

LESSON PLAN

SMILE, BREATHE, AND GO SLOWLY: SLUMBY THE SLOTH GOES TO SCHOOL



by Chiara Carminati, illustrated by Roberta Angaramo

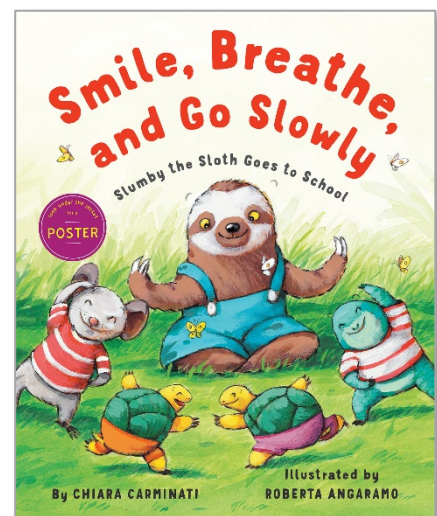
“And every once in a while, Slumby’s classmates would lie on the grass alongside him, be still, and watch the butterflies. Because every once in a while, it’s nice to live life slowly.”—from *Smile, Breathe, and Go Slowly*

ABOUT THE BOOK

It’s Slumby the sloth’s first day of school in the rainforest. Can he keep up with everyone and still be himself?

Everyone loves Slumby. He’s kind, he’s always happy, and butterflies follow him everywhere. Slumby knows that the other students at school like him, except that he moves so . . . very . . . slowly.

When he is too slow to compete in the turtle race, or play boa rope or armadillo ball, what is he to do? It can be hard to be left out. Then again, when one of his classmates is in danger, Slumby might be the only one who can help.



9780823442461 • Ages 3–7

BEFORE READING

- Discuss the title and cover illustration.
- What do the title and cover illustration tell us about the book?
- How do you feel when you smile?
- Why is it important to breathe?
- When is it good to go slowly? When do you want to move fast?
- Who is this book going to be about?
- Why do you think the illustrator has butterflies flying around Slumby’s head?
- How do you think Slumby is feeling?
- What is a sloth? Make sure the students understand that sloths are rainforest tree dwellers who are considered “lazy” because they sleep for much of the day and move slowly.
- Do sloths go to school?



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FICTION VS NONFICTION STUDY

- What kind of book is this? Is the book fiction or nonfiction? Explain why.
- Discuss fiction and nonfiction text types. Fiction is a make-believe story or fantasy, and nonfiction is factual and real.
- Ask the students to create a fiction/nonfiction chart and to fill it in with book they have read. Explain why they fit into each category.

Fiction	Nonfiction

WORD WORK: Introduce Students to New Vocabulary from the Story

New vocabulary: *rainforest, sloth, sluggish, exertion, consequently, admire, serene, plunged*

Discuss the new words from the story. Explain that we can learn the meaning of unknown words by reading them in context.

DURING READING

Read the story aloud to the group.

While you read, students should think about the following questions:

- Where and when does the story take place?
- Who is the main character?
- What is the main character like?
- How does Slumby feel throughout the story? What does Slumby do to make you think that?
- What is the problem? How is it resolved?
- What is the tone of the story? How does the tone change?
- What information do you get from the illustrations?
- What do the new vocabulary words mean in the story?
- What is the main idea of the story?



Have the students reread the story silently or in small groups.



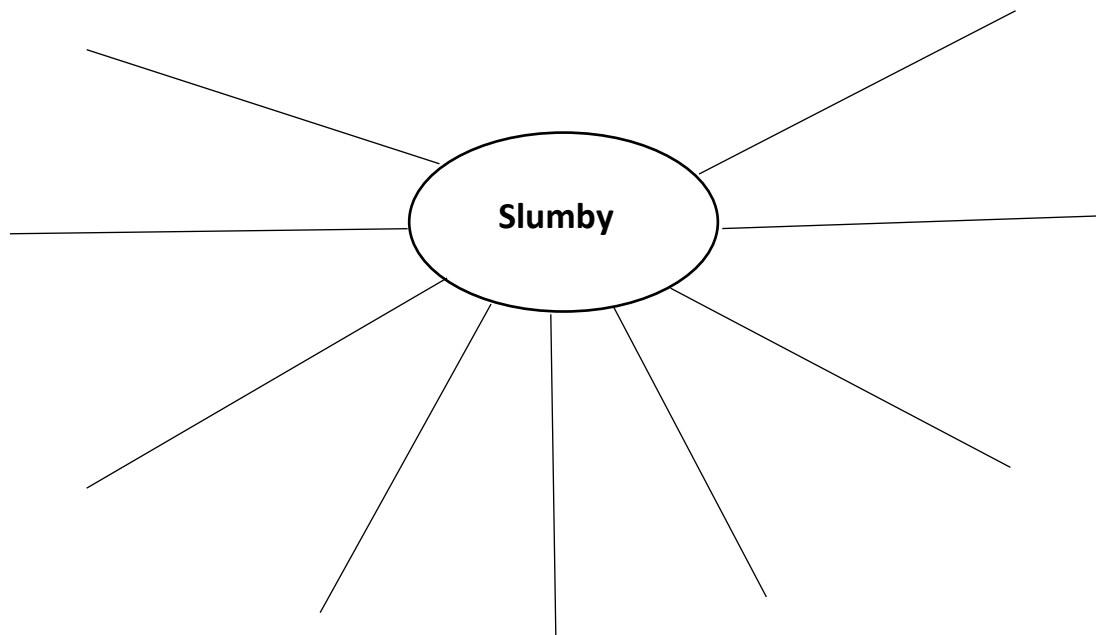


AFTER READING

- Why do you think the author wrote this book?
- What is the lesson in the story?
- Discuss this quote from the book: “Every once in a while, it’s nice to live life slowly.” How can you apply this to your life?
- How does the author incorporate the themes of friendship, individuality, and “stop and smell the roses” mentality into *Smile, Breathe, and Go Slowly*.
- How does the illustrator create the tone using pictures?
- What do the butterflies represent?
- At what point in the story do you feel bad for Slumby? When do you feel proud of him?
- Sequence the events in the story. Create a story map using words and illustrations to retell Slumby’s day.
- What do the other characters in the story learn from Slumby?
- Would you like to be friends with Slumby? Explain why.
- How are you like Slumby?
- Why do you think the author chose *Smile, Breathe, and Go Slowly* as the title for this book? Think of another title that would be appropriate.
- Write a sentence and draw a picture of something you do when life gets too fast and you need to slow down.

RESEARCH & ACTIVITIES

- Read about sloths in the rainforest online or in the library. Create a presentation to share with the class.
- With a partner, create an activity that will help people relax and be mindful.
- Create a character chart for Slumby.



Guide written by Marla Conn, MS, Ed., reading/literacy specialist and educational consultant.

