

Spider®

THEME

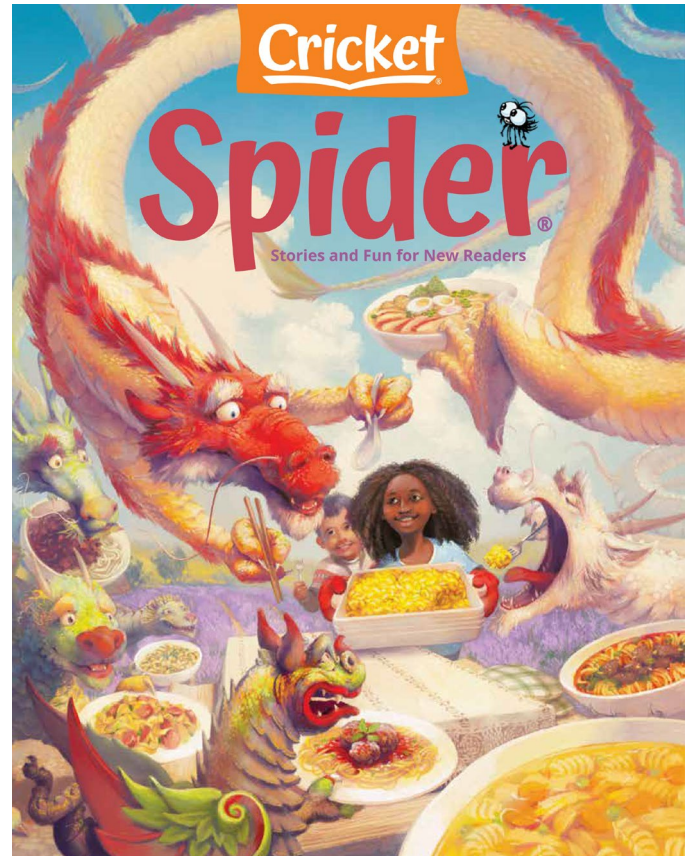
Fire-breathing dragons will capture imaginations in this month's issue of SPIDER magazine. Use the texts, lessons, and activities in this teacher guide to explore everything dragon while teaching students about core language arts concepts.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What is a dragon?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will integrate and evaluate content.
- Students will determine central ideas or themes.
- Students will write and present narratives.
- Students will conduct short research projects.
- Students will analyze the cultural characteristics of places.



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

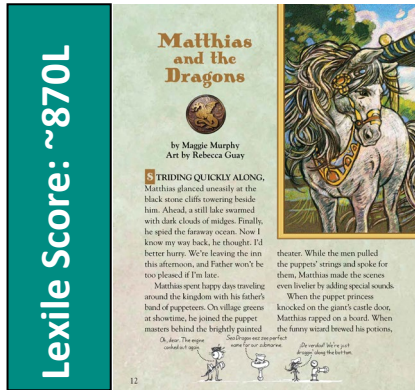
- **Matthias and the Dragons**
Fantasy, ~870L
- **Real-Life Dragons**
Expository Nonfiction, ~610L
- **Chopsticks**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction, ~590L

Spider® Teacher Guide: September 2021

Matthias and the Dragons

pp. 12–17, Fantasy

Give students practice in identifying story elements using this story about a clever boy who tricks a dragon.



ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What is a dragon?

Ask students to name books, movies, and games that have dragon characters. Then display a web diagram with the phrase “characteristics of dragons” in the center. Have students work in pairs to brainstorm characteristics of dragon characters. Then ask volunteers to share their ideas with the class and record the characteristics in the web. Finally, tell students to notice the characteristics of the dragons in this story.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. Then display the sentences below and have students use the vocabulary words to complete them. Finally, remind students to look for the vocabulary words as they read the story.

1. My _____ dog sleeps at the foot of my bed every night.
2. We had to go inside because the _____ were biting us.
3. I've heard that the _____ house on the corner is haunted.

RESOURCES

- Story Map

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will write and present narratives.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **midges** (p. 12) very small flying insects that bite people and animals
- **forbidding** (p. 14) having a frightening or threatening appearance
- **devoted** (p. 15) having a strong love or loyalty for someone or something

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions for discussion:

1. What is Matthias's job during the puppet shows?
2. Why does Matthias enter the dragons' cave?
3. What makes the dragons' interactions humorous?
4. Describe the relationship between the two dragons.
5. How did Matthias's job making sound effects help him figure out how to escape from the dragons?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Story Elements

INSTRUCT: Invite students to name the elements of a short story. Then display a copy of the *Story Map* worksheet and go over these terms in the graphic organizer: *character, setting, problem/solution, story events*. Ask students to identify these elements in a familiar story. Record students' responses, correcting them as needed.

ASSESS: Distribute a copy of the *Story Map* to each student. Have students work in pairs to identify and record the story elements in “Matthias and the Dragons.” Discuss responses as a class. Invite students to share themes or messages that they find in the story, for example, “Good things can come out of difficult situations.”

EXTEND

Art/Drama/Storytelling Have students use puppets to enact Matthias's encounter with the dragons, just as Matthias does in the story. Assign groups different tasks: create the script, develop scenery, create puppets, set up the theater. Then assign individuals to take on the roles of the puppets, including a narrator, if needed. After students rehearse the production, have them present it to the class.

Story Map

Use the organizer below to record information about “Matthias and the Dragons.”

Characters	Setting
What is the problem?	
List the story events that lead to the problem.	
How is the problem solved?	
List the story events that lead to the solution.	

Spider® Teacher Guide: September 2021

Real-Life Dragons

pp. 19–23, Expository Nonfiction

Use this article about plant, insect, and animal dragons to teach students about text features.



Lexile Score: ~610L

THEY MAY NOT breathe fire, but these real dragons are really cool!

Dragonet
A little dragon is known as a dragonet. But in the animal world, a dragonet is a fish. Many kinds of dragonets swim in tropical waters from Hong Kong to Australia. Lots are brightly colored and live around coral reefs. Others are brown, like sand, and stay on the ocean floor. A dragonet spreads out its fins to help it move along the surface almost as if it is walking.

But this dragon doesn't have scales. Instead, a dragonet is covered in a coat of sticky slime. Slimy skin makes the dragonet less scary and keeps off being parasites.

It looks like a snake! I wish I could see a dragonet in the wild. It's scary that a dragonet is covered in a coat of sticky slime. I wish I could see a dragonet in the wild. It's scary that a dragonet is covered in a coat of sticky slime. I wish I could see a dragonet in the wild. It's scary that a dragonet is covered in a coat of sticky slime.

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RESOURCES

- Text Features
- Make Predictions

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article.
- Students will integrate and evaluate content.
- Students will conduct short research projects.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **slime (p. 19)** thick, slippery liquid
- **tentacles (p. 20)** the long, flexible arms of an animal, such as an octopus, that are used for grabbing things and moving
- **burrows (p. 21)** makes a hole or tunnel in the ground by digging
- **hovers (p. 23)** floats in the air without moving in any direction

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What is a dragon?

Brainstorm with students a list of the physical characteristics of dragons (big teeth, scales, sharp claws, long tail, wings). Have students work in groups to brainstorm a list of real animals that most closely resemble dragons, such as alligators and lizards. Invite students to share their ideas and then reveal the title of the article.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display and read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Instruct students to work in pairs to write sentences that use the words correctly. Have partners share their sentences with other pairs. Then remind students to look for these words in the article.

READ & DISCUSS

Before students read, distribute and review the *Text Features* handout. Have students identify examples of text features in “Real-Life Dragons.” Next, distribute the *Make Predictions* handout. Have students look at the article title, photographs, headings, and captions to make predictions about the content of the article. Have students record their predictions on the handout. After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. Check your prediction. Was it accurate? Explain.
2. Sort the different types of dragons into three groups: land dragons, sea dragons, and air dragons.
3. What do all the different types of dragons have in common?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Text Features

INSTRUCT: Have students compare the pages of “Real-Life Dragons” to the pages of the story “Matthias and the Dragon” (pp. 12–17). Ask students to describe how the article pages are different from the story pages. Remind students that authors use text features to help readers understand important ideas in a text. Model a think-aloud strategy for understanding how a text feature helps readers understand an idea in the text. (Example: The text on page 19 tells me that some dragonets are brightly colored and others are brown, like sand. The photographs on this page help me understand what different dragonets look like.) Invite volunteers to give their own examples.

ASSESS: Have students work in small groups to peruse some or all the text features in the article. Each group member should point to and identify a text feature, read/describe it, and explain how it connects to and expands information in the article.

EXTEND

Science Have students conduct research to find three more examples of dragon-like animals, such as the Komodo dragon. Students will create three dragon cards, using the article sections as a model. Cards should include a picture of the dragon and a description of its characteristics.

Text Features

The chart below lists text features found in “Snot-Copter: Drones at Work.” It also explains how these features can help you understand a text. If you cannot find one of the listed features in the article, cross it out in the chart below.

Text Features	How Text Features Help Readers
Title: the name of a text	The title tells the topic or main idea of a text. Titles are often written to be catchy and interesting.
Headings: titles of sections within a text	Headings help readers identify and understand the main idea in a section of text.
Photographs: camera-made pictures	Photographs help readers visualize and understand important ideas, real people, and real objects discussed in a text.
Captions: text under a photograph or picture	Captions explain what a photograph or illustration shows.
Word definitions (from buggy characters)	Word definitions help readers understand important words in a text.

Make Predictions

Use the article's title, photographs, and headings to predict what the article will be about. In the chart below, record your prediction and the details that helped you make it.

Details from the title	Details from the photos	Details from the headings
My prediction		

Spider® Teacher Guide: September 2021

Chopsticks

pp. 26–30, Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Use this story about a girl and her mother who think in different ways to give students practice in identifying theme.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will determine central ideas or themes.
- Students will analyze the cultural characteristics of places.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **clumsy** (p. 26) moving or doing things in a very awkward way
- **traditions** (p. 27) ways of thinking, behaving, or doing something that have been used by the people in a particular group, family, or society for a long time
- **impressive** (p. 29) deserving attention, admiration, or respect

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What is a dragon?

Display images of a Chinese dragon and a Western dragon. Explain that dragons exist in stories all around the world, but there are differences between Eastern and Western dragons. Have students point out their similarities and differences. Then explain that Western dragons breathe fire, attack towns, and hoard treasure. Eastern dragons are wise and bring good luck. They symbolize strength and power. Tell students to look for Eastern and Western dragons in this story.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the following context sentences and underline the vocabulary words. Have students work in pairs to infer the meaning of each vocabulary word based on the context. Then reveal the definitions and have students check their predictions. Finally, remind students to look for the vocabulary words as they read the article.

1. The big fish Mom caught was really impressive.
2. I tried to juggle three balls, but I was clumsy and dropped them.
3. Making cookies is a holiday tradition that we enjoy every year.

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. How does Shay feel at the beginning of the story? Explain why she has these feelings.
2. How do Shay's parents feel about Shay eating with a fork?
3. Why does Shay's brother call her a cheater?
4. How is Shay's dragon different from her mother's dragon?
5. Why does Shay's mom put a fork *and* chopsticks in Shay's lunchbox?
6. How does Shay feel at the end of the story?

SKILL FOCUS: Identify Theme

INSTRUCT: Explain that the theme of a story is a message or lesson about life that an author wants to share with readers. Give examples of common literary themes, such as “don't give up on your dreams,” and “actions speak louder than words.” Continue by explaining that usually themes are not stated and that students can figure out themes by thinking about information and events in a story, including characters' problems, how they solve them, and the lessons characters learn. Provide picture books and have students work in pairs to identify themes in the books. Have pairs present their themes and explain the story information that helped them understand the themes.

ASSESS: Instruct partners to work together to identify a theme in “Chopsticks” and explain the story details that convey this theme.

EXTEND

Social Studies Have students conduct research to learn about the role of dragons in Chinese culture. Then have them create a poster showing and describing four ways that dragons are part of Chinese culture.