Long ago, the magpies’ nests were the envy of all other birds. To help the other birds, Maggie Magpie patiently explained how to build a nest. But some birds were impatient and flew off without listening to all the directions, which is why, to this day, birds’ nests come in all different shapes and sizes. This clever retelling of an old English folk tale teaches the importance of careful listening.

It’s so much more than a picture book...this book is specifically designed to be both a fun-to-read story and a launch pad for discussions and learning. Whether read at home or in a classroom, we encourage adults to do the activities with the young children in their lives. Free online resources and support at www.ArbordalePublishing.com include:

- For Creative Minds as seen in the book (in English & Spanish):
  - Bird Fun Facts
  - Bird Math
  - Is it Injured?
- A Match the Nest Activity for:
  - Maggie
  - Killdeer
  - Screech-owl
  - Brewer’s Blackbird
  - Whip-poor-will
  - Northern Oriole
- Teaching Activities:
  - Reading Questions
  - Language Arts
  - Science
  - Interactive Quizzes: Reading Comprehension, For Creative Minds, and Math Word Problems
  - English and Spanish Audiobooks
  - Related Websites
  - Aligned to State Standards (searchable database)
  - Accelerated Reader and Reading Counts! Quizzes
  - Lexile and Fountas & Pinnell Reading Levels
- eBooks with Auto-Flip, Auto-Read, and selectable English and Spanish text and audio available for purchase online.

Thanks to Anne Hobbs, Dr. Miyoko Chu, and Katherine Smith of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology for verifying the accuracy of the information in this book.
Long ago, when the world was young, only the magpie knew how to build a nest. Her nest was large and so well built that her babies were kept safe.
All the other birds laid their eggs here and there—on the ground, in a hollow log, or in a tree crotch. Their eggs were often stolen or lost, and the baby birds that did hatch were not safe from their enemies.

Poor baby birds! This made the mother birds very sad.
One day a mother bird said to her friend, “Let’s ask Maggie Magpie to show us how to build a nest.” So off they went to the magpie and said, “We know how clever you are and that you have a strong nest to hold your eggs and protect your babies. We want to learn how to build a nest just like yours. Then our eggs and chicks will be safe too. Won’t you please teach us?”

Maggie puffed up her feathers. “I’ll be glad to.” At once she flew about, busily collecting materials. Twittering and chirping, the other birds arranged themselves on the ground so they could see and hear.
Maggie perched herself on a grassy mound and carefully smoothed the feathers in her beautiful long tail. She waited until the birds stopped their chattering.

“First of all,” she began, “you must find a hollow space that is the right size.”

“A hollow space—that’s easy!” exclaimed the killdeer, lifting its head to show its sparkling black-and-white collar. Away it went, and the killdeer still lays its eggs in a hollow space on the ground.
Bird Fun Facts

Scientists sort animals into different classes. All the animals in this book are birds. While all birds have feathers, not all birds can fly (penguins do not fly). Birds lay eggs, breathe air, and are warm blooded.

Most birds build a nest that is hidden (camouflaged) or is hard for predators to reach. A nest may be made out of different things; you might even find dog hair or ribbons woven into nests.

Quite often male birds have bright feathers or coloring to attract a mate. It is usually the female who builds a nest, but sometimes the male or both male and female will build the nest together. Birds don't really need to learn how to build their nests; they are born knowing how (instinct).

For Creative Minds educational section may be photocopied or printed from our website by the owner of this book for educational, non-commercial uses. Cross-curricular teaching activities, interactive quizzes, and more are available online. Go to www.ArbordalePublishing.com and click on the book’s cover to explore all the links.

Bird Math

Robins lay two broods of three to six eggs.

Screech Owls have only one brood a year but they lay between two and seven eggs, depending on the type of screech owl.

Killdeers have one or two broods a year with three to five eggs in each brood.

Which bird might lay the most eggs in a year? How many eggs?
Which bird might lay the fewest eggs in a year? How many eggs?
Why do you think birds have so many babies at a time?

Is it Injured?

If you see a fledgling on the ground, that does not mean it is injured or abandoned. It might just be learning how to fly or to find its own food. If it has no visible injury, you should keep pets away and leave it alone. Observe the bird from inside or far away so that the parent birds can reach it.

You should get help for the bird only if you can see a visible injury, you know for sure that the parents are dead, or the bird has been alone for over eight hours and it is now dark. It is illegal to care for migratory birds and most songbirds and you need to get the bird to an avian (bird) vet or a bird rehabilitator. Check the phone book or internet to find one in your area. Don't try to feed the bird.

male oriole
female oriole
Match the Nest Activity
Read the descriptions and match the nests to the correct birds.

a. Magpie
The magpie builds a large bulky bowl of mud and grass surrounded by a latticework of sticks that point in all directions. The nest, which has a side entrance, is located high in trees.

1.

b. Baltimore Oriole
The oriole carefully weaves a deep hanging pouch of plant fibers, hair, yarn, or string, and attaches it to a tree branch. This pouch, or sack, has a top opening. The nest is lined with hair, wool, or fine grasses. The female usually builds the nest while her mate stays nearby and sings. It can take from five to eight or more days to build this intricate nest.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

f. Whip-poor-will
This bird makes no nest; it lays its eggs on the ground on dead leaves.

6.  g. Meadowlark
The female does all the work on the nest. First, she finds a depression in the ground that pleases her. She forms the base of the nest, lining it with coarse dry grasses and an inner lining of fine grasses. Then she builds a dome-shaped roof of grasses which she weaves into nearby plants.

8.  i. Robin
The robin builds her nest early in the spring and may place it in an evergreen shrub or tree fork. Her nest is a deep cup, which she shapes by sitting in it and pressing her breast against the edges. The nest is made of grass, weed stalks, and strips of cloth or string worked into soft mud. It is lined with fine grass.

j. Screech-owl
The female lays her eggs in an natural opening or a hole in a tree.

l. Killdeer
The male scrapes several hollows in an open stretch of ground, and the female chooses one of them. She adds a few pebbles and bits of grass or woodchips to line the depression.

k. Mourning Dove
This bird often finds a deserted nest, and the male brings sticks to the female to place in the nest. The female builds a careless platform of sticks with little, if any, lining of grass or weeds. The nest is so loosely made that it often falls apart in a storm.

This bird makes a sloppy nest. The male starts to build the nest in a hole in a tree or other opening, but the female often removes what he has done and adds her own materials. She fills the hole with grass, twigs, or dry leaves.

This bird makes a loose nest of weeds and grasses, with some help from her mate in the early stages. Sometimes she reinforces the nest with mud on the inside and lines it with grass or feathers.

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The magpie builds a large bulky bowl of mud and grass surrounded by a latticework of sticks that point in all directions. The nest, which has a side entrance, is located high in trees.

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To my mother: who first told me stories—DLM
For my Boy Scout nephew, Nick, and in memory of my dad, James Neidigh, for his love of carving birds—SN
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