

Science

Vocabulary Readers

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**Teaching
Resources**



Introduction

Dear Teacher,

Science touches on every aspect of our lives, and one of the most common ways we experience science is through the life cycles of plants and animals. Each of the six science books in this program focuses on a different life cycle and the vocabulary used to describe it. The books feature leveled text for beginning readers, colorful and appealing photographs, and a clear, simple design. Readers learn basic concepts, fascinating facts, and much more about plant and animal life cycles.

The program is designed to make nonfiction accessible and engaging for young readers. The *Science Vocabulary Readers* include nonfiction elements such as a table of contents, chapters, picture captions and labels, boldface type, diagrams, maps, charts, glossaries, and special features such as Fast Facts and Life Cycle Reviews.

The program is flexible and easy to use in the classroom. Among the helpful features are the following:

- a tiered display and storage box that makes the titles easily identifiable
- six copies of each book, allowing for both independent reading and group instruction
- this guide to support and enhance your teaching plans
- two student reproducibles for each title that review content and help develop reading comprehension and critical-thinking skills

With *Science Vocabulary Readers*, children will boost essential reading skills, build core science knowledge, acquire key science vocabulary, and apply what they learn to their own lives.

Happy reading!

The Editors

Using This Guide

You can use the *Science Vocabulary Readers* in a number of ways. To help you maximize children's learning, this guide includes the following components:

What You'll Find in the Guide

- information about using nonfiction text (page 4)
- strategies for teaching science vocabulary (page 6)
- a sample lesson (page 10) that you can use as a model for teaching each of the books
- four sample graphic organizers (page 11) that you can replicate to use with the books
- two student reproducibles for each book (pages 12–23) focusing on essential comprehension skills, content, and personal reading response

Setting Up the Books

Place the books in the handy tiered box so that each title is visible and children have easy access to the books. Set the display box on a shelf or countertop where children can see it.

Using the Books for Reading in the Science Curriculum

These books are the perfect choices for science lessons on life cycles. Each book correlates to guided reading levels J or K. Check the grid on page 8 so you can select titles at just the right level for each child. Since six books of each title are included, you can easily assign children for small-group instruction.

Using the Books for Teaching Vocabulary

You might use the glossary at the back of each book to create a vocabulary lesson. After introducing and teaching the words, have children find and read them in the text. Encourage children to identify other words in each book that they would like to add to its glossary.

Using the Books for Independent Reading

These books also make good additions to your independent reading library. You might wish to place one copy of each book in a section of materials about life cycles. Invite children to browse through the books and choose one to read during independent reading time.

Using the Books for Teaching Nonfiction Text

The books provide excellent vehicles for teaching the genre of nonfiction. Read on for more about the benefits of this instruction.

Using Nonfiction

Ask yourself this: How many times a day do I read a piece of nonfiction? The answer is “often,” perhaps far more often than you realize. Nonfiction, or expository text, provides a reader with information. Most people encounter nonfiction in signs, advertisements, newspapers, magazines, instructions, recipes, manuals, lists of ingredients, and on the Internet.


If adults are bombarded with nonfiction material, so are children. Students from the earliest grades on must learn to read directions and signs. As they progress through school, children must learn to read content-area textbooks, reference materials, and other informative texts. And just as reading a story requires certain skills, so, too, does reading nonfiction.

The Challenges of Nonfiction

With nonfiction, readers must comprehend and remember facts and ideas and relate these to other information, usually prior knowledge. In many cases the information in nonfiction is complex because it reflects specific content areas.

The vocabulary in nonfiction is sometimes more difficult than in fiction. Readers are exposed to words that are not usually encountered in common conversation. These words are more likely to be polysyllabic and difficult to decode. They may be harder to pronounce. Some terms may be familiar to students but have unfamiliar meanings in a specific context. For example in the book *Horse Life Cycle*, students will most likely recognize the word *groom* but may not be familiar with the meaning “to brush and clean an animal.”

Another challenge that nonfiction poses is its format. Unlike a narrative text, expository text often has various features. These include headings, graphic aids, captions, boldface



words, pronunciations, and sidebars. Some students become distracted by these features, and as a result, their reading is interrupted by them.

The Benefits of Nonfiction

Although nonfiction poses challenges to developing readers, it provides important benefits as well.

- **A comfort level with nonfiction helps students navigate standardized tests.** Most such tests require students to read both fiction and nonfiction passages. Often, students are asked to make comparisons. Students who have had instruction in nonfiction materials have a definite advantage.
- **Nonfiction increases world knowledge.** Students find a large body of useful information as they read expository texts. Many children like to become “experts” in a topic and enjoy learning and sharing unusual facts.
- **Nonfiction builds vocabulary.** Language is a form of power, and as students read nonfiction, they acquire a vocabulary related to the topic. Words from the *Science Vocabulary Readers* such as *herbivore*, *pollen*, *hibernate*, *breed*, and *nectar* expand students’ ability to communicate in specialized areas. Mastery of these words and the concepts they represent help build student confidence as well.
- **Academic achievement is strengthened when students can navigate nonfiction texts.** As students move to higher grades, they encounter more and more expository materials. Repeated exposure to such texts provides a foundation that helps students master subjects more easily.

Nonfiction Features in *Science Vocabulary Readers*

You’ll find the following features in the *Science Vocabulary Readers*:

- **Chapters and chapter titles.** Explain that these titles usually identify or summarize the content of a chapter.
- **Clear and colorful photographs.** Illustrative material such as this is important to nonfiction because it supports the text and helps readers understand what is being conveyed. Many of the photographs have captions, which add to the information, or labels, which help clarify the illustrations. In some places, arrows are used to guide readers.