

Lesson Plan

Advanced Fluent
reading stage
Level R



Animal Architects explores how and why burrowing animals, such as wombats, prairie dogs, beavers, spiders and snakes, build structures underground for shelter, to raise their young, to store food, and to catch food.

Informative text types:
Explanation/Report

Science Curriculum links

Australia

- **BS (ACSSU73)** Living things depend on each other and the environment to survive
- **CS (ACSSU074)** Nature and uses of common materials
- **CS (ACSSU074)** Uses of materials based on their properties
- **GS (ACHASSK088)** The importance of environments, including natural vegetation, to animals and people

New Zealand

- **LW:** The key structural features and functions involved in the life processes of plants and animals
- **PW:** The properties of different groups of substances are linked to the way they are used in society or occur in nature

Key concepts

- Animals work in different ways to construct and maintain their homes/shelters and to remain safe

Content vocabulary

ambush, architects, build, burrows, chamber, colonies, dam, design, earth movers, fertilise, foundations, fungus, gnaw, hibernating, hind, lodges, moat, mound, predators, prey, regurgitate, rodents, saliva, sedges, solitary, species, stalk, stout, structures, towns, tunnels, turret, vent, ventilation shaft

Text features

- Diagrams, text boxes, sidebars, captions, glossary

Reading strategy

- Asking and answering questions

First reading session

Getting started

Introducing the book

Ask: *What do you know about animals that build underground structures?*

What questions do you have about how or why these animals do this?

Give each student a copy of the book *Animal Architects*. Have the students browse through the book. Say: *As you browse through the book, think about what you already know about the animals in the book. What connections are you making?* Have the students discuss their thinking with the group.

Exploring vocabulary

Ask: *What words or phrases would you expect to see in a book about animal architects?* Students work with a partner and record their words on note paper, listing the words under the names of the animals in the contents page. Say: *When you are finished, circle the words that apply to more than one animal.*

If some words or phrases are not known, have the student who recorded the word explain what it means. Compare the students' vocabulary words with the words in the glossary.

Introducing the reading strategy focus

Say: *We often read informative books to find the answers to questions we have about a topic. What questions do you have about animals that build underground structures?* Give the students a copy of the Graphic Organiser and have them record three questions in the available spaces.

Reading with teacher support

Say: *Read the introduction and chapter 1 to yourselves. As you read, keep your three questions in mind. Notice when the book answers a question and write down the information.* Have the students discuss their thinking with their partner, and then have a group discussion. Ask: *How has the author helped you to ...* (refer to a student's question e.g. "... understand why wombats build tunnels?"). Have the students record their ideas on the Graphic Organiser and compare it with their partner's. Say: *Be ready to talk about what you noticed with the whole group.*

Second reading session

Building understanding

Choose to have students either read independently or, if they need more support, to meet with you in a small group.

Independent and partner work

Have the students read chapters 2, 3, and 4 independently. Say: *As you read, use the same process we used with the introduction and chapter 1. Read the chapters to yourself and keep track of your thinking by adding to your Graphic Organiser, then meet with your partner to discuss what you have learned about animal architects and which of your questions you have found answers to.*

Have the students meet as a group to share and talk about what they have read and what they recorded on their Graphic Organiser. Monitor the group's progress and support them, if necessary.

Have the students read the rest of the book. On completion, have the students reread the whole book in preparation for the final reading session. Say: *Be ready to talk about your thinking and to discuss your questions and wonderings with the group.*

Reading with teacher support

Ask: *What have we learned so far about animal architects?* Share your ideas with a partner. Have the students read chapter 2 to themselves. Review what the students have read. Ask: *What new information do you have about prairie dogs and beavers? Which questions have you found answers to?* Invite the students to talk about their understandings. Have the students read chapters 3 and 4 to themselves. Say: *Now add the answers you have found about each animal to your Graphic Organiser.* On completion, have the students reread the whole book in preparation for the final reading session. Say: *Be ready to talk about your thinking and to discuss your questions and wonderings with the group.*

Reflecting on the reading strategy

Encourage the students to talk about what they did to help themselves as readers. Ask: *How did having questions in mind help you to concentrate on the information in the book? Did the book answer all your questions? Did the book make you think of new questions? Where might you find answers to these new questions?*

Final reading session

Bringing it all together

Have students talk about the whole book. Use a range of questions to promote discussion and higher-level thinking. Where appropriate, have the students lead the discussion.

Why do animals build underground structures? How are the animals in the book equipped to do this building? (Inferential)

How are the structures that animals build the same as structures that humans build? How are they different? (Synthesising)

The author uses the word “architect” to describe animals that build underground structures to live in. Is this true – do animals really plan and design the homes they build? (Critical)

Invite students to ask their own questions.

Going beyond the book

Have students demonstrate their understandings by choosing one or more of the following tasks. The tasks can be completed independently, in pairs or in a small group.

Speaking and listening

Have students research one of the animals in the book, focusing on the questions they had about this animal and the answers they found in the book and elsewhere. Students then give a short oral presentation about this animal.

Vocabulary

Have students add to the word lists they made prior to reading the book. Students can use this list to support them in the writing task that follows.

Visual literacy

Have students return to the book to examine the use of a sidebar to provide additional information about beavers (pages 14–15). Discuss how the additional information in sidebars and captions can be integrated with the body text to make the information clear to the reader.

Writing

Have the students write a creative recount about their understanding of one of the animals in the book, using the prompt: *The year I built a _____ (burrow, mound, lodge etc.)* Provide the students with a template detailing how to plan and write a recount.

Planning to write a recount

Name: _____

Getting started

What is my recount about? _____

Who am I writing for? _____

Planning my recount

1. Setting: orientation

Who? _____

What? _____

Where? _____

When? _____

2. Significant things that happened (in order)

First (event 1) _____

Then (event 2) _____

Finally (event 3) _____

3. Conclusion: Comment

Can I summarise what I have written? _____

**Hint:** What voice will I use?
first person *I, we, my*, or third
person *he, she, they*?

Additional features I could use

☐ Extra facts

☐ Emails

☐ Time lines

☐ Quotes

☐ Photographs

☐ Diaries

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Say: *Remember to make clear the time sequence. Make sure to build some rising drama into your writing by thinking about things that could go wrong or threats that could arise as the animal/s build their homes.* Encourage the students to talk about their ideas with a partner. Say: *You will need to research what might go wrong for your animal.*

Alternatively, the students could choose to create a poster advertising the sale of one or more of the animals' homes to prospective animal buyers.

Graphic Organiser: Posing and answering questions

Name/s: _____

What questions do you have about how and why animals build underground structures?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

	My questions	Answers in the book	Further questions
Wombats			
Prairie dogs			
Beavers			
Termites			
Spiders			
Snakes			

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Developed by
Eleanor Curtain Publishing

Text: Kerrie Shanahan, Jenny Feely
Consultants: Linda Hoyt, Lyn Reggett
Designed by Derek Schneider
Printed in China through
Colorcraft Ltd, Hong Kong

Distribution details:
www.ecpublishing.com.au/contact-us

More information:
www.WorldWiseReading.com.au
www.ecpublishing.com.au

ISBN: 978-1-76086-193-3

