

Faces™

SNAKES ALIVE!

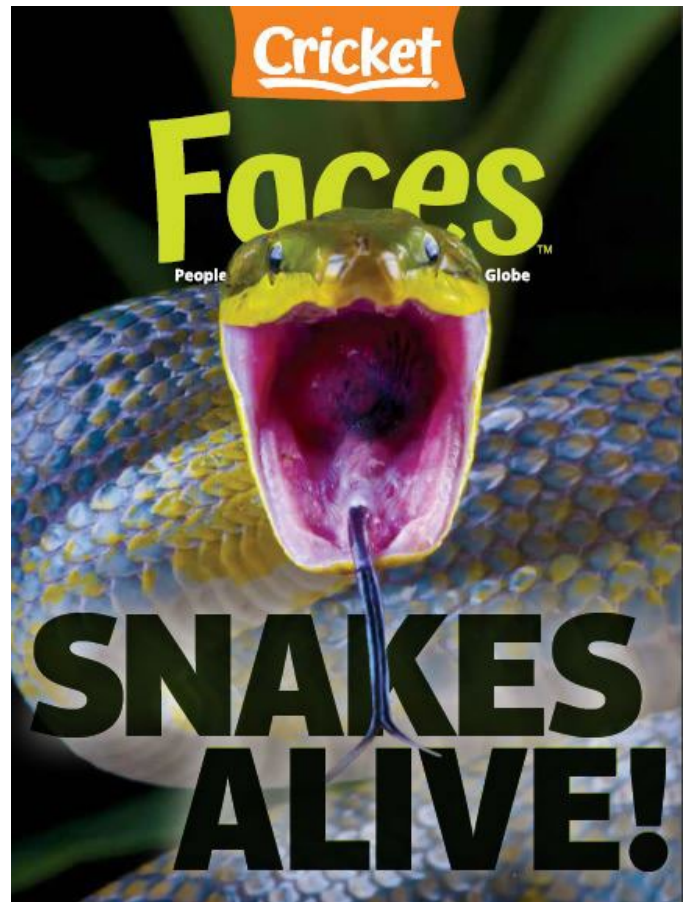
Creepy to some and revered by others, snakes have an important role in nature and in many belief systems. This month's issue of FACES explores the existence of snakes in the wild and informs readers about the long history of snake symbolism in different cultures.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

How do snakes influence people and places?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the hunting and survival skills of snakes.
- Students will learn the significance of Nāgas in Hinduism and Buddhism.
- Students will learn about the spirit god of the Zambezi River.
- Students will distinguish between fact and opinion statements.
- Students will examine the cultural influence of a mythological being.
- Students will analyze the impact of innovation.
- Students will use the literary device of alliteration to create subheadings.
- Students will create trading cards of mythological creatures.
- Students will participate in a mock debate: Progress vs. Tradition.



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

SELECTIONS

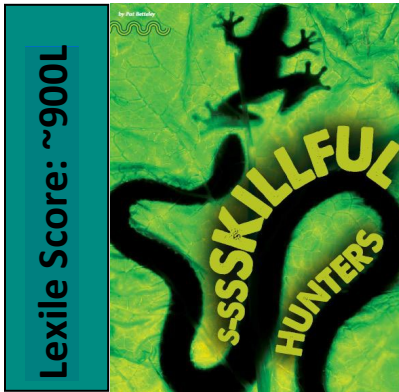
- **S-SSkillful Hunters**
Expository Nonfiction, ~900L
- **Going Gaga over Nāgas**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1020L
- **The Watchful River Spirit**
Expository Nonfiction, ~960L

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S-SSSkillful Hunters

pp. 14–17, Expository Nonfiction

Sneaky and slithery, snakes are fascinating reptiles to study. Students will learn how snakes overwhelm their prey using powerful venom or crushing coils.



RESOURCES

- Facts and Opinions: Sneaky Statements

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the hunting and survival skills of snakes.
- Students will distinguish between fact and opinion statements.
- Students will use the literary device of alliteration to create subheadings.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **venom (p. 15)** a poisonous substance secreted by some animals, such as snakes, and typically injected into prey by biting or stinging
- **molt (p. 15)** to lose a covering of skin, hair, or feathers and replace it with new growth in the same place
- **predators (p. 17)** animals that live by killing and eating other animals

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do snakes influence people and places?

Distribute long strips of paper to students and have them design their own snakes. Tell students to create a realistic replica of a snake and discuss what that means. Finally, have students place their snakes on their desks and allow students to walk around the room to view the snakes. (If possible, hide some rubber snakes around the room to create high interest before reading!)

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Post the key words and discuss the definitions. Tell students they will create a word-search puzzle using the three vocabulary words, in addition to 17 more theme-related words. Suggest they highlight topical words as they read to use in the word search. Share the puzzles with another class for use as a prereading exercise for this article.

READ & DISCUSS

Read the article aloud with the class. Have students reread the text in small groups to answer the questions below. Discuss responses.

1. How do snakes overpower their prey?
2. Why do snakes molt?
3. What senses are considered a snake's superpowers?
4. How are snakes able to eat huge meals?
5. Explain the scare tactics snakes use to fool their predators.

CONCEPT/SKILL FOCUS: Fact and Opinion

INSTRUCT: Remind students that it is important to be able to distinguish between fact and opinion in order to determine the credibility of information. (**Fact:** can be proven and is true for everyone. **Opinion:** can't be proven, involves personal judgment.) Distribute the *Facts and Opinions: Sneaky Statements* worksheet. Have students review the article and classify each statement on the worksheet as a fact or opinion.

ASSESS: Have students choose one fact and one opinion from the worksheet and explain to a partner WHY it is a fact or opinion.

EXTEND

Language Arts Display the headings from the article: "Strong Scales," "Stealth," "Super Senses," "Subdue and Swallow." Have students say the headings aloud and ask them what sounds they notice. Review alliteration with students (the close repetition of the same first sounds in words). Then discuss possible reasons why the author used alliteration in the headings. Finally, have students select an animal, create a title for an article about the animal, and use alliteration to write four subheadings for their planned article. The objective of this exercise is usage of alliteration, so students do not need to actually write the article. Offer extra credit to those who choose to do so.

Sneaky Statements

Facts and Opinions Locate and underline each of the sentences below in the article. Then mark each statement as FACT (F) or OPINION (O). *Helpful Hints:* Facts can be proven. Opinions are personal judgments.

- _____ 1. Snakes are reptiles that are closely related to lizards.
- _____ 2. Snakes look big and scary when they puff up their bodies.
- _____ 3. Love snakes or hate them, you have to admire their skill.
- _____ 4. Snakes are cold-blooded, meaning that they get their warmth from the environment.
- _____ 5. You might think a snake would get a bellyache after eating such a huge meal.
- _____ 6. Snakes use some pretty impressive tricks to fool their predators.
- _____ 7. Snakes are important to our ecosystems.
- _____ 8. Snakes' skins are covered with strong scales.
- _____ 9. All snakes are dangerous and should not be kept as pets.
- _____ 10. Snakes live on every continent except Antarctica.



Going Gaga over Nāgas

pp. 18–21, Expository Nonfiction

Readers will learn about Nāgas, mythological serpents revered throughout South and Southeast Asia by followers of Hinduism and Buddhism.



RESOURCES

- Cultural Influence: Serpent Stories

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn the significance of Nāgas in Hinduism and Buddhism.
- Students will examine the cultural influence of a mythological being.
- Students will create trading cards of mythological creatures.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **revered** (p. 19) regarded as worthy of great honor and respect
- **virtuous** (p. 20) morally good
- **sacred** (p. 20) to do with God or a god, very holy

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do snakes influence people and places?

Most students enjoy books and movies about gods/goddesses and will have some experience with the myth genre. Discuss well-known gods in mythology (and the Marvel Universe!). Explain that myths are more than fantastical stories. They serve a profound purpose in ancient and modern cultures. Encourage students to discuss the purpose(s) with a partner and then share their answers with the class.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Discuss the key vocabulary words and definitions with the class. Invite students to share prior knowledge relating to these words. Then ask students to explain what the meanings of the words have in common. Tell students to use two different highlighters to identify other words with similar meanings and words with opposite meanings in the article.

READ & DISCUSS

Reinforce comprehension of the concepts presented in the article by using the following questions to direct discussion:

1. In which religions are Nāgas important? Explain their importance.
2. Why are Nāgas virtuous in some legends and villainous in others?
3. How did travelers spread the notion of Nāgas through objects?
4. How have Nāgas managed to slither their way into pop culture?

SKILL FOCUS: Cultural Influence

INSTRUCT: Remind students that the article presents detailed information about mythological beings known as Nāgas. These serpent-like creatures are considered villainous in some legends and virtuous in others. Distribute the *Cultural Influence: Serpent Stories* graphic organizer and tell students they will use it to record the different ways in which Nāgas are significant to people.

ASSESS: Review the chart. Have students discuss the duality of other mythological beings.

EXTEND

Mythology Gather reference books on mythological creatures, such as dragons, leprechauns, mermaids, and centaurs. Students will use information from books and from the internet to create mythological creature trading cards. Create a simple template for the cards, which will need to be larger than playing cards. Be sure each student has chosen a different character. Cards should include the creature's strengths/weaknesses, allies/enemies, superpowers, habitat, appearance, and important symbols. Encourage colorful, detailed artwork. Laminate the cards and keep them together in a deck for students to peruse in their free time.

Serpent Stories

Cultural Influence Consult the article and record how Nāgas are significant to many people in South and Southeast Asia.

Element	Description
Historical Significance	
Nāga's Appearance	
Associations & Offerings	
Folklore & Traditions	
Pop Culture Emergence	

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The Watchful River Spirit

pp. 26–27, Expository Nonfiction

The River Tonga people believed that Nyaminyami, the spirit god of the Zambezi River, watched over them. This article presents Nyaminyami's kind and protective nature.



RESOURCES

- Impact of Innovation: River Spirit

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the spirit god of the Zambezi River.
- Students will analyze the impact of innovation.
- Students will participate in a mock debate: Progress vs. Tradition.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **ceremonial** (p. 26) used in or done as part of a ceremony
- **reverence** (p. 26) deep respect for someone or something
- **discontent** (p. 27) a feeling of unhappiness or disapproval

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do snakes influence people and places?

Read aloud the first sentence of the article: “The River Tonga people lived along the Zambezi River in south-central Africa for centuries, very isolated from the rest of the world.” Instruct students to fold a piece of paper in half and write the words **ADVANTAGES** and **DISADVANTAGES** as column headings. Have students work with a partner to discuss and list the pros and cons of living in an isolated location.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the following statements and underline the key vocabulary words. Review how to infer the meanings of words by using context clues and background knowledge. Then have students work in pairs to determine the meaning of each word. Reveal definitions.

1. Veterans are honored on Veterans Day with ceremonial events, such as parades and speeches.
2. My kind, wise grandmother inspired reverence in me.
3. The town curfew created widespread discontent among teenagers.

READ & DISCUSS

Preview the questions below, and have students read the article independently. Then read the article aloud, pausing for discussion when answers to the questions are revealed.

1. Where did the River Tonga people originally live?
2. Describe the traits and characteristics of Nyaminyami.
3. Why did the governments of Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland harness the power of the Zambezi River?
4. How did the governments' actions affect the Tonga people?
5. What events led the Tonga River people to proclaim that Nyaminyami disapproved of the dam?

CONCEPT/SKILL FOCUS: Impact of Innovation

INSTRUCT: The article presents detailed information about how plans to build a dam greatly affected the Tonga people living along the river. Distribute the *Impact of Innovation: River Spirit* organizer. Tell students they will analyze how the decision to harness electricity had both positive and negative effects on the people of the region.

ASSESS: Circulate as students work, and have content-related mini-conversations. Remind students to give specific details in their answers.

EXTEND

Social Studies The battle between tradition and progress is often resolved in a way that leaves some people unhappy. Divide the class into two groups, one representing the Tonga River people and one representing the governments of Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland. Have students use information from the **SKILL FOCUS** activity to debate the building of a dam on the Zambezi River.

River Spirit

Impact of Innovation Read the statement in the gray box. Use the space below to explain how the building of the river dam had both negative and positive effects on people of the region. Support your three examples with details.

Statement: Looking for ways to increase electricity production, the governments . . . decided to harness the power of the great river. (p. 26) **POV: POSITIVE**

1.

2.

3.

Statement: The Tonga people were forcibly moved. (p. 27) **POV: NEGATIVE**

1.

2.

3.