Lesson Plan

Zoos: Pro or Con?

About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Pro or Con **Page Count:** 20 **Word Count:** 1,807

Book Summary

This book presents readers with a unique text structure—that of a local newspaper publishing letters to the editor. Members of a local community share their opinions both supporting and opposing expansion and renovation of the local zoo. Through these letters, readers are presented with the pros and cons of the issue of whether zoos should exist or be abolished. Readers can decide for themselves after reading critically.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Summarize

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of summarizing to understand text
- Distinguish between fact and opinion in persuasive text
- Identify commas and their uses
- Recognize and understand syllable patterns

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Zoos: Pro or Con?* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Summarize, commas, syllable patterns 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

- **Content words:**
  - **Story critical:** *conservation (n.), controversial (adj.), exotic (adj.), extinct (adj.), outdated (adj.), stewards (n.)*
  - **Enrichment:** *accredited (adj.), curator (n.), ecosystem (n.), psychological (adj.), tranquilize (v.), wildlife refuges (n.)*

Before Reading

Build Background

- Show students the editorial section of the local newspaper. Explain that this is a place where citizens can express their opinions on a variety of topics in the news. Writers are usually responding to a controversial subject that they feel strongly about—either "pro" (in agreement with the subject or issue) or "con" (against it).
- Tell students that many books, articles, and newspapers publish pro/con documents that try to present both sides of an issue equally, allowing readers to form their own opinions based on the information presented. In this book, students will have an opportunity to read about an issue and decide if they are "pro" or "con."

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).
- Preview the table of contents on page 3. Remind students that the table of contents provides an overview of the book. Ask students what they expect to read about in the book, based on what they see in the table of contents. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)

Introduce the Reading Strategy: Summarize

- Explain to students that one way to understand and remember information in a book is to write a summary, or a brief overview, of the most important information in a section. Point out that a summary often answers the questions *who, what, when, where,* and *why*.
- Read page 4 aloud to students and model summarizing.
  Think-aloud: *To summarize, I need to decide which information is important from what I've read. I look at subtitles, bolded words, and captions to guide me. Then, in my mind, I organize the information into a few words or sentences. For example, the text on page 4 appears to be the section from the Springfield newspaper explaining to readers that an anonymous donor has contributed money to help renovate the local zoo. The page goes on to explain that readers have been responding to this news by writing to the editor to say whether or not they agree with the zoo renovation. The editor of the newspaper is publishing these letters from readers to "stimulate further discussion." When I look at this important information, a summary of page 4 might be:* In response to the local news of an upcoming major renovation to the zoo, the editor of the Springfield newspaper is publishing letters from readers who are either in favor of or opposed to this zoo renovation.
- Write the summary on the board. Discuss how you used the information in the book, along with your own words, to create the summary.
- Explain to students that they will be using a graphic organizer to help them summarize the remaining sections 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 Comprehension Skill: Fact and opinion

- Review or explain that many stories include both facts and opinions. Explain that one way to evaluate written material (such as a letter to the editor) is to recognize the difference between statements based on fact and statements based on opinion. An *opinion* tells how a person feels about something. You can agree or disagree with an opinion. A *fact*, by contrast, can be verified or proven.
- Ask volunteers to name their favorite flavor of ice cream, and write these on the board. Explain that students have expressed their opinions regarding the best flavor according to their tastes. Point out that there are many different flavors of ice cream, and tell them that this statement is a fact.
- Have students turn to page 6 and read the first paragraph together. Ask students to consider whether the second sentence is an example of fact or opinion. Model the skill of identifying fact and opinion.
  Think-aloud: *In the second sentence, the letter writer tells us that awareness of the environment has grown in recent years. This sentence is a fact because it can be proved and documented in many ways. However, the next sentence (People are changing the natural...) is an opinion. This issue of how environmental crises have been caused is a huge controversy in our world today that is hotly debated. Many people believe strongly that humans have caused such problems as global warming, animal extinctions, and so on, but others do not. As I read the book, I will look for facts and try to learn from them. Any opinions I come across will give me a better idea of the beliefs and viewpoints on both sides of the issue.*

Introduce the Vocabulary

- As students preview the book, point out any vocabulary that you feel may be difficult for them. Explain that all the words appearing in bold print can be found in the glossary at the back of the book.
- 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 context clues within a sentence to work out meanings of unfamiliar words.
- Model how to apply word-attack strategies. Direct students to page 4. Point to the word *outdated*. Model how to use context clues to figure out the meaning of the unfamiliar word.
- Have students turn to the back of the book and search the glossary for the word *outdated*. Read the definition together. Then have them return to page 4 and reread the sentence with the word *outdated* to confirm the word's meaning.
- Remind students that a glossary and a dictionary contain lists of words and their definitions, and that students should use these tools as needed to find the meanings of unfamiliar words.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about the two sides of the argument about the zoo renovation. Remind them to read critically to distinguish between facts and opinions.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Preview pages 6–8. Explain to students that these pages are the first letter to the editor. Point out the italicized statement at the top of page 6, the "thumbs-up" icon on page 6, and the name at the beginning of the letter. Have students read pages 6–8.
- Distribute the summarize worksheet and model its use on the overhead projector or document camera.
  Think-aloud: *The first letter to the editor is obviously in favor of zoos. Now that I have read the entire letter, I am going to go back and use my graphic organizer to help me summarize and understand clearly this writer's ideas. In the top "Main Idea" box, I will write the italicized statement from the top of page 6: "Responsibility to our fellow creatures." Next, in the box labeled* Reason #1, *I will write the writer's first argument: "Humans created the environmental crisis, and it's up to us to fix it." As I continue to re-read the paragraph, I see two details the writer adds: "Clean up the environment and shift to greener lifestyles" and "Save species that are endangered." I will write these in the first* Details *box. Now I can clearly see and summarize the first letter to the editor.*
- Have students read pages 9–10. Discuss the information they can now record in the second set of boxes on their worksheet. Fill in the class worksheet on the board and allow time for students to fill in their chart.
- **Check for understanding:** Distribute a second copy of the worksheet. Have students read to the end of page 15. Ask them to fill in the top portion of their worksheet in the same manner for the first "con" letter. Have volunteers share their responses.
- Have students read the remainder of the book and have them continue filling in their worksheet as 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 with students how using the graphic organizer helped them summarize each letter writer's argument and viewpoints.
- **Think-aloud:** *When I look back over my worksheet, it is easy for me to quickly summarize the pros and cons of the Springfield newspaper readers. It also helps me to evaluate the issues and decide for myself whether I am for or against zoos.*
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the worksheet if they have not already done so. Have them share their responses with a partner.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Have students review their summarize worksheet. Ask them to think about which letter they found more convincing or which one they found themselves agreeing with the most. Why? Was it the use of persuasive language? Convincing facts? Or powerful, emotional opinions?

  Independent practice: Assign each student one of the four letters from the book. Provide two different colored highlighters, and have them highlight facts in one color and opinions in another.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you read about two sides of an issue, or argument, and analyzed each one for its use of facts and opinions. The next time you are in an argument or debate, or are asked to write a persuasive letter, what will you think about when you plan your argument?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Commas

- Explain that commas may be used by writers in a variety of ways. Some of the uses are: to separate an introductory word or phrase from the rest of the sentence, to separate a list of three or more items, and to separate clauses within sentences.
- Have students turn to page 13. Ask them to find the following sentence: *In the wild, they roam over such large distances that living in small spaces causes them great stress.* Ask a volunteer to come to the board and circle the comma. Explain that the phrase *In the wild* is an introductory phrase leading into the sentence and that the comma separates it from the rest of the thought. Remind students that this is only one of the many uses for a comma.
- Next, explain to students that whenever a list of three or more items is made, a comma must be placed between the items. Listed items can be nouns, verbs, adjectives, or entire phrases or clauses. Remind students that this is only one of the many uses for a comma.
- Have students turn to page 16 and read the following sentence aloud: *You are permanently separated from your town, neighborhood, parents, and friends.* Explain that when the sentence is read aloud, the commas create a pause between the words. Point out the list of items, the commas used to separate the items, and the use of the word and before the last item.
- Lastly, have students locate the following sentence from page 4 in their books: *To encourage further discussion on the topic, we are printing a small selection of readers' letters that express many of the pros and cons of zoos.* Point out the independent clause *(we are printing a small selection of readers' letters that express many of the pros and cons of zoos)* and the dependent clause *(To encourage further discussion on the topic).* Explain that the comma separates the two clauses. Remind students that this is only one of the many uses for a comma.

- **Check for understanding:** Have students turn to pages 11 and 12 and reread both pages. Point out that many commas are used on these two pages and that they are used in a variety of ways. Have a volunteer read the sentence that uses commas to separate items in a list. *(…climbed a wall, killed one person, and injured two others...)* Ask another volunteer to read the sentence that uses a comma to separate an introductory phrase. *(As a result, some zoos attempt to reduce…)* Ask a third volunteer to read the sentence that uses a comma to separate clauses. *(This sometimes leads people to think they can keep exotic animals as pets, even though they lack the training and facilities...)*
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the commas worksheet. If time allows, discuss their responses.

Word Work: Syllable patterns

- Review with students that a *syllable* is a unit of sound in a word. A syllable contains a vowel and often one or more consonants. For example, point out to students that the word *zoo* contains one syllable, and the word *center* contains two syllables, and *habitat* contains three. Explain that many words have multiple syllables, such as the words *community* and *conservation*. Tell students that knowing how to break words into syllables can help them read and spell longer or unfamiliar words.
- Write the word *support* on the board. Say the word aloud, stressing the syllables, and put a dot over each of the vowels in the word. Then draw a line to divide the word into its two syllables. Say: *Notice that the vowel* u *is in the middle of the syllable* sup, *and it is closed in by the consonants* s *and* p *on either side. The vowel sound is short in the syllable* sup. *We call this a* closed syllable. *Often, vowels in closed syllables are short vowels. I can use this strategy when I am trying to sound out unfamiliar words.*
- Repeat the process above with the word *local*. Demonstrate that the syllable break comes after the vowel, so the first syllable is an open syllable—there is no consonant closing it in at the end. Often, open syllable vowels are long.
- **Check for understanding:** Write several more words from the book on the board (*favor, letters,* and so on), making sure to include three- and four-syllable words as well. Ask student volunteers to come to the board, divide each word into syllables, and then explain whether the first syllable is open or closed.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the syllable patterns worksheet. If time allows, discuss their responses.

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 ask family members to share their opinion regarding zoos.

Extend the Reading

Persuasive Writing Connection

Ask students to use what they now know about the pros and cons of zoos, based on the facts and opinions in the book, to write their own pro or con essay about zoos. Have them use a blank summarize worksheet to plan their argument.

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

Content Area Connection: Pro or Con?

Supply magazine articles, local newspapers, and links to Internet websites for student groups to investigate a recent story or debate on wild animals kept in captivity (for example, the incident at the San Francisco Zoo mentioned on page 12). Ask them to prepare a small poster describing the event or story and the pro/con issues surrounding it. Have them explain which side of the argument they support and why. Lead a roundtable discussion in which students share their findings and discuss their opinions.

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 summarizing during discussion and on a worksheet
- analyze text to distinguish between fact and opinion and their effects on the reader
- correctly identify various uses of commas as punctuation in discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly recognize and understand syllable patterns within words during discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- Book Quiz
- Retelling Rubric