



THEME

Fuel your students' curiosity with the articles, stories, and poems in this issue of *Spider*. Using this guide, you and your students will encounter different kinds of texts that share the same purpose: to help readers understand ideas.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

How do different texts explain our world?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will analyze how events and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text.
- Students determine theme.
- Students will conduct and present short research projects.
- Students will write explanatory texts.
- Students will write narratives to develop imagined events.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core English Language Arts skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

- **Move Over, Cats and Dogs—It's Raining Fish and Frogs!**
Expository Nonfiction, ~950L
- **Make Your Own Glass Flower**
Activity, N/A
- **Why the Sky Is Far Away**
Folktale, ~750L

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Move Over, Cats and Dogs—It's Raining Fish and Frogs!

pp. 18–20, Expository Nonfiction

Use this nonfiction article about the strange phenomenon known as animal rain to teach students about cause-and-effect relationships.



RESOURCES

- Cause-Effect Organizer

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article.
- Students will analyze how events and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will conduct and present short research projects.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **downpour** (p. 19) a sudden, heavy rain
- **eyewitness** (p. 19) a person who sees something and is able to describe it
- **riverbank** (p. 19) the ground at the edge of a river

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do different texts explain our world?

Write the term “animal rain” in the center of an idea web. Then have students brainstorm questions about animal rain. Record these questions in the web. Next, ask students what kinds of texts and websites they might use to find answers to their questions and facts about animal rain. Finally, tell students this text is a nonfiction article that uses facts to explain what animal rain is.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. Ask students what these words have in common. Explain that they are all compound words, or words that are made up of two smaller words. Have students identify the smaller words in each compound. Then have them work in pairs to write sentences using the compounds. Remind them to look for these words in the article.

READ & DISCUSS

After students have read the story, use the questions below to prompt discussion. In addition, revisit questions from the Engage activity and work as a class to use text information to answer them.

1. What kinds of animals are found in animal rain?
2. What is the most recent example of animal rain in the article?
3. List three countries where animal rain has happened.
4. How could a tornado cause animal rain to fall?
5. What story do the people of Yoro, Honduras, tell about animal rain?

SKILL FOCUS: Cause-and-Effect Relationships

INSTRUCT: Review cause—why something happens—and effect—what happens as a result of a cause. Offer a few simple examples of cause-and-effect relationships. Then explain that authors of science articles often use cause-and-effect relationships to explain science topics. Ask students to identify the science topic in this article (animal rain). Display and distribute the *Cause-Effect* organizer. Point out that the first section of the article tells about some of the effects of animal rain. Briefly discuss these and then have students work in pairs to add three effects to their charts. Repeat this sequence with causes. Go over correct responses and then discuss the question below the chart.

ASSESS: Have students create a 2" × 4" comic strip that shows a cause and an effect of animal rain. Have them write a caption for each frame that describes the cause or effect. Invite students to share their strips.

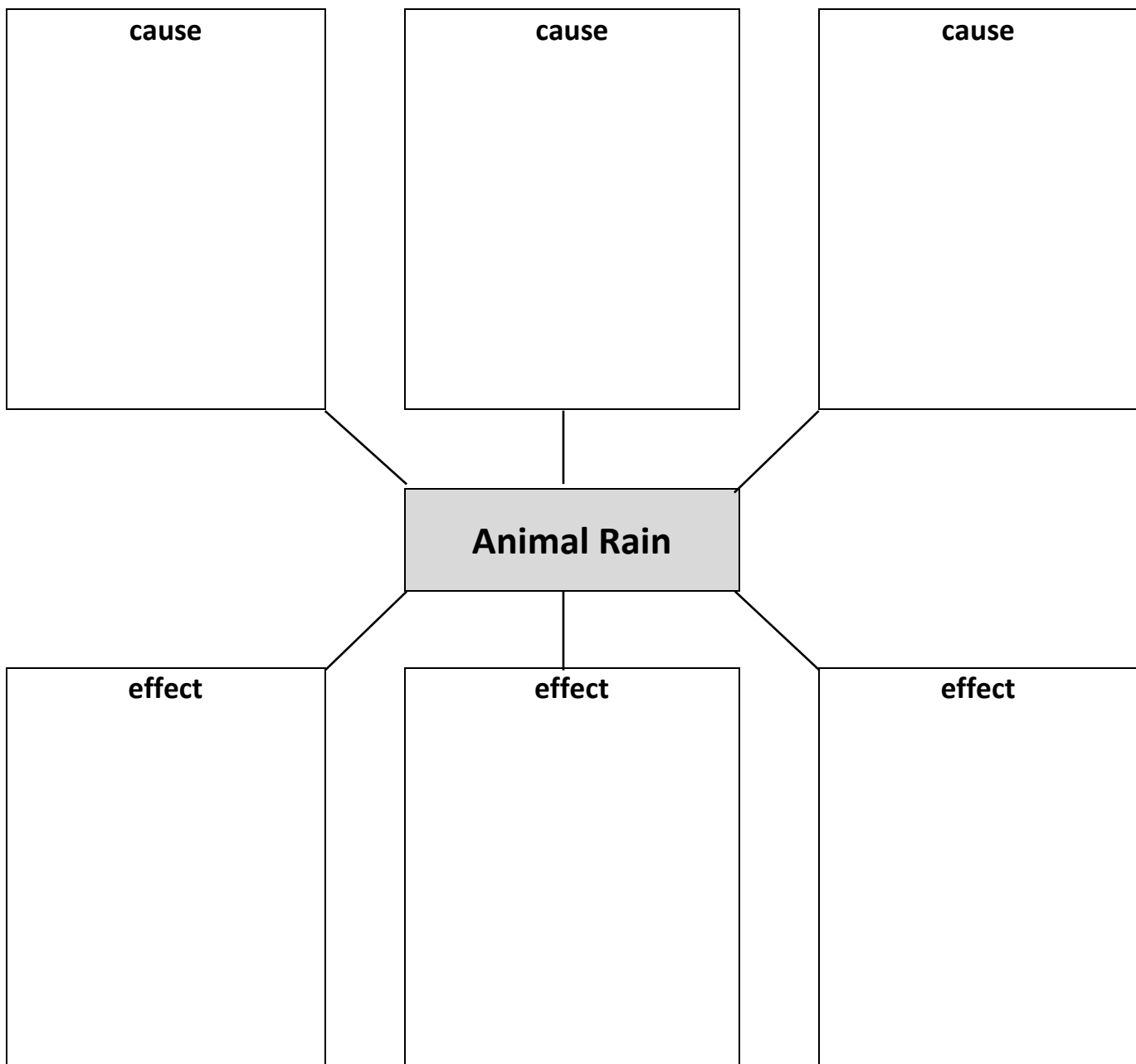
EXTEND

Science Have students research another weather phenomenon, such as northern lights or odd cloud formations. Have them create a presentation explaining the causes and effects of the phenomenon.

Name _____

Cause-Effect Organizer

Science articles often describe cause-effect relationships. A cause tells why something happened. An effect tells what happened as a result of the cause.



Discuss: What cause of animal rain is described on page 20? How is this cause different from the causes you wrote in the chart above?

Make Your Own Glass Flower

p. 21, Procedural Text

Use these directions for making a craft as a model that students can use to help them write a simple recipe.



RESOURCES

- Recipe Organizer

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a procedural text.
- Students will interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text.
- Students will write explanatory texts.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **place (p. 21)** to put something in a particular place or position
- **run (p. 21)** to make something move quickly over an object
- **poke (p. 21)** to make a hole in something by pushing a sharp or pointed object through it
- **thread (p. 21)** to pass something through a hole, like thread through a needle

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do different texts explain our world?

Ask students to describe situations in which they need to read directions to understand how to do something. If students get stuck, offer a few suggestions, such as when they want to make a recipe or learn a new game. Share a recipe with students and talk about its different sections. Discuss the format of directions.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and definitions. Read them aloud. Point out that authors choose words very carefully when they write directions so that readers will know exactly what to do. Have students complete the sentences below using the key words. Discuss correct responses. Instruct students to look for the vocabulary words as they read the text.

1. At the dinner table, _____ your napkin in your lap.
2. A sharp stick could _____ a hole in your shoe.
3. _____ your hand along the cat's fur to feel how soft it feels.
4. When you put on a shirt, you _____ your arm through the sleeve.

READ & DISCUSS

After students have read the text, discuss the questions below.

1. What does this text explain?
2. What are the two parts of the text?
3. How are these parts different?
4. What do the red flowers in the second part help you understand?
5. Why do the directions tell you to get help from an adult?
6. Did you find these directions easy to understand? Explain.

SKILL FOCUS: Write Directions

INSTRUCT: Tell students they are going to write step-by-step directions for someone else to follow. Explain that their directions are going to provide instructions for how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Review the two parts of "Make Your Own Glass Flower," and display the *Recipe Organizer*. Help students create a specific and complete "What You'll Need" list. (Ex: "two slices of bread" instead of simply "bread")

ASSESS: After students have completed the first section of the organizer, have them work in pairs to complete the second section. Tell students to number the steps in this section. When students have finished, have pairs exchange recipes with another pair and review each other's work. Invite volunteers to share their final recipes.

EXTEND

Writing Challenge the class to write another set of directions for an activity that they enjoy. Encourage students to include illustrations. Invite them to present their completed directions to the class.

Name _____

Recipe Organizer

Make a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich

What You'll Need:

What to Do:

1.

2.

3.

Why the Sky Is Far Away

pp. 22–25, Folktale

This Nigerian folktale takes readers on a journey to discover why the sky is far away. The article provides students with the opportunity to study the literary structural element of theme while allowing their imaginations to soar.



RESOURCES

- Theme Worksheet

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a folktale.
- Students will determine theme.
- Students will write narratives to develop imagined events.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **appreciate** (p. 23) to admire and value something
- **wasteful** (p. 23) using more of something than is needed
- **ungrateful** (p. 23) not feeling or showing thanks for something
- **ominously** (p. 24) in a way that suggests something bad is going to happen in the future

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do different texts explain our world?

Explain that some folktales are called “how and why” stories because they explain *how* something came to be or *why* something is the way it is. Share with students a copy of Rudyard Kipling’s *Just So Stories*. Invite students to share their experiences with these or similar stories, such as *pourquoi* tales. Point out that most of these tales were developed at a time when people had very little scientific knowledge. Invite students to come up with titles for “how and why” stories they might write.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words with their definitions and read them aloud. Reveal the title of the tale. Have students work with a partner to use the title and vocabulary words to predict why the sky is far away. Invite students to share their ideas. Remind them to look for the vocabulary words and check predictions as they read.

READ & DISCUSS

After students have read the story, use the questions below to prompt discussion:

1. Why is it easy for people to get food at the beginning of the story?
2. How do they spend their free time?
3. Why did the sky become angry?
4. What did people do after they were warned about being greedy?
5. Why did people become wasteful again?
6. Is Oba a modest or a prideful king? Explain.
7. How did life change for people on earth?

SKILL FOCUS: Identify Theme

INSTRUCT: Tell students they are going to think and write about the story to help them determine its themes. Distribute the *Theme* worksheet. Have students work in pairs to summarize the story by completing the sentence in Part A. Discuss responses. Then explain that in a folktale, the theme is often a lesson about right and wrong behavior. Continue by explaining that in folktales, bad behavior is often punished. Then have pairs answer the questions in Part B of the worksheet.

ASSESS: Have partners finish the last section of the worksheet by writing a theme statement. Reconvene the class to discuss themes and the story details that support them.

EXTEND

Writing Have students write their own “how and why” stories. Brainstorm a list of story ideas (why grass is green, how the skunk got its stripes, etc.). After writing their tales, have students add illustrations. Encourage them to read their stories to the class.

Name _____

Identify Theme

1. Complete the sentence in the box below.

The sky is far away because . . .

2. Answer the questions in the boxes below.

Who is punished in the tale?

Why are they punished?

3. What lessons does the story teach? Determine two different themes by finishing each statement in the boxes below.

People should not . . .

People should . . .