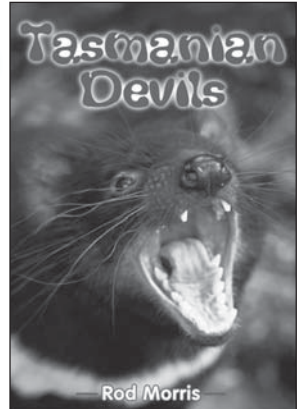


Tasmanian Devils

by Rod Morris



Book Summary

Rod Morris has written a nonfiction account of an unusual marsupial, the Tasmanian devil. He explains how this fierce little animal with a big mouth is winning a battle of survival against the odds.

Features of the Book

- The animal life cycle
- The arresting cover
- Specialized vocabulary – *marsupial, nocturnal, predator, prey, extinct*
- The contents page, glossary, and index
- Fact boxes
- Diagram and map
- Close-up photographs

Purpose

Tasmanian Devils can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** using a glossary and index;
- S** comparing nonfiction genres;
- S** debating different sides of an argument;
- S** researching and presenting information;
- S** writing a scientific report;
- S** creating a glossary.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Using a glossary and index
- S** Comparing nonfiction genres
- S** Debating different sides of an argument

Introducing the text

Show the group the cover of the book and discuss the title and photograph.

- *What kind of animal is this?*
- *How would you describe it? What do you think it might eat?*
- *Why do you think these animals might be called devils?*

Read the blurb on the back cover together and discuss the further information it provides.

- *How does the writer describe the Tasmanian devil?*
- *Where is Tasmania/Australia?*

Ask the students to find these places on a map or a globe and list any facts they know about them.

Discuss the contents page.

- *Which chapters are going to be about Tasmanian devils?*
- *Can you find the glossary and the index?*
- *What do we use these for?*

Discuss the students' suggestions and clarify any misconceptions. Test their understanding with questions such as:

- *Where in the book would I find out what the word "predator" means?*
- *Where in the book would I read about other animals that live in Tasmania?*
- *How would I find out where to look in the book for information on the wombat?*
- *Can you explain how the words are organized in the index?*

Reading and discussing the text

Explain that the book is a nonfiction report. Ask the students what kind of information they would expect to find in this report. Their suggestions could include:

- facts about where the animal lives and what it eats
- graphs and charts
- maps and diagrams.

Discuss other ways that nonfiction material is presented in books, for example, diaries and step-by-step instructions.

- *How might a report be different from a diary?*

Ask the students to read chapter 1.

- *As you read, mark any words you are unsure of.*


Discuss these words. Use an atlas, dictionary, or encyclopedia to clarify meanings. If a student has not listed any words, ask for an explanation of the words in bold type.

Write the headings of the remaining chapters on the board. Ask the students to think about what these headings tell them about the content of the chapters.

- *Write down one question you have about each chapter heading. This should be a question you expect to have answered in the chapter.*

The students can now read the rest of the book independently. When they have finished, ask them to refer back to their questions.

- *Did you find answers to all of your questions? Were the answers in the predicted chapters?*

 Ask the students to complete a web diagram of the Tasmanian devil with their new knowledge. Brainstorm the headings they will need, for example, Description, Diet, Habitat, and Predators. Record their main points under each heading.


Present the following topic to the students: “The survival of the Tasmanian devil is important.” Ask them for ideas that are for and against this statement. They should consider both sides of the argument and come to their own conclusions based on the ideas they have suggested. They will need to reread parts of the book to find evidence that supports their suggestions using the contents page and index to locate relevant pages.

Revisiting the Text

The suggested activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson if appropriate or could be taken as a mini-lesson at a later time.

S Researching and presenting information


- *Which of the Tasmanian devil’s marsupial neighbors would you like to find out more about? Why?*

 Ask the students to write down these headings: Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why.

- *Record one question about your marsupial neighbor under each heading.*
- *Record where you are going to find the answers to your six questions.*
- *Collect information that answers your questions and record it on a web diagram.*
- *What could you teach someone else about your chosen marsupial?*

Ask the students to use their web diagram as a prompt to tell a partner facts about their marsupial.

S Writing a scientific report

 Ask the students to create a fact file on the Tasmanian devil. They should reread their book and use other sources to collect relevant information. Their file should include:

- the name of the animal
- classification
- a map to show where it is found
- a description and an illustration
- information on diet, food chain, and habitat
- survival tactics
- other interesting facts.

The fact file could be presented on a large piece of paper. You might like to set a format for the layout or ask the students to refer back to the book for layout ideas. Discuss headings and the use of illustrations, text boxes, and diagrams.

- *Which pages are the most effective?*

S Creating a glossary

Ask the students to make a list of interesting words relating to the marsupial they chose for the activity above. They could select 8 to 10 words to make a glossary using the blackline master on page 73. Discuss alphabetical order, writing meanings that are easily understood, and supplying pictures or diagrams to support the definitions.