

## Lesson 9

### *Read Aloud: The Whispering in the Canopy*

Young Oakie heard the whispering in the canopy before, so he didn't pay much attention to it. The conversation was all "over his head", so to speak, anyway. Little did he know the magnitude of what he was ignoring. The whispering was not merely the rubbing together of branches and leaves caused by wind. Oh, no! It was so much more!

The great trees of the canopy had long utilized this method of communication. When the wind moved through the tree-tops, there was a great sharing of information as they brushed together. But they were not the only ones involved. Magpies and mockingbirds, squirrels and raccoons could all become messengers when called upon. Each creature could be counted upon to share news and find answers for the great immobile ones. Oakie was soon to come to understand that the twittering and chattering of the forest creatures was not always idle conversation or annoying gossip. Sometimes these creatures could more closely be described as the "Forest Courier".

Upon hearing Oakie's distressing news concerning his mother oak, the old gentleman, Hickory, commenced to rustling and whispering questions concerning his friend Mother Oak. She had quietly gained a good name among the forest creatures, and to hear of her demise was very distressing indeed.

Could it be true? Did anyone know? Was the old mother oak really down? From the gentleman Hickory, the news traveled to a cherry, then a maple. In each of these trees, the birds and squirrels notified their acquaintances, and soon the creatures of the meadow had heard, and they were on their way to the clearing left by old Mother Oak.

The birds had told the squirrels, and they had hurried down to tell the raccoons and rabbits. As soon as one of these creatures found an uninformed friend, they shared the news; and soon the clearing was surprisingly crowded.

The creatures in this area were flabbergasted by the sudden arrival of visitors. Mother Oak had been down for over a year, and they couldn't understand what all the fuss was about. But our visitors had come from another section of the forest that had received the news long ago, and forgotten it in their search for shelter and food.

A wise old owl noticed the ruckus below, and flew down to see what all the fuss was about. A stately buck deer stepped forward to explain; he already knew about old Mother Oak, but he was concerned about such a gathering. Any concentration of animals this size was sure to be noticed, and predators would find easy prey if their presence was discovered.

“Good afternoon, friend Owl,” said the buck. “It has been noised among the canopy that old Mother Oak has a young tree growing under Grandfather Hickory. Grandfather Hickory had not heard of the fate of old Mother Oak, and has sent a message to learn the truth.”

“Good day to you, your Highness,” responded the wise old Owl. “I am glad to learn that it is only concern and curiosity that has prompted such a gathering. I was afraid that there was a fire or a group of men moving in. It is not often that I am awakened from my sleep at this time of day.”

“Please accept our apologies for the rude awakening, friend Owl, apologized the Prince of the forest. “The loss of old Mother Oak is such a shock that many of our friends rushed here because they could not believe the news. Old Mother Oak was a source of shelter and provision for so many of our friends.”

“Yes, yes, yes of course, your Highness. But there is still the matter of sending a message to Grandfather Hickory. Do these other creatures know the full story of old Mother Oak, or shall one of us explain?” asked the wise old Owl.

“Well, friend Owl, since you have lived practically your whole life in that sweet gum tree, why don’t you do the honors? I do love to hear you tell a story!” granted the Prince of the forest.

“And so I shall,” answered the wise old Owl.

## Lesson 9

### *Research Activity: Types of Storms*

A storm may be defined as any natural disaster caused by a change in the atmosphere. Storms are formed when a system of low air pressure comes in contact with a system of high air pressure, and usually involves drastic symptoms, such as heavy rains, winds, and possibly, thunder and lightening.

There are many different types of storms, each with their own specific characteristics. On the internet or in a book about storms, research these different types of storms, then list the specific characteristics of each in the box where each type of storm is listed.

<i>Thunderstorm</i>	<i>Tornado</i>
<i>Blizzard</i>	<i>Hurricane</i>
<i>Tsunami</i>	<i>Sand Storm</i>

Lesson 9  
*Nature Coloring: Raccoon*

In a field guide or on the internet, find a picture of a raccoon. Color the raccoons below realistically.



Lesson 9  
*Research Activity: Raccoons*

Do some research, and answer the following questions about raccoons.

Where geographically might raccoons be found in the wild?

What do raccoons eat?

What type of homes do raccoons make in the wild?

Why would a raccoon make a good pet?

Why would a raccoon not make a good pet?



Lesson 9  
*Whooo is That Owl?*

In a book about owls or on the internet, identify the following owls by their appearance. Beside each picture, write what kind of owl is pictured.

