

# Book Links

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS:  
ELEMENTARY ECONOMICS  
BY ANGELA LEEPER

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Even very young children can understand the necessity of money, and they certainly already know what they want to buy with it. The capital (and human) resources that have helped to create the items they see at home, at school, and in the community may be more difficult to comprehend, however. In addition, making choices between needs and wants—or dealing with limited resources—can be a struggle for children when it seems like the world is an endless supply of material goods. Luckily, the books in this annotated bibliography, suitable for sharing across the curriculum, help introduce many of these broad economic concepts through engaging informational texts, moving and inspiring stories, and a little humor as well.

## Capital Resources

**Building Our House.** By Jonathan Bean. Illus. by the author. 2013. 44p. Farrar, \$17.99 (9780374380236). PreS–Gr. 2.

A little girl narrates the story of her modern-day-homesteading parents' construction of a family house in this story based on the author's own childhood. Mallets, cement mixers, and a host of other capital resources are described and illustrated in active vignettes as the family builds the house year-round. Lisa Shulman's *Old MacDonald Had a Workshop* (2002) shows more home-building resources at work.

**Going Up!** Elisha Otis' Trip to the Top. By Monica Kulling. Illus. by David Parkins. 2012. 32p. Tundra, \$17.95 (9781770492400). 621.8. Gr. 1–3.

Part of the Great Ideas series, this picture-book biography, enhanced with expressive characterizations and detailed backdrops, tells how lesser-known inventor Elisha Otis created the elevator and paved the way for skyscrapers. Monica Kulling's *All Aboard! Elijah McCoy's Steam Engine* (2010) and *In the Bag: Margaret Knight Wraps It Up* (2011), about the invention of paper bags, are also in the series.

**How Did That Get in My Lunchbox?** The Story of Food. By Chris Butterworth. Illus. by Lucia Gaggiotti. 2011. 32p. Candlewick, paper, \$5.99 (9780763665036). 641.3. K–Gr. 3.

Retro-style designs illustrate this nonfiction title, which explains how a combination of natural, human, and capital

resources help to grow, pick, pack, and deliver cheese, bread, cookies, and other items found in a school lunchbox. Shawndra Shofner's *How It Happens at the Ice Cream Factory* (2009) and Robin Nelson's *From Cocoa Bean to Chocolate* (2012) also show the factory process used to create other favorite foods.

**Machines Go to Work.** By William Low. Illus. by the author. 2009. 42p. Holt, \$15.99 (9780805087598). 621.8. PreS–Gr. 1.

Double- and triple-page spreads (with lifted flaps) use minimal text and detailed, boldly colored illustrations to show a variety of big machines at work, from a fire truck and helicopter to a diesel locomotive and container ship. A final spread recaps each vehicle with more information. Low's follow-up title, *Machines Go to Work in the City* (2012), focuses on big-city machines on land and in the air.

## Consumers

**Follow Your Money:** Who Gets It, Who Spends It, Where Does It Go? By Kevin Sylvester and Michael Hlinka. Illus. by Kevin Sylvester. 2013. 56p. Annick, \$24.95 (9781554514816); paper, \$14.95 (9781554514809). 330. Gr. 4–7.

Comparing the economy to a spider web that connects producers, consumers, resources, and more, this nonfiction title uses a multitude of engaging scenarios and calculations to determine the profit and hidden costs of common American goods, such as fast food, gaming consoles, MP3 players, and jeans. It also covers issues related to taxes, home finance, banking, and credit cards.

**Human Footprint:** Everything You Will Eat, Use, Wear, Buy, and Throw Out in Your Lifetime. By Ellen Kirk. 2011. 32p. illus. National Geographic, paper, \$6.95 (9781426307676). 304.2. Gr. 3–7.

Based on images and information from the National Geographic documentary *Human Footprint*, this large-format paperback offers photos showing what typical Americans will use and consume during their lifetimes, such as 3,796 diapers, 13,056 pints of milk, and 14,518 candy bars. Each double-page spread includes factoids to amaze readers as well as tips on conserving natural resources.

**Mirror.** By Jeannie Baker. Illus. by the author. 2010. 48p. Candlewick, \$18.99 (9780763648480). PreS–Gr. 3.

This inventive, mostly wordless picture book follows two boys (one in urban Australia and one in rural Morocco) through a single day, highlighting the differences and commonalities in their lives, particularly what their families buy and consume. Meant to be read simultaneously, the stories

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appear side by side as separate mini books bound within the same covers. See also Faith D’Aluisio’s *What the World Eats* (2008) for more global comparisons of consumption.

**Nothing.** By Jon Agee. Illus. by the author. 2007. 32p. Disney/Hyperion, \$16.99 (9780786836949). K–Gr. 3.

Reminiscent of “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” this humorous story with cartoon illustrations mocks consumer spending. Just as shop owner Otis sells his last antique and is about to close, Suzie, the richest lady in town, asks what’s for sale. When Otis replies, “Uh, nothing,” the humor begins as Suzie buys his nothing and starts a trend of buying and selling “nothing” all over town.

## Goods and Services

**At the Supermarket.** By Anne Rockwell. Illus. by the author. 2010. 32p. Holt, \$16.99 (9780805076622). PreS–Gr. 1.

A young boy accompanies his mother to the supermarket and notes the many goods they buy, from hamburger and grapes to toilet paper and ice-cream sprinkles. Readers will be drawn to the child-friendly paintings and enjoy how many of the family’s groceries are used to make the boy a birthday cake at the end. Pair with Susan Middleton Elya’s *Bebé Goes Shopping* (2006) for a Latino perspective.

**Goods or Services?** By Ellen K. Mitten. 2012. 24p. Rourke, paper, \$7.95 (9781617419935); lib. ed., \$22.79 (9781617417917); e-book, \$16.50 (9781612367095). 381. K–Gr. 2.

Simple text and full-page color photos describe how families use money to buy goods (such as food, clothing, and toys) and services (such as haircuts, dental visits, and swimming lessons) in this Little World Social Studies title. It also explains how families have needs and wants and must make choices about spending. A concluding picture glossary reinforces the learning. See also Robin Nelson’s *What Do We Buy? A Look at Goods and Services* (2010).

**Orange Peel’s Pocket.** By Rose Lewis. Illus. by Grace Zong. 2010. 32p. Abrams, \$16.95 (9780810983946); paper, \$5 (9781419702938). PreS–Gr. 2.

When her kindergarten class begins a study of China, Chan Ming, an adoptee who’s lovingly nicknamed Orange Peel, finds out more about her birth country by visiting other local immigrants from China. Her neighborhood tour leads her to a tailor, a flower-shop owner, a chef, and other service providers whose goods connect to China.

## Human Resources

**Librarian on the Roof!** A True Story. By M. G. King. Illus. by Stephen Gilpin. 2010. 32p. Albert Whitman, \$16.99 (9780807545126). 027.4764. K–Gr. 3.

Based on a true story and complemented by cartoon-like illustrations, this picture book describes how librarian RoseAleta Laurell braved a week on the roof of Texas’ oldest public library to raise money for its extremely outdated and underused children’s section. Jeanette Winter’s *The Librarian of Basra* (2005) and Jan Pinborough’s *Miss Moore Thought Otherwise* (2013) offer more stories of notable librarians.

**The Village Garage.** By G. Brian Karas. Illus. by the author. 2010. 32p. Holt, \$16.99 (9780805087161). PreS–Gr. 2.

Every season, the harmonious workers at the Village Garage have plenty of work to do, from picking up leftover debris from winter storms in the springtime to filling potholes in the summer to salting the roads in the winter. Accompanied by childlike gouache and acrylic illustrations, the lighthearted book also shows backhoes, elephant trucks, and other capital resources being used.

**Who Put the Cookies in the Cookie Jar?** By George Shannon. Illus. by Julie Paschkis. 2013. 32p. Holt, \$16.99 (9780805091977). 641.86. PreS–Gr. 1.

After a hand dives into a cookie jar to pull out a treat, this rhyming picture book shows how many hands around the world help contribute to producing and selling cookies. The stylized folk-art illustrations depict metal operators making cookie sheets, sewers crafting oven mitts, harvesters gathering sugarcane, warehouse employees loading trucks, and many others at work.

## Money

**Everything Money.** By Kathy Furgang. 2013. 64p. illus. National Geographic, paper, \$12.95 (9781426310263). 332.4. Gr. 4–6.

Double-page spreads combine color photos, text boxes, charts, and statistics to offer a wealth of facts about money. Including a history of money, how Americans spend their money, global currency, and money usage in a digital age, this high-interest book offers a broad overview. An interactive glossary and a money origami activity extend the text.

**Lots and Lots of Coins.** By Margarette S. Reid. Illus. by True Kelley. 2011. 32p. Dutton, \$16.99 (9780525478799). 737.4. K–Gr. 3.

With the help of his coin-collector father, a boy learns fun facts about coins, from their early history to how they are minted to the people and places that have adorned them.

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Several pages focus on the appearance and value of today's coins. Detailed mixed-media illustrations add as much information as the text. Loreen Leedy's *Follow the Money* (2002) also offers facts about coins and their usage.

**Money Madness.** By David A. Adler. Illus. by Edward Miller. 2009. 32p. Holiday, \$16.95 (9780823414741); paper, \$6.95 (9780823422722). 332.4. K–Gr. 3.

Accompanied by stylized digital art as well as photos of coins and bills, this nonfiction book is indeed all about money. Starting with early forms of bartering and its potential problems, the text continues with various items (rocks, feathers, etc.) that have been used as money. It concludes with a look at today's money, including credit cards and digital money. See Betsy Maestro's *The Story of Money* (1993) for a more in-depth history of money.

## Natural Resources

**Energy Island:** How One Community Harnessed the Wind and Changed the World. By Allan Drummond. Illus. by the author. 2011. 36p. Farrar, \$16.99 (9780374321840). 333.9. Gr. 1–3.

An engaging narrative and winsome illustrations relate how the small Danish island Samsø gained global attention when it achieved “energy independence” by shifting completely from fossil fuels to renewable resources, primarily wind power captured on its shores. The leader of the movement? A grade-school teacher who started his visionary campaign with his students. Pair with William Kamkwamba's *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* (2012).

**The Mangrove Tree:** Planting Trees to Feed Families. By Susan L. Roth and Cindy Trumbore. Illus. by Susan L. Roth. 2011. 40p. Lee & Low, \$19.95 (9781600604591). 577.69. Gr. 3–7.

Using a picture-book format with a cumulative verse, nonfiction text, collage art, and appended color photos, this title describes how Japanese American scientist Dr. Gordon Soto started a project to plant mangrove seedlings in the drought-stricken African country of Eritrea. His efforts helped a village move from poverty and hunger to a self-sufficient community. Pair with Jeanette Winter's *Wangari's Trees of Peace* and Claire Nivola's *Planting the Trees of Kenya* (both 2008).

**One Well:** The Story of Water on Earth. By Rochelle Strauss. Illus. by Rosemary Woods. 2007. 32p. Kids Can, \$18.95 (9781553379546). 553.7. Gr. 3–5.

This picture book is rooted in the idea of “One Well,” the fact that all “water on Earth is connected.” Each double-page spread tackles one broad topic—for example, how water is recycled, or its distribution on earth—with boxed insets adding

information about various species in various places, from coral reefs to the Bering Glacier in Alaska. See also Beatrice Hollyer's *Our World of Water* (2009).

**This Tree Counts!** By Alison Formento. Illus. by Sarah Snow. 2010. 32p. Albert Whitman, \$16.99 (9780807578902); e-book, \$6.99 (9781453240922). PreS–Gr. 2.

As a class gathers to plant saplings near their school's lone tree, they first listen to the tree's story. Counting along the way, from 1 owl to 10 earthworms, the students learn the many ways that trees contribute to nature, including serving as a home for numerous animals, “washing” the air, and becoming things like pencils and guitars. Diane Muldrow's *We Planted a Tree* (2010) is an excellent pairing.

## Producers

**Feeding the Sheep.** By Leda Schubert. Illus. by Andrea U'Ren. 2010. 32p. Farrar, \$16.99 (9780374322960). PreS–Gr. 1.

Throughout the seasons, a little girl on a farm repeatedly asks her mother, “What are you doing?” in this cozy, beautifully illustrated story. The mother's step-by-step, rhythmic, and rhyming answers describe how she feeds the sheep; shears, washes, dries, and cards the wool; spins and dyes the yarn; and, finally, knits a sweater. Soon the girl is helping to feed the sheep, too.

**The Good Garden:** How One Family Went from Hunger to Having Enough Food. By Katie Smith Milway. Illus. by Sylvie Daigneault. 2010. 32p. Kids Can, \$18.95 (9781554534883). 813. Gr. 2–4.

In rural Honduras, María and her family are campesinos, farmers who eke out a subsistence living from small, depleted land plots. She learns sustainable techniques about terracing plots, composting, and growing complementary plants as well as selling crops directly at the market, rather than dealing with a predatory broker. Colored-pencil artwork incorporates Latin American culture.

**To Market, to Market.** By Nikki McClure. Illus. by the author. 2011. 40p. Abrams, \$17.95 (9780810997387). 381.41. K–Gr. 3.

Cut-paper illustrations depict a young boy's exploration of market day as he looks for items on his list (apples, honey, cheese, smoked salmon, napkins). Each item is featured over four pages, introducing the artisan or farmer responsible for it, the locale where it originated, and an explanation of its production. The final scene shows his family enjoying their fare.

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**Up We Grow!** *A Year in the Life of a Small, Local Farm.* By Deborah Hodge. Illus. by Brian Harris. 2010. 32p. Kids Can, \$16.95 (9781554535613). 630. Gr. 1–3.

This photo-essay shows a year on a communal organic farm. Moving chronologically through the seasons, it follows a small collective of farmers as they plant and nurture crops; tend to livestock; celebrate their harvest; and plan, during the cold winter months, for the next year. A final note fills in more detail about the key elements of sustainable agriculture.

## Savings

**The Money We'll Save.** By Brock Cole. Illus. by the author. 2011. 40p. Farrar, \$16.99 (9780374350116). Gr. 1–3.

In this folksy tale, set in a nineteenth-century New York City tenement, Ma sends Pa to the market for ingredients for a pancake supper. She reminds him not to buy anything else, as Christmas is coming, and the working-class family must save every penny. The hilarity sets in when Pa returns with a turkey they can fatten up. As amusing disasters ensue, their savings become questionable.

**Start Saving, Henry!** By Nancy Carlson. Illus. by the author. 2009. 32p. Viking, \$15.99 (9780670011476). K–Gr. 2.

Mouse Henry likes to spend his allowance on jawbreakers and giant pencils, but when he wants a more expensive Super Robot Dude, he learns that he has to save his money. He also discovers that it's not always easy to save when unexpected expenses come up. The childlike illustrations feature a running dollar graph to show Henry's ever-changing state of savings. Pair with Eileen Spinelli's *Miss Fox's Class Earns a Field Trip* (2010) for similar savings problems.

**Tía Isa Wants a Car.** By Meg Medina. Illus. by Claudia Muñoz. 2011. 32p. Candlewick, \$15.99 (9780763641566). PreS–Gr. 2.

A young Latina girl's *tía* Isa wants a car to escape the family's city tenement building and head to the seashore, which reminds Isa of the beach she left behind on her island home. By taking odd jobs around the neighborhood, the young girl helps speed up her aunt's slow savings process. Spanish phrases and warm pastel colors add to the coziness of the family story.

## Scarcity

**The Can Man.** By Laura E. Williams. Illus. by Craig Orback. 2010. 40p. Lee & Low, \$18.95 (9781600602665). K–Gr. 3.

Tim wants a new skateboard, but his multiracial family has too many bills. After watching a homeless man, known as the Can Man, collect cans in his urban neighborhood, Tim decides to do the same to raise money for his skateboard. But when he

realizes that he has really taken the Can Man's income, Tim gives his earnings to him. The boy is rewarded with a surprise gesture.

**Four Feet, Two Sandals.** By Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammed. Illus. by Doug Chayka. 2007. 28p. Eerdmans, \$17 (9780802852960). Gr. 1–3.

In a refugee camp in Peshawar, on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, Lina, 10, finds a beautiful sandal when the relief workers throw used clothing to the crowd. Then she spots Feroza wearing the matching sandal. At first, the two Muslim girls walk with one sandal each until they realize sharing them on different days is better. In the process, they develop a strong friendship.

**Lucky Beans.** By Becky Birtha. Illus. by Nicole Tadgell. 2010. 32p. Albert Whitman, \$16.99 (9780807547823). Gr. 1–3.

Since the Depression hit Marshall's African American family, his father lost his job, and his mother makes beans every night for dinner. Blending historical fiction, math, and humor and based on stories of the author's grandmother, this picture book describes how Marshall enters a contest to guess how many beans are in a jar and win his mother a new sewing machine.

**Rain School.** By James Rumford. Illus. by the author. 2010. 32p. Houghton, \$16.99 (9780547243078); e-book, \$16.99 (9780547505008). PreS–Gr. 2.

It's Thomas' first day of school in Chad, but when he arrives, there are no desks, classrooms, or even a school. Instead, the children begin their lessons by building the school out of mud bricks and a grass roof that they make themselves. After nine months of learning to read, the children conclude their lessons—and just in time, as the heavy rains wash away the school until next year.

## Trading or Bartering

**Estela's Swap.** By Alexis O'Neill. Illus. by Enrique O. Sanchez. 2002. 32p. Lee & Low, \$16.95 (9781584300441); paper, \$8.95 (9781600602535). K–Gr. 3.

Mexican American Estela joins her father at the swap meet, where she hopes to sell her beloved music box to earn money for folk-dancing lessons. In this realistic story, illustrated with bright acrylic paintings, a Santa Ana wind destroys a flower seller's stock, and the girl donates the music box to her. The seller makes it a trade instead by giving Estela a hand-sewn folk skirt.

**The Great Tulip Trade.** By Beth Wagner Brust. Illus. by Jenny Mattheson. 2005. 48p. Random, paper, \$3.99 (9780375825736). K–Gr. 2.

During the Dutch tulip mania of the 1600s, Anna's father gives her eight tulips for her eighth birthday in this Step

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into Reading early reader. Through a variety of trades with tulip-crazed citizens, the girl earns furniture, accessories, and animals for their home. A concluding author's note explains how people bought, sold, and traded tulips during this era as a means to get rich.

**One Fine Trade.** Retold by Bobbi Miller. Illus. by Will Hillenbrand. 2009. 32p. Holiday, \$16.95 (9780823418367). 398.2. PreS–Gr. 2.

In this amusing cumulative tale, based on an old folk song and illustrated with textured artwork, Georgianne, whose “wedding day is a-coming,” asks her fine peddler father, Georgy Piney Woods, to trade their rail-skinny horse for a silver dollar to buy a new dress. In a series of ridiculous and even scary trades, Georgy finally succeeds. And then Georgianne needs a veil!

## Wants and Needs

**Almost Zero.** By Nikki Grimes. Illus. by R. Gregory Christie. 2010. 128p. Putnam, \$10.99 (9780399251771). Gr. 2–4.

In this Dyamonde Daniel chapter book, African American Dyamonde, goaded by a classmate, tells her mother that she needs a cool pair of high-tops, and it's her mother's job to provide what she needs. The plan backfires when she finds herself with only one set of clothes: “what she needs.” The experience sensitizes her to others' needs when fire destroys a classmate's apartment.

**Betty Bunny Wants Everything.** By Michael B. Kaplan. Illus. by Stéphane Jorisch. 2012. 32p. Dial, \$16.99 (9780803734081). K–Gr. 3.

When Betty Bunny's mother allows her children to pick out one item each from the toy store, Betty Bunny, living up to the book's title, wants everything. After a tantrum causes her to be escorted out of the store empty-handed, the little bunny, who's always a “handful,” understands that she can't have everything she wants, and she learns how to make choices on a limited budget. David Shannon's *Too Many Toys* (2008) also tackles wanting too much.

**Do I Need It? Or Do I Want It?** Making Budget Choices. By Jennifer S. Larson. 2010. 32p. illus. Lerner, \$25.62 (9780761356646). 332.024. K–Gr. 2.

This nonfiction entry in the Exploring Economics series introduces young children to the difference between wants and needs and explains how individuals and families must choose between the two. It also shows how budgeting and saving money can help with these decisions. A culminating budgeting activity allows readers to learn more about the process. Gillia Olson's *Needs and Wants* (2009) offers an even simpler look at the topic.

**Those Shoes.** By Maribeth Boelts. Illus. by Noah Z. Jones. 2007. 40p. Candlewick, paper, \$6.99 (9780763642846). K–Gr. 3.

African American Jeremy wants the black high-tops with white stripes that all his classmates are sporting; his grandmother knows he needs new boots for winter. He wants these shoes so much that he settles for a too-small, thrift-store pair until he realizes another boy needs them even more. A snow-fall rewards Jeremy with his decision and a chance to wear his new boots. A similar shoe dilemma occurs in Elise Primavera's *Louise the Big Cheese and the La-Di-Da Shoes* (2010).

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## Common Core Connections: Elementary Economics

The following are suggestions for implementing the Common Core State Standards with recommended books about elementary economic concepts. You can find more information about the standards at [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org).

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**In the Classroom:** After reading and discussing Chris Butterworth's *How Did That Get in My Lunchbox?*, ask the class to come up with a typical breakfast or dinner. Then list the natural, capital, and human resources used to make the meal.

### Common Core Connections

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.2.** Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.
  - **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.4.** Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area.
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**In the Classroom:** Have students keep a log of how much milk, bread, soda, water, and clothing they consume or use in a week. They can multiply that number to determine their estimated consumption in a year or average lifetime, using *Human Footprint*, by Ellen Kirk, as a model.

### Common Core Connections

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2.** Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
  - **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.3.** Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.
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**In the Classroom:** After reading Jennifer S. Larson's *Do I Need It? Or Do I Want It?*, students can list their personal needs and wants and depict the results in a Venn diagram that shows commonalities among the class members.

### Common Core Connections

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.6.** Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.
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**In the Classroom:** After reading Rose Lewis' *Orange Peel's Pocket*, students can follow the lead character's actions and ask adult family members and neighbors what goods or services they provide. Have the students present their findings in lists, classroom charts, or reports, followed by class discussion.

### Common Core Connections

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.1.** Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
  - **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.6.** Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.
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**In the Classroom:** Teachers can create classroom "money" for students to earn through good behavior and spend on token prizes or rewards. After discussing *Start Saving, Henry!*, by Nancy Carlson, students can track their savings and earnings in a written or pictorial log.

### Common Core Connections

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.7.** Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.
  - **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.3.** Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
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**In the Classroom:** After reading and discussing Alison Formento's *This Tree Counts*, students can go on an exploratory walk around their school or neighborhood to observe and document the natural resources they encounter, making connections to details in Formento's title.

### Common Core Connections

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.4.** Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.9.** Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.7.** Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.