

Secrets of the Deep

by John Bonallack

Summary

To protect our natural resources, people need to learn more about them. In May 2003, a group of scientists set sail in the *Tangaroa* to explore the seamounts and ridges between New Zealand and Australia. During the expedition, they encountered many problems that required the use of technology and innovative thinking.

Features of the Text

- Jigsaw-puzzle analogy
- Photographs with captions
- Maps
- Fact boxes
- Descriptive language
- Specialised vocabulary – *sled*, *SWATH mapping*, *formalin*, *seamount*

Purpose

Secrets of the Deep can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** examining the use of descriptive language in non-fiction texts;
- S** using prior knowledge to support understanding of complex texts;
- S** exploring analogies.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Examining the use of descriptive language in non-fiction texts
- S** Exploring analogies

Introducing the text

Look at the cover, title, and contents page together. Discuss the title and the visual images it creates.

- *What do you think this text is about?*
- *What do you know about creatures that live deep in the sea?*

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read to the end of page 3.

- *Who are the people in the photographs? What is their mission?*
- *Why do they want to explore the deep sea?*

Together, identify the descriptive language on page 2. Discuss how language can be descriptive and factual at the same time. Explain to the students that descriptive language helps to make a non-fiction text more engaging. Compare the tone of the text on page 2 (descriptive and factual) with the text on page 3 (matter-of-fact).

Read the fact box on page 4 together.

- *How is life on Earth like a jigsaw puzzle?*
- *What other pieces of that jigsaw puzzle can you think of?*

Explain that this is an analogy – an extended comparison between two things. Draw the students' attention to the jigsaw puzzle design on the page.

Ask the students to read to the end of page 8. Discuss the problems that the scientists had and how they solved them. Write these on a problem–solution chart.

- *The text tells us that the sea's depths are very cold and dark. What features would you expect the creatures living there to have?*

The students can now read the rest of the text. When they have finished reading, discuss the features deep-sea creatures have that help them to survive in this environment.

Following Up

The students can:

- use the blackline master on page 33 to write an analogy about the deep sea
- write research questions about a creature of the deep and use several sources to find the answers
- write a letter to the organisers of the *Tangaroa*'s next expedition, convincing them that the student would be a valuable member of the team.
- debate the pros and cons of this kind of research