

## About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Personal Narrative Page Count: 16 Word Count: 455

### Book Summary

In *Chickens in My Backyard*, Savannah narrates her experience of raising chickens in Tucson, Arizona. Her family lives in the city, and they don't own a farm, but they do have a chicken coop in their backyard, where they care for three chickens. Savannah's story will defy expectations for many students, who think of chickens living on a farm in green pastures, and they will be fascinated to learn how a girl their age cares for and manages these animals. Family photographs invite students to enter Savannah's world.

## About the Lesson

### Targeted Reading Strategy

- Summarize

### Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of summarizing to understand text
- Identify main idea and details
- Identify consonant *ch* digraph
- Recognize and use pronouns
- Understand the purpose of bold print in text

### Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website.

- Book—*Chickens in my Backyard* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Photograph of a chicken
- Sticky notes
- Highlighters
- Main idea and details, consonant *ch* digraph, pronouns worksheets
- Discussion cards



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting 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](http://VocabularyA-Z.com).

- Content words:

Story critical: **bedding** (n.), **chicks** (n.), **coop** (n.), **grind** (v.), **nesting boxes** (n.), **pellets** (n.)

## Before Reading

### Build Background

- Have students raise their hand if they own a pet. Ask them to describe to a partner how they take care of their pet.
- Place a photograph of a chicken on the board. Ask students to identify the animal. Have volunteers share what they know about chickens, and record the information on the board. Ask students where chickens live.

## 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, fiction or nonfiction, 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).

### Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Main idea and details**

- Remind students that the main idea is the general topic of a book, and details are the extra facts or descriptions that give the reader more information. Point out to students that the title of the book often gives clues to help the reader identify the main idea. This book is titled *Chickens in My Backyard*. Ask students to share with a partner what they think the general topic of the book is.
- Invite a volunteer to come to the board and circle the word *Chickens*. Ask students to give the thumbs-up signal if they agree that chickens are the topic of this book.
- Read pages 3 and 4 aloud to students. Model how to identify important details and formulate the main idea.
- **Think-aloud:** *These first two pages give us a lot of information. I know that a girl named Savannah is telling the story and that she lives in Tucson, Arizona. She lives in the desert. Her house is in the city, but her backyard is like a farm, and there is a chicken coop in the backyard. Her family made the coop out of wood from an alley. They own three chickens and also a dog. All of this information is interesting, but I want to choose the most important details that will explain the main idea. I know that the main idea has something to do with chickens. The most important details on these pages that have to do with chickens are the following: Savannah owns three chickens, and the chickens live in a coop in her backyard. Now I know that these chickens are pets. I think the main idea of this book is: Savannah's family raises chickens as pets. I will continue to look for details that support this main idea.*
- Explain to students that one way to remember the new information is to take notes about the details every few pages. Remind students that they are looking for details that support the main idea.
- Pass out sticky notes and have students put them on pages 7, 10, 13, and 15. Explain to students that they will stop at these pages to take notes. Point out that they can use words or pictures to record the important details.
- Introduce and explain the **main-idea-and-details worksheet**. Have students write the information from the discussion on their worksheet.

### Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Summarize**

- Explain to students that one tool readers use to understand and remember what they read is summarizing. Explain that readers summarize by finding the main idea of the book and the most important details, and organizing the information to make sense.
- Point out that summaries do not include all of the details. Students must decide what information in the book is the most important to know and tell about.
- Have students return to pages 3 and 4, and model how to summarize that information.
- **Think-aloud:** *As I read this book, I am going to stop at the end of every few pages to think about what I read and ask myself what information was the most important in that section. To do this, I am going to identify the main idea of the book and look for the most important details. Since I already read these pages and found the most important details and the main idea of the book, I can start my summary with these two pages. My summary is: This book is about how Savannah's family raises chickens as pets. The narrator, Savannah, owns three chickens. They live in a coop in Savannah's backyard.*

## Lesson Plan *(continued)*

## Chickens in My Backyard

- Write this preliminary summary on the board and have students copy it onto a separate sheet of paper. Have them find the sticky notes they placed in their copy of the book. Explain to students that when they stop at each sticky note to take notes on details, they will also continue writing their summary of 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

- Have students flip through the book and find all the words that are in bold print. Call on random students to say one of the bold words from the book, and write them on the board: *coop*, *chicks*, *nesting boxes*, *bedding*, *grind*, and *pellets*.
- Point out that these words all relate to taking care of chickens. Break students into six groups and assign a word to each group of students. Pass out a piece of blank paper to each group. Have groups write and draw what they know about their word. Have each group share their definition for their word using their prior knowledge.
- Point out the glossary at the back of the book. Review or explain that a glossary contains a list of words and their definitions.
- Model how students can use the glossary to find a word's meaning. Have them locate the word *coop* in the glossary. Invite a volunteer read the definition for *coop*. Have students compare the glossary definition with their prior knowledge of the word.
- Have students follow along on page 4 as you read the sentence with the word *coop* in it to confirm the meaning of the word. Repeat the exercise with the remaining vocabulary words.

### Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about Savannah and her pet chickens. Encourage them to pay attention to the work involved in caring for pet chickens. Remind them to stop after every few pages to note the important details of the book and to continue summarizing what they have read.

## **During Reading**


### Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read from page 5 to the end of page 7. Encourage those who finish early to go back and reread. Have students take notes on important details from those pages on their [main-idea-and-details worksheet](#).
- Invite students to share the details they identified. Have them share with a partner whether they think these details are the most important ones. Discuss as a class all of the details shared and have students agree on the most important details by giving the thumbs-up signal. Write these details on the board. Encourage students to edit their worksheet by looking over their notes and making sure they only include the most important details.
- Ask students whether the information in the book still confirms the main idea that *Savannah's family raises chickens as pets*. Have students record this main idea on their worksheet.
- Review with students the first part of the summary, which is written on the board. Model summarizing.
- **Think-aloud:** *I will use the important details of these three pages to continue my summary. Savannah's family bought their chickens as chicks. Her family kept the chicks in a box with a heat lamp to keep them warm. Now that the chickens are older, their dog keeps the chickens safe by scaring away coyotes. I use the most important details and arrange them in an order that makes sense. Now I will add this information to my summary.*
- Write the summary on the board. Invite students to share what they would add to the summary using the important details from page 7. Add this information to the summary on the board. Have students continue the summary they started on a separate sheet of paper.

## Lesson Plan *(continued)*

## Chickens in My Backyard

- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 10. Point out the sticky note. Have students stop to write important details on their [main-idea-and-details worksheet](#). Discuss as a class the details gathered from these pages, and record the details on the board.
- Have students work with a partner to continue their summaries on a separate sheet of paper, using the important details to guide them.
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to watch for sticky notes and to stop at pages 13 and 15 to note important details on their worksheet and to add to their summary on a separate sheet of paper.

 Have students make a 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 Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Review the main idea of the book: *Savannah's family raises chickens as pets*. Discuss the details that students recorded on their worksheet. Guide students to agree on those details that are pertinent to the main idea and those that are not important.
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the top portion of [main-idea-and-details worksheet](#) by adding any important details they heard in the discussion and had not included on their worksheet, and by removing any details that were not specific to the main idea of the book. If time allows, discuss their responses.

### Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- **Think-aloud:** *The last two pages of the book provide the final details I need to complete my summary. The chickens sleep in the nesting box at night. Savannah's dad keeps them safe by closing the door. Savannah thinks chickens are good pets! That completes my summary, which includes a main idea, important details told in order, and a short conclusion.*
- Ask students to explain how the strategy of summarizing helped them understand and enjoy the story. Ask volunteers to share the summary they wrote on a separate sheet of paper. Use their ideas to complete the summary on the board.
- **Independent practice:** Have students fill in the summary box on their main-idea-and-details worksheet, using the notes on important details and the summaries they wrote on a separate sheet of paper to aid them.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, Savannah shares about how her family cares for three pet chickens. They work hard to keep their chickens healthy and safe. Now that you know this information, why do you think it is important to take care of animals?

### Build Skills

#### Phonics: Consonant **ch** digraph

- Write the word *chicks* on the board and say it aloud with students.
- Have students say the /ch/ 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 together create the /ch/ sound in the word *chicks*.
- Circle the **ch** digraph. Explain to students that when the letters *c* and *h* are together, they often create the /ch/ sound.

## Lesson Plan *(continued)*

## Chickens in My Backyard

- Have students practice writing the consonant *ch* digraph on a separate sheet of paper while saying the /ch/ sound.
- Have students brainstorm other words that start with the consonant *ch* digraph and record these on the board.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following words on the board: *chicken, coop, chew, chin, color, and chair*. Say each word, one at a time, and have students clap their hands every time they hear a word that starts with the consonant *ch* digraph. Invite volunteers to come to the board and circle the consonant *ch* digraph in the appropriate words.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [consonant \*ch\* digraph worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

### Grammar and Mechanics: **Pronouns**

- Write the following sentence on the board: *Savannah has pet chickens*. Circle the word *Savannah* and ask students to call out whether it is a noun or verb (noun). Review with students that *nouns* are words that identify a *person, place, or thing*.
- Explain that a *pronoun* is a word used in place of a noun. Write the word *she* above the word *Savannah*. Have students reread the sentence, replacing the noun with the pronoun, and ask whether it makes sense.
- Discuss reasons that authors use a pronoun in place of a noun: to avoid repeating the same words, to make the writing flow better, and so on. Write a list of pronouns on the board: *I, she, he, it, they, and we*.
- Write the pronoun *I* on the board and explain to students that this is a special pronoun. When a person in the book tells the story, the person will refer to himself or herself as *I*. Ask students who is telling the story in this book (*Savannah*). Point out that Savannah refers to herself as *I*, and her family as *we*.
- Have students turn to page 9. Write the following sentence from the book on the board: *The chickens love to go outside*. Invite a volunteer to come to the board and circle the noun (*chickens*). Have students share with a partner the pronoun they would use to replace chickens (*they*). Have the class reread the sentence, using the pronoun in place of *chickens*. Ask students to give the thumbs-up signal if the sentence makes sense.
- Have students turn to page 11. Write the following sentence from the book on the board: *I also like the sounds that the chickens make when they lay their eggs*. Invite a volunteer to come to the board and circle the pronoun (*I*). Have students share with a partner the noun they would use to replace *I* (*Savannah*). Have the class reread the sentence, using the noun in place of *I*. Ask students to give the thumbs-up signal if the sentence makes sense.



- **Check for understanding:** Have students work with a partner to find and highlight all pronouns in the book. Call on pairs to share one of their highlighted pronouns, and have the class give the thumbs-up signal to show whether they agree or disagree that the word is a pronoun.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [pronouns worksheet](#). Discuss their answers aloud after students finish.

### Word Work: **Bold print**

- Review or explain to students that bold print means that something is written in darker print than the other words on the page. Have students turn to page 4 and ask them to locate an example of bold print (*coop*). Point out that the word *coop* is part of an important detail that supports the main idea of the book.
- Ask students to turn to the glossary at the end of the book. Have them find and point at the word *coop*. Have a volunteer read the definition.

## Lesson Plan *(continued)*

## Chickens in My Backyard

- Explain to students that bold print is used most often in nonfiction writing. Authors use bold print as a tool to draw attention to a word or subject or feature on the page. In this book, the author uses bold print to identify the words that are in the glossary and to draw attention to words that have a special meaning for chickens.
- Ask students to search the book for the word **pellets** and point to it when they find it (page 8). Ask students if it was easy finding the word because of the bold print. Explain that bold print is a useful tool that readers can use when trying to locate information quickly. Have students find the word **pellet** in the glossary and point at it.
- **Check for understanding:** Repeat the process for the remaining words in bold print. Ask students to share with a partner why bold print 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 students practice summarizing the story with someone at home.

### Extend the Reading

#### Personal Narrative Writing Connection

Just as Savannah raised chickens in her backyard, all families have something unique about them. Have students think about what makes their family special—from a particular sport they play to the way they eat supper to an original holiday tradition—and discuss these characteristics or traditions as a class. Record many examples on the board. Have students write a narrative that describes one such characteristic or tradition in their own family. Remind them to include themselves in their narrative by using the first-person point of view and referring to themselves with the pronoun *I*.

Visit [WritingA-Z.com](http://WritingA-Z.com) for a lesson and leveled materials on personal narrative writing.

#### Science Connection

Break students into groups. Bring in several books or magazine articles about chickens and spread them around different centers in the room. Have groups rotate to each of the chicken centers to read the books, discuss the information, and take notes on what they learn. After each group has visited all the centers, have the groups create a poster that shows what they now know about chickens. Have groups present their poster to the class.

#### 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 use the strategy of summarizing to comprehend the text during discussion
- accurately identify the main idea and details of the book during discussion and on a worksheet
- consistently identify consonant *ch* digraph during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly use pronouns during discussion and on a worksheet
- properly understand the purpose of bold print in text during discussion

**Comprehension Checks**

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