.com/collections/elizabeti-series-collection>



## BACKGROUND

**Tanzania:** Tanzania is in southeastern Africa on the Indian Ocean. Its capital is Dar es Salaam. Most people there make their living from agriculture. The official languages of Tanzania are English and Swahili (sometimes called Kiswahili). Find more geographical information about Tanzania at <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/countries/tanzania/#/tanzania-masai.jpg>. See sample photos and information about life in a rural Tanzanian village at <https://www.soschildrensvillages.org.uk/tanzania>.

**School in Tanzania:** According to UNICEF at <https://www.unicef.org/tanzania/what-we-do/education>, Tanzania “achieved nearly universal access to primary education” in 2007, but the success of the education system is still highly challenged. “An estimated 2 million children between the ages of 7 and 13 years are out-of-school ... Primary school-aged children from the poorest families are three times less likely to attend school than those from the wealthiest households... Girls, the poorest children, children with disabilities and children living in underserved communities are most vulnerable to dropping out of school or never going to school.”

Simply commuting to school can be an intense, exhausting, and even dangerous experience for children in rural Tanzania. A BBC news story at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-23239800> shares one girl's experience. (Note: that some details will be inappropriate and frightening for young students.)

**The Elizabethi Series:** These books are based on the author's experiences while serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Tanzania in the 1980s. (See <https://www.peacecorps.gov/tanzania/> for more information on the Peace Corps in Tanzania. An interview with the author, found at <http://www.peacecorpswriters.org/pages/2001/0109/109talkstubo.html> includes more information about her personal experience.)

Although the stories take place in Tanzania, all three Elizabethi books focus on universal childhood experiences and desires: wanting a special toy to love and care for (*Elizabethi's Doll*), sibling love and

responsibility (*Mama Elizabethi*), and the first day of school (*Elizabethi's School*).

## BEFORE READING

### Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

- How did you get ready for your very first day of school?
- How did you feel about starting school?
- How did you feel after you'd been going to school for a little while?
- How might schools in different places be different from each other? What's often similar about school no matter where it is?

### Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Talk about the title of the book. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?

Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, author and illustrators' dedications, and illustrations.

### Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- how Elizabethi gets ready to start school
- what starting school is like for Elizabethi
- how Elizabethi's feelings change during the story



## VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below. Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

### Content Specific

braided, school uniform, school year, machaura, newborn

### Academic

fidget, twirled, sloppy, filed, stiff, peeked, disturb, sloppy

Encourage students to consider why the author, Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen, would want to share this story with young people.

## AFTER READING

### Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

### Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. How does Elizabethi get ready for school? How does she feel?
2. What does Elizabethi see and hear when she gets to school? How does she feel?
3. Based on the description, how does the game *machaura* work?
4. What school work do Elizabethi and her classmates do? What does Elizabethi think about?
5. What do Elizabethi and the other children do outside? What do the older girls do for Elizabethi?
6. What does Elizabethi learn at school?
7. What does Elizabethi do after school?
8. What does Elizabethi do when she gets home?
9. What clues did the author give that something might happen with Elizabethi's cat Moshi? What did happen? How did Elizabethi feel when she found Moshi and her kittens? What did she do?
10. What does Elizabethi's family do in the evening? What new things does each person find out?

### Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)



1. What's new for Elizabethi as she starts school? How can new things make you feel different ways all at once?
2. What helps Elizabethi when she feels lonely and homesick at school? Why do you think those things help? Give specific examples from different parts of her school day.
3. How is the walk home different than the walk to school? How is getting home different than getting ready to leave?
4. Why do you think Elizabethi's family time in the evening felt extra special that night? Give examples.
5. How do you think Elizabethi's mother learned to play machaura? Why can it be surprising to find out things adults know?
6. How does Elizabethi feel about going to school by the end of the story? Do you think her feelings will change at all as she continues to go to school?
7. What did you learn about some people's life in a Tanzanian village from reading this story? What are you interested in learning more about?

## Reader's Response

*(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)*

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion. You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

Create a three-column chart with words that lists a story event with a character name, how that character felt, and supporting evidence from the text. (Call students' attention to the characters' faces in the illustrations. Also encourage students to consider some feeling words not explicitly stated in the text, such as homesick, joyful, relieved, and relaxed.)

Make a list of ways others helped Elizabethi's first day of school be successful. Make another list of ways Elizabethi

might help her younger brother or another younger child when they start school.

Compare and contrast your first day of school with Elizabethi's. Include examples of how each of you felt, and how others' actions impacted your day.

In this story, school is a new experience for Elizabethi. Why is it sometimes hard to adjust to new experiences? Why does it take time? Write about a time you had to adjust to a new experience.

## ELL Teaching Activities

*(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)*  
*(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)*

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
  - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
  - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about their experiences starting school, or what they enjoy about being at home.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language



Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

6. If you have Spanish language learners, there is *La escuela de Elizabethi* available: <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/la-escuela-de-elizabeti>

## Social and Emotional Learning

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)  
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships. Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of *Elizabethi's School*:

Have students chart Elizabethi's emotions over the course of the story. How does she feel when she's interacting with each character in the story? Use the illustrations as a visual reference and way to tap into students' visual literacy skills.

What Social and Emotional Learning skills does Elizabethi exhibit over the course of the book? (some examples include problem-solving, grit and perseverance, and perspective taking) How do they influence her character? Why was it important for her to demonstrate those skills?

Encourage students to think about Social and Emotional Learning skills they have used to achieve something that they are passionate about. How does it relate to how Elizabethi accomplished her goal?

Have students in an essay argue whether Elizabethi is a role model for young people or not. What evidence can

students find in the text that demonstrates Elizabethi character and whether the author encourages young people to emulate her or draw caution from her.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

### English/Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1 and 2, Craft and Structure, Strand 4 and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types and Purposes, Strand 3)

Write scenes from the story on slips of paper and students choose one to act out/ad lib. Encourage actors to focus on conveying Elizabethi's feelings, including what she might say to herself as well as her conversations with other characters.

Have students write or act out a sample conversation between Elizabethi and her parents about her first day of school. Brainstorm how Elizabethi might explain her feelings during different parts of her day based on evidence from the text.

Turn your pretend play area into a village school and include elements from the story for children to incorporate into their play, such as drums, stones for *machaura*, and play food for a school garden.

Read other the other Elizabethi stories: *Elizabethi's Doll* ([https://www.leeandlow.com/books/45/hc/elizabeti\\_s\\_doll](https://www.leeandlow.com/books/45/hc/elizabeti_s_doll)) and *Mama Elizabethi* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/mama-elizabeti>). Talk about how each of the three stories presents themes relevant to most children, even if they do not live in Africa. Ask your students what other stories they'd like to read about Elizabethi's life.



Read other stories related to starting school, such as *Moony Luna/Lunita lunera* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/moony-luna-luna-lunita-lunera>), *Armando and the Blue Tarp School* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/armando-and-the-blue-tarp-school>), or *The Upside Down Boy/El niño de cabeza* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-upside-down-boy-el-nino-de-cabeza>). Discuss connections between texts.

Make a list of ways others helped Elizabethi adjust to school by including and supporting her. Read other stories that demonstrate inclusion and kindness in group settings, such as *David's Drawings* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/david-s-drawings>) and *First Day in Grapes* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/first-day-in-grapes>). Keep a running list of ways students can include and support others and encourage students to act in these ways themselves.

In this interview (<http://www.peacecorpswriters.org/pages/2001/0109/109talkstubo.html>), the author Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen shares that Elizabethi was inspired by a girl with a rock doll she remembered from her time in Tanzania. Ask your students to share memories of particular people they've observed. Why were they significant? Experiment with writing stories inspired by those people. Have students work individually or using shared writing. Alternatively, have students invent stories about a person in a picture or video clip.

## Social Studies

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1 and 2 and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)  
(Writing Standards, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9)  
(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Have students write specific rules for machaura, using the information in the book as a starting point. Play the game and share experiences and reflections. Talk about how playing games with others can make people feel.

Listen to African drum music like Elizabethi and her classmates may have danced to in the school yard. Invite students to dance to the music or have them try

playing real or homemade drums in a similar way. Talk about ways music and dancing can impact how people feel.

Discuss the importance of appreciating the diversity of others' experiences when learning about a faraway place; not everyone in Tanzania has the same experiences, just as the students in your class may not have the same experiences. (You may wish to read aloud *Mama Elizabethi* <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/mama-elizabethi> to add to your comparison.)

Read more about efforts to ensure girls in Tanzania or other developing countries receive an education, and, if possible, plan a way to contribute.

Talk about how the inspiration for the Elizabethi stories came from the author's experiences in the Peace Corps. Have students learn more about the Peace Corps using the links in the Background section. If you have access to an individual who served as a volunteer, invite him/her to speak to your class. Or, show some of the videos from the Peace Corps YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/peacecorps>. Ask your students to write about or discuss whether they would like to be a Peace Corps volunteer and why or why not.

## Home-School Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)  
(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Have students interview an adult family member about their early school experiences. Include the question, "What's something you know how to do or play from your childhood that might surprise me?" Share and compare responses at school.

Ask a family or school community member who has traveled to an African village or taught school in a developing country to share photos, artifacts and stories about their experience.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen** has won numerous awards for her *Elizabethi* series. A native of Wisconsin, Stuve-Bodeen was a Peace Corps volunteer in Tanzania. She now lives in the Midwest with her husband and their two daughters. Find her online at <http://www.writersabodeen.com>.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Christy Hale** is the author and illustrator of *The East-West House: Noguchi's Childhood in Japan*, a Kirkus Reviews Best Books of the Year selection. She has also illustrated several award-winning picture books, including the three books in the *Elizabethi* series. As an art educator, Hale has written about artists for Instructor Magazine's Masterpiece of the Month feature and workshops. Hale lives with her family in Palo Alto, California. Visit her online at [christyhale.com](http://christyhale.com).

## ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

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### On the Web:

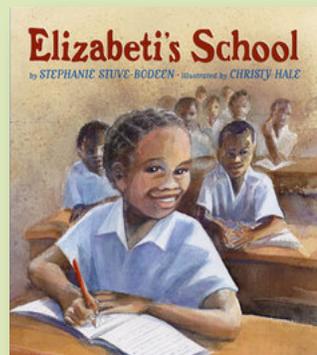
[www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering](http://www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering) (general order information)

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/elizabeti-s-school> (secure online ordering)

**By Phone:** 212-779-4400 ext. 25 | **By Fax:** 212-683-1894

**By Mail:** Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

## Book Information for *Elizabethi's School*



\$10.95, PAPERBACK

9781600602344

32 pages

\*Reading Level: Grades 2-3

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Guided Reading Level: M

Accelerated Reader® Level/  
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## RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/elizabeti-s-school>

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.