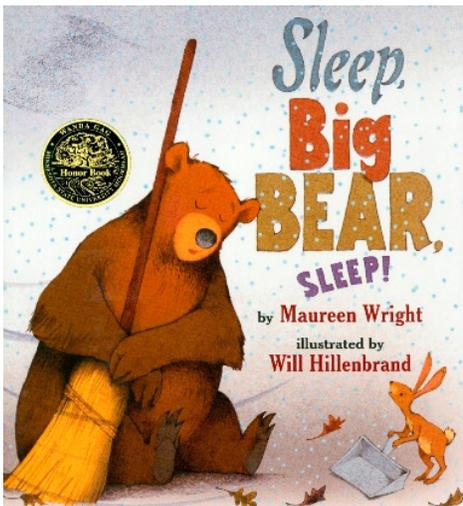


# Sleep, Big Bear, Sleep!

by Maureen Wright (author) and Will Hillenbrand (illustrator)  
A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit



## About the Book

When Old Man Winter softly reminds Big Bear that it's time to hibernate, Big Bear doesn't hear well and thinks he said "Drive a jeep, Big Bear, drive a jeep." Tired Big Bear causes havoc as he drives around town. This sequence continues as Old Man Winter continually says, "Sleep, Big Bear, sleep" and Big Bear responds to what he thinks he hears. He sweeps, leaps, dives deep, and climbs a steep mountain, before Old Man Winter finally yells: "Hey there, Bear! Did you hear what I said? It's winter time, now go to bed!" A friendly rabbit adds to the fun as it follows Big Bear on all of his

adventures and finally joins him in his cozy den.

Hillenbrand's full-color, full-page illustrations convey the seasonal change from shades of green to a gray winter landscape dotted with snowflakes. Two vertical double-page spreads towards the middle of the story add to the drama as Big Bear dives deep and prepares to climb a very steep mountain. Preschoolers through third graders loved this very entertaining story. They enjoyed the illustrations and asked for more time to look at them after the read aloud sessions. They also liked the rhyming text and the repeated line, "Sleep, Big Bear, Sleep." Five-year-olds "freaked out with laughter when Big Bear drove the jeep." One day care provider recommended this story to read before nap or bedtime. She commented: "I could say, 'okay, Big Bear went to sleep, now it is your turn!'"

One kindergarten teacher appreciated that the book made the children think, as it stirred up many questions. First graders enjoyed how Big Bear kept misunderstanding, and they tried to guess what he would do next based on picture clues. One second grade teacher shared that her class loved the book and that the story led to a good discussion on confusing what people say. And, of course, the children wanted the book read over and over.

*Permission to use book jacket image and book description granted by Will Hillenbrand.*

## Book Details

***Sleep, Big Bear, Sleep*** written by Maureen Wright, illustrated by Will Hillenbrand  
Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2009, 978-0-7614-5560-8. Ages 4-8.

<http://www.marshallcavendish.us/kids>

***Sleep, Big Bear, Sleep!*** Is a Wanda Gág Book Award 2010 winner!

<http://web.mnstate.edu/cmc/WandaGagHonorBooks2010.cfm#SleepBigBearSleep>



## About the Author

Maureen Wright and her husband, Don, have three sons and a daughter-in-law. One high school-age son still lives at home. The author lives in the country in Athens Township, Pennsylvania, where bears occasionally cross their property. She has written many stories about bears, finding their comical natures suited to children's stories. She is aware of the dangers, though! Two of her sons once had to climb a tree in the woods to avoid a passing bear!

Maureen enjoys writing in rhyming verse because her favorite books to read to her boys when they were young were lyrical. She decided to try her hand at picture books after babysitting a one-year-old and having the baby crawl away while Maureen sat there happily reading a rhyming verse book and laughing out loud. She writes at home with her old dog, Sandy, and cat, Lyle, by her side.

*Photograph and biographical information courtesy Maureen Wright; used with permission.*

## Author Resources:

**Maureen Wright's official website**

<http://booksbypaureenwright.com/>

**For publicity and speaking engagement inquiries:**

<http://booksbypaureenwright.com/class-room-presentations/>

## About the Illustrator



I have lived almost all my life in Cincinnati, Ohio, where I grew up surrounded by stories. My parents owned a barber shop where I listened to conversations that seemed to me stories about adult life. When I wasn't at the shop, I spent hours at baseball games, sharing the stories about the teams and players. My grandmother, who lived nearby, shared stories about her earlier life on a farm with my three brothers and me when we kept her company during thunderstorms.

Drawing was how I captured the stories I heard. My older brother sketched cartoons and I began by copying him. I drew mostly at the kitchen table, but also used my crayons on stairwell walls. My early pictures still decorate the basement of my mother's house.

My first art class came when I was a sophomore in high school. I was sure everyone else was more talented and experienced, but I discovered that all those years of listening and drawing had given me a good idea for putting ideas together as pictures. I went on to art school, although my father was worried that I wouldn't be able to make a living. When I graduated, I found work in advertising, but after a class in picture book art, I decided to try my hand at illustrating children's literature. Now it is my full-time work. I spend a lot of time in schools sharing my picture books and how I create them. I think it's important for children to enjoy the process of art and not worry too much about the finished product.

When I approach a story, I think of myself as a choreographer adding movement to a score or a movie director bringing a script to life. I read the story many times, just to let the wonder of it wash over me and feel it stretch and deepen in my imagination. I really work in three worlds at once: the world of the imagination, the world of myth, and the physical world; children seem to live comfortably in all three. Successful illustrations link these worlds together and give a visual voice to the story.

As I begin to draw, I try to keep the child's viewpoint foremost in my mind. For each book, I keep a journal of my sketches. Every journal has a child's drawing tucked inside to remind me that a child's imagination is the starting and ending point for my art. My studio shelves are lined with marionettes, stuffed toys, and folk art animals to help me with ideas for my drawings. My wife, Jane, and our son, Ian, provide inspiration, too.



<http://oh.webjunction.org/ohctrointro>

## Illustrator Resources:

### Will Hillenbrand's Official Website

<http://willhillenbrand.com/>

### For publicity and speaking engagement inquiries:

Tish Gayle, Literary Events Agent  
808 Lexington Ave. Terrace Park, Ohio 45174  
E-mail: [tish@willhillenbrand.com](mailto:tish@willhillenbrand.com)

## Awards Will Hillenbrand has won

- Starred review from *Publishers Weekly* for **Counting Crocodiles**
- Horn Book Fanfare List 1997 for **Coyote and the Fire Stick**
- IRA Children's Choice Award for **Sam Sunday and the Mystery at the Ocean Beach Hotel**
- IRA Children's Choice Award for **The House that Drac Built**
- Irma S. and James H. Black Bank Street College of Education Award for excellence in text and illustration, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* 1995 Blue Ribbon Book, and *School Library Journal* Best Books of 1995 for **Wicked Jack**
- ALA Notable Book Award for **Traveling to Tondo**
- Gold Medal and honors from the Society of Illustrators

## Will Hillenbrand's art

Will Hillenbrand shares his processes for creating the illustrations for his books. There are a number of great resources for learning about how Will creates his art here:

<http://willhillenbrand.com/artprocess.html>

Each page has activities called "You Try It!" so that the steps Will takes can be replicated by kids.

## Talk About It!

*Topics to share when discussing this book with children*

- It is time for Big Bear to hibernate. Talk about hibernation, what it is, who does it, when do they do it, and why.
- Rhyming words are used in this story. Say the words out loud together. What same sound is in all of the rhyming words?
- Big Bear does many things in this story like drive a jeep and dive down deep. Which of those things can a bear really do? Which of those things can people do?
- Part of Big Bear's trouble is that he doesn't hear so well. Is he being a good listener? Talk about listening and why it is important.
- At the beginning of the story, Old Man Winter whispers softly to Big Bear, but by the end he is shouting. Encourage listeners to say with you, "sleep, Big Bear sleep!" as you read the story, getting a little louder each time. Talk about softer and louder sounds, and why Old Man Winter might be shouting by the end of the story.
- At the end of the story Big Bear puts on his pajamas, fluffs his pillow and hugs his teddy as he gets ready to go to sleep. What are some other things people might do when they get ready for bedtime?
- Bear has an animal friend with him on each page of the book. What animal is it? Have listeners find and name other animals on the pages of the book.
- This story is about the coming of winter. In what ways can we tell that by reading this story?

Many of the ideas listed above incorporate the **six early literacy skills** that help children get ready to read. Recognizing letters (Letter Knowledge) and understanding that they make sounds that form words (Phonological Awareness). Knowing that things have names and being able to name them (Vocabulary). Telling a story or describing events that happened in a story (Narrative Skills). Noticing and recognizing text (Print Awareness), and the interest in and enjoyment of books (Print Motivation). All of these things lead to children being ready to learn how to read when they begin school.

For more information: <http://www.ohreadytoread.org/>.

## Learn and have fun!

Here are some fun ideas for extending the story

- Have a picnic inside or out
- Have a snack that includes honey
- Set up a campsite with a tent (a blanket and a table work fine!)
- Go on a "bear hunt"
- Sing *The Bear Went Over the Mountain*
- Play leapfrog
- Make a jeep from a large cardboard box that children can "drive"
- Role-play some of the activities in the story, driving, sweeping, leaping.
- Play King of the Mountain (or a friendly version of!) if there is a hill nearby, or use a piece of playground equipment.

Fun storytimes to associate with ***Sleep, Big Bear, Sleep*** might include

- Bears
- Animals
- Animal homes/habitats
- Hibernation
- Seasons
- Camping
- Bees/insects
- Transportation/Things that go

Take a trip!

- Visit a zoo
- Schedule a visit from a beekeeper or possibly visit one.
- Plan a visit to a lake or pond. Talk about the animals that live in the water.
- Go swimming! If possible schedule a swimming trip to a nearby pool or lake. An inflatable pool would also work!



<http://oh.webjunction.org/ohctrointro>

## Tie It In!

*Using this book with the Ohio Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards*

The Ohio Department of Education adopted revised Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards in 2011. These standards describe what young learners should know and be able to do in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies before entering kindergarten. Early childhood educators are implementing these standards in their schools and centers. For more information, including the complete set of standards, follow this link to the Ohio Department of Education site: <http://bit.ly/tBOIOP>.

Every Choose to Read Ohio book for young children may be used to support the English and Language Arts Reading Standards for Literature and Reading Standards: Foundational Skills. Here are examples of activities using **Sleep, Big Bear, Sleep!** that align with Pre-K standards.

### English Language Arts

- Reading Standards: Foundational Skills: Phonological awareness – Have children identify the rhyming words that appear on each page (e.g. *park, dark, well, dell, sleep, leap, etc.*) and produce additional rhyming words.
- Reading Standards for Literature: Craft and Structure – Discuss what the author (Maureen Wright) and illustrator (Will Hillenbrand) contributed in presenting the ideas in **Sleep Big Bear, Sleep!** This book has a wonderful visual element to it that can really be emphasized in a classroom setting.

### Mathematics

- Counting and Cardinality – use the illustrations to count. How many animals, people, trees are on the page? Point as you count.

### Science

- Life Science: Observations of Living Things – learn about bears and other animals that hibernate. What are their behaviors? Why do they hibernate?

### Social Studies

- History Strand: Words associated with time are meaningful in the context of daily classroom routines – discuss the order of events that occurred before Big Bear went to sleep.

Other Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards may also apply. See the Ohio Department of Education website (<http://education.ohio.gov>) for further information.



<http://oh.webjunction.org/ohctrointro>

## Explore More!

### Literacy resources for young children:

This website for the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh has many early literacy resources including ideas for **Sleep, Big Bear, Sleep!**

<http://www.carnegielibrary.org/research/parentseducators/educators/blast/earlylearning/programs/Hibernation2.html>

Ohio Ready to Read, the early literacy initiative developed by the Ohio Library Council's Children's Services Division and the State Library of Ohio, has many great resources for librarians, educators and parents on teaching early literacy skills.

<http://ohreadytoread.org/>

National Association for the Education of Young Children

<http://www.naeyc.org/>

Association for Library Service to Children

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/index.cfm>

## About Choose to Read Ohio

Choose to Read Ohio (CTRO) spotlights Ohio authors and promotes reading across Ohio. The State Library of Ohio, in partnership with Ohioana Library Association, developed this initiative to encourage Ohioans of all ages to share literature by authors native to, residing in, or associated with Ohio. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits: <http://oh.webjunction.org/ohctrointro>.

This toolkit revised December 2011.