

# How the clues give the animal away

What makes an animal easy or hard to identify, and how does an author control what we know?

5 days

2 books

Grade 2

146 min full

97 min short

## The idea

These two books use almost the same invitation: listen to clues, make a guess, then turn the page and find out whether you were right. That similarity is what makes the pair useful. The unit is not really about animals. It is about how information is released.

Animals in Camouflage teaches the class to notice the machinery of the riddle. The clue page speaks in the animal's voice, describes without naming, and ends in a question; the answer page gives the name and then adds facts.

Animals Black and White changes the conditions. Now the reader begins with one fact already known - every answer is black and white - and has to decide when that helps and when it does not.

Across five days, students move from guessing, to naming the structure that makes guessing possible, to testing how well different clues narrow the possibilities, and finally to noticing language that creates one impression before correcting it. Across the first four days, students build the ideas and evidence they will need for the final comparison.

On Day 5, they return to examples from both books to decide which clues actually helped most.

|                                   |                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>The arc</b>                    |                                                                      |
| <b>Guess before you know</b>      |                                                                      |
| <b>1</b>                          | Use the clues, record a prediction, and let the book mark the guess. |
| <b>What the author holds back</b> |                                                                      |
| <b>2</b>                          | Name the repeated clue-page / answer-page structure.                 |

|                                       |                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>One fact changes every guess</b>   |                                                                                       |
| <b>3</b>                              | Test whether knowing a shared trait makes identification easier.                      |
| <b>When the sentence misleads you</b> |                                                                                       |
| <b>4</b>                              | Find the exact word where an impression is corrected.                                 |
| <b>Which clues actually work</b>      |                                                                                       |
| <b>5</b>                              | Use evidence already gathered to compare which clues narrowed the possibilities most. |

## Day 1 · Guess before you know

### BOOK

Animals in Camouflage

### TIME

30 min full · 25 min short

### USE

Whole-Book Plan

### ROLE IN UNIT

Start with the reading behavior the whole unit depends on: stop before the reveal, make a real guess, and then look back for the clue that earned or defeated it.

### Teach it

Read the whole book as riddles. Before each reveal, have students make a real guess. After the reveal, record the answer and one clue that helped - or one clue that sent the guess in the wrong direction. At the end, ask which animal was easiest to identify and which was hardest, and require students to point to the clue that made the difference.

### Student product

A three-column guess / answer / useful clue record with at least three completed examples.

### Look-fors

Students make a prediction before the reveal, name a clue rather than merely the answer, and can explain why one clue helped more than another.

### **Unit bridge**

Do not tell students yet that the next day is about structure. End by asking: “Did the book give its information in the same order every time?”

## **Day 2 · What the author holds back**

### **BOOK**

Animals in Camouflage

### **TIME**

28 min full · 16 min short

### **USE**

The Riddle in Two Halves

### **ROLE IN UNIT**

Students now move from participating in the riddles to describing how the riddles are built.

### **Teach it**

Build the two-column pattern: CLUE PAGE / ANSWER PAGE. Students add what repeats on each side: the clue page speaks as the animal, gives identifying information without naming it, and ends in a question; the answer page begins with the animal's name and adds facts. Finish by having students state the rule for how the riddle works.

### **Student product**

A completed two-column riddle-structure chart and one sentence stating the pattern.

### **Look-fors**

Students distinguish what the author gives from what the author withholds and can state the repeated clue-page / answer-page pattern without retelling one animal entry.

### **Unit bridge**

Ask why an information book would deliberately delay the name. Keep the answer visible: the delay turns information into a puzzle and makes the reader use evidence.

## **Day 3 · One fact changes every guess**

### **BOOK**

Animals Black and White

### **TIME**

30 min full · 25 min short

### **USE**

Whole-Book Plan

## ROLE IN UNIT

The second book keeps the riddle structure but changes the reader's starting point. Every answer shares one visible trait.

### Teach it

Before reading, list black-and-white animals the class already knows. During the riddles, record guesses before each reveal. For two or three examples, have students mark whether knowing the animal would be black and white helped A LOT, A LITTLE, or NOT YET, then name the clue that finally settled the guess.

### Student product

A short clue-strength record for two or three animals: shared color helped a lot / a little / not yet, plus the clue that settled the guess.

### Look-fors

Students judge a clue by how many possibilities it rules out. They do not treat a true clue as automatically useful.

### Unit bridge

The important distinction is not “color helps” or “color does not help.” Students should notice that the usefulness of a clue depends on how many possibilities it rules out.

## Day 4 · When the sentence misleads you

| BOOK                           | USE                               |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Animals Black and White</b> | The Sentence That Turns You Round |

### TIME

28 min full · 15 min short

## ROLE IN UNIT

Now the unit becomes more precise: not every clue simply adds information. Some sentences encourage one interpretation and then correct it.

### Teach it

For each selected page, record what the animal first seems to be, circle the turning word - especially “but,” and notice “although” - and then record what the sentence makes clear. Ask why the author lets the reader form the first picture before correcting it.

### Student product

A first impression / turning word / corrected meaning chart for two examples.

### **Look-fors**

Students locate the exact language that changes the interpretation and explain how the turn affects the reader's guess.

### **Unit bridge**

Connect back to guessing: a clue can be useful because it tells the truth directly, but it can also be useful because the author lets you form the wrong picture and then changes it.

## **Day 5 · Which clues actually work**

### **BOOK**

Animals in Camouflage

### **TIME**

30 min full · 16 min short

### **USE**

How Each One Hides - selected examples

### **ROLE IN UNIT**

Students bring the evidence from Days 1-4 together and make one judgment: which clues actually narrowed the possibilities enough to help?

### **Teach it**

Use selected examples from How Each One Hides rather than teaching the full content lesson inside the unit close.

Spend a few minutes naming four possible clue sources - color, shape, place, and behavior - then return to the records students have kept since Day 1. Choose one example from each book. For each, ask: "What clue did we have, and how much did it narrow the possibilities?" Compare the two examples and finish with the written response:

"The most useful kind of clue is \_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_."

### **Student product**

A two-example comparison using evidence from both books, followed by the one-sentence unit response.

### **Look-fors**

Students use evidence already gathered, compare usefulness rather than simply naming clue types, and explain usefulness in terms of ruling out possibilities.

## Unit close

Unit close: Put two previously studied examples side by side - one from each book. Ask which clue became useful sooner and what made it useful. Students then complete the written response from their own evidence. The comparison should take minutes, not become a second lesson.

## What students should be able to say by the end

- A riddle can give true information without giving the answer.
- An author can control difficulty by deciding which clue comes first and which fact is held back.
- A shared trait can narrow the possibilities, but it is only useful when it rules out enough alternatives.
- Words such as “but” and “although” can signal that the first impression is about to be corrected.
- Color, shape, place, and behavior can all provide identifying evidence, but a clue matters only when it narrows the possibilities.

## Assessment

Use the Day 5 written response as the summative check. A strong response names a kind of clue, explains when that clue becomes useful, and points to an example from one of the two books. The judgment matters more than the length. For students who need support, offer: “The clue \_\_\_\_ helped because it ruled out \_\_\_\_.”