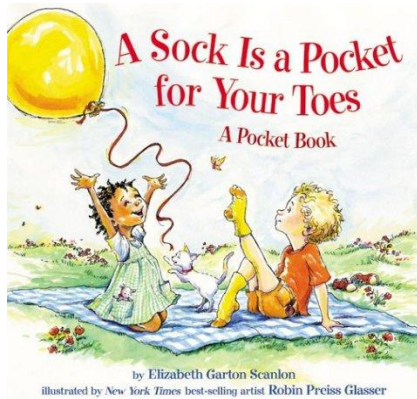


*A Teacher's Guide to*  
**A Sock Is A Pocket For Your Toes**

Written by Elizabeth Garton Scanlon

Illustrated by Robin Preiss Glasser



A SOCK IS A POCKET FOR YOUR TOES: A POCKET BOOK  
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### **About the Author**

One day, as Elizabeth Scanlon dressed her baby girl, she sang, “A sock is a pocket for your toes,” and the idea for her first picture book was born. Now she lets that child-centered perspective dictate her daily work. Raised in Vail, Colorado, Liz moved to Wisconsin, Ohio, the U.K., and back to Colorado again before ending up in Austin, Texas, where she lives with her husband and two daughters. She’s been a climber of mountains, an instructor of yoga, an editor of textbooks, and a teacher of creative writing, among other things. Learn more about Liz and her other books at [www.LizGartonScanlon.com](http://www.LizGartonScanlon.com) and <http://liz-scanlon.livejournal.com/>.

### **About the Illustrator**

In addition to books about socks, pockets and toes, Robin Preiss Glasser has illustrated such bestsellers as *America: A Patriotic Primer* by Lynne Cheney, *You Can't Take a Balloon Into the Metropolitan Museum* by Jacqueline Preiss Weitzman, *Daddy's Girl* by Garrison Keillor, and the Fancy Nancy picture books. She lives in Southern California with her family, their dog, and a few tiaras.

### **Kudos for *A Sock Is A Pocket For Your Toes***

“...bubbly verse and playful imagery...leaving young listeners seeing their own worlds in a new way...” ~*Kirkus Reviews*

“...a rhyme that will appeal to kids’ fascination with containers... the concept, abetted by Glasser’s madcap illustrations, is that the world abounds in nontraditional pockets... fast-moving and fun.” ~*ALA Booklist*

*A Sock is a Pocket* is “a spur to imaginative thinking.” ~*School Library Journal*

### **Story Summary**

Through whimsical rhyme, children discover that the world is full of pockets.

### **Pre-Reading**

#### Background Knowledge:

Ask who is wearing something with pockets. Send students on a “pocket search” around the classroom, looking for other kinds of pockets (pocket charts, envelope “pockets” on the wall, library book pockets, etc.). List the pockets they find.  
(*use prior knowledge to anticipate meaning and make sense of texts*)

Take a Book Walk:

Show the front cover of *A Sock is a Pocket for Your Toes*, pointing out the title, author and illustrator. Ask students what they think the title means, and what kind of “pockets” might be in the story. List their answers on a chart. Now “walk” through the book, showing only the illustrations. Can students guess the story’s pockets and their contents? Add their answers to the chart.

*(understand and identify simple literary terms such as title, author, and illustrator; make predictions)*

Vocabulary Boost:

The vocabulary below might be new for your students. Guide them in using either text or picture clues (or both) to decipher meanings:

**from the text:** rub-a-dub-dub, good cheer

**from the pictures:** horseshoe, dell (small, wooded valley)

**from both pictures and text:** coop, scotch, suds

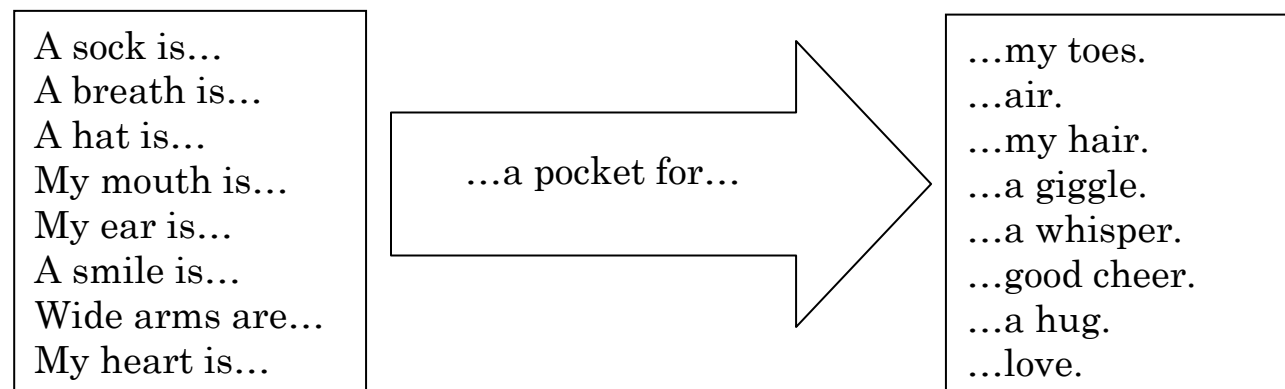
*(discuss meanings of words and develop vocabulary through meaningful/concrete experiences)*

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Name one “pocket” from the story. What was inside? *(knowledge)*
2. Find the illustration of the mother watching her child blow up the balloon. How does the mother feel? *(comprehension)*
3. Name another non-traditional pocket. What might go inside? *(application)*
4. Which pocket was your favorite? Why? *(analysis)*
5. In the story, one child goes home with a new kitten. What would make a good “pocket” for the kitten? *(synthesis)*
6. Which pocket in the story do you think is most like a regular pocket? Why? *(evaluation)*

**Body Pockets**

Many of the “pockets” in the story involve parts of the body. Make a list of the following examples from the book, then ask students to add some of their own. Have each child choose one to illustrate, then bind the pages into a class book.



*(name major body parts and their functions)*

### Stories in Pictures

Look at the illustrations in the book. There are several “stories” that take place only in pictures. Ask students:

1. How many families are there?
2. What does each family do during this day?
3. How (and where) do the families interact?

#### A breakdown of the families:

1. An only child and mother (the child appears on the first page of text, and the mother appears on the page with the bear cave).
2. An African American mother and a child, whose father appears toward the end of the story.
3. A family who lives on a farm.
4. A family with a mother, father, and two children, who appear on the third page of text.

#### Questions:

1. Members of each family meet up at the zoo, but do they all know each other?

**Answer:** No, the family who lives in the city does not know the others.

2. In the scene outside the zoo gates, where are the father and son going?

**Answer:** To take a nap, as shown on the next page.

3. What does the sign outside the zoo say?

**Answer:** “Free Kittens at Apple Lake Farm”

4. In the first farm scene, do the families all seem to know each other? How can you tell?

**Answer:** Yes; one of the girls is running into the outstretched arms of another adult, and later the women are walking arm-in-arm.

5. In the scene where one family is leaving the farm, what are they taking with them?

**Answer:** a kitten

6. Toward the end of the story, look at the illustration of the whole town. Where do you think each family lives? (Note: the farm, city and suburbs are all visible.)

**Answers:** The city family's row house is on the far left center of the scene, the pink house (home of the new kitten) is on the bottom right, the farm is on the far right, and the terrace where the family is dancing under the orange lights is near the bottom left corner).

*(describe how illustrations contribute to the text)*

### Play a Rhyme

Copy the story onto chart paper in black marker; leaving a space between lines. Use red for the following lines: *uh-oh!*, *please scootch*, *oink oink*, *tee hee*, *hi ho*, *blink*, *blink*, and *sweet love*. (There will be no spaces before or after these red lines).

See the following page for an example:

**A sock is a pocket for your toes.**

*(blank line)*

**A vase is a pocket for a rose.**

*(blank line)*

**A pocket for a chicken is a coop,**

*(blank line)*

**and a bowl is a pocket full of soup—**

**uh-oh!**

**A bowl is a pocket spilling soup.**

Show children how to clap to the rhythm of the rhyme in the story. You should come up with three slow claps for each black line, and two quick claps between lines and for the lines in red. Practice a few times all the way through. *(clap in time to a simple rhythmic beat)*

Variations:

1. Give students basic instruments such as wood blocks, maracas and triangles. Have one set of instruments for the slow beats, and another for the quick beats. Children could also make their own instruments with cans of dried beans. *(sing or play a classroom instrument independently or in groups)*
2. Have students take turns drawing boxes around the words that rhyme, using a different color for each pair of rhyming words. *(identify the musical elements of literary language such as its rhymes or repeated sounds)*
3. See if the children can come up with more “red” lines to go in the blank lines. Here are some suggestions:

After the line ending with...	...the next line might be:
toes	wiggle, wiggle
rose	sniff, sniff
coop	cluck, cluck
bear	growl, growl
air	puff, puff
hair	brush, brush
nest	tweet, tweet
rest	(making snoring sound)
suds	pop, pop
duck	quack, quack
luck	Good luck!
smoke	puff, puff
ring	ring-a-ding
ding	ding-a-ling
shell	peep, peep
home	Welcome!
cone	lick, lick

rhyme	(any 2 one-syllable words that rhyme)
ear	whisper, whisper
cheer	(brush, brush—to match the illustration)
hugs	squeeze, squeeze

Once they've completed all lines, have them think of movements that could illustrate each line in red (wiggling their toes, sniffing a pretend flower, walking like a chicken, etc.)

*(dramatize poems and songs; create and imitate movement in response to selected rhythms; respond through talk, movement, music, and drama to a variety of stories and poems in ways that reflect understanding and interpretation)*

### Bean Sprout Pockets

Soak dry beans overnight. For each student, fold a paper towel in half twice and dampen. Place the paper towel into a plastic zip bag and add a layer of beans between the paper towel and the plastic bag. Write the student's name on the outside of the bag, and tape it to a sunny window. Using the chart on page 6 of this guide, have children record their observations either in words or with drawings.

#### Example:

Day #:	What Do You See?
1	No change.
3	Roots!

Once the beans have sprouted, transfer them to another "pocket"—a cup filled with potting soil.

*(plan and conduct simple descriptive investigations; communicate findings about simple investigations; record observations about parts of plants including leaves, roots, stems, and flowers; observe and record the functions of plant parts)*

### Pocket Pita Snack

Throw a Pocket Pita Party with the home letter on page 7 of this guide. Reproduce a copy for each child and have them fill in (or dictate to you) their favorite "pocket" from the story and what they would like to bring from home to stuff into their pitas. (Be sure to check whether any students have food allergies).

*(dictate messages such as news and stories for others to write (K-1); write to record ideas and reflections (K-3))*

## Bean Plant Observation Record

My name: \_\_\_\_\_

Day #:	What do you see?

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We have been reading the book A Sock is A Pocket for Your Toes, written by Elizabeth Garton Scanlon and illustrated by Robin Preiss Glasser. It's about all kinds of unusual pockets! My favorite pocket from the story is: A \_\_\_\_\_ is a pocket for a \_\_\_\_\_.

Here is a picture of my favorite pocket:

We will be having a Pita Pocket Party on \_\_\_\_\_.

On that day, I would like to bring \_\_\_\_\_ from home to put in my pita pocket.

Love,

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**MEET AUTHOR ELIZABETH GARTON SCANLON**



**1. When did you know you wanted to become a writer?**

When I was little, I wrote for fun, the way some kids kicked a soccer ball around. When I was in college, I started writing seriously. I majored in journalism. I wrote a lot of poetry. And then I spent years dipping my feet into textbook work, corporate marketing and teaching. But it was when I became a mother that I made the happy discovery that writing for children was what I truly loved.

**2. What kind of training does a writer need?**

A writer needs a solid understanding of the elements of craft – language, structure, grammar, all the nuts and bolts. But equally important, writers learn by being avid readers – through apprenticeship and example. There are many academic degrees that can help a student on the way to being a writer but there's not a particular one that's required. Writers write.

**3. How did you get the idea for *A Sock is a Pocket for Your Toes*?**

When my daughters were babies, I made up silly songs and rhymes as we walked or bathed or played. One day, as I was dressing my eldest, I sang, "A sock is a pocket for your toes..." The next thing you know, I was hooked on pockets.

**4. Once the idea came to you, what happened next? Did you jot it down right away? Let it simmer?** I wrote it down that day, and played and played with it over the next few months. The potential pockets in the world, it turns out, are plentiful. I had a lot to work with.



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

I met a number of challenges in working on this book, not the least of which was that I knew very little about picture books, writing for children or the publishing industry. I had to study hard and fast. But in terms of the actual writing, sustaining strong and believable rhyme was most difficult. Rhyme is magic, I think, when done well because it makes a text musical. But it can be hard to make it sound natural, and sometimes I just could not find the right word to fit the rhyme scheme. More than once I had to throw away a whole stanza because of a missing piece of rhyme.

The greatest reward in working on this book was being given the opportunity to live within a child's perspective while I worked. Maintaining that sense of wonder is part of my job now. Lucky me.

**6. How did the illustrations come about?** My editor at HarperCollins sent the text to an illustrator she thought would be perfect for this book. She was right! Robin Preiss Glasser said yes to the project and began working on the art. She went through a revision process with the editor, just like me – starting with her sketches and eventually her full-fledged watercolors. I didn't see any of them until later; this part of the process is for the editor and illustrator only. It was hard to wait, but a delight when I saw what she had done!

**7. Do you have a writing routine?**

I do, but it varies, according to what I'm working on and what time of year it is and other factors. Writing and revising lead me into different routines, for example, as does my kids' summer vacation. In general, I work from about 9:00 am-2:00 pm, but I have also gotten some of the best ideas in the middle of the night. When that happens, I get up and work!

**8: What's the best piece of writing advice you've ever received?**

"Omit needless words" – from Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*. A huge amount of my daily effort goes into trying to distill something down to its most essential form. I guess that's why my books are so short!

**9: What advice do you have for young writers?**

Read. Read. Read. There is no better instructor in the art of writing than a good book.

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

I love hanging out with my husband and daughters – hiking, cooking, playing cards. I love running, I love reading, I love hot baths and I love and rely on yoga.