

Learning Guide



Sleep

We hope you enjoyed learning all about how and why we need sleep. Extend your learning with this print-ready Learning Guide!



What's in this Learning Guide?

Get Set to Listen:

Check your knowledge before and after listening to the episode by determining if statements are TRUE or FALSE.

Vocabulary

Discussion Questions

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3-8.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3-8.3

Writing Prompts and Extension Projects

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.8

Sleep Log

NGSS: LS1.D; LS1.A; NHES: Standards 1, 2, & 7; CCSS.MATH.PRACTICE.MP2

Animal Sleep Comparison

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.5; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.1; NGSS: 3-LS4-3 / 3-LS4-4

Bedtime Routine Planner

CASEL: Self-Management

Build Your Sleep Space

NGSS: ETS1.A & ETS1.B; LS1.A; NHES: Standards 1 & 7; CASEL: Self Management

Yoga & Breathing for Sleep Exercises

Mirror Neuron Game

NGSS: LS1.A; CASEL: Self-Awareness

Additional Resources and Book List



The Children's Hour
kids public radio

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<https://www.childrenshour.org/sleep/>



Get Set to Listen

1. Before listening!

Read each statement and write TRUE or FALSE based on what you already know.



2. After listening!

Based on what the experts said in the episode, write TRUE or FALSE.



Before Listening	TRUE or FALSE?	After Listening
	1. We sleep about 1/2 of our lives.	
	2. We spend about 8 hours dreaming every night on average.	
	3. Your body releases growth hormone when you're sleeping.	
	4. People's hair, fingernails, noses, and ears grow continuously, even into adulthood.	
	5. Not getting enough sleep makes people more stressed out.	
	6. Some diseases, like Alzheimer's disease, are connected to not getting enough sleep.	
	7. Mirror neurons , which tell us to copy what we see in other people, may be responsible for contagious yawns.	

What did you learn?



Get Set to Listen

Answer key

1. FALSE. We sleep about 1/3 of our lives.
2. FALSE. We spend about 2 hours dreaming every night on average. Dreaming happens in the stage of sleep called R.E.M. (Rapid Eye Movement).
3. TRUE
4. TRUE
5. TRUE
6. TRUE
7. TRUE



Vocabulary

sleep cycle	The full pattern your body goes through as it moves between different stages of sleep. Each cycle lasts about 90 minutes and includes both non-REM sleep and REM sleep .
sleep stage	One of the distinct levels your body and brain move through while you sleep. Each stage has its own brain activity, body changes, and purpose, and together they make up a full sleep cycle .
REM sleep (Rapid Eye Movement sleep)	A stage of sleep where your eyes move quickly under your eyelids, your brain becomes very active, and most dreaming happens. During REM sleep, your body is relaxed and still, but your brain is busy processing memories, emotions, and learning from the day.
deep sleep	The stage of sleep when your body is most relaxed and it is hard to wake up. During this time, your muscles repair, your brain builds memories, and you wake up feeling rested.
growth hormone	A chemical messenger made by the pituitary gland in the brain. Its main job is to help the body grow, especially bones and muscles, and to repair tissues during sleep.
short-term memory storage	The system in your brain that holds a small amount of information for a brief period of time—usually 10 to 30 seconds. Used for thinking, problem solving, and following directions.
long-term memory storage	The part of your brain that keeps information for a long time—from hours to years, or even your whole life. Used for storing facts, skills, experiences, and vocabulary.
mirror neurons	Special brain cells that activate when you do something and also when you see someone else do it. They help you understand other people's actions, feel empathy, and learn by watching.



Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think sleep is important for our bodies and brains?
2. How do you feel when you don't get enough sleep?
3. What are some things that can help you fall asleep faster?
4. Why might it be harder to focus in school if you didn't sleep well?
5. How do you think sleep helps your body grow stronger?
6. Why do you think growth hormone is released mostly during sleep?
7. If you could design the perfect sleep environment, what would it look like?
8. Imagine your brain is "cleaning up" while you sleep. What kind of "cleaning" do you think it does?



Group Discussion Strategies

Think Pair Share:

1. Individually, student writes down their answer to a question.
2. Students pair up and tell each other their answers.
3. Teacher calls for volunteers to share with the whole class their answer (and/or their partner's answer). Teacher notes key words/phrases on board.

Round Robin:

1. Teacher poses one question (written on top of a large page) to students, who are assembled into small groups of 3 or 4.
2. Students take turns brainstorming the answers. The recorder of the group writes down all answers.
3. The leader reads the group's ideas to the entire class. Teacher moderates.



Writing Prompts

Narrative Prompts

1. Draw or write about your dreams when you first wake up in a dream journal. How did your dreams make you feel?

Informative/Explanatory Prompts

1. Explain the stages of sleep and why each stage is important.

Extension: Create a diagram or chart to show the sleep cycle.

2. Describe how sleep affects memory, learning, and growth.

Extension: Include real-life examples of how sleep helps people do better in school, sports, or hobbies.

3. Research what makes a good sleep environment, and then design your own “perfect sleep environment”. What changes do you need to make to your own sleeping space?

Extension: Include a drawing or diagram of your recommended sleep space.

Opinion/Persuasive Prompts

1. Do you think kids should have later school start times to get more sleep? Why or why not?

Extension: Use facts about sleep cycles, brain function, and memory to support your argument.

2. Should people try to get exactly 8 hours of sleep every night, or is it okay to sleep less sometimes? Explain your opinion.

Extension: Include a persuasive paragraph about the benefits of healthy sleep habits.





Sleep Log

Track bedtime, wake-up time, and how rested you feel for a week.

Do you notice any patterns? What helps you sleep better? How does screen time, caffeine, or exercise affect your energy and sleep quality?

Going to Sleep, day _____

What time is it as I lie down? _____

What am I thinking about? _____

What are some feelings I'm having? _____

Did you wake up in the middle of the night? What time was it? _____

Waking Up

What time is it as I wake up? _____

What caused me to wake up? _____

What feelings am I having as I wake up? _____



Going to Sleep, day _____

What time is it as I lie down? _____

What am I thinking about? _____

What are some feelings I'm having? _____

Did you wake up in the middle of the night? What time was it? _____

Waking Up

What time is it as I wake up? _____

What caused me to wake up? _____

What feelings am I having as I wake up? _____



Animal Sleep Comparison



Stephen Simmons, author of Where Do Ocean Creatures Sleep At Night?, became curious about how different animals sleep—and turned what he discovered into books. Explore his work and learn more using the “Research Resource List.”

Which animals sleep the longest? Shortest? What were the most unusual sleep habits you discovered? Share what you discovered with us at The Children’s Hour!

Research Resource List

[Animals and Sleep](#)

From the Sleep Foundation.

[The Connection Between Animal and Human Sleep](#)

This article from the Sleep Foundation compares animal sleep to human sleep and describes how different animals have different sleep needs and patterns.

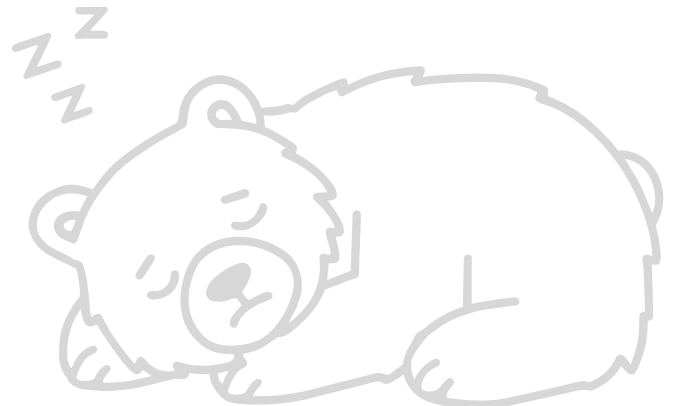
Videos

[What Can We Learn From How Animals Sleep?](#)

[How the Animal Kingdom Sleeps](#)

This video from *The Atlantic* describes the weird and varied sleep habits of different animals.

[The Most Extreme Sleeping Hours Among Animals](#)





Bedtime Routine Planner

Sleep helps us grow, think, and feel our best. A calming bedtime routine sets you up for a good night and a great day—use the tips below to make your own bedtime routine chart.

How Much Sleep Do You Need?

4-12 mo.	12-16 hrs. (including naps)
1-2 yrs.	11-14 hrs.
3-5 yrs.	10-13 hrs.
6-12 yrs.	9-12 hrs.
13-18 yrs.	8-10 hrs.

Your bedtime depends on how much sleep you need and when you wake up. Start your routine 30–45 minutes before sleep, or longer if you need more time to relax.

I want to be asleep by _____.

The minimum amount of time I need to do my bedtime routine is _____.

That means I need to start my bedtime routine at _____.

Create a bedtime routine you can do every night. Choose easy activities in the same order and time each night, and ask your parents for help sticking to it.

Ideas for your bedtime routine:

- *Listening to relaxing music*
- *Turning off screens*
- *Brushing teeth*
- *Taking a soothing bath*
- *Changing into pajamas*
- *Reading a book*
- *Talking or journaling about the day*
- *Snuggling with family, pets, or stuffies*

Pro Tip: *It may be tempting to sleep in on weekends, but waking up around the same time every day makes sticking to your sleep schedule easier and helps your body feel ready for every day.*



My Bedtime Routine

Use the tips on the "Bedtime Routine Planner" sheet to make your own bedtime routine chart. Write or draw each activity inside a cloud. Each night, check off the box in the cloud after you finish that part of your bedtime routine.

_____ 's Bedtime Routine Start Time: _____ Asleep by: _____

☐☐☐☐☐☐



Build Your Sleep Space

Tips

to Make Your Bedroom Perfect for Sleep

A good sleep space is **cool, dark, quiet, and comfy**, with **no distractions** like TVs, phones, or tablets. Your bedroom should mostly be **for resting and sleeping**, not playing or doing homework. Use the guidelines below to design your perfect sleep space.

Temperature – Keep it Cool

- The best temperature for sleep is about **68°F**.
- If you wake up sweaty, try **lighter pajamas or blankets**.

Lighting – Keep it Dark

- Use **curtains or shades** to block streetlights.
- **Avoid bright lamps and screens** before bed—they can make it harder to fall asleep.
- If you need a nightlight, choose a **small, dim one** that doesn't shine in your eyes.

Noise – Keep it Quiet

- **Turn off** TVs, game consoles, or phones before bed.
- Some kids like a **fan or white noise** to help block outside sounds.

Comfort and Safety

- Make sure your mattress and blankets are comfy.
- Keep your room **tidy**, with fewer toys or distracting things around.

Making Sleep Happen

- **Beds are for sleeping**, not playing or doing homework.
- Make your room **calm and relaxing**—soft colors and a soothing bedtime routine help your mind know it's time to rest.

Additional Resources for more tips and ideas!

- [Create a Calm Sleep Zone article](#) from Kelty Mental Health Resource Center
- [Sleep-Friendly Bedroom Ideas for Your Child](#)





Build Your Sleep Space

Make Your Bedroom Perfect for Sleep

A good sleep space is **cool**, **dark**, **quiet**, and **comfy**, with **no distractions** like TVs, phones, or tablets. Use the guidelines on the “Tips” page to design your perfect sleep space.

My Perfect Sleep Space Diagram:

 **Upload** your Fungi Hero to our Instagram [@tchradio](#), TikTok [@thechildrenshourradio](#), and [Facebook page](#), and check out others' designs!



Mail your design to:
The Children's Hour
PO Box 70236
Albuquerque, NM 87197



Record a Voice Message
This might be used on The Children's Hour!



Post your Fungi Hero on our Instagram, TikTok and Facebook! Check out others' designs!



Yoga & Breathing for Sleep

These yoga and breathing exercises calm your mind as you prepare for sleep. Give them a try!

- Do 2–3 rounds of each breathing exercise.
- Move slowly and quietly for yoga poses.
- Focus on relaxing your body and calming your mind.



Exercise	How to Do It	Visual Cue
Belly Breathing	Lie down, hand on belly, hand on chest. Breathe in through your nose (belly rises), breathe out slowly (keep chest still).	Belly inflates/deflates
Bunny Breathing	Take 3 quick sniffs in through your nose, then 1 long slow breath out through your nose.	“Sniff-sniff-sniff... Haaah”
Balloon Breathing	Imagine a balloon on your belly. Inhale to inflate it, exhale to deflate. <i>Optional: Pufferfish Breath—hold air with puffed cheeks, then exhale slowly.</i>	Belly balloon inflates/deflates
Flower Breath	Pretend to smell a flower as you breathe in, blow gently on it as you breathe out.	Smell and blow the flower

Pose	How to Do It	Visual Cue
Sun Reach	Inhale, reach arms up to the sky like reaching for the sun. Exhale, bring arms down.	Stretch to the sun
Cloud Gathering	Bend knees, arms down. Inhale, straighten legs, lift arms up. Exhale, bend knees, lower arms.	Lift and lower like clouds
Five-Point Star	Stand feet wide. Inhale, stretch arms out to sides like a star. Exhale, bring arms down.	Spread like a star



Mirror Neuron Game

Sleep scientist Vishal Sumra talked about how **mirror neurons**, which tell us to copy what we see other people doing, might be responsible for why yawns are so contagious in [The Children's Hour's "Sleep" episode](#) (segment 36:22-37:21).

Have fun exercising your **mirror neurons** in this game!

Objective

Be the best “mirror” by copying your partner’s actions as closely as possible.

Setup

1. Divide students into pairs or small teams.
2. Each team decides who will be the Leader first; the other(s) are the Mirror(s).

How to Play

1. Leader performs a series of movements (gestures, facial expressions, poses).
 - *Examples: touch your nose, jump once, spin slowly, make a surprised face.*
2. Mirrors copy exactly, including timing and expression.
3. Switch roles after 1–2 minutes.

Scoring Twist

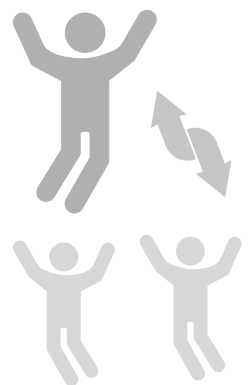
- Judge points: One student (or teacher) awards points after each round:
 - 3 points: Mirror copied perfectly
 - 2 points: Almost perfect
 - 1 point: Tried, but some details missed
- *Optional: For large groups, each team can score against themselves by self-assessing accuracy.*

Variations

- *Emotion Round:* Leader shows an emotion instead of a movement; mirror copies facial expression and body language.
- *Story Round:* Leader acts out a mini-scene (like pretending to climb a mountain); mirrors follow along.
- *Silent Leader:* Leader cannot speak; only gestures.

Discuss

- How did it feel to be mirrored?
- Was it easier to copy actions or emotions?
- Did you notice details you usually miss in others’ movements?





Additional Resources

[Animals and Sleep](#)

From the Sleep Foundation.

[The Connection Between Animal and Human Sleep](#)

This article from the Sleep Foundation compares animal sleep to human sleep and describes how different animals have different sleep needs and patterns.

[Create a Calm Sleep Zone article](#) from Kelty Mental Health Resource Center

[Sleep-Friendly Bedroom Ideas for Your Child](#)

[Bedtime Yoga: 12 Poses to Help Kids Sleep Better](#)

From *Yoga Journal*.

Videos

[What Can We Learn From How Animals Sleep?](#)

This video explains the sleeping habits of mammals, fish, birds, reptiles, and other sea creatures, and what it means for understanding our own sleep.

[How the Animal Kingdom Sleeps](#)

This video from *The Atlantic* describes the weird and varied sleep habits of different animals.

[The Most Extreme Sleeping Hours Among Animals](#)

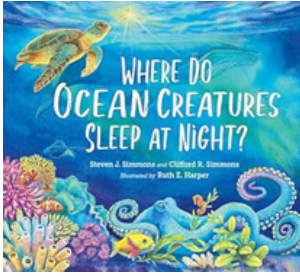
Do you sleep like a long-sleeping bat or a quick-napping goat? Explore how different animals sleep!

[Tips for a Good Sleep Routine](#)

These tips from Daffodils Child Development Center will help set up children for a lifetime of healthy sleep habits.



Book List



Where Do Ocean Creatures Sleep At Night?

by Stephen Simmons & Clifford Simmons, illustrated by Ruth Harper

This rhyming picture book explores where and how creatures like sharks, dolphins, sea turtles, octopuses, and whales rest in the sea.

ages 3-5



Good Night to Your Fantastic Elastic Brain

by JoAnn Deak & Terrence Deak, illustrated by Neely Daggett

What happens in the brain during sleep? This STEM picture book written by two brain scientists explains why getting a good night's rest is so important.

ages 4-8

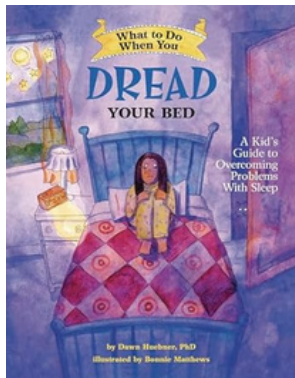


The Animals Sleep: A Bedtime Book of Biomes

by Thomas M. Heffron, illustrated by Lina Safar

This illustrated book uses poetic text to show how animals sleep across deserts, forests, grasslands, and oceans.

ages 3-7



What to Do When You Dread Your Bed

by Dawn Huebner, illustrated by Bonnie Matthews

A kid's guide to overcoming problems with sleep. This award-winning workbook will provide kids with tools to calm their minds so they can get a good night's sleep.

ages 6-9



Sleep with Kip: Simple Sleep Help for Peaceful Bedtimes

released by Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI)

A 6-book series designed to promote good bedtime and sleeping habits.

ages 0-8