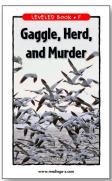# Gaggle, Herd, and Murder

About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational   **Page Count:** 12   **Word Count:** 129

Book Summary
Readers may have heard about a *pack* of wolves or a *litter* of puppies, but do they know which animals make up a *gaggle* or a *murder?* In *Gaggle, Herd, and Murder*, readers learn the meaning of these terms and more. Engaging photographs support the text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy
• Connect to prior knowledge

Objectives
• Connect to prior knowledge to understand text
• Classify information
• Blend phonemes
• Identify initial consonant *r*-blends
• Use and identify collective nouns
• Understand and use content vocabulary

Materials
Green text indicates resources available on the website

• Book—*Gaggle, Herd, and Murder* (copy for each student)
• Chalkboard or dry erase board
• Classify information, initial consonant *r*-blends, collective nouns worksheets
• Discussion cards

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

Vocabulary
*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA–Z.com.
• **High-frequency words:** *all, are, have, of, they, this*
• **Content words:**
     Story critical: **colony** *(n.),* **gaggle** *(n.),* **gather** *(v.),* **groups** *(n.),* **herd** *(n.),* **murder** *(n.),* **pack** *(n.),* **pod** *(n.),* **smack** *(n.)*
     Enrichment: *bats (n.), crows (n.), geese (n.), jellyfish (n.), together (adv.), whales (n.), wolves (n.), zebras (n.)*

Before Reading

Build Background
• Ask students to close their eyes and picture in their mind a group of like animals they have seen at a zoo, on a farm, or in the wild. Ask them to describe what they see. Ask how the animals move and what they are doing. Invite students to name different kinds of animal groups, such as herds, swarms, and schools.

Book Walk

Introduce the Book

- Give students a copy of the book. Show students the front and back covers and read the title. Ask students what they think the words *gaggle, herd,* and *murder* refer to. Ask if they've heard these terms before.
- Review the title page, glossary, and index. Talk about the information (title of book, author's name, vocabulary words and definitions).
- Ask students to predict what the book might be about. (Accept any answer students can justify.)

Introduce the Reading Strategy: Connect to prior knowledge

- Explain to students that good readers make connections between what they already know and new information they read about. Remind them that they are more likely to understand what they are reading if they already know something about the topic.
- Model how to connect to prior knowledge.
  Think-aloud: *As I read the title and look at the front and back covers, I'm reminded of a herd of cattle I saw and learned about in our study of the farm. The information I already know about herds will probably help me read and understand the information about herds in the book.*
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- As you preview the book, ask students to talk about what they see in the pictures and use the vocabulary they will encounter in the text. Incorporate new vocabulary words into the discussion of the pictures. For example, on page 5, you might say: *It looks as if the entire colony of bats is flying out for the night.*
- Have students turn to the glossary on page 12. Explain that a *glossary* is an alphabetical listing of important words used in the text. Each listing provides a definition and the page number on which the word is first used. Ask students where they would turn to find the word *herd* (page 9). Repeat the exercise with the word *pack*. Draw students' attention to the index on the same page. Ask a volunteer to tell what an *index* is (an alphabetical listing of subjects mentioned in the book with all page numbers for each subject). Ask students where they would turn to find more information about *smack* (page 8).

Set the Purpose

- Have students read the book to find out about animal group names. Remind them to stop after every couple of pages to think about what they already know about the topic.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Give students their book. Have them put a finger on the bottom of page 7 and ask them to read to the end of the page. Encourage students who finish before everyone else to reread the text to find out more about animal group names.
- When they have finished reading, ask students what words they had trouble with. Have them identify the groups of animals they read about (gaggle, geese; colony, bats; murder, crows; pod, whales).
- **Think-aloud:** *I once studied dolphins and learned that a group of dolphins is called a* pod. *Since I already knew about groups of dolphins being called* pods, *it was easier for me to read and understand the part of the book about whales being called* pods.
- Ask students to read the remainder of the book.

  ✏️ Have students make a small question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. These can be addressed in the discussion that follows.

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

- Ask students to share examples of how they connected what they already knew about groups of animals to understand the new information in the book. (Accept answers that show students have thought about the reading.)

Teach the Comprehension Skill: Classify information

- **Discussion:** Ask students which animal group names were new and which ones they were already familiar with. Encourage students to use new vocabulary during the discussion. *(I hope I never swim through a smack of jellyfish!)*

- **Introduce and model:** Draw a two-column T-chart on the board with the labels *Animal* and *Group of Animals.* Review or explain that recording information on a chart is one strategy readers use to remember information in nonfiction text. Say: *For example, the first animals I read about were geese. I will write* geese *in the* Animal *column. I read that a group of geese is called a* gaggle. *I will write* gaggle *in the* Group of Animals *column.*

- **Check for understanding:** Have students find the next animal in the book and identify the group name.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the classify information worksheet.

  ✏️ **Extend the discussion:** Have students use the inside back cover of their book to write about and illustrate the most unusual animal group name they learned about.

Build Skills

Phonological Awareness: Blend phonemes

- Tell students you are going to review some of the different names of animal groups by having them guess the word after you say the parts of the word as a clue. Say: *I'm thinking of a group of geese. It's a /g/… aggle. What am I thinking of?* (Students say: *Gaggle!*)

- Have students orally practice blending sounds with the following clues: *I'm thinking of animals together. It's a gr… oup. What am I thinking of?* (group); *I'm thinking of a group of bats. It's called a /c/… olony. What am I thinking of?* (colony); *A murder is a group of cr… ows. What is a murder a group of?* (crows); *A pod of whales sw… im together. What does a pod of whales do together?* (swim); *I'm thinking of a group of jellyfish. It's called a sm… ack. What am I thinking of?* (smack); *I'm thinking of a group of zebras. It's called a /h/… erd. What is a group of zebras called?* (herd); *A group of wolves is a /p/… ack. What is a group of wolves called?* (pack)

Phonics: Initial consonant *r*-blends

- Write the words *group* and *crows* on the board. Have students find the words on page 6.

- Circle the initial consonant *r*-blend in each word *(gr, cr).* Tell students that in a *blend*, two or three consonants are grouped, or clustered, together in a word with each letter keeping its own sound. Initial consonant *r*-blends are a type of consonant cluster.

- Have students refer to the bottom of page 8 to find a word that has an initial consonant *r*-blend *(travels).* Have them brainstorm other examples of initial consonant *r*-blend words and write them on the board (examples may include words that start with *br, cr, dr, fr, gr, pr,* and *tr*).

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the initial consonant *r*-blends worksheet. When students have finished, discuss their answers.

Grammar and Mechanics: Collective nouns

- Review or explain that a *noun* names a person, place, or thing. For example, in the sentence *I like my dog,* the word *dog* is a noun—a dog is a thing. Further explain that when a word refers to a group of things, such as *flock, herd,* or *team,* the word is called a *collective noun.* For example, in the sentence *My dog had a litter of puppies,* the word *litter* is a collective noun because it refers to a group.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students turn to page 7. Ask them to locate an example of a noun *(whales)* and a collective noun *(pod, pods)* on the page. Discuss the difference between the examples of nouns and collective nouns.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the collective nouns worksheet.

Word Work: Content vocabulary

- Invite students to discuss some of the new vocabulary words that were introduced for animal group names. Provide opportunities for students to talk about difficult words, such as *colony* and *murder.* Model incorporating new vocabulary by asking: *Zebras race together in herds; what other animals race together or travel in a herd?*
- For any words that continue to be challenging, encourage students to say the new vocabulary words, talk about their meanings, and use the words in sentences.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, allow partners to 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.

Extend the Reading

Informational Writing Connection

Have students choose one of the new vocabulary words that refers to the name of an animal group, such as *gaggle, herd, murder, pack, pod,* or *smack.* On a piece of white paper or card stock, invite students to draw a picture that shows the animal group at the top of the page. Then have them write a sentence at the bottom of the paper that fits the following pattern: *A _____ is a group of _____.* Assemble the page in a book about animal groups or display them on a bulletin board.

Visit Writing A–Z for a lesson and leveled materials on expository writing.

Science Connection

Plan a visit to a local zoo or wildlife center where students can learn about other animal group names. After the visit, encourage students to discuss group names from the book and new group names they learned.

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.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:
- accurately and consistently demonstrate connecting to prior knowledge
- classify information accurately
- accurately blend phonemes
- accurately identify initial consonant *r*-blends
- understand and identify collective nouns
- understand and use content vocabulary appropriately

Comprehension Checks
- Book Quiz
- Retelling Rubric