

The Singing Leaf

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Overview

This informative report focuses on the life of the katydid, an insect that lives in New Zealand but is less well known than the grasshopper, cricket, cicada, praying mantis, or wētā.

Suggested reading purpose and teaching purpose

Based on the information I have about my students' learning needs, what would be appropriate reading and teaching purposes for this lesson?

- To find information and learn about a lesser-known insect that lives in New Zealand.
- To support the students in developing the comprehension strategy of **summarising**.

Suggested learning goal

We are learning to determine the important details in the text and state them in our own words.

Success criteria

To support our comprehension of the text, we will:

- ask questions and make connections to identify the key words and information
- group or categorise the key words and information
- look for the clues that help us to decide on the most important information
- state this information in our own words.

Readability

Noun frequency level: 9–10 years for guided reading

What features of this text support the reading and teaching purposes?

- The report structure, with one key idea per paragraph
- The question used to introduce the article
- The wealth of information included in the text
- The use of labels and captions
- The words in bold and the glossary to explain them
- The supporting map.

What prior knowledge or experience might help my students to read this text?

- Knowledge of insects (especially wētā, crickets, praying mantises, cicadas, and grasshoppers)
- Familiarity with insects that shed their skins, such as the cicada
- Experience in using a glossary
- Familiarity with terms such as “camouflage”
- Familiarity with the structure of a report
- Experience with using other comprehension strategies, such as “identifying the main idea”, where the reader has to identify key words or information.

What text features might challenge my students and require a prompt or a brief explanation?

- The concept of having “ears in their legs”
- The location of South America and the size of the Amazon rainforest
- Particular words (besides those in the glossary), including “katydid”, “kikipounamu”, “praying mantises”, “chirp”, “slit”, “oval”, “hatch out”, “species”, “hay bales”
- The many adverbial phrases of time and place (especially for English-language learners), including “from a rose bush on a summer evening”, “in your garden”, “at night”, “in the grass”, “during the day”.

A framework for the lesson

How will I help my students to achieve the reading purpose and learning goal?

Before reading

- Share the reading purpose and briefly introduce the text.
- Discuss the title and what it might refer to. “I wonder why the author chose this as the title rather than “The Katydid”? (Making connections; forming and testing hypotheses)
- Have the students share their knowledge of similar insects, such as grasshoppers, cicadas, wētā, crickets, and praying mantises. (Making connections)
- Discuss the structure of a report with the students and the sort of information that they might find. Introduce the organiser “is/has/lives/does” to the students. (Making connections)
- Share the learning goal and success criteria with the students.

Reading and discussing the text

Refer to Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8 for information about deliberate acts of teaching.

As your students read through the text, support them with any unfamiliar vocabulary, grammar, and concepts as necessary.

- Read page 22. As a group, fill in the first line of the chart below. Have the students record what they consider to be key words and phrases in the relevant columns of the “is/has/lives/does” chart as they read.
- Have the students read the following pages and work in pairs to complete the chart. At the end of each page, discuss what they consider each paragraph to be about and what they think are the key words and phrases. Remind them to ask questions and make connections to what they already know about finding key information. Also get them to record (at the bottom of the chart) any interesting ideas or facts that don’t fit into any of the four columns. The chart below has been filled in for teachers. (Analysing and synthesising; summarising)

	Is (Classification)	Has (What it looks like)	Lives (Habitat)	Does (What it does)
Page 22		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camouflage • Looks like a leaf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rose bush • Summer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sings”
Page 23		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like praying mantises: same colour, same size 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eats the leaves and petals of deciduous trees and shrubs • Feeds at night • Hides in grass in daytime • Flies short distances • Prefers to walk and climb
Page 24		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ears inside its front legs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North America 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sings in summer and autumn • Rubs its

				wings together to “sing” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both males and females “sing” to find each other
Page 25		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eggs look like black oval seeds Nymphs look like adults but smaller and without wings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amazon rain forest New Zealand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lays eggs in early autumn in soil, stems of plants, and bark of trees Eggs hatch the following spring into nymphs Splits its skin about five times as it grows
Page 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> insects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
<p>Interesting facts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nymphs turn the same colour as what they eat. The katydids’ Māori name is “kikipounamu”. They get their English name from the way their song sounds. No one knows how long they have been in New Zealand. 				

After reading

- Have the students peer review each other’s findings with a focus on whether the information recorded by the students is in fact key information. Encourage them to explain to each other how they decided. Also, students could check to see that the information is recorded in the correct column on the chart. (Analysing and synthesising; summarising)
- Share and discuss findings as a group. Discuss how the students will need to use their findings to decide what is the most important information, and use this to create two sentences from each column in their own words. Model how they could make a sentence out of more than one fact. For example, “Katydids feed at night and eat the leaves and petals of deciduous trees and shrubs”. “Is there anything that the article did not tell you that you would like to know?” The article does

not give an explicit classification for the katydid (refer students to the “Is” column), although inclusion of the words “entomologist” and “nymph” implies they are insects. (Asking questions; summarising)

- Review the learning goal and success criteria and reflect with the students on how well the learning goal has been achieved. For example, “How did you decide what was key information? What were the clues and evidence that helped you? How will our learning today about finding the main idea help you next time you are reading an information text by yourself?” Note any teaching points for future sessions.

Links to further learning

What follow-up tasks will help my students to consolidate and/or extend their new learning?

- Have students do follow-up research to find out the answers to any questions they have about katydids. They could present their findings on a poster or in a computer-aided presentation.
- Have the students compare what they have found out with other articles in the *School Journal* about insects, for example, “Unwanted Visitors” (SJ 2.3.08) or “Cockroaches – Creepy or Incredible?” (SJ 3.1.02). Have the students summarise one of these articles and show a comparison between the katydid and the other insect using a Venn diagram.
- Revisit the adverbial phrases in the text (especially those in the “Lives” and “Does” columns) and unpack for English-language learners. (Building vocabulary)
- Ask the students to share with a partner how they find the key information and main idea in a text when they are reading independently.