

Backyard Jungle

by Bruce Chapman

Summary

Many animals and insects live in and around our homes. Some of these creatures are more helpful to us than others.

Features of the Text

- Headings and subheadings
- Labeled illustrations and diagrams
- Fact files and charts
- Photographs (including closeups)
- Activity with instructions

Purpose

Backyard Jungle can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- exploring and using the features of nonfiction texts;
- using prior knowledge;
- summarizing and synthesizing information .

The Guided Reading Lesson

- Exploring and using the features of nonfiction texts

Introducing the text

Refer the students to the title of the book.

- What does the title make you think of?
- What kinds of creatures might you find in a backyard jungle?
- How does thinking about the title of a book help us before we read?

Look at the contents page together and discuss the students' expectations of the text.

As you introduce, read, and discuss this text, draw the students' attention to the nonfiction features. Check that they understand the information and how it is presented. Spend time discussing the features that are unfamiliar. The students may also need support to identify what they should read first, how they should interpret the information, and how the graphic features support the text.

Following Up

The students can:

- use the index in the book to complete the web about birds on the blackline master on page 63
- complete the experiment described on page 14 of the book and chart what they find over several days
- select four creatures in the book and list the helpful and harmful behavior of each one.

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read the first page.

- What animals and insects live near you?

Look at the chart on page 3 together.

- Do any of the creatures on this chart live near you?
- What would you add to this chart?
- Where exactly do these creatures live?

Look at pages 4 and 5 together.

- Are these the places you thought the creatures would live?
- Are any of the places different? Why do you think that is?

Ask the students to read pages 6 to 9. Remind them to use the photographs to help them understand the text.

- How are earthworms and bees helpful to us?
- Why are some of the words on these pages in bold?
- Do you know what these words mean?
- How can you find out?

The students can now read page 10.

- Can you think of some ways in which animals might adapt to their surroundings?

Look at the food chain on page 11 together.

- What does this tell us about cats, birds, insects, and plants?

Now look at the food web and encourage the students to use it to answer the following questions:

- What happens when a wild cat eats a bird?
- What do slugs eat? What are they eaten by?

When the students have finished reading the book, discuss the index.

- Why do nonfiction books often have an index?
- How do we use an index?

Help the students to use the index to find some information in *Backyard Jungle*. Encourage them to use the index when they read other nonfiction texts.