



### About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Interview Page Count: 22 Word Count: 1,498

#### Book Summary

Sit in on an interview with Jeff Polcen, lead zookeeper of hoofed animals at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. Readers learn about the animals under Jeff's care, the responsibilities of a lead zookeeper, and many interesting facts about the care of giraffes, zebras, ostriches, and gazelles. Photographs support the text.

### About the Lesson

#### Targeted Reading Strategy

- Connect to prior knowledge

#### Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of making connections to prior knowledge
- Identify the main ideas and details in informational text
- Identify and form irregular plural nouns
- Identify compound words

#### Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Zookeeping* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Main idea and details, compound words 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

- Content words: *anesthesia, antelope, exhibits, giraffes, hoofed, savannah, species, vultures, zookeeper*

### Before Reading

#### Build Background

- Discuss zoos that students have visited, read about, or seen on TV. If necessary, prompt with questions about topics, such as types of zoos, zoo animals, and zookeepers.

#### Preview the Book

##### Introduce the Book

- Give students a copy of the book and have them preview the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers and offer ideas as to what kind of book this is and what it might be about.

##### Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Connect to prior knowledge**

- Model how to use prior knowledge to help students make connections to content in the book.  
**Think-aloud:** *I've been to several zoos to see the animals, but I've never been behind the scenes. I'm very curious about what it's like to work at a zoo and what's involved in taking care of the animals.*

- Direct students to page 3 in the book. Explain that the format of this book is an interview. The questions asked by the interviewer are written in bold print. The zookeeper's answers are written after his name.
- Have students preview the rest of the book, looking at photos and captions. Point out the index at the back of the book, and explain its purpose.
- As students read, they should use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

### Introduce the Vocabulary

- 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 the word. They can look for base words, prefixes, and suffixes. They can use the context to work out meanings of unfamiliar words.
- Model how to apply word-attack strategies. Direct students to page 3. Write the word *hoofed* on the board and ask them to find it on the page. Model how they can use prior knowledge and context clues to figure out the meaning of the unfamiliar word. Read the sentence *Growing up on a farm, I've always liked working with hoofed animals.* Ask students what they think of when they hear the word *hoof* (horse's hoof). Have students use context clues and prior knowledge as they relate to the following sentence to confirm the meaning of *hoofed*: *Cows and horses are related to giraffes and zebras* (a list of other familiar hoofed animals).
- Remind students to check whether words make sense by rereading the sentence or sentences around the unfamiliar word.

### Set the Purpose

- Remind students to think about what they already know about zoos as they read the interview.

## During Reading

### Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Give students their copy of the book and have them read to the end of page 7. Have students reread the pages if they finish before everyone else.
- When they have finished reading, ask students what things they already knew about the care of zoo animals and what new things they learned.
- Model connecting to prior knowledge and thinking about new information during reading. **Think-aloud:** *Since I already knew that zookeepers take care of animals and I already knew a lot about the kinds of animals in zoos, I was able to understand the information about the zookeeper's responsibilities. But I didn't know that a zookeeper takes care of so many different types of animals. For example, I didn't know that one zookeeper might take care of both hoofed animals and birds. That was new information I learned.*
- Have students read to the end of page 13. As they read, have them think about any prior experience they have with the information in the book. Encourage them to remember zoos they have visited and the animals they have seen there. They can also think about information they have learned about zoo animals from books they have read.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students share some of the things they thought about as they read the information on the pages so far. Select volunteers to share connections they made from prior knowledge to the text. Ask other students to share information in the book that was new to them.
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Encourage them to continue to connect new information to their prior knowledge as they read. Explain that connecting to prior knowledge helps students to understand and remember the information they read.



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 Reading Strategy

- Discuss how using what they already know about a topic helps keep students actively involved in the reading process and helps them understand and remember what they read.

## Teach the Comprehension Skill: **Main ideas and details**

- **Discussion:** Ask students if they thought the interviewer asked good questions. Ask what questions they would have asked if they had been the interviewer.
- **Review or explain** that many books are about one thing. Show students the book and ask what the main topic of this book is (zookeeping). Have students look through the book. Explain that each interview question contains a main idea about zookeeping and that the question answers provide details that tell more about the main idea.
- **Introduce and model:** As an example, have students talk about the main idea on page 10 (How the zookeeper provides medical care for large animals). Ask them to name a detail they read that relates to the main idea. (Zookeepers use blowpipes or air guns to give anesthesia to large animals.) Reinforce that the detail provides additional information about the main idea.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students look at page 4. Remind them that the topic of the book is zookeeping. Ask them what this part of the interview is about (zookeeper skills). Read the paragraph. Ask students to name one detail that tells more about the skills needed to be a zookeeper. (Observation is the most important skill; a zookeeper must use common sense around wild animals.)
- **Independent practice:** Tell students to complete the [main-idea-and-details worksheet](#).



**Extend the discussion:** Instruct students to use the inside back cover of their book to write four facts they learned about giraffes.

## Build Skills

### Grammar and Mechanics: **Irregular plural nouns**

- Review or explain that a singular noun names one person, place, or thing. Ask students to provide the plural forms for each of the following nouns: *zebra, animal, bird, zoo*.
- Write the noun *baby* on the board. Tell students that the plural of this noun is irregular. Explain that the plural is formed by changing the letter *y* to *i* and adding *-es*. Show students how to make the change.  
*baby    bab + i    babi + es    babies*
- **Check for understanding:** Have students come to the board and write the plural form of each of the following words: *puppy, spy, fairy, penny, city, lady, daisy*.

### Word Work: **Compound words**

- Write the word *zookeeper* on the board. Review or explain that this is a *compound word* and that a compound word is made by joining one word with another word to make a new word with a new meaning. Ask students to tell the meanings of the words *zoo* and *keeper*. Then have them tell the meaning of the newly formed word (a person who takes care of animals in a zoo). Use the word in a sentence: *A zookeeper is an important person at a zoo.*
- **Check for understanding:** Have students to turn to page 6 and find a word made from two other words (*everyone*). Ask students to tell what each word means by itself and what the compound word means.
- Give students the [compound words worksheet](#) for practice with identifying and using compound words.

## 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

### Writing Connection

Have students choose one of the following to write and share with the group.

- Write a story from the point of view of one of the animals in the zoo. Suggest that the animal tell what zoo life is like and what's good and bad about it. Tell students that the story may be humorous or serious.
- Use the information from the interview to write a newspaper article about Jeff Polcen. Suggest that students provide information that answers the questions *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and *why*.

Visit [Writing A-Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on expository writing.

### Science and Social Studies Connection

Have students research one of the animals mentioned in the book or another zoo animal of their choice. Suggest that they look for the following information: the animal's natural habitat, what it eats, animals that prey on it, its current population, and its size and weight. Have students prepare a poster report that includes a map showing the animal's habitat and lists other important facts and details they learned. Display students' posters on a bulletin board titled "Born Free."

### 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:

- use the reading strategy of making connections to prior knowledge to understand nonfiction text
- effectively identify main ideas and details in text in discussion and on a worksheet
- identify and form irregular plural nouns by changing the *y* to *i* and adding *-es*
- recognize and use compound words in sentences and on a worksheet

### Comprehension Checks

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