



# AUTHOR STUDY

Lessons based on the works and life of Eric Carle

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# Eric Carle Author Study

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## Getting Started

Choosing to do an author study with your child or student is a great way to introduce them to a new way of looking at literature and can help them better appreciate the books they read. It can also be fun for you, too, as you learn new things about authors and get to read many more books! 😊

Before you begin...

- Gather some information about the author you're going to be studying together. Have some websites on-hand (most authors have their own) and do some research for yourself so you have some background knowledge.
- Make a list of all the books you want to use in your unit. Some are listed in the lessons for you, but you'll want to have more on-hand just for leisure read-alouds as well. Decide which (if any) books you want to buy and which ones you'll gather from the library.
- Read through the lessons and know what you'll need to print ahead of time. Make sure you print enough journal pages and any of the "extras" you'll want to use.
- You may want to have your student's journal or culminating project bound at the local office store, so plan ahead for that if you choose.

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## Lesson 1: The Grouchy Ladybug

Introduce The Grouchy Ladybug and read with student.

*\*Whenever you introduce a new book or author, follow this format:*

- *Point out and read the title, author, illustrator, and publication information to the student. Continue to do so with each book until he/she is able to point them out to you. This is how we get information about a book and it's important for the student to know where to find it!*
- *Conduct a "picture walk" through the book – flip through the book and look at the pictures. Make predictions about what you think will happen in the story. Make some comments and allow the student to comment on the illustrations, as well.*
- *Read the book to the student. Ask for a summary from the student and allow him/her to use the book to help retell.*
- *If reading another book in the same author study, point out the similarities in the author's style in multiple books.*

Discuss The Grouchy Ladybug and complete a page in the author study journal.

Reflection Question(s): What does it mean to be a good friend? Which ladybug would you like to have as a friend? How can you be a good friend to the people in your life?

As the first lesson in this unit, do a little research on the author. (We will do more in-depth research later.) Visit <http://www.eric-carle.com/home.html> to get to know the author we'll be studying over the next few lessons.

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## Lesson 2: Pancakes, Pancakes!

*A lesson in sequencing.*

Introduce Pancakes, Pancakes! and read it to the student. Have your student retell the book using the words “first, next, last.” The picture cards can be used as a visual aid for this, as well, and the student can put them in order as he/she retells the story.

Your student can come up with an idea to teach someone else in a “how-to” book. Practice making that item before you write the book—maybe it’s making pancakes, or sandwiches, or pizza! Do this together for a fun hands-on activity.

Help your student tell and write the directions for their “how-to” book. Cut out the rectangular strips and use each one for a page. Write one sentence or direction per page and start it with a sequencing word (“first, next, last”). They can draw a small picture for each sentence, too, if desired. (*Teacher: cut out the strips, and have as many copies as necessary for each direction in your student’s book. Then staple the strips in order as a booklet for the student.*)

Have your student complete a journal page for this book. There is no specific reflection question, but you may come up with your own.

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## Lesson 3: Rooster's Off to See the World & The Very Hungry Caterpillar

*A lesson in estimation.*

Read Rooster's Off to See the World to your student, but do not discuss yet. You may introduce title, author, etc, but do not do a picture walk first.

Once you've read the book, close it and ask the student how many animals they think came with the rooster. After they've guessed, give the student a ten frame and some counters (you may also use dry beans). Read the book again and have the student count how many animals actually came with the rooster by placing a counter down for each animal. Was their guess close? Now you may discuss elements of the book if you want.

Repeat this activity with the book The Very Hungry Caterpillar. Have the student guess the number of food items the caterpillar ate, and then count the real number of items during the second reading.

Using white boards and markers, make addition equations to add the different types of foods that the caterpillar ate.

The student may fill out a journal entry for one or both of the books used in this lesson and this lesson may also be spread out between 2 days if desired.

For more activities using ten frames, visit: <http://www.k-5mathteachingresources.com/ten-frames.html>

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## Lesson 4: The Foolish Tortoise & The Greedy Python

(Written with Richard Buckley. Point this out to your student! Sometimes other authors use Eric Carle to illustrate their books because of his creative style!)

Introduce and read The Foolish Tortoise. Discuss the book, particularly what the “problem” was in the story. What was the solution? Why was the tortoise foolish?

Complete a journal entry on the book.

Have a discussion about body parts that animals have that help them survive and why they need them. Ask questions like, “What if a tortoise didn’t have a shell?” Have the student come up with more questions using the frame, “What if a \_\_\_\_\_ didn’t have a \_\_\_\_\_?”

Visit the zoo! This is a great place to discuss the different characteristics animals have and how they use them to their advantage. (*What does an elephant use its trunk for? Why do giraffes have long necks? What if zebras didn’t have stripes?*)

Repeat these discussions with the book, The Greedy Python. This can be done on the same day or a different day. Discuss how the books are similar and different.

After completing a journal entry on The Greedy Python, have them complete the reflection question page comparing these two books.

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## Lesson 5: The Grouchy Ladybug

Revisit the book, The Grouchy Ladybug and see what your student remembers. Reread the book together.

Using the Time Journal template, print out as many pages as you need and help your student create a time journal for a day. Record what activity takes place at what time during the day and draw the hands on the clocks.

For more activities on learning to tell time, visit:

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/genia-connell/10-quick-easy-and-fun-ways-practice-time-skills/>

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## Lesson 6: Illustration Gallery Walk

In this lesson, we will more deeply explore Eric Carle's artwork in his stories. You may either print out (in color) several examples of Eric Carle's art or make photocopies of his illustrations from books (try to leave out the words).

Hang the pictures up in a room or hallway, or lay them across the floor or table and allow your student to look closely at them all. Allow your student to choose a favorite or one that they want to talk about.

Ask: "How do you think Eric Carle made these pictures?"

Explain Eric Carle's tissue paper technique. If you're unfamiliar with his artwork, do some research together to see how he does it! Eric Carle has some great explanations and tutorials for his work on his website:

<http://www.eric-carle.com/home.html>.

Although Eric Carle paints his own tissue paper, you can set out colored tissue paper, scissors, glue, and white cardstock and have your student create his/her own artwork in the style of Carle.

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## Lesson 7: The Life of Eric Carle

Gather together all the Eric Carle books you've read so far for the lessons in this unit and ones you've read as extras (and maybe even some you haven't read).

Give your student plenty of quiet time to look through as many of the books as they'd like and even read or re-read some with you. Does your student have a favorite? Or one that they didn't like at all?

Do some more research about Eric Carle. Revisit his website and even look for more biographies online about him. Help your student complete the author review sheet.

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## Lesson 8: Culminating Project

Did you know that Eric Carle also co-wrote several books with another author, Bill Martin Jr?

Gather these books and read them to your student: Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?, Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?, Panda Bear, Panda Bear, What Do You See? Although Bill Martin Jr. didn't co-write this book, you can also include Baby Bear, Baby Bear, What Do You See? as it follows the same format.

After reading the books, talk briefly about the five senses.

For their culminating project, your student will write their own book in this style, mimicking Eric Carle. Together, think of an animal you would like to be the main character of your story, and then choose a sense you want to write about (see, hear, smell, etc.). Help your student brainstorm and outline a story.

Print out the story template in as many copies as needed to complete your student's book. If you want to do tissue paper art on the pages, I recommend printing the book on cardstock so it holds up to the tissue paper and glue.