

Animal Messages

by Kevin Boon

Summary

Animals don't communicate in the same way as people, but they can still find each other, frighten off predators, and share information about food. They do this in lots of different ways, often without making a sound!

Features of the Text

- Fact boxes and grids
- Labelled diagrams
- Captioned photographs and illustrations
- Headings and subheadings
- Contents page, glossary, index
- Specialised vocabulary

Purpose

Animal Messages can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** using the features of non-fiction such as headings, glossaries, captions, and grids;
- S** locating information using the contents page and index;
- S** summarising and retelling information;
- S** using the text as a model for writing.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Using the features of non-fiction such as headings, glossaries, captions, and grids
- S** Locating information using the contents page and index

Introducing the text

Look at the charts that the students completed earlier on the blackline master for *Tail Talk and other poems* and talk to them about their pets.

- How do you know when your pet is hungry/happy/upset?
- What does it do when it doesn't want anyone near?

Reading and discussing the text

Discuss the title of the book and the illustration on the cover.

- What kind of animal is this? What message might it be sending?

Read and discuss the contents page.

- Can you think of any animals that communicate through smell, colour, or dance? Are they on your chart?

Read the introduction and then look at the grid on page 3. Discuss the headings and the use of columns. Explain to the students that grids are a useful way to summarise information.

- Why has the author presented the information in this way?
- How do you read a grid like this?
- What does the grid tell us about bats and dogs?

Ask the students to read to the end of page 9.

- How else has the information been presented? (captions, diagrams, photographs, glossary)

Look at the grid on page 8. Compare this with the grid on page 3. Check the students' understanding by asking them questions that they can answer with information from the grids, for example:

- Why would a jay make a rattling sound?
- What do redshanks do when there is danger?
- How would a stonechat let other birds know that there was a snake nearby?

Discuss the use of sound to communicate messages.

- What other ways of communicating are there, which haven't been written about in this book?

Use the comparison grid on page 3 to predict what other kinds of messages may be included in this book.

Ask the students to read the rest of the text independently, confirming or revising their predictions.

Discuss the glossary and index on page 16.

- What kinds of books usually have a glossary or index?
- What are these two things used for?
- How would you use them as you read the book?

Following Up

The students can:

- use the blackline master on page 27 to complete their own grid, referring to the grid on page 3 of the book as a model
- use the information on page 11 of the book to prepare a small grid about lizards or octopuses
- choose one animal from the book and use the library or Internet to research its habits and habitat.