



About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational Page Count: 12 Word Count: 154

Book Summary

If someone asked you to name smart animals, chances are you wouldn't mention the crow. Yet this bird exhibits surprisingly intelligent behavior. Emergent readers will be fascinated to learn about the crow's clever tricks and actions. A mixture of photographs and fun illustrations that support the text will maintain their interest.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Ask and answer questions

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of asking and answering questions to understand text
- Identify main idea and details
- Discriminate the initial consonant blend *cr*
- Associate the letters *cr* with the /cr/ sound
- Recognize and explain the parts of a simple sentence
- Alphabetize words

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Smart Crows* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Highlighters
- KWL, main idea and details, initial consonant blend *cr*, simple sentences 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.

- High-frequency words: *are*, *do*, *know*, *they*
- Content words:

Story critical: ***defend*** (v.), ***fetch*** (v.), ***gather*** (v.), ***protect*** (v.), ***solve*** (v.), ***tools*** (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students if they have ever had a pet. Encourage them to share stories about their pets that show how smart (or not smart) the animals are, for example, doing tricks or following directions.
- Write the word *crow* on the board. Read the word aloud and have students read the word with you. Explain that a crow is a type of bird. Ask students how a bird can show that it is smart.

- Draw a KWL chart on the board. Review with students that a KWL chart will help them keep track of their questions and what they are learning. The letter *K* stands for what they already *know*, the letter *W* stands for *what* they want to know, and the letter *L* stands for what they *learned*.
- Guide the class in describing facts that they already *know* about crows, and record that information in the *K* column of the chart on the board. Draw a simple picture that explains the information written on the board. Introduce and explain the [KWL worksheet](#). Have students record at least three facts in the *K* column of their worksheet, using a sentence or a drawing and a word to explain that drawing.

Book Walk

Introduce the Book

- Show students the front and back covers of the book and read the title with them. Ask what they think they might read about in a book called *Smart Crows*. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).
- Preview the pictures in the book. Remind students that pictures can give information. Guide students to look at the captions, which explain the pictures and provide more details about crows.

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

- Explain to students that good readers ask questions about a topic before and during reading, and then look for answers using what they know and what they read. Explain that readers do this to help themselves better understand and remember what they read.
- Model asking and answering questions using the information on the cover.
Think-aloud: The picture on the cover is of a black bird with beady black eyes. I've seen that type of bird before, sitting on buildings or telephone wires, and I know that it is a crow. The title of the book is Smart Crows. I never knew that crows were smart! I wonder how crows are smart. Are they smart like me? Or are they smart in a different way? Can they solve math problems or read books? These are some questions that I have, and I will look for answers to them as I read.
- Review the KWL chart on the board. Explain to students that they will use this chart to keep track of their questions.
- Record your question in the *W* column of the KWL chart on the board. Have students discuss with a partner at least one question they have about the book. Remind them to record their question on their own KWL worksheet. Encourage students to continue adding questions to their worksheet as they read.
- Invite volunteers to share their questions. Record these in the *W* column of the KWL chart 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: **Main idea and details**

- Remind or explain to students that a main idea is the big idea of a book. Explain that a book may have one main idea, or it may have sections, with a main idea for each section and a main idea for the whole book. Most of the sentences in a book or a section will describe the main idea. Explain that the title of a book often provides a clue to the main idea. As a class, examine the title and picture on the cover. Ask students to point to a clue about the main idea of *Smart Crows*.
- *Think-aloud: This title gives me a big clue about the main idea. The book is called Smart Crows, and it has a picture of a crow on the cover. I think that the main idea of this book is that a crow is a smart animal. I may be wrong, or there may be more than one main idea in this book, and that*

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

Smart Crows

is okay. As I read, I will think about all the details and make sure that they fit with this main idea. I can change this main idea or add another main idea if I need to.

- Write the following sentence on the board: *A crow is a smart animal.* Draw a circle around the sentence and label the circle with the phrase *Main Idea*. Draw spokes extending out from the circle.
- Review with students that details explain the main idea by providing new information about that big idea. In this case, the details should explain ways in which a crow is a smart animal. Encourage students to be detectives as they read, searching out all the details that explain the main idea of this book.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- As you preview the book, reinforce the vocabulary words that students will encounter. For example, while looking at the picture on page 4, you might say: *What is that crow doing? It is using a wire to pull up the food! The book says that crows solve problems. Solve must mean figuring out an answer to fix a problem, like the crow using a wire to get food it couldn't reach.*
- Remind students to use their decoding strategies to read new or difficult words. Review or explain that one way to read a new word is by using the picture and the context of the sentence. For example, point to the word *fetch* on page 6 and say: *I am going to check the picture and read the rest of the sentence to figure out this word. I see in the picture that the crow waits for a car to run over the nut and then hops out in the street to pick up the pieces. The sentence reads as follows: When the light turns red, crows hop out and /f/ their snack! One word that would work is get, but that starts with the /g/ sound, and this word starts with the /f/ sound. So I think about other words that means the same thing as the word get. I know when dogs get a stick, we say they fetch the stick. The word fetch starts with the /f/ sound. This word must be fetch.*


Set the Purpose

- Have students continue asking questions and looking for answers as they read the book. Ask them to think about birds they have seen before and in what ways those birds acted that made them seem smart.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Give students their copy of the book. Have a volunteer point to the first word on page 3 (*Crows*). Point out to students where to begin reading on each page. Remind them to read the words from left to right.
- Ask students to place a finger on the page number in the bottom corner of page 3. Have them read to the end of page 5, using their finger to point to each word as they read. Encourage students who finish before others to reread the text.
- Model asking and answering questions.
Think-aloud: *On page 5, I read that crows build their nests using things we throw away. That is one way that crows are smart, and it is an answer to my question about how crows are smart. It is different from how I am smart because I don't build nests. It is like recycling, though, and I do recycle. So crows are smart like me in some ways and smart in different ways, too. This information answers my question about whether crows are smart like me. I still want to know more ways that crows are smart. Also, I have a new question: Can crows do other smart things? I will look for an answer to this question as I read.*
- Record answers to previous questions in the *L* column of the KWL chart. Draw a line from the information learned to the question that it answered (from the *L* column to the *W* column) to reinforce the fact that this detail answered a previous question.
- Invite students to share any answers they found and any new questions they have. Write their responses on the KWL chart on the board. Remind students to continue filling out their personal KWL chart as they read.

- Review the main idea of the book: *A crow is a smart animal*. Encourage students to look for details to explain that idea.
 - **Think-aloud:** *I have already discovered some details that show that a crow is a smart animal. I learned that crows use tools to solve problems. I also learned that crows build their nests with items we throw away. From these details, I believe my main idea for the book—a crow is a smart animal—is correct. I'll continue to look for details that explain the story's big idea.*
 - Write these details on the board at the ends of the spokes extending from the main idea in the circle.
 - **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 8. Encourage them to share how they filled out their KWL chart as they read. (Accept all answers that show students understand how to ask and answer questions.)
 - Have students read the remainder of the book. As they read, remind them to look for details that explain the main idea 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

- **Think-aloud:** *When I read page 8, I learned that crows use different calls to speak to family members, which shows that they can tell their family members from other birds. This is another way that crows are smart. So it answers my question about whether crows can do other smart things. Yes they can!*
- Record these answers on the KWL chart and draw a line across columns to connect answers to corresponding questions.
- Have students work in groups. First, have them share all the questions that arose as they were reading. Next, as a group, have them decide if those questions were answered and if so, with what information. Have groups work together to complete the KWL worksheet. Invite volunteers to come to the board and add information to the class KWL chart using a drawing or a sentence.
- Ask students to explain how asking questions and looking for answers helped them to understand and remember the story.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Ask students to think of one detail from the book. Randomly select a student and ask him or her to share one detail from the book. Record this detail in the main idea web on the board. Ask that student to pick a classmate to share his or her detail and record this detail on the web on the board. Repeat the process until all the book's details have been shared.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [main-idea-and-details worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you learned about crows and their smart behaviors. The next time you see a crow or another bird, watch it closely. What smart behaviors do you think it might do?

Build Skills

Phonological Awareness: **Discriminate initial consonant /cr/ sound**

- Write the word *crow* on the board and say it aloud to students, emphasizing the initial /cr/ sound. Ask students what sound they hear in the beginning (/cr/).

- Write the word *creek* on the board and read the word with students. Separate the onset and rime to emphasize the initial /cr/ sound. Have students say the /k/ sound, the /r/ sound, and then blend the two sounds together. Explain to students that when they blend the sounds together, they will hear each sound. Have students practice saying the /cr/ sound to a partner.
- **Check for understanding:** Say the following words one at a time and have students give the thumbs-up signal if the word begins with the /cr/ sound: *crawl*, *cat*, *can*, *creep*, *crazy*, and *castle*.

Phonics: Identify initial consonant blend cr

- Write the word *creek* on the board and say it aloud with students.
- Have students say the initial /cr/ sound aloud. Then run your finger under the letters in the word as students say the whole word aloud. Ask students to identify the two letters that make the /cr/ sound. Circle those two letters.
- Have students practice writing the *cr* letter combination on their desk with a finger while saying the /cr/ sound out loud.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following words on the board: *crazy*, *cave*, *crook*, *cap*, *corn*, *crop*, *cow*, and *craft*. Read each word and then have students read the word to a partner. Invite a volunteer to come to the board and circle the word if it contains the initial /cr/ sound or erase the word if it does not.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [initial-consonant-blend-cr worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Grammar and Mechanics: Simple sentences

- Write the following sentence on the board: *Crows protect each other*. Read the sentence aloud with students. Explain that sentences are made up of many parts. Some sentences are called *simple sentences*. These sentences are made up of two parts: the *subject* and the *predicate*.
- Circle the word *crows* in the sentence. Explain that *crows* is the subject of the sentence. A *subject* is the *person* or *thing* in the sentence doing the action.
- Underline the rest of the sentence. Explain that this part is the predicate. The *predicate* is everything in the sentence that is not the subject.
- Invite volunteers to perform a simple action, such as lifting a book or throwing away a piece of paper. Explain that they are a subject because they are the ones doing something. Write a sentence on the board to describe that action. Have students point to the subject and circle it on the board. Invite volunteers to come to the board and underline the predicate.
- Write several more sentences on the board with animals or objects as the subjects. Ask students to think-pair-share about the subject and predicate of each sentence: think in their mind, pair with a partner and discuss, and share their answers with the class. Invite volunteers to come to the board and circle the subject or underline the predicate.



- **Check for understanding:** Have students circle all the subjects in the book and underline all the predicates.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [simple sentences worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.

Word Work: Alphabetical order

- Review or explain to students that words can be organized by listing them in alphabetical order. Remind students that they alphabetize words by first looking at the beginning letter in each word and then deciding which letter comes first in the alphabet.
- Write the words *gather* and *defend* on the board. Underline the first letter in each word. Ask students which letter comes first in the alphabet, *d* or *g*. Have students point to the letter that comes first. Write the word *defend* above the word *gather* in a list. Leave plenty of room between the words.

- Write the word *fetch* on the board. Invite a volunteer to come to the board and underline the first letter. Compare the letter *f* to the letters *d* and *g*. Ask students to give the thumbs-up signal if the letter *f* comes before the letter *d* (no). Ask students to give the thumbs-up signal if the letter *f* comes after the letter *d* (yes). Point out to students that they now know that the word *fetch* comes after *defend*, but they still don't know if it comes after *gather*. Repeat the process, guiding students to understand that *fetch* comes between *defend* and *gather*. Write the word *fetch* in the list between the two words.
- Write the word *solve* on the board. Repeat the process above, emphasizing that because the letter *s* comes after all the other letters, the word *solve* belongs at the bottom of the list. Add the word to the alphabetized list.
- **Check for understanding:** Assign students to pairs and give each pair a word (make sure each word starts with a different letter of the alphabet). Write the word *crow* on the board. Have each pair share their word with the group and say where their word belongs alphabetically on the list. Guide students to determine which word belongs before, after, and so on. As they share their words, add them to the list on the board, erasing words and making corrections as necessary.

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 decide on the main idea with someone at home and together identify details that support that idea.

Extend the Reading

Informational Writing and Art Connection

Ask students to think of other animals they think are smart. Have them draw a picture of that animal performing one smart behavior. Write this sentence starter on the board: *A (animal name) is smart. It can _____.* Have students write and complete the sentence underneath their picture.

Visit WritingA-Z.com for a lesson and leveled materials on informational report writing.

Science Connection

Bring library books to class about birds, including ones with more information about crows. As a class, research three types of birds, including crows. Make a KWL chart for each of these new birds, and add to the KWL chart from the lesson for crows. Once completed, compare the KWL chart from the lesson with the new KWL charts. Brainstorm a list of similarities and differences between the birds.

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 determines main idea and supporting details during discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately discriminate initial consonant blend /cr/ sound during discussion
- consistently associate the letters *cr* with the /cr/ sound during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly identify the parts of a simple sentences during discussion and on a worksheet
- properly alphabetize words during discussion

Comprehension Checks

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