

Focus Question:

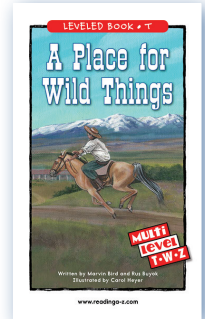
What is Alejandro's problem, and how does he hope to solve it?

Book Summary

Text Type: Fiction/Realistic

Alejandro and his mother live on a Patagonian ranch, called an *estancia*, where they maintain their land in the true gaucho tradition. But when tough times fall on the estancia, the family must decide whether they are going to keep or sell their beloved ranch. *A Place for Wild Things* is an engaging story that will open students' eyes to the culture and tradition of the Patagonia region of South America. Students can also use this story to analyze the plot as well as to make, revise, and confirm predictions to better understand the text.

The book and lesson are also available for levels W and Z.



Lesson Essentials

Instructional Focus

- ☐ Make, revise, and confirm predictions
- ☐ Analyze plot
- ☐ Understand the importance of illustrations to enhance text
- ☐ Use correct subject-verb agreement in sentences
- ☐ Identify and understand root words and their affixes

Materials

- ☐ Book: *A Place for Wild Things* (copy for each student)
- ☐ Analyze plot, subject-verb agreement, root words worksheets
- ☐ Discussion cards
- ☐ Book quiz
- ☐ Retelling rubric

Vocabulary

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

• Words to Know

Story critical: *estancia* (n.), *gauchos* (n.), *guanaco* (n.), *overgrazed* (adj.), *pasture* (n.), *tradition* (n.)

Enrichment: *bombacha pantaloons* (n.), *porcelain orchid* (n.), *tourists* (n.)

- **Academic vocabulary:** *common* (adj.), *consider* (v.), *finally* (adv.), *plan* (n.), *protect* (v.), *seek* (v.)

Guiding the Reading

Before Reading

Build Background

- Place on the board a map of South America, and have students identify as many countries as they can. Label these countries on the map.
- Highlight the Patagonia region, which is located at the southern tip of South America and shared by Argentina and Chile. Explain that the story students will be reading takes place in this area of South America.

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of *A Place for Wild Things*. 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, authors' names, illustrator's name).

Introduce the Reading Strategy:

Make, revise, and confirm predictions

Explain to students that engaged readers often make predictions, or guesses, about what will happen next in a story. Discuss how these predictions are created on the basis of what they already know, what has happened in the story, and what the characters say and do. Explain to students that as they read they will either confirm or revise the predictions they made. Point out that making and revising predictions helps readers stay engaged with the story. Invite students to review the illustrations throughout the story. Then have them turn to a partner and make a prediction about what this story might be about. Have students share their predictions and record them on the board.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: Analyze plot

- Explain to students that fictional stories have important elements that shape the narrative: characters, setting, plot, and theme. Explain that

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

the *plot* is made up of all the events in the story. Write the word *plot* on the board and read it aloud with students.

- Point out that the plot can be divided into five parts: the introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Record these headings on the board and read them aloud with students. Explain that the introduction describes the setting and characters, the rising action introduces the problem and describes the events surrounding it, the climax is the most intense part of the story where the problem is often solved, the falling action shows the result of the climax, and the resolution is the conclusion that ties up the story. Explain to students that as they read they should pause often to identify these elements of the plot.

Vocabulary

Have students turn to the “Words to Know” box on the copyright page. Discuss each word with students. Then, have students turn to the glossary on page 16. Explain that the glossary provides definitions for the vocabulary words in the book. Point out the use of each content word and academic vocabulary word in the book, and then use each word in a different model sentence. Have students work in groups to create posters for these words. Have them include on each poster the word and its part of speech, the definition, the word in an example sentence, and a picture illustrating the meaning of the word.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about Alejandro’s problem and how he hopes to solve it. Write the Focus Question on the board. Invite students to look for evidence in the book to support their answer.
- 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 a future discussion.

During Reading

Text-Dependent Questions

As students read the book, monitor their understanding with the following questions. Encourage students to support their answers by citing evidence from the book.

- Why is the estancia losing money?* (level 1) page 5
- What are the pros to selling the estancia? What are the cons?* (level 2) pages 6–7
- What does Martín mean when he says, “The change in land affects us all”?* (level 3) page 10
- What caused the sheep to run away from the estancia?* (level 1) page 12

- How does the puma inspire Alejandro to come up with an idea to save the estancia?* (level 3) pages 13–15
- What do you think Alejandro will do next?* (level 3) page 15
- Why did the author write this book?* (level 3) multiple pages

Text Features: Illustrations

Explain to students that illustrations, or drawn pictures, in a fiction story help bring the story to life. Point out that illustrations help readers better understand the characters’ emotions and they also help readers visualize the setting of the story. Have students look at the illustrations on pages 4 and 5. Ask students: *How do these illustrations help you better understand the characters’ emotions? What would you predict was happening in the story on the basis of these illustrations, without reading the text?* Have students review other illustrations in the book and discuss in groups how these illustrations bring the story to life. Invite volunteers to share their ideas with the class.

Skill Review

- Invite students to pause at various points in the story to work with a partner to make, revise, and confirm predictions. Emphasize that it is not important that their predictions be accurate. Have each pair of students work with another pair to share their predictions and to provide evidence from the story to support the predictions.
- Discuss with the class why it is important to make and revise predictions while reading. Reiterate that their predictions should be made on the basis of what they already know, what has happened in the story, and what the characters say and do.
- Model analyzing plot.
Think-aloud: *I know that the plot of a story is made up of all the events that occur. Within the plot, there are five major parts that I will identify. Looking for these elements of the plot helps me to understand and remember what I have read. For example, as I read the first few pages of the story, I identified the introduction. The introduction includes the beginning of the story, where it takes place, and the characters. I know this story takes place on a South American ranch, called an estancia, and the characters are Alejandro, Alejandro’s mother, and Martín. I was able to find all of this information in the first few pages. I also identified the rising action. The rising action is when the problem is introduced as well as the series of events that occur as a result of this problem. After reading the first few pages, I know the problem is that Alejandro’s estancia is in danger of being sold.*
- Model how to complete the **analyze plot worksheet**. Have students analyze each element of the plot. Then, have students discuss the details with a partner.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

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.

Skill Review

Graphic Organizer: **Analyze plot**

Review the analyze plot worksheet that students completed. Have students share their work in groups. Invite volunteers to share their answers with the rest of the class.

Comprehension Extension

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided to be used for extension activities.

Response to Focus Question

Have students cite specific evidence from the book to answer the Focus Question. (Answers will vary. Sample: *Alejandro's problem is that his South American ranch, called an estancia, is in danger of being sold. Alejandro comes up with a plan to save the estancia—I think he is going to suggest to his mother to take down the fences and let the animals graze freely on the land instead of being confined behind a fence.*)

Comprehension Checks

- **Book quiz**
- **Retelling rubric**

Book Extension Activities

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics:

Subject-verb agreement

- Review with students that *nouns* are words that name people, places, and things. Write the word *Alejandro* on the board. Then review with students that *verbs* are words that describe actions. Write the word *rides*. Say the subject and verb aloud: *Alejandro rides*.
- Now erase the *s* from *rides* and read the subject and verb aloud: *Alejandro ride*. Ask students if this sounds correct. Point out that a subject (noun) must agree with the verb in a sentence. Explain that if the subject is singular, like *Alejandro*, most verbs will need to end with an *s* or *es*. Therefore, *Alejandro rides* makes sense.
- Write a list of nouns and verbs on the board. Have students work with a partner to create sentences combining the nouns and verbs. Invite students to share their findings with the class.

- **Check for understanding:** Have students look through the book to find five nouns. Then have them add verbs that agree with those nouns to create five noun-verb pairs. Have students share their noun-verb pairs with the class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **subject-verb-agreement worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: **Root words**

- Write the word *careless* on the board. Ask students what the word would be if *-less* were removed, and write *care* next to *careless*. Explain that the root word *care* is a noun. Point out that when the suffix *-less* is added to the word *care* the word becomes an adjective. Discuss that root words may have a prefix, a suffix, or both added to them.
- Review or explain that a *suffix* is a letter or group of letters added to the end of a word to form another word, often altering or changing its meaning. Point out that some examples of suffixes are *-ed*, *-y*, *-s*, *-es*, and *-ing*.
- Review or explain that a *prefix* is a letter or group of letters that is attached to the beginning of a word to modify its meaning. Point out that some examples of prefixes are *dis-*, *mis-*, and *un-*.
- Have students turn to the copyright page in the text and locate the word *overgrazed*. Ask what this word means on the basis of the root word and prefix. Have students explain how the meaning of the sentence would be changed if the prefix *over-* were not part of the root word.
- **Check for understanding:** Give students a half-sheet of paper and write the following words on the board: *happy*, *fear*, *honest*, *complete*, and *small*. Have students identify the meaning of each root word. Then have them add the following suffixes or prefixes accordingly: *un-*, *-less*, *dis-*, *-ly*, and *-est* (*unhappy*, *fearless*, *dishonest*, *completely*, and *smallest*). Have students identify how the meaning of each word changed with the addition of a prefix or suffix.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **root words worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Connections

- See the back of the book for cross-curricular extension ideas.