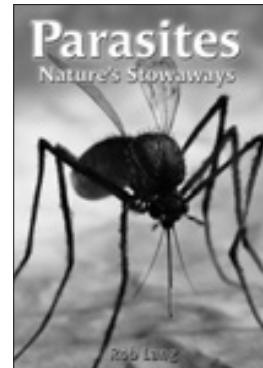


Parasites: Nature's Stowaways

by Rob Lang



Book Summary

Parasites are uninvited guests that live in or on animals, plants, or people. This text describes different kinds of parasites and their clever survival tactics.

Features of the Book

- Fact box
- Sequence
- Labeled diagram
- Cause and effect

Purpose

Parasites: Nature's Stowaways can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills and understandings:

- asking questions;
- analyzing text structure;
- forming opinions based on evidence from text;
- comparing the characteristics of organisms.

Investigation Tools

- What's the Background? – Living Together, page 8
- Step by Step – The Path of a Hookworm, page 13
- Looking Closer – A Tapeworm, page 16
- Making Connections – Head Lice, page 19
- Weighing Both Sides – Helpful or Harmful?, page 22
- Digging Deeper – The Striga Plant, page 28

The Guided Reading Lesson

- Asking questions
- Analyzing text structure
- Forming opinions based on evidence from text

Introducing the text

- *What do fleas, mosquitoes, and lice have in common?*
- *Why are these insects disliked?*

Discuss the common characteristic of parasites. (They live off their hosts.)

- *Can you think of other creatures that might fit into this category?* (ticks, leeches, some plants, ringworm)
- *What questions do you have about parasites?*

Distribute the books and ask the students to examine the cover and the table of contents. Explain that asking questions is a good way to think more deeply about a text's meaning.

- *Do any new questions come to mind?*

Invite the students to consider the chapter titles.

- *What do they tell you about parasites?*
- *What do they reveal about how this text is organized?*

Reading and discussing the text

Use the bold words on page 3 to demonstrate how to use the glossary. Encourage the students to skim the glossary for interesting words.

- *What questions do these words make you think of?*

Ask the students to read the introduction and study the illustrations.

- *What is your reaction?*
- *How are parasites spread?*

Discuss the cycle described in the introduction.

- *How might you interrupt the cycle?*
- *Why would you want to?*
- *Why do you think parasites are called "uninvited guests"?*
- *Now read chapter 1 to learn which parasites might be living on you!*
- *Did the information in chapter 1 answer any of your questions?*
- *Did it make you think of any other questions?*
- *How would you answer the question in the chapter title?*
- *Why would the author start with this chapter?*
- *Why was the parasite fact file included?*
- *Which facts interested you the most? Which surprised you?*

Ask the students to discuss whether worms are helpful or harmful.

- *Read chapter 2 to find out why some worms are parasites.*

When they finish, ask them which facts interested them most.

- *How does the author establish the difference between harmless and harmful worms?*
- *How does this chapter's organization help you identify the kinds of parasitic worms? (subheadings)*
- *Why did the author describe the hookworm in the step-by-step format? (makes information easier to remember, helps visualize process)*
- *How does this format add to the description?*
- *How does the diagram on page 16 help you to interpret the text?*

Ask the students to read chapter 3, looking for evidence that parasites can sometimes be useful.

- *Which bloodsucker has been useful to people? (leeches)*
- *What questions would you ask a doctor who uses leeches?*
- *What does this chapter make you wonder about?*

Explain that plants can also be parasites. Set the following purpose and invite the students to read the rest of the book:

- *Find out how one plant parasite affects the lives of millions of people.*

When they finish, discuss how the striga plant affects so many people. (It destroys crops in Africa.)

- *How is athlete's foot similar to a flea? (It gets its food from living things.)*

In pairs, the students can share their opinions about:

- *Which parasite is the creepiest?*
- *Which is the most dangerous to humans? Why?*

Invite the students to reread page 30.

- *Why is this an effective way to end the book? (It reminds the reader of what parasites have in common and summarizes the information.)*

Discuss any of the students' questions that haven't been answered. Generate ideas about how they might find answers.

Revisiting the Text

The activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson, during later reading sessions as mini-lessons, or as independent activities.

S Comparing the characteristics of organisms

Discuss how each parasite has special features that help it to survive. Compare the different effects these have on the parasite's host.

☞ The students can use information from the text to complete the blackline master on page 81.

S Analyzing text structure

The students can use the Step by Step investigation tool on page 91 to explain the life cycle of the parasite described in the introduction.