Hiccupotamus
The 2016 CLEL Bell Award Book for SING

by Steve Smallman, illustrated by Ada Grey
Tiger Tales, 2015

A small bird quickly learns that the jungle is a musical place. *Hiccupotamus* shows what wonderful songs can be created from everyday sounds with a little cooperation and imagination. Making music and singing songs together helps small children hear the different sounds that make up words and stimulates mathematical processes in their brains.

Activity Ideas for *Hiccupotamus*:

- Use objects around the house to mimic the sounds in the story. Find a comb and pencil. Rub the pencil along the teeth of the comb to make the “plink plink plink-a-plonk” sounds of the crocodile in the story. What other sounds can you copy, with props or with your bodies? These activities help children develop the listening and oral language skills that are the foundation for written language skills.

- Blow bubbles! If you don’t have any bubble solution on hand, make bubbles in a cup of water by blowing air through a straw. Introduce new vocabulary by making observations and talking about what you see when you blow bubbles with the children. What do the bubbles look like? What shape are the bubbles? Are some bubbles big and others small? Look how they shimmer! Knowing many descriptive words helps prepare children to understand what they read.

- The animals in the story work together to create a wonderful song. Learning to take turns and play with others is a skill most children need to spend a lot of time practicing. Play a game together that requires cooperation, such as a simple board game, a card game, or even playing catch with a ball. Playing games teaches listening skills, helps children learn how to follow directions, and requires two or more individuals to work together to complete a goal—all of which are important skills to have when starting school.

The CLEL Bell Picture Book Awards are given to books that provide excellent support of early literacy development in young children. For more information and for other activity sheets, visit [http://www.clel.org](http://www.clel.org) and select the CLEL Bell Awards tab.

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