

Spider®

THEME

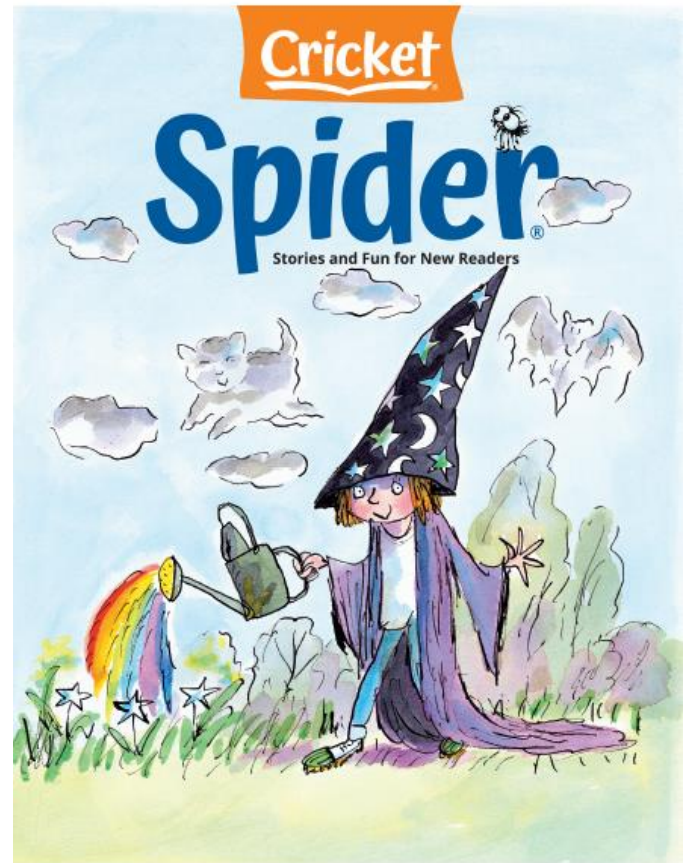
This month's issue of *Spider* is full of magic, including the magic of nature, the magic of fantasy, and the magic of teamwork. Use the minilessons and activities in this teacher guide to reinforce language arts skill and engage students in a variety of learning activities.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

Where can we find magic?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will analyze the structure of texts.
- Students will read and analyze an article.
- Students will determine themes of a text.
- Students will assess how a point of view shapes the content and style of a text.
- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will write narratives to develop imagined experiences and events.
- Students will engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.
- Students will speak clearly at an understandable pace to give presentations.



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.

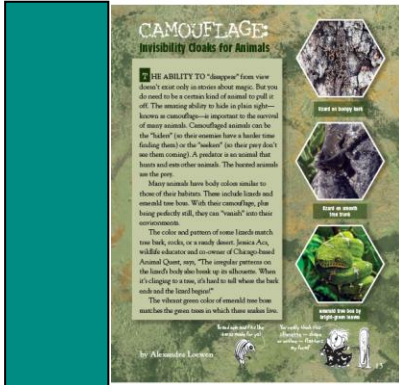
SELECTIONS

- **Camouflage: Invisibility Cloaks for Animals**
Expository Nonfiction
- **Unmagical Cat**
Fantasy
- **Fabulous Frederic**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Camouflage: Invisibility Cloaks for Animals

pp. 13–15, Expository Nonfiction

Use this article about different types of animal camouflage to teach students about description text structure.



RESOURCES

- Description Structure Web

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze an article.
- Students will analyze the structure of texts.
- Students will write narratives to develop imagined experiences and events.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **habitat** (p. 13) the place or type of place where a plant or animal naturally lives
- **coloration** (p. 14) the color or patterns of color on an animal or plant
- **mimicry** (p. 15) when one type of plant or animal looks like a different type of plant or animal

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: Where can we find magic?

Ask students to share what they know about animal camouflage.

Brainstorm examples of animals that use camouflage. Then ask students to think of ways humans use camouflage (military, hunting, fashion). Tell students note how the author connects camouflage to magic in the article.

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.

1. A tiger's __ is orange with black stripes and a white underbelly.
2. The parrot's natural __ is the jungles of South America.
3. __ helps some animals hide from the predators that want to eat them.

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. What does the phrase “hide in plain sight” mean?
2. How does camouflage help predators?
3. How does camouflage help prey (animals hunted by other animals)?
4. Name three animals that hide by blending into their surroundings.
5. How does a king snake trick its predators?
6. How does the author connect camouflage to magic?

SKILL FOCUS: Description Text Structure

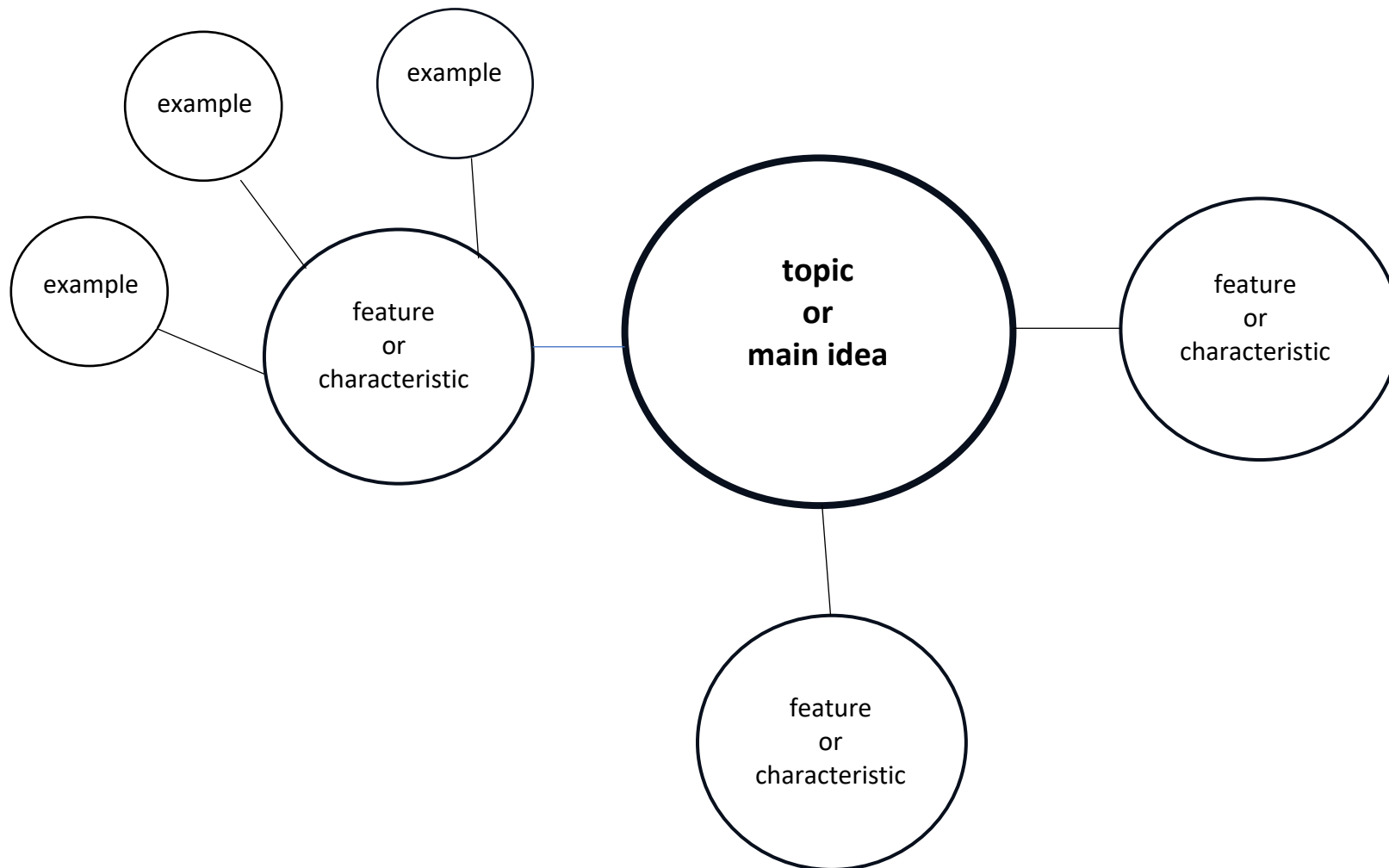
INSTRUCT: Explain that when authors of nonfiction want to describe a topic, they often use description text structure. Display the *Description Structure Web*. Using this structure, authors can help readers learn about a topic by describing its features and characteristics and by giving examples. Next, work with students to create a concept web based on a simple nonfiction picture book on a single subject, such as frogs or tornados. Draw the center circle and write the topic of the book inside. Have students work in pairs to identify features of the topic. Add branches to the topic circle to write the features. Add branches to the features to add examples if they are included in the book. Next, have students work in pairs to begin a new concept web for the camouflage article. Challenge students to come up with a main idea statement for the center circle instead of just a topic word. Ask volunteers to share their statements.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to underline features in the article and add them to their webs. Then have them follow this procedure to add examples. Work with the class to go over the webs.

EXTEND

Writing: Have students use the first-person POV to write a story in which one or more animal characters use camouflage to stay safe in a close call with a predator. Remind students to use dialogue and description. Invite students to share their stories with the class.

Description Structure Web

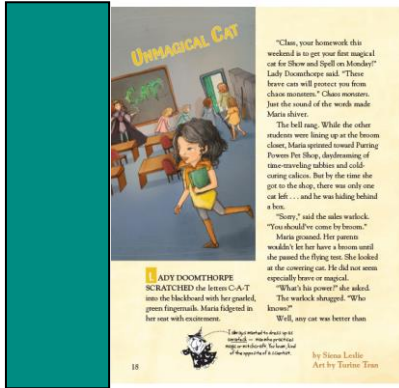


Spider® Teacher Guide: October 2023

Unmagical Cat

pp. 18–24, Fantasy

Use this story about a cat who turns out to be very magical to help students determine the theme.



RESOURCES

- Theme

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will determine themes of a text.
- Students will engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **gnarled** (p. 18) bumpy or twisted
- **chaos** (p. 18) complete confusion and disorder
- **tabbies** (p. 18) cats that have dark and light stripes or spots on their fur
- **calicos** (p. 18) cats that have white, brown, and black fur

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: Where can we find magic?

Point out that magic is found in many books, fairy tales, movies, and games. Invite students to name examples. Discuss what makes stories about magic so appealing. Brainstorm some problems students might solve using magic—changing their boring lunch to something more delicious, flying to school instead of taking the bus, making a stain or spill vanish, etc.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display and read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Then have students work in pairs to write a very short story using all four of the vocabulary words. Give students about five minutes to complete the activity. Then invite students to share their work.

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. Why does Maria sprint to the pet store when the bell rings?
2. What problems might a chaos monster cause?
3. Both the warlock and Lady Doomthorpe say that Maria's cat looks more like a Toby than a Shalakazoom. What do they mean?
4. How does Maria feel about taking part in Show and Spell?
5. What is Toby's power?
6. Would the story change at all if Toby was called Shalakazoom? Explain why or why not.

SKILL FOCUS: Identify Theme

INSTRUCT: Explain that the theme of a story is a message about life that an author wants to share with readers. Give examples of common literary themes: "don't give up on your dreams," "every person has talents and abilities." Continue by explaining that themes are not usually stated but can be identified by thinking about information and events in a story, including how characters react to problems, important decisions characters make, how characters change and grow, and lessons characters learn. Discuss possible themes of familiar stories.

ASSESS: Distribute the *Theme* worksheet. Have students work in pairs to complete it. Discuss students' themes and the details that revealed them.

EXTEND

Social Studies: Plan a class field trip to a local animal shelter or invite a representative from the shelter to come to your classroom and talk to the class about the work the shelter does. Have students do some research on animal shelters in advance of the trip so they will be prepared with questions to ask. Find out if the class can help the shelter by holding a food or toy drive.

Theme

Reread “Unmagical Cat” and underline key details to help you answer the questions below. Then use your answers to help you determine a theme of this story.

1. What challenges does Maria face?

2. How does Maria react to these challenges?

3. What important decisions does Maria make?

4. In what ways does Maria grow or change?

5. What lessons does Maria learn? Do other characters learn any lessons?

Write a theme for this story on the lines below. On the back of this sheet, list the details from the story that help show this theme.

Spider® Teacher Guide: October 2023

Fabulous Frederic

pp. 26–31, Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Use this story about a young magician who learns the power of teamwork to teach students to analyze first-person point of view.



RESOURCES

- First-Person POV

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will assess how point of view shapes the content and style of a text.
- Students will speak clearly at an understandable pace to give presentations.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **complicated** (p. 26) hard to understand, explain, or do
- **professional** (p. 26) participating in an activity as a paid career
- **specialty** (p. 27) something that a person is known for doing very well

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: Where can we find magic?

Share details about magic shows you have seen and invite students to do the same. Then show students an age-appropriate video of a magician performing a trick. For example, some episodes of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* feature magicians. Penn & Teller's "Try This at Home" videos show average people trying to perform magic tricks. Be sure to preview the video you choose before sharing with your class. Explain that "Fabulous Frederic" is about a young magician.

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.

1. Dad is a great cook, but baking cakes is his ____.
2. The game was ____ but we finally figured out how to play it.
3. A ____ dancer's job is to dance on the stage for an audience.

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. Why was the Color Switch card trick difficult for Frederic?
2. Does Frederic seem confident or cocky about his first performance?
3. Why does Uncle Herbert tell Frederic to "play to your strengths"?
4. What changes does Frederic make to his magic show?
5. How is teamwork important in the story?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Point of View

INSTRUCT: Explain that some stories are told from a first-person point of view by a story character. Review information about the first-person point of view using the chart at the top of the *First-Person POV* worksheet. Next, point out that first-person narrators may not say exactly what they think and feel, but they usually include information that lets readers make inferences about their thoughts and feelings. For example, a narrator might say "tears filled my eyes" instead of saying "I felt sad." Read aloud the first two paragraphs of the story. Have students turn and talk with a partner to identify Frederic's thoughts and feelings and the clues in the text that reveal them. Discuss students' ideas.

ASSESS: Distribute the *First-Person POV* worksheet. Have students work in pairs to complete the activities.

EXTEND

Performing Arts: Have students work independently or in pairs to learn a magic trick. Students can use books or the internet to find suitable tricks. Encourage students to give themselves stage names. After students have practiced their tricks, have them perform for classmates.

First-Person POV

First-Person Point of View

- Narrator is a story character
- Participates in the action
- Uses first-person pronouns: *I, me, mine*

Read the first story excerpt below. Highlight details that help you understand how Frederic thinks or feels. Then write Frederic's thoughts and feelings next to the details that reveal them. Compare ideas with your partner. Repeat these steps with the second story excerpt.

Story Excerpt 1

"Anyway, the worst thing that could possibly happen *did* happen: the hidden deck fell out of my sleeve when I was making the switch. So, there they were, fifty-two cards the audience wasn't supposed to see, spilled all over the stage.

Everybody laughed.

I tried to put on a good face, which is what you have to do when something goes wrong. I made a joke and smiled confidently when I took my bow. Then I called Theodore out for a bow. He's a really good sport, which is why he agreed to be my assistant for the mind-reading trick. Incredible as it might seem, he'd rather draw pictures than do magic. Theodore is my identical twin, but my dad always says you couldn't find two people more different anywhere." (p. 27)

Story Excerpt 2

"Amanda ran up onstage with Theodore then, and the two of them took their bows. Everybody stood up and clapped, which didn't surprise me. It was a great trick.

I was backstage, of course, while Theodore and Amanda were getting all the applause, but that didn't matter. The Fabulous Franzetti patted me on the back and told me he was glad I was using his wand. That was enough for me." (p. 31)