

# How to Get Your OCTOPUS to SCHOOL



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## Educator Guide

# ABOUT THE CREATORS



Becky grew up in Northeast Wisconsin and spent most of her childhood playing in lakes and reading books. Shortly after graduating from Luther College, Becky spent a year working as a children's bookseller at Barnes & Noble and soon discovered she enjoyed reading picture books more than anything else. Much, much more.

Now Becky spends her days writing children's books and working at her local library. She is the author of *My School Stinks* (2021), *This Field Trip Stinks* (2022), and *How to Get Your Octopus to School* (2023). When she's not reading or writing, Becky can be found hiking through the woods, baking something sweet, or thinking happy thoughts. She currently lives in Central Wisconsin with her husband and two kids.

Becky is represented by James McGowan of [BookEnds Literary Agency](#).



Jaclyn Siquett grew up playing in her dad's garden, feeding worms to box turtles, and tossing french fries to seagulls at the Jersey shore. She now spends her time avoiding sunburn at the beach with her daughter, catching up on a certain great baking show, and illustrating books for children. She lives in Brick, NJ.

Jaclyn received her BFA in Illustration from the University of the Arts in 2008. She is an active member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, and is proud to be represented by Christy Tugeau Ewers at the CAT Agency.

# ABOUT THE BOOK

**Learn how to get your octopus to school in this hilarious and endearing back-to-school story!**

Getting your octopus to school won't be easy. He would much rather stay home with you and play hide-and-seek or dress-up. But you know your octopus will love school if he gives it a chance. And you'll tell him that . . . as soon as you can find him . . .

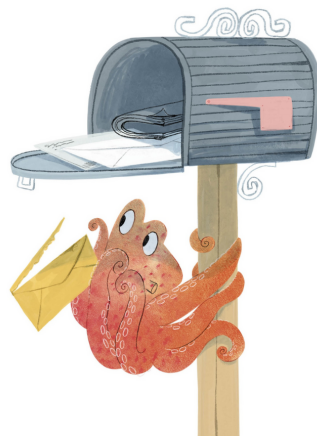
Reminiscent of *If You Take a Mouse to School*, get your little one ready for school with this silly and sweet back-to-school story. Perfect for any parent who has struggled to get their child ready for school in the morning! Includes an embellished list of octopus facts in the backmatter.

## ABOUT THE GUIDE

This guide was created by Kari Allen, an educator with twenty years of classroom experience. All activities can and should be modified to best fit student needs, A sampling of Common Core standards are listed at the end of the guide. Visit Kari's website [www.kariallenwrites.com](http://www.kariallenwrites.com) for more information.

All art and book excerpts have been used with permission from the creators. This guide should only be used for classroom or educational purposes.

Common Core and NGSS connections listed at the end of the guide are a sampling. Connections are not limited to these highlighted ones.



# REVIEWS AND PRAISE FOR *HOW TO GET YOUR OCTOPUS TO SCHOOL*

*"The matter-of-fact text will easily pull anyone into this alternate version of the world, where octopuses play with stuffed toys, draw at easels, and hug their humans goodbye. As a bonus, the book does not reference a specific school level, making it accessible for a wide range of young children. A list of octopus facts after the story will help caregivers distinguish between truth and fiction presented in the narrative. A charming back-to-school book for the nervous octopus in all of us." — Kirkus reviews*

*"Scharnhorst offers funny and endearingly patient point-by-point advice on a morning routine . . . All the while, Sinquett's breezy digital art depicts a small, salmon-hued octopus humorously exhibiting arrayed behaviors both human and cephalopod . . . [a] sweetly humorous take on a familiar rite of passage."  
--Publishers Weekly*

*PreS-Gr 2—"Congratulations! It's time for your octopus to start school!" A small, apprehensive coral octopus eyes the letter flashed by a young pale-skinned girl, matching the extra arms of her playmate with two long, dark brown pigtails. Her octopus would rather stay home, and he uses camouflage to hide in plants, a toy chest, and the shower, sending the girl scouring the house for her eight-armed friend. After snatching him up into a tickle attack, she plops him down beside a closet to find a suitable outfit for the first day of school. Mystery mollusk toast for breakfast concludes the manic morning, and then it's time for the clingy octopus to slide into Mrs. Bubble's classroom. What surprises will the octopus discover inside? Scharnhorst's second-person narrative slips readers into the perspective of the young girl sending her cunning, yet cuddly, octopus off to school. While the octopus's game of hide-and-seek may extend a bit too long for grown-ups, young readers will hardly notice as they enjoy spotting the octopus hiding throughout Sinquett's playful and brightly colored digital cartoon illustrations. Spoiler alert: The goodbye hug at the end of the story might draw a tear from grown-up readers getting ready to send children off to school. Back matter contains a list of "Ten (Mostly) True Facts About Octopuses," for readers curious about the habits of octopuses highlighted throughout.*

*VERDICT A charming, eight-armed hug of a story that won't hide long on library shelves. - School Library Journal Starred Review*



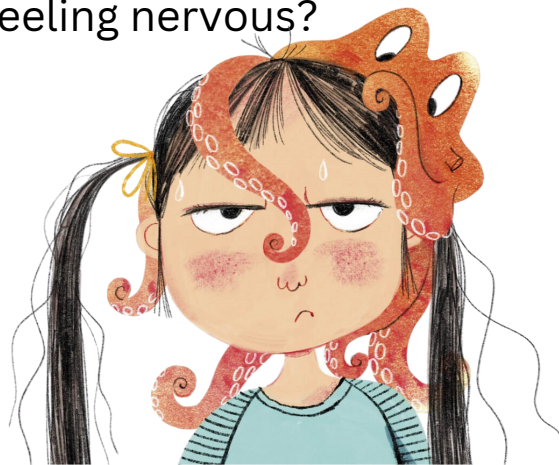
# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## BEFORE READING

- What do you know about octopuses? **Braintstorm** what you know. **Discuss** if any of those facts might come up in the text.
- **Discuss** if you think the book is fiction or nonfiction.
- **Look** at the cover. What predictions can you make?
- Take off the jacket and **look** at the case cover. This book has a hidden cover! What do you notice? How is it different from the jacket?
- **Check out** the endpapers. The endpapers are what are glued down to the cover. The endpapers in this book give us some clues about the story. What do you notice? What do you wonder?
- **Look** at the title page. What do you notice?

## WHILE READING

- How do you get ready for school? Do you have a routine? What does your routine look like? (See writing prompt connection.)
- When you do something new, how do you feel?
- How do people act when they are nervous? What do you do to help yourself if you are feeling nervous?



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## AFTER READING

- How did the writer and illustrator include real facts about octopuses in the text and the illustrations?
- What would **you** do to get your octopus to school?
- What was your first day of school like? How did you feel?
- Look at the back matter. Back matter is extra material at the end of a book. What do you notice?

## WRITING PROMPTS

- How do you get ready for school? (See printable)
- Write about a time you felt nervous. (See printable.)
- How do people act when they are nervous? What do you do to help yourself if you are feeling nervous?
- If you were an octopus, where would you hide?
- Write your own *How to Get....!* Pick an animal or object and write about how you would get it to school! See the Craft Move section and try out some of the Point of View or Anthropomorphism techniques.



# CRAFT MOVES

- **Point of View:** This story is told through second person narration. Second person means the narrator is talking to the reader directly. You can see this because the pronouns "you" are used. First person narration is when a character tells their own story and you might see the word "I" a lot. Third person narration is when someone tells the story but from a distance so you might see the word "they" or a character's name used.
- Discuss how would this story be different if a different point of view was used! What if the octopus told the story or if the child did?
- **Anthropomorphism:** When an animal or a plant is given human characteristics and qualities that is called anthropomorphism. Where do you see this happening in ***How To Get Your Octopus to School?*** Why do you think the author chose to make the octopus like a kid?



# LANGUAGE EXPLORATION

- Explore the etymology of the word octopus. The word octopus means "eight foot". *Octo* is a prefix meaning it comes in the beginning of the word. Look at the following list words, what meanings can you figure out thinking about word meanings and parts. Can you make your own octo words?
  - octagon
  - October
  - octogenarians
  - octopod
- Learn about plurals. What do we call more than one of something? Research what more than one octopus is called. Is it octopi? Octopus? Octopuses? Go on a plural scavenger hunt in some books. What plurals can you find? What do you notice? (See printable to record your findings.)





# OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Design an outfit for an octopus! Think about if your octopus was going to somewhere else besides school or what would your octopus wear for a special school day, like Picture Day!
- Design a home for an octopus. See this article from the [Smithsonian](#) on how octopuses use trash in the ocean as shelter. Or this resource from the [National Wildlife Federation](#) talks about where octopuses like to build their homes. Here's another one from [National Geographic](#). Maybe you can use found objects to build the perfect home for an octopus!
  - Draw a plan before you make the home! Add labels to your design plan.
  - Write a persuasive piece to explain why your home is the perfect den for an octopus. Try to use what you've learned about octopuses as evidence to support your reasons.
- Play Octopus Camouflage. One person should cover their eyes and then count to twenty. The others try to camouflage themselves. The "it" person then shouts "Octopus" and then opens their eyes and tries to find everyone without moving from their spot (they can turn around).



# MATH

- Octopuses have 8 legs. Let's do some Octopus Math! (See printable.)

Extension: Make your own octopus equations.

- Skip count by 8s. Record the count. What patterns do you see?
- How many ways can you make 8 using addition, subtraction, multiplication and/or division? (See printable.)

# SCIENCE

- Look at the backmatter of the book. Backmatter is extra material at the back of a book. The backmatter in *How To Get Your Octopus to School* shares some octopus facts. Research octopuses and make your own list of octopus facts.
- Octopuses can use camouflage. What other animals use camouflage? Learn about how animals can change their colors or use things around them to blend in and hide!



Picture Books that connect to *How to Get Your Octopus to School* and could make a text set if read together.

- *School's First Day of School* by Adam Rex and Christian Robinson (an inimate object with human characteristics)
- *Inky's Amazing Escape* by Sy Montgomery and Amy Schiller-Saford
- *Mr. S* written and illustrated by Monica Arnaldo (another unusual character at school!)
- *Mae's First Day of School* written and illustrated by Kate Berube
- *Oliver's Alligator* written and illustrated by Paul Schmid .



# Octopus Math

There are two octopuses. How many legs? Show how you know with words, pictures, numbers or equations.

There are four octopuses. How many legs? Show how you know with words, pictures, numbers or equations.

Name:



# Octopus Math

There are three octopuses. One swims away. How many legs? Show how you know with words, pictures, numbers or equations.

There are five octopuses. Two swim away. How many legs? Show how you know with words, pictures, numbers or equations.



Name:

# How Many Ways Can You Make 8?

Show how you can make eight using addition, subtraction, multiplication and/or division.

Name:





Name \_\_\_\_\_

# A PICTURE OF ME GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

# MY OCTOPUS OUTFIT







# Plural Scavenger Hunt

Octopus? Octopi? Octopuses?

Record plurals you find in other books. List the singular of the word.

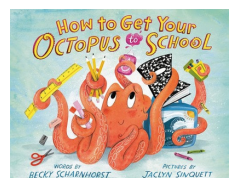
What do you notice?

Plural

Singular

Plural	Singular

Name:



# COMMON CORE AND NGSS CONNECTIONS

- K.RL.1 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- K.RL.6 With prompting and support, name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.
- K.RL.7 With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).
- K.RL.10 Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.
- K.W.2 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.
- K.W.8 With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
- K.SL.4 Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.
- 1.RF.1 Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.
- 1.W.1 Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.
- 1.SL.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
- 2.RL.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
- 2.RL.5 Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.
- 1.OA.1 Use addition and subtraction within 20 to solve word problems involving situations of adding to, taking from, putting together, taking apart, and comparing, with unknowns in all positions, e.g., by using objects, drawings, and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem.
- 2.NBT.2 Count within 1000; skip-count by 5s, 10s, and 100s.
- K-ESS3-1 Use a model to represent the relationship between the needs of different plants and animals (including humans) and the places they live.