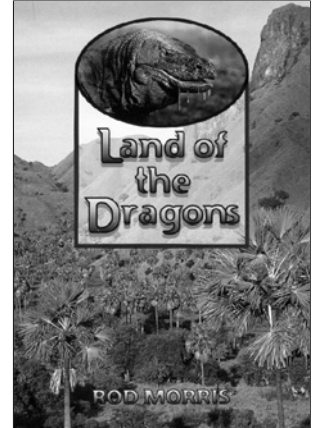


# Land of the Dragons

by Rod Morris



## Book Summary

Writer and photographer Rod Morris combines legend and personal narrative to provide a fascinating factual account about the Komodo dragon – the world's biggest lizard.

## Features of the Book

- The combination of fact and fiction
- The use of personal narrative and legend
- Descriptive language – *long-lost; flickering; rulers of the island; forked; hot on his tail; buried treasure*
- The use of italics
- The use of a map and inset
- Design features – chapter headings, dragon motif to end chapters
- The comparison with dragons from fairy tales

## Purpose

*Land of the Dragons* can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** comparing and contrasting different writing styles and genres;
- S** identifying the author's purpose for writing;
- S** interpreting and using graphic information;
- S** using electronic media for further research.

## The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Comparing and contrasting different writing styles and genres
- S** Identifying the author's purpose for writing

## Introducing the text

Ask the students what they know about dragons and record this information as a star diagram. If they have recently read *Dragon Slayer* by Joy Cowley, they may suggest that they are fierce, breathe fire, and can sometimes fly.

Ask the students if they think that dragons are real and then show them the cover of the book.

- *What do you think this book is about?*
- *Could there really be a country where there are dragons?*
- *What kind of creature is on the cover? Can you describe it?*

Note the words and phrases that the students suggest to refer to later.

Ask the students to read the blurb on the back cover and to discuss the information it contains. They may offer statements such as:

- There is an animal called a Komodo dragon.
- It's really a lizard.
- They live on an island called Komodo.

Discuss how the information about the Komodo dragon compares with the students' ideas of mythical dragons.

## Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read pages 3 and 4 of the text independently.

- *As you read, think about the way the author describes his dragon.*

The way that the author is holding the carving and describing where it came from suggests that it is very special to him. This is confirmed later in the text.


Read the story on pages 6 to 8 to the group.

- *What do you notice about this part of the book? Do you think it's true?*
- *What do you call this kind of writing? Does the way that it begins give you any clues? (A long time ago ...)*
- *Why do people write stories like this? (As an explanation when they are not quite sure how something happens or has come to be.)*

 Ask the students to read chapter 2 independently.

- *As you read, make a note of one fact about the dragons and be ready to share it with the group.*

The students can record these facts on the blackline master on page 81, adding to it as they find out more about the Komodo dragon.

 The students can now read the rest of the book independently. Ask them to locate and record five more facts about the Komodo dragon to add to the information chart that they have started.

- *What do you think is the author's main reason for writing this book?*

Discuss the reasons that authors usually write – for the reader's enjoyment, to give the reader information, or to persuade the reader to accept a point of view.



## 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** Identifying the author's purpose for writing

The Komodo dragon is a very special animal for the author. Even though some people might find its appearance and habits frightening, Rod Morris writes about it with respect and fascination. Writing this book is one way he can share his interest with others and introduce them to the culture of Indonesia.

- *Why do you think Rod Morris wrote this book?*
- *What makes you think that Komodo dragons are really special to the author? (He has a carving of one. He visited the island where they live. The language he uses. The way he watched the female guarding her nest for so long. His excitement about finding the eggs and the way he carefully covered the nest again.)*

### **S** Interpreting and using graphic information

Look at the map on page 11. Ask the students whether they knew of any of the countries on the map before they read the book. Discuss how the layout shows the wider view and then a segment of that view in greater detail.

The students can now use an atlas or a globe to find the area shown in the map in relation to the United States. Use the key on the map to work out the width of the United States and then Australia. This will help to show how small the island of Komodo really is.

### **S** Using electronic media for further research

Encourage the students to do further research on the Komodo dragon and the area in which it lives. They could each write several "I want to know" statements and then use the library or the Internet to locate the information they need. They could try the following website address:

<http://www.schoolworld.asn.au/species/komodo.html>