



About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Information Page Count: 12 Word Count: 191

Have you ever wondered about the unusual animals from Down Under? Australia is home to many interesting animals. Colorful, detailed photographs help the reader imagine what it might be like to see these creatures in person. Repetitive sentence patterns and high-frequency words support readers. Use the story to teach students to identify the main idea and details as well as to ask and answer questions.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Ask and answer questions

Objectives

- Ask and answer questions to understand text
- Identify main idea and details
- Discriminate short vowel /i/ sound
- Identify short vowel *i*
- Recognize and use verbs
- Understand and arrange words in alphabetical order

Materials

Green text indicates resources that are available on the website.

- Book—*Are You From Australia?* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board
- Map of the world or globe
- Pictures of a desert, a forest, and a seashore
- Sheets of paper
- Main idea and details, short vowel *i*, verbs 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.

- High-frequency words: *eat*, *in*, *live*
- Content words:
Story critical: *bill* (n.), *country* (n.), *deserts* (n.), *forests* (n.), *pouch* (n.), *seashore* (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Show students a map or globe and ask them to find Australia. When students find Australia on the map, discuss its location in relation to students' homes.

- Show students pictures of a desert, a forest, and a seashore. Ask students whether or not they have been to any of these places. Discuss the characteristics of each place and how they are alike and different. Explain that all of these places can be found in Australia.

Book Walk

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, author's name).

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

- Explain to students that effective readers ask questions before and while reading a book, and look for answers as they read. Point out that readers use prior knowledge and information they read in the book to help them form questions. Explain to students that asking and answering questions helps readers understand and remember what they read.
- Model using the cover to generate questions.
Think-aloud: The title of the story and the picture on the cover made me think of a question right away. The title asks the question, Are you from Australia? and I know kangaroos are usually found in Australia. This makes me wonder whether the book will be about animals from Australia. I will write that question on the board. (Will the book be about Australian animals?) The animals on the back cover look like bats; however, I know bats are usually active at night. I wonder if these animals are bats? I will write this question on the board too. (What are the animals on the back cover?) I will have to read the book to find the answer to my questions.
- Have students look at the covers and title page of the book. Ask students to share questions they have, on the basis of this information, with a partner. Invite volunteers to share some of their questions with the whole class. Record these questions on the board.
- Preview the rest of the book with students and discuss the pictures. Record any further questions they think of as they go through this process.
- 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 to students that most books have a big, or main, idea. This is what the book is mostly about. Explain that the supporting details are the information that describes the main idea. These supporting details make the main idea stronger.
- Read the title to students and write it on the board. Explain that titles often provide clues about the book's main idea. Have students discuss with a partner predictions for the main idea of this story. Invite volunteers to share their predictions with the rest of the class.
- Guide the class to an agreement that the main idea will involve animals from Australia. Point out that they cannot finalize the main idea for this book until they read more information.
- Read page 3 aloud to students. Model identifying the main idea and details.
Think-aloud: After reading this page, I think the author wants us to learn about some of the animals that live in Australia. On the basis of the title, the pictures, and the information I have read, I think the main idea of the book is many animals live in Australia. I know the book will have details that help us understand the main idea of the book. From looking at the pictures, I know that kangaroos, people, and crocodiles are all animals that live in Australia. These are details that support the main idea, many animals live in Australia. I will have to keep reading to find out more information about each of these animals.
- Ask students to identify details from the book that support the main idea (a koala, a platypus, and so on).

Introduce the Vocabulary

- While previewing the book, reinforce the vocabulary words students will encounter. For example, while looking at the picture on page 6, you might say: *It looks as though this kangaroo lives in the desert. What is a desert? Correct, it is an area of land that usually does not get much rain. What else might be found at the desert?*
- Remind students to look at the picture and the letters with which a word begins to help them decode a difficult word. For example, point to the word *forests* on page 5 and say: *This word begins with the letter Ff, which makes the /f/ sound. The small picture on the page shows the flying fox in a tree. The word tree doesn't begin with the /f/ sound. I know, however, that areas where many trees grow are called forests. The word forests begins with the /f/ sound, and the sentence makes sense with this word. The word must be forests.*
- Have students divide a separate sheet of paper in half. Write the word *forest* on the board. Read it aloud and have students read it with you. Ask students to share with a partner what they think the word means. Define the word for students.
- Ask students to write the word *forest* on one side of their paper. Under the word, ask students to write key words that help define *forest*.
- Have students draw a picture representing the word on the other side of the paper. Then, ask students to think of a sentence that correctly uses the word *forest* and share it with a partner. Invite volunteers to share their sentence and picture with the rest of the class.
- Repeat this activity with the remaining vocabulary words.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about the animals of Australia. Encourage them to pay attention to details that support the main idea.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read from page 3 to the end of page 5. Encourage those who finish early to go back and reread.
- **Model answering questions.**
Think-aloud: *Earlier, I asked the question, Will the book be about Australian animals? When I read pages 3 and 4, I learned that the animals that I read about so far live in Australia. The platypus lives in the rivers of Australia and looks like a beaver with a duck's bill. The next question I asked was What are the batlike creatures on the back cover? I read that this animal is called a flying fox, and it is one of the biggest bats in the world. It is also an Australian animal that lives in the forests. Both of these animals seem to be different from animals I know about and have seen before. I wonder if the other animals that live in Australia are unusual. I will have to keep reading the book to find out.*
- Invite students to share questions they asked while reading.
- Review the main idea of the story: *many animals live in Australia*, and write it on the board. Have students give a thumbs-up signal if they agree with the main idea. Remind students that supporting details will tell which animals live in Australia. Have students think-pair-share about the details they have read about so far in the story. Then, call on students to share and defend their answer with the rest of the class.
- Introduce and explain the **main-idea-and-details worksheet**. Have students write the main idea on the worksheet. Write the sentence *A platypus lives in the river* on the board. Have students write the sentence in one of the empty spaces on the worksheet.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 8. Encourage them to share questions they asked as they read and any answers they found as they were reading. (Accept all answers that show students understand how to ask and answer questions.)

- Have students work in groups to discuss new details they read that support the main idea, *many animals live in Australia*. Call on groups to share at least one new detail with the rest of the class. Record these details on the board. Ask students to choose one detail to record on their worksheet. Remind them to draw a picture for the detail.
- Check worksheets for individual understanding. Encourage additions or deletions to accurately record the most important details.
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to think about what they know about or have experienced with animals from Australia as they read and to identify important details from 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

- Have students share any other questions they thought of while reading. Reinforce how asking questions and looking for answers as they read kept them actively involved in the reading process. Ask students to share the answers they learned while reading.
- **Think-aloud:** *Now that I have finished reading the book, I know there are many unusual animals that live in Australia. As I was reading, I wondered if all the animals would be different from animals I had seen before. I read about the koala and the spiny anteater. They both live in the forests of Australia. I have never seen these animals around my home. They are animals that live only in Australia; this makes them interesting to learn about. Earlier I asked a question about the flying fox. I wondered why it might be flying around during the daytime when most bats fly at night. I didn't find the answer to my question in this book. Sometimes all questions cannot be answered by reading just one book. I will have to research in other places to find the answer to this question.*
- Ask students to explain how asking and answering questions helped them understand and remember the information in the book.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Review the main idea on the board with students. (*Many animals live in Australia.*) Review the details students drew and wrote on their worksheet. Invite them to explain why each of the details supports the main idea of the story. Have the rest of the students give the thumbs-up signal if they agree the detail supports the main idea.
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete their main-idea-and-details worksheet by writing important details from the end of the book. If time allows, discuss their responses.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you learned about several unusual animals that live in Australia. Now that you have read and thought about this information, what are some traits that make these animals different from other animals you are familiar with?

Build Skills

Phonological Awareness: **Short vowel /i/ sound**

- Say the word *bill* aloud to students, emphasizing the short vowel /i/ sound. Have students say the word aloud and then say the /i/ sound.
- Read page 9 aloud to students. Have students raise their hand when they hear a word that has the short vowel /i/ sound.

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

Are You From Australia?

- Have students practice making the short /i/ sound with a partner. Have student pairs generate words that have the short /i/ sound. Walk around and listen to students to make sure they are making the sound correctly. Have volunteers share some of the words generated with the whole group.
- **Check for understanding:** Say the following words one at a time and have students give the thumbs-up signal if the word has the short /i/ sound: *live, water, river, lake, big, dig*.

Phonics: Short vowel i

- Write the word *bill* on the board and say it aloud with students.
- Have students say the short vowel /i/ sound aloud. Then, run your finger under the letters in the word as students say the whole word aloud. Ask students to identify which letter represents the short vowel /i/ sound in the word *bill*.
- Have students practice writing the letter *i* on a separate piece of paper while saying the short vowel /i/ sound.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following words that begin with the short /i/ sound on the board, leaving out the vowel: *nip, pig, stick*, and *him*. Say each word, one at a time, and have volunteers come to the board and add the short vowel *i* to each word.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [short-vowel-i worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Grammar and Mechanics: Verbs

- Review or explain to students that *verbs* are words that name actions. Have each student name at least one verb. Write the verbs on the board. Select several of the verbs for the class to act out.
- Have students read page 6 aloud with you. Ask them to identify the verbs (*live, hop*, and *carry*).
- Write several sentences from the book on the board; use examples that have easy-to-identify verbs. Invite volunteers to come to the board and circle the verb in each sentence. Have the class say the verbs aloud.



Check for understanding: Have students locate and circle the verbs in the book. Have volunteers share one verb they found with the rest of the class. Have the rest of the class give the thumbs-up signal if they agree the word is a verb.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [verbs worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.

Word Work: Alphabetical order

- Review or explain the process of putting a list of words in alphabetical order. Remind students to look at the first letter of each word to determine which word would come first in alphabetical order.
- Write the words *pouch* and *deserts* on the board. Have a volunteer explain which word would appear first in alphabetical order (*deserts*) and why (because *Dd* comes before *Pp* in the alphabet).
- Write the words *forests* and *country* on the board. Ask a volunteer to tell which word would appear first in alphabetical order and to explain his or her thinking (*country*, because the letter *Cc* comes before *Ff* in the alphabet).
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following words on the board and have students work with a partner to arrange them in alphabetical order: *rivers, lakes, waters, seashore*. Have a volunteer explain which word would appear first in alphabetical order (*lakes*) and why.
- **Independent practice:** Provide each student with a blank piece of paper. Write the following words on the board and have students record them in alphabetical order: *sand, fish, leaves, trees, pouch, bugs, Australia*. If time allows, discuss students' responses as a class.

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 them discuss the main idea and details of the book with someone at home.

Extend the Reading

Informational Writing and Art Connection

Discuss the animals from Australia students read about in the book. Give each student a piece of paper and one index card. Have students choose one animal from the book, write the name of the animal, and draw a picture of the animal on their piece of paper. Then, have students write three key words about their animal on the index card. Have students use these key words to write facts about the animal they have chosen under their picture.

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

Social Studies Connection

Make a chart about the animals from the book, include the habitat, the food, physical description, and so on. Provide Internet and other resources about animals from Australia. Discuss the any new animals learned about after reading these materials. Add the information about these animals to the chart. Provide student pairs with two animals to compare and contrast using a Venn diagram. Have the student pairs share their information with the whole class.

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 understand text during discussion;
- accurately identify details that support a main idea during discussion and on a worksheet;
- accurately discriminate the short vowel /i/ sound during discussion;
- identify and write the letter symbol that represents the short vowel /i/ sound in text, during discussion, and on a worksheet;
- correctly understand and identify verbs during discussion and on a worksheet;
- understand the process of arranging words in alphabetical order during discussion and on a separate piece of paper.

Comprehension Checks

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