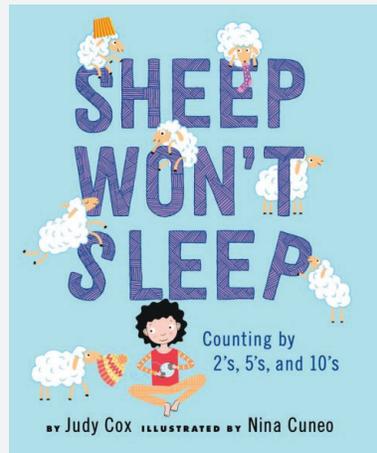


Second Reaction: *Sheep Won't Sleep: An Interactive Counting Text*

Cox, Judy. *Sheep Won't Sleep*. Illustrated by Nina Cuneo.
New York: Holiday House, 2017. Print.

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Sheep Won't Sleep by Judy Cox, with illustrations by Nina Cuneo, is engaging, visually vibrant, and universally relatable to young audiences. Students were engrossed by the animals, bright colors, and patterns that seemed to leap off each page. We started with the question, "Has anyone ever had a hard time falling asleep? What did you do to help?" Once students excitedly shared their ideas, I introduced them to the main character, Clarissa. I told students that Clarissa falls asleep with a little help from some animals and even more help from mathematics! Students laughed and told me I was silly, but they were eager to know how our friend Clarissa fell asleep. Before opening the book, I challenged students to listen and look for patterns throughout the story. From the very first page my students were eager to count, and they wanted to jump in and help me read the story each time a new animal was introduced. The entertaining patterns, along with the different animals filling up Clarissa's bedroom, had my students laughing and eager to learn what new animals would show up next and how we would count them.

The beginning was wonderful because my students closed their eyes to picture a "gentle, woolly, white sheep sailing over a stile with the perfect grace of ballet dancers." Once I started counting, students jumped right in! They were eager to count, demonstrate different animal sounds, and pretend they were in the story too. Students were further engaged in new vocabulary found throughout the book. Words such as *pairs*, *advised*, *stile*, *argyle*, and *pranced* all raised

inquiry among my students. In retrospect, I should have previewed words; however, I do not feel that this unknown vocabulary took away from the goal of skip counting.

My favorite part was how each page presented a visual representation for skip counting. For example, when counting by two's there were ten sets of two alpacas on the page. This made the book interactive as I had students come up and point to each pair as they modeled skip counting. Allowing students to come up and count sets of animals on each page provided scaffolding for students who needed a visual representation for skip counting. My second-favorite part of this book was how the animals added onto each other on each page. After a new animal was introduced we started back with the sheep and counted by ones and then by twos, next by fives, and so on, to count the number of animals we had up to that point in the text. This was phenomenal practice for my students, and they were excited to start back at the very beginning and count all of the animals we had met so far. This activity also lent itself well to one of the final pages, where we were introduced to the equation that represented all of the animals we counted throughout the text. The second half of the book shifted students' thinking to subtraction. This allowed for discussion among my students as they tried to mentally solve for how many animals were left. I plan to come back and highlight this part of the text with our unit on adding and subtracting multiples of ten. I would like to cover up the answers and provide an explanation for how students solved for the answer. I think students would find many patterns through this activity and multiple solutions would be presented.

I feel *Sheep Won't Sleep* is a great addition to any classroom library. It ties mathematics and literacy together, and there are many activities that could be done with this text. In the future I would have students make their own animals and demonstrate how their animals represent skip counting. Another idea is to have a visual, hands-on representation (e.g., pictures of animals from the book, real-life pictures of animals, felt animals) on the board as you count each of the animals. This would also support subtracting, as you could physically remove the animals from the board.

I looked forward to sharing *Sheep Won't Sleep* with my first graders because skip counting is something we work on daily. My students love listening to books being read aloud, but they love interacting with the book even more. This text provided many opportunities for students to engage with the book and reinforced skip counting in a fun and productive way. I plan to continue reading this book to and with my students and to explore skip counting more deeply.

About the Author

Keely Rutan is currently a first-grade teacher at Premier Charter School in St. Louis, MO. She is in her fourth year of teaching, and for the last two years she taught an English Language Learners cluster class. She is finishing her Master's degree in Applied Educational Psychology and had the opportunity in the summer of 2018 to work with teachers in Ghana. She loves to learn and grow with her first graders and believes that you never stop learning!