

# CURRICULUM GUIDE



## WHEN YOU BREATHE

By DIANA FARID  
Illustrated by BILLY RENKL

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU BREATHE?

In this beautiful book, breath—the very air, stardust, the grand atoms of the universe—blossoms in the

upside-down tree in your rising chest, animating and enlivening you. And when you breathe out, you send your song out into the world.

Author Diana Farid is a physician and a poet, and her lyrical picture book about the marvel of breathing marries both passions.

A NCTE 2021 NOTABLE POETRY BOOKS SELECTION

A CALIFORNIA READING ASSOCIATION 2021 EUREKA! GOLD AWARD WINNER FOR CHILDREN'S NONFICTION

*"Science and art combine in an appealing presentation demonstrating how breathing nourishes our bodies as part of the larger ecosystem."*

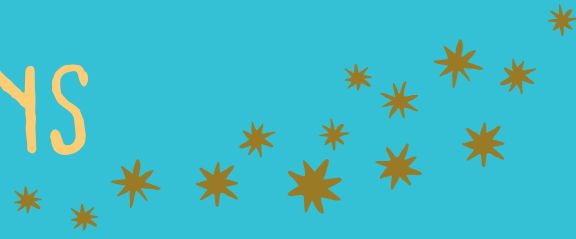
—BOOKLIST

[dianafarid.com](http://dianafarid.com) [cameronbooks.com](http://cameronbooks.com)

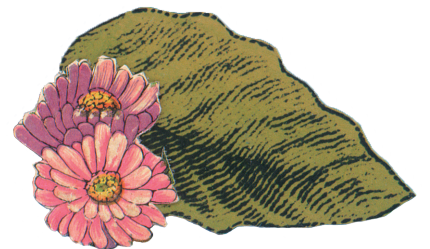
  
cameron kids

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) addressed by the discussion questions and activities in this guide are noted throughout. For more information on the Common Core, visit [corestandards.org](http://corestandards.org).

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- ★ Though we cannot see air, we see how air causes some things to move. How does the author describe how air can be seen at the beginning of the story? Look out the window of your classroom. What can you observe about how the air moves things?  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1
- ★ Look carefully at the illustration on the page with the text, “And then / inside / air becomes / breath.” How do you think the girl is feeling as she stands under the tree? What picture clues lead you to describe the girl’s feelings?  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7
- ★ What is the “upside-down tree” that breath fills inside your chest?
- ★ Look at the illustration of the girl blowing a dandelion. Describe what happens first, second, and last according to the three-panel illustration.  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7
- ★ On the page before the dandelion blowing, the girl is depicted differently. Why do you think that the illustrator chose to change her in this image?  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7
- ★ How does the illustrator depict the air that the girl inhales and exhales in the story’s illustrations? Why do you think he chose to illustrate breath in this way?  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7
- ★ What feeling do you think the author hopes to have the reader experience when reading *When You Breathe*? Which words or phrases does the author use to create this feeling?  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.4
- ★ Find your favorite page in *When You Breathe*. Did you choose your favorite page because of the words, the illustration, or both? Share your favorite page with a partner, and give reasons for your choice.



The discussion questions and activities in this guide were created by Leigh Courtney, PhD. She teaches in the Global Education program at a public elementary school in San Diego, California. She holds both masters’ and doctoral degrees in education, with an emphasis on curriculum and instruction.

# ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

## BODY POETRY

In *When You Breathe*, the author compares lungs to an upside-down tree. What could you compare your brain to? Your heart? Choose one body part, and write a comparative poem about it.

## MINDFUL BREATHING

This book helps us notice our breathing. Try some mindfulness exercises through different breathing techniques.

**HUMMING BREATH:** Place one hand on your abdomen over your belly button. Place the other hand in the middle of your chest. Take a deep breath and hum while breathing out. Feel the vibration of the sound as you hum.

**SMELL FLOWERS/BLOW DANDELIONS:** Grasp your hands together as if you were holding a bouquet of flowers. Take a deep breath in as if you were smelling the scent of the flowers. Exhale and blow out air as if you were blowing the seeds off a dandelion.

**FIVE-FINGER BREATHING:** Hold your hand in front of you with your fingers spread apart. With the index finger from your other hand, trace along the edge of the extended hand starting at the base of the thumb. Inhale as you trace upward, and exhale as your finger traces down between fingers.

How does it make you feel when you pay attention to your breath?

## VERB HUNT

The author of *When You Breathe* uses vivid verbs to describe the process of breathing. Work as a class to generate a list of the vivid verbs used in the story. Write each verb on a slip of paper, and place the papers in a hat or bag. Have classmates take turns drawing paper slips from the hat or bag to act out the verbs for the class. See if your classmates can identify the vivid verbs.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.1.5.D

## DANDELION ART

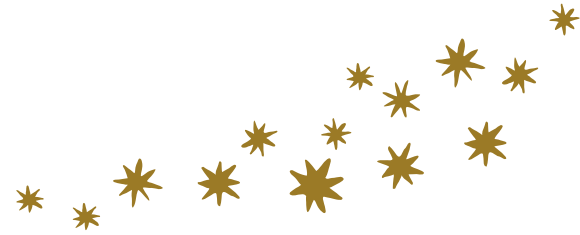
The girl in the story is depicted blowing the seeds from a dandelion. Create your own dandelion art by painting three green stems that stretch from the base of a blue or black paper to halfway up the paper. Next, use a dish brush or fingertips dipped in white paint to dab the dandelion seeds in a circle above the top of each stem. Write three wishes on a slip of paper that you might make if you were to blow the seeds from these three dandelions. Attach your wishes to your dandelion art.

## NATURE COLLAGE - LUNGS

Download a template at <https://dianafarid.com/educator-resources>, then watch author Diana Farid explain how to make a beautiful collage of our lungs using branches, flowers, leaves, and other natural objects at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_9yE8UXZqV4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9yE8UXZqV4).

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

# BREATHING WORDS



Use the glossary at the end of *When You Breathe* to help you match the following words with their definitions. Draw a line from each word to its definition. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.4.E**

TRACHEA

To take in breath. We do this about 12 to 20 times a minute.

EXHALE

Small pockets deep in the lungs where atoms like oxygen move across thin walls and into the blood.

INHALE

Tubes that branch off the trachea and carry air deeper into the lungs.

BRONCHI

A hollow muscle in the middle of the chest that pumps blood.

HEART

The air we breathe goes here. We have two: a right one and a left one.

LUNGS

To breathe air out through the nose and mouth. Our bodies do this about 12 to 20 times a minute.

ALVEOLI

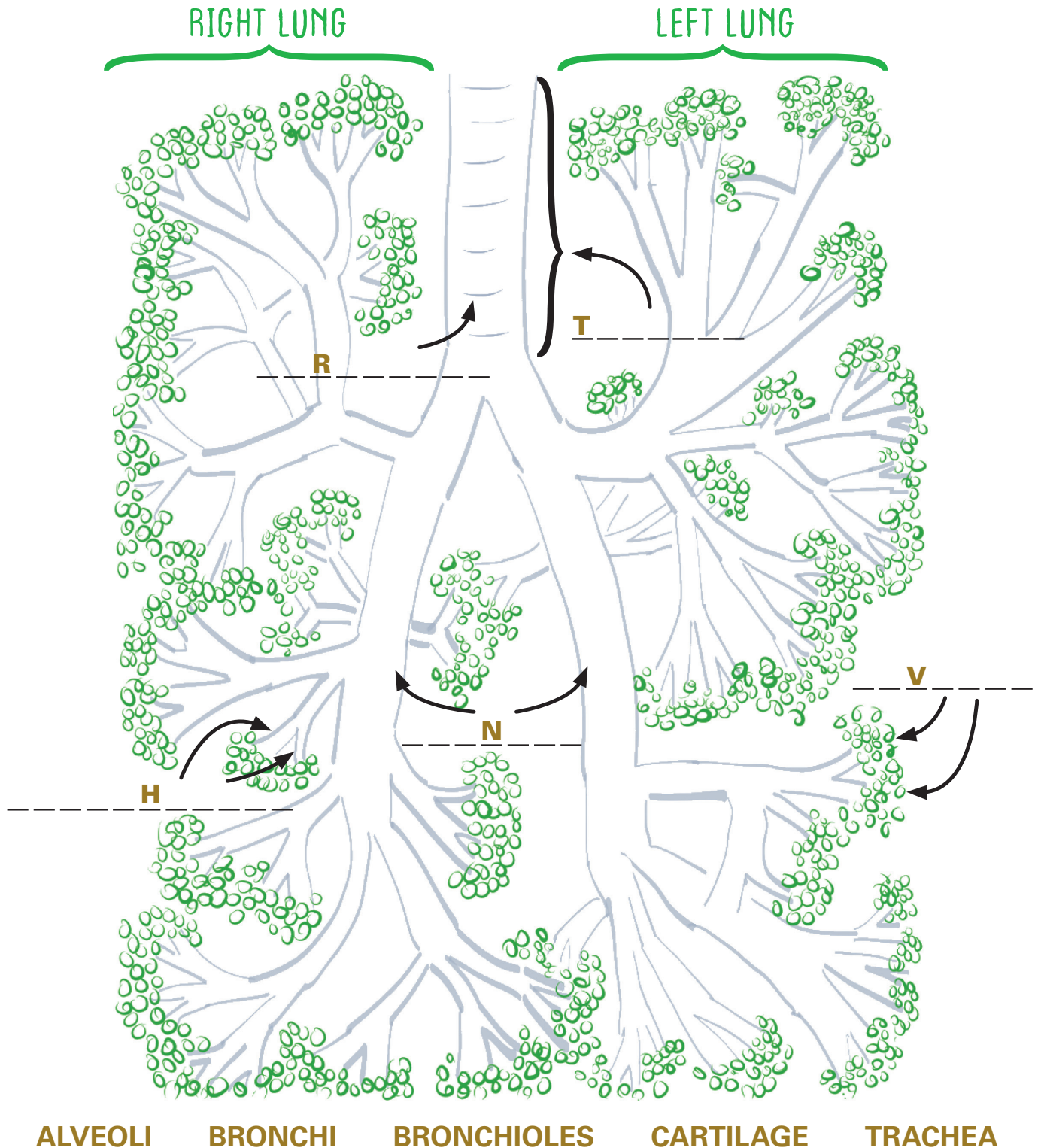
A tube that carries air from the nose and mouth down to the lungs.



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

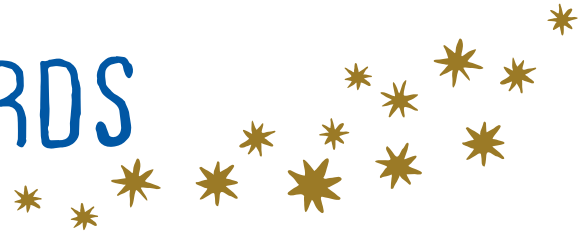
# LABELING THE LUNGS

Can you correctly label the parts of the lungs with terms listed below? Look at the Breathing Words glossary at the end of *When You Breathe* for definitions.



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

# PICKING PERFECT WORDS

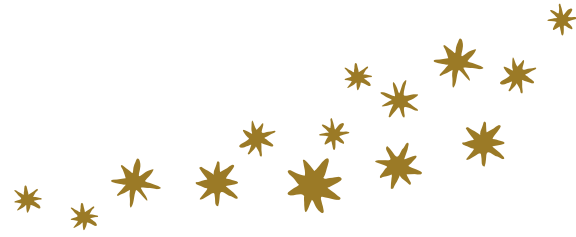


With just a handful of words on each page, the author of *When You Breathe* helps paint beautiful images for the reader. Take a closer look at the words in the story, and choose words from the text to sort into the categories in the chart. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.5.A; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.1.5.A; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.5.A**

WORDS THAT ARE THINGS (NOUNS)	WORDS THAT DESCRIBE (ADJECTIVES)	WORDS THAT SHOW ACTION (VERBS)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

# JUMP ROPE CHANTS



Nothing can make you breathe harder than an intense round of jumping rope with friends. With a partner, pick a section from *When You Breathe* to turn into a jump rope chant. Write the original words from the story in the first section. In the second section, rewrite the text as a chant. Think of which words in your chant you might repeat and which words you might emphasize. Grab some jump ropes, and gather some friends to head to the playground to try out each other's jump rope chants! [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.2.A](#)

## ORIGINAL TEXT

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## TEXT REWRITTEN AS A JUMP ROPE CHANT

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