Anchor Text Guidance: Grade 4, Module 2

Animal Defense Mechanisms

Texts and authors

Can You Survive the Wilderness? by Matt Doeden
Lexile®: 680

Animal Behavior: Animal Defenses by Christina Wilsdon
Lexile®: N/A

Venom by Marilyn Singer
Lexile®: NC1110

"Fight to Survive!" by EL Education (included in the module materials)
Lexile®: 890

Text Overview

EL Education's Grade 4, Module 2 is designed to prompt consideration of these compelling questions:

- How do animals' bodies and behaviors help them survive?
- How can writers use knowledge from their research to inform and entertain?

Can You Survive the Wilderness? by Matt Doeden is a choose-your-own-adventure story that allows the reader to make choices about how and whether they would survive in the wilderness in a variety of scenarios.

Animal Behavior: Animal Defenses by Christina Wilsdon presents a wide variety of defense mechanisms that animals use to survive. The author describes several types of physical and behavioral adaptations, supported by examples from the animal world. Note that students read only selected excerpts from this book.

Venom by Marilyn Singer is an introduction to the science of toxinology (the study of toxins). Written with simple explanations for accessibility, the text provides details on the diversity of venomous and poisonous animals.

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"Fight to Survive!", written by EL Education, introduces the concept of physical and behavioral adaptations and the role they play in helping animals survive.

Text Rationale

Students begin the module by building background knowledge about how different animals' bodies and behaviors help them survive. Concrete examples of animal defenses throughout *Animal Behavior: Animal Defenses* support fourth graders in navigating the moderately complex meaning, language, and structure of the text. Multiple readings and close readings of this text focus on vocabulary and identifying main ideas and details.

The excerpts from *Animal Behavior: Animal Defenses* were specifically chosen to help students learn to summarize informational text by identifying main ideas and supporting details. Students practice research skills and explore how an author uses reasons and evidence to make a point. Students also use this text to build academic and domain-specific vocabulary that will help them read and write about animal defenses throughout the module.

Students learn how writers use knowledge to inform and entertain as they read and reread "Fight to Survive!" They also use this text to continue to practice determining the main idea and supporting details, supporting their thinking with specific details and examples from the text, and acquiring key academic and domain-specific vocabulary.

Multiple readings for a variety of purposes support readers in working with these complex texts as they research, record information, and synthesize that information for their expert animal research.

Additional Considerations

Be aware of the specific value assigned to animals in different cultures to avoid cultural misunderstandings, particularly if you have students from cultures or geographic regions where it is common for venomous animals to be pets or for people to eat some of the animals described. Investigate the routines, practices, rituals, beliefs, norms, and experiences that are important to students and their families. Integrate this background into the classroom as students investigate animal defense mechanisms. Take time to draw out students' prior experiences and associations with the animals studied in the module, if students are comfortable sharing. Some students may have ties to or experience with the countries of origin of the animals.

EL Education recommends that school leaders and teachers read the texts in advance, with their specific school community in mind, to become familiar with the issues presented so that they can discuss them with students and families as needed.

Including Families

Families of students working through this module are invited to discuss any concerns they have about the texts with their children and the teacher. Teaching notes throughout the module recommend that teachers speak to families of students who may be particularly affected by the topics encountered. Notes in the homework materials distributed to families recommend that they reach out to teachers with questions or concerns about the texts. These materials also encourage families to talk with their children about the texts they are reading, particularly if any of the topics raised might be sensitive to a particular student.