

About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational Page Count: 16 Word Count: 609

Book Summary

In the millions of years that ants have crawled on the Earth, they have become some of the most fascinating and amazing insects. Informative and entertaining, *Awesome Ants* gives students an inside look at the lives of ants. Detailed photographs provide up-close views of everything awesome about ants, from communicating through scents and vibrations to their underground activities. Join students in this exciting exploration of these tiny and intriguing creatures.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Ask and answer questions

Objectives

- Ask and answer questions to understand text
- Identify main idea and details
- Identify vowel digraphs *ea*, *ee*, *ie*
- Recognize and use conjunctions *and*, *but*
- Identify synonyms and antonyms

Materials

Green text indicates resources are available on the website.

- Book—*Awesome Ants* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board
- Dictionary
- Thesauruses
- KWLS / ask and answer questions, main idea and details, conjunctions, synonyms and antonyms worksheets
- Discussion cards



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting the book on an interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if the books are reused.)

Vocabulary

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

Content words:

Story critical: **antennae** (n.), **colony** (n.), **communicate** (v.), **related** (adj.), **species** (n.), **vibrations** (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students about any encounters they have had with ants. Encourage them to explain where and when they have seen ants and what they know about ants on the basis of these experiences. Record their responses on the board.

- Show students the cover of the book and read the title. Explain that this book is all about the life of ants. Ask students what they think the author's opinion of ants might be on the basis of the title. Guide students to provide questions they may have about the book on the basis of what they have seen so far. Record these questions on the board.

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, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book and author's name).

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

- Explain to students that effective readers help themselves to understand what they are reading by asking questions before, during, and after reading. Discuss with students how interacting with the text by asking questions will help them understand and remember what they read.
- Model how to ask questions as you preview the book.
Think-aloud: Before I start reading, I usually have several questions that come to mind about the topic or title of the book. From what I see on the cover and title page, I know that this is a nonfiction book about ants. I'm curious to know what new information I will learn about the lives of ants. When I look at the cover, I see that the title is Awesome Ants. This makes me think that the author must believe ants are pretty interesting and will include interesting facts in the text. I know some things about ants, but I wonder if I will learn where ants live and how long they have been on the Earth. As I read, I will be curious to see if I can discover the answers to some of my questions. This helps me understand what I am reading and makes reading enjoyable.
- Introduce and explain the **KWLS / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet** to students. Draw a similar chart on the board. Say: *Before I read the book, I will record any information I know about ants in the K section of the chart.* Invite volunteers to provide facts about ants and record their responses on the board. Have students record information about ants on the worksheet. Say: *Next, I will consider what I would like to know about ants that I do not already know. For example, I want to know where ants live. I would also like to know how long ants have lived on the Earth. I will record this information in the W section of my chart.* Invite students to record their own questions on the worksheet. Ask volunteers to share their questions with the class.
- 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**

- Explain that a book has a general topic that is the subject of the book; this is the *main idea* of the book. The extra information or descriptions that help us to better understand the book are the *details*. Explain to students that we need both the main idea and the details in order to fully understand and enjoy each book.
- Explain that sometimes there is so much information on a topic that it is grouped into sections, and each section has its own main idea. Often, the reader must carefully determine the main idea as well as the extra details that support or enhance the main idea. Have students view the table of contents. Point out to students that the table of contents is a good guide for determining how the information in the book is organized. Say: *As I view the table of contents, I notice this book is divided into seven sections. As I read, I will look for the main idea of each section and the details that support it.*

Introduce the Vocabulary


- Write the following content vocabulary words on the board: *antennae*, *communicate*, *related*, and *vibrations*.
- Point out that these four words can be found in the text and that knowing what they mean will help students understand what they are reading. Divide students into pairs and give each set of students a blank piece of paper. Have students divide the paper into four sections and label each section with one vocabulary word. Invite them to draw and write what they know about each word and create a definition using their own prior knowledge.
- Model how students can use a dictionary to find the meaning of a word. Have them locate the word *antennae* in the dictionary. Invite a volunteer to read the definition aloud.
- Show students the glossary on page 16. Have them locate the word *antennae* in the glossary. Point out that the dictionary has multiple definitions for the word *antennae*, depending on the usage. Have students compare the dictionary definition with the glossary definition and ask them which dictionary definition is the closest. Ask them to compare this definition with their prior knowledge of the word.
- Ask students to locate the word *antennae* on page 7 and read the sentence containing the word aloud. Repeat the exercise with the remaining vocabulary words. Ask students to compare and contrast the three sources: the dictionary, the glossary, and the text.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about ants and their fascinating lives. Encourage students to ask and answer questions while reading.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read pages 4 and 5. Encourage those who finish early to go back and reread. Ask students to go back and look at their KWLS / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet and see if this part of the text answered any of their questions.
 - Model answering a question and filling in the L section of the ask-and-answer-questions chart on the board.
Think-aloud: *Before reading, more than one question came to mind about this book. I was curious about where ants live and wondered how long they have been on the Earth. While reading, I discovered that ants live on every continent except Antarctica. I also learned that ants have been around for about 100 million years and lived during the time of the dinosaurs! I will write these answers in the L section of my chart.*
 - Ask students to write any answers to their questions in the L section of the KWLS / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet. Invite students to record additional questions they raised in the W section of the worksheet. Have them share the information they learned and the questions they generated as they read the book.
 - Model identifying the main idea and details for a specific section of the book.
Think-aloud: *The section titled "A Little History" contains some general information about ants. I learned that ants are about 100 million years old. I also learned there are over 10,000 types of ants and they live on every continent except Antarctica. Ants have been able to survive for so long because of their bodies and how they live. On the basis of what I have read so far, I think the main idea of this section is: Ants are amazing creatures that live in nearly all parts of the world and have existed for a very long time.*
-  Ask students to highlight the details that support the main idea of this section. Next, introduce and explain the **main-idea-and-details worksheet** to students. Draw a similar diagram on the board and model how to record the main idea and supporting details. Remind students to refer to the words or phrases they highlighted. Record their responses in the appropriate circles on the board.

- **Check for understanding:** Have students read pages 6 to 8. Have them write answers they found while reading on their worksheet and any additional questions that came to mind as they read. Invite them to share the information they learned and the questions they generated as they read this section.



Have students work in pairs to reread pages 6 to 8. Ask students to underline or highlight the important details that support the main idea. Have them work with their partner to identify the main idea of the section "Body Parts." Ask volunteers to share their responses with the class. Then have students record any new questions and answers on the KWLS / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet.

- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to look for and write answers to their questions on the KWLS / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet. Encourage them to add new questions they might have to the worksheet as they read. Remind them to circle or highlight the important details that occur in each section and to determine the main idea.



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

- Reinforce that asking questions before and during reading, and looking for the answers while reading, keeps readers interested in the topic. It also encourages them to keep reading to find answers to their questions, and helps them understand and enjoy what they read.
- **Think-aloud:** *Before reading, I wanted to know where ants live. I learned that ants live on every continent except for Antarctica. When I learned this information, I recorded it in the L section of my KWLS chart. As I continued to read, I also learned that ants live in colonies that are usually underground. I will add this information to the L section of my chart. As I look at my chart, I can see that many of my questions about ants were answered in the text but some of my questions were not.*
- Have students identify any questions on their charts that did not get answered in the text. Invite students to brainstorm a list of other sources they might use to locate additional information to answer their questions such as the Internet, books, and so on.
- **Independent practice:** Invite students to write questions they still have about ants in the S section of the worksheet. Ask students to share their questions with the class.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill


- **Discussion:** Discuss how stopping to review the important details helped students remember the facts and better understand the main ideas in the book. Remind students that books are often organized into smaller sections so that the information is easy to read and remember. Point out that each section has a main idea and supporting details.
- Model identifying the main idea and supporting details for the section "Let's Talk."
Think-aloud: *After reading the section "Let's Talk," I learned that ants communicate in many different ways. For example, ants can communicate by touching each other with their antennae or by leaving a chemical trail. I learned that the main way ants communicate is through smell. This section provided many details about all the different ways ants can communicate. I think the main idea of this section is stated in the first sentence: Ants communicate with each other in three different ways: touch, sound, and smell. The other information in the section provides important details that support the main idea.*


- Have students reread the section “The Queen” with a partner to identify the main idea and supporting details. Ask volunteers to share their findings with the class.
- **Independent practice:** Ask students to reread the section “One Big, Happy Family” and have them complete the main-idea-and-details worksheet. If time allows, discuss their responses.
- **Enduring understanding:** On the basis of the title of this book, *Awesome Ants*, it is clear that the author thinks ants are amazing creatures worth reading about. After reading this book, do you agree or disagree with the author? Why or why not?

Build Skills

Phonics: Vowel digraphs *ea, ee, ie*

- Write the word *free* on the board and point to the letters *ee*. Explain to students that the letters *ee* stand for the long vowel /e/ sound they hear in the word *free*. Explain that the *ee* letter combination is one of the letter combinations that stand for the long vowel /e/ sound. The other combinations are *ea* and *ie*. Explain to students that these combinations of letters together are called *vowel digraphs*.
- Write the words *need* and *net* on the board and say them aloud. Ask students which word contains the same vowel digraph as in *free*. Circle the vowel digraph *ee* in the word *need*. Give other examples if necessary. Ask students to name other words containing the vowel digraph *ee*. Write each example on the board and underline the vowel digraph in each word.
- Have students turn to page 4 and locate the word in the first sentence containing the vowel digraph *ee* (*seen*). Then have students reread page 5 and locate another word with vowel digraph *ee* (*between*).
- Write the word *neat* on the board and ask students what letter combination in this word makes the long vowel /e/ sound. Circle the vowel digraph *ea* in the word *neat*.
- Write the words *dream* and *duck* on the board and say them aloud. Ask students which word contains the same vowel digraph as in *neat*. Circle the vowel digraph *ea* in the word *dream*.
- Have students turn to page 10 and reread the paragraph. Ask students to locate two words in the paragraph that contains the vowel digraph *ea* (*release, nearby*).
- Write the word *piece* on the board and ask students what letter combination in this word makes the long vowel /e/ sound. Circle the vowel digraph *ie* in the word *piece*.
- Write the words *niece* and *nice* on the board and say them aloud. Ask students which word contains the vowel digraph *ie* as in *piece*. Circle the vowel digraph *ie* in the word *niece*.
- Have students turn to page 5 and reread the page. Ask students to locate a word that contains the vowel digraph *ie* (*species*).

 **Check for understanding:** Have students work in pairs to reread the section titled “Body Parts” and circle all the words with vowel digraphs *ea, ee, or ie* (*three, each, hear, feeling, see*).

 **Independent practice:** Have students reread the section titled “Let’s Talk” and circle all the words with the vowel digraphs *ea, ee, or ie* (*each, three, bodies, release, nearby*).

Grammar and Mechanics: Conjunctions *and, but*

- Review or explain that a *conjunction* is a word that links and relates two parts of a sentence together. Examples of conjunctions are *and* and *but*.
- Have students turn to page 4 and reread the first sentence. Copy this sentence on the board: *You’ve seen them marching through grass and across sidewalks.* On the board underneath this sentence write: *You’ve seen them marching through grass. You’ve seen them marching across sidewalks.* Discuss how the author chose to link these sentences together instead of writing two repetitive sentences, one after another. Ask students why they think the author chose to combine these sentences.

- Ask students to turn to page 12. Have them reread the fifth sentence and write this sentence on the board: *All of these ants are female, but only one is allowed to lay eggs: the queen.* Ask students to identify the conjunction used in the sentence that connects two thoughts or ideas (*but*). Invite students to break this sentence into two separate sentences. Have students explain why they think the author chose to use a conjunction in this sentence.



Check for understanding: Have students reread page 10. Have them underline the sentence that contains a conjunction and circle the conjunction (*The trail allows them to find the food and return to the colony*). On a separate sheet of paper, invite students to create two separate sentences from this sentence containing a conjunction.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [conjunctions worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers aloud after students finish.

Word Work: Synonyms and antonyms

- Write the word *tall* on the board. Ask students to suggest a word that means almost the same thing (*high*). Review or explain that a word that means the same or almost the same as another word is called a *synonym*. Ask students to suggest a word that means the opposite of *tall* (*short*). Review or explain that a word that means the opposite of another word is called an *antonym*.
- Have students turn to page 4 and locate the last sentence on the page. Read the sentence aloud and record it on the board: *We're talking about ants—tiny, strong, awesome ants.* Ask students which word describes the size of the ants (*tiny*). Ask students to suggest a word that means the same or almost the same as *tiny* (*small, miniature*). Ask students to suggest a word that means the opposite of *tiny* (*huge, giant*).
- **Check for understanding:** Give pairs of students a thesaurus. Ask them to find the word *near* and have them name the synonyms listed. If the thesaurus lists antonyms, have them find the antonyms for *near*. If needed, provide additional practice using the thesaurus.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [synonyms-and-antonyms worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss answers aloud after they are finished.

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 demonstrate how a reader asks questions and then reflects on the answers while reading.

Extend the Reading

Informational Writing Connection

Have students choose an insect of interest to research. Encourage students to adopt a similar attitude to that of the author, inviting them to pick an insect that they consider awesome and amazing. As a class, brainstorm to produce a list of some examples of amazing insects and record these examples on the board. Provide Internet and text resources for students to conduct their research. Have students gather interesting or little-known facts about their insect of choice and present this information in clearly labeled paragraphs, much like the way the text is organized. Have students create a table of contents for their writing. Invite students to present their findings to the class. Collect research from all students and create a classroom book entitled *Awesome Insects*. Visit WritingA-Z.com for a lesson and leveled materials on informational writing.

Science and Art Connection

Have students create diagrams or models of their insect of choice from the activity listed above. Invite students to clearly label each body part of the insect including the head, thorax, and abdomen. Additionally, have students write a brief summary of the insect's habitat. Encourage students to share their work with the class. After presentations, display students' work throughout the classroom.

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 asking and answering questions to comprehend the text during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly identify the main idea and supporting details in the text and on a worksheet
- accurately identify vowel digraphs *ea*, *ee*, and *ie* in the text and during discussion
- correctly identify conjunctions *and* and *but* in the text, during discussion, and on a worksheet
- consistently identify and correctly use synonyms and antonyms in the text, during discussion, and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- **Book Quiz**
- **Retelling Rubric**