

Spider®

THEME

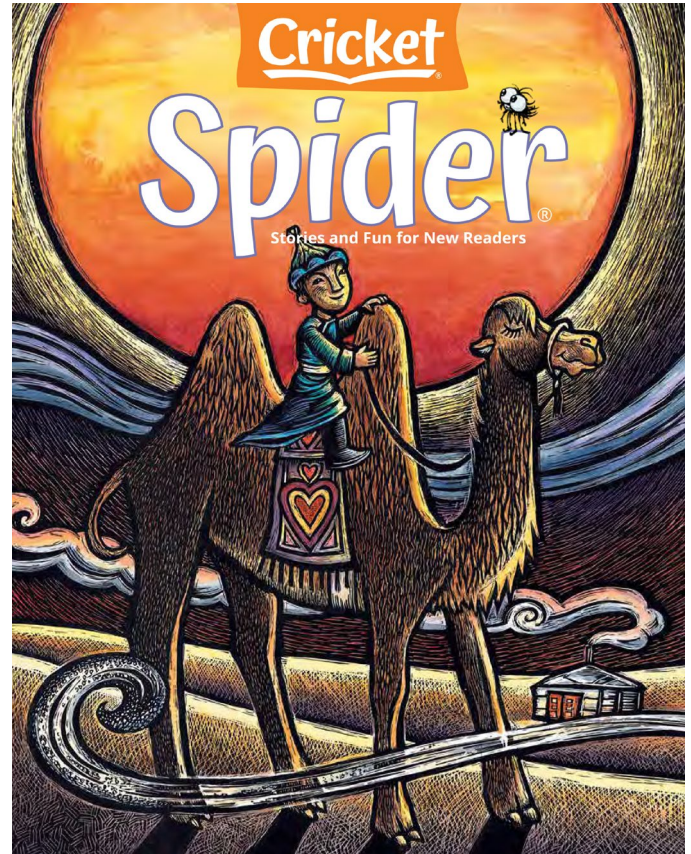
Use the texts covered in this teacher guide to explore techniques writers use to make their writing engaging and memorable.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

How do writers make their writing interesting?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze an author's style and tone.
- Students will interpret words and phrases.
- Students will recognize the key elements and characteristics of literary texts.
- Students will analyze places, including their physical, cultural, and environmental characteristics.
- Students will present a folktale.
- Students will write narratives.



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

- **Mansa Musa's Golden Journey**
Expository Nonfiction, ~830L
- **Mansa Musa's Wisdom**
Historical Fiction, ~680L
- **Who Saved the Day?**
Tall Tale, ~680L

Spider® Teacher Guide: February 2022

Mansa Musa's Golden Journey

pp. 10–13, Expository Nonfiction

Guide students to notice a writer's style and purpose using this article about Mansa Musa, the ruler of ancient Mali, and his famous journey to Mecca.



RESOURCES

- Author's Purpose

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article.
- Students will read and analyze an author's style and tone.
- Students will analyze places, including their physical, cultural, and environmental characteristics.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **empire (p. 10)** a group of countries or regions that are controlled by one ruler or one government
- **natural resources (p. 10)** materials such as minerals, land, water, and forests that exist in nature and are useful to humans
- **awed (p. 12)** filled someone with feelings of wonder and respect
- **sketchy (p. 13)** not complete or clear

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do writers make their writing interesting?

Ask students what they like to read—fiction, nonfiction, science articles, stories, long novels, funny writing, factual writing, etc. Then ask what makes writing interesting instead of boring. Tell students to notice how the author makes this factual article interesting and fun to read.

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 article.

1. This book is about an outer-space _____ that is ruled by a Martian.
2. The lovely bride in her flowing dress _____ the wedding guests.
3. The game directions were _____ and we couldn't understand them.
4. Copper, lead, and iron are just a few of the _____ in the U.S.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the article, discuss these questions:

1. How many years ago did Mansa Musa make his journey?
2. How did natural resources, trade, and travel help make Mali a wealthy empire?
3. Why did Mansa Musa want the world to know about his empire?
4. How did Mansa Musa's trip change West Africa?

SKILL FOCUS: Author's Style and Purpose

INSTRUCT: Remind students that an author's purpose is the reason he or she has for writing. Distribute the *Author's Purpose* worksheet and go over the information. Then display and read aloud the first few paragraphs from an encyclopedia article about Mansa Musa. (Don't reveal that the text is from an encyclopedia.) Have students work in pairs to identify the author's purpose (to inform). Then read aloud the first paragraph of "Mansa Musa's Golden Journey." Discuss how the author's tone, or attitude, compares to the tone of the encyclopedia article. Ask students what makes the tone of the "Golden Journey" article different. Point out the first two sentences and explain that the writer has involved the readers by connecting the subject to their lives.

ASSESS: Explain that often a writer has more than one purpose. Have students work in pairs to determine Jennifer Stephan's purpose or purposes for writing "Mansa Musa's Golden Journey." Have partners underline text details that helped them identify purposes.

EXTEND

Social Studies Have students learn more about Mali by conducting research on an aspect of its history or culture. Topics include foods, art, music, languages, architecture, schooling, plant and animal life, important places, interesting facts, geography, climate, and economy. As part of their research, students might consult the March 2020 issue of the world cultures magazine *FACES*, which focuses on Mali.

Author's Purpose

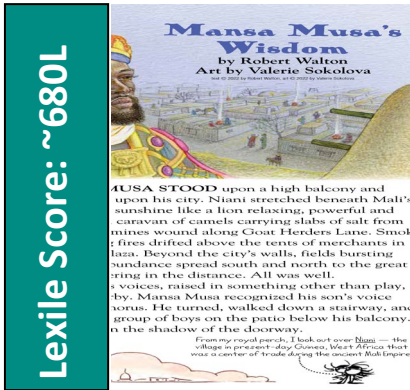
Author's Purpose	Definition	Examples
Persuasion	The author writes to convince readers to think or act in a certain way.	advertisements, reviews, editorials, speeches
Information	The author writes to explain something, give directions, or give information to readers.	textbooks, nonfiction books, biographies, recipes, encyclopedia articles
Entertainment	The author writes to engage or amuse readers, scare them, make them laugh, or help them understand someone's feelings.	plays, poems, stories, novels
Description	The author wants readers to be able to visualize a person, place, thing, or event.	descriptive articles and essays

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Mansa Musa's Wisdom

pp. 15–21, Historical Fiction

Help students identify and analyze figurative language by using this story about a wise king who teaches his son a lesson about pride.



RESOURCES

- Similes and Personification

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will interpret words and phrases.
- Students will present a folktale.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **abundance** (p. 15) a large amount of something
- **envy** (p. 17) the feeling of wanting to have what someone else has
- **superior** (p. 17) better than other people
- **enchanted** (p. 18) made to feel delighted by something

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do writers make their writing interesting?

Explain that one way writers make their writing interesting is by describing things using details and comparisons. Write the name of your favorite food on the board. Then model using words and phrases to describe it. (Grilled cheese sandwich: crispy on the outside; gooey melted cheese, like a warm blanket, buttery taste) Then give students five minutes to write a short description of their favorite foods. Invite students to share their descriptions. Instruct them to notice how the author of this story describes things.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display and read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Then have students 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 as they read the story.

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. “Mansa Musa’s Wisdom” is an example of a story within a story. Summarize the two stories.
2. How would you describe the kingdom of Mali based on the description in the first paragraph?
3. How does Maghan behave with his friends?
4. What lesson does Mansa Musa teach his son through the story about the jerboa?
5. Identify the theme of the main story and of the jerboa story. Then compare the themes. How are they similar and different?

SKILL FOCUS: Simile and Personification

INSTRUCT: Explain that writers can use figurative language to engage readers’ interest and help readers visualize and understand ideas. Continue by explaining that similes and personification are two types of figurative language that the author of “Mansa Musa’s Wisdom” uses in the story. Distribute the *Similes and Personification* worksheet to students and review the definitions and examples in the box at the top of the page. Have students work in pairs to identify the simile in the first paragraph. (“Niani . . . like a lion relaxing, powerful and unhurried”) Ask students to identify the two things being compared. (Niani and a lion) Discuss how students visualized the city of Niani based on this simile. Use a similar procedure to discuss the personification in the first column on page 19. (“Yellow fingers of flame grabbed at his tail.”) Ask students to identify the human qualities given to the fire.

ASSESS: Students may work in pairs to complete the worksheet.

EXTEND

Language Arts/Social Studies Have students read other folktales that contain messages about the price of pride. Students should present the folktale to the class in an interesting way, such as by dramatically reading it aloud, presenting it as a play, or creating a comic strip.

Analyze Similes and Personification

Literary Element	Definition	Example
simile	A comparison of two unlike things that have something in common; uses the word <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>	When Ernie was sick, his voice sounded like a croaking frog. The clouds were as big as mountains.
personification	description that gives human qualities to an idea, object, or animal	The fallen leaves danced across the playground.

Use the chart below to help you think about similes in “Mansa Musa’s Wisdom.”

Similes

Examples from “Mansa Musa’s Wisdom”	Two Things Being Compared	What I Pictured

Use the chart below to help you think about personification in “Mansa Musa’s Wisdom.”

Personification

Example from “Mansa Musa’s Wisdom”	Human Qualities Given	What I Pictured

Who Saved the Day?

pp. 24–29, Tall Tale

Teach students to recognize exaggeration using this tall tale about a very large, very loud family.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will recognize the key elements and characteristics of literary texts.
- Students will write narratives.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **suitor** (p. 24) a man who wants to marry a woman
- **parlor** (p. 24) a room in a house or apartment that is used for conversation or for spending time with guests
- **topple** (p. 26) to cause something to fall

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What makes an author’s writing interesting?

Display the following statements: *I’m so hungry I could eat a horse. Dad snores louder than a freight train. My ears are as big as an elephant’s. Mom’s car is a thousand years old. I’ve seen that movie a million times.* Have students work in pairs to discuss what these statements have in common. Invite students to share ideas. Then ask if the statements are realistic. Point out that these statements are examples of exaggeration, or overstatement. Tell students to look for examples of exaggeration as they read 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 baby sister likes to build block towers and _____ them over.
2. Gram says Gramp was the only _____ who captured her heart.
3. Gram and Gramp liked to sit in the _____ and listen to the radio.

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. What is unusual about the members of the Brady family?
2. How is Cedric different from the other characters?
3. Where in the story does the author describe a chain of events? Which chains are told in reverse sequence?
4. What is the theme or message of this story?

SKILL FOCUS: Exaggeration

INSTRUCT: (In preparation for this lesson, find a brief tall tale to read aloud to students, such as *Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind Crockett*.) Tell students that “Who Saved the Day?” is an example of a tall tale. Explain that a tall tale is a story that uses humor and exaggeration to tell about impossible events. Ask students to listen as you read a tall tale. Pause as you read to ask students to identify examples of exaggeration and humor.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to highlight examples of exaggeration in “Who Saved the Day?” Discuss the details that make the story humorous.

EXTEND

Art and Writing Have interested students create a nine-panel comic strip version of “Who Saved the Day?” Tell students to list the events in the story and then choose the events they will include in their strips. Then have them sketch pictures and draft the writing for the strip. Following a solid draft, have them create their final comic strips.