

Stories in Stones

by Bill Gaynor



Book Summary

Stories are usually associated with books – but stories in stones! The fossils in this book tell stories of a time long, long ago.

Features of the Book

- The use of technical terms – “fossil,” “mosasaur,” and “ammonite.”
- The concept of a vast amount of time passing.
- Additional challenges in text in smaller type.
- The use of bold type for emphasis.
- The explanatory section on page 4.
- Text that encourages close attention to the photographs and illustrations.
- The use of comparisons – “like a penguin” and “like an octopus.”
- Multisyllabic words – “mosasaur,” “dinosaurs,” “elasmosaur,” “ammonite,” and “octopus.”
- Changes of tense throughout the text.

Purpose

Stories in Stones can be used in a guided reading setting to introduce and reinforce the following skills and strategies:

- S** discussing the organizational structure of the text;
- S** discussing new vocabulary and extending understanding;
- S** writing to the author about their opinion of the story.

Introducing the text

Discuss the title.

– *How can stones tell stories?*

Look at the images on the cover. Ask the children if they can make any links between the image of the crab and what seems to be a stone model of a crab.

Read the name of the author to the group.

Reading the text

- S** Discussing the organizational structure of the text.

- S** Discussing new vocabulary and extending understanding.

Pages 2 and 3 – Let the children answer the question.

Look at the tree.

– *Has anyone seen a very old tree?*

The book says these rocks are millions of years old.

– *Could anything be older than that?*

Pages 4 and 5 – Discuss the explanation of what a fossil is, and then read the shaded information box and the caption to the photograph.

Pages 6 and 7

– *What word tells us how this crab might have moved?*

Pages 8 and 9 – Explain the use of the text in parentheses.

Pages 10 and 11 – Talk about the word “fly” and why it is in quotation marks.

Pages 12 and 13

– *How big is this shell? Would you notice it if it was lying on the beach? How can you tell that the shell is big?*

Pages 14 and 15 – Look closely at the photograph.

– *How can you tell that these are leaves?*

– *Do you know where they were growing when they were alive?*

Page 16 – Read this section together. It is a summary in words and photographs.

Children now read the book independently.


Revisiting the text

Discuss how the author has made comparisons to more familiar creatures, for example, “just like a penguin” and “just like an octopus.”

Study the use of tense in the text, for example, the “is” and “was” on page 4.

Following Up

- S** Writing to the author about their opinion of the story.

 Encourage the children to write a letter to the author of *Stories in Stones* telling him what they liked about the book, and what things made it easy/hard to understand.

- E** Complete the blackline master opposite.