

**Title:** *Over and Under the Snow* by Kate Messner. Illustrated by Christopher Silas Neal.

Chronicle Books, 2011.

**Summary:**

A little girl is spending the day skiing with her mother and father in the deep woods. As they are gliding over the fresh, white snow, they see a red squirrel skitter across but quickly disappear. The little girl is curious and asks her father, "Where did he go?" The father explains that the squirrel went under the snow to seek warmth and safety. As they continue to ski through the forest, the little girl shares all of the forest animals that she discovers are under the snow. As she skis through the beautiful, tall pine trees, there are shrews skittering through small tunnels. Over the snow a deer has left its mark by leaving tracks in the snow, while the mice sleep under the snow. There are voles, hares, bullfrogs, chipmunks, and black bears snoozing under the snow as she glides faster and faster over the snow. Before the family heads home, they cook hot dogs and roast marshmallows over a small fire in the snow. The little girl glides home on her tired legs and cuddles up in bed dreaming of the forest animals that live under the snow in the winter.

**Awards:**

- Winner of the 2012 Golden Kite Award from SCBWI
- E.B. White Read Aloud Award for Younger Readers Finalist
- NSTA/CBC Outstanding Trade Book for Science
- New York Times Notable Children's Book
- Winter 2011-2012 Kids Indie Next Pick
- Kansas Bill Martin Jr. Picture Book Award Nominee
- Great Lakes Great Books Award Nominee
- New Hampshire Ladybug Picture Book Award Nominee
- Virginia Readers' Choice Award Primary Nominee
- Illinois Monarch Award Nominee

**Book Reviews:**

"Messner packs much information into the serene wintry landscape, beautifully captured in Neal's stunning retro-style illustrations." - The New York Times

"Throughout the book, Neal's crisp, clean mixed-media illustrations cleverly provide above- and belowground views, and Messner's back material will educate children about the subnivean zone and animal adaptations" - School Library Journal

"[A] lovely study of the ways animals spend the winter." - Publishers Weekly, starred review

<http://www.amazon.com/Over-Under-Snow-Kate-Messner/dp/0811867846>

**Author's Webpage Location:**

<http://www.katemessner.com/over-and-under-the-snow/>

**Illustrator's Webpage Location:**

<http://redsilas.com/>

**Discussion Questions:**

**Questions before the reading of the book:**

1. Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is going to be about?
2. What do you think animals do in the winter?
3. What types of places do animals live in the winter?

**Questions during the reading of the book:**

1. Why do you think some animals have to burrow underneath the ground while other animal do not need to?
2. By looking at the illustrations how are the homes different?
3. What kinds of foods do they eat during the winter?

**Questions after the reading of the book:**

1. What alerted the fox for searching for his food in the winter?
2. What was the smallest creature that was living underground during the winter?
3. What other types of animals do you the live underground that were not mentioned in the book?

**Activities:**

**Writing:**

- Pretend you are a forest creature living in the winter season, what steps would you take to survive? What would your home look like? What types of food would you eat? When would you start getting ready?

**Math:**

- Students would be given the measurements of the pine trees and beech trees that were found in the forest mentioned in the book. A beech tree is approximately seven feet while the pine trees can be 40 feet to 80 feet depending on the type of pine tree. Therefore you could create a problem such as "The little girl was skiing through the woods, she spotted

a 45 foot pine tree and it looked enormous next to the 7 foot beech tree, how much taller is this pine tree than the beech tree? And they would subtract to find the answer. They could then create a bar graph showing the difference of 38 feet. It is possible to create story problems using the forest animals mentioned in the book to make it fun for the students.

#### Art:

- Students draw a picture of one of the animals that was mentioned along with the home that they live in during the winter.
- Students can use a black piece of construction paper and use white paint to represent the snow that the little girl was gliding through and they can also add the pine trees.

#### Physical Education:

- Half of the students would be given pieces of cardboard to use as skis like the little girl in the story used to maneuver in the snow while the other half pretends to be the animals in the story. Cones would be used as the trees and the animals would pretend to be under them while the other students ski around them. They will switch roles half way through gym class.

#### Science:

- The little girl was gliding through the snow! But where does this snow come from? Students would study the process of water vapor freezing in the air. This process happens when the temperature in the clouds is really cold.
- How did the little girl and her father know there was a deer nearby? He left tracks! Students will be able to study different tracks that various animals leave and if possible the teacher can take a field trip or a walk in the woods and look for tracks in the dirt or in snow. They would be able to describe the different shapes and sizes.

#### Drama:

- Students can be assigned an animal mentioned in the book (squirrel, bear, bumblebee etc.) and they would have the opportunity to create a play using the dialogue that they create with their groups of four or five students.

#### Music:

- Students would create their own songs about the animals mentioned in the book.
  - Example: “The little red squirrel has special claws that help him climb into the trees! His legs are strong so very strong allowing him to leap so high “whee!

#### **Other Books on the same topic:**

- *Under Ground* by Denise Fleming
- *Animals Under Our Feet* by Sindy McKay and Illustrator Judith Hunt
- *Deep Down Underground* by Olivier Dunrea
- *First Snow in the Woods* by Carl R. Sams and Jean Stoick
- *The Story of Snow: The Science of Winter's Wonder* by Mark Cassino
- *Under the Snow* by Melissa Stewart and Constance R. Bergum
- *Snowballs* by Lois Ehlert

#### **Other Books written by Kate Messner:**

- *Seamonster's First Day*
- *Sea Monster and the Bossy Fish*
- *Marty McGuire*
- *Marty McGuire Digs Worms!*
- *Marty McGuire Has Too Many Pets!*
- *Sugar and Ice*
- *Eye of the Storm*

#### **Other Books Illustrated by Christopher Silas Neal**

- *Holding on to Zoe* by George Ella Lyon
- *The SeaWrack Wars* by T.E. Clipper
- *Belle Prater's Boy* by Ruth White

#### **Websites:**

- **Fantastic Fun and Learning**
  - <http://www.fantasticfunandlearning.com/underground-animal-theme-resources.html>
  - This website offers activities and crafts for students to learn more about the animals that live underground.
- **Underground Animals Storytime**
  - <http://sunflowerstorytime.com/2013/06/20/underground-animals-storytime/>
  - This website is aimed toward preschool or kindergarten teachers and it provides a list of other books on underground animals as well as providing cute crafts for them to do after reading the book.
- **Dig into Exploring Underground Animals**
  - <http://handsonhomeschooler.com/2013/06/dig-into-exploring-underground-animals.html>
  - This website allows other people to communicate and they share books on this topic as well as activities and printouts for students.
- **Lesson Plan**

- <http://www.marcieatkins.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Over-and-Under-the-Snow-by-Kate-Messner.pdf>
- A Mentor text lesson plan for the book *Over and Under the Snow* created by Marcie Flinchum Atkins
- **Live Binder**
  - <http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=996659>
  - This website has many activities created for the 2013-2014 Virginia award books of which *Over and Under the Snow* is one. Click on the book title at the top of the webpage and you will find lots of activities and ideas for use with the book.
- **Grade ONEderful**
  - <http://www.gradeonderful.com/2013/01/over-and-under-snow-ppbf.html#.U2upsVc0jTp>
  - This website gives ideas for *Over and Under the Snow*, but then it also suggests other books and when you click on the picture of the book, the website author has other ideas for those books about snow as well.