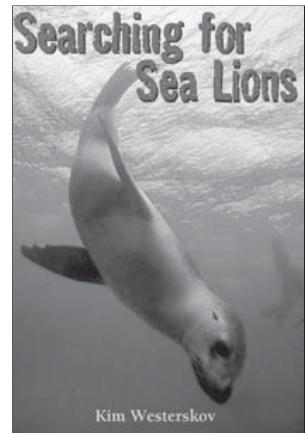


Searching for Sea Lions

by Kim Westerskov



Book Summary

Photographer and writer Kim Westerskov undertakes an expedition to remote Campbell Island. The purpose of this visit was to take underwater photographs of a rare species of sea lion for a film and a book about a remote South Pacific island.

Features of the Book

- Dramatic photographs
- Nonfiction in first-person narrative form
- Descriptive language – *a very special underwater dance; seaweed sways and dances*
- The author's affinity with the sea lions
- The use of framed and overlapping images in the layout
- The simple fact chart
- Specialized vocabulary – *bull, pup, flipper*
- The factual information in italics

Purpose

Searching for Sea Lions can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- exploring how information is presented in different ways;
- discussing technical vocabulary;
- discussing an author's use of descriptive language;
- describing the mental images evoked by the text;
- forming and revising questions for investigation;
- locating and summarizing information.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- Exploring how information is presented in different ways
- Discussing technical vocabulary
- Discussing an author's use of descriptive language

Introducing the text

Look at the front cover of the book together.

- Do you know what sea lions are? Why do you think they are called sea lions?
- Why would someone be searching for them?

The blurb on the back cover states that the author is a photographer. It suggests that he is searching for sea lions so that he can take photographs of them underwater. Discuss the photographs of the sea lion on the cover and the title page.

Briefly discuss the topic of diving.

- What kinds of equipment do you need to dive?
- What kinds of animals might you see?
- Are there any dangers involved?
- Why do people go diving?

Talk about the reasons for diving, such as exploring, looking for sunken wrecks and treasure, recreation, fishing, and commercial applications, such as repairing oil pipelines or telephone cables.

- How would you feel about swimming underwater like this?
- What kinds of things might you be worried about?

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read chapter 1 independently.

- *As you read, make notes about the reasons for the sea voyage, both for the photographer and the people who took him.*

Ask one of the students for an oral summary of Kim Westerskov's reasons for traveling to such a remote place.

Discuss the idea of maps of the sea and note the background image of the ocean map on page 8.

- *What do you think the numbers on the map mean?*

When you feel that the students understand the purpose of the visit to the island, ask them to read chapter 2. This chapter contains a lot of facts and figures about the environment and the wildlife on the island.

- *As you read, notice that some of the story has been printed in a different way, using italics.*

When the students have finished reading, discuss the purpose-setting question.

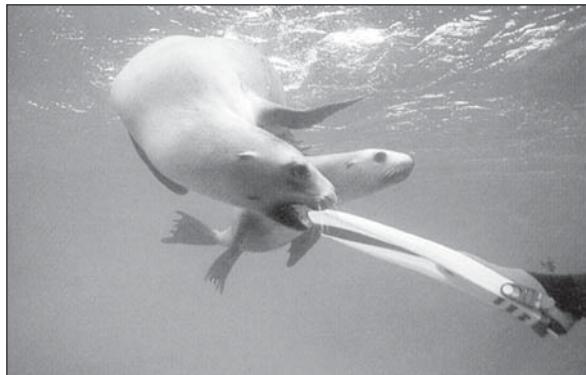
- *What is the difference between the text in italics and the text in regular print? Why do you think these parts of the text are printed differently?*

Look at the information panel on page 10 together. Discuss the vocabulary (average, rain days, wind speed, gale, degrees, knots). If possible, have some figures of local averages available to compare with these figures.

- *What do these facts about Campbell Island tell you? Would it be a pleasant place to live?*

Now the students can finish reading the book independently.

- *As you read, notice how the author describes the sea lions and the things they do.*



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 Describing the mental images evoked by the text

The text in this book is a combination of fact and evocative writing. Look at the images of the sea lions swimming underwater on pages 24 and 25. Ask the students to describe the shapes of the seals and the movements these shapes suggest.

- *Do you think the author's description is a good one?*
- *If you don't look at the photographs, what kind of picture comes into your mind?*
- *How else could you describe the sea lions moving in this way?*

Look at the other examples above and ask the students to write their own descriptive sentences for these images. They can record their ideas on the blackline master on page 72.

S Forming and revising questions for investigation

Ask the students to write down three "I want to know" statements about sea lions to find information that is not provided in the book. For example:

- I want to know what sea lions like to eat.
- I want to know what is being done to protect sea lions.

The students could use the school library and the Internet to gather the information they want. They could try "<http://www.seaworld.org>" to begin with.

S Locating and summarizing information

From the beginning of the adventure, Kim Westerskov faced a number of problems that made it difficult for him to do what he wanted.

Ask the students to skim through the story again and to write one sentence that summarizes each problem or to use a keyword that acts as a prompt for an oral summary. For example:

- They could only stay four days.
- For most of their stay, the weather on the island was bad.
- They couldn't find many sea lions underwater to begin with.

– Are they good summaries? Do they give you too much information or not enough?