

Let's Do Nothing

Author and Illustrator: Tony Fucile

- **Summary:** Don't move! A master of animation explores the elusive art of doing nothing in this comical tale of two very active imaginations. Frankie and Sal have already played every sport and board game invented, baked and eaten batches of cookies, and painted a zillion pictures. What's left to do? Nothing! Ten seconds of nothing! Can they do it? Can they act like stone statues in the park? Can they simply hold their breath and not blink an eye? With a wink to the reader and a command of visual humor, feature film animator Tony Fucile demonstrates the Zen-like art of doing nothing...oops! Couldn't do it!
- **Awards received:**
 - Parents' Choice Picture Book Award List—2009
 - IRA-CBC Children's Choices Booklist-2010
 - SLJ Best Books Of The Year--2009
 - *Other State List Nominations*
 - Washington Children's Choice Picture Book Award 2011
 - Maryland Black-Eyed Susan Book Award—2010-2011
 - North Carolina Children's Book Award—2011
 - Vermont Red Clover Award—2011
 - Wyoming Buckaroo Award-2010-2011
- **Reviews:** From *School Library Journal*, July 1, 2009: PreS-Gr 1—Fucile makes a hilarious debut with this picture book. After playing all kinds of games, reading comic books, and baking “enough cookies to feed a small country,” two boys agree to do “nothing” for 10 seconds. When Sal, the older child, tells Frankie that they are going to sit in chairs and pretend to be statues in the park, the younger boy's imagination runs wild and ruins the moment. He envisions a flock of pigeons clustering about his stony self and shoos them away. This only frustrates Sal, who tries again and again to think of ways for the two of them to remain absolutely still. Frankie is unable to get this right, always imagining something that causes him to move, from a small dog relieving himself on the boy's giant redwood self or King Kong climbing his Empire State Building self and stealing his eyeglasses. In the end, when Frankie can no longer hold his breath or keep from blinking, Sal gives up. Relieved, Frankie has a suggestion. The story is told mainly through the zany artwork. Clear, cartoonlike illustrations alternate between generous spreads and vignettes set on white backgrounds. Done in ink, colored pencil, and acrylic, the pictures capture the universality of the moment through the boys' animated body language, Sal's imperious glances, and Frankie's increasing exasperation.—*Adrienne Wilson, Edith Wheeler Memorial Library, Monroe, CT*
- **Author Information:**
 - http://www.candlewick.com/book_files/0763634409.art.1.pdf Print
Interview With Tony Fucile

- <http://www.soundauthors.com/tony-fucile-lets-do-nothing-2.htm> Transcript of *Sound Authors* interview with Tony Fucile
- <http://www.pippinproperties.com/authors-illustrators/tony-fucile/> Short biography of Tony Fucile with photo.
- http://www.animationartist.com/2000/Interviews/Animators/Tony_Fucile/TFucile.html Tony Fucile discusses animation in transcript of interview with *Animation Artist* magazine. (Color photo of Tony at work)

- **Discussion Questions:**

- What does it mean to do nothing?
- Is blinking doing nothing?
- Is it possible to do nothing?
- Is thinking doing nothing?
- Have you ever said you were doing nothing?

- **Curricular Activities**

- Reading/oral language – Read the story aloud with students taking the parts of Frankie and Sal.
- Writing –
 - Students can make a list of what they were doing when they said they were doing nothing. Write about what you see, hear and feel.
 - Write the “next chapter”--when Sal and Frankie shout “Let’s Do Something!” what will they do?
- Math/ Technology –
 - Talk about time. How many seconds in a minute? How many minutes in an hour? Hours in a day? Seconds in an hour? etc.
 - Explore the concept of zero. Is zero really the same as “nothing?”
 - Make lists of “every sport ever invented,” “every board game,” and “every comic book” that you can think of. Count the totals and compare them using a bar graph, pie graph or picture graph.
- Science – Research blinking and why we need to do it.
- Social Studies –
 - Research the Empire State building. Where it is built, its significance, how tall it is, etc.
 - Use a map or atlas to locate Redwood National And State Parks, California and New York City, home of the Empire State building
- Art –
 - Draw or paint a scene from the book.
 - Explore the post-impressionist paintings of Vincent Van Gogh. Look closely at *Sunflowers*, *Starry Night*, *Poppies* or other paintings. How does the artist use shapes, colors and brush-strokes to show the subject?
 - Create your own picture using an impressionist technique.
- Drama –
 - Students can sit and face each other while playing the silent/ statue game. Teachers can time students and see who can last the longest.

- Present the story as a Reader’s Theater. Create dialog for the wordless sections. What would the statues, redwood trees and buildings be saying?
 - Music – Close your eyes and listen for 30 seconds. What sounds do you hear in different places—in the classroom, in the hallway, outside?
 - Technology– Watch the animated book trailer. Use PowerPoint, KidPix or animation software to create a book trailer for a book you want to recommend to other readers.
 - Cooking/food –
 - As a class, students can make no bake cookies together, just like Frankie and Sal did.
 - Bake cookies. Use tiny cookie cutters or very small amounts of dropped dough to make “enough cookies to feed a small country.”
- **Related Books:**
 - *Dreams* by Peter Spier. Doubleday, c1986.
 - *I wish that I had duck feet* by Theo LeSieg. Beginner Books, c1965.
 - *Meanwhile* by Jules Feiffer. HarperCollins, c1997.
 - *Skippyjon Jones* by Judy Schachner. Dutton's Children's Books, c2003.
 - *Yikes!* by Robert Florczak. Blue Sky Press, 2003.
 - *Edward the Emu* by Sheena Knowles & Rod Clement
 - *Ma! There’s Nothing to Do in Here* by Barbara Park & Viviana Garófoli
 - *Five Little Monkeys with Nothing to Do* Eileen Christelow
 - *I’m Bored!* by Christine Schneider, Hervé Pinel
- **Resource Books:**
 - *A place for Zero: a math adventure*, by Angeline Sparagna LoPresti. Charlesbridge, c2003
 - *Zero is the leaves on the tree*, by Betsy Franco. Tricycle Press, c2009.
 - *What’s zero?* by Betsy Franco. Yellow Umbrella Books, c2002
- **Other titles by Fucile:**
 - *Bink & Gollie*. Written by Kate DiCamillo and Alison McGhee, Illustrated by Tony Fucile.
 - *Mitchell’s License* Written by Hallie Durand, Illustrated by Tony Fucile.
- **Websites for further study or enrichment:**
 - Let’s Do Nothing! Activity Kit:
http://www.candlewick.com/book_files/0763634409.kit.1.pdf
 - Article Q& A with Tony Fucile:
http://www.candlewick.com/book_files/0763634409.art.1.pdf
 - Article for Parents about Children Doing Nothing -
<http://www.scholastic.com/resources/article/the-joys-of-doing-nothing>