

Focus Question:

What makes the Amazon a unique habitat?

Book Summary

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational

The Amazon rainforest is a rich, living treasure. Filled with more kinds of insects, plants, and animals than anywhere else in the world, the Amazon is a complex and fascinating habitat. *The Amazing Amazon* provides students a comprehensive look at this intricate world through detailed text and colorful photographs. The book can also be used to teach author's point of view and how to effectively summarize a text.

The book and lesson are also available for levels U and X.



Lesson Essentials

Instructional Focus

- ☐ Summarize to understand text
- ☐ Determine author's point of view
- ☐ Describe information provided by the table of contents
- ☐ Discriminate and use various sentence types
- ☐ Identify and use homophones

Materials

- ☐ Book: *The Amazing Amazon* (copy for each student)
- ☐ Summarize, sentence types, homophones 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: *epiphytes* (n.), *foliage* (n.), *peccaries* (n.), *species* (n.), *substrate* (n.), *tributaries* (n.)

Enrichment: *decomposes* (v.), *emit* (v.), *nocturnal* (adj.), *pollinators* (n.), *prehensile* (adj.), *slithers* (v.), *trickles* (v.), *unsuspecting* (adj.), *venomous* (adj.)

- **Academic vocabulary:** *different* (adj.), *discover* (v.), *probably* (adv.), *support* (v.), *understand* (v.), *volume* (n.)

Guiding the Reading

Before Reading

Build Background

- Invite students to share their prior knowledge of rainforests. Point out that a tropical rainforest is a warm forest where it rains a lot and therefore can support much life.
- Write *The Amazon* and read it aloud to students. Display a map of the world and locate the Amazon on the map in relationship to your hometown. Point out the location of the equator and explain that the proximity to the equator is responsible for the warm climate. Explain to students that the Amazon is the largest rainforest in the world.

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of *The Amazing Amazon*. 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: Summarize

Explain to students that engaged readers *summarize*, or create a brief overview, as they read. Explain to students that when readers summarize what they read, it helps them remember information in the section or the book. Point out that a summary often answers the questions, *Who*, *What*, *When*, *Where*, and *Why*. Read page 5 aloud to students and model how to summarize the information.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

Introduce the Comprehension Skill:

Author's point of view

- Explain to students that when an author writes about a topic, he or she often expresses his or her attitude, opinion, and beliefs about the subject. This is called the *author's point of view*. The author's point of view is often expressed through his or her purpose for writing: to inform, to persuade, or to entertain the reader. Point out that although an author's purpose when writing a nonfiction book is usually to inform, we can often infer how the author feels about the topic from the details included in the book.
- Explain to students that as they read the book, they will be looking for details that reveal the author's point of view.

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 pages 23 and 24. 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 Amazon. 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.

- *How are tropical and subtropical rainforests similar? How are they different?* (level 2) pages 4, 5, and 6
- *Where is the Amazon rainforest located?* (level 1) page 6
- *How are the layers of the rainforest like a four-story building?* (level 1) page 9
- *Why is the emergent layer of the rainforest an ideal home for a harpy eagle?* (level 2) pages 10 and 11

- *How are the emergent layer, canopy layer, and understory layer similar? How are they different?* (level 2) pages 9, 11, and 13
- *In what ways does the rainforest floor support all of the living creatures in the Amazon?* (level 3) multiple pages
- *How is the Amazon rainforest a rich treasure?* (level 3) multiple pages

Text Features: Table of contents

Explain that the *table of contents* is a list of the sections in a book. It can be used to find information quickly and is located at the front of the book. Have students turn to page 3 of the book. Ask students what they can expect to read about in this book. Have students work with a partner to predict what information each section might contain. Ask students: *How does the table of contents help you create a summary of the book? In which section might you learn about people's connection to the Amazon rainforest? On what page does this section begin? Which section shows you how to find more information about the rainforest?* Continue to ask students about information from the table of contents and on which pages they will find the information.

Skill Review

- Review how to summarize with students. Have students reread the section "Rainforests" and list the *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and *why* from the section on a separate sheet of paper. Then have students work with a partner to create a short oral summary using this information. Invite volunteers to share their summary with the class.
- Model how to complete the [summarize worksheet](#).
- Review with students that an author of a nonfiction book often expresses his or her point of view about a topic. Have students independently reread page 20.
- Model identifying the author's point of view.
Think-aloud: I know that an author includes details in his or her writing that reflect his or her beliefs or feelings about a topic. When I read, I look for details that the author includes to make a point about the topic. For example, on page 20, the author states that the Amazon is a treasure and that it provides many resources for humans and animals alike, including the oxygen we breathe. These details show me that the author believes the Amazon is a special and very important resource that is worth taking care of and protecting.
- Have students work with a partner to reread different sections of the book and look for examples of the author's point of view about the Amazon. Invite partners to share their findings with the class.

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.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

Skill Review

Graphic Organizer: Summarize

Review the summarize worksheet that students completed. Have students share their work in groups. Remind students that when readers summarize what they read, it helps them to better remember information in the section or the book.

Comprehension Extension

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

Response to Focus Question

Have students cite specific evidence from the book to answer the Focus Question. (Answers will vary. Reasons should include the following: *The Amazon rainforest is a unique habitat because it is home to more kinds of insects, plants, and animals than any other place on Earth. Because of its location on the planet, it has one of the most varied ecosystems on the planet.*)

Comprehension Checks

- **Book quiz**
- **Retelling rubric**

Book Extension Activities

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Sentence types

- Explain to students that there are different types of sentences that they will encounter when they read and as they write. One type of sentence is called a *complex sentence*. A complex sentence contains an independent clause joined by one or more dependent clauses.
- Select a simple sentence from the text and record it on the board, for example, *The Amazon rainforest is a real place*. Invite students to identify the subject and verb in the sentence. Explain that this is a simple sentence because it has one phrase that contains a subject and a verb. Have students work with a partner to locate other simple sentences within the text.
- Point out that sometimes a sentence can have two parts, called *phrases* or *clauses*. Explain that each clause has its own subject and verb and that the clauses are joined together by *conjunctions*. Provide examples of conjunctions for students, such as *after, although, as, because, before, once, since, so, that, though, unless, until*, and so on. Provide an example of this from the text and record it on the board, for example, *The understory is not nearly as busy as the canopy, but animals do live here*. Have students work with a partner to identify the conjunction.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *Somewhere in the Amazon, the scream of a howler monkey echoes through the forest*. Underline the

scream of a howler monkey echoes through the forest. Explain that this part of the sentence is called the *independent clause*. Explain that the part of the sentence before the comma is called the *dependent clause*. Point out that even though both sentence parts contain a subject and a verb, the dependent clause does not express a complete thought and is not a sentence on its own.

- Have students locate and reread the third sentence of the third paragraph on page 20: *As you read these words, a jaguar slinks through the understory, a leaf-cutter ant marches back to a fungus garden, and the scream of a howler monkey echoes through the forest*. Invite a volunteer to identify the conjunction and the dependent clause. Point out that in this example, the dependent clause comes first in the sentence.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work independently to reread the section “Keeping it Clean” to locate complex sentences. Have students identify the independent and dependent clauses as well as the conjunction. Have students share their findings with the class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **sentence types worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: Homophones

- Have students turn to page 5 and reread the first sentence on the page: *Rainforests live up to their name: they are forests where it rains almost every day*. Write the words *their* and *where* on the board. Ask students to suggest a definition for each word and use it in a complete sentence.
- Write the word *wear* on the board. Ask students how this word is different from the word *where* (it is spelled differently and has a different meaning). Explain that two words that sound the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings are called *homophones*. Invite volunteers to use each word in a complete sentence. Repeat this process for the word *their*.
- Have students turn to page 9 and reread the page independently. Invite them to highlight the word *four* in the first sentence and circle a homophone located on the same page (*for*). Have students share their findings with a partner and use each homophone in a complete sentence.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work in pairs to reread page 10. Invite them to create a list of words from this page with accompanying homophones. Have each group share their findings with the class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **homophones worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Connections

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