

Focus Question:

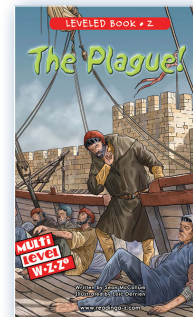
What was the impact of the Black Death on Europe's history?

Book Summary

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational

Imagine half of the people of your city are suddenly gone. That's exactly what happened to many Europeans who survived the Black Death. In *The Plague!*, students will learn about the bubonic plague, which caused the deaths of half of the people of Europe in the 1300s. Engaging text and detailed graphics will keep students interested in learning about this important historical event. This book can also be used to teach students how to ask and answer questions as well as to identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.

The book and lesson are also available for levels W and Z1.



Lesson Essentials

Instructional Focus

- ☐ Ask and answer questions to understand text
- ☐ Determine cause-and-effect relationships
- ☐ Describe information provided by graphics
- ☐ Identify and use dashes
- ☐ Place words in alphabetical order

Materials

- ☐ Book: *The Plague!* (copy for each student)
- ☐ KWLS / ask and answer questions, cause and effect, dashes, alphabetical order 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.

Words to Know

Story critical: *bacteria* (n.), *immune system* (n.), *infectious* (adj.), *sanitation* (n.), *symptoms* (n.), *viruses* (n.)

Enrichment: *contagion* (n.), *digestive* (adj.), *DNA* (n.), *exotic* (adj.), *hygiene* (n.), *microbe* (n.)

- Academic vocabulary:** *area* (n.), *authority* (n.), *confirm* (v.), *event* (n.), *likely* (adj.), *source* (n.)

Guiding the Reading

Before Reading

Build Background

- Place on the board a map of Europe from the 1300s and write the words *bubonic plague* and *Black Death* on the board. Ask students to work with a partner to list any facts they know about this period of history. Have volunteers share the information with the class.
- Create a KWLS chart on the board, and introduce and explain the [KWLS / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet](#). Review or explain that the *K* stands for knowledge we know, the *W* stands for information we want to know, the *L* stands for what we learned, and the *S* stands for what we still want to know about the topic. Discuss and fill in the first column (*K*) on the board with information students know about the bubonic plague. Have students complete the same section of their KWLS / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet.

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of *The Plague!* 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, 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:

Ask and answer questions

Explain to students that having prior knowledge about a topic, and asking and answering questions while reading, can help readers understand and

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

remember information in a book. Direct students to the “Words to Know” box on the copyright page and model asking questions about the list of words as they relate to the topic of the book. Ask students what they would like to know about the bubonic plague on the basis of this word list. Have them fill in the second column (W) of their worksheet. Write their questions on the class chart as well. As students read, encourage them to ask questions and record them on their KWLS / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill:

Cause and effect

- Discuss cause-and-effect relationships. Explain that a *cause* is an action or event that makes something happen and the *effect* is what happens because of, or as a result of, the action or event.
- Explain to students that there can be more than one effect from a cause. Copy the top of the **cause-and-effect worksheet** on the board, and write *cheated on a test* in the Cause box and *sent to the principal's office* in the Effect box. Ask students what else can happen when someone cheats on a test. Record responses.
- Explain to students that they will be looking for cause-and-effect relationships as they read the book.

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 out 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 them 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 the bubonic plague. Write the Focus Question on the board. Invite students to look for evidence in the book to support their answer to the question.
- 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 areas of Europe were impacted first by the Black Death? (level 1) page 3
- How did the Black Death spread from one person to another? (level 2) pages 6–7
- If one in five infected people survived the bubonic plague, what was the survival rate? What was the death rate? (level 3) page 8
- What were some ways people tried to fight the bubonic plague? (level 2) pages 9–10
- Why were rural areas less affected by the Black Death than cities? (level 3) page 11
- What were the consequences of the Black Death? (level 3) multiple pages
- Could the Black Death happen in modern times? Why or why not? (level 3) multiple pages

Text Features: Graphics

Explain that graphics help readers better understand the information presented in the book. Have students turn to page 7. Ask them to identify the graphic and share with a partner how the graphic helps readers better understand how the bubonic plague spread. Invite volunteers to share with the rest of the class. Repeat with other graphics, such as the graph on page 11. Ask students: *How does this graphic help you better understand what the author is trying to tell you? Would the information be easier or harder to understand without the graphic?* Invite volunteers to share their answers with the class.

Skill Review

- Model for students how to ask and record questions while reading on the KWLS / ask-and-answer-questions worksheet. Invite volunteers to share their questions. Discuss with students how posing questions helps them better understand the book.
- Have students work in groups to periodically review the cause-and-effect relationships they find in the book. Have groups discuss their opinion of these relationships.
- Model evaluating details to determine cause-and-effect relationships.
Think-aloud: *The book is providing me with information about the cause-and-effect relationships associated with the Black Death in Europe. For example, on page 7, I read that people passed the Black Death to each other directly through pus, blood, or saliva. After reading this, I know a cause is an infected person coughing on someone and the effect is getting the Black Death. This is one of the many cause-and-effect relationships I read about in the book.*
- Model how to complete the cause-and-effect worksheet. Have students identify details from the book and circle them. Then, have students discuss the details with a partner and determine the cause-and-effect relationships in the book.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

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: Cause and effect

Review the cause-and-effect worksheet that students completed. Have students share their work in groups. Invite volunteers to share with the rest of the class the examples they chose. Discuss with students how the cause-and-effect relationships changed the course of history in Europe.

Comprehension Extension

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

Response to Focus Question

Have students cite specific evidence from the book to answer the Focus Question. (Answers will vary. Sample: *The Black Death had a major impact on Europe's history. Since the plague caused the death of half of the Europeans at the time, there were not enough workers to plow the fields or tend to the livestock. Farmers tried new practices to grow food with fewer hands, while peasants were able to demand better pay and treatment. There were also advances in public health as people began to understand the importance of cleanliness and sanitation to prevent outbreaks of disease.*)

Comprehension Checks

- Book quiz
- Retelling rubric

Book Extension Activities

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Dashes

- Explain that a *dash* is a punctuation mark that is used for different purposes: to show an afterthought or summary at the end of a sentence or to "set off," or clarify, information within a sentence.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *In October 1347, a dozen trading ships sailed into the port of Messina, Sicily—part of Italy today.* Explain to students that in this sentence the dash is being used to add a thought or more information to the end of the sentence.

- Explain the difference between a dash and a hyphen. Remind students that hyphens are used in adverbs, nouns, and compound adjectives, such as *plague-infected* ships. Point out that hyphens are shorter in length and used to connect two or more words.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students reread the second and third paragraphs on page 4 and highlight the sentences containing a dash. Then, have them turn to a partner and explain how each dash was used. Review students' findings with the class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [dashes worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: Alphabetical order

- Write the words *contagion* and *contagious* on the board. Point out that the words begin with the same letter (Cc). Model how to list these words in alphabetical order. Review the process of putting a list of words in alphabetical order. Remind students that if the first letter of two words is the same they must compare the second letter instead, and if the second letter of the two words is the same they continue to compare the third letter, and so on, until they find two letters that are different.
- Write the words *organism* and *organ* on the board. Have a volunteer explain which word would appear first in alphabetical order and why.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the words *cleanliness* and *clean* on the board. Have the students write the words in alphabetical order and explain their thinking on a separate piece of paper. Discuss their answers with the class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [alphabetical order worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Connections

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