

## A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

Use this toolkit to plan book discussions, library programs, or classroom activities.

Meet Ohio native, California-based, award-winning author Brenda Woods.

Select from a range of discussion questions and extension activities to deepen the experience of reading *Zoe in Wonderland*.

Discover informative books, videos, websites, and other resources to explore topics and themes in depth.

# Zoe in Wonderland

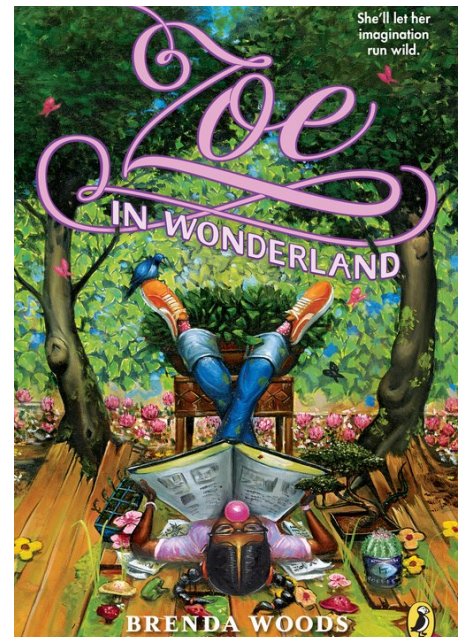
By Brenda Woods



## About the Book

Coretta Scott King Honor winner Brenda Woods introduces introverted, daydream-prone Zoe, who's afraid her real life will never be as exciting as her imaginary one.

Zoe Reindeer considers herself "just Zoe"—never measuring up to her too-perfect older sister or her smarty-pants little brother. Truthfully, though, she'd rather just blend in with the plants at the family business, Doc Reindeer's Exotic Plant Wonderland. She does have one friend, Q, and he's the best one ever—but he's moving away, leaving Zoe to fend for herself, and she doesn't know what she'll do without him. That is until a tall astronomer from Madagascar comes to the nursery looking for a Baobab tree. His visit starts a ball rolling that makes Zoe long for real adventures, not just imaginary ones—and shows her that perhaps her first real adventure is finally beginning.



Book jacket image and book description courtesy of Penguin Random House. Used with permission.

## Book Details

***Zoe in Wonderland*** by Brenda Woods  
Nancy Paulsen Books (Penguin Random House), 2016. ISBN 9780399170973. 196 pages. Ages 8+.  
Leveled Reading: AR Points 5.0. ATOS Book Level 4.5. 710 Lexile.  
[www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/316508/zoe-in-wonderland-by-brenda-woods/9780425288917/](http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/316508/zoe-in-wonderland-by-brenda-woods/9780425288917/)

Available as an ebook through the Ohio Digital Library: [ohiodigitallibrary.com](http://ohiodigitallibrary.com)

Also by Brenda Woods: The historical novel ***The Unsung Hero of Birdsong, USA***, her 8th book, recounts the friendship between a young white boy and a Black World War II veteran who has recently returned to the unwelcoming Jim Crow South.  
[www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/550193/the-unsung-hero-of-birdsong-usa-by-brenda-woods](http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/550193/the-unsung-hero-of-birdsong-usa-by-brenda-woods)



Permission to use author photo and biographical information granted by Penguin Random House.

**“My name finally made sense—a slightly unusual name for a slightly unusual girl. ‘Zoe G. Reindeer,’ I said out loud, then put my lips together to try to whistle. For the first time, a sound came out...As sweetly as birdsong, a whistle flew out of me. I was more than surprised. I was astonished.”**

## About the Author

Brenda Woods was born in Ohio, grew up in Southern California, and attended California State University, Northridge. Her award-winning books for young readers include **The Blossoming Universe of Violet Diamond** (a CCBC choice and a Kirkus Reviews Best Book); the Coretta Scott King Honor winner **The Red Rose Box**; the ALAN Pick **Saint Louis Armstrong Beach**; and VOYA Top Shelf Fiction selection **Emako Blue**.

Brenda Woods's numerous awards and honors include the Judy Lopez Memorial Book Award, the FOCAL International Award, and the ILA Children's Choice Young Adult Fiction Award. Brenda lives in the Los Angeles area.

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## Author Resources

### Brenda Woods's official website

[www.brendawoods.net/about.html](http://www.brendawoods.net/about.html)

### Author page on Penguin Random House website

[www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/229299/brenda-woods](http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/229299/brenda-woods)

### Brenda Woods on the Brown Bookshelf

[thebrownbookshelf.com/2009/02/13/brenda-woods/](http://thebrownbookshelf.com/2009/02/13/brenda-woods/)

### For publicity and speaking engagement inquiries:

Please contact Author Visits coordinator Andrea Cruise at Penguin Random House, [penguinauthorvisits@gmail.com](mailto:penguinauthorvisits@gmail.com).

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## Go Further!

*Ideas for extending the experience of reading **Zoe in Wonderland**.*

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is an independent agency of the United States government. NASA oversees the civilian space program and is responsible for aeronautics and aerospace research. Learn more about NASA's work by exploring the NASA Kids Club, Humans in Space, the Solar System, and much more!

[www.nasa.gov](http://www.nasa.gov)

Build your own Hubble Space Telescope! NASA provides free plans for a scale model telescope you can build out of paper. (Link opens PDF document.)  
[perkins.owu.edu/documents/education/NASA.Great.Observatories.pdf](http://perkins.owu.edu/documents/education/NASA.Great.Observatories.pdf)

Create your own solar system puzzle! Learn more about each planet as you construct a 3-D puzzle. (Link opens PDF document.)  
[perkins.owu.edu/documents/education/SolarSystemPuzzle.pdf](http://perkins.owu.edu/documents/education/SolarSystemPuzzle.pdf)

Learn about fun astronomy clubs in Ohio! Many offer public events as well as membership meetings.

[www.go-astronomy.com/astro-clubs-state.php?State=OH](http://www.go-astronomy.com/astro-clubs-state.php?State=OH)

*More on the last page!*

## Talk About It!

Topics to share when discussing **Zoe in Wonderland** with young readers.

**Educators:** Every CTRO book may be used to support Ohio's English Language Arts reading, writing, and speaking and listening standards. See examples below. Other Learning Standards such as Life Science: Behavior, Growth and Changes (Grade 3) may also apply. Discussion questions and educational activities for **Zoe in Wonderland** align with Learning Standards for Grades 3-5.

**Librarians, parents, and others:** These activities are also for library programs, family activities, and other projects. Learning Standards define what students should know and be able to do at each grade. For more information, see the Ohio Department of Education website, [education.ohio.gov](http://education.ohio.gov). From the Topics dropdown menu, click on "Learning in Ohio."

**Friendship:** Zoe has one really good friend, Quincy. Discuss how this friendship changes over the course of the story. Have you ever had a friend move far away? What are some ways you keep in contact with friends who move away? (RL.5.3)

**Stuck in the Middle:** Zoe has a "too perfect" older sister, Jade and a "smarty-pants" of a little brother, Harper. Discuss how Zoe's relationship with her siblings affects how she sees herself. (RL.5.3)

**What's in a name:** Zoe gives her little brother Harper the nickname "the Snox". Discuss what two words combine for Harper's new nickname and if you think he deserves that name. (RL.5.4)

**Growing up:** Zoe imagines all of the fabulous things she'll be when she grows up. Write an essay describing what you imagine you will be like in 10 years. What things do you think you'll be allowed to do that you can't do now? What's the best part of being your age right now? (W.5.3)

**Sick family members:** Quincy's mom has cancer. Discuss what this means for Zoe's friendship with Quincy. What are some ways you could be a friend to someone who has a sick parent? (RL.5.3)

**Astronomy:** Zoe meets an astrophysicist from Madagascar who introduces her to the field of astronomy. Use online resources available to students through INFOhio ([infohio.org](http://infohio.org)) and to all Ohio residents through Ohio Web Library ([ohioweblibrary.org](http://ohioweblibrary.org)) to identify and learn about some famous astronomers from Ohio. Discuss or write up your findings. (W.5.8)

**Making movies:** Watching movies is one of Zoe and Quincy's favorite things to do. Use INFOhio, Ohio Web Library, or internet sources to identify and learn about some films that have been made in Ohio. Have you ever wanted to make a movie? What would your movie be about? Who would be in it? This can be a discussion or a writing exercise. (W.5.8)

**Planting seeds:** Zoe lives in a plant wonderland where there are many exotic plants. Visit your local library and check out some books on gardening. What would you plant in your garden? Would you plant baobab seeds like Zoe does? Write a list of the plants you would grow and the reasons you selected them. Include a list of the books you consulted. (W.5.8)

**Being Zoe:** Zoe spends a lot of time noticing what makes her different. Find a couple of examples in the story where Zoe feels special or unique. Who helped her see her uniqueness? In what ways are you unique? Share or write a list of your unique characteristics. (W.5.9)

**Older friends:** Zoe has a unique relationship with her elderly next door neighbor, Mrs. Warner. Discuss this relationship and the effect it has on Zoe's life. (RL.5.5)

## Go Further! (continued)

Visit a planetarium to learn more about space science. Here is a list of planetariums in Ohio:

[www.go-astronomy.com/planetariums-state.php?State=OH](http://www.go-astronomy.com/planetariums-state.php?State=OH)

You can also visit many wonderful plant sanctuaries in Ohio, including the Dawes Arboretum in Columbus:

[dawesarb.org/explore/visitors-center](http://dawesarb.org/explore/visitors-center)

Dr. Mae Jemison is a medical doctor, chemical engineer, and an astronaut! Meet her in this video:

[youtu.be/B0vGDfuWhfI](https://youtu.be/B0vGDfuWhfI)

Do you have a story to tell? Learn the ins and outs of making your own documentary!

[www.desktop-documentaries.com/making-documentaries.html](http://www.desktop-documentaries.com/making-documentaries.html)

## Check It Out!

Explore themes with these nonfiction/informational companion texts.

Astronomy:

***Beyond the Solar System: Exploring Galaxies, Black Holes, Alien Planets, and More: A History with 21 Activities*** by Mary Kay Carson. A 2015 & 2016 Choose to Read Ohio selection.

***Startalk: Everything You Ever Need to Know About Space Travel, Sci-fi, the Human Race, the Universe, and Beyond*** by Neil deGrasse Tyson.

Women:

***Brazen: Rebel Ladies Who Rocked the World*** by Pénélope Bagieu; English translation by Montana Kane.

***Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls: 100 Tales of Extraordinary Women*** by Elena Favilli and Francesca Cavallo.

***Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History*** by Vashti Harrison.

***Women in Science: 50 Fearless Pioneers Who Changed the World*** written and illustrated by Rachel Ignotofsky

Gardening:

***Enchanted Gardening: Growing Miniature Gardens, Fairy Gardens, and More*** by Lisa Amstutz.

***It's Our Garden: From Seeds to Harvest in a School Garden*** by George Ancona.

***The Nitty-Gritty Gardening Book: Fun Projects for All Seasons*** by Kari Cornell; photographs by Jennifer S. Larson.

***Shaking Things Up: 14 Young Women Who Changed the World*** by Susan Hood; illustrated by Selina Alko [and others].

Filmmaking:

***Learn to Speak Film: a Guide to Creating, Promoting & Screening Your Movies*** written by Michael Glassbourg; illustrated by Jeff Kulak.

***The Movie Making Book: Skills & Projects to Learn & Share*** by Dan Farrell & Donna Bamford.

Choose to Read Ohio, a project of the State Library of Ohio, the Ohioana Library Association, and the Ohio Center for the Book, encourages public libraries, schools, families, and others to build a community of readers and an appreciation of Ohio authors, illustrators, and literature. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits:  
[library.ohio.gov/ctro](http://library.ohio.gov/ctro).

This toolkit revised  
December 2018.