

Minnesota Diary of a Spider - Analyze a Spider's Point of View

3.1.5.1

Standard

Use literary text features, including nonliteral language and narrative point of view, to understand literary texts.

Why this lesson is a winner Students explain how Spider's first-person perspective shapes what he notices, fears, and describes.

Decision: WINNER

Included only because the lesson teaches and assesses the claimed expectation. Partial or merely topical matches are excluded.

The standards page is additive. The approved TumbleTA skill lesson follows unchanged.

Model: I notice that the same meal is a treat in one book and a dread in the other. The worm's family eat leaves at that table happily. The spider is hoping they will not have leaves again. Nothing about the dinner has changed - only who is writing it down.

Support and extension

Above: Both books end on the same date with a wish about being misunderstood. Explain what the author is doing by making them match.

Below: Fill the comparison chart, then write about the dinner from both sides.

Assessment

Look for:	Says both books are diaries with dates.
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Says both are written as I by a small creature.

Says the spider and the worm are friends in both.

Notices the same dinner table in both books.

Says both last entries are about being misunderstood.

3. Told By A Spider

Full lesson

TIME

34 minutes

OBJECTIVE

Work out how the diary is shaped by who is writing it, and how the same thing looks from the other end.

STUDENT PRODUCT

Two lists side by side, and three spider-only sentences

FOCUS

First-person narration, and size seen from both ends

Essential question

How can Spider scare others and still be frightened himself?

Materials

The book Pages 5, 9, 11, 20 and 21, found before the lesson One list sheet each

Text to mark before teaching

Passage 5 — a human basketball game, seen from inside the net Passage 9 — the spider smeared sideways across its own web Passage 11 — the web among the ferns, with a red cap in the corner Passage 20 — Fly's mother, twice the size of anybody Passage 21 — a shadow thrown on a wall

Lesson sequence

1	Launch · 4 min
Focus:	Two things happening in one room
Teacher direction:	Show the gym-class page without reading it and ask what

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is going on. The class will see a basketball game. Then read the words, which are about learning to catch the wind.

Prepared text:	Passage 5
2	Teacher model · 7 min
Teacher model:	I read the two lists near the end. One is called things I scare and the other is things that scare me. The lists reverse the direction of fear: Spider scares Fly's mother, while Daddy Longlegs scares Spider. So being frightening and being frightened depend on whose point of view we are following.
Prepared text:	Passage 20, Passage 21

3 Two lists, one word each way · 13 min

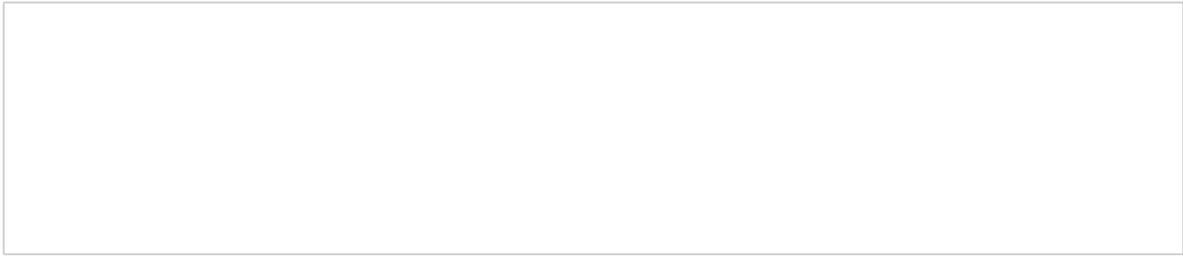
Focus:	Scaring, and being scared
Teacher direction:	Using Passages 20 and 21, write what is on each of the spider's two lists and what the pictures add.
Expected answer:	On the list of things he scares, the first is Fly's mom - and the picture has her looming over everybody while Fly says it was not his fault.

On the list of things that scare him, the first is Daddy Longlegs, and the picture is not the creature at all but a huge shadow thrown up a wall. So the pictures give the size rather than the animal: what frightens you looks enormous, and you look enormous to whatever you frighten. Neither list is about how big anything really is.

Student product:	Two lists, side by side, with what the picture shows
Prepared text:	Passage 20, Passage 21

4 What only a spider would say · 10 min

Focus:	Sentences that need eight legs
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Teacher direction:	Using Passages 5, 9 and 11, find things in this diary that
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only a spider could have written.

Expected answer:	Learning in gym class to catch the wind and travel to faraway places is a spider's lesson it is how a spider actually moves house - and it is happening in the corner of a human gym. The safety drill is about vacuum cleaners, which are dangerous to a web and to nothing else in the room. And outgrowing your own skin, so that you have to molt and can then take the old one to school for show and tell, is not something a person could write at all. Each of these is an ordinary school event with a spider's body underneath it.
Prepared text:	Passage 5, Passage 9, Passage 11

Teacher guidance

Why this text works: The pair of lists is the best five minutes in this book for teaching point of view, because the same family appears on both of them and the class can see why without being told.

Show the two illustrations together: a mother fly filling the frame, and a shadow up a wall. Ask which one is really bigger, and the honest answer is that the pictures are not about that. The gym-class page is worth showing before reading, because the class will describe a basketball game and then find out the page is about something else happening in the same room.

Expected answer:	The diary is shaped at every point by the body writing it.
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Gym class teaches catching the wind, because that is how a spider travels, and the illustration puts that lesson inside a human basketball game. The safety drill is about vacuum cleaners, which threaten a web and nothing else.

Outgrowing your skin and molting is a spider's problem, and taking the old skin to show and tell is a spider's joke. And the two lists at the end - things I scare, and things that scare me - have the same kinds of creature on both, because whether you are the frightening one depends on which list you are writing. The pictures say the same: a mother fly fills a page, and Daddy Longlegs appears only as a shadow.

Model: I notice that the pictures give me size rather than fact. Daddy Model: I notice that the pictures give me size rather than fact. Daddy Longlegs is drawn as a shadow up a wall, which is how he feels to the spider rather than how big he is - and the next entry says that when the spider finally found him he turned out to be a lot bigger than expected anyway.

Support and extension

Above: The spider frightens Fly's mother and is frightened of Daddy Longlegs. Write what Daddy Longlegs might have on his own two lists.

Below: Fill the two columns, then write three things only a spider would say.

Assessment

Look for:	Says Fly's mom is on the list of things he scares.
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Says Daddy Longlegs is on the list of things that scare him.

Says the pictures show how big things feel.

Names one lesson only a spider would need.

Says molting is something only a spider does.

Short version

TIME

18 minutes

OBJECTIVE

Work out how the diary is shaped by who is writing it, and how the same thing looks from the other end.

STUDENT PRODUCT

Two lists side by side, and three spider-only sentences

FOCUS

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Essential question

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Materials

The book Pages 5, 9, 11, 20 and 21, found before the lesson One list sheet each

Text to mark before teaching

Passage 5 — a human basketball game, seen from inside the net
Passage 9 — the spider smeared sideways across its own web
Passage 11 — the web among the ferns, with a red cap in the corner
Passage 20 — Fly's mother, twice the size of anybody
Passage 21 — a shadow thrown on a wall

Lesson sequence

1	Launch · 3 min
Focus:	Two things happening in one room
Teacher direction:	Show the gym-class page without reading it and ask what is going on. The class will see a basketball game. Then read the words, which are about learning to catch the wind.
Prepared text:	Passage 5
2	Teacher model · 5 min

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Teacher model · 5 min 2

Teacher model:	I read the two lists near the end. One is called things I scare and the other is things that scare me. The lists reverse the direction of fear: Spider scares Fly's mother, while Daddy Longlegs scares Spider. So being frightening and being frightened depend on whose point of view we are following.
Prepared text:	Passage 20, Passage 21

3 Two lists, one word each way · 10 min

Focus:	Scaring, and being scared
Teacher direction:	Using Passages 20 and 21, write what is on each of the spider's two lists and what the pictures add.
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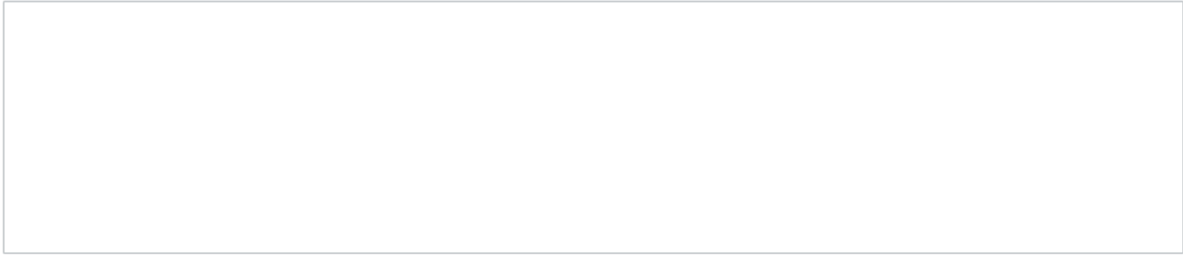
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Student product:	Two lists, side by side, with what the picture shows
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Expected answer:

The diary is shaped at every point by the body writing it.

Gym class teaches catching the wind, because that is how a spider travels, and the illustration puts that lesson inside a human basketball game. The safety drill is about vacuum cleaners, which threaten a web and nothing else.

Outgrowing your skin and molting is a spider's problem, and taking the old skin to show and tell is a spider's joke. And the two lists at the end - things I scare, and things that scare me - have the same kinds of creature on both, because whether you are the frightening one depends on which list you are writing. The pictures say the same: a mother fly fills a page, and Daddy Longlegs appears only as a shadow.

Model: I notice that the pictures give me size rather than fact. Daddy Longlegs is drawn as a shadow up a wall, which is how he feels to the spider rather than how big he is - and the next entry says that when the spider finally found him he turned out to be a lot bigger than expected anyway.

Support and extension

Above: The spider frightens Fly's mother and is frightened of Daddy Longlegs. Write what Daddy Longlegs might have on his own two lists.

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Says molting is something only a spider does.