

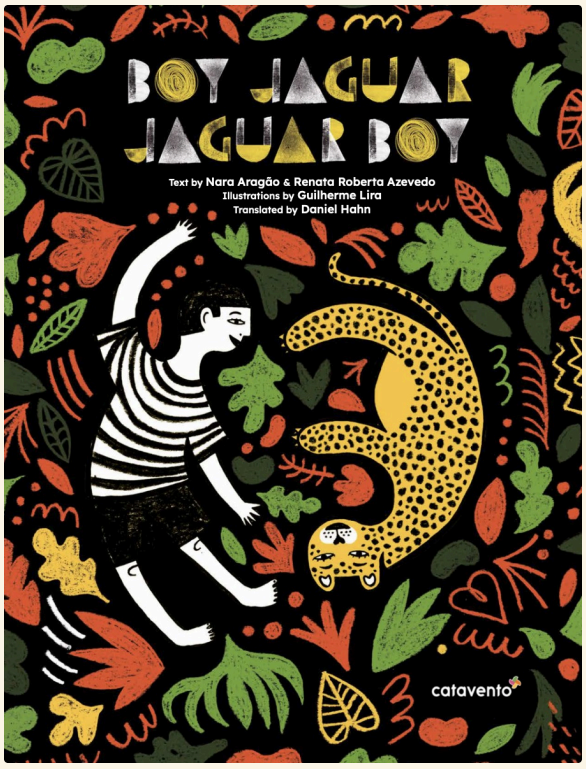

Boy Jaguar Jaguar Boy

Teacher's Guide

Discussion questions, STEAM activities and a visit to the real Pantanal

Written by **Nara Aragão** and
Renata Roberta Azevedo
Illustrated by **Guilherme Lira**
Translated from Brazilian Portuguese
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INSIDE THIS GUIDE

Contents

About the Book 3

Before Reading · During Reading 4

After Reading 5

STEAM Art & Science Activities 6

STEAM Writing Activity · More Resources 7

Brazil and Its Words 8

Visit the Pantanal 9

Curriculum Connections · Ordering 10

> **A story about happiness, nature, friendship, and the journey toward knowing who we are.**



ABOUT THE BOOK

A boy, a jaguar, and a forest that sees them both

In the enchanted forest of Mungará, a boy named Kiné goes looking for luck and happiness and meets Marzul, a jaguar searching for her own beauty. As their unlikely friendship grows, each begins to see themselves in the other, and the forest becomes a living presence that asks every child to look at themselves, and at everyone else, with care.

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ORIGINAL EDITION
Boitatá, Brazil, 2025

Themes

Nature · Friendship · Self-knowledge · Brazilian fauna & flora · The environment

Recognition for the original edition

- BRAW Amazing Bookshelf, Bologna Children's Book Fair 2026
- Top 10 Semifinalist, AEILIJ Literature Award
- 30 Best Children's Books of the Year 2026, Revista Crescer

How to use this guide

The questions move from the cover, to the story, to children's own lives. Pick the ones that fit your group. Younger listeners do well with three or four questions per reading, and every activity works with ordinary classroom supplies.



BEFORE READING

Establish background knowledge

1. What do the title and the front and back cover illustrations tell you about the book? Where do you think the story takes place? Who will be in it? What might happen?
2. Read the title aloud. Why do you think the words are flipped? What could it mean to be a "boy jaguar" or a "jaguar boy"?
3. This book was first written in Portuguese in Brazil, then translated into English. Where in the world is Brazil? What do you know about it? What do you think a translator does?
4. What do you already know about jaguars? Where do they live?

DURING READING

Think about the elements of the story

Setting

Where and when does the story take place? How do the pictures show the forest of Mungará?

Characters

Who are Kiné and Marzul? What do they want, and how do they feel?

Point of view

Who is telling the story? How would it change if Marzul told it?

Cause and effect

What is happening, and why? How does each friend change the other?

Predictions

Pause now and then and wonder: what will happen next?

Illustrations

How do color and shape create mood and make the forest feel alive?

Read it twice

Read the book once for the story, then again just for the pictures. On the second reading, invite children to point out plants and animals and to notice how Kiné and Marzul are drawn when they are apart and when they are together.



AFTER READING

Check for understanding

1 Looking for luck and happiness

1. Why do you think Kiné goes into the forest searching for luck and happiness? Where would you look?
2. Does Kiné find what he was looking for? Is it what he expected?
3. What makes you happy? Is happiness something you find, something you make, or something you share?

2 Marzul and her own beauty

4. Why might a jaguar not feel beautiful?
5. What does Kiné see in Marzul that she cannot see in herself? What does Marzul see in Kiné?
6. Has a friend ever helped you notice something good about yourself?

3 Seeing yourself in the other

7. The boy and the jaguar are very different. How are they alike?
8. What does the title mean to you now? Did your answer change from before?

4 The living forest

9. Which pictures make the forest of Mungará seem like a character?
10. What does the forest ask of Kiné and Marzul? What does it ask of us?

5 Themes and purpose

11. What are the themes or messages of the book? Why do you think the authors wrote it?
12. When did you connect with Kiné or Marzul? Have you ever felt like them?

Turn and talk

Pair children up and give each pair one question. After two minutes, invite pairs to share with the whole group. Quieter children often say more to one partner than to a full circle.



HANDS-ON LEARNING

STEAM activities

STEAM ART ACTIVITY

Half Me, Half Jaguar

The book's art shows a face that is half boy and half jaguar. Ask children to fold a sheet of paper in half, draw half of their own face on one side and half of an animal they admire on the other.

Talk about it together: What do you and your animal have in common? What would your animal teach you? A ready-to-print version is in the Fun Activities pages.

STEAM SCIENCE ACTIVITY

Spot the Rosettes

Jaguars are the largest wild cats in the Americas, and Brazil's Amazon and Pantanal are among their most important homes. Their dark spots are called rosettes, and no two jaguars share the same pattern.

Children design a jaguar with a rosette pattern all their own, then compare: like fingerprints, every one is different. Extend it by listing the plants and animals in the illustrations. For each one, children draw a simple map of the forest and place it next to what it needs there, such as water to drink, trees for shelter or food to eat. The map becomes a model of how living things depend on the places they live.





HANDS-ON LEARNING

Write, share and care

STEAM WRITING ACTIVITY

A Friend's Mirror

Kiné and Marzul help each other see what is good and beautiful in themselves. Why do you think they needed each other to see it?

Children write a short note to a friend, a family member or a classmate telling them what they admire about them. A note usually includes who it is for, who it is from, and a drawing. Collect the notes into a class book. A printable note page is in the Fun Activities pages.

ENVIRONMENT ACTIVITY

Care for Our Forest

Take a short walk around the school grounds or a nearby park. Each child chooses one living thing to look at closely and draw. Back in class, agree on one small action the group can take to care for it, just as the forest of Mungará asks us to look at everything with care.

More resources

Fun Activities pages

Printable word search, maze, drawing page, Portuguese word match and friendship note, free from Catavento Press.



LET'S EXPLORE

Brazil and its words

The story comes from Brazil, the largest country in South America, where more than 200 million people speak Portuguese.

The forests of Brazil

Most of the Amazon rainforest lies in Brazil, along with the Pantanal, the world's largest tropical wetland, and the Atlantic Forest on the coast. Jaguars live in all three. The forest of Mungará is imaginary, but it is full of the kind of life these real places hold.

The first peoples

More than 300 Indigenous peoples live in Brazil, speaking more than 270 languages. English words like *jaguar*, *toucan*, *piranha*, *capybara* and *cashew* have roots in Indigenous languages of South America.

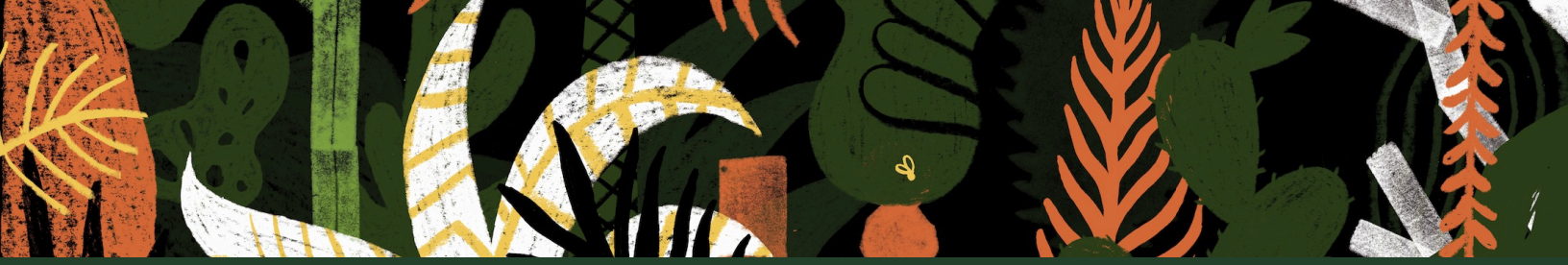
The guardian of the forest

In Brazilian folklore, the Curupira is a small forest spirit with red hair and feet that point backward, so hunters following its footprints walk the wrong way. It protects trees and animals from anyone who harms them. Ask: how is the forest of Mungará like the Curupira?

Portuguese words from the story

PORTUGUESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
onça	OHN-sah	jaguar
menino / menina	meh-NEE-noo / meh-NEE-nah	boy / girl
floresta	floh-REHS-tah	forest
amigo / amiga	ah-MEE-goo / ah-MEE-gah	friend
sorte	SOR-chee	luck
felicidade	feh-lee-see-DAH-jee	happiness
beleza	beh-LEH-zah	beauty
cuidado	kwee-DAH-doo	care
árvore	AR-voh-ree	tree
bicho	BEE-shoo	animal, little creature
obrigado / obrigada	oh-bree-GAH-doo / oh-bree-GAH-dah	thank you

In Portuguese the jaguar is often called *onça-pintada*, the "painted jaguar," for its spots. A taste of Brazil to share: *pão de queijo* (cheese bread), *brigadeiro* (a chocolate sweet) and *açaí*, a purple berry from Amazon palm trees.



REAL PLACES, REAL JAGUARS

Visit the Pantanal

Kiné and Marzul's story takes place in an imaginary forest. This page invites students to discover a real place in Brazil where jaguars live: the Pantanal, in the heart of South America and one of the best places on Earth to see jaguars in the wild.

The largest tropical wetland

The Pantanal is the biggest tropical wetland in the world. Most of it lies in Brazil, in the states of Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul, and it reaches into Bolivia and Paraguay.

Water sets the rhythm

In the rainy season, rivers overflow and flood the plains. In the dry season, the water shrinks into ponds and lagoons, and animals gather around them.

Jaguar country

The Pantanal has one of the largest jaguar populations anywhere. Its jaguars are strong swimmers that hunt in rivers for fish and caimans.

Meet the neighbors Portuguese name, English name

onça-pintada
JAGUAR

The largest wild cat in the Americas, with spots called rosettes.

capivara
CAPYBARA

The largest rodent in the world, and an excellent swimmer.

ariranha
GIANT OTTER

A playful, noisy otter that lives and fishes in family groups.

arara-azul
HYACINTH MACAW

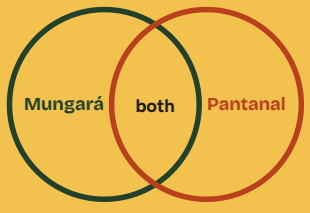
A bright blue parrot, the largest parrot that can fly.

jacaré
CAIMAN

A relative of the alligator that rests along rivers and ponds.

tuiuiú
JABIRU STORK

A tall stork with a black head and red neck, the symbol of the Pantanal.



Activity: Real or imaginary?

Draw two overlapping circles labeled Mungará and Pantanal. Look at the book and at photos of the Pantanal, then sort what you find: things only in the story, things only in the real wetland, and things in both. Compare the two habitats: how many different kinds of plants and animals can you spot in each? Talk about why people need to protect real places like the Pantanal, where drought and wildfires have harmed animals in recent years.



FOR EDUCATORS

Curriculum connections

The questions and activities support these widely used standards for kindergarten through grade 3.

AREA	STANDARD	WHERE IN THIS GUIDE
Reading literature	Common Core RL.K.3, RL.1.3, RL.2.3	Characters, setting and major events (During Reading, After Reading 1 to 10)
Reading literature	Common Core RL.K.7, RL.1.7	Using illustrations to describe the story (Read it twice, After Reading 9)
Speaking & listening	Common Core SL.K.1, SL.1.1, SL.2.1	Collaborative conversations (all questions, Turn and talk)
Science	NGSS K-ESS3-1	Modeling how plants and animals depend on where they live: children map each living thing next to the water, shelter or food it needs (STEAM Science, Care for Our Forest)
Science	NGSS 2-LS4-1	Observing and comparing the plants and animals of two habitats, the book's forest and the Pantanal wetland (Visit the Pantanal, Real or imaginary?)
Social & emotional	CASEL self-awareness, relationship skills	Seeing strengths through a friend's eyes (A Friend's Mirror)
Languages & culture	Cultural comparison	Portuguese words and Brazilian culture (pages 8 and 9)

About the creators

Nara Aragão & Renata Roberta Azevedo

Authors of the story, first published in Brazil by Boitatá in 2025 as *Menino Onça, Onça Menino*.

Guilherme Lira

Illustrator, whose bold black, mustard, green and orange palette brings Mungará to life.

Daniel Hahn

Award winning translator of fiction and children's books from Portuguese, Spanish and French.

BRING KINÉ AND MARZUL TO YOUR SHELVES

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