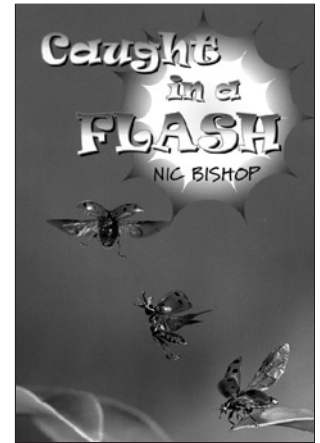


# Caught in a Flash

by Nic Bishop



## Book Summary

This book explains how photographer Nic Bishop came to develop a way of “freezing” the actions of animals and insects – movements that happen too quickly for us to see. The final result is breathtaking. We see crisp images of insects caught in mid flight and a flying squirrel testing its “wings” inside the photographer’s house.

## Features of the Book

- The double meaning in the title
- Sequences of images to suggest movement
- The image of the flash on the cover and title page
- The diagram and the accompanying caption
- The variety of text styles – personal narrative, procedural, expository
- The clear example of problem solving
- Design features – using circles and rectangles
- Specialized vocabulary – *flashgun, shutter, laser*

## Purpose

*Caught in a Flash* can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** using photographs to aid prediction;
- S** following the problem-solving process;
- S** interpreting labeled diagrams;
- S** reading and writing procedural text;
- S** distinguishing between fact and opinion;
- S** using the text as a springboard to further research.

## The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Using photographs to aid prediction
- S** Following the problem-solving process
- S** Interpreting labeled diagrams

## Introducing the text

Ask the students whether they have ever closely watched a fly zooming by.

- *Were you able to see how the fly’s wings were working? Why not?*

Introduce the idea that many things happen so fast that we can’t see them clearly. Ask the students for other examples (a cricket leaping, a hummingbird’s wings beating, moving parts inside a machine).

- *How could you slow these things down so that you could see them? Could you take a photograph?*
- *What might happen if the thing was moving too quickly? (the picture would be blurry)*

Discuss what happens when someone moves in a family photo.

Show the students the cover of the book and ask them to comment on the photograph.

- *What do you think the book might be about?*
- *Can anyone suggest what the title might mean?*

Read the blurb on the back cover together and discuss the fact that the author, Nic Bishop, is also the photographer.

- *Can you tell from the last sentence what the book might be about?*

Depending on the abilities and experience of the students, you may wish to introduce and discuss some of the specialized vocabulary and ideas at this point.

## Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read chapter 1 independently. As they read, they could think about the following question:

- *What problem does the author have?*

Ask the students to back up their suggestions with evidence from the text. (He wants to take photographs of fast-moving things, but insects “aren’t interested in having their photographs taken.” He can’t buy the equipment he needs.)

- *What is the unusual plan that he wants to try?* (He wants to build a piece of equipment so that the insect or animal can take its own photograph.)
- *How could this work? How could something as small as a fly take a photograph?*

Ask the students to read the first two pages of chapter 2 and then discuss in detail the diagram on page 9. Before they read on, make sure that the students understand how the author hopes the equipment will work.

The students can now read the rest of chapter 2 and chapter 3 independently. As they read, get them to note any further problems that the author faced and how he solved them. Discuss their findings. They may suggest:

- He needed a laser gadget for the plan to work. He asked his father to build one.
- He needed a special shutter for the camera, but there was nowhere he could buy it. He made it himself from a doorbell.
- His flashgun wasn’t good enough. He asked a friend to make a special flashgun.

The students can now read the rest of the book independently, enjoying the images the author has captured and the stories that go with them.




## 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 late time.

### **S** Reading and writing procedural text

Discuss how the author went through a series of steps as he tried to take the photographs he wanted. He also went through smaller steps to solve each problem he encountered along the way. Ask the students to choose one of these problems and to write a series of numbered steps for someone to follow.

 The students could use the blackline master on page 80 to order the steps that the author used to teach Amelia to glide.

You could also suggest that the students write their own sequence of steps for something that they enjoy doing and then share this with the group.

### **S** Distinguishing between fact and opinion

Ask the students to reread the final page of the book.


- *What do you notice about the way the author is writing here?*
- *Does he say things like this anywhere else in the book?* (The author has used adjectives like “beautiful” and “amazing,” and a metaphor and a simile to describe the movements of the insects.
- *Would someone else say the same things about these insects if they saw them?*

Discuss the idea of fact and opinion. The book mostly consists of factual information and descriptions.

- *Are the author’s statements on the last page fact or opinion?*

### **S** Using the text as a springboard to further research

The students could choose an animal or insect from the story to research more thoroughly.

 They could make a poster, sketching the insect in the center, and placing the additional information in captions around it. Encourage them to share their findings with the rest of the class and display their work.