



# Teacher's Guide





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# Overview

*My World* is a collection of themed informational texts for young children. It's designed to address interests that many young children have, while simultaneously building their knowledge about the world as well as their literacy learning. Each theme includes the following:

- A collection of ten little books on the theme
- Terms and facts that support the theme
- Suggested additional resources to extend the theme

## What Is Informational Text?

Informational text is a subset of nonfiction that is written with the purpose of informing readers about the **natural or social world**. It has some common features that can help you spot it, such as these:

- Uses timeless verbs and generalized nouns, as in “dogs bark” or “plants grow from seeds”
- Realistic illustrations or photos
- Charts or graphs
- No characters
- Topical
- May be non-linear, meaning you need not read from the beginning of the book to the end of the book as you would with a story
- Specialized vocabulary, which is sometimes bolded or in italics
- Factual and accurate
- Table of contents, index, and glossary

Of course, not all informational texts have all of these features. However, the presence of these features and text structure is a good clue that the text is informational in nature. We can point out these features to children as we read an informational text to help them become aware of the differences in genres. There is good evidence that very young children are aware of genre differences. Texts like those in this collection can assist you in supporting their growing awareness. For more detail about informational text and how to use it with young children, see *Reading and Writing Informational Text in the Primary Grades: Research-Based Practices* (2003) by Duke and Bennett-Armistead.

### How should I use the texts in this series?

The little books in this collection can be used in a variety of ways, depending on your objective. You might:

- Use them for a read-aloud to introduce the concepts and provoke interest.
- Use them for a read-aloud to introduce the structure of informational text.
- Use them for a read-aloud to promote comprehension using some of the questions included in the books.
- Compare them to other texts that you've read to assist children in making text-to-text connections.
- Include them as reference books in dramatic play.
- Include them in the science corner for reference.
- Include them in the book corner for independent exploration.
- Encourage beginning readers to read them independently or with support through guided reading or partner reading.

- Invite children to expand on the books by encouraging their use as a writing prompt.
- Send them home with children to share with their families.

However you choose to use them, know that you will be advancing both children's knowledge of the world and their developing literacy.

### How to use this information:

The following information is designed to assist you as you work to develop content-rich themes to teach young children about the world around them. Use the focus vocabulary to enrich children's understanding and their language use associated with the theme. Each book in the series provides suggestions for questions that might extend children's curiosity and learning about one of five themes: animals, transportation, plants, recreation, and community. Consider using this information in three ways: 1) as part of planned experiences and discussions; 2) to take advantage of children's spontaneous questions or opportunities that arise through their play; and 3) to share with your families the information you are talking about in class, so they can further the conversation at home through book-reading, discussion, and providing experiences that allow for greater understanding of the concepts. For more detail on how to plan a theme using terms and facts, see *Teaching Young Children Using Themes* (2011) by Kostelnik et al.

The following sections provide theme-specific vocabulary, background knowledge for teachers, and additional resources.

# Animals Everywhere

## Focus Vocabulary for the Theme

animal	living
birth	nocturnal
carnivore	non-living
crepuscular	offspring
diurnal	omnivore
domesticated	parent
egg	pet
habitat	plan
hatch	scientist
herbivore	wild

## What Teachers Need to Know

Animals live all over the world. Animals live on every continent and in every ocean.

Animals that are taken care of by people are domesticated. Some examples are cows, goats, and chickens.

Domesticated animals often give us food such as milk, eggs, or meat.

Domesticated animals that live in our homes are called pets. Some examples are fish, parrots, and cats.

Animals that take care of themselves are wild. Some examples are toucans, Komodo dragons, and whales.



Some wild animals live in zoos, where zookeepers take care of them.

All animals have babies. Some are born live, while others come from eggs.

Sometimes, animal babies have a different name than the animal parent. For example, frog babies are called tadpoles; swan babies are called cygnets; and horse babies are called foals.

There are many different groups of animals. These groups are called classes. The classes include fish, birds, mammals, invertebrates, reptiles, and amphibians.

All animals can move.

Animals are active at different times of the day. Some are active in the daytime. They are called “diurnal.” Squirrels are diurnal. Some are active at night. They are called “nocturnal.” Owls are nocturnal. Some are most active during dusk and dawn. They are called “crepuscular.” Deer are crepuscular.

All animals need food, water, and oxygen.

All animals eat. Animals that eat other animals are called carnivores. Animals that eat plants are called herbivores. Animals that eat both animals and plants are called omnivores.

Some animals are able to regulate their body temperature. That is called being warm-blooded. Other animals cannot. They are cold-blooded.

People who study animals are called zoologists.

People who study different types of animals include specialized zoologists called ornithologists (who study birds), ichthyologists (who study fish), herpetologists (who study reptiles and amphibians), mammalogists (who study mammals), malacologists (who study mollusks), and entomologists (who study insects). There are many more specializations as well.

## FISH

- All fish live in the water. Some live in salt water, and some live in fresh water.
- Some fish, such as trout, have bones. Some fish, such as sharks, have cartilage.
- Some fish are hatched from eggs. Some are born live.
- Some fish are carnivores. Some are herbivores.
- All fish get oxygen from the water.
- Almost all fish are cold-blooded. (Some sharks appear to be warm-blooded.)

## REPTILES

- Reptiles breathe air.
- Most reptiles are hatched from eggs. Some are born alive.
- Most reptiles live on land. Some live in the water. Some live in salt water, and some live in fresh water.
- Some reptiles are carnivores. Some reptiles are herbivores. Some are omnivores.
- Reptiles are cold-blooded.
- All reptiles have an internal skeleton.

## BIRDS

- Birds breathe air.
- Birds are born from eggs.
- Birds are warm-blooded.
- All birds have feathers.
- All birds have an internal skeleton. Birds have hollow bones.
- Some birds can fly. Some cannot. Some can swim. Some cannot.
- Birds eat many different types of food. Some eat insects or other animals, such as snakes, fish, or mice. Some eat seeds or other plant parts.
- The fastest animal on earth is a bird, the peregrine falcon, which can fly at speeds of up to 200 miles an hour.

## MAMMALS

- All mammals breathe air.
- All mammals are born alive.
- All mammals have fur/hair (including dolphins and whales).
- All mammals make milk for their babies.
- All mammals are warm-blooded.
- All mammals have an internal skeleton.
- People are mammals.
- Some mammals live on land, and some live in the oceans.
- Some mammals, such as antelope, are herbivores. Some, such as lions, are carnivores. Some are omnivores, including bears and humans.

## AMPHIBIANS

- All amphibians are born in the water.
- Most are hatched from eggs.
- All amphibians must remain moist, as they breathe through their skin.

- Some amphibians such as frogs and toads metamorphosize, which means they change forms as they develop. For example, a tadpole changes into a frog after growing legs and lungs.
- Amphibians are cold-blooded.
- Amphibians are omnivores, with some eating algae and worms and others eating insects and fish.
- Amphibians have internal skeletons.

## INVERTEBRATES

- There are more invertebrates than any other group of animal.
- Some examples of invertebrates are insects, jellyfish, spiders, worms, and lobsters.
- Invertebrates have no internal skeleton.

### Additional resources:

Consider using a mix of stories about animals and additional informational texts. It's likely that you have many favorites by favorite authors. Feel free to draw on those, but consistently compare narrative stories with what you know about animals from your factual exploration. For example, you might read Eric Carle's *Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Talk with the children about whether or not the information included in that book aligns with what you've been learning about the life cycle of butterflies: butterflies come from a chrysalis, not a cocoon, and they don't eat sausage, cake, etc.

Some great informational texts include the DK *Eye Wonder* series; *Zoobooks* (on any animal topic you can think of!) and their new magazines for younger children, *Zootles* and *Zoobies*; and The National Wildlife Foundation's magazines, *Ranger Rick*,

*My Big Backyard*, and *Wild Animal Babies*. Be aware, though, that magazines are often a mix of genres. If you want to point out key features of informational text, make sure the text you are using has those features!

### **Other titles to consider**

Hameray's *Zoozoo Animal World Series*, by Lee Waters:

*Arctic Fox*

*Bald Eagle*

*Bat*

*Brown Bear*

*Butterfly*

*Chicken*

*Cow*

*Crocodile*

*Deer*

*Gorilla*

*Horse*

*Killer Whale*

*Moose*

*Owl*

*Pig*

*Polar Bear*

*Puffin*

*Sheep*

*Snake*

*Walrus*

Hameray's *Zoozoo Into the Wild Series*, with titles by various authors:

*Brothers*

*Elephant*

*Frog*

*Giraffe*

*Me and Mom*

*New Friends*

*Orangutan*

*Play Ball*

*Going Home*

*Helpful Hippo*

*Hippo*

*Lion*

*Snack Time*

*Tiger*

*We Are Thirsty*

*Zebra*

# Going Places

## Focus Vocabulary for the Theme

airplane	on foot
automobile	ship
bicycle	transportation
boat	tricycle
car	truck
cart	vehicle
engine	vessel
motor	

## What Teachers Need to Know

Transportation is the term for moving people or things from one place to another.

There are many forms of transportation.

Sometimes we move things on land, sometimes we move things on the water, and sometimes we move things in the air.

Stuff we transport is called cargo.

### Land Transportation

People and animals use their feet for transportation.

People also use other kinds of transportation on land.

Land transportation (such as bicycles, tricycles, cars, trucks, and trains) often has wheels.

Another name for land transportation is “vehicles.”

Some wheeled vehicles drive on roads.

Some wheeled vehicles, such as trains and subways, drive on tracks.

Some animals, such as horses, camels, and elephants, are used for transportation. They help people move over land by letting the people ride on them.

Some animals can pull carts or sleds to help move people or things. Sled dogs are trained to pull sleds, and some donkeys are trained to pull carts.

People who drive vehicles are called drivers. The people who travel with them are called passengers.

People who drive trains are called engineers.

## **Water Transportation**

People and animals can move through water with their bodies by swimming.

Vehicles in water are called vessels.

Some vessels, such as ships and boats, move on top of the water.

Some vessels, such as submarines, move under the water.

Vessels on top of the water float.

Vessels under the water are suspended.

Places where vessels come to land to unload are called ports.

People who drive water vessels are called captains. Workers on the vessels are called sailors.

## **Air Transportation**

“Aircraft” is the name for transportation in the air.

People cannot fly without a plane or other aircraft.

Some animals, such as birds and bats, can move through the air on their own.

Some aircraft, such as planes, spaceships, and helicopters, use engines to fly.

Some aircraft, such as hang gliders, are launched and then just glide.

People who drive aircraft are called pilots.

## **Additional Resources:**

Civardi, A. (2006). *Going on a Plane*. Tulsa, OK: E.D.C. Publishing.

Hillenbrand, W. (2002). *Down by the Station*. Orlando, FL: Voyager Books

Jacobs, P.D. & Swender, J. (2004). *My Subway Ride*. Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith.



Kirk, E. (2006). *My Plane Book*. London: Collins.

Mitton, T. (2005). *Tough Trucks*. London: Kingfisher.

Mravec, J. (2004). *Boats, Planes & Trains*. Lincolnwood, IL: Publications Unlimited.

Pallotta, J. (1999). *The Airplane Alphabet Book*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge Publishing.

Priddy, R. (2003). *My Big Train Book*. London: Priddy Books.

Simon, S. (2004). *Seymour Simon's Book of Trains*. New York: HarperTrophy.

# Growing Things

## Focus Vocabulary for the Theme

plant	farmer
germinate	florist
warmth	harvester
soil	tractor
root	grow
stem	plow
flower	weed
branch	nursery
leaf/leaves	tree
needles	grocer
seed	market
harvest	fruit
field	vegetable
garden	

## What Teachers Need to Know

Plants are living things.

Unlike animals, plants do not move around. They will turn their leaves to face the sun, but they cannot otherwise move.

Plants grow from seeds.

Seeds contain an embryonic form of the plant they will become. Seeds need to be planted for that embryonic plant to germinate (grow).

All plants require light, warmth, nutrients, and water.  
Most plants get their nutrients from soil through their roots.

Some plants get nutrients from water. This is called hydroponics.  
Flowering plants have several parts: roots, stem, and flowers (where seeds are formed).

In flowering plants, seeds are formed when the pollen moves from the stamen to the pistil. Once fertilization occurs, the seeds develop in the ovary. It is this part of the plant that grows and becomes a fruit.

Plants make their own food by using energy from the sun to turn carbon dioxide and water into sugar. This process takes place in the leaves. The chemical needed for this is chlorophyll. Chlorophyll is what makes leaves green.

Stems and trunks support the plant so the leaves can collect the sunlight necessary for photosynthesis.

Because plants store nutrients and energy, they are good for animals to eat. Many animals eat plants.

Sometimes most of a plant is edible; lettuce is an example of this.  
Sometimes only a small part of a plant is edible; raspberries are an example of this.

Fruits and vegetables are edible parts of plants.

Sometimes the roots are edible (as in potatoes and carrots) and sometimes the plant part above the ground is edible (as in cabbage or lettuce). Sometimes it is just a part of the portion of the plant that

is above the ground that is edible (as is the case with corn or tomatoes).

Gardens usually have many different types of plants.

Fields usually have only one type of plant.

## **Plants and People**

People who study plants are called botanists.

People who grow plants are gardeners, farmers, horticulturists, and nursery workers.

Farmers grow plants for animals and humans to eat.

People can buy plants and seeds at a nursery or a flower shop.

Farmers sell food to grocers so grocers can sell them to families.

Sometimes farmers sell food to families at farmers' markets or farm stands.

## **Trees**

Trees are a kind of plant.

There are two main types of trees.

Deciduous trees have leaves that change color and fall off each year. They have a dormant period in cooler months when the tree rests. As the weather warms, the trees make food again and leaves start to grow.

Coniferous trees are called evergreens because they have no dormant period. They make food all year in their needles, which are actually a type of leaves. Needles do not fall off every year like deciduous leaves do.

Trees grow seeds.

Some trees grow fruits, such as apples, oranges, and plums.

Some trees grow nuts, such as acorns, hazelnuts, and walnuts.

Peanuts do not grow on trees. The peanut is actually a legume, similar to beans or peas, though unlike beans or peas, peanuts grow underground.

Some trees have other kinds of seed containers such as pinecones (in the case of pine trees) or winged seeds (maples, for example).

Picking parts of plants is called harvesting. People who pick parts of plants are called harvesters or pickers.

Some machines can pick plants too. They are also called harvesters.

**Additional Resources:**

Amery, H. (2006). *On the Farm*. London: Usborne Books.

Black, S. (2003). *On the Farm*. New York: Cartwheel Books.

Bunting, E. (2000). *Flower Garden*. Orlando, FL: Voyager Books.

Bulla, C. R. (2001). *A Tree Is a Plant*. New York: HarperCollins.

Chevalier, C. (1999). *The Secret Life of Trees*. New York: DK Children.

Gibbons, G. (1984). *The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree*. New York: Harcourt Children's Books.

Kemper, B. (2006). *Out and About at the Greenhouse*. Mankato, MN: Picture Window Books.

Lobel, A. (1993). *The Rose in My Garden*. New York: HarperTrophy.

Wellington, M. (2007). *Zinnia's Flower Garden*. New York: Puffin.

# Having Fun

## Focus Vocabulary for the Theme

activities	recreation
entertainment	rules
game	sports
pastime	team
play	

## What Teachers Need to Know

There are many ways to have fun.

Anything that is enjoyable is a way to have fun.

Some people enjoy the same things.

Some people do not enjoy the same things. (They can still be friends, though!)

Sometimes we have fun alone.

Sometimes we have fun with other people.

## Games

Sometimes we play games for fun.

Games usually have rules and winners.

Some games are played with a partner.

Some games are played with teams of people.

Some games are played inside, and some are played outside.

Some inside games include board games, hide and seek, electronic games, basketball, and card games.

Some outside games include football, hopscotch, Frisbee, and tag.

## **Sports**

Sports are games that are organized and competitive.

Sports usually involve large motor activity; running a race, shooting a basket, or batting a ball are examples of this.

Some sports are played with teams, and some sports are played with just one player against another player (e.g., golf or tennis).

## **Activities**

Sometimes we just play for fun, not to win. These are unstructured activities.

Some unstructured activities include ice skating, swimming, pretend-playing, exploring nature, fishing, climbing trees or rocks, hiking, building a snowman, engaging in the arts, and sledding.

## **Additional Resources:**

Connor, B. (2007). *Unplugged Play: No batteries, no plugs, pure fun!* New York: Workman Publishing Company.



De Paola, T. (1997). *The Art Lesson*. New York: Puffin.

Hammond, T. (2005). *Sports*. New York: DK Publishing. NOTE: DK Publishing has informational books on a wide array of topics including recreational activities such as sports. While these books are not geared toward the preschool child, they can provide useful information to teachers trying to build their own knowledge on an unfamiliar topic, such as a sport a child is interested in.

Editors of Sports Illustrated Kids (2009). *Wow! Sports Illustrated Kids Pop-up Book of Sports*. New York: Sports Illustrated Kids.

Henry, S. (2007). *Making Amazing Art: 40 activities using the 7 elements of art design*. Nashville, TN: Williamson Books.

Golenbock, P. (1992). *Teammates*. Riverside, UT: Sandpiper.

Micklethwait, L. (2005). *Colors: A first art book*. London: Frances Lincoln.

Tomkins, J. (2011). *Nimby: An Extraordinary Cloud Who Meets a Remarkable Friend*. Seattle, WA: Green Tiger Press.

# My Community

## Focus Vocabulary for the Theme

activities	neighborhood
buildings	neighbors
buy	recreation
city	sell
community	shopkeeper
community helpers	shops
home	town
merchandise	transportation
motor	vehicle

## What Teachers Need to Know

Communities are people who share things.

- Some communities, such as neighborhoods, share space.
- Some communities, such as church communities, share values.

People who live near each other are called neighbors.

- Neighbors sometimes help each other.
- People who help their towns or cities are called community helpers.
- Community helpers include police officers, firefighters, teachers, doctors, and letter carriers.

People can buy the things they need in their communities.

- Shopkeepers have stores in the community.
- There are many different kinds of stores.
- We buy food at grocery stores and from farm markets.

- We buy books at bookstores. We buy shoes at shoe stores. We buy sports equipment at sporting goods stores.

People get around their communities in many different ways.

- Some people walk around their community.
- Some people drive.
- Other people take a bus or a taxi.
- Some people ride bikes or skateboards.

Animals live in communities as well.

- Some animals that live in communities are wild, such as squirrels and pigeons or other birds.
- Some animals are pets such as dogs and cats.

### **Additional Resources:**

Ardalan, H. (2001). *Milton Goes to the Vet*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books.

Hoena, B. A. (2003). *A Visit to the Library*. Mankato, MN: Pebble Plus.

Kottke, J. (2000). *A Day with Firefighters*. Danbury, CT: Children's Press.

Levine, E. (1988). *If You Were an Animal Doctor*. New York: Scholastic.

Moss, M. (1999). *Mel's Diner*. New York: Troll Communications.

Radabaugh, M. B. (2003). *Going to a Restaurant*. Chicago: Heinemann.



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