

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR DUET

About the Book

The story of the impactful partnership between humans and mockingbirds, both scientifically and culturally over the centuries, written for young adults by award-winning nonfiction powerhouse Phil Hoose.

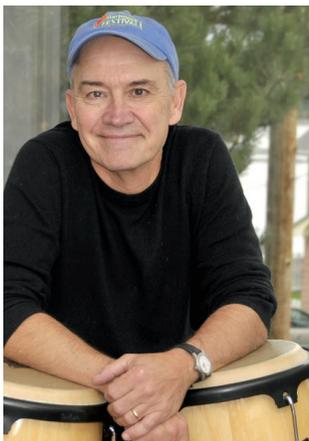
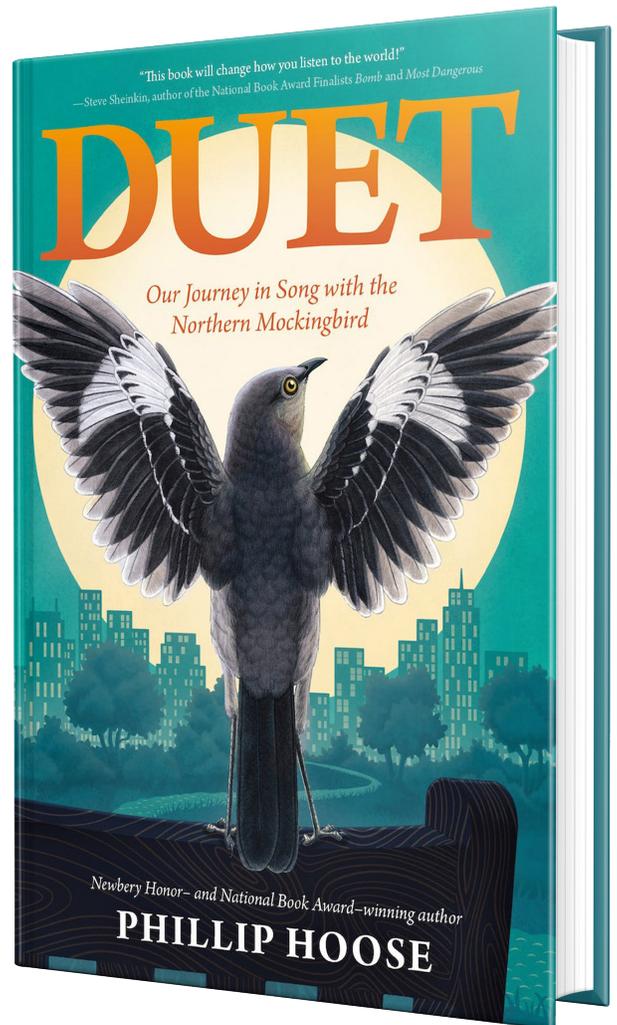
The Northern mockingbird's brilliant song—a loud, bright, liquid sampling of musical notes and phrases—has made it a beloved companion and the official bird of five states. Many of our favorite songs and poems feature mockingbirds

Mockingbirds have been companions to humans for centuries. Many Native American myths and legends feature mockingbirds, often teaching humans to speak. Thomas Jefferson's mockingbird, "Dick", was the first White House pet. John James Audubon's portrait of a rattlesnake raiding a mockingbird's nest sparked outrage in the world of art. Atticus Finch's somber warning to his children, "Remember, it's a sin to kill a Mockingbird," is known throughout the world. Some jazz musicians credit mockingbirds with teaching them a four-note call that says, "Break's over." And mockingjays—a hybrid between jabberrjays and mockers—are a symbol of the rebel cause in the Hunger Games trilogy.

But in the early 1900s the mocker was plummeting toward extinction. Too many had been trapped, sold, and caged. Something had to be done. To the rescue came a powerful and determined group of women.

Now, National Book Award and Newbery honor-winner Phillip Hoose brings the story of the important and overlooked connection between humans and mockingbirds—past, present, and future. It is the third volume of his bird trilogy.

Duet is a study in the power of song. As author Steve Sheinkin puts it, "This book will change how you listen to the world."



About the Author

Phillip Hoose is an award-winning author of books, essays, stories, songs and articles. Although he first wrote for adults, he turned his attention to children and young adults in part to keep up with his own daughters. His book *Claudette Colvin* won a National Book Award and was dubbed a *Publisher's Weekly* Best Book of 2009. He is also the author of *Hey, Little Ant*, co-authored by his daughter, Hannah; *It's Our World, Too!*; *The Race to Save the Lord God Bird*; *The Boys Who Challenged Hitler*; and *We Were There, Too!*, a National Book Award finalist. He has received a *Jane Addams Children's Book Award*, a *Christopher Award*, a *Boston Globe-Horn Book Award*, and multiple *Robert F. Sibert Honor Awards*, among numerous honors. He was born in South Bend, Indiana, and grew up in the towns of South Bend, Angola, and Speedway, Indiana. He was educated at *Indiana University* and the *Yale School of Forestry*. He lives in *Portland, Maine*.

9780374388775 | Ages 12-18

Before Reading

1. Go to Phillip Hoose’s website to listen to a northern mockingbird sing. Next, read the introduction of *Duet: Our Journey in Song with the Northern Mockingbird*. Using evidence from the text and from the sounds of the northern mockingbird, design an infographic to support readers as they learn more about the bird. Canva is a free online tool for students and educators that can support infographic design.

Extension: Take students outside with binoculars and allow time for them to birdwatch and listen for mockingbirds. This activity should be planned during the spring. To support their outdoor time, this free app can help students identify birds based on sounds and pictures.

Standard: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

2. Listen to a recording of Hoose discussing *Duet* and the reasons why he wrote the book. Analyze the recording and predict the themes and central ideas that will be present in the text.

Standard: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

During Reading

1. As Hoose explains, “Climate scientists have developed a saying: Adapt or die.” Using evidence from the text, explain how mockingbirds have adapted over time.

Standard: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

2. Summarize the Native American myths and legends detailed in chapter 1.

Standard: Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

3. Why were early explorers frustrated with mockers?

Standard: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

4. Throughout the book, Hoose includes additional information, like in the section titled *Captivity* on page 29. How does this addition help him structure the text and support a reader’s understanding?

Standard: Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.

5. Create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the nightingale and the mockingbird using the information in chapter 4.

Standard: Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

6. In chapter 5, Hoose introduces the reader to John James Audubon. How did Audubon become a famous bird artist? Which paintings of his are the most famous and why?

Standard: Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

7. Define “evolution” using evidence from the text in chapter 6.

Standard: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

8. Listen to at least three versions of “Listen to the Mocking Bird” from different artists and years. Compare and contrast the versions and rate the songs based on how the delivery of the lyrics affects the impact of the words.

Standard: Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium’s portrayal of the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words).

9. Define “ornate” using context clues from page 64. Why would Hoose use this word to describe birdcages?

Standard: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

10. Why did “Listen to the Mocking Bird” become the anthem of the Siege of Vicksburg? Use evidence from the song to explain your thinking.

Standard: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

11. What was the Plume War and how is it connected to what Hoose describes as “the nation’s first environmental protection groups.”

Standard: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

12. Create a timeline to show the legislation that has been passed to protect birds. Determine how each new piece of legislation connected to earlier laws.

Standard: Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

13. Based on Laskey’s study, how do mockingbirds learn their songs?

Standard: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

14. Why did Harper Lee choose to name her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

Standard: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

15. Explain Christine Stracey’s study of mockingbirds and how it shifted over time.

Standard: Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

After Reading

1. On page 8 Hoose argues that “no bird has meant as much to American life as the northern mockingbird.” Based on the evidence presented throughout the book, should the mockingbird be the symbol of America instead of the eagle?

Standard: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

2. Why did Hoose name his book on mockingbirds *Duet*? Now that you’ve read the book, do you agree with his title choice?

Standard: Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.

3. As Hoose says at the end of chapter 1, “these and countless other stories and songs become polished like smooth stones in the telling and retelling.” After reading the chapter and the numerous myths, stories, and songs about mockingbirds, write your own myth, story, or song incorporating what you’ve learned about the mockingbird.

Standard: Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

4. Design a conservation plan to increase the mockingbird population and prevent its extinction. Use ideas from the text as well as additional research when designing your plan.

Standard: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

5. Throughout the text, Hoose shows how mockingbirds have played a role in US history. Create a timeline of key moments in US history and incorporate the role mockingbirds have played.

Standard: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

6. Hoose organized *Duet* in chronological order and showed how mockingbirds were present at pivotal points in US history. Using this strategy, create a timeline of your life placing important dates into chronological order. Then make connections to the bird species you would have seen or heard during these pivotal times.

C3 Standard: D2.His.2.6-8. Classify series of historical events and developments as examples of change and/or continuity.

7. Using the Native Land Map research the Indigenous tribes that lived where your school or home is located. Once you determine the names of the tribes, research myths and stories from these specific tribes. How are these myths and stories similar to the ones Hoose shared in *Duet*? How are these myths and stories different?

Standard: Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

8. Hoose included many examples of stories, poems, songs, and art that showcased the mockingbird. Research other examples of the mockingbird as presented by the literary and art communities. Design a multimedia presentation to share your findings.

Standard: Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

Standard: Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

Nicole Woulfe has taught middle school Social Studies in New Hampshire for seventeen years. She is also an adjunct professor at Southern New Hampshire University in the competency based learning program. In 2018, she was named NH's History Teacher of the Year.