

The Secret World of the Dust Mite

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Overview

This is an article that informs the reader about dust mites and the place they have in our lives.

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 out about the existence and characteristics of dust mites.
- To support the students in developing the comprehension strategy of **summarising**.

Suggested learning goal

We are learning to identify key information to answer a big question.

Success criteria

To support our comprehension of the text, we will:

- ask questions and make connections to our own knowledge to find important information as we read
- locate the key information that relates to the big question
- state this information in our own words.

Readability

Noun frequency level: 9–10 years for guided reading

What features of this text support a range of reading and teaching purposes?

- The powerful photo of the dust mite
- The use of a question to start the article
- The factual information
- The topic-specific vocabulary
- The separate information about the discoverer of the dust mite (page 16)
- The terms of measurement.

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

- Familiarity with the structure of a report
- Knowledge of spiders
- Familiarity with a microscope

- Experience of allergies
- Knowledge of the decimal system and how small 0.3 millimetres is.

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

- The concept of losing skin
- The fact that there is moisture in the air (refer to students' knowledge of the water cycle)
- The fact that animals can be so small that we can't see them
- Familiarity with fungi
- Particular words and concepts, including "creatures", "lurking", "arachnid", "pollen", "fungi", "grams", "shed" (as a verb), "droppings", "uninvited"
- Colloquialisms (especially for English-language learners): "Chill out", "It's probably just as well ...", "You could say that ...", "You may as well get used to it".

A framework for the lesson

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

Before reading

- Before handing out the journals to the students, cover the text on page 14 and show the students the photo of the dust mite. Discuss what they think it might be but try to avoid mentioning how big a dust mite is. (Making connections, forming and testing hypotheses)
- Share the reading purpose and briefly introduce the text.
- Tell them the title. "I wonder why it is a secret world?" (Forming and testing hypotheses)
- 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.

- Introduce the idea that, when looking for information, we can read a text to see if it has the information that the reader requires and then reread it to pull out that key information. Explain that you will pose the "big question" after the first reading.

Page 14

- Discuss the size of the dust mite and relate this to the concept of a "secret world". (Making connections)

Page 16

- Read page 16 to the students. Discuss the idea that people were unaware of the existence of dust mites until Antoni van Leeuwenhoek discovered them in ordinary house dust. (Making connections; inferring)

Page 17

- Discuss anything that they didn't understand or were unsure of. "How do you feel about all those little creatures in your house?" Check that students understand that dust mites mainly affect allergy sufferers and are not a problem for most people. (Making connections)
- Pose the big question (**How can we minimise dust mites in our homes?**) and discuss how they are going to use the text to answer this question. (Analysing and synthesising; summarising)
- Refer to the success criteria. Have the students reread the text to identify and record key information that will help them to answer the big question. Confirm that the question is about minimising dust mites, not eliminating them, which is impossible. Explain that some information will be explicit and that some might have to be inferred. Ask them to share what they found with their partner. (Analysing and synthesising; summarising; inferring)
- Refer students back to page 14 to check whether there is any useful key information there. (Analysing and synthesising; summarising; inferring)

After reading

- Have the students share the key information and characteristics they found out about dust mites with the group. Draw out any inferences that have not been made by the students. Discuss students' findings and whether the information they have chosen will answer the big question. (Summarising; inferring)
- Review the learning goal and success criteria and reflect with the students on how well the learning goal has been achieved. For example, "How do you know if an idea is a key idea and that it will help you to answer the big question? How will what you learnt today about finding the key ideas in a text help you next time you are reading an informational report?" 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?

- Using the information they have gathered, students will present (in their own words) an answer to the big question. This could be done in a variety of ways, including:
 - a poster with instructions
 - an advertisement for an anti-dust mite product

- an oral presentation
 - a computer-aided presentation.
- Share with a partner how they find and use key information to answer a big question about a topic when they are reading an information text independently.