

About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Realistic Page Count: 24 Word Count: 2,678

Book Summary

Born on Sable Island is a realistic fiction book about two girls who accompany their mother on a zoological excursion to Sable Island. They quickly find out that this isolated spot off the coast of Nova Scotia is very different from the world they are used to. Photographs and illustrations support the text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Visualize

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of visualizing to understand text
- Analyze characters in the text
- Identify and use complex sentences
- Identify similes

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Born on Sable Island* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Highlighters
- Visualize, analyze character, complex 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.

Content words:

Story critical: *dunes* (n.), *foals* (n.), *isolated* (adj.), *sandbars* (n.), *vulnerable* (adj.), *zoologist* (n.)
 Enrichment: *civilization* (n.), *distressed* (adj.), *excursions* (n.), *inquiring* (adj.), *muzzle* (n.), *unkempt* (adj.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Using a large world map, point to North America and then the United States and Canada. Ask students if they have ever heard of Nova Scotia. Follow the North American coastline up from Massachusetts to Nova Scotia. Explain to students that Nova Scotia is a Canadian province and that Sable Island is a small island situated 300 km southeast of mainland Nova Scotia in the Atlantic Ocean. Explain that the island is a year-round home to only a few people. In summer, research scientists, photographers, tourists, and artists visit, and the island is known for its population of wild horses. Sable Island is protected, and permission must be granted from the Canadian Coast Guard to visit the island.

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

Born on Sable Island

- Write the phrases *Sable Island*, *Atlantic Ocean*, and *Nova Scotia* on the board. Tell students that these locations will be mentioned in the book.
- Encourage students to look at the map and tell whether they think the North Atlantic Ocean is a warm or cold body of water. Discuss their ideas and have students share the reasoning behind their decision.

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, illustrator'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: **Visualize**

- Explain to students that good readers often visualize, or create pictures in their mind, while reading. Visualizing is on the basis of what a person already knows about a topic. Explain that one way to visualize is to draw a picture. Read aloud to the end of page 4 while students follow along silently.
- Model how to visualize using a drawing.
Think-aloud: Whenever I read a book, I always pause after a few pages to create a picture in my mind of the information I've read. This helps me organize the important information and understand the ideas in the book. For example, on page 4, the story begins with Dani describing Sable Island as an isolated spot off the coast of Nova Scotia. I imagined the cold Atlantic Ocean hitting the shores of an island with no buildings or homes. I imagined the shore as a sandy beach, but very windy and not at all appealing.
- Introduce and explain the [visualize worksheet](#). Have students draw what they visualized from page 4 on their worksheet. Invite students to share their drawings.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Analyze characters**

- Explain that there are many ways to learn about a character in a story. One way is to examine a character's words or thoughts. Another way is to examine the actions of the character. Explain to students that an author uses a character's words, thoughts, and actions to give the reader insight into a character's personality, relationships, and motivations, and the conflicts he or she may face.
- Ask students to return to page 4. Model how to analyze a character on the basis of his or her actions.
Think-aloud: As I read page 4, I found out that Dani was writing a letter about her trip to Sable Island. She said that she liked to take photographs and then complimented her sister Mimi's "amazing" drawings. She said that Sable Island surpassed even their big imaginations and that their trip was magical and personal. Dani wrote that she hoped readers would enjoy their scrapbook. On the basis of these clues, Dani appears to be kind and passionate. This information provides insight into Dani's personality.
- Have students read the first paragraph on page 5. Discuss which words might suggest that Dani is impatient and observant. (She describes them sitting at the airport "forever"; she notices what everyone else is doing or feeling.)
- Introduce and, explain and have students record the information from the discussion on the [analyze character worksheet](#).

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Write the following vocabulary words on the board: *zoologist*, *isolated*, and *foals*. Remind students that they can look for context clues in the text and photographs to help them define an unfamiliar word.
- Show students the photograph of seals on the title page. Explain that a special type of scientist studies animals, including seals. Ask students if they know the name of this type of scientist. Point to the word *zoologist* on the board. Have students turn to page 5 and find the sentence in which the word *zoologist* can be found. Have a volunteer read the glossary definition for *zoologist*.
- Ask students to turn to page 22 and read the first paragraph. Point to the word *foal* on the board and ask a volunteer to give a definition for this word. Guide students to point to the foal in the picture on this page.
- Have volunteers use the words *zoologist* and *foals* to predict events that might occur in *Born on Sable Island*. Invite them to share their predictions with a neighbor.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about Mimi and Dani's adventures on Sable Island. Remind them to stop every few pages to visualize the most important information they read and to draw it on their worksheet.

During Reading


Student Reading




Guide the reading: Have students read from page 5 to the end of page 8. Ask them to put an asterisk or a star next to information where they visualized. Encourage students who finish before everyone else to go back and reread.

- Model visualizing.
Think-aloud: *When I read about the shipwrecks on Sable Island on page 8, I pictured ships smashed to tiny pieces and washed up onto the sandbars all along the beaches. When George said that the island was called the "graveyard of the Atlantic," I visualized hundreds of ships piled up together under a giant tombstone. I pictured the seas tossing the ships around, out of control, and I pictured thick fog rolling in and blocking the rocky shores.*
- Have students share their pictures of what they visualized while reading. Have them explain their drawings aloud.
- Model how to analyze characters.
Think-aloud: *When I read about Dani arriving at the island, I thought that she might be spoiled or disrespectful. One reason I thought this was because she said that the island with its old weathered buildings was definitely not a vacation resort.*
- Have students share other examples of how Dani might be acting spoiled or disrespectful. (She wasn't sure she liked her mom's special island; she reported that Mimi said George was "weird.") Have students record the information from the discussion on their analyze character worksheet for pages 5–8.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 14. Have them visualize the information in the text as they read. Ask students to draw what they visualized on their visualize worksheet. Invite students to share what they visualized.
- Ask students to explain whether they think Dani's personality has changed at this point in the story or stayed the same. Have them write any new information in the *Traits* section of their analyze character worksheet for pages 9–14. Have them write clues that support their answers from the text on their worksheet (suspicious: *"I admit that I still didn't expect to see...horses"*; curious: *"We wanted to stay right there,"* and so on; opinionated or hurt: *"All you ever think about is what you like!"*). Have students share their responses from the text.

- Have students add more examples to their analyze character worksheet if they come across more evidence to support character traits already listed (observant: *"Mom sounded frustrated," ...the horse blinked as if to say "Thank you";* disrespectful: *"All you care about are your stinky seals!" ...just shrugged past him and kicked sand...).*

 Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to visualize as they read, and have them continue to put an asterisk or a star next to information where they visualized.

 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

- Ask students to explain or show how the strategy of visualizing helped them understand and remember important events in the story.
Think-aloud: *When I read about the mother horse lying with her foal just after giving birth, I pictured the spotted horse tired and lying in the wet field, curled lovingly around the tiny, dark body. I pictured the foal all folded up at pointy angles, weakly looking to its mother for guidance. I visualized the mother horse gently bending down again to lick the foal, then nudging it softly with her nose, urging her baby to stand. This helped me to understand how precious the foal was and to remember that part of the book.*
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the visualize worksheet. Discuss their answers aloud after they are finished.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Review the characteristics of Dani that students identified from the first page of the story and those written in the first column on the board (kind, passionate). Review the other character traits on the board identified as Dani's (spoiled, disrespectful, impatient, observant, curious). Ask students if other character traits were revealed later in the story.
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the analyze character worksheet. Discuss their answers aloud after they are finished.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this story, Dani and Mimi were surprised to find that a seemingly lonely and empty island could end up being so personal and magical. Now that you know this information, why do you think it's important to be open to new experiences and not to judge too quickly what those experiences might offer?

Build Skills


Grammar and Mechanics: Complex sentences

- Write the following sentence (from page 7 in the text) on the board: *I must have gotten too close with my camera _____ suddenly they went flopping into the ocean, shouting and grunting.*
- Have students read the sentence and suggest words that belong in the blank to complete the sentence (*when, since, because*).
- Review or explain that a *conjunction* is a word that joins together two parts of a sentence. Point to the examples that students suggested to complete the sentence on the board. Explain that these conjunctions join parts of sentences together to form a *complex sentence*. List examples of conjunctions on the board (*after, although, as, as if, because, before, for, it, once, since, so, than, that, though, unless, until, when, whenever, where, whereas, wherever, whether, while*).

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

Born on Sable Island


- Reread the sentence on the board, including a conjunction in the sentence. (*I must have gotten too close with my camera because suddenly they went flopping into the ocean, shouting and grunting.*) Underline *I must have gotten too close with my camera*. Explain that this part of the sentence is called the *independent clause*. Circle *because suddenly they went flopping into the ocean, shouting and grunting*. Explain that the part of the sentence that follows the conjunction is called the *dependent clause*. Point out that even though both sentence parts contain a subject and verb, the dependent clause does not express a complete thought and is not a sentence on its own.

 **Check for understanding:** Have students highlight the following sentence from page 14 in their book: *If your mom says okay, you can come with me tomorrow*. Have students underline the dependent clause (*If your mom says okay*) and circle the independent clause (*you can come with me tomorrow*). Ask students to identify the conjunction (*If*).

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [complex sentences worksheet](#). Discuss their answers aloud after they are finished.

Word Work: **Similes**

- Review or explain that a *simile* compares two things by using the word *like* or *as*. Write the words *like* and *as* on the board. Explain that these words often signal the use of a simile. (Example: *The man was as quiet as a clam.*)
- Have students turn to page 6. Ask a student to read the first paragraph aloud. Ask another student to identify the simile in this paragraph. (*From the air, I thought it looked like the loneliest place on Earth.*)
- Ask students to explain what the simile is comparing (the island to the loneliest place on Earth). Challenge students to explain why the author might have used this simile to describe the island.

 **Check for understanding:** Ask students to turn to page 15. Have them highlight a simile on this page and write which two things the simile compares (*There was a gap between two dunes like a secret doorway*; the gap is compared to a secret doorway).

- **Independent practice:** Have pairs of students highlight additional examples of similes throughout the text. When finished, discuss 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 visualize with someone at home while they read the book.

Extend the Reading

Realistic Fiction Writing Connection

Have students write a fictional piece in which their character visits a special place or has an adventure. Tell students that the story should have a main character and at least one supporting character, and challenge them to add dialogue. Remind them to keep the characters and events believable since they are writing a realistic fiction piece. Have students share their finished stories aloud in small groups.

Visit [Writing A-Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on narrative writing.

Science Connection

Supply print and Internet resources for students to learn more about zoologists. Have them find out the answers to questions such as: What types of animals do zoologists study? Where in the world do zoologists travel? What kind of equipment do they need to do their job? Who pays them to do their work? How much education does someone need to become a zoologist?

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 visualizing to comprehend the text during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly analyze the words, thoughts, and actions of the main character during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly identify the parts of complex sentences during discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately identify similes during discussion

Comprehension Checks

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