

About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational Page Count: 16 Word Count: 401

Book Summary

Get ready for some big, hairy spider action. *Tarantula!* explains many interesting facts about these misunderstood animals. Captions, boldface print, and detailed photos make this a great book to discuss nonfiction features of text with students. Students also have the opportunity to ask and answer questions as well as determine the author's purpose.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Ask and answer questions

Objectives

- Ask and answer questions to understand text
- Identify author's purpose
- Identify initial consonant *sp*-blend
- Recognize and use commas in a series
- Understand the purpose of boldface words in text

Materials

Green text indicates resources are available on the website.

- Book—*Tarantula!* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board
- Photograph of a tarantula
- *KWL / ask and answer questions, initial consonant *sp*-blend, commas in a series worksheets*
- *Discussion cards*



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting the book on an interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if the books are reused.)

Vocabulary

*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

- Content words:

Story critical: *fangs* (n.), *harmless* (adj.), *prey* (n.), *sense* (v.), *spider* (n.), *venom* (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Write the word *tarantula* on the board and show students a photograph of a tarantula. Ask students to share what they know about these creatures. Record their responses on the board.
- Have students study the photograph of the tarantula you provided. Ask them what questions they have about tarantulas. Record their questions on the board.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name).
- Preview the table of contents on page 3. Remind students that the table of contents provides an overview of the book. Ask students what they expect to read about in the book on the basis of what they see in the table of contents. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Ask and answer questions**

- Explain to students that engaged readers understand what they are reading by asking questions before, during, and after reading. Discuss with students how asking questions will help them understand and remember what they read.
- Model how to ask questions.
Think-aloud: Before I start reading, I always have several questions that come to mind about the topic or title of the book. From what I see on the cover and title page, it appears this book is all about tarantulas. As I study the photograph on the front cover, I see it has orange, brown, and white on its body, I wonder if all tarantulas are this colorful. I also wonder how big tarantulas can get because the one on the cover looks very large. As I read, I will be curious to see if I can discover the answers to my questions. Looking for answers to my questions as I read helps me understand what I'm reading and makes reading enjoyable.
- Introduce and explain the **KWL / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet**. Refer students to the list of questions generated on the board. Have them write one or two questions in the first section of their worksheet. Invite students to share some of their questions about tarantulas. Add any new questions to the list on the board.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Author's purpose**

- Explain to students that an author usually has a reason or purpose for writing a book. The purpose is to *inform*, to *entertain*, or to *persuade*. Explain that to *inform* means to give someone information about something; to *entertain* means to amuse someone; and to *persuade* means to convince someone to think of or do something in a new way.
- Read the table of contents and page 4 aloud. Model how to identify the author's purpose.
Think-aloud: When authors write, they have a reason, or purpose, for writing their book. They want to inform us, entertain us, or persuade us. After reading the title and the first page of this book, I think the author wants readers to learn facts and information about a spider called a tarantula, so I think the author's purpose is to inform us. Sometimes authors write for more than one purpose, so I will keep reading to see if the author also wants to entertain us or persuade us.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Introduce the story-critical words listed in the vocabulary section of this lesson.
- Review the correct pronunciation for the words in the glossary. Turn to the glossary on page 16. Read the words aloud and discuss their meanings.


- Remind students of the strategies they can use to work out words they don't know. For example, they can use what they know about letter and sound correspondence to figure out words. They can look for words within words, prefixes, and suffixes. They can use the context to work out the meanings of unfamiliar words. For example, say: *If I didn't know the meaning of the word venom, I could read the definition in the glossary, but I could also turn to the page it's on and read the words and sentences around it. I could also make connections to something I already know to help me figure out the meaning of the word. When I read page 11, I can see that the word venom must mean poison that makes prey stop moving. I know that venom is poisonous because I have read books about snakes that use venom to keep their prey from moving.*

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about tarantulas. Remind them to ask questions and search for answers to questions as they read, and to think about the author's purpose for writing the book.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read pages 4 through 6. Encourage those who finish early to go back and reread. Ask students to look at their KWL / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet and then circle or highlight any questions that were answered in this part of the text.
 - Model answering a question and filling in the second column of the ask-and-answer-questions chart on the board.
Think-aloud: Before reading, more than one question came to mind about this book. I was curious about the colors of tarantulas. I also wanted to know how big tarantulas get. While reading, I discovered some tarantulas are brown or black, but others can be very colorful. I also learned tarantulas can grow up to 12 inches. I will write these answers on the ask-and-answer-questions chart on the board.
 - Ask students to write answers to their circled questions and any additional questions they had on their ask-and-answer-questions worksheet. Invite them to share the information they learned and the questions they generated as they read the book. Write shared responses on the class chart on the board.
 - Review the three reasons authors write books: *to inform, to entertain, to persuade*. Ask students to explain the author's purpose in this section of the book.
 - **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 8. Encourage them to share questions they asked as they read. (Accept all answers that show students understand how to ask and answer questions.)
 - Ask students to explain the author's purpose in this section. Ask them if they continue to think it is to inform, or if the author has entertained or persuaded the reader in any way on these pages.
 - Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to ask and answer questions and keep in mind what the author's purpose is while they read.
-  Have students make a small question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Reinforce that asking questions before and during reading, and looking for the answers while reading, keeps readers interested in the topic. It also encourages them to keep reading to find answers to their questions and helps them understand and enjoy what they read.

- **Think-aloud:** *Before reading, I wanted to know about tarantulas. I now know where they live, how they use their bodies to survive, how they catch prey, and how safe they can be. I also know that people are a tarantula's biggest enemy.*
- **Independent practice:** Point out to students that all of their questions may not have been answered in this text. Brainstorm other sources they might use to locate additional information to answer their questions (websites, books, and so on). Invite students to write one or two more questions they still have about tarantulas on their worksheet. Ask students to share questions they added.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Review the three main purposes that authors have for writing. Ask students if they think it is possible for an author to have more than one purpose when writing. For example, is it possible for an author to give you information and entertain you at the same time?
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you read about an interesting spider many people fear. In the book you learned many facts about tarantulas. Now that you know this information, do you think people should be afraid of these fascinating creatures? Why or why not?

Build Skills

Phonics: Initial consonant *sp*-blend

- Write the word *spiders* on the board and say it aloud with students.
- Have students say the /sp/ sound aloud. Then run your finger under the letters in the word as students say the whole word aloud. Ask students to identify which letters represent the /sp/ sound in the word *spiders*.
- Have students brainstorm other words that begin with the *sp*-blend. Make a list on the board. Have volunteers come to the board and underline the *sp*-blend in each word.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following words that begin with the /sp/ sound on the board, leaving off the initial consonant blend: *spend*, *spot*, *speed*. Say each word, one at a time, and have volunteers come to the board and add the initial *sp*-blend to each word.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [initial-consonant-sp-blend worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Grammar and Mechanics: Commas in a series

- Explain to students that when three or more items are listed, a comma is placed between the items. Listed items can be nouns, verbs, adjectives, or entire phrases or clauses. Remind students this is only one of the many uses for a comma.
- Write the following sentence on the board, leaving out the commas: *Tarantulas live in holes under logs or in trees.* Have a volunteer suggest where to place the commas in the sentence.
- Have students turn to page 5 and look at the caption at the bottom of the page. Ask them to find the list of colors. Ask them to circle the commas and notice that the last item is added to the list after the word *or*.



Check for understanding: Have students work in pairs to find and circle the remaining lists of items that are separated by commas. Have them underline the sentences. After everyone has finished, discuss their answers.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [commas-in-a-series worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.

Word Work: Boldface

- Explain to students that *boldface* means that something is written in darker print than other words on the page. Have students turn to page 4 and ask them to locate an example of boldface (*fangs*).
- Ask students to turn to the glossary at the end of the book. Have them find and point to the word *fangs*. Have a volunteer read the definition.

- Explain to students that boldface is used most often in nonfiction writing. Authors use boldface as a tool to draw attention to a word, a subject, or a feature on the page. In this book, the author uses boldface to identify words in the glossary and to draw attention to words that have to do with tarantulas.
- Ask students to search the book for the word *venom* and point to it when they find it (page 11). Ask students if it was easy to find the word because of the boldface. Explain that boldface is a useful tool readers can use when trying to locate information quickly.
- **Check for understanding:** Repeat the process for the remaining words in boldface. Ask students to share with a partner why boldface is useful when reading nonfiction.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have them discuss the author's purpose with someone at home.

Extend the Reading

Informational Writing and Art Connection

Have students draw a picture of a tarantula. Under the picture, have students write a fact about a tarantula similar to the captions in the book. Remind students to use capital letters and periods. Visit WritingA-Z.com for a lesson and leveled materials on informational writing.

Science Connection

Discuss other types of spiders students know about. Make a list on chart paper. Bring in Internet resources and other books about spiders. Make a chart and list facts about other spiders. Use these facts and the ones students learned about in the book to compare and contrast tarantulas with other spiders.

Skill Review

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently ask and answer questions to understand text during discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately identify author's purpose during discussion
- correctly identify initial consonant *sp*-blend during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly understand and use commas in a series during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly identify and use words in boldface during discussion

Comprehension Checks

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)