

*The Leaf Detective:*  
*How Margaret Lowman Uncovered Secrets in the Rainforest*  
**Discussion Guide**  
Grades: Pre-K – 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.**

- Preview with the students the 2-page Rainforest Magic illustrations & explanations on the last few pages of the book. Use this opportunity to discuss the various sections of the rainforest structure, along with the plants & trees and animals within each section.
- Ask: Why is conservation of the rainforest important? (Optional: Think, Pair, Share)

**During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.**

- Why was it unusual for Margaret Lowman to be a scientist? Use details from the story.
- How did Margaret Lowman get interested in studying trees?
- Describe Margaret Lowman's first method for getting up into a tree?
- What is transpiration? Explain the process.
- Explain the process of plants & trees needing carbon dioxide and people needing oxygen. How does each process benefit both?

**After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.**

- Ask: What made Margaret Lowman a field biologist?
- Tell students to think about having a career where trees are studied. Brainstorm ideas on chart paper about the following questions: What attracted her to the trees/rainforest initially? There is more than plants & trees in the trees/rainforest. Name some of those other parts.
- **Extension:** At the end of the story, Margaret Lowman has discovered that it is important for people in villages to understand the importance of preserving the trees/rainforest. List some reasons why this was important and what she taught them about how it benefited them to protect the trees/rainforest.

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.