

## Africa Calling, Nighttime Falling

written by Danny Adlerman  
illustrated by Kim Adlerman

### About the Book

**Genre:** Fiction

**Format:** Paperback, \$9.95  
40 pages, 8-1/2 x 10-1/2

**ISBN:** 9781620143469

**Reading Level:** Grade 4

**Interest Level:** Grades 1–6

**Guided Reading Level:** P

**Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:**  
N/A

**Lexile™ Measure:** N/A

\*Reading level based on the ATOS Readability Formula

**Themes:** Animal/Biodiversity/Plant Adaptations, Animals, Environment/Nature, Imagination, Poetry

**Resources on the web:**

[leeandlow.com/books/africa-calling-nighttime-faling](http://leeandlow.com/books/africa-calling-nighttime-faling)

### SYNOPSIS

All across Africa, as the sun sinks lower in the sky, the animals ready for the night. Lion prowls. Viper slinks. Monkey swings. Hippo splashes. And meanwhile, a child prepares for her own peaceful dreaming.

The jaunty rhythms, gentle rhymes, and beautiful illustrations in this book will send every child off to a good night's rest. This revised paperback edition includes descriptions of each of the animals in the book, a map of Africa detailing the animals' habitats, and sheet music to sing along with the text.

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

## BACKGROUND

### About the Animals

#### Lion (*Panthera Leo*)

Lions live in groups called prides, which include up to three males, around a dozen females, and their cubs. Most hunting is done by the females, who often work together to prey upon various grassland animals. Lions are considered, as a species, vulnerable, their population down some 42 percent in just the last twenty-one years.

#### African Forest Elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*)

Though the African elephant is the largest animal walking the Earth, the forest elephant is a smaller sub-species. They use their trunks for communication and handling objects, while their large ears help them to get rid of excess heat. The forest elephant is considered an endangered species, inhabiting just 25 percent of its historic range.

#### Horned Viper (*Cerastes cerastes*)

The venomous horned viper lives in the Sahara Desert, which is spread out across most of north Africa. It is relatively small, reaching a maximum size of just under three feet in length. A nocturnal species, the horned viper feeds largely on rodents, as well as the occasional lizard or small bird. It is not considered threatened at this time.

#### Cape Buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*)

The Cape buffalo weighs up to two thousand pounds – weight it gains through grazing on grass, sedges, and woodlands. It seeks out areas with an abundant water supply, in part to take refuge from the heat, which it does not like. Buffalo overall are not considered threatened as a species, with some nine hundred thousand in total living throughout the world.

#### Monkey (Sooty Mangabey) (*Cercocebus atys*)

The sooty mangabey lives mainly in the high forest of West Africa, where it forages – mostly on the ground – for fruits, seeds, and invertebrates. It is considered near-threatened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, with its numbers decreasing from deforestation.

#### Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibious*)

“Hippopotamus” means “river horse” in ancient Greek. It can weigh as little as fifty-five pounds at birth, but can grow to a weight of three and a half tons! Hippopotami can be found in or near rivers and swamps in twenty-nine African nations, where they feed on plants. The hippo is considered a vulnerable species.

#### Mountain Zebra (*Equus zebra*)

Mountain zebras tend to stay in higher elevations most of the year, but they do migrate to the plains during the winter. They spend up to half of their daylight hours feeding on fruit, grass, leaves, bark, and roots, but if they feel danger is afoot, they will drink only at night. The mountain zebra is considered endangered, with fewer than two thousand zebra left in the wild.

### Rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*)

Both the black and the white rhinoceros can be found primarily in the savannah and grasslands of eastern and southern Africa. Their grass consumption and the resultant waste are important to the ecological balance of the continent. Because they are often poached for their horns, the black rhino population has decreased almost 98 percent since 1960, leaving them critically endangered.

### South African Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*)

The cheetah is the fastest land mammal anywhere, reaching speeds of over sixty miles per hour. Its wide-angle, sharp vision, combined with its strength and speed, makes it an excellent predator of smaller animals such as rodents and gazelle, but it shies away from larger hunters, such as lions. This species is considered vulnerable, with about seven thousand adults remaining.

## African Habitats and Animals

For information on each of the animals featured in the book (Lion, Monkey, African Forest Elephant, Hippopotamus, Horned Viper, Cape Buffalo, Mountain Zebra, Rhinoceros, and South African Cheetah), see the backmatter in the updated paperback version.

Africa is a diverse continent filled with an extensive variety of wildlife. Specific habitats include plains/grasslands, rainforests, and deserts.

## Endangered vs. Vulnerable Species

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, an endangered species is a species that is threatened with extinction. A vulnerable species is one likely to become endangered should present conditions not change. For an updated list of critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable, and threatened species, see World Wildlife Fund ([https://www.worldwildlife.org/species/directory?direction=desc&sort=extinction\\_status](https://www.worldwildlife.org/species/directory?direction=desc&sort=extinction_status)).

## BEFORE READING

### Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and 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:

- What do you know about Africa and its geography?
- What kind of animals live in Africa?
- If you visited a country in Africa, what kind of animal would you most hope to see? Why?
- What are some different things animals do at night?

### 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)

- **Book Title Exploration:** Talk about the title of the book, *Africa Calling, Nighttime Falling*. 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?
- **Read Danny Adlerman's Biography:** Read about author Danny Adlerman as well as on his website <https://dannyandkim.com/bio>. Encourage students to think about how she comes up with new ideas for his books, and what could have been her inspiration for writing *Africa Calling, Nighttime Falling*.
- **Read Kim Adlerman's Biography:** Read about Kim Adlerman as well as on her website <https://dannyandkim.com/bio>. Have students look into her illustrations for other books and compare and contrast his style across books. How are her illustrations among the books similar? How are they different? Does it seem like the subject matter of a book influences the style of her illustrations? Why do you think so?
- Encourage students to stop and jot in their reading notebooks during the read-aloud when they: learn new information, see a powerful image, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or hear new words.
- Have students quickly write a feeling in their notebooks during reading. After reading, ask students why they wrote down that feeling and have them write a journal entry about it.

### Setting a Purpose for Reading

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

Have students read to find out:

- which African animals the book describes
- what the animals' habitats are like

- what the animals do as night arrives
- how the words of the book help readers imagine being in the African wilderness at night

Encourage students to consider why the author, Danny Alderman, would want to share this story with young people.

## 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. (Many of the Spanish words can be found in the book glossary, but there are also some that are not included. Students could be encouraged to create a log of these words—they will not be listed here.)

### Content Specific

Africa, plains, jungle, queen, lions, elephant, tusk, moonlight, desert, viper, buffalo, monkey, hippo, mountainside, zebra, grazing, marshes, grasslands, rhinos, cheetah, prey, stalking

### Academic

hunting, prowling, growling, solitude, dusk, bares, mighty, mammoth, romping, stomping, cloaks, slinks, swiftly, sliding, gliding, suspicious, passing, stranger, signs, danger, cautiously, eyeing/eyes, spying, highest, tallest, swings/swinging, gracefully, deep, still, calm, splashing, spraying, shadows, mysterious, watchful, gazing, roam, massive, stunning, silently, searching, swiftly, slumbering, protected, warmly, beaming, peaceful, dreaming

## 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 textual 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. What animal does the book show first? Where is the lion standing? What can she see?
2. What animal comes next? What do the elephants have? What do they do?
3. What animal is in the desert? How does it move?
4. What is the buffalo doing?
5. What do the monkeys do at night? Where?
6. What animals are in the pool? What are they doing?
7. What are the zebras doing? Where are they?
8. Where do the rhinos live? What do they do?
9. What is the cheetah doing?
10. What is the surprise at the end of the story?
11. How does the book end? What do you notice about the illustration?

### 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. Why do you think the lion is called the queen? Why is she standing up on the rock? What is she doing?
2. Why might the elephant come out at dusk? What do you imagine elephants' stomping to be like?
3. Why might the viper come out at night? What might it be doing?
4. For what "signs of danger" might a buffalo look?
5. Compare the description of the buffalo with the words about the lion. How are do these animals act the same, and how are they different?
6. How do the monkeys act differently than any of the other animals?
7. What would it be like to watch hippos playing in a pool at night? Describe what you might see

both in the pool, and around the pool.

8. Why might the Zebra be eating at night?
9. What do you imagine when you read the words about the rhinos? What else could be "massive, stunning?"
10. What other animal from the book would you say is most similar to the cheetah? Why? Which animal is most different?
11. What types of things were the animals doing in this book? How is the way they act different depending on what they are doing?
12. Why do you think the author ended the book with a child sleeping? How is the child both the same as and different than the animals?
13. All of these animals are from different regions and countries in Africa. How does the author make it possible that all the animals would be together in some way?

### 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.

1. Write about three strong images you had in your mind during this book. Use the sentence frame: "When I read the words \_\_\_\_\_ about the \_\_\_\_\_, I imagined \_\_\_\_\_."
2. Imagine you are a scientist who studies African animals and you're going on a nighttime safari. How would you get ready? Where would you go? What would you do? What would you hope to see?
3. Which animal from the book is most interesting to you? Why? Write a list of questions you still have about that animal.
4. Some of the animals in this story are endangered. Why do you think it is important to protect endangered animals?

### 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 an African animal, or observations they make about nighttime where they live.
  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. View photos or watch videos of animals engaged in some of the behaviors from the book. Match vocabulary from the book to these real-life images. Act out some of the verbs from the book to solidify understanding.
  7. The last page in the book includes the song—play the song and have students practice singing along.

### Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)

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

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 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 this book.

8. Compare animals that feel confident and animals that feel cautious or suspicious in the book. Act out these two types of emotions and talk about the body language associated with each. Connect this discussion to how confident and cautious people may feel, and brainstorm examples of thoughts each emotion might spark.
9. Explore what it means to feel peaceful, making connections to the child ready for bed on the last spread. Chart students' ideas about what makes them feel peaceful. Institute a brief "peaceful time" in your classroom and involve students in planning what to do during that time to help create a peaceful, restorative climate.
10. Practice listening to others to build relationships and connections. Have students talk in pairs about their favorite animals and why they like them. Have partners share each other's responses as a way to encourage active listening.



# 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 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Re-read the book, alternating between reading a spread and consulting the back matter to learn more about that animal.** Talk about connections between the poetic text and the information shared. Compare and contrast poetry and informational text on the same topic.
- **Read other books related to animals in specific habitats, such as *Everglades Forever: Restoring America's Great Wetland* ([leeandlow.com/books/everglades-forever](http://leeandlow.com/books/everglades-forever)), *Parrots Over Puerto Rico* ([leeandlow.com/books/parrots-over-puerto-rico](http://leeandlow.com/books/parrots-over-puerto-rico)), and *Puffling Patrol* ([leeandlow.com/books/puffling-patrol](http://leeandlow.com/books/puffling-patrol)).** Make connections between texts. How are these books similar? How are they different? What did you learn about the animals in the three books?
- **List the rhyming root word pairs in the book (e.g., *prowl/growl*, *romp/stomp*, *slide/glide*).** Brainstorm additional words that rhyme with these pairs, and/or choose pairs that fit your phonics goals to study in more detail.
- **Use the -ing words in the book to study adding the -ing ending to root words.** As it is applicable to your students' level, discuss rules such as dropping the final "e" or doubling the final consonant.
- **Have students learn about different poetry forms.** Use the resource from Read Write Think to refer to different poetry forms. After students examine the poems in the book in more detail, have each student write a poem in a form of their choosing ([http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson417/poetryforms2.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson417/poetryforms2.pdf)). Alternatively, as a group or individually, write poems describing different settings. You might provide the language structure from the book, "\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_-ing/ \_\_\_\_\_-ing."
- **Revisit the text to make a two column list of words related to predators and words related to prey (e.g., *hunting*, *prowling*, *"cautiously eyeing"*).** Read more about food webs in African habitats and add additional words to your list.
- **Conduct a figurative language study with students. Have students go on a figurative language scavenger hunt in *Africa Calling, Nighttime Falling*.** Refer to Read Write Think's "Figurative Language Resource Page" as a tool for students to use during

their search ([http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson79/figuresource.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson79/figuresource.pdf)). Have students keep track of their findings in their reader's notebooks.

### Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **View the map of the African continent in the book's backmatter and practice using the map key.** View additional maps of Africa and locate notable examples of types of habitats, such as the Sahara Desert and Serengeti Plains. For background information on various geographic regions of Africa, see <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/africa-physical-geography/>. Research additional animals in those areas afterwards.
- **Pair this book with informational books about various African cultures, such as *Vanishing Cultures: Sahara* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/vanishing-cultures-sahara>), or *Only the Mountains Do Not Move: A Maasai Story of Culture and Conservation* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/only-the-mountains-do-not-move>).** Pay special attention to ways in which the land impacts the lives of both people and animals, and the connection of humans to nature in different habitats.
- **Learn more about organizations that work to conserve African wildlife, such as the World Wildlife Federation (<https://www.worldwildlife.org>) or the African Conservation Foundation (<https://africanconservation.org>).** Brainstorm ways students can support this work now or in the future.
- **Have students choose one African habitat or one animal to learn about in more detail.** Pay special attention to how animals are adapted to live in a particular habitat, or the relationships among species within a habitat. Generate a list of questions to help students structure their research and share their findings.

### Art, Media & Music

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Read the description on the copyright page about the layering technique used to create the book's illustrations.** Have students experiment with a simplified version of the process, using crayon or oil pastel to draw shapes, using watercolor paint with a resist technique, and adding collage items or nature items for the final layer.
- **Use the sheet music in the back of the book to play a musical version of the text.** Or, have students create their own musical version using percussion instruments or other instruments. Ask students to reflect on how experiencing the book through music affected their understanding.

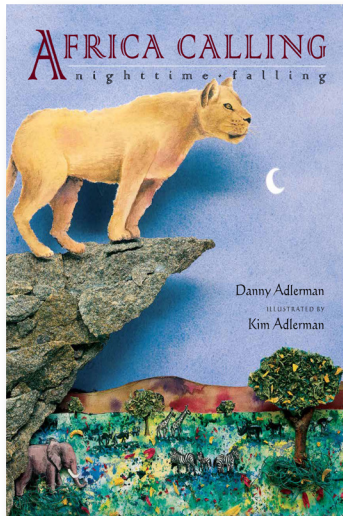
### School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Challenge families to create their own bedtime poems together about sounds or sights in their neighborhoods, sharing the book as an example.** Share poems at school.
- **Have students prepare writing and/or artwork to share information with their families about an African animal.** Provide a simple reflection or comment form for families to share thoughts and questions.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

**Danny and Kim Adlerman** have created eleven children's books, one board game, and three beautiful children. Kim is an in the book publishing industry and sings and plays guitar both solo and in various have collaborated on acclaimed graphic designer and illustrator, while Danny works as a production manager combos. They live in central New Jersey. Check out their website at [dannyandkim.com](https://dannyandkim.com) and find them online at [dannyandkim.com](https://dannyandkim.com).

## ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

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