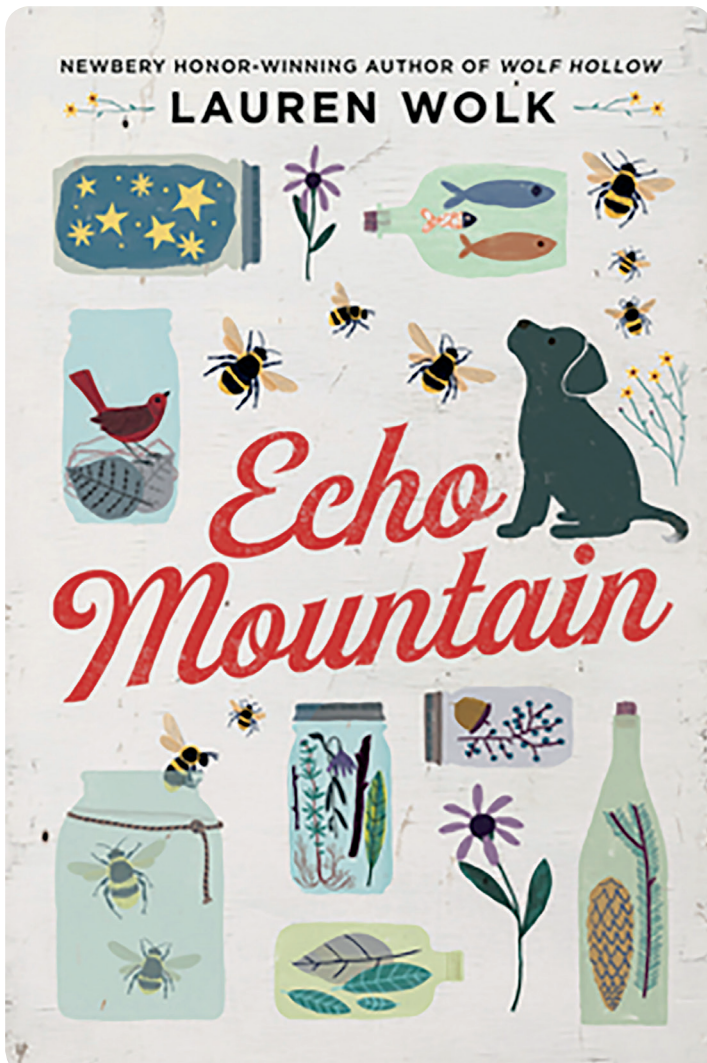


Getting Started:

BEFORE reading the book!

Use the Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS) questions below to engage and orient readers and to help guide a group discussion. Begin by taking a quiet moment to look closely at the book jacket allowing time for observation and contemplation of the images.

(IRW can provide a facilitated discussion if you'd like.
Please contact [ALISON JOHNSON](mailto:ALISON.JOHNSON) via email or at: 207-460-6828.)



- *What is going on in this picture?*
- *What do you see that makes you say that? (provide evidence)*
- *What more can we find? (go deeper)*

If virtual, ask your students to summarize, (or you paraphrase if synchronous), their ideas in short notes in a Google Doc or other format (Padlet, etc.) Build on the group ideas and communal knowledge during your discussion.

What words and phrases are used by students?

What details are noticed to convey ideas?

ELA Standards:

- Speaking & Listening – Comprehension & Collaboration (5th-8th)
- Language – Conventions of Standard English (5th-8th)
- Writing – Text Types & Purposes (5th)

*For more information on VTS go to – WWW.VTSHOME.ORG.

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HUNGRY FOR MORE?

Try reading some of Lauren's other work and complete an **author study**. An author study is an opportunity to delve deeply into an author's life and work, explore themes, characters, and writing style

Use these prompts to get you started:

- What are Lauren's themes? (Ideas that recur throughout the story)
- How does she develop her characters?
- From what you know about the author, can you find any connections to her life?
- Do you identify with any of his characters? Why? Why not?

ELA Standards:

- Reading Literature: Key Ideas & Details (5th-8th),
- Craft & Structure (5th-8th)
- Writing: Research to Build & Present Knowledge (5th-8th)

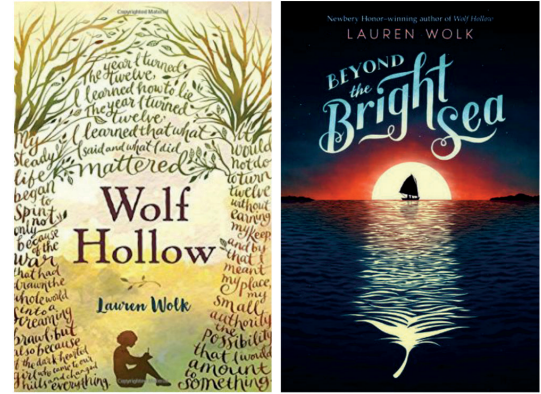
Lauren Wolk's educator guide for *Echo Mountain* is full of questions and activities including a thorough mapping of The Hero's Journey and how ordinary characters like Ellie embark on the classic journey of heroism.

[HTTPS://STORAGE.GOOGLEAPIS.COM](https://storage.googleapis.com)

HOST A STUDENT LED BOOK DISCUSSION!

Action: Create small groups and pick students to fill the following roles.

- **Discussion Director:** Creates or poses questions for discussion and keeps conversation moving. (Qualities for the job: Detail oriented, natural leader, welcoming attitude)
- **Literary Luminary:** Prompts read alouds and highlights vivid descriptions and language used. (Qualities for the job: Loves reading and is comfortable reading aloud, observant, wants to share knowledge)
- **Word Finder:** Clarifies word meanings and pronunciations. (qualities for the job: Good vocabulary, speaks clearly, fascinated by word choice)
- **Group Reporter:** Monitors discussion to help ensure equal participation. Maintains schedule and takes notes. (Qualities for the job: Time management skills, fair and balanced approach, not afraid to jump in)
- **Illustrator(s):** Draw pictures to document the experience. (Everyone can fill this role. Be sure to allow a few minutes each time for quick sketching.)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES TO GET YOU STARTED:

1. In chapter 4 the author talks about duality and the “two-ness” of things. On pages 16 & 17 Ellie tries to explain what this means to her. She considers herself a woods-girl that can do what needs to be done but also, an echo-girl that feels the burden of this doing. Do you ever feel like there are two sides of yourself being stretched in different directions? What words would you use to describe your “two-ness”? Does one side ever take over?
2. In chapter 6 (p.24), Ellie talks about feeling three kinds of light and warmth on the morning of Quiet’s birth. What do you hear in the writing that helps you explain what she means by the three examples; “spring itself, Quiet, and from the flame growing inside me”
3. The original title for this book was going to be “No more Lullabies” but was changed to “Echo Mountain”. Which do you prefer and why? What would you name this book?
4. Interview elders who may have lived through hard times and compare to your experience with the challenges living through a modern-day pandemic. See if anyone remembers stories from the depression era or any other time of hardship. Write a news article or comic strip about your findings. What questions would you ask them? In your group come up with a list of questions you will all use and then compare the responses you receive.

ELA Standards: Reading Literature:

- Key Ideas & Details (5th-8th)
- Craft & Structure (5th-8th)
- Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration (5th-8th)
- Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas (5th-8th)
- Language: Conventions of Standard English (5th-8th)
- Writing: Text Types & Purposes (5th-8th)
- Research to Build & Present Knowledge

*note you will find more discussion ideas below under Let’s Talk & Investigate

LET’S TALK & INVESTIGATE SOME KEY IDEAS & DETAILS:

Read the first chapter carefully and consider the descriptions used that help us learn about the characters in this short introduction. Talk it over with a classmate. What do we learn about the narrator, Ellie, her mother, sister and brother?

Action: Choose a character from the story to create a character trait study using one of the two ideas below. Share and compare.

1. Draw an outline of your character or something that represents him/her (a piggy bank, a barn, etc). Find images that that help tell about the character’s strengths or weaknesses and

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create a collage inside the outline. You can also use [HTTPS://WORDART.COM](https://wordart.com) to create an image filled with descriptive words like the sample to the left. Be resourceful: online, magazines, drawings, etc. What words could you put in to help describe your character? (*image courtesy of Sipayak School*)

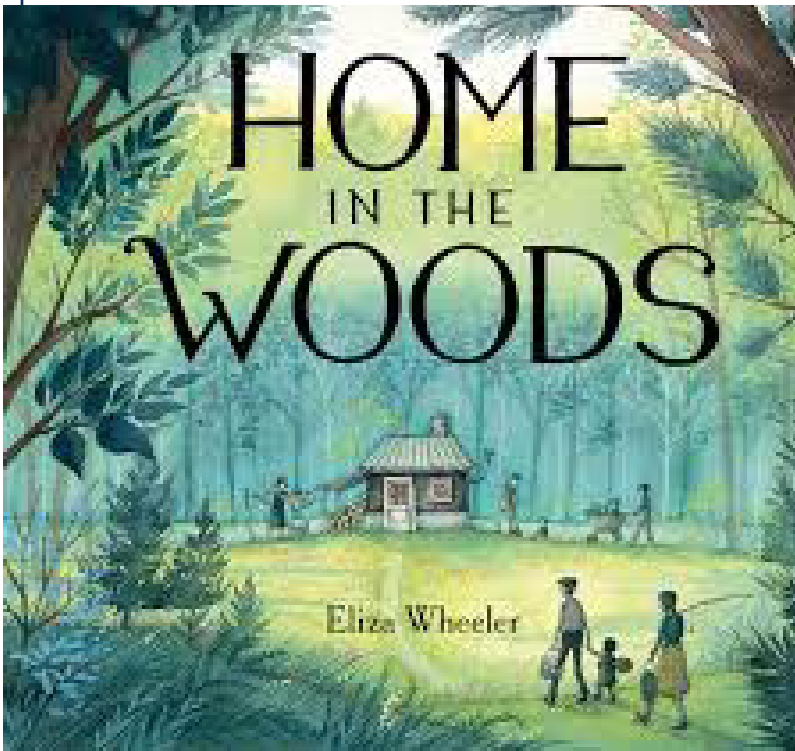
2. Create a fake social media profile for one of the characters in the book. Make your own template and include information from the questions below:



- What image would your character choose as their profile picture?
- What are their favorite activities?
- Who would they be friends with?
- Who or what organization might they follow?
- What pictures or stories from their life would they want to share?

ELA Standards:

- Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details (5th-8th)
- Craft and Structure (5th-8th)
- Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing (5th-8th)
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge (5th-8th)
- Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration



LET'S CONNECT AND CREATE:

1. Look at the cover of the beautiful picture book *Home in the Woods* by Eliza Wheeler. Use your experience with Visual Thinking Strategies in looking at the cover of *Echo Mountain* and apply the same technique.

- What is going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that? (provide evidence)
- What more can we find?

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2. The end papers of *Home in the Woods* have a map of the woods and neighbor's homes. Think about the details of the setting for *Echo Mountain* and draw a map of Ellie's world and homestead. Use pencil to start, but then add black pen to add definition to your lines and colored pencil or other color to liven up your artwork. Compare with your classmates. Can you create a gallery for viewing either on a classroom wall or in a virtual space?

3. Design a new book cover for *Echo Mountain* dress up or use props and photograph your creation. Check out this short video on recreating L.L. Bean covers from the 1930's.

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=ESR82A1BZHE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESR82A1BZHE)

4. *Home in the Woods* is about the depression era just like *Echo Mountain*. Watch this video about the author and illustrator's process: [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=GMNC0EVTUU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMNC0EVTUU)

- *What comparisons can you make between the two stories?*
- *The artist talks about capturing the "feeling" and "movement" of the story. When you look at her images, what examples of her artwork can you find where she has conveyed feeling or movement?*

ELA Standards:

- Speaking & Listening – Comprehension and Collaboration
- Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas (5th-8th)
- Language – Conventions of Standard English (5th-8th)
- Art Connections: Processes & Conceptualization of Artistic Ideas

NATURE AND SCIENCE CONNECTIONS:



1. Make an herbarium of plants mentioned in the book or others you find near your home. Press, dry and glue into a notebook and label with; location found, common name, Latin name, date found.

2. Pressing botanicals and making an herbarium: Flower and herb presses can be made from things around your home. The materials get layered like a sandwich.

3. **To Make Press;** Use board, cardboard, layers of paper (at least 2), more cardboard, keep doing these layers until you have enough, then top with another piece of wood (shingles work). You can secure this with rubber bands or a belt with a buckle or a strap with Velcro.

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4. Another easier way to press is with a book, place flowers and other botanicals between sheets of paper in the pages of the book. Make sure you have permission as sometimes marking on the paper can occur.

Four styles of presses Book, Velcro strap, screws, rubber band

5. Pick flowers, grasses, leaves, ferns, even some types of mosses to press. Make sure they are dry. You may need to let them sit inside for a while if they are damp or wet. Pick around noon on a sunny day if possible.

6. Place in press between your cardboard and paper layers, upside down. Make sure you push petals and leaves apart gently to get them where you want them and can see the herbs or flowers. Lay the rest of your "sandwich" pages on top and another piece of cardboard. Keep layering until your press is full.

7. Keep the same type of plants together. Do not place different thicknesses on the same page. You can do this in winter with dried grasses and weeds, fir, pine or cedar or even some types of moss. (see below) Give it a try!

8. Use field guides to find out the names, common and Latin and label as you go so you don't forget. You should also add the date of picking. If you have a cell phone you can also use the App Picture This to help identify plants.

ELA Standards:

- Science Connections: Engineering & Design



READ MORE

