

Focus Question:

What are some reasons animals build?

Book Summary

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational

What Built This? introduces readers to the fascinating world of animal builders. Students will learn about the many reasons animals build as well as the different types of things they build. Text is supported with detailed photographs and text features to keep students engaged. This book can also be used to teach students the skills of comparing and contrasting, and identifying nouns. The book and lesson are also available for levels K and N.



Lesson Essentials

Instructional Focus

- ☐ Ask and answer questions to understand the text
- ☐ Compare and contrast ideas from the text
- ☐ Segment syllables
- ☐ Identify long vowel /a/
- ☐ Recognize and use nouns
- ☐ Understand and use captions to clarify pictures
- ☐ Place words in alphabetical order

Materials

- ☐ Book: *What Built This?* (copy for each student)
- ☐ KWLS / ask and answer questions, long vowel /a/, nouns worksheets
- ☐ Discussion cards
- ☐ Book quiz
- ☐ Retelling rubric

Vocabulary

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

- **High-frequency words:** *these, this, with*
- **Words to Know**
Story critical: *builders (n.), chimney (n.), dams (n.), dens (n.), prey (n.), silk (n.)*
- **Academic vocabulary:** *through (prep.), use (v.)*

Guiding the Reading

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students what they know about animals, focusing on what animals need to survive. Invite volunteers to share ideas. Ask students to think about how animals get those survival tools. Does nature provide them? Or do the animals need to make or build those tools? Have students share their ideas with a partner.
- Guide students to think about why animals build different things. Encourage students to share their ideas with the class.

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of *What Built This?* 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, 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, on the basis of what they see in the table of contents. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)

Introduce the Reading Strategy:

Ask and answer questions

Explain to students that engaged readers ask and answer questions while reading in order to better understand a text. Pass out the *KWLS / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet* and explain what each section on the KWLS chart stands for. Have students think about the topic and fill out the *What I Know* section on their worksheet. Then, have students think about what questions they have about the topic and fill out the *What I Wonder* section on their worksheet. Explain that students will look for the answers to these questions while reading in order to better understand the text.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

Introduce the Comprehension Skill:

Compare and contrast

- Explain to students that one way to better understand information presented in a text is to compare and contrast. Explain that *comparing* tells how things are alike and that *contrasting* tells how things are different.
- Encourage students to think about what the animals build in this book and how those things are alike and different while reading.

Vocabulary

Have students turn to the “Words to Know” box on the copyright page. Discuss each word with students. Then, have students turn to the *glossary* on page 16. Explain that the glossary provides definitions for the vocabulary words in the book. Point to the use of each content word and academic-vocabulary word in the book, and then use each word in a different model sentence. Have students work in groups to create posters for these words. Have students include on each poster the word and its part of speech, the definition, the word in an example sentence, and a picture illustrating the meaning of the word.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about what types of things animals build. Write the Focus Question on the board. Invite students to look for evidence in the book to support their answer.
- 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 a future discussion.

During Reading

Text-Dependent Questions

As students read the book, monitor their understanding with the following questions. Encourage students to support their answers by citing evidence from the book.

- *What is the benefit of prairie dogs digging their tunnels underground?* (level 3) page 5
- *How do trapdoor spiders catch their prey?* (level 1) page 9
- *How are prairie dogs and leafcutter ants similar?* (level 2) pages 5 and 10
- *What would happen if crayfish couldn’t dig to get to water?* (level 3) page 13
- *What do animals use to build?* (level 2) multiple pages

Text Features: Captions

Explain that captions are helpful when reading because they clarify pictures and provide the reader with more detailed information. Have students turn to a picture in the book and cover the caption. Have students guess what the picture is showing. Then, have students uncover the caption and read about the picture. Repeat with multiple pictures from the text. Explain that reading captions is an important part of understanding the text and that all captions should be read to give students a better understanding of the text.

Skill Review

- Discuss the animals students have read about so far in the book. Have students think about what these animals build.
- Model comparing and contrasting.
- **Think-aloud:** *Two animals I have read about so far in this book are prairie dogs and sociable weaver birds. Prairie dogs dig underground tunnels that have rooms for eating and sleeping. Sociable weaver birds make nests that can hold four hundred birds! These two animals are alike because they both build homes where they can eat and sleep and their homes are big enough for lots of prairie dogs or sociable weaver birds to live in them. These animals are different because prairie dogs live underground and sociable weaver birds live high in trees.*
- Have students choose two other animals from the book and discuss what they build. Have students share with a partner how the animals are alike and how they are different.

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.

Skill Review

Graphic Organizer: Ask and answer questions

Have students answer all of the questions from their KWLS / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet in the *What I Learned* section. If any questions remained unanswered, have students circle them. Have students brainstorm a list of new questions they have on the basis of the book and list them in the *What I Still Wonder* section. Encourage students to investigate the answers to these questions to continue learning about this topic.

Comprehension Extension

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided to be used for extension activities.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

Response to Focus Question

Have students cite specific evidence from the book to answer the Focus Question. (Students should include that animals build for many reasons, such as protection, attracting a mate, catching prey, and getting water.)

Comprehension Checks

- Book quiz
- Retelling rubric

Book Extension Activities

Build Skills

Phonological Awareness: Segment syllables

- Explain to students that every word contains one or more parts. These parts are called *syllables*.
- Say the word *chimney*. Clap at each syllable: *chim-ney*. Explain to students that you clapped two times because there are two parts, or syllables, in this word. Read the following words and have volunteers clap the number of syllables: *builders, dens, animals*.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work together to count the number of syllables in various words in the book. Give students a number of syllables, such as two, and have them search for words with two syllables. Repeat with another number of syllables.

Phonics: Long vowel /a/

- Write the word *stay* on the board and read it aloud with students. Have students say the long vowel /a/ 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 represent the long vowel /a/ sound in the word *stay*.
- Write the word *sat* and read it aloud with students. Have students discuss with a partner the similarities and differences between the two words. Point out that *sat* has the short vowel /a/ sound while *stay* has the long vowel /a/ sound.
- Have students identify words with the long vowel /a/ sound in the book.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following words on the board: *make, mad, bay, bat, track, and tape*. Say each word, one at a time. Have students work with a partner to sort the words into long vowel /a/ words and short vowel /a/ words. Have volunteers share their answers with the class. Ask the class to give a thumbs-up signal if the students sort the words correctly.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [long vowel /a/ worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Grammar and Mechanics: Nouns

- Using an extra copy of the book, cut out a few pictures and display them on the board. Have students name the objects in the pictures and write the names on the board.
- Explain to students that *nouns are words that name people, places, and things*. Read the list of names written on the board, and invite volunteers to come up and circle the nouns. Have students share any other nouns they see in the pictures.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work with a partner to find and highlight all the nouns in the book. Call on students to share with the rest of the class a noun they found, and have other students give a thumbs-up signal if the word is a noun.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [nouns worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: Alphabetical order

- Review or explain the process of putting a list of words in alphabetical order.
- Write the words *silk, dams, and prey* on paper and display them on the board. Discuss how to put these words in alphabetical order, reminding students to look at the first letter in each word. Have a volunteer move the words into the correct order.
- Put students into small groups, and give each group the following six words: *and, up, can, was, like, and bag*. Have students work together to put these words in alphabetical order. Invite volunteers from each group to share their answers.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the words *big, sat, cry, under, eat, and flat* on the board. Have students write the words in alphabetical order on a separate sheet of paper and share their answers with a partner.

Connections

- See the back of the book for cross-curricular extension ideas.