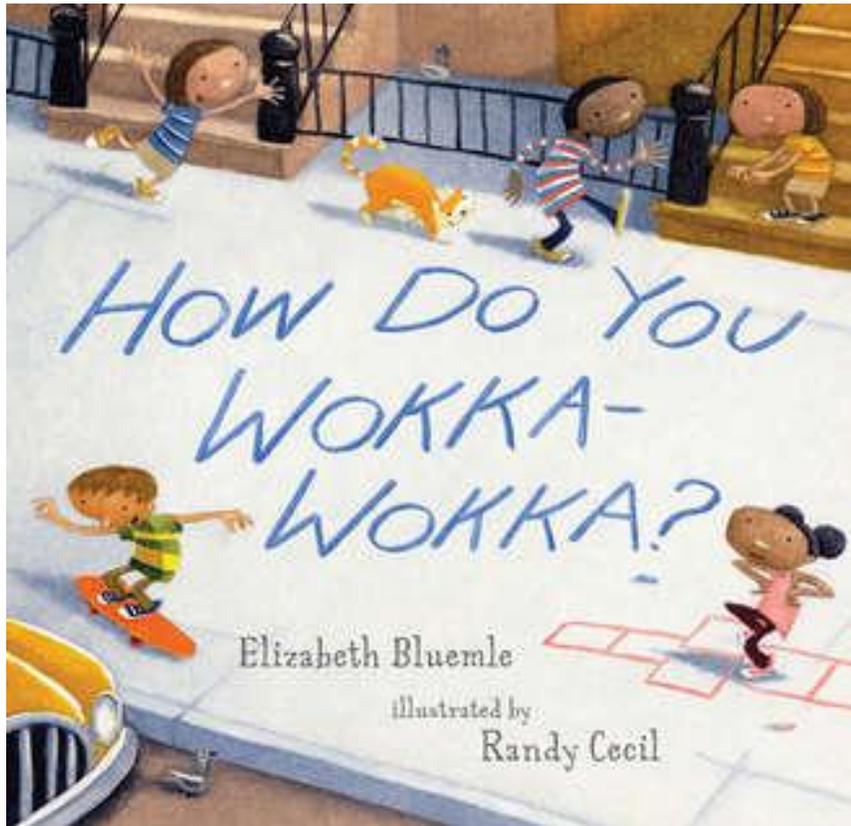


*A Teacher's Guide to*  
**How Do You Wokka-Wokka?**

*Written by Elizabeth Bluemle*

*Illustrated by Randy Cecil*



*HOW DO YOU WOKKA-WOKKA? © 2009 by Elizabeth Bluemle,  
Art by Randy Cecil, published by Candlewick Press*

***Praise for WOKKA-WOKKA***

“This bouncy book is a joy as a read-aloud whether in a group or one-on-one...kids and adults won’t be able to resist making their own nonsense rhymes and dances as they “wokka-wokka” through the book. ~ School Library Journal, starred review ★

“Peppy prose incorporates wordplay, repetition, and bouncy sounds... An exuberant read-aloud that will get kids moving.”~Booklist Review

Infectious rhyme. ..with unflappable enthusiasm, art and text underscore the message that “Nobody wokka/ in the same wokka way.” ~Publisher’s Weekly

## Story Summary

In this raucous collection of words and sounds, a boy gets his neighbors up and moving in their own wokka way.

### About the Author

Elizabeth Bluemle has worked as a Hollywood script reader, a small press editor, a book packaging creative director, an elementary school assistant teacher, and a Manhattan school librarian. She holds a master's degree in education from the Bank Street College of Education and an MFA in creative writing from Vermont College.

About this book, she says, "When my nephew, Will, was two, he started asking us, 'How do you wokka-wokka?' He knew what he meant, but we didn't, so we answered him with funny dance moves. The way he brought people of every generation joyfully together with one simple, silly question grew into this book."

Ms. Bluemle is the author of *Dogs on the Bed*, illustrated by Anne Wilsdorf, and *My Father the Dog*, illustrated by Randy Cecil. She lives in Vermont where she co-owns the Flying Pig Bookstore in Shelburne.



### About the Illustrator



When Randy Cecil's mother used to read him stories, he'd linger on each page to study the illustrations. The "the kid who could draw" eventually graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design, began work as a freelance children's book designer, and got his first book deal soon afterwards.

In addition to *How Do You Wokka Wokka?* and *My Father the Dog* by Elizabeth Bluemle, his illustration credits include *We've All Got Bellybuttons!* by David Martin; *Looking for a Moose* by Phyllis Root; and *One is a Snail, Ten is a Crab*, by April Pulley Sayre and Jeff Sayre. He is the author-illustrator of *Gator and Duck*, which *School Library Journal* called, "a beautifully realized friendship story." He lives in Houston, Texas. Learn more about Randy's work at <http://www.randycecil.com>.

## Pre-Reading

### Warm-Up

1. Ask students how they usually feel when they wake up in the morning. What do they do (yawn, stretch, smile, frown, hop out of bed, retreat under the covers)? What do they say (“Good morning!” or “Please, Mom, 5 more minutes!”)? Ask them to imagine waking up on a sunny Saturday morning and looking out their window. What is the first thing they would do?



Give students a piece of paper and have them pretend it is a window. Ask them to draw self-portraits as they might look when they first wake up. Once they have finished, add paper shutters or curtains to hide their drawings. As they share their wake-up routines, they can open the shutters/curtains to reveal themselves to the class.

2. Have students take turns demonstrating how they walk when they're happy, sad, feeling silly, in a hurry, etc. Ask how their gaits change with their emotions.

- *activating prior knowledge*

### Take a Book Wokka-Wokka

1. Show the front and back covers, including the author's and illustrator's names. What is happening in the cover illustration?
2. Read the title and ask students what *wokka-wokka* might mean. Make a list of their responses. Ask if *wokka-wokka* is a real word or an invented one. Can they think of other stories with invented words? (Some examples include *Jamberry* by Bruce Degan and books by Dr. Seuss.)
3. Show the illustrations in the book. Pause on each page to ask what is happening in each scene. See if students can follow the main character (the boy on the first page) throughout the book.

- *predicting, identifying key parts of a book, previewing text*
- *analyzing the impact of authors' decisions regarding word choice and content*
- *identifying key parts of a book: front and back, print, illustrations*

### *Vocabulary Boost*

Below are some words and phrases that might be new to your students.

Note: Some words may be wearing a rhyming disguise!

block	flamingos	flock	mariachi	maracas
shimmy	dock	get a move-on	block party	cakewalk

The first time you read the story aloud, go all the way through without stopping so that children can hear the rhythm and rhyme. When you reread, help students use context clues to decipher new words. Clues can be found on the pages where characters walk like a flamingo, pretend to shake a set of maracas, move their arms like a clock, and flop like a fish.

For example, when the text says:

*I wokka-wokka like flamingos in a flocka—  
croakie-yocka, leggy-longy, pinky-hoppa-hoppa*

Make a chart like the following example to help children follow the clues.

<b>Target Word:</b>	<b>Context Clues:</b>
flamingo	lives in a flock, long legs, pink

- *identifying meaning of unfamiliar words by using context clues, asking questions during read-alouds, and activating prior knowledge*

## Discussion Questions

1. What does the boy do when he wakes up? (*knowledge*)
2. What happens in the neighborhood when everyone shows how they wokka-wokka? (*comprehension*)
3. How do *you* wokka-wokka? Show your friends and teachers! (*application*)
4. When the boy says, "Everybody wokka in his own wokka way," what does he mean? What are some other things that people do in their own way? (*analysis*)
5. How would you organize your own block party? Illustrate or write about the games, guests, music and food you would have at your neighborhood bash. (*synthesis*)
6. Why do you think the author invented so many words in this story? Do the words make the story more fun to read? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

## Student Activities

### *An Invitation to Wokka*

Draw students' attention to the first child in the story who asks "How do you wokka-wokka?" A second child answers, then they both go and ask a third child, and so on.

Have the class stand in a line. Ask the first child, "How do you wokka wokka?" The child shows his wokka, then you and the child ask the question to another child. Continue this way as those who have taken a turn all ask the next child to wokka-wokka. At the very end, the whole group says, "How do *we* wokka-wokka?" and everyone breaks into their own wokka style!

Video Variation: Have your students sit together as if they were gathered for a class photo, with one student holding the book *How Do You Wokka Wokka?*



Capture the cover image in your opening video shot, then pan out to include the whole class. On your cue, have the group say, "How do *you* wokka-wokka?" Cut! Now film snippets of how people throughout the school wokka-wokka. In man-on-the-street interview style, film one child asking the question to another, and film the wokka-wokka display. Now have the one who just wokka-ed ask the next person. Once everyone in the class has been filmed, move on to teachers, parents, custodians and the principal!

- *making effective use of such devices as pace, volume, stress, enunciation, and pronunciation.*
- *using dance to communicate*

## Mural

Turn to the illustration of the street party. Discuss the setting and activities displayed on these pages. On butcher paper, help students plan and illustrate a block party mural including homes, businesses, and other buildings from their own neighborhoods.

Now invite students to illustrate themselves as they “wokka in their own wokka way”. They can cut out their completed self-wokka portraits and add them to the block party mural.



Digital Variation: Take individual photos of kids in their wokka poses. Print them and have the kids cut them out and add them to the mural.



Life-Size Variation: Have students work in partners. One child freezes in a wokka position against a large sheet of paper while the partner traces the pose onto the paper. The child can then draw and color his face, hair and clothing. Cut out and attach to the wall. Have children explain their own wokkas in speech bubbles and attach them near their cut-outs.

Example:

“I wokka-wokka like some bunnies hoppa-hoppa!”

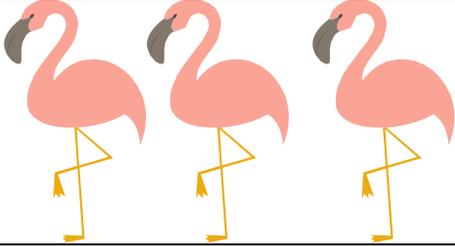
- *identifying location and patterns of local areas (e.g., neighborhoods and town)*
- *making inferences about events, characters, and setting*
- *using clear sentences and grade-appropriate mechanics so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader*
- *demonstrating competency in beginning dance skills*
- *using the elements and principles of two-dimensional design in the visual arts, including line, color and shape*

## *Everybody Wokkas in Their Own Wokka Way*

Reread the line: ***“Everybody wokkas in their own wokka way.”***

How many ways to wokka can you count in the book? Make a chart with all the wokka types and have students draw what each one looks like. Have the class vote for the kind of wokka they like best. Record votes by tally and help students to analyze the results.

### I wokka wokka...

...like flamingos in a flocka.	
...like a mariachi with maracas.	
...like a clock go ticka tocka.	

Now have the children add their own ways to wokka on the chart and vote again. How did the wokka rankings change?

- *Generates a personal response to what is read aloud*
- *Organizes and displays data using tally charts through written or verbal/scribed response to answer questions*
- *Analyzes patterns, trends, or distributions in data in a variety of contexts using “more,” “less,” or “equal.”*

## *Ticka-Tocka*

Show the page with the words:

***“...pitta-patta, time-no-matta, picka-pocka-ticka-tocka.”***



Ask what the boy is doing at the top of the page. If his hands were clock hands, what time would it be? Older students can pretend to become clocks and show different times. For younger students, have them talk about what they do at different times of the day.

- *Identifying a clock as a measurement tool*
- *determining elapsed and accrued time as it relates to before/ after and sequences of events (first, next, last)*
- *telling time to the hour and half-hour*

## *Shake-a-the-Maracas*

Help students to make their own maracas: Let children each decorate two paper cups using paint, markers, glitter glue, ribbon, etc. Fill a cup about 1/3 of the way with dried beans and tape the second cup on top. Let students add decorations to the tape, if they'd like.



Sit in a circle and read the book again. Have the children shake their maracas to the beat of the prose. Whenever you read the line “How do you wokka-wokka?” have students keep their maracas still while you point to a child to recite that line. Invite students to say the line on the last page in chorus, shaking their maracas for the grand finale.

- *using the elements of vocal and instrumental music, including rhythm*
- *improvising with instruments and voices based on poetry or stories*
- *playing instruments, alone and with others, using developmentally appropriate literature and instruments, in rhythm, maintaining a steady beat*

## *Rhyming Fun*

The nature of the rhyming text will help students to decode new words. Make a list of rhyming pairs throughout the book, such as: way/day; patta/matta; picka/ticka; and racka/acka/snacka. Include all the words that rhyme with wokka: blocka, flocka, yocka, shocka, socka, tocka, dock-a, knocka, and rocka.

Ask students if they notice the similar spelling patterns in the rhyming words. Use the word cards on the following page to let children sort the words according to spelling patterns and rhymes.

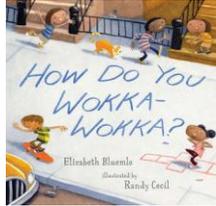
Point out the game of hop scotch on the front cover, then use the cards to play Wokka Wokka Hoppa Scotcha:

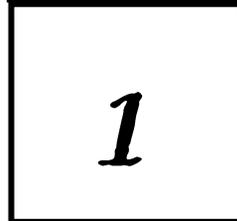
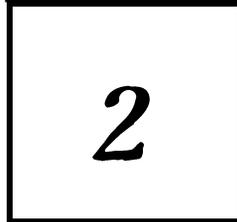
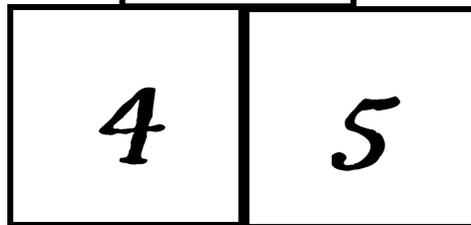
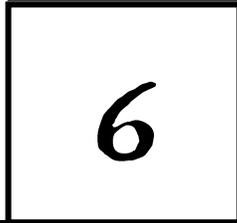
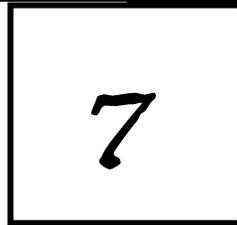
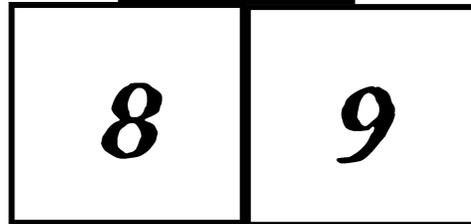
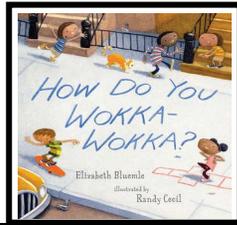
1. Place all cards face down.
2. Give two students a Wokka Wokka Hoppa Scotcha Game Board (see page 11 of this guide).
3. Let each student choose a marker to be placed at the bottom of the game board.
3. One student turns over two cards. If they rhyme, that student may move his or her marker to the first space. If the words do not rhyme, the cards are turned over and the other student takes a turn.
4. If the free card is turned over along with a word card, the child can move forward one space by naming any word (invented or real) that rhymes with the word card.
5. Two markers may occupy the same space.
6. The first student to reach the last space wins!



**Tech Tip:** Display the rhyming words on interactive whiteboard tiles to play the matching game with the class.

- *recognizing pairs of rhyming words and producing rhymes*
- *using sounds, syllables, and letter patterns (e.g., phonological, phonic, and graphic knowledge)*

way	day	patta	matta
picka	ticka	racka	acka
snacka	wokka	blocka	flocka
yokka	shocka	socka	tocka
dock-a	knocka	rocka	 <i>Free Card</i>



*Wokka Wokka  
Hoppa Scotcha  
Game Board*

## *Interview with Author Elizabeth Bluemle*

### **1. The idea for your book was inspired by your nephew. What happened after he uttered the words, “How do you wokka-wokka?”**

My nephew, Will, started asking the question a lot. We couldn't figure out what he meant by “wokka-wokka,” especially after we ruled out “walking.” So his mother, in amused exasperation, flapped her arms and said, “I wokka-wokka like this!” Will was delighted, and asked everyone he came in contact with how they wokka-wokka'd, and each person came up with a different silly gesture or movement to make him laugh.



### **2. Once the idea for the book came to you, what happened next? Did you jot it down right away? Let it simmer?**

I knew there was something strange and wonderful in that mysterious question, but it needed a long time simmering before I came up with how to turn *wokka* into something resembling a book. It wasn't enough to have people making silly movements; there needed to be a story, an arc. And at some point, I was able to connect the idea of individuality and community coming together in a great big block party like the ones I loved when I lived in New York City.

### **3. How did the illustrations come about?**

The publisher likes to make a match between an author and an illustrator. My editor asked me for a short list of possible artists, and she showed me the publisher's list of candidates. Randy had worked on my first book, and my editor and I both love his style and warmth and exuberance. Once we lit on the idea of matching up again for a book unrelated to the first one, it was an easy decision.

### **4. What was the most challenging part of writing this book? The most rewarding?**

The most challenging part was probably getting across the idea of the story. When I first drafted it, the text had come to me in fragments of rhythm, almost like hearing music in my head. It started with “How do you wokka-wokka? How do you wokka-wokka? I wokka-wokka like flamingos in a flocka, I wokka-wokka like this.” Over time, that verse expanded, and I knitted together several verses. Then I realized I needed to introduce what was happening in the story, which is when I wrote the beginning: “Some days you wake up and you just gotta wokka....” Right now, the most challenging part is sharing the rhythmic scheme; kids tend to get it right away, but it confuses some adults!

The most rewarding part is watching kids light up when encountering the silly language and seeing them bob around to the beat, coming up with their own unique wokkas. Recently, students at a school for the blind selected *How Do You Wokka-Wokka?* as their 2010 Kid's Choice Award at the Philadelphia Please Touch Museum. It was a huge honor to discover that my words had reached so many children.

### **5. Do you have a writing routine?**

I write every day, although it may not be creative work, since I do a lot of writing in my bookselling life. Nowadays, I pretty much have to schedule writing retreats for a weekend or week in order to carve out uninterrupted writing time. Most good writers I know do write every day, even just a little. It helps to keep the rust off, and the best ideas often come during the actual writing process.

### **6: What advice do you have for young writers?**

Read, read, read, write, write, write, and live, live, live! Absorbing all kinds of language through reading is vital (not to mention a pure joy). In order to get good at writing, you need to practice. Brilliant pianists don't just sit down and dash off a concerto; every artist trains and grows and improves, so don't worry if you're not perfect the first time every time. Finally, have experiences and adventures and get your heart broken and fall down and get up again. In addition to having a full life, you'll also become a better writer. Pay attention to the world around you and you will have enough material to last your whole life. When you think of your best memories, they almost always involve other people and doing something fun together. We're a video-driven world in many ways, but really, when you think about your favorite times, are you going to remember that amazing picnic at the top of a mountain, or the time you spent playing a video game? Which one would make a better story? Don't get me wrong; I like video games, too, but they don't hold a candle to getting out there and living and writing about your adventures.

### **7. What do you like best about co-owning a bookstore?**

Having a partner who's also my best friend is the best! She and I are good at different things, so between the two of us, most of what needs to happen at the store gets done. We don't always see eye-to-eye on decisions, which is also good, because it means we really talk things out and see ideas from different perspectives other than our own. Two heads are better!

**8. When you aren't writing, what are some of your favorite things to do?**

Favorite activities: playing with my dogs and my nephews, hanging out with my dad, rowing boats, hiking, doing just about anything in nature (especially when it's sunny and breezy), baking, sharing books with kids. Laughing is my very favorite activity, and happily, I often do that when I'm writing, too.

**9. Are you working on any other books?**

I have more books in progress than I can remember offhand. I usually work on more than one thing at a time, and right now, my patient editor is waiting for revisions on a few picture books and a novel. Got to get to those writing weekends!

**10. How do *you* wokka-wokka?**

I wokka-wokka like this: [visualize round lady laughing]