

# BY THE END OF YEAR 5

## ILLUSTRATING THE READING STANDARD

### “Plight of the Sea Turtle” (School Journal, Part 3 Number 2, 2008)

Noun frequency level: 10–12

By the end of year 5, students are required to use a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts to locate, evaluate, and integrate information and ideas in order to meet the reading demands of the curriculum, drawing on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes described for the end of year 5 in the Literacy Learning Progressions. The curriculum tasks will also involve the students in generating their own questions as well as answering questions from the teacher.

The students in a year 5 and 6 class are involved in a science investigation to discover how environmental causes and human actions have led to many animals becoming endangered and to identify a range of actions that individuals and organisations can take to restore the habitats of these endangered species.

“Plight of the Sea Turtle” deals with the decreasing numbers of sea turtles in the Pacific and describes some initiatives

to prevent their extinction. The information is logically organised, and the text is well supported by photos, a map, captions, and easily identified information boxes.

The teacher chose “Plight of the Sea Turtle” because the text includes a range of features, such as descriptive and explanatory text, factual information, and historical details. These require the students to find and use several pieces of information in order to ask and answer questions about this endangered animal.

The following example illustrates aspects of the task and text and demonstrates how a student engages with both task and text to meet the reading demands of the curriculum. A number of such examples would be used to inform the overall teacher judgment for this student.

The student by the end of year 5 is guided in her use of strategies to understand the information and ideas in the text and to generate questions, related to her specific purpose for reading, within the science context.

The student by the end of year 6 deliberately selects and uses strategies such as skimming and scanning to locate, evaluate, and integrate common themes relating to endangered species.

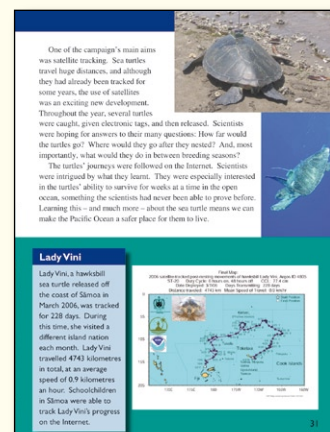
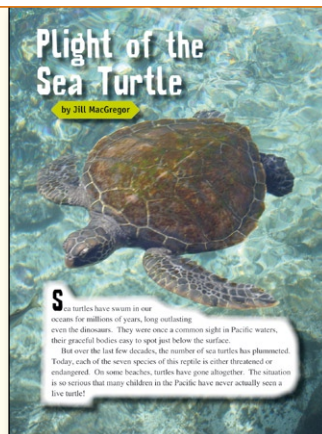
But over the last few decades, the number of sea turtles has plummeted. Today, each of the seven species of this reptile is either threatened or endangered. On some beaches, turtles have gone altogether. The situation is so serious that many children in the Pacific have never actually seen a live turtle!

During this time, she visited a different island nation each month. Lady Vini travelled 4743 kilometres in total ...

Sea turtles travel huge distances, and although they had already been tracked for some years, the use of satellites was an exciting new development.

Scientists were ... especially interested in the turtles’ ability to survive for weeks at a time in the open ocean, something the scientists had never been able to prove before. Learning this – and much more – about the sea turtle means we can make the Pacific Ocean a safer place for them to live.

The student identifies the main idea that the sea turtle, an animal that has survived for millions of years, is threatened. She cross-checks understandings of the word “Plight” (in the title) and uses prior knowledge and context to work out the meaning of the ambiguous sentence “On some beaches, turtles have gone altogether.” She also uses concrete examples, such as the fact that “many children in the Pacific have never actually seen a live turtle”, to support the abstract idea that “the number of sea turtles has plummeted.” The student asks questions about the causes of the decline in sea turtle numbers and looks for further information to help answer these questions as she reads on.



The student uses the text box and map to locate information about the route Lady Vini took. In response to the teacher’s questions, the student clarifies competing information to identify the fact that, although tracking turtles is not new, using satellites to track them *is* new. The student makes inferences that satellite tracking provides more precise information to scientists than other tracking methods do. She makes connections between the information about the distance travelled by Lady Vini and the scientists’ proof of the length of time turtles can survive in the sea. This enables the student to ask questions about how individuals and groups can take action to ensure that the Pacific Ocean is made safer for turtles.