

Spider®

THEME

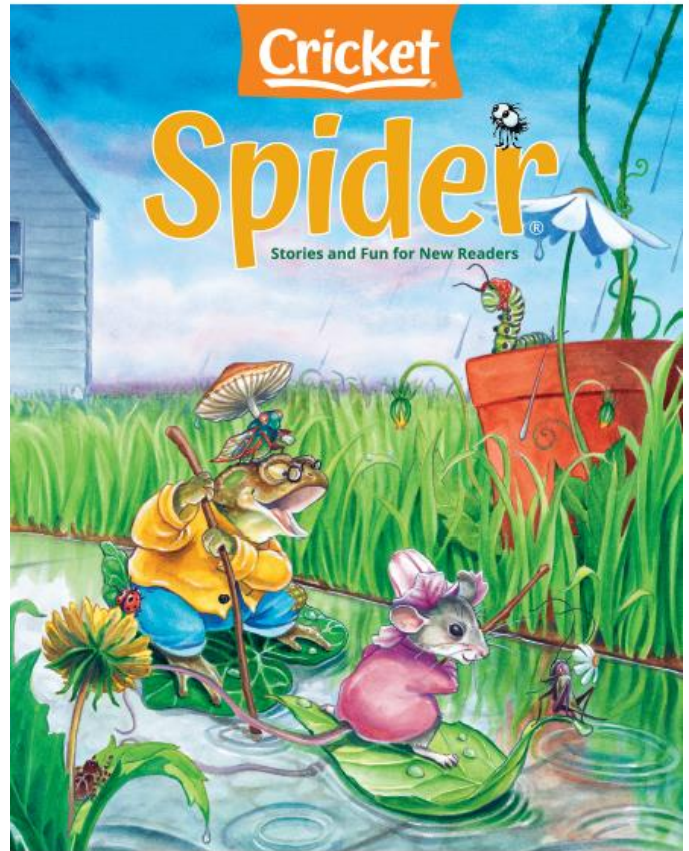
This month's issue of Spider magazine is full of frogs. You'll find a few toads, too. Experience these amphibians in fiction and nonfiction selections accompanied by language arts minilessons and cross-curricular activities.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

How do different authors write about frogs?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact in a story.
- Students will read and analyze a science article.
- Students will integrate and evaluate content.
- Students will analyze the structure of texts.
- Students will present short research projects.
- Students will learn about amphibians in their area.
- Students will present the life cycle of a frog in comic-strip form.



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

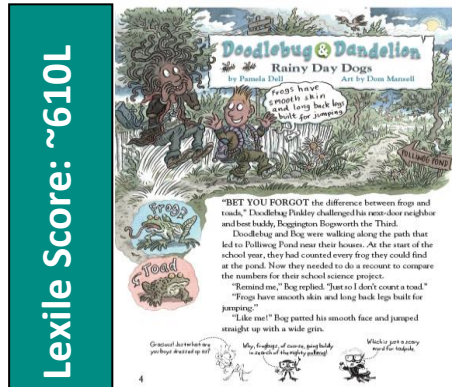
- **Doodlebug & Dandelion**
Science Fiction, ~610L
- **Counting Tadpoles**
Expository Nonfiction, ~970L
- **Ribburta and the Run-Ragged Babysitting Adventure**
Fantasy, ~570L

Spider® Teacher Guide: April 2023

Doodlebug & Dandelion

pp. 4–8, Science Fiction

Use this story about two friends working on a frog-counting science project to help students reflect on important elements in the story.



RESOURCES

- Narrative Pyramid (2 pages)

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact in a story.
- Students will present short research projects.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **recount** (p. 4) a second count of something
- **steamed** (p. 5) angry or irritated
- **command** (p. 6) to have control over something such as people or animals
- **drenching** (p. 7) making someone or something completely wet

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do different authors write about frogs?

Create a word web on the board with the word *frog* in the center. Have students turn and talk with a partner to list everything they know about frogs. Then bring the class together to share ideas. Note students' ideas in the word web. Then ask students to share what they know about the differences between frogs and toads. Tell students to pay attention to the frogs in this story and note anything odd or interesting about them.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display and read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Then display the sentences below and have students use the vocabulary words to complete them.

1. On hot days, we enjoy _____ ourselves with the garden hose.
2. I did a _____ of my savings to make sure I had enough to buy a hat.
3. Dad was _____ when the dog made muddy footprints on the couch.
4. Have you ever seen a dog trainer _____ a group of dogs?

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. Why do Doodlebug and Bog need to recount the frogs in the pond?
2. Do you think the boys talk and joke in a realistic way? Explain.
3. How are frogs and toads different, according to Doodlebug?
4. What surprising events happen in the story?
5. On page 7, Bog begins to say something and doesn't finish: "It's probably because you—." Reread that part of the story and then make an informed guess about what Bog was going to say.
6. What problems do the boys face in the story?
7. What is the story's climax, or point of greatest excitement?
8. How would the story change if the frogs didn't listen to Doodlebug?

SKILL FOCUS: Narrative Pyramid

INSTRUCT: Work with students to demonstrate how to complete a Narrative Pyramid. Distribute the *Narrative Pyramid* worksheets and display a blank narrative pyramid to fill in as a class. Review the directions. Then use a familiar story, such as "Cinderella," to fill in the blank pyramid as a class.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to complete the *Narrative Pyramid* graphic organizer using the "Doodlebug & Dandelion" story. Then have them summarize the story in paragraph form.

EXTEND

Science: Have students research and deliver presentations on extreme amphibians. Students might choose a giant species, such as the Chinese giant salamander or the cane frog. They might choose a tiny frog or chameleon, an amphibian with an unusual appearance or ability. Students should include photos or drawings in their presentations.

Narrative Pyramid (page 1 of 2)

Follow the directions in the table below to fill in the narrative pyramid. Then write a summary of the story.



Line 1	Write the main character's name.	
Line 2	Write two words to describe the character's personality.	
Line 3	Write three words to describe the setting. You may write a phrase: "cold underground cave." You may also write three different words to describe the setting: "1925," "beach," "rainy."	
Line 4	Write a phrase to describe the problem in the story. Use four words.	
Line 5	Write a phrase or a full sentence to describe the first important event in the story. Use five words.	
Line 6	Write a phrase or a full sentence to describe a second important event in the story. Use six words.	
Line 7	Write a phrase or a full sentence to describe a third important event in the story. Use seven words.	
Line 8	Write a phrase or a full sentence to describe the solution to the problem in the story. Use eight words.	

Narrative Pyramid (page 2 of 2)

1. Main character's name

2. Two words describing the main character's personality

3. Three words stating the setting

4. Four words describing the problem

5. Five words describing one event

6. Six words describing another event

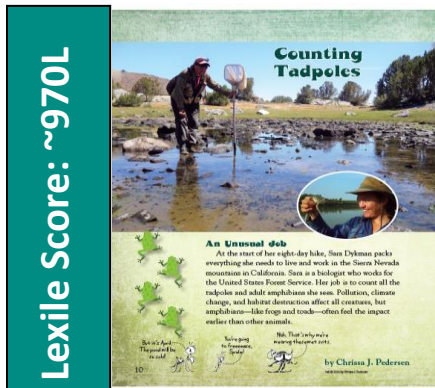
7. Seven words describing a third event

8. Eight words describing the solution to the problem

Counting Tadpoles

pp. 10–15, Expository Nonfiction

Use this article about a scientist who studies the effects of pollution, climate change, and habitat destruction on amphibians to help students analyze graphic features.



RESOURCES

- Text Features

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a science article.
- Students will integrate and evaluate content.
- Students will learn about amphibians in their area.

KEY VOCABULARY

- amphibian** (p. 10) an animal that can live both on land and in water
- habitat destruction** (p. 10) damage done to an area to such a degree that native plants and animals can no longer live there
- elevation** (p. 14) the height of a place

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do different authors write about frogs?

Have students preview the article by reading the title and looking at the photos. Then have students work in small groups to predict why the author of “Counting Tadpoles” wrote the article. Did she want to entertain readers, persuade readers, or inform readers? Have students present and support their predictions. Then tell students to think about whether their predictions were accurate as they read the article.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display and read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Then display the matching activity below. Have students copy and complete it. Remind them to look for the vocabulary words as they read the article.

Vocabulary Words

- amphibian
- habitat destruction
- elevation

Examples

- 5,000 feet high
- frogs and toads
- a bulldozer pushing down trees

READ & DISCUSS

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

- What is Sara Dykman’s job?
- What are two ways amphibians can breathe?
- How do pollutants and chemicals hurt amphibians?
- What is an indicator species?
- Why is it important for Sara to get an accurate tadpole count?
- What are the three species of amphibian Sara searches for?
- Why does Sara use fungicide when she checks frogs for chytrid?
- Why doesn’t Sara begin counting tadpoles at higher elevations?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Text Features

INSTRUCT: Point out that nonfiction texts often include different kinds of text features, such as photos, captions, and headings. Remind students that text features contain important information that supports ideas in the main text. Distribute the *Text Features* handout to students and review the features and how they help readers. Then, using science or social studies magazines and textbooks, work with the class to find examples of the different features.

ASSESS: Have students work in groups of four to take turns identifying and reading or describing the text features in “Counting Tadpoles” in the order they appear. Also have groups discuss how each feature connects to the main text and what it helps them understand.

EXTEND

Science: Have students use the library, internet, and local experts to learn about amphibian species in their area and the threats they are facing. Students can also use the Amphibian Report Card website to find information. Encourage students to take part in the report card activity described at the end of the article.

Text Features

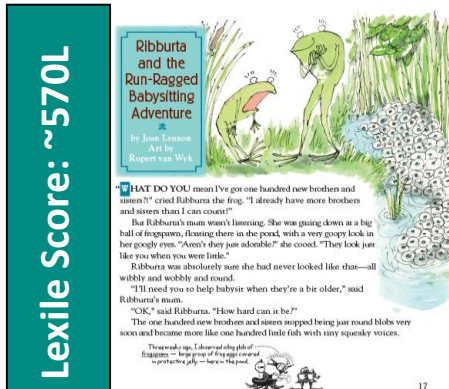
The table below lists text features found in “Counting Tadpoles.” It also explains how these features can help you understand a text. Use this table to help you discuss text features with the other members of your group.

Text Features	How Text Features Help Readers
Title: the name of a text	The title tells the reader the topic they will learn about in the text.
Headings: titles of the sections in a text	Headings help readers identify and understand the main idea in a section of text.
Sidebar: information that is set apart from the main text	A sidebar gives more information about a detail in the main text. It might include pictures or photos.
Pictures: photographs and illustrations	Pictures show an important object or idea from the main text. They help readers visualize and understand important ideas discussed in a text.
Captions: text under a picture	Captions usually explain what a picture shows.
Inset photo: a small photo set inside a larger photo	An inset photo can show a faraway view of something or a close-up view of something small.
Labeled photos: photos with words and markings on them	Labeled photos help readers understand key information in the photos.

Ribburta and the Run-Ragged Babysitting Adventure

pp. 17–21, Fantasy

Give students practice in analyzing the stages of plot using this story about a big sister frog who babysits her many siblings.



RESOURCES

- Stages of Plot

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze the structure of texts.
- Students will present the life cycle of a frog in comic-strip form.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **cooed** (p. 18) talked in a soft, quiet, and loving way
- **squawked** (p. 18) complained loudly or with strong feeling
- **downstream** (p. 18) in the direction in which a stream or river flows

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do different authors write about frogs?

Brainstorm a list of frog characters in books, movies, and tales. Your list might include the frog from *The Princess and the Frog*, King Harold in *Shrek*, and Frog from the Frog and Toad books. Discuss the traits of the different frog characters. Then tell students to think about how they would describe the frog in this story.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Have students work in groups of three to write sentences using the vocabulary words, with each group member responsible for a different word. Have groups review their sentences and confirm that the words are used correctly. Invite students to share their sentences. Then tell the class to look for these words as they read the story.

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. Why do you think the main character is named Ribburta?
2. Describe Ribburta's traits. Does she seem like a big sister? Explain.
3. Why do you think Ribburta believes babysitting won't be difficult?
4. How do the brothers and sisters act like human kids?
5. How do the brothers and sisters cause trouble?
6. Why are the frogs worried about the snake?
7. How do they protect their sister?
8. What is a theme of this story? How does the story show the theme?

SKILL FOCUS: Stages of Plot

INSTRUCT: Remind students that the series of events in a story is called the plot. Continue by reminding them that the events in a story focus on a character's problem and how the problem is solved. Work with students to create a list of the important events in this story. Have students work in pairs to decide if anything is missing from the list or if any events should be combined. Then distribute the *Stages of Plot* worksheet to all students and go over the different plot stages. Have students fill in the Conflict section. Then have pairs discuss which events to include in the Rising Action box. Discuss ideas as a class.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to continue to fill out the plot diagram. Then bring the class together to go over responses.

EXTEND

Science: Have students show the life cycle of a frog in comic-strip form. Students can begin by researching the life cycle stages and noting the details they will include in their strips. Then they can sketch the images they will need. Finally, students should combine their words and images into a comic strip. Suggest students imagine what the frogs might say at different stages and add humorous dialogue in speech balloons.

Stages of Plot

In the chart below, note events from the story to outline the story's plot.

- **Conflict:** The problem a character faces in a story.
- **Rising Action:** Story events make the conflict more complicated.
- **Climax:** The main character makes an important choice or takes an action and the outcome of the conflict is clear.
- **Resolution:** The final events at the end of the story tie up loose ends.

1. Rising Action

2. Climax

3. Falling Action

Conflict