



ISSUE THEME

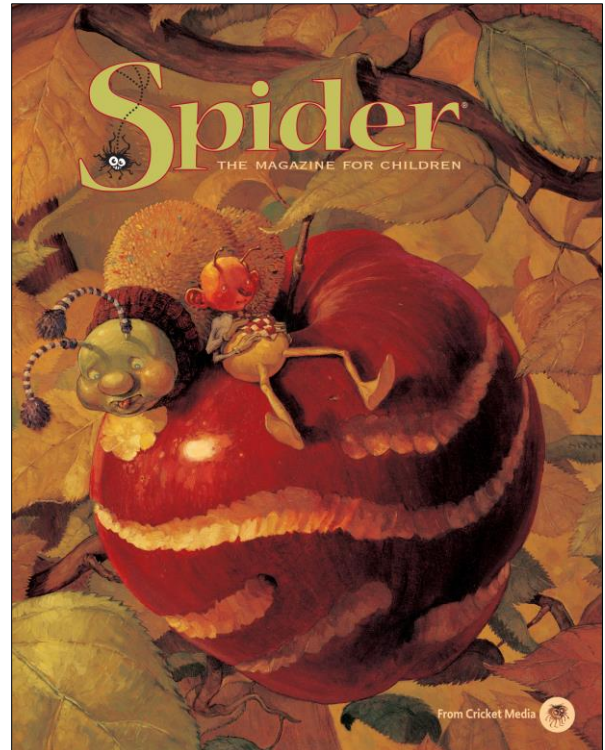
People and animals have characteristics and talents that make them unique.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What makes you who you are?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development
- Students will interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text: analyze sound devices
- Students will analyze how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text
- Students will analyze places, including their physical, cultural, and environmental characteristics
- Students will analyze the structure and function of living things
- Students will evaluate historical events and developments to identify them as examples of historical change and/or continuity



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

- **Mole-Rat Keeps His Feet Dry**

Folktale, ~550L

- **Sssnaked**

Poem

- **The Perfect Tux**

Contemporary Realistic Fiction, ~650L

Mole-Rat Keeps His Feet Dry

pp. 20–23, Folktale

Use this Kenyan folktale about a small animal that can take care of himself to teach your students about theme.



RESOURCES

- Theme Worksheet

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a folktale
- Students will determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development
- Students will analyze places, including their physical, cultural, and environmental characteristics

KEY VOCABULARY

- **plains** (p. 20) large areas of flat land without trees
- **flood** (p. 20) a large amount of water covering an area of land that is usually dry
- **gush** (p. 21) to flow out very quickly
- **burrow** (p. 21) a hole in the ground that an animal makes to live in or for safety
- **tunnels** (p. 21) passages that go under the ground

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What makes you who you are?

Explain to students that different people may react to a problem in different ways. As an example, tell students to imagine that on the way home from school, they got off the school bus at the wrong stop. Invite students to explain how they would solve this problem. After the discussion, explain that in this tale, the animal characters have different ideas about what to do in a difficult situation.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud. Ask volunteers to explain the meanings of familiar words. Acknowledge correct meanings and then read the definitions aloud. Next, have students work in pairs to put the words into groups and make predictions about what will happen in the story. Invite pairs to share their word groups and predictions.

READ & DISCUSS

After all students have read the story, use the questions below to discuss it:

1. In what ways is Mole-Rat different from the other animals in the story?
2. What do the other animals think about Mole-Rat at the beginning of the story?
3. How do their opinions change by the end of the story?
4. How would you describe Mole-Rat?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Theme

INSTRUCT: Explain to students that the theme of a folktale is often a lesson that the characters learn. Continue by explaining that students can identify themes in folktales by paying attention to the words and actions of the characters and by thinking about what the characters learn. Use a picture-book folktale such as *The Ant and the Grasshopper* to teach students how to identify theme. Display a three-column chart on the board with the headings “Character Words,” “Character Actions,” and “Lessons Learned.” Work with students to fill in the chart and identify the theme of the story.

ASSESS: Distribute a copy of the *Theme* worksheet to each student. After students have worked independently to complete the worksheet, have them work in groups to compare their theme statements.

EXTEND

Geography Have students conduct research to learn more about Kenya, for example its environment, history, or culture. Suggest students use one online source and one print source in their research. Have students create a short report using text and visuals to share with the class.

Name _____

Theme Worksheet

Write details from the story in the chart below. Then use the details to help you write the theme.

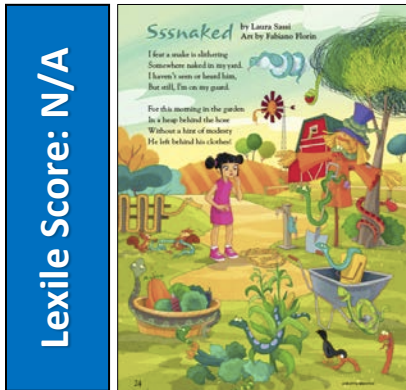
Character Words	
Character Actions	
Lessons Learned	

On the lines below, write a theme for “Mole-Rat Keeps His Feet Dry.”

Sssnaked

p. 24, Poem

Use this poem about a snake who sheds its skin to teach students about sound and form in poetry.



RESOURCES

- Sound Devices Worksheet

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a poem
- Students will interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text: analyze sound devices
- Students will analyze the structure and function of living things

KEY VOCABULARY

- **slithering** (p. 24) moving by sliding your entire body back and forth
- **modesty** (p. 24) the quality of not being too proud or confident about yourself

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What makes you who you are?

Remind students that animals, like people, have characteristics and abilities that make them unique. Ask students, “What makes a snake a snake?” Invite students to share what they know about snakes—how they look, move, and behave. Then explain that the speaker in the next poem describes something special and unusual that snakes do.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Write the words *slithering* and *modesty* on the board. Then display the first sentence and the last sentence from the poem, leaving gaps for the words *slithering* and *modesty*. Have students work in pairs to use context to place the words in the gaps and write a definition for each word. Have partners share their ideas with the class.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students listen closely as you read the poem aloud. Then have students work in pairs to take turns reading the poem to each other. Use the following questions to discuss the poem:

- What words or ideas stood out to you as you read and listened to the poem?
- Why does the speaker think there’s a snake in the garden?
- How does the speaker feel about the snake?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Sound Devices

INSTRUCT: Discuss with students the ways in which the poem looks and sounds different from stories. Point out that poems are written in stanzas, or groups of lines. Then explain that poets use rhyme, rhythm, and alliteration to make sound patterns in poems.

- Define rhyme (words or phrases that end in the same sounds). Use the poem “Humpty Dumpty” to provide examples of rhyme.
- Define alliteration (the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words) and give an example. (The sea is swirling over the rocks and sand.)
- Define rhythm (a regular, repeated pattern of beats). Use the poem “Humpty Dumpty” to provide an example of rhythm. Have students clap to the rhythm as you read aloud.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to complete the *Sound Devices* worksheet. Then gather the class together and review responses.

EXTEND

Science Have students conduct research to learn about snakes that are native to your state and the behaviors that help snakes survive. Invite students to share what they learn with the class.

Name _____

Sound Devices Worksheet

- **Rhyme:** words or phrases that end in the same sounds
- **Alliteration:** the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words
- **Rhythm:** a regular, repeated pattern of beats

Record examples of rhyme and alliteration from the poem “Sssnaked” in the chart below. Then answer the questions about rhythm in the box provided.

Sound Device	Example in the first stanza	Example in the second stanza
Rhyme		
Alliteration		

Is the rhythm the same in both stanzas? How can you tell?

Discuss: Why do you think the poet used these sound devices? What feelings do they add to the poem?

Spider® Teacher Guide: September 2017

The Perfect Tux

pp. 25–31, Contemporary

Realistic Fiction

Use this story about a younger brother who doesn't want to dress up for his sister's wedding to help students explore characters' perspectives.



RESOURCES

- Characters' Perspectives Worksheet

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story
- Students will analyze how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text
- Students will evaluate historical events and developments to identify them as examples of historical change and/or continuity

KEY VOCABULARY

- **sharp** (p. 25) stylish or fashionable
- **snazzy** (p. 25) attractive and stylish
- **adorable** (p. 25) very lovable
- **cool** (p. 25) very fashionable, stylish, or appealing in a way that is generally approved of, especially by young people
- **fluffy** (p. 25) covered with soft material

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What makes you who you are?

Ask students to share what makes them unique and interesting, such as hobbies, talents, interests, habits, or fashion styles. Share something similar about yourself. Then ask students if they have ever been asked to do or wear something that just didn't feel "like you." Explain that in the next story, a younger brother who loves reptiles and amphibians must clean up for his sister's wedding, and he does not like it.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud. Ask volunteers to explain the meanings of familiar words. Acknowledge correct meanings and then read the definitions aloud. Next, ask students what these words have in common. Help students understand that they are all adjectives—words that describe people, places, and things. Finally, tell students to look for other adjectives as they read the story.

READ & DISCUSS

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

- Why does Rex have to wear a tuxedo?
- How would you describe Rex?
- How does Rex feel about being in the wedding?
- Do you think Rex's sister is patient with Rex? Explain.

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Characters' Perspectives

INSTRUCT: Explain to students that a perspective is a way of thinking about something and that different story characters may have different perspectives, or ways of thinking, about the same thing. Continue by explaining that paying attention to the things characters say and do can help students understand their perspectives. Read the first page of the story aloud and discuss with students how the different characters feel about Rex wearing a tuxedo.

ASSESS: Have students complete the *Characters' Perspectives* worksheet. Then gather the class together and review responses.

EXTEND

Social Studies Have students conduct research to find out how and why wedding clothes have changed throughout history. Suggest students create a timeline with words, pictures, and at least three dates to record what they learn. Invite students to share timelines with the class.

Name _____

Character Perspectives Worksheet

Describe each character's perspective on the topics shown. Use story details to support your answers.

getting dressed up for the wedding

Rex's Perspective	Lora Lee's Perspective

amphibians and reptiles

Rex's Perspective	Lora Lee's Perspective

putting a frog on the dance floor

Rex's Perspective	Lora Lee's Perspective

What do you learn about Rex and Lora Lee from their perspectives? Write your answer on the back of this sheet.