

Ask®

Fool Me Twice

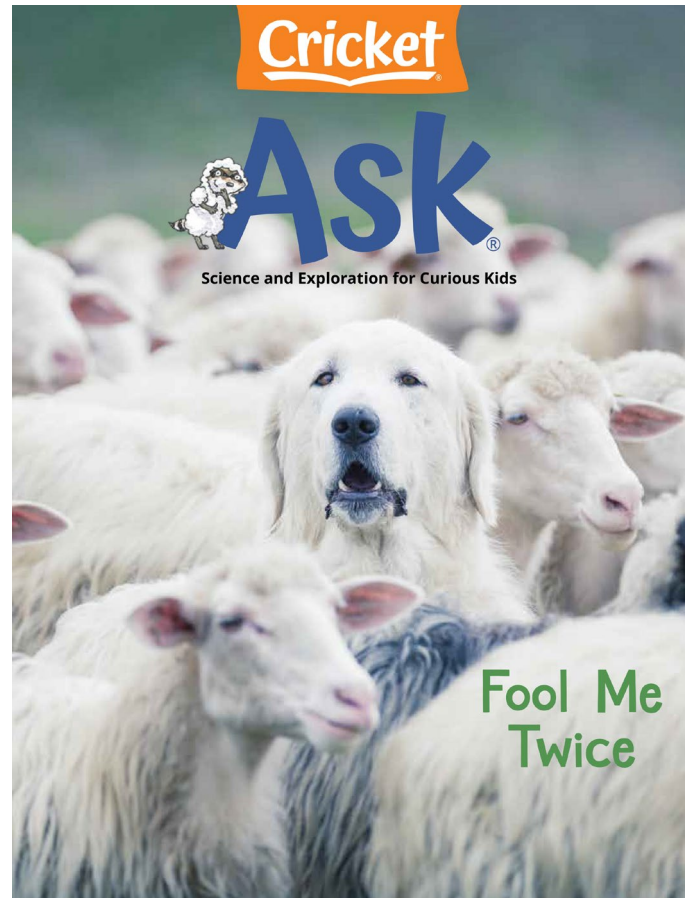
American novelist Lev Grossman once said, “The truth doesn’t always make a good story, does it?” From famous hoaxes to animal survival, deception is rampant in both the human and animal world. This issue of ASK magazine examines many forms of trickery and even reveals a magician’s secrets. Be prepared to be amazed!

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What is the science behind deception?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn how being deceptive can give animals a survival advantage.
- Students will learn how magic tricks require great skill, specific materials, and a willing audience.
- Students will learn how famous hoaxes have fooled people for centuries.
- Students will interpret animal behaviors.
- Students will construct explanations from an expository text.
- Students will obtain information and analyze the elements of deception.
- Students will study the literary device of alliteration as used in subheadings.
- Students will research theatrical elements that contribute to the overall tone of a production.
- Students will learn about misinformation.
- Students will study the phenomenon of “fake news.”



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

SELECTIONS

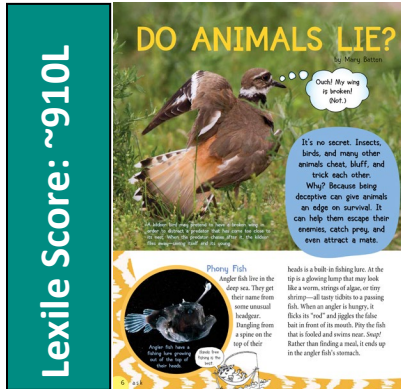
- **Do Animals Lie?**
Expository Nonfiction, ~910L
- **The Vanishing Elephant**
Expository Nonfiction, ~670L
- **Famous Fakes**
Expository Nonfiction, ~970L

Ask® Teacher Guide: October 2021

Do Animals Lie?

pp. 6–11, Expository Nonfiction

Students will learn how animals and insects often employ the art of deception to thrive in the natural world. This article examines camouflage, mating trickery, and hidden treasures.



ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What is the science behind deception?

Distribute the article and direct students to notice the subheadings. Remind students that subheadings in nonfiction texts are used to organize information for improved comprehension. Divide the class into four groups that correspond to the subheadings: Phony Fish, Insect Imposters, Bluffing Birds, and Cheating Chimps. Ask each group to predict the content of their assigned section.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Post the key terms and discuss the definitions. Then display the following questions and have students supply the correct answers:

1. What word has to do with hiding things? (cache)
What possessions might you **cache**?
2. What word refers to an underwater structure? (reef)
What marine life would you see living in or around a **reef**?
3. What word refers to an animal leaving its young? (brood parasite)
What does a **brood parasite** rely on another animal to do?

RESOURCES

Analyzing Behaviors: Animal Tales

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn how being deceptive can give animals a survival advantage.
- Students will interpret animal behaviors.
- Students will study the literary device of alliteration as used in subheadings.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **coral reef** (p. 7) a long line of rocks or coral near the surface of the ocean
- **brood parasites** (p. 9) animals (usually birds) that trick other animals into raising their young
- **cache** (p. 9) to hide something for future use

READ & DISCUSS

Read the article aloud with the class. Have students reread the article with a partner to answer the questions below. Discuss responses.

1. List three reasons why an animal would be deceptive.
2. How is trickery part of mating rituals for many animals and insects?
3. What does a scrub jay do when it knows that another jay is watching it cache?
4. How do chimpanzees use sound to outsmart each other?
5. How does nature often favor the trickster?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyzing Behaviors

INSTRUCT: This article presents the reader with detailed information regarding the different deceptive behaviors that animals and insects employ. Present the *Analyzing Behaviors: Animal Tales* worksheet and tell students they will need to consult the article and use critical thinking skills to record and explain how each animal's specific behavior allows it to outsmart other creatures in the natural world.

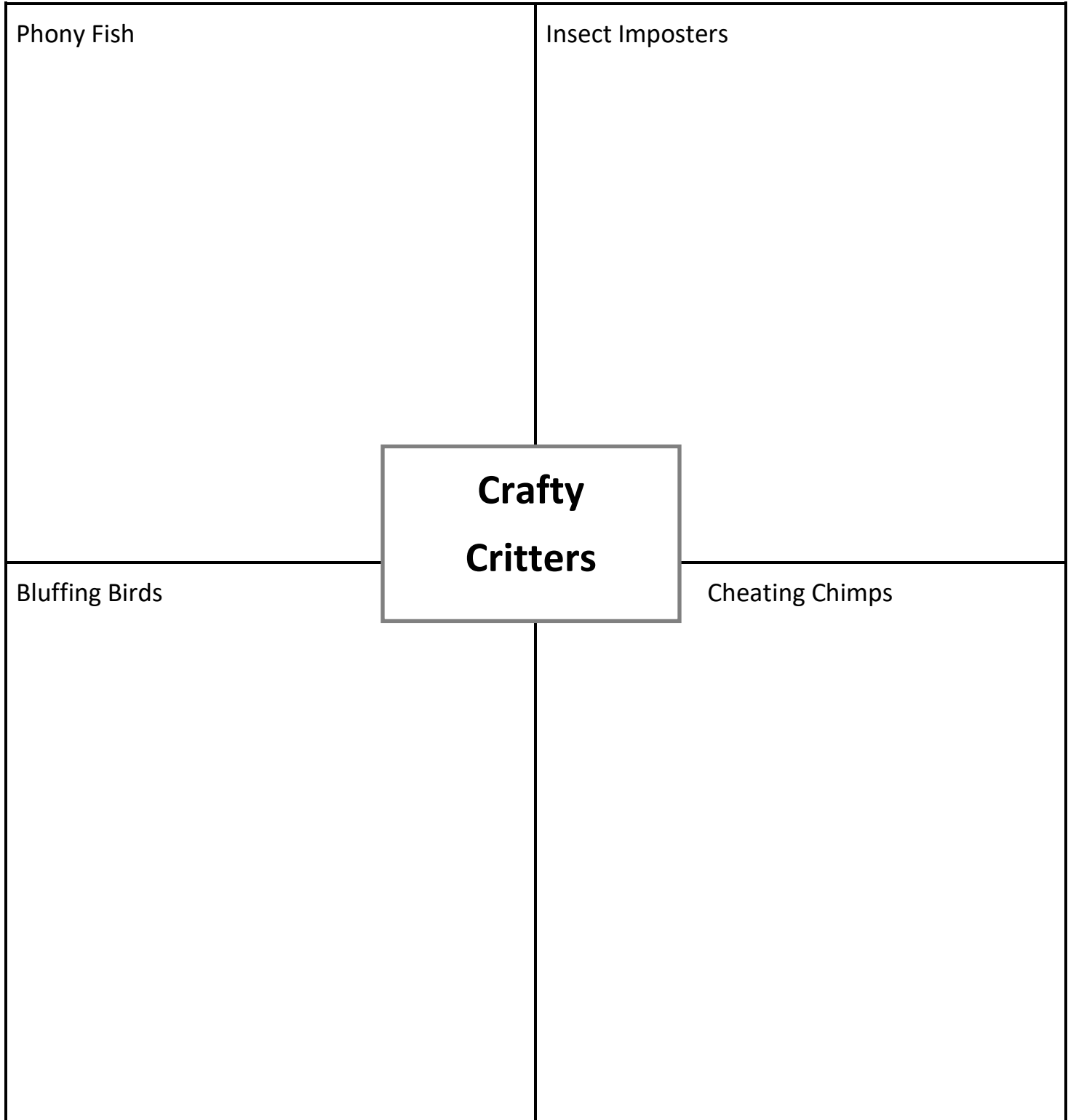
ASSESS: Review the worksheet with the class. Have groups of students compare the information with their predictions from the Engage activity.

EXTEND

Language Arts Review the literary device of alliteration (the repetition of a consonant sound at the beginnings of words). Ask students why they think the author chose to use alliteration in the subheadings. Challenge students to create alliterative descriptions of deception for other animals. (Ex: Lying Llama, Sneaky Snake)

Animal Tales

Analyzing Behaviors Review the article and highlight behaviors that the animals use to be deceptive. Explain their methods below.

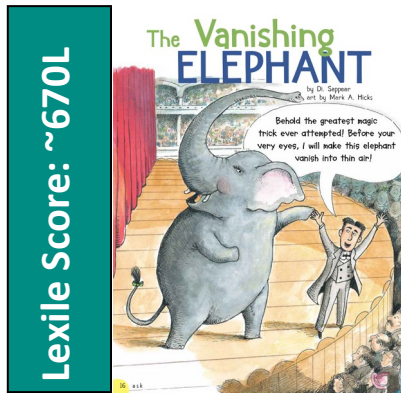


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The Vanishing Elephant

pp. 16–21, Expository Nonfiction

Abracadabra! This high-interest article reveals the secrets of great magicians. Readers will literally learn some “tricks of the trade.”



RESOURCES

Construct Explanations: Hocus Pocus

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn how magic tricks require great skill, specific materials, and a willing audience.
- Students will construct explanations from an expository text.
- Students will research theatrical elements that contribute to the overall tone of a production.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **ponderous** (p. 17) slow and clumsy because of weight and size
- **lumbered** (p. 17) moved in a slow, awkward way
- **levitate** (p. 20) to rise or make something rise into the air in a way that appears to be magical

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What is the science behind deception?

Show students a video clip of a magician sawing a woman in half. (YouTube is a good source; be sure to preview.) They will discover that this is a trick that anyone with the proper materials can learn to perform. Have students view the drawing on page 21 that illustrates how the trick is accomplished. Ask students why they think people are so eager to believe that this is magic, rather than a learned skill.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Post and discuss the three vocabulary words and their definitions. Ask the class which two words have related meanings (*ponderous* and *lumbered*). Display the following sentence: “The **ponderous** elephant **lumbered** onto the stage.” Guide students to identify *ponderous* as an adjective and *lumbered* as a verb. Give students two minutes to brainstorm a list of adjectives that could complete this sentence: The _____ magician was able to **levitate** the woman.

READ & DISCUSS

Pose the following questions to students to prompt meaningful discussion following the reading of the article.

1. What was considered to be Harry Houdini’s biggest trick?
2. Why did Houdini warn other magicians not to try his trick?
3. What materials do magicians think were needed to perform the “Vanishing Elephant” trick?
4. What equipment is needed to perform the “Floating Woman” trick?
5. Describe personality traits that contribute to a magician’s success.

SKILL FOCUS: Construct Explanations

INSTRUCT: Advise students to review the article and to study the three different magic tricks discussed. Distribute the *Construct Explanations: Hocus Pocus* graphic organizer, and tell the class that they will use information from the text to complete the organizer. Students will focus on the methods magicians use to deceive live audiences.

ASSESS: Review the worksheet. The answer to the final question should be completed independently and must include logical reasoning.

EXTEND

Theatrical Elements The article describes a 1917 newspaper ad that exclaimed, “See the New Sensational Illusion ‘The Vanishing Elephant’ with the famous mystifier, Houdini!” The article goes on to describe Houdini’s elegant clothing and the music the orchestra played during his act. Have students work in small groups to discuss how these theatrical elements (clothing, music, set design, and advertising language) add to the anticipation and mood of a production. Instruct groups to choose a show/movie they enjoy and explain how each of these components helps to create an exciting mood. Then have them write an enticing advertisement for the show.

Hocus Pocus

Construct Explanations Refer to the article to provide explanations of how the magic tricks listed below were performed. Include your own theories, as well.

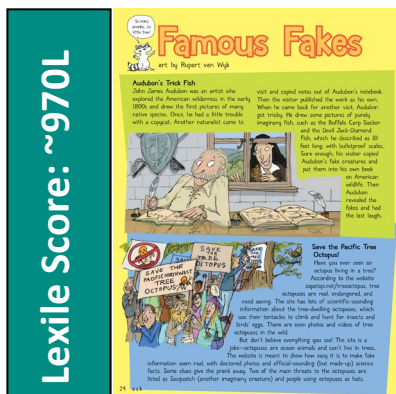
Magic Trick	Probable Explanations
The Vanishing Elephant	
The Floating Woman	
The Disappearing Coin	

What contributes to the fact that most magic tricks today seem more incredible than those performed long ago? Explain the advantages that contemporary magicians have over their predecessors.

Famous Fakes

pp. 24–25, Expository Nonfiction

Tree-climbing octopuses and spaghetti that grows on trees seem too fantastical to be true. Yet people around the world have believed that these and other incredible events were true. Students will learn about the art of deception and our willingness to believe the unbelievable.



RESOURCES

Analyzing Information: Complete Deceit

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn how famous hoaxes have fooled people for centuries.
- Students will obtain information and analyze the elements of deception.
- Students will learn about misinformation.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **doctored** (p. 24) changed something in order to trick or deceive people
- **prank** (p. 24) a trick that is done to someone as a joke
- **hoax** (p. 25) an act that is meant to trick or deceive

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What is the science behind deception?

Display the website mentioned in the article: zapatopi.net/treeoctopus. Do NOT reveal that the website is a hoax. Have students work in pairs to skim the site and answer a few routine comprehension questions about the tree octopus: Where does it live? What does it eat? Why is it unique? etc. Then read aloud the section on article page 24 that reveals the site is a hoax. Discuss students' reactions to being tricked. Why did many students simply accept the information as fact?

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Post and discuss the key terms, as well as the title of the article. Be sure that students understand the definitions before reading the article. As a post-reading activity, have students use the three vocabulary words to summarize the article in paragraph form.

READ & DISCUSS

Reinforce comprehension of the concepts and details presented in the article by using the following prompts to direct discussion.

1. How did James John Audubon teach his copycat a lesson?
2. What elements does the website zapatopi.net/treeoctopus use to engage the reader and create believability?
3. Why were viewers in Britain particularly vulnerable to the April Fool's Swiss Spaghetti Harvest Hoax in 1957?
4. Why do you think people still believe in the Loch Ness Monster despite the confession of the men who made the famous photo?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyzing Information

INSTRUCT: This article presents the reader with information about famous hoaxes that captivated the public. Studies have learned that people often fail to ask important questions about the content they encounter, making them more vulnerable to pranks. Present the *Analyzing Information: Complete Deceit* graphic organizer. Tell students they will be highlighting sentences from the reading that describe the elements that made the hoaxes believable. After students have collected information, they are to use their critical thinking skills to record questions that may have debunked the pranks.

ASSESS: Reconvene and discuss answers. Have students share their questions.

EXTEND

Social Studies Emphasize that students need to constantly evaluate viewpoints and sources and think critically when they read or view information about current events. Even trained experts can have difficulty identifying misinformation. Play "3 Truths and a Lie" with the class and analyze why some lies are harder to discern than others.

Complete Deceit

Analyzing Information Review the article and determine which details made each hoax believable. What questions could have been asked that may have debunked the hoax before it gained traction? Choose another famous hoax and complete the last row accordingly.

Famous Hoax	Details that made the hoax believable	Questions that might have debunked the hoax
The Pacific Tree Octopus		
The Swiss Spaghetti Harvest		
Loch Ness Monster		
