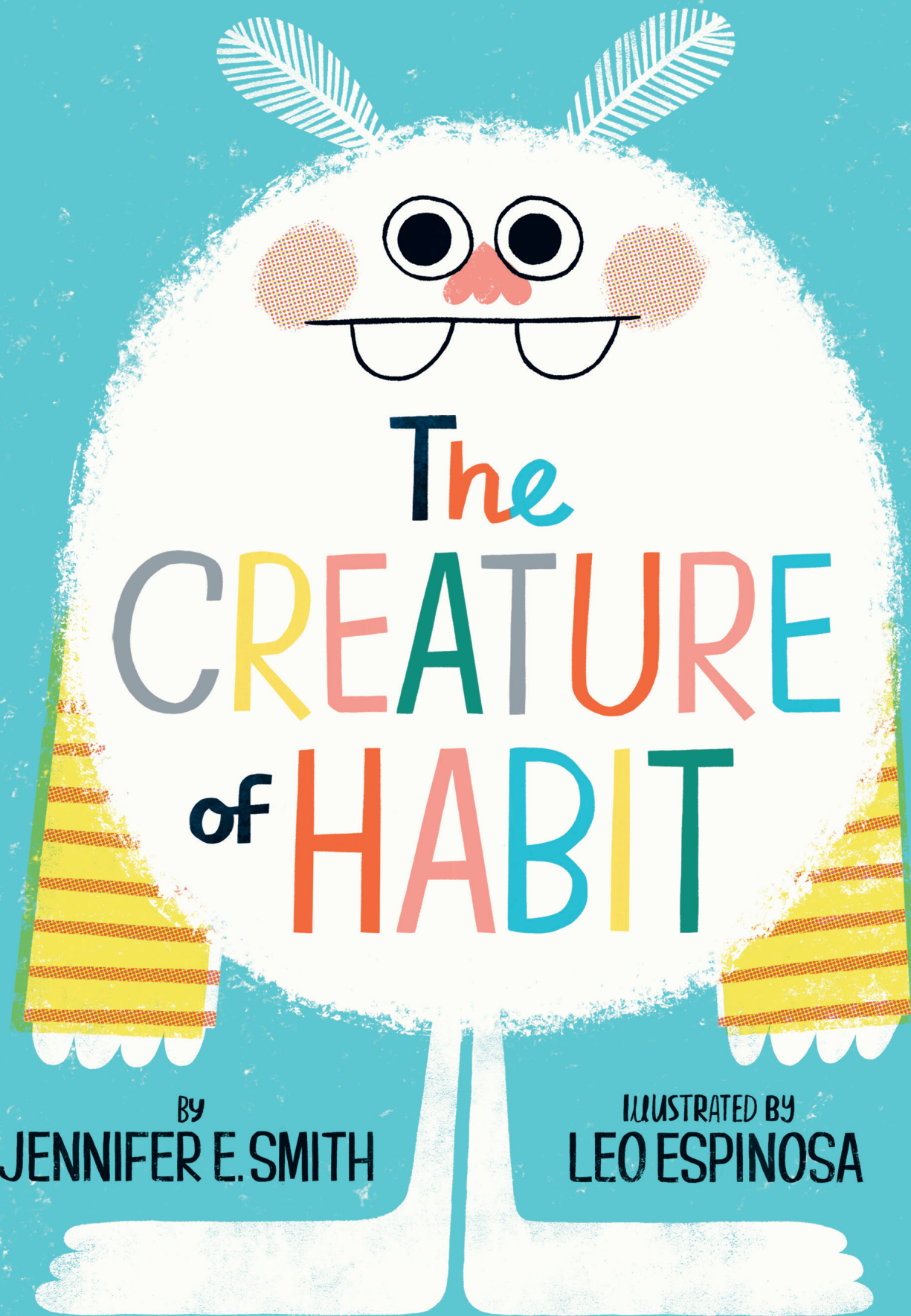




BY  
JENNIFER E. SMITH

ILLUSTRATED BY  
LEO ESPINOSA

Art © 2021 by Leo Espinosa

EDUCATORS' GUIDE



@RHCBEducators



# The CREATURE of HABIT

By Jennifer E. Smith  
Illustrated by Leo Espinosa

## ABOUT THE BOOK

**A story for creatures of habit big and small who might be surprised by the joy of trying something new.**

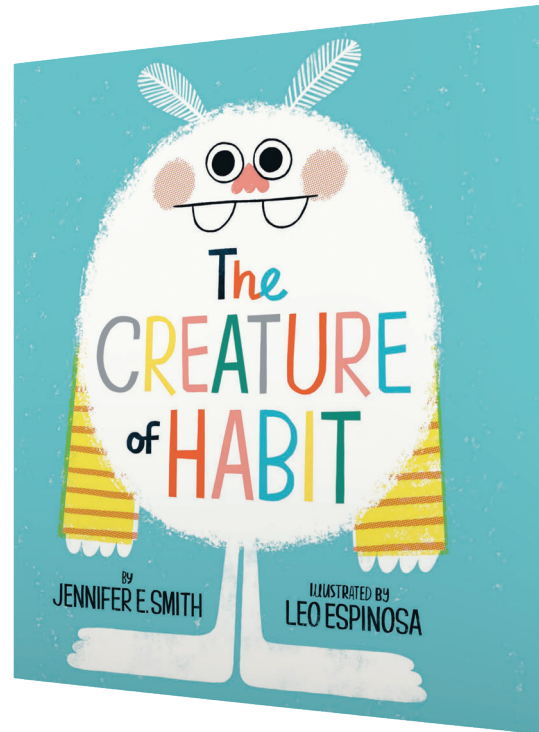
On the island of Habit, there lives a very big creature with big teeth, big eyes, and very big feet. Every day the creature does the exact same things in the exact same order.

It is the way the big creature likes it. That is, until a small boat carrying a very small creature with small teeth, small eyes, and very, very small feet arrives on the island. At first the big creature is excited to show the little creature around and explain how things are done on the island, but the small creature has his own ideas.

Can these two creatures learn to appreciate each other? Is the island big enough for both of them? Told with heart and humor, this is a story about being open to new ways of doing things.

**“SURE TO SUPPORT  
LITTLE ONES’  
READING HABITS.”**

—*Kirkus Reviews*



HC: 978-0-593-17305-3 • EL: 978-0-593-17307-7 • GLB: 978-0-593-17306-0  
Grades: Preschool–2

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR



*Photo courtesy of the author*

**JENNIFER E. SMITH** is the author of eight novels for young adults, including *The Statistical Probability of Love at First Sight*, *Windfall*, and *Field Notes on Love*. She earned a master’s degree in creative writing from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, and her work has been translated into thirty-three languages.



*Photo courtesy of the author*

**LEO ESPINOSA** is a *New York Times* bestselling illustrator and designer from Bogotá, Colombia. Picture books he has illustrated include *No More Naps!* by Chris Grabenstein; *Islandborn* by Junot Diaz, for which

he was awarded a Pura Belpré Illustrator Award; and *Goldfish on Vacation* by Sally Lloyd-Jones. Leo’s award-winning illustrations have been recognized by American Illustration, Communication Arts, Pictoplasma, 3x3, and the Society of Illustrators. In addition, he has given multiple lectures and workshops at schools and institutions, such as Parsons School of Design and Pratt Institute, while also serving on the faculty of the Rhode Island School of Design.





# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## ARE YOU A CREATURE OF HABIT?

The Creature of Habit likes to do the same thing at the same time every day. Talk about what you do in the classroom every day or every week. Then invite each student to create their own list of classroom habits. The lists can expand to include monthly and even yearly habits such as celebrating certain holidays. Then have students share their lists in small groups. They should consider whether they'd like to eliminate a habit or add a new habit inspired by a classmate's list.

## PUPPET PRODUCTION

Divide students into small groups to create a puppet show based on a scene or two in the book. They can make paper bag puppets for both characters plus some props—paper fish, oranges and pineapples, and so on. One or more students will serve as narrators, while the students with the puppets will add simple dialogue like, "Try this orange." Have the students practice their scenes and then perform them for their classmates.

## WHAT'S ON HIS WALLS?

The book's illustrations show the bedroom of the very big creature. Ask students to discuss what features in the bedroom reflect the creature's life and habits. Then have them create an illustration of a bedroom for the very small creature that reflects his life and activities. Post the pictures and have students compare what they chose to put in their illustrations.

## LEARNING FROM FRIENDS

Invite students to work in pairs to write and illustrate a short story about two friends. Like the characters in *The Creature of Habit*, the friends in their story should be similar in some ways and different in others. The friends should each introduce a new habit or activity to the other. Ask the students to use dialogue as well as description and convey some of the information through the illustrations.





# TRYING SOMETHING NEW

Thanks to his new friend, the very big creature tries a few new things. In the left-hand column, list habits that the very big creature has at the beginning of the story. In the middle column, list what the very small creature does that's different. In the third column, comment on how the very big creature changes what he does. Record at least three changes.

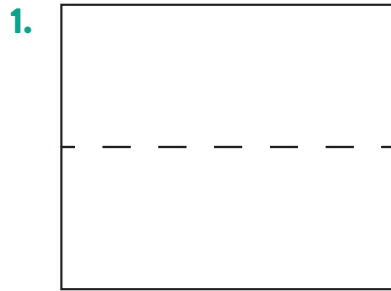
| HABIT OF THE VERY BIG CREATURE | WHAT THE VERY SMALL CREATURE DOES THAT'S DIFFERENT | CHANGES THAT THE VERY BIG CREATURE TRIES |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
|                                |                                                    |                                          |
|                                |                                                    |                                          |
|                                |                                                    |                                          |
|                                |                                                    |                                          |



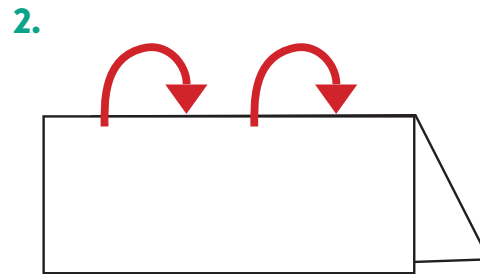


# WORD HATS

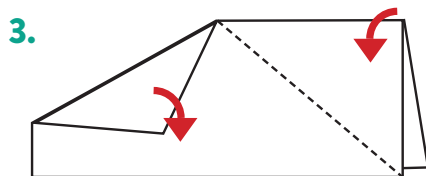
The very small creature wears a hat made by folding a sheet of newspaper. Teach students how to make such a hat from newspaper or construction paper. Ask each student to choose two words to put on their hat. The words can be from the story, from a class vocabulary list, or just favorite words. They should print the words on strips of paper and glue them on each side of the hat brim.



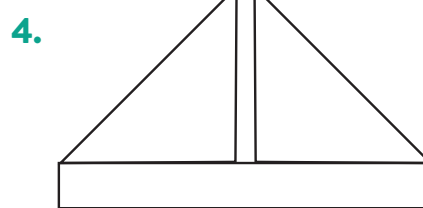
Start with a piece of newspaper.



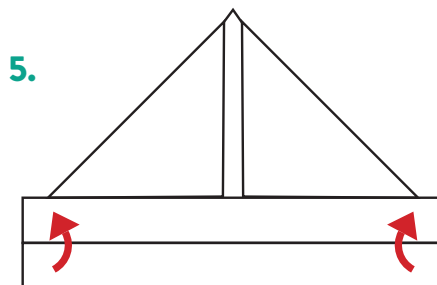
Fold the paper in half.



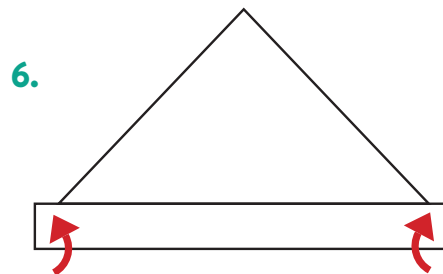
Starting from the creased side, fold the top corners down toward the center of the page.



Your paper should look like this.



Lift the bottom flap and fold it up.



Flip the paper over, and repeat step 5.

7.



Your newspaper pirate hat is ready to wear!

This guide was created by Kathleen Odean.

Random House Children's Books, School and Library Marketing,  
1745 Broadway New York, NY 10019

